

**Implications for Funding of Theological Education Today:
Some Questions we Might Ask
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What constitutes excellence in theological education. The Scovel commission said, “We need ministers who are intellectually strong, professionally able, personally integrated and religiously aware.”

Is this still true? Are there things you would add? What kind of ministers do we need now?
(Perhaps something about overcoming oppressions?)

Is there a problem with our current ministers ?

How do you find out?

The Scovel commission:

Visited the three major UU-related schools . . . visiting classes and conferring with teachers, students, alumni, board members and administrators at each school. We interviewed the director and a student from the Stevens-Gesner project in New York City [a special project to educate ministers without a theological school] and visited the Internet experiment in theological education [a new seminary] in Washington, D.C. We made comparative statistical studies on the kinds of curricula taught in the three major schools and on the cost to the Association for the graduates of each school and the records of the graduates. We also sent out questionnaires to find out why so many Unitarian Universalist seminarians went to non-UU schools to prepare for the ministry. As our work progressed we asked, “What kind of ministers do we need?”

The Panel on Theological Education will:

engage in a consultative process to clearly articulate a vision for the ongoing use of Theological Trust funds for Unitarian Universalist ministerial formation, development and excellence. Significant conversations will be held with a broad range of critical stakeholders including theological schools, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA), its CENTER committee and other professional organizations, students, congregational and District leaders, and non-UU organizations such as the Alban Institute, other denominations, etc. **Are there other people/institutions you would consult?**

What are the implications for theological education of modern technology such as on-line courses, oversight by e-mail, etc.

What are the implications for funding for theological education of demographics which most likely show that the crest of the baby boomers studying for the ministry is passing?

Should the Report be distributed widely for comment, as the Scovel report was, before the Board decides on a specific course of action?

The 1973 Report was widely disseminated, as was the January 1974 one, before the Final Report was approved by the Board. Because of widespread criticism and comments, it was changed.

Accountability vs. control – Where is the fine line?

Who is/should be responsible for the assuring that all candidates for the UU ministry obtain the training they need, and that money awarded is being spent wisely? MFC, ATS (Association of Theological Schools that does accrediting), current reports of theological schools to the Panel on Theological Education? Rely only on requests to the Panel on Theological Education funds for specific activities? Other?

The needs of the institutions of the theological school vs. the needs of the individual studying for the UU ministry What is fair? How important is the criteria of fairness or equity? Is it important/wise to keep the promise made to fund the theological institutions so many years ago? (There is no legal obligation.) Most candidates for the UU ministry do not attend UU schools. Should most of the endowment money be given to candidates for UU ministry attending non-UU schools?

How important are UU-related theological schools to the future of the denomination?

Rev. Diane Miller, former head of the Department of Ministry said recently, “Without strong institutions [UU related schools], our mission in theological education cannot be sustained. When the number of aspiring ministers declines, where I expect it is already trending, we will be poorly served to have the academic centers of our tradition further weakened, less independent, or altogether extinct.” **Do you agree or disagree? Why?**