



Association of

Unitarian Universalist Administrators

Supporting and strengthening Unitarian Universalism through effective administration

December 16, 2019

Dear AUUA Members,

The AUUA Board would like to respond to the recent flurry of posts to the listserv about confidentiality.

We would like to remind you, as a couple of AUUA members have pointed out, that email and social media are not a confidential means of communication, even in a closed group. While the AUUA listserv and Facebook page are both closed groups, open only to members of the AUUA, some of those members might be administrators for other UU professional organizations (e.g. LREDA or AUUMM) or UUA Staff or ministers (in some small congregations, the minister might be the only person handling administration, in which case, they are eligible for membership in the AUUA).

We would also like to remind you that our association does have listserv guidelines, which are posted on the website - <https://www.auua.org/aboutus/listserveguidelines/> - and while we don't have specific Facebook guidelines posted, they would be similar if not identical to the listserv guidelines. We would like to highlight an excerpt from those guidelines --

"When you are thinking about posting a question or comment to the listserv, please ask yourself these questions before posting:.....

- Does my question or comment reflect a commitment to professionalism and UU values? Speaking negatively about your congregation, its lay leadership or minister, or anyone else, for that matter, is almost never appropriate in a public listserv.*
- Would I want my question or comment to be read by anyone in my congregation, by my supervisor or by the minister at my congregation? If the answer is no, don't post it. If you would like to get confidential advice about a difficult situation that reflects poorly on your congregation, etc., please contact an AUUA board member for advice and/or to get the question posted anonymously."*

And an excerpt from our Code of Professional Practices, also posted on the website, <https://www.auua.org/aboutus/codeconduct/>:

II. Colleagues

B. I recognize that in my relationship with religious professionals, I have a responsibility to be supportive in both personal and public situations. I will offer honest and caring responses to them and designate appropriate help when called for. Understanding the trust that colleagues place in relationships with each other, I will honor the need for confidentiality, keeping in mind that such confidentiality is not to be used to allow harm to another or to prevent appropriate help from being sought. I accept the responsibility to confront a colleague's misuse of power, or to report concerns about suspected misconduct to an AUUA Good Officer or, in its absence, the AUUA Board of Directors.

For many years, the administrators' listserv was seen by other UU professionals as merely a place where administrators griped about their congregations or fellow staff. Former AUUA Boards worked

long and hard to create the Code of Professional Practices and the Listserv Guidelines and to raise the administrators' profile within the UUA to be that of the professionals which we know we are but which hasn't always been recognized by other UU professionals. To maintain that professional standing, we must behave as professionals.

We are disappointed and sad to think that someone's job or relationship with their minister or staff would be jeopardized by unprofessional behavior on the part of one of our members.

Many, if not all of us, use the listserv and Facebook to gather and to share information around practices, procedures, and facts, which are all certainly good uses and one of the purposes of this method of communication. Please do not share information in these public, though closed, venues which involves opinions or characterizations about people or congregations. If there is a difficult situation for which you would like advice, please contact a colleague or an AUUA board member directly. You may also contact a Good Officer by emailing GoodOfficer@auua.org; that email is seen just by our trained Good Officers.

Thank you,
The AUUA Board