

ASSESSING
OUR
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
LEADERSHIP
SCHOOLS
2004-2005

A Sabbatical Project
By Rev. Rod Thompson
Ohio-Meadville District Consultant

Jointly funded by:
UU Leadership School Network
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Ohio-Meadville District

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I have a long history with Leadership Schools. I was on the staff of The Mountain Leadership School for many years beginning in the mid-1980s. I started as a group facilitator, served at one time or another in the roles of Heritage and Values presenter, Minister of the Week, and, for four years, as Dean of the school. The Dean in this school was the organizer and logistics person who left the presentations to others. Later, after becoming the District Consultant for the Ohio-Meadville District, I served for three years as the Congregational Leadership presenter at EAGLES (Eastern Great lakes Leadership School). In that role I provided information, resources, anecdotes, and group exercises a couple of hours each day of the school.

During that time I saw The Mountain School evolve slowly to become very good at giving the participants a strong, basic grounding in group dynamics and some understanding of their own leadership styles. We did a fairly comprehensive job of providing a picture of UU History. And we subjected everyone to some learn-by-doing worship planning and presentation. Many of our graduates became part of a pool of leadership talent for the districts, thanks to the continual presence of Roger Comstock, our District Executive. As I look back, it seems that an increasing spiritual awareness, for some an awakening, was a byproduct.

My sense of the EAGLES experience was just the opposite – that spiritual depth and personal transformation was the primary outcome (which, of course, is valuable in a UU leader) and that leadership styles, skills, and group dynamics were the byproduct.

So, in the Spring of 2003, as the time for my Sabbatical approached, I proposed to spend my Sabbatical studying, comparing, evaluating, and summarizing our Unitarian Universalist Leadership Schools for the benefit of future lay leaders in our congregations through the districts and the Lay Leadership Development Office. That proposal was approved by both the UUA and the Ohio-Meadville District.

This was my rationale:

Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists (mostly lay leaders) have attended one of our eleven Leadership Schools in their attempt to equip themselves to be an effective leader in one of our congregations. To do so requires a major expense and commitment for both the individual and congregation. To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive study of these schools: what they teach, what methods they use, what their goals are, and/or how effective that training

is for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations. Asking questions like: Do they achieve their goals? Do they provide a benefit for the congregation and district as well as for the individual?

There were, at the time, eleven Leadership Schools: The Mountain (offering both a lay leadership school and a religious educator school) serving the Thomas Jefferson and Mid-South Districts (though for the RE School they welcomed RE folks from all over the Association), EAGLES (Eastern Great Lakes Leadership School, serving the Ohio-Meadville and St. Lawrence Districts), UniLead (serving the Metro New York and Joseph Priestley Districts), Midwest (a combined effort of the Prairie Star, Central Midwest and Heartlands Districts), Northeast (serving all five Northeast districts); and then individual district schools in the Pacific Northwest (the first school), Pacific Central, Pacific Southwest, Southwest, Mountain Desert, and Florida Districts. Since then the Pacific Southwest District has switched to Weekend Leadership Modules, entitled *Leading the Vision*; the Pacific Northwest District has focused on leadership training through a school entitled Gold Mine for Youth and Young Adults; and my Ohio-Meadville District has separated itself from the St. Lawrence District to conduct its own Leadership School.

In my own background I had been directly involved in two of these schools and knew from first hand experience how different their approaches have been. That left another nine schools, plus the recently developed weekend and youth/young adult schools in some districts to be studied.

I believed the information gathered by this study would benefit the schools themselves as well as our whole UU movement. I expect the information will be in greater depth than any previously gathered and to present it in a way that compares apples to apples.

In my original proposal I offered to participate in, or at least visit, each school during its session to be able to observe and get a feel for and the sense of each school. I wanted to develop an evaluation tool, with the help of the UUA's Director of District Services, the Director of the Leadership Development Office, and the District Staff Team, in order to ask the same questions across the country from the participants in each school so we can compare answers between schools.

After beginning the early stages of the project by attending three Leadership Schools during the summer and fall of 2003, I realized what everyone else had advised me at the time; that my plan was way too big and required way too much time away over at least two more summers, not including time for writing. Therefore, I revised my Leadership School Study Sabbatical Plan.

1. I now have direct, on-site experience with four of our eleven Leadership Schools. This will have to be enough on-site experience for this project. The participants of the three schools I attended this past summer and fall all completed the same evaluation instrument. I propose to spend some of my time this spring collating and summarizing those evaluations and issuing a short preliminary report to these three schools, my colleagues in the District Based Staff of the UUA, and to the Unitarian Universalist Leadership School Network, which has funded the work so far.

That work was done and you'll find a summary in the Appendixes. Although I still think the idea was a good one, I now realize that at the end of the school is the wrong time to seek any in-depth evaluations. Yes, we need to ask for feedback at the end of the school, but with the glow of what most refer to as a "wonderful" and/or "transforming" experience is not the time to ask the participants to be objective about the school's effectiveness.

2. I then spend two weeks at the end of September, 2004, designing several survey instruments to seek Leadership School evaluations from leadership school graduates, their sponsoring congregations, and their district leadership. I will also seek mailing lists from all of the Leadership Schools and/or the districts who sponsor them.

I subsequently realized that I had not thought of two other stake holders in the outcome of our Leadership Schools. I became aware that, if I were to make an accurate assessment of our schools, the opinions of my religious professional colleagues would be essential as to how effective these Leadership Schools are to the growth and vitality of our congregations, and to the day to day work of our ministers, and our religious educators. Thus I created and distributed surveys to both groups.

3. I then spent the month of November, 2004, preparing and distributing these assessment instruments; and through personal interviews with representatives of the 11 (or more by then) schools to gather the information about what they teach, what methods they use, what their goals are, as well as their best practices in leadership development.
4. Then, giving the recipients of the surveys a month to complete them and return them to me, during the month of January, 2005, I collated the data and wrote up my findings and conclusions.

I believe that this revised plan has allowed me to somewhat accomplish my original goals of:

- increasing our knowledge of what these schools teach,
- what methods they use,
- what their goals are and whether they achieve their goals,
- how effective their training is for the participants
- and, more importantly, whether they provide a benefit to the congregation and district as well as to the individual?

Although necessarily partial and incomplete, I still believe the information gathered will be vital for the work of the Lay Leadership Development across our Association, our Districts, and our Congregations.

In the pages that follow you will find the information gathered from these surveys and my conclusions drawn from them. You will also be able to read about each of the current UU Leadership Schools and, hopefully, compare what they offer and how they operate. Although there is a benefit to attending a school with folks from ones own district and/or region, there may also be benefit in attending a school that appears to best meet ones personal leadership development goals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge the invaluable help of several individuals in the Ohio-Meadville District without whom this project might never have happened. First, I want to thank Ohio-Meadville District Administrative Secretary, Mary Huffman, and her family and friends, who did a lot of the copying, folding, and stuffing of the mailings. You saved me hours of hard work! Likewise, thanks to Peter Morales, former District Services Director, and Harlan Limpert, former Director of the Lay Leadership Office and current Director of District Services, and all of my District Based Staff colleagues (past and present) for their encouragement, critique, guidance and support for this work. Also a special thanks to the Unitarian Universalist Leadership School Network and Convener Laura Shemick, the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group, and my own Ohio-Meadville District for their generous financial support that made it feasible to conduct this study.

My thanks to all of you.

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

An Executive Summary

I have spent my Sabbatical studying, comparing, evaluating, and summarizing our Unitarian Universalist Leadership Schools for the benefit of future leaders in our congregations. Although my findings are far from conclusive, here is what I have learned in relationship to my stated goals.

The first goal was to increase our knowledge of what our leadership Schools teach.

As a result of this study, I do have a better knowledge of that our schools teach; but is it enough? All our Leadership Schools have a common origin. The format was pioneered in the Pacific Northwest District and spread across the Association from the days of the Inter-district Representatives. From those beginnings each school developed and refined its own structures and curriculum. For the most part that should be good. It would mean that each school adapted what was taught to its district's culture, resources, and to fit the needs of the leaders in their congregations. The problem now, 20+ years later, is that there is no consistency across the country or even from year to year. How is a person, or their congregation, going to be assured that the training they are paying for is really going to make them more effective congregational leaders? That is the \$700 – more or less – question!

The second goal was to determine what methods they use.

All of our schools use a variety of methods to teach what they have to teach, many incorporating the latest adult education methods. However, the overall approach continues to be learn-by-doing in various small group settings.

The third goal was to look at the individual school's goals and to determine whether they achieve them.

Some of the schools are quite up-front in stating their goals, posting them on their web-sites. For other schools the goals are less obvious. I think knowing the school's goals would help a person or congregation know whether the school would meet their leadership development needs. As a result of the surveys I can say more than three-quarters of the Leadership School Graduates concluded that their school did achieve its goals, while almost half of the Ministers and Religious Educators surveyed were not even sure what those goals were.

The fourth goal was to determine how effective the participants found the training.

This one was easy. 90% of these Graduates reported that attending their Leadership School made a difference in their lives. They further affirmed that it strengthened their abilities as a leader in their congregations, that this experience deepened or enriched their religious or spiritual life, and that it had an impact on their professional or work life and their personal or family life. And fully 94% of the respondents said that they have or would encourage others to attend. Clearly Leadership School Graduates proclaim the effectiveness of their training.

The fifth goal was to determine whether the schools provide a benefit to the congregations and districts as well as to the individual.

The three other surveys, Congregations, Ministers and Religious Educators also gave a pretty solid “effectiveness” rating – 60% for Congregations, 70% for Ministers, and 63% of Religious Educators answered “Yes” or “Maybe” to the question about whether Leadership School was effective. However, the fact that from 21 to 24% of all three groups only said “Maybe” may express more hopefulness than actuality. It is also notable that 9% of Congregations, 18% of Ministers, and 31% of Religious Educators said that, “No,” Leadership Schools are not effective.

In some ways the perceptions of the effectiveness of our Leadership Schools appear to be like to the descriptions of the elephant in the classic parable as seen in these four quotations from the surveys:

“The biggest lesson I learned is that relationships matter more than issues, and process is more important than outcomes. This has enriched my personal, religious, and professional lives and helped me on the path to become a more integrated and whole person.” (Graduate)

“Sending board officers or members to leadership school would be an excellent investment for the congregation if we could afford it.” (Congregation)

“We have not sent anyone to leadership school for two years due to uncertainty about whether larger church governance, culture, and issues are able to be reflected in the leadership school curriculum.” (Congregation)

“Mostly “grads” have returned with an inflated sense of their skills.” (Minister)

“LS has been good...for them...but if the criteria for effectiveness is their taking “leadership” for us, it has been very limited.” (Minister)

“I think it’s always a positive experience for participants, and a good process; I’m just not sure how much behavior is actually changed or to what extent the tools learned are actually applied. If more lay leaders understood church systems, dynamics and had an intentional opportunity to deepen their spiritual life we’d have tremendous leaders.” (Religious Educator)

We need to study this “elephant” in even greater depth. We also need to find more and other 21st Century ways of providing Leadership Training and Development for our Leaders.

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Survey of Leadership School Graduates

I distributed several hundred surveys to Leadership School graduates. I mailed out 500 surveys to graduates from the Russell Lockwood Leadership School (MDD), Dwight Brown Leadership Experience (SWC), Midwest Leadership School (CMW, PSD, and Heartland), UniLead (MNY & JPD), Florida Leadership School, and EAGLES (just the St. Lawrence part); randomly and proportioned according to the number of congregations in each state in each district. The North East Leadership School (NELS), The Mountain Leadership Schools (Lay Leadership and Religious Education), and the Pacific Central District School elected to distribute the survey electronically rather than grant me access to their data base. Early on I had also distributed the survey to all of the Ohio-Meadville District EAGLES grads through my regular mailing list. All responses from all sources are included in these results.

In all, I received 251 surveys in return. I am told that that is a pretty statistically meaningful return and probably reflects the favor with which most of the graduates hold their respective Schools.

This Survey, a complete copy of which can be found in the Appendix, was presented to the Graduates as an attempt to answer some of the questions about effectiveness. I will go through the questions one by one with the most significant statistics.

1. Which school did you attend? (I'll list these in alphabetical order)

38 from the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience
34 from EAGLES
21 from the Florida Leadership School
43 from the Midwest Leadership School
14 from The Mountain Leadership Schools (both Lay and RE were counted)
19 from the North East Leadership School
17 from the Pacific Central District Leadership School
30 from the Russell Lockwood Leadership School
35 from UniLead

2. In what year did you attend?

I got responses ranging from 1978 through 2004. The more recent graduates predominated. Although it is true that some of the content, many of the exercises, and, probably, all of the staff and faculty of the schools has changed over these years, it is unlikely that the changes would invalidate these findings.

3. Who paid for your leadership school participation?

For as long as I can remember, Leadership Schools have been advocating for congregations to pay for a significant portion of the costs of their leader's participation in the school, with the participant paying the rest. The assumption was that this would give both the congregation and the individual a financial stake in the outcome.

It is not surprising, then, that 48% of the surveys indicated that they and their congregations shared the expense. I was surprised to discover that 32% of the congregations paid the entire cost of the school for their leaders. This would indicate a high degree of investment by the congregation in the leadership development of their leaders. Another 17% of the graduates paid for the school by themselves. Only 8% acknowledged receiving scholarship help.

4. After attending your leadership school, generally speaking, did you:

- **Participate more in the life of your congregation?**
- **Participate less in the life of your congregation?**
- **Participate to the same extent as before in the life of your congregation?**

One of the goals of our leadership schools has always been to train leaders who will then return to their congregations and take a more active role as a leader. With this question I had hoped to assess how well the schools achieved this goal.

60% of the respondents reported that they increased their participation.

36% reported that they participated to the same extent. This could mean that they were participating at a pretty high degree already, or that the school did not inspire them to a more active role.

Only 3% admitted to participating less after returning from the school.

Now we come to one of the biggest questions in the survey:

5. Did attending your leadership school make a difference in your life?

227, or 90% of the respondents answered, YES, some of them adding exclamation points. An additional 5% said they were not sure.

5% indicated NO, it had not made a difference. Some also with exclamation points.

As a follow up I asked them to specifically identify the areas of difference in their lives. Here are the answers:

6. If attending your leadership school made a difference in your life, check all that apply:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 81% | It strengthened my abilities as a leader in my congregation. |
| 75% | It deepened or enriched my religious or spiritual life. |
| 49% | It improved my professional/work life. |
| 39% | It enhanced my personal/family life. |

My conclusion is that this means that Leadership School graduates overwhelmingly affirm that they gained significantly from their Leadership School experience. Some might say that the learning theory of Cognitive Dissonance, that suggests that once a decision is made the overwhelming feeling is to support that decision, may be at work here. The more one have invested in something the more one will avoid anything that would suggest it was not the right decision. However, I have no doubt that Leadership School graduates do feel more skilled and confident in their leadership abilities as a result of their experience at the school.

To further follow up I asked the following question.

7. Have you used the skills/knowledge/insights from leadership school in your church?

Again, an overwhelming majority, 88% said YES and only 3% said NO. The remaining 9% were not sure one way or the other. These numbers, plus the answers to the next question, further confirms that these folks have been using what they learned to benefit their congregations.

This sample of the answers to this question further illustrates the use of these Leadership School lessons learned.

8. If "yes," in what way(s) have you used them?

It made me a more effective president of my congregation, because I found it easier to accept my shortcomings, resulting in more energy to apply to my presidential duties.

I have applied the systems theories information in understanding the workings of the congregations that I serve. The School affirmed my role as a leader and gave me tools to embody that role more effectively.

I gained skills in leading services. The personality tests were somewhat helpful; I understand they now do the Myers-Briggs, which would have been great, but was not so much in vogue at that time. It was years later that I connected the Myers-Briggs with the tests I took there.

As an extrovert for 40 years, it took my experience at EAGLES to see that to be effective in group settings, I needed to put aside my "extrovert" ways. I have remembered some of the things I learned in group experiences there while working in committees here. I also learned a bit more about diversity among Unitarians and grew in appreciation for this aspect of our denomination. I also experienced personal growth that continues to affect my relationships within our congregation.

I've become more skillful at dealing with conflicts in the congregation, a skill I learned more about at leadership school. In addition, I am able to see different group processes at work and identify different types of personalities in the congregation's leadership and can adapt my personal requests and working style to them in order to get things accomplished.

Leadership school gave me a better perspective of the overall UU movement and organization. I was much better able to put current activities of our congregation in the context of our overall religion. I also learned more about myself as an individual and as a leader, and became more effective at both.

I was informed by these skills, and insights into my own personal leadership style, during my year as board president. I think I was helped to be less attached to outcome of any board discussions or decisions, and more focused on leading a healthy process and trusting the board's actions that resulted. I am more comfortable with conflict and with identifying and managing different sorts of conflict. I have continued in active leadership roles and in educating myself about how best to fulfill these roles. Currently I am serving on a "transition team" with our congregation's interim minister, helping guide the congregation through the

interim process, and feel I was called to this work because of my leadership skills. My confidence as a leader, and my awareness of and comfort with my own particular style, are greatly enhanced because of my involvement.

The biggest lesson I learned is that relationships matter more than issues, and process is more important than outcomes. This has enriched my personal, religious, and professional lives and helped me on the path to become a more integrated and whole person.

With the next few questions I wanted to find out about the participant's current situation and involvements. Perhaps just the percentages will explain a lot.

9. I am currently . . .

- 81% An active member of the same Unitarian Universalist congregation as when I attended the school
- 8% An active member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation other than the congregation to which I belonged when I attended the school
- 1% An active member of a non-Unitarian Universalist congregation
- 6% A relatively inactive member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation
- 0% A relatively inactive member of a non-Unitarian Universalist congregation
- 2% Not now a member of any congregation of any faith

This would indicate that most of these leaders have remained where they were and have remained active, with only 8% moving to a new UU congregation. On the other hand I am somewhat concerned that 6% have become inactive (some, I'm sure, by virtue of age or retirement) and that 2% have left church affiliation altogether (more than those who have gone to other non-UU congregations). I can't actually tie that to their Leadership School attendance but I am left to wonder.

10. If you are currently an active member of a UU congregation (what is your current role?)

I was pleased to note that fully 77% of respondents identify themselves as laypersons active in general congregational leadership activities with only 7% as layperson who is not active in any congregational leadership activities. Another 10% are either religious educators or other staff persons in their congregations. I was a little surprised, given my experience with the Leadership Schools who welcome ministers and seminarians, that only 11 of the 251 (4%) identified themselves as ministers.

Interestingly enough, with only 11 identified in Question 10, a total of 15 responded to this question. I believe this reflects those individuals who are now in seminary but don't yet identify themselves as ministers.

11. If you are ordained, please check one:

- 4 Answered, I was ordained when I attended leadership school
- 2 Answered, I was in seminary when I attended leadership school
- 5 Answered, I was thinking about attending seminary when I attended leadership school
- 4 Answered, I had not thought of entering the ministry prior to attending leadership school

Clearly Leadership Schools have influenced several attendees to consider UU Ministry as a vocation and many have become well respected ministers in our ranks.

Next, in **Question 12**, I wanted to know whether Leadership Schools had encouraged participation at the District or Association level. Many of my District Based Staff colleagues (past and present) have relied upon their involvement in Leadership Schools to get to know who the up and coming congregational leaders are and how skilled and well equipped they are for future recruiting into district leadership positions. It appears that some districts have been more successful than others at this. I would also note that district involvement, which could be as little as attending an Annual meeting, is far different than district leadership.

So, anyway, here are the results of what the respondents said has happened since attending leadership school:

40% of them answered, I have been involved in UU activities at the district level

13% of them answered, I hold or have held a leadership position at the district level

I did not ask them to specify how they were involved (though many did) which is why I have concluded that “involved” was pretty loosely defined. Nor did I ask about their leadership positions.

12% said, I have been involved in UU activities at the national level

6% said, I hold or have held a leadership position at the national level

Again, I did not ask for the what or how, though some did describe real involvement and leadership roles. Interestingly few equated involvement with attendance at General Assembly, which you’ll note next is surprisingly low. Perhaps the way I asked the question was too restrictive. As one who always attends GA I think of only one GA attendance as minimal. Anyway, only 19% said:

I have attended more than one General Assembly since attending leadership school

This next question was an important one in my mind, though I’m not sure it gets to what I really wanted to know.

12. In your opinion, did the leadership school you attended achieve its goals with you?

Though 84% answered YES to this question there was obvious confusion about whether I was asking about the school’s goals or the attendee’s goals. Perhaps the 11% who said they NOT SURE would confirm this. One question remains, do the participants really know that the goals of their school are? I, too, am not sure, but a strong 84% positive response might indicate that I am the only one still asking the question.

13. Have you, or would you encourage others to attend your leadership school?

This one was easy for the graduates. 94% answered YES. The answers to the next question explain it pretty well. I’ve included only a few, but you get the idea.

14. Why?

It helps them understand their personality, accept their weaknesses, and use their strengths.

It’s a transforming, confidence building activity which connects you with many other UU leaders.

The “total immersion” experience was powerful!

Broader perspective on UU, better understanding of available UU resources, contacts with other congregations, understanding of congregational dynamics, assistance in planning growth (numerical and quality of congregational life)

Because the experience expands one’s knowledge and understanding of Unitarian Universalism. It provides opportunities to learn new skills, meet new people, create networks, and explore new philosophies. It gives one a rich environment for strengthening one’s faith and exploring new ideas. Leadership school is a safe place to take some risks while trying new ways of working with people and leading groups.

Leadership in a church setting is very different from leadership in the business world. This is something that many church leaders don’t understand. One person cannot give the orders and expect everyone else to jump (even the minister). Leadership school provides an opportunity to learn how leadership skills need to be tailored to leading a congregation and how being a religious community with respect for all people is different.

For the personal, professional and spiritual growth opportunities.

A fabulous experience and gives a good grounding in our faith and in its practice.

It is life changing.

15. Have you maintained any contact with the other participants or faculty you met at leadership school since the school?

94% said Yes

I think this indicates the participants desire to continue both the Leadership School experience and to reinforce what they learned. Many schools help the graduates set up an interactive internet List-serve or website to facilitate these continuing connections. Some are cumulative and others are just for the graduates from a single year.

I did ask if there were any additional comments, and asked them to add them at the end. Most were repeats of the comments they had made elsewhere with a few suggestions for improving both the survey and the schools. Please go to the Appendix for a longer list of these comments.

Clearly the Leadership School graduates who responded to this survey are supportive of, and advocates for, the Leadership School model of leadership development. Although there are a lot of other methods of delivering these services and trainings, these Leadership School graduates enthusiastically encourage future leaders to attend a Leadership School, their congregations to provide financial and motivational support for them, and their districts to continue to provide this training.

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

Survey of Congregational effect of Leadership Schools

I distributed over five hundred surveys to congregations across the continent. Before that I sent a survey to each of Ohio-Meadville District's 46 congregations to test the questions and hear their comments. Then I mailed out 500 surveys to roughly half of our congregations, trying to distribute them randomly but in proportion to the number on congregations in each state and district. I was able to get mailing lists from some districts, from others I used the information found on their web sites, while for a few I had to use the UUA Directory. I was determined to survey a fair cross section of our congregations to get data that was as accurate as possible.

I have received 125 congregational surveys in return, 51% from Family and Small congregations, 44% from Mid-Size congregations, and the remaining 5% are from large congregations. I am told that a 25% response is a pretty good response and is statistically significant. All of the districts and schools are represented except the Pacific Southwest District which has discontinued their week-long lay leadership school and are focusing on a new set of weekend leadership modules under the banner of *Leading the Vision*.

This Congregational Survey, a complete copy of which can be found in the Appendix, was offered as an attempt to answer some of the questions about how our congregations perceive the effectiveness of our Leadership Schools. I will go through the questions one by one with the most significant statistics.

Questions 1, 2 and 3 asked for the congregation's name, location and district. By that means I was able to connect each congregation with a school for comparison with the other surveys. As noted above, I received surveys from 19 of our 20 districts with connections to all 10 of the active schools. [Please see the chart at the end of this section, Page 21.]

4. Have leaders from your congregation attended a leadership school?

80% of the congregation returning surveys said Yes. Every survey from Pacific Central, Joseph Priestley, and Metro New York congregations answered Yes. The Ohio-Meadville District had the fewest positive responses, just 59% saying yes. If this is a statistically accurate indication of how many congregations have sent leaders to these schools then it is a pretty large penetration of the market. On the other hand, one could ask if the congregations who did not respond did so because they had no interest, nor any participation, in the schools. Since we are making the assumption that this is a random, statistically significant sample we will have to accept it as accurate and congratulate the schools for their marketing success.

5. If yes, which one?

As indicated above, all of the 10 active schools were represented. NELS and the Midwest Leadership School were identified most often. They also draw from the largest number of congregations. EAGLES had the largest percentage of congregations represented.

6. Approximately how many have attended over the past ten years?

I thought this might be a very telling question. According to my calculations, 584 persons from these 125 congregations attending a Leadership School. That averages out to 4.7 persons per congregation. The congregation reporting the largest number of attendees was the UU Fellowship of Clemson, SC. I know for a fact (because I was there for several of the years) Clemson sent as many as 4 leaders a year some years the The Mountain Leadership School and a member of that congregation was the Dean of the school for several of these years. On the other side of the average, several congregations reported sending no one to any school during this time. I would also add that we have no way of knowing how accurate the reported numbers are. In most case the person completing the survey had little or no knowledge of the actual number.

Since UniLead sent me a list of their graduates by congregation I was able to share that information in a cover letter to those congregations. I am sorry to say that the number reported by these congregations did not appear to be any more accurate than the others.

7. Of these leadership school participants:

I also wanted to find out how many of these LS graduates from their congregation were still active in their congregation. According to the information I received 80% of these 584 participants are still active and 64% of them are still in leadership positions. If these counts are accurate that seems like a pretty good testament to the effectiveness of the schools in encouraging continued involvement and leadership. However it does not necessarily say anything about the effectiveness of the leaders.

This next question was an attempt to answer that question.

8. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your congregation?

- 47% said **Yes**, in most cases
- 21% said **Maybe**, in some cases
- 9% said **No**, not significantly
- and 5% were **not sure**

This is a far cry from the 90% of LS graduates who affirmed that their leadership school experience had changed their lives and made them more effective leaders. If we split up the congregations by size we get some interesting variations:

- 43% of small, 54% of mid-size and 17% of large congregations said **Yes**
- 19% of small, 21% or mid-size and 33% of large congregations said **Maybe**
- 6% of small, 10% or mid-size and 33% of large congregations said **No**
- and 2% of small, 10% of mid-size and none of the large congregations were **not sure**

This would seem to say to me that Mid-Size congregations find leadership schools more effective for training their leaders. Clearly Large congregations don't find them nearly as effective for them, and Small congregations seem more mixed in their appraisal. Regardless of size, the congregations in districts related to 4 of the schools gave particularly high effectiveness ratings to their schools: 75% of Mountain Desert District congregations said **Yes** to the effectiveness of their Russell Lockwood LS, 70% Southwest Conference congregations said **Yes**, 69% of the congregations of the two districts involved in The Mountain Schools, and 65% of the congregations of the three districts in the Midwest LS said **Yes**. Interestingly enough, with only a very small sample, 40% of Florida congregations said **No**; their school had not significantly improved the effectiveness of their participants.

As a way to follow-up on the previous question I wanted to follow the money.

9. Assuming that you at least helped pay for your leaders to attend leadership school, has your investment been worth it?

- 35% said **Yes, a high return** on investment
- 21% said **Yes, a moderate return** on our investment
- 9% said **Little or no return** on the investment
- and less than 1% said it was a **waste** of the investment

These answers follow the previous one very closely even though, for whatever reason, a number of congregations did not answer this question. As you might expect, 50% of the large congregations claimed only a moderate return on their investment and the rest of them found little of no value there.

Next I wanted to see if many of the congregations had policies to regularly send leaders to their Leadership School and whether that made any difference in their approval rating.

10. What is your congregation's policy regarding payment for leadership school?

- Only **11%** of these congregations actually have a **written policy** to send at least one person to leadership school and pay at least part of their way (with or without a line item in our budget). The congregations that attend UniLead have the largest number of these policies.
- Another **27%** **regularly send** folks to leadership school, paying at least part, but without a policy. The congregations in the three district served by the Midwest LS had the largest number of marks here.
- The largest number of responses, **38%**, said they deal with attendance to leadership school on a **case by case** basis. The NELS district's congregations identified most with this choice.
- Another **8%** admitted that they expect leadership school participants to pay their own way
- **16%** of the surveys did not answer this question at all.

There does seem to be a correlation between congregations in a district having a written policy or the custom to regularly send their leaders to a Leadership School and their assessment of the effectiveness of that school. The two schools with the highest number of congregations in these two categories (The Mountain Schools and the Midwest School) also had two of the highest percentages of positive assessments of effectiveness of their leaders after returning from these schools.

It is hard to say which comes first, policies or effectiveness, But it confirms what the schools have been saying to their congregations all along, the more leaders you send and the more consistently you send them, the more effective your leadership will be.

Next, as a follow-up to the previous question, I wanted to know...

11. How do you decide who to send to leadership school?

12% said the President Elect/Vice President is expected to go when elected

33% said we send promising new leaders as they emerge

23% said we send those who volunteer

30% said we don't really have a way of deciding

The first two responses are what Leadership Schools recommend to enhance the success of the previous question. Although it may be realistic, because of costs and the required time away, to send these only volunteers; these may not be most important individuals for the congregation to send. It was refreshing to find 30% of the congregations willing to admit that they don't really have a way of deciding who should attend Leadership School. It also confirmed my suspicions.

In the next two lists of categories of study/training (objectives) at most of our Leadership Schools I was hoping to get some idea of the areas of leadership that the congregations expect the leaders to work on while at the school (question 12) and which of these areas of leadership/objectives seem to be well accomplished by their Leadership School (Question 13). In both lists I'll give you the percentage of responses as well as their rank order.

12. Please select the top 5 reasons why you send leaders to a leadership school.

63% (1) – To become a more effective leader

44% (3) – To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments

34% (5) – To learn about group life cycles and group processes

48% (2) – To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture

33% (6) – To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life

15% (10) – To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role

22% (9) – To explore how to make the most of human resources

27% (7) – To learn how to manage conflicts effectively

38% (4) – To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values

11% (11) – To join others in planning and leading worship

23% (8) – To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life

6% – Other: Wanted to go

Strengthen ties to District and UUA

Need whole fellowship experience

A visible path to leadership

To support growth

Growth & vitality strategies

Graduates encourage others

As I looked at the differences between the overall ranking and those of the size cohorts I don't see many differences. All three identified "becoming a more effective leader" as number one, though I must admit that that one also received the most side comments. There seems to be a lot of confusion about what an effective leader is. None the less, that one consistently came out number 1.

All three groups of congregations also rated the second one on the list, learning “their own leadership styles and temperaments” very high. The next three, understanding groups, congregational cultural dynamics, and systems, all ranked high with mid-size and smaller congregations but not at all with large churches; and it was just the opposite with the next three, size characteristics, human resources, and managing conflicts, which the large churches valued highly. Then it flipped again for UU heritage and values and the last one, spiritual depth. These were valued by the small and mid-size congregations but not by the large congregations. And surprising enough, “planning and leading worship,” a focus of a lot of the time and anxiety during the Leadership School week was last (except for the “other”) in importance to all three size groups, getting absolutely no votes by the large congregations. If Leadership Schools are going to want to attract leaders of large congregations they are going to have to re-think a lot of what they are doing.

Now to look at the areas of leadership/objectives seem to be well accomplished by their Leadership School.

13. Which of these objectives seem to be well accomplished?

- 48% (1) – To become a more effective leader
- 35% (3) – To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments
- 27% (6) – To learn about group life cycles and group processes
- 29% (5) – To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture
- 17% (8) – To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life
- 12% (10) – To understand how congregational size affects the leader’s role
- 14% (t9) – To explore how to make the most of human resources
- 14% (t9) – To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
- 38% (2) – To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
- 20% (7) – To join others in planning and leading worship
- 31% (4) – To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
- 3% – Other: Not enough of them
 - These are not institutional values
 - Strengthen ties to District & UUA
 - Understand themselves better

Clearly the congregations know what Leadership Schools have focused upon because they see the schools doing them pretty well – teaching effective leadership (whatever that may mean), personal leadership styles, basic group processes, congregational dynamic, UU heritage and values, and personal spirituality – except for the large congregations which don’t think Leadership Schools do much of anything that is helpful to them very well.

Next I thought it might be instructive to see who in a congregation would be given or would take on the task of answers the survey questions. Here is now it turned out.

14. Please tell us who you are by checking all that apply:

- 28% were completed by the president of the congregation
- 50% were completed by the minister of the congregation
- 9% were completed by someone on the staff of the congregation (self defined)
- 12% were filled out by someone else, whoever was asked to fill this

I also asked if the one completing the survey was a Leadership School Graduate. 28% were.

I was not surprised to discover that the Leadership School Graduates tended to rate the Leadership Schools' effectiveness higher than the average (Question 8). 61% to 47% Yes. 29% to 21% Maybe.

I've already mentioned the percentage of congregations by the three size groupings but here is the data for all six sizes as defined by Unitarian Universalist Association guidelines.

15. Please tell us about your congregation:

Size:

- 18% Family <75
- 33% Small 75-150
- 26% Mid-Size 1 150-250
- 18% Mid-Size 2 250-500
- 3% Large 1 500-750
- 2% Large 2 >750

Statistically, in the UUA about 70% of our congregations have less than 150 members so 60% response is a little low. And only about 4% of our congregations have 550 members or more, so our 5% is a little high. But altogether the breakdown of our responses comes pretty close to the average.

Setting:

- 17% of these congregations identify themselves as Rural
- 35% of these congregations identify themselves as Urban
- 46% of these congregations identify themselves as Suburban
- 2.5% of these congregations identify themselves as Small town or city
(This one was added and not one of the categories I included.)

I don't know how this measures up to UUA statistics but I found it interesting none the less.

You'll find any additional comments from the surveys in the Appendix.

When compared with the high marks given by the Leadership School Graduates, our congregations don't have quite as favorable opinion of the schools, though they clearly still look favorably on the school. As many of the comments, formal and marginal, brought up, it is harder and harder to find the money and leaders with the time to devote a week of their vacation and/or family time to one of these schools. The fact that larger congregations find little at the schools to encourage them to send their leaders has to be a concern for both the schools and the district that need to provide for the leadership development to their congregations. In addition, we now discover that one of the foundations of the Leadership School movement – time and energy spent planning and leading worship at the school – is not sought, nor do they think the schools do it very effectively. Much food for thought.

So that we can compare between surveys I am going to list the number of responses by Leadership Schools rather than Districts. Here they are in descending order by the number of responses:

School	Districts	Number of congregations	Number of responses
Russell Lockwood LS	Mountain Desert	45	4 (9%)
Florida LS	Florida	43	5 (12%)
GoldMine & (previously) PNWLS	Pacific Northwest	60	6 (10%)
Pacific Central LS	Pacific Central	38	7 (18%)
Dwight Brown LE	Southwest	71	10 (14%)
UniLead	Joseph Priestley and Metropolitan New York	64 + 53 = total 117	8 + 3 = total 11 (6%)
The Mountain Lay LS And RELS	Mid-South Thomas Jefferson (previously) Florida	32 + 61 = total 93	1 + 11 + 1 = total 13 (14%)
EAGLES (Eastern Great Lakes LS)	Ohio-Meadville St. Lawrence	44 + 32 = total 76	13 + 4 = total 17 (22%)
Midwest LS	Central Midwest Heartland Prairie Star	72 + 54 + 59 = total 185	9 + 7 + 7 = 23 (12%)
NELS (Northeast LS)	Ballou Channing Clara Barton Massachusetts Bay New Hampshire-Vermont Northeast	47 + 64 + 55 + 43 + 26 = total 235	7 + 2 + 8 + 6 + 2 = 24 (10%)

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

Survey of Ministers regarding the effectiveness of Leadership Schools

I think I knew I would need a Minister's Survey early on but I didn't actually create this Survey until just before our OMDUUPRL, Ohio-Meadville District Unitarian Universalist Professional Religious Leaders' Retreat in September, 2004. OMDUUPRL is a combined Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Chapter for our district. With their help I was able to refine the questions to get their unique perspective on our Leadership Schools.

The hardest part of the process was getting the surveys to the ministers. Of course, reaching the OMD ministers was easy; it was reaching the rest that was hard. I first tried to have a colleague distribute the survey via the internet through the UUMA Chat Line, which is used for confidential discussions among UUMA members. That garnered very few responses. I then subscribed myself to the list with the understanding that I could generate a discussion, but not distribute the survey. The result of that effort was also quite small. Since Chat Line responses were confidential I can't quote them here, but I do want to share the sense of their comments. I think the best word is, mixed. Their experiences with Leadership School graduates was both positive and negative. They acknowledged that many graduates came back with more skills and a deeper faith; but at the same time they saw a tendency for many of them to come back without much inclination toward a cooperative relationship with their ministers. That observation, though not at all universal, is still troubling.

My only other option for getting the survey into the hands of ministers was to create a mailing list myself from the UUA Directory. That done, I mailed out over 200 surveys, which combined with the others, resulting in about 250 surveys distributed. In my cover letter to the ministers I wrote the following: "I became aware early in my study that the opinions of my ministerial colleagues would be essential if I were to make an accurate assessment of our schools, thus this survey. Please take a few minutes to complete it as forthrightly as possible..." One hundred ministers have completed the Survey. Statistically speaking, this seems like a reasonable response.

Here is how the ministers answered my survey questions.

Which District are you in?

I got responses from 100 ministers representing all 20 UUA Districts, with the Ohio-Meadville, Thomas Jefferson, Joseph Priestley, and the Heartland Districts with the largest numbers. All in all, the distribution is actually pretty even.

1. Have you attended a Leadership School yourself?

52 Said Yes, they had been to a Leadership School

48 Said No

If yes, which School?

Again, all nine of our current schools were represented, plus the British School and the two schools that no longer exist, the Pacific Northwest's Lay School and the Pacific Southwest School. The Mountain, UniLead, Pacific Central, Pacific Northwest, Russell Lockwood, NELS, and Dwight Brown were the Schools most often identified.

2. If yes, please check one:

Of the 52 who had been to a Leadership School, here is how they answered:

35% said I was ordained when I attended leadership school

Many of those who were already ordained were on the faculty of their school

19% said I was in seminary when I attended leadership school

29% said I was thinking about attending seminary when I attended leadership school

15% said I had not thought of entering the ministry prior to attending

Without knowing how universal this is, it appears that our Leadership Schools have been a stepping stone to our UU ministry.

4. Has attending your leadership school made a difference in your ministry?

75% said Yes

17% said No

and 6% were not sure

So, this would say that Leadership Schools are good for ones ministry. At the same time I am aware that many of our schools do not welcome ministers as participants, but only as faculty.

Before going on with these next two questions, I should say that I was particularly interested in how our ministers would assess our schools and whether they would be significantly different from those answering the other surveys. I found I also wanted to know whether participating in a school would affect the answers.

5. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your congregation?

49% of the 100 said Yes, in most cases

Interestingly, 46% of those who had been to a school said Yes, while 51% of those who hadn't been to a school said Yes.

21% said Maybe, in some cases

Again, a much higher percentage, 22% to 6%, of the non-school attendees

18% said No, not significantly

This one was equally divided. 18% of both groups said NO, the effectiveness of their leaders were improved.

And only 3% said they were not sure.

Those numbers seem quite significant to me, reflecting similar congregational numbers of yes and maybe votes for effectiveness, but much higher impressions of no significant improvement.

On the follow-up question it is interesting to see the numbers are a little different.

6. On the whole have Leadership School grads been an asset to your ministry?

56% of the 100 said Yes, in most cases

Those who had not been to a school marked this more often (60% to 53%) than those who had been to a school.

21% said Maybe, in some cases

These were pretty even for both groups.

14% said No, not significantly

The number was 18% for those who had not been to a school, but only 10% for those who had. Apparently those folks moved into the next category on this question.

and 4% said No, they have hindered my ministry

Though the number is small it is still troubling, especially since this response all came from the “been to LS” group which raises it to 8% of that number.

Leadership Schools can not be happy with even this small number of ministers finding their graduates to have been a hindrance to their ministry.

7. Comment? This sampling is representative of those received and is consistent with the statistics above.

In most cases, either did not help or actively harmed. Some did help.

LS grads tend to be more aware of their spiritual commitment to serving/ministering, and they en-vision better, without being bogged down by those parts of reality that fall short.

Depends on specific needs at a given moment in time.

I don't know if anyone in my current congregation has gone to leadership school but in previous congregations it was very helpful to have people who had attended.

It depends more on the readiness of the volunteer than the content of the LS, I think. It affirms them in their commitment, but doesn't go a lot further.

Good leaders have become better, but those with psychological or anticlerical issues seemed to have those issues reinforced.

Out of the 12 or more graduates, only 3 continue to be active in the congregation – and two have been a negative influence.

Mostly “grads” have returned with an inflated sense of their skills.

LS has been good...for them...but if the criteria for effectiveness is their taking “leadership” for us, it has been very limited.

I wish we could come up with a different format. The week long program is a significant deterrent to many people.

This next question asks for the minister’s opinion on what aspects of the Leadership School curriculum would be of most value for the leaders to have.

8. **Which of these Leadership School objectives, if accomplished by leaders attending a leadership school, would be of the most value to you and your congregation in your ministry?** Please check your top 5.

I have indicated both the percentage of those marking each one as in their top 5 and also included their rank (1-11 with ties). The numbers following are the rank order as indicated by those who had been to a Leadership School, followed by the rank order by those who had not.

58% #1 To become a more effective leader	#4	#1
54% #2 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments	#2	#3
19% #8 To learn about group life cycles and group processes	#10	#9
46% #4t To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture	#8t	#2
49% #3 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life	#3	#4
16% #9 To understand how congregational size affects the leader’s role	#9	#5t
22% #7 To explore how to make the most of human resources	#7	#7
40% #5 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively	#5	#5t
46% #4t To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values	#1	#6
9% #10 To join others in planning and leading worship	#8t	#10
32% #6 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life	#6	#8

12 individuals added other aspects they would like to see in the Leadership School curriculum:

- Understanding Professional Ministry (suggested by three ministers)
- Contact with other UU leaders (twice)
- Connect with the wider UU world (twice)
- Being part of a larger movement
- Effective meetings
- Financial skills
- Variety of worship styles
- Increase confidence

This next question tries to get some impression of whether Leadership Schools achieve their goals. As with the other surveys, many commented that they were not sure what those goals are. If our ministers, who are a key link in the encouragement and financial support for leaders to attend our schools, do not know what the school’s goals and objectives are; the schools have some additional work to do.

9. In your opinion, do leadership schools achieve their goals?

47% said Yes, attendees are at 51% of the time and Non-attendees at 42%

At most just over half of the ministers responding are saying yes. Clearly the schools have some work to do. Or we need to find other ways of providing Leadership development and training.

5% said No, attendees came in at 8%

45% are not sure! That is 39% of attendees and 51% of non-attendees.

That number is way too high for a program that has been around for so long.

This final question (and its follow-up #11) provides an interesting contrast to the numbers above.

10. Have you, or would you, encourage others to attend leadership schools?

81% said Yes

14% said No

Some did not answer the question.

Clearly this shows a desire to have leadership development and training provided for our leaders and the implied hope that our schools can supply it.

11. Why? Here is a sampling of the responses:

Because it can help people become more effective leaders in a church setting, where many volunteers – even those who have leadership experience in other contexts – do not have much previous experience.

I was told I couldn't attend a leadership school because I was ordained. I wanted to, felt left out. There is nothing comparable for ordained.

Negative experiences have outweighed positive. Also, if I'm going to encourage, I need to know more.

I think the rewards to the individual are justification enough for making that encouragement a part of my ministry; any benefits the congregation realizes are icing on the cake.

When they have a readiness or desire to enhance capacity and can share issues/concerns with like minded folks in a safe setting and develop networks of relationship for support/consultation even beyond the event.

I think I would encourage a few folks to go to leadership school.

I personally enjoyed, and I witnessed another person (lay) personally benefit at the PCD school.

Deepen faith & leadership commitment

It's very worthwhile.

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Here are some additional comments:

Most UU congregations have a minister (or more, or in part). My hope-prayer is that leadership schools teach collaborative ministry as a value, even in lay-led congregations.

In far too many cases of which I am aware, LS graduates turn out to be disruptive elements in their congregations after attending LS. While this might be more the congregation's responsibility in choosing the wrong person to send to LS, still, I hope LS's could do more to alleviate this unfortunate result.

Every congregational president since we started the program has been a leadership school graduate. It has totally changed our leadership cadre and congregational culture in ways no other experience has or – I think – could.

The leadership needs in a church of 100 are vastly different from those in a church of 300, and different again in those of 500+. A cycle of 3 years offerings with excellent trainers, tailored to specific sizes of church, would be something I could support.

We have tried to pay the cost of leadership school (\$700+). It's a huge investment for sometimes minimal returns. I totally support it, but somehow wish it could be emphasized (maybe even covenanted) that for someone to have their way paid they would need to agree to take on significant leadership roles afterward.

What are we to conclude from these surveys of our UU ministers? With the broadest strokes I would say that our ministers want to support these schools, but . . .

They would like to know more about what their goals are.

They would like to be included more in setting those goals.

They would like to be assured that the lay leaders who participate come home to take their place as effective leaders and that they are not trying to undermine the work of their minister.

And they would like for costs to be more affordable and/or that other, more cost effective, ways of providing leadership development and training be found.

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

Survey of Religious Educators regarding the effectiveness of Leadership Schools

With apologies to our Religious Educator I have to admit that I did not think of them as a separate group to survey until I sat with several our Ohio-Meadville District Religious Educators at our OMDUUPRL, Ohio-Meadville District Unitarian Universalist Professional Religious Leaders' Retreat in September, 2004. OMDUUPRL is a combined Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Chapter for our district. With their help I was able to refine my questions to get their unique perspective on our Leadership Schools.

I am happy to say that LREDA, the Liberal Religious Educators Association, was willing to share their mailing list with me. With that list I was able to send out over 200 surveys to our Educators and I am delighted to say that 70 of them responded by returning the ir completed surveys.

Before I review the findings of these surveys I would like to make a couple of observations. First, the people who we entrust with the Life Span Faith Development in our congregations ought to be looked to for Leadership Development, but we don't often do so. It was obvious from their answers and comments that too often these Educators are expected to concentrate only on their volunteers and our children. On the whole, except for The Mountain's Leadership School for Religious Educators, the RE folk who completed the survey had little knowledge of our Leadership Schools and only a few had attended a school. Of these many commented that no one from their programs had attended, which would lead me to conclude that maybe my questions were not as well articulated as I had hoped or that I was making an assumption that our Leadership Schools are well known throughout the church community and that everyone is encouraged to attend.

Second, one half of those responding to this survey who had been to a Leadership School had attended The Mountain's Leadership School for Religious Educators, making up almost one quarter of the total responses. This shows an obvious need. Our schools are missing an opportunity to relate to and involve the very people for whom life-long learning is a way of life.

Here is now these Religious Educators assessed the effectiveness of our Leadership Schools for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations, their ministers, and their religious educators.

Which District are you in?

I got 70 responses from LREDA members in 18 of our 20 Districts. I got the most from the Joseph Priestley district and none from the Northeast or the Mountain Desert Districts. The rest of the districts were pretty evenly represented.

3. Have you attended a Leadership School yourself?

49% said Yes

Of those, half had been to The Mountain's RE School

The next highest numbers came from EAGLES and the Midwest School

51% said No

This is a vast untapped market.

4. If yes, which School?

As I said above, 24% had attended The Mountain's School for Religious Educators. An additional 6%, each, had attended EAGLES and the Midwest School. Other schools identified included The Mountain's Lay leadership School, Dwight Brown Leadership Experience, Pacific Southwest, NELS, Pacific Central, and UniLead.

3. If yes, please check one:

Of the 34 who answered Yes to the above question

6% said I was volunteer Religious Educator when I attended leadership school

88% said I was a professional Religious Educator when I attended leadership school

Remember, The Mountain RE School is for Religious Educators

3% said I was thinking about RE as a profession when I attended leadership school

And none said they had not thought of entering the profession prior to attending leadership school

Responses to the follow-up question are pretty predictable given that half of them went to a school especially for Religious Educators as continuing education.

4. Has attending your leadership school made a difference in your RE work?

88% said Yes (the same percentage as those who were already professionals)

6% said No

And only one person said she was not sure

Moving on to the questions about effectiveness:

5. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation(s) whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your church?

39% said Yes, in most cases

24% said Maybe, in some cases

3% said No, not significantly

21% said they were not sure

These responses show a lower positive assessment than any of the others but the most interesting figure is that of those who are not sure. This may reflect their lack of experience with the schools or the school's lack of education and promotion.

This follow-up question further strengthens my observation that, in the minds of our Religious Educators, the leadership Schools are not getting the job done as well as we thought.

12. On the whole have Leadership School grads been an asset to your RE work?

37% said Yes, in most cases

The majority of these are those from the Mountain RE School.

18% said Maybe, in some cases

21% said No, not significantly

Only 1% said No, they have hindered my ministry

Another 21% did not answer this question

13. Comment? These comments seems to be consistent with the statistics above.

Those who are interested in RE came back willing to do more and with a better understanding of why we teach UU history and values. Those with no interest in RE originally came back with no change.

The success of the program is affected by the personality of the participants. Some return to their congregations energized, others used some of what they learn in a low key way. It also depends on the congregation itself: is it supportive? Are there issues or conflicts? Etc.

The Leadership School that I have "sent" people to has been Goldmine. Two youth have gone. One has come back as an evangelical UU – jumping in and getting more involved in the congregation. The other is quieter but has definitely developed a stronger sense of being a UU.

Leadership School processes help us remember we are a religious organization and help bring spirit into the routine work.

This next question asks for the Religious Educators' opinion on what aspects of the Leadership School Curriculum would be of most value for the leaders to have.

14. Which of these Leadership School objectives, if accomplished by leaders attending a leadership school, would be of the most value to you and your congregation in your Life Span Faith Development work? Please check your top 5.

I have indicated both the percentage of those marked each one as in their top 5 and also included their ranking (1-9 with ties).

63% #1 To become a more effective leader

47% #4 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments

57% #2t To learn about group life cycles and group processes

57% #2t To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture

46% #5 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life

34% #8t To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role

36% #7 To explore how to make the most of human resources

53% #3 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
34% #8t To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
17% #9 To join others in planning and leading worship
44% #6 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
3 individuals added aspects they would like added to the LS curriculum
Volunteer management
Program planning
Combining adults and kids

This next question tries to get some impression of whether Leadership Schools achieve their goals. As with the other surveys, there were many comments in the margins that said they were not sure what those goals are. If our Religious Educators, who could be a key link in the encouragement and support of leaders to attend our schools, do not know what the school's goals and objectives are; the schools have some additional work to do.

15. In your opinion, do leadership schools achieve their goals?

49% said Yes

None said No

And 44% are not sure

That is way too high for a program that has been around this long.

This final question (and its follow-up #11) provides another perspective on the above question. It may be telling that 10% of the respondents did not answer this question.

16. Have you, or would you, encourage others to attend leadership schools?

87% said Yes

Only 3% said No

But apparently another 10% are not sure.

Clearly this shows a desire to have leadership development and training provided for our leaders and implies hope that our schools can supply it.

17. Why? Here is a sampling of the responses.

If nothing else it provides networking experiences.

I found leadership school helped me better understand how I work as a leader in different settings, and it gave me a better perspective on what I can and cannot do.

Because if you are passionate about your work you learn skills, you reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and you network with colleagues.

In my work as DRE, I have not seen anything "spectacular" or even remotely helpful for work within our lifespan program.

People who go say it's a transformative experience and they generally come back passionate about congregational work.

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Here are some additional comments:

In my experience, most people selected for leadership school already have leadership skills – at least some. What they seem to need is confidence; understanding how leading in a church is very different from other places, i.e. the corporate or academic world; and why we do what we do. If they can also learn that this can be a spiritual practice (not a chore) then we've really done our job!

We are organizing a leadership development team for churchwide leadership education and development. It gets more and more difficult for people to go away for a full week or even a weekend.

I think local churches don't advertise Leadership School well – and we don't hear about them easily to be of help. Try using the REACH list or district packets if not used already.

I would like to see attendees use the skills they've learned in the church.

What are we to conclude from these surveys of our UU Religious Educators? As we noted with our ministers, I would say that they want to support these schools, but . . .

They would like to know more about what their goals are.

They would like to be included more in setting those goals.

They would like to be assured that the lay leaders who participate come home to take their place as effective leaders and that they are not trying to undermine the work of their minister.

And they would like for costs to be more affordable and/or that other, more cost effective, ways of providing leadership development and training be found.

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS

Leadership Schools Compared

In this section I have attempted to compare the various aspects of each school by using their current website or other information which the school provided. It should be noted that all of this is fluid. Each year each school makes some changes to its program and, sometimes, even its structure. For the most current information about a given school I suggest you go to the school's website or contact your District Office and/or District Staff.

For each of the schools I have provided the following information:

- School name
- Website address
- Contact information, with a specific name if possible
- Dates for 2005 (if known)
- Where the school is held
- The School's Mission (either a Mission Statement or its promoted purpose)
- Areas of Focus (outline of curriculum)
- Weekend schedule
- Covenant (either for participants or staff)
- Costs/Fees for attending, including split between participant and congregation)
- Capacity
- Structure and relationship to their District
- Is District Staff involved?

Here are the Schools in alphabetical order.

Leadership Schools Compared

School	Dwight Brown Leadership Experience Southwest District
Website	http://www.swuuc.org/events/leadershipschool.html
Contact information	The SWUUC District Office at 817-446-0099 or 1-800-793-7062
When in 2005	Because of GA in Fort Worth this year there will not a be a school this summer.
Where Is It Held?	At Austin College in Sherman Texas The comfortable facilities at Austin College include a full range of recreational opportunities. Accommodations are in a centrally air-conditioned campus dormitory - all double suites with adjoining baths. The cafeteria includes a wide selection of freshly prepared foods, including vegetarian options.
Mission Statement	What is the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience? It is a challenging, exciting, leadership development experience that will enrich the life of the participants, as well as enhance the sponsoring Unitarian Universalist society. It is a weeklong, intensive program, designed to teach and reinforce leadership skills and insights for leaders and leaders-to-be in UU congregations. It is named after the District Executive who helped launch our first Leadership Experience.
Areas of Focus	Growth and Organizational Development The major focus of DBLE is the care and feeding of Unitarian Universalist congregations; thus a significant part of each day is devoted to learning about the dynamics of religious organizations, and the impact different styles of leadership have on working relationships within a congregation. A rich mixture of lectures and small group exercises are featured in this part of DBLE. Worship and Ultimate Values The Sunday morning experience is the focal point of a Unitarian Universalist community. One of the most challenging and exciting parts of DBLE is individual participation in the creation of innovative worship services. There are also lectures and discussions about the theory of worship and the many ways in which our shared values may be highlighted in these times of celebration. Unitarian Universalist History and Tradition Everything that we are and do has roots, and we can grow more vigorously, both individually and institutionally, if we know something about these roots. UU History and Tradition is an integral part of every DBLE year. Gain new knowledge and insight through the daily exploration of our heritage.

	<p>Personality and Leadership Leadership is what some people do to help other people achieve common goals, and the core of this helping capacity is self understanding. At DBLE this is facilitated by the use of a personality type indicator, opening up a whole range of insight into the functioning (or lack of functioning!) which we find in religious organizations.</p> <p>Personal Empowerment All of these new insights and skills enhance your potential not only as a UU leader, but as a human being. Your empowerment as a person is the fundamental aim of DBLE.</p>
Weekly Schedule	
Covenant	
Budget	In 2004, the UU society must first pay \$150 to be eligible to send one or two participants (\$200 if they wish to send more than two participants.) If your society has not sent anyone to DBLE in at least three years, this annual fee may be discounted \$50. Also, the registration fee for each participant is \$425 - unless they register before May 15th - in which case the fee is reduced to \$375. This covers tuition, room, board, and all supplies. Societies are encouraged to pay all or at least part of the individual registration fee.
Capacity/ Average participants?	The program is designed for a maximum of 30 participants
Structure and relation to District?	The Dwight Brown Leadership Experience is a function of the Southwest UU Conference
Is the DE involved?	Yes. Bob Hill is deeply involved.

Leadership School Compared

School	EAGLES (Eastern Great Lakes Leadership School)
Website	www.sld.uua.org/brochure/PDF2005/2005EAGLESbrochure.pdf
Contact information	EAGLES committee Chair: Ernie Hall, hallel@nycap.rr.com 518-372-1966 or the District Office www.sld.uua.org 716-882-0430
When in 2005	July 17-23, 2005
Where Is It Held?	Wells College, Cayuga Lake, NY
Mission Statement	For over two decades, leaders in the UU congregations in the St. Lawrence District have honed their leadership skills, deepened their commitment, and developed a supportive network through this week-long residential leadership school. This unparalleled learning experience, remembered affectionately by its graduates as a transformational event, is known as EAGLES
Areas of Focus	<p>What am I going to Learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles and practice of congregational leadership • UU history, traditions, and values • the relation of individual growth and spirituality to leadership • organizational structures of congregations, districts, and nations • governance and polity • group dynamics • the impact of each person's gifts and behavior on group process • leading productive meetings • handling conflict and ... • how to bring UU values into the process
Weekly Schedule	Sunday through Saturday
Covenant	
Costs	<p>Participants from St. Lawrence District: Participant \$300 Congregation First participant \$280, Addl. participants \$230 Participants outside St. Lawrence District: Participant \$350 Congregation First participant \$330, Addl. participants \$280 Limited need-based financial aid is available -</p>
Capacity/ Average participants?	
Structure and relation to District?	EAGLES is a Committee of the St. Lawrence District
Is the DE involved?	Yes. Tom Chulak serves on the planning committee and on the Professional Staff

Leadership School Compared

School	Florida Leadership School
Website	www.floridodistrict.org
Contact information	Phone: (407) 894-2119 E-mail: UUAFLDIST@aol.com
When in 2005	Not yet scheduled but has recently been in October
Where Is It Held?	In 2003 at Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center, Orlando, FL
Mission Statement	<p>Here are the 2003 School's Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase our mindfulness of the processes of leadership, interpersonal dynamics and the world around us, using the school's process as a mirror to see ourselves as others see us. 2. To learn and practice skills for improving group process. 3. To increase awareness of the tension that exists in leadership between the need for community and consensus and the need for diversity, creativity, individuality and privacy. 4. To become more adept at recognizing and valuing persons having strengths different from our own and dealing with the conflicts that often arise from these differences. 5. To experience the connection between congregational leadership, UU heritage and values, and our own leadership styles. 6. To become better at dealing with and contributing to the growth and changes taking place in our congregations. 7. To gain a stronger sense of UU history and tradition. 8. To experience the process of planning and to participate in leading a worship service. 9. To explore through writing and discussion our own religious thoughts, feelings and beliefs and how these influence leadership. 10. To become aware of issues that produce tension and crises in UU congregations and how they may be addressed in keeping with UU values. 11. To improve our ability to foster personal and congregational religious growth. 12. To experience and better appreciate each other, ourselves and natural beauty that surrounds us. 13. To return home with new energy, greater enthusiasm and renewed commitment. 14. To have fun.
Areas of Focus	<p>Personal style using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator</p> <p>Credo writing</p> <p>Heritage and Values</p> <p>The Art of Worship</p> <p>Congregational Leadership and Systems Thinking</p> <p>Leadership Exercises</p> <p>Worship and Worship Feedback</p> <p>And a High Ropes Course</p>

Weekly Schedule	Arriving Sunday afternoon and engaging until 9:15 or so Monday – Friday from 7:15 until 9:15 And leaving Sunday by noon
Covenant	<p>Here is the 2003 Staff Pledge</p> <p>With love and respect, we the members of your Florida Leadership School faculty wish to clarify our responsibilities and commitments to every one of you. This is our pledge to you.</p> <p>We are committed to honor the personal integrity of each one of you and to maintain that integrity, unbreached, within the group of us as a community– not only during the week at Canterbury, but in the larger UU community.</p> <p>We are also dedicated to creating and maintaining intentional community. We will work to facilitate a safe, open, caring loving atmosphere for all. Part of our role is to lead this community and to model appropriate behaviors.</p> <p>Good training requires honesty and candor – especially when giving feedback. We are committed to providing good training in a caring and compassionate way.</p> <p>No confidences entrusted to any one of us individually will be shared with others outside the faculty without express permission for the person(s) who shared it. Confidences thus shared will be kept by faculty members who hear them, except in the unlikely case that an individual were dangerous to self or another, or given evidence of abuse or neglect of a child or dependent adult, or if a faculty member is placed under a court order.</p> <p>We ask that you, in turn, adopt a similar careful attitude with regard to confidential material shared by others within your groups.</p> <p>In our faculty meetings and discussions at the school, the faculty acts as a team addressing those issues necessary to the well being of all here at the Florida Leadership School. We will share sensitive items with other faculty only when it may be in your best interest and the best interest of the School to do so.</p> <p>Recognizing our humanness, we on the faculty, pledge to hold each other and ourselves accountable for maintaining this covenant of trust, and to continue to learn with you.</p> <p>This is offered with our care and love. (signed by the faculty members)</p>
Budget	
Capacity/ Average participants?	
Structure and relation to District?	The Florida leadership School is a function of the Florida District.
Is the DE involved?	Yes, Mary Higgins was involved in planning and was on the staff.

Leadership School Compared

School	Gold Mine Leadership School or Youth and Young Adults
Website	www.pnwd.org/pdfs/GoldMine2005.pdf
Contact information	Contact Dean Andy Bartels for more information: (253) 983-7927 or bartelspurcell@cco.net
When in 2005	July 24-29, 2005
Where Is It Held?	Olympia UU Congregation, Olympia WA
Mission Statement	Learn to be a better leader and communicator. Food and showers are provided. Community is created. Bring your sleeping bag, a toothbrush, and an open mind. Be prepared to dig down deep and come out ready to give your gifts to the world. These five days will change your life and your community.
Areas of Focus	An intense five-day school for youth and young adults where you will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your personal creed • Deepen your knowledge of Unitarian Universalists' challenging religious heritage and values • Expand your skills for growing healthy groups • Explore paths of worship • Hone leadership skills so you can better heal our world.
Weekly Schedule	We begin at 4:00 pm on Sunday and go until noon on Friday.
Evaluation Form	
Covenant	<p style="text-align: center;">GoldMine 2004 Community Covenant</p> <p>While we expect the level of commitment and the intensity of work during this pilot camp to be such that it will preclude any of us getting into trouble, we also think that it is helpful to set out some guidelines for behavior to prevent any misunderstandings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be an alcohol-, tobacco-, and other drug-free week for all Human Rights Camp participants, including staff. • You are expected to stay on with the camp staff and your home hospitality assignment during the week. Exceptions are only with explicit permission of a staff member. • Possessions of weapons, illegal drugs, and pets is strictly prohibited. • Patently sexual behavior is inappropriate in this intentional community. Although sexuality is something to be valued and developed in persons of all ages it detracts from and confuses community building and our goal of inclusiveness. Hugs are okay and encouraged, because they are easily inclusive. <p>We think of our GoldMine community as a circle of individuals focused around a center-point which is our group purpose: to experience a challenging and inspiring week of activities – at times alone, at times together. Generally, we expect each person's individual behavior to contribute toward the center of our circle.</p>

	<p>GoldMine is designed to be a concentrated event; it is NOT a “conference” in the usual sense. The days will be long, varied and demanding, with little free time, per se. This will not be an appropriate setting for dealing with personal life crisis issues. Nonetheless, the community we create together will be safe, supportive, and fun. We aim to give each participant as full a sense of their own developing leadership (including “self-leadership”) abilities as is possible in a short week. We are eager to join with you in this endeavor.</p>
Cost	Fee per person is \$300
Capacity/ Average participants?	There is a 24 participant cap with preference given first to participants within the PNW District.
Structure and relation to District?	Gold Mine is a function of the Pacific Northwest District.
Is the DE involved?	Yes, Program Consultant is.

Leadership School Compared

School	MidWest Leadership School sponsored by the following districts of UUA: Prairie Star , Heartland , and Central MidWest
Website	www.psduua.org/mwls/index.html
Contact information	For more information, email Jan Steinmark, MWLS Registrar: jansteinmark@yahoo.com
When in 2005	Session I: Wednesday, July 13 to Wednesday, July 20 Session II: Saturday, July 23 to Saturday, July 30
Where Is It Held?	Beloit College Campus Beloit, Wisconsin
Mission Statement	The Unitarian Universalist MidWest Leadership School is part of our denomination's nationwide network of lay-led schools designed to create an environment where leadership skills can be developed. Through individual reflection, and facilitated interaction with other Unitarian Universalists, MidWest Leadership School offers opportunities for personal, spiritual, and leadership growth. Leadership School is an intensive week of workshops, discussion groups, interactions, and fun with UU peers. Participants in the school create an intentional community built on shared experiences, learning, intimacy, and trust.
Areas of Focus	MWLS fosters effective lay leadership to benefit your congregation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing tools to navigate change • Learning methods for conflict resolution • Applying elements of meaningful worship • Networking with people and resources from UU communities
Weekly Schedule	
Covenant	The weeklong experience is designed as an integrated curriculum. Each person who enrolls contributes to the learning experience. Participants are expected to make a commitment to the formation of this intentional community, to agree to stay the entire week, and to attend all scheduled classes and gatherings. You are essential!
Costs	Fees — Each congregation pays a fee of \$345 for one or two participants in the same or in different sessions. An additional congregational fee of \$75 is required for three or more participants. Tuition — Tuition is \$595 per student if postmarked by April 15th. If postmarked after April 15th, tuition is \$695. Tuition includes meals, room, and materials for the week.
Capacity/	

Average participants?	
Structure and relation to District?	A committee made up of folks from the three districts, along with district Staff from the three districts, plan and provide the schools for the three districts.
Is the DE involved?	Yes, on a rotating basis.

Leadership School Compared

School	NELS (Northeast Leadership School)
Website	www.uua.org/nels
Contact information	Sally Russell, 2 Hayes Lane, Lexington, MA 02420 (781) 863-5930 sally_russell@yahoo.com
When in 2005	July 31 - August 6, 2005
Where Is It Held?	Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod Craigville, Massachusetts
Mission Statement	Our mission is to model and create a risk taking, energizing journey of individual growth within a mutually empowering community. We provide training in religious stewardship for the benefit of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and the larger denomination
Areas of Focus	<p>NORTH EAST LEADERSHIP SCHOOL provides the opportunity to integrate UU history and principles with the practical work of congregations. It is a carefully designed, highly structured program, which combines three areas of importance: leadership development, theology and worship. From formal lectures, to small group discussions, and from personal reflection to community worship, NELS is active and experiential. Participants have the opportunity to meet and share ideas with lay leaders and ministers from all over New England and the eastern Canadian provinces. After an intense week, participants leave with a deeper understanding of how to put the seven principles into practice in their lives at many levels.</p> <p>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT The leadership development (LD) curriculum explores the challenges and opportunities of working with people. The material is tailored to speak directly to UUs and to the work they do at all levels within committees and congregations. NELS participants work within small LD groups to put theory into practice. The skills of managing volunteers, the ability to deal with conflict and an understanding of different leadership styles all provide benefits in participants' professional, personal and spiritual lives.</p> <p>THEOLOGY The theology curriculum explores both the history and current experience of Unitarian Universalism. With an understanding of the struggles of our liberal religious ancestors, NELS participants are better able to clarify their own personal beliefs. As one participant put it, "The Unitarian Universalist tradition and history is vital to the whole experience of embracing this faith." Through reflection, writing, meditation and sharing in small group discussions, each person has the opportunity to articulate a personal credo.</p>

	<p>WORSHIP</p> <p>In many congregations, lay people share and assist in the responsibilities for planning and producing worship services. By examining and understanding the elements of a worship service, using many resources and points of view, lay leaders are able to be intentional and inspirational in their choices of reading, music and rituals. In addition to the presentations of theories and ideas, each participant works within a small group to create and lead one of the daily worship services for the NELS community. The opportunity to learn, worship, and reflect together is a deeply spiritual experience.</p>
Weekly Schedule	<p style="text-align: center;">A Day in the Life of NELS</p> <p>Here is an example of a typical day at NELS. The curriculum is ever evolving to address new challenges.</p> <p>7:15 Worship - Every participant has the opportunity to be part of planning worship service. Small groups are given a theme and then have 24 hours to create a worship service for the community. Services take place in the rustic tabernacle building. Each worship service is unique and may include music, guided meditation, singing, and other elements to build community.</p> <p>7:45 Breakfast - All meals are eaten together. Meal times are important social times where food and informal discussion are enjoyed.</p> <p>8:30 Worship Reflection - This is an opportunity to consider what worked in the worship service and what the worship leaders learned.</p> <p>9:05 Leadership Development - “Why am I here?” This is one of the themes addressed to learn which human qualities contribute to effective leadership.</p> <p>10:10 Break</p> <p>10:30 Theology - “Too Good to Damn” Is human nature innately good?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Is there a divine spark within us? Do I believe in sin? These questions and many others are explored in lectures by the historian/theologian on staff.</p> <p>11:45 Lunch -A variety of choices, including vegetarian, is available at each meal.</p> <p>12:30 to 1:45 Free Time</p>

	<p>2:00 Worship - “What practice deepens our experience?” Most of us want our worship not only to speak to our minds and engage our intelligence, but also to touch our hearts and move us emotionally. Is our worship large enough to hold the real, whole and sometimes messy lives of each person who attends?</p> <p>3:15 Break</p> <p>3:35 Leadership Development - In the “Creative Conflict” group exercise, participants begin to understand their own conflict management styles and learn the appropriate times to use alternative conflict management styles.</p> <p>4:50 Group Reflection - Each participant shares thoughts by writing a feedback sheet for the staff, who summarizes them for the next day.</p> <p>5:15 Free Time</p> <p>5:45 to 7:30 Dinner and Free Time</p> <p>7:30 Credo Groups - This small group focuses on the individual spiritual journey. Through journal writing, meditation, and discussion, each person in this small group develops a personal belief statement.</p> <p>9:15 Social Time - Participants have the opportunity to spend time together outside or in the common room talking, singing or playing games.</p> <p>11:00 Quiet Time</p>
Covenant	
Costs	<p>1). Church Application Fee The church application fee of \$350 allows your church to send up to two people to NELS. For \$400 your church may submit a team application for three to five people. The total church fee is due with the completed application form and <u>must be postmarked by May 15, 2005</u>. Applications postmarked after this date will incur a \$30 late fee. All church application fees are NON-REFUNDABLE. <i>Space is limited, so enroll early!</i> [In case of an emergency last-minute cancellation, the church fee may be encumbered for ONE year.]</p> <p>2). Individual Tuition, Room, and Board Fee Tuition, room, and board fee is \$600 per person. <u>A \$150 deposit of this fee must be received with the initial application by May 15,</u></p>

	<p><u>2005 and is NON-REFUNDABLE.</u> The total fee must be paid BEFORE June 30, 2004.</p> <p>Financial Aid Financial aid may be available from your church or district. Talk to your Board Chair, Minister, or District Executive for more information.</p>
Capacity/ Average participants?	
Structure and relation to District?	This is an independent organization serving the five NE districts
Is the DE involved?	To my knowledge, none of them are involved

Leadership School Compared

School	Pacific Central District Leadership School
Website	http://www.pcd-uua.org/pcldrship/pcdleadershipschool.htm
Contact information	Drew Wilson, Co-Convenor E-mail: dandjwilson@comcast.net Eric Gable, Co-Convenor E-mail: DragonEAG@aol.com Claire Wright, Dean E-mail: lorenclaire@msn.com
When in 2005	July 23-29, 2005 ????
Where Is It Held?	Westminster Retreat Center, Alamo, California
Mission Statement	<p>Leadership School provides the means and setting for participants so that they may enhance their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ understand and practice the skills required for successful group process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ learn to design, plan, and lead worship events ➤ become aware of historical and contemporary issues within the Unitarian Universalist movement ➤ gain a greater understanding of and affinity for that which defines them as Unitarian Universalists ➤ integrate Unitarian Universalist heritage and values with their personal involvement in the life and organization of their congregations ➤ become more personally committed to strengthening Unitarian Universalist institutions so that our values might be shared and live on. <p>The staff of Leadership School tries to integrate the needs of the individual with the tasks and functions required in a life affirming religious community. It is the hope of staff that through private conversations, small and large group activities, the presentation of lectures, and good fellowship that participants will deepen their religious faith and leadership capabilities. Refer to the Curriculum page for the core curriculum and the Leadership School experience.</p>
Areas of Focus	The program intends to integrate the needs of the individual with the tasks and functions of our religious communities. Opportunities for growth are presented through lectures, group activities, and individual discussions. Goals are for participants to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ broaden their knowledge of heritage, and deepen their appreciation for the religion and values of our UU religious movement ➤ identify personal values through open discussion, and deepen their spiritual life by designing and presenting rituals, celebrations, and worship services ➤ learn a variety of leadership styles, and develop a leadership philosophy that will balance concern for getting the job done with concern for the people doing the work
Weekly Schedule	Saturday - Friday
Covenant	The UUA Covenant sets forth our mutual promise and best hope for our faith. This is no easy task. As we strive to fulfill the Principles and Purposes of our living tradition in each of our communities, there is great and continuing need for leaders who will undertake the caring responsibility for programs and activities which will continue to make our membership in the UUA so very worthwhile.
Budget	
Capacity/ Average participants?	
Structure and relation to District?	Pacific Central District Leadership is supported through student tuition and generous donations from alumni, friends and District funds. If you are interested in contributing to our Leadership School Scholarship Fund, your donation is fully tax deductible.
Is the DE involved?	They have not been.

Leadership School Compared

School	Russell Lockwood Leadership School
Website	www.uua.org/mdd/rlls/RLLS_2005.html
Contact information	<i>Penny Breiman, Registrar</i> (penny.breiman@comcast.net).
When in 2005	July 31 st to Aug. 6 th , 2005
Where Is It Held?	St. Malo Retreat Center , Estes Park, Colorado
Mission Statement	To enhance the quality of congregational life by developing the leadership skills of individuals.
Areas of Focus	<p>The curriculum of Leadership School is devoted to two major areas which are integral to the development of leadership in a congregational context: leadership skills development and religious heritage and values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Leadership training * Teachings on U.U. history and values * Process development in church polity * Group activities * Credo groups * Intense participation in leadership process, personal exploration, small group discussion & spiritual exploration * Worship service planning * Networking with UUs from the Mountain Desert District as well as district officers and ministers * Participation in creative activities including music (vocal & instrumental), nature, talent show, art, etc.
Weekly Schedule	Sunday - Saturday
Covenant	From a paragraph in the 2003 RLLS Notebook Cover Letter: This will be a week of growth, a week when your limits will be tested, a time for you to look inward and outward, and a time you will look back on often. You are responsible for making this week the best it can be for you – we will help in any way we can. It is important to keep communication open, so feel free to talk with us about your needs, concerns, joys, cares and ideas.
Fees	<p>Congregation Fee: Participating congregations pay a basic Congregation Fee of \$160 ... no matter how many participants are sent.</p> <p>Participant's Fees ...</p> <p>\$595 Early Bird Registration Fee ... if postmarked by April 30.</p> <p>\$675 Regular Registration Fee ... if postmarked between May 1 and May 31.</p> <p>\$750 Late Registration Fee ... if registration is postmarked after May 31.</p>
Capacity	
Structure and relation to District?	The Russell Lockwood Leadership School is a function of the Mountain Desert District
Is the DE involved?	Yes, Ellen has been involved in both the planning and on the Staff

Leadership School Compared

School	The Mountain School for Congregational Leadership
Website	http://www.mountaincenters.org/lcl_mscl.html
Contact information	Director, Learning Center for Leadership 828-890-0352 (Wednesday - Sunday)
When in 2005	Monday, July 25 - Sunday, July 31, 2005
Where Is It Held?	Surrounded by the Nantahala National Forest, our home is Little Scaly Mountain — four miles southwest of Highlands, North Carolina. At 4200' elevation, perched atop striking granite cliffs and nestled in an ancient dwarf white oak wind forest, our site is spectacular, with dramatic vistas, quiet places and lots to do. The Mountain is an independent affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association . Our goal is to provide opportunities for participants and staff to experience communities that practice UU principles and values, communities that embrace diversity.
Mission Statement	Expand your leadership skills at The Mountain. The Mountain School for Congregational Leadership provides opportunities to explore your own leadership style, gain interpersonal and organizational skills, deepen your spiritual life, and network with people from small, mid-size and large Unitarian Universalist congregations.
Areas of Focus	Temperaments and styles — Learn your own preferences, and how to work from strengths to enhance group work. Small group dynamics — Life cycles, group processes, and ways to empower groups through collaborative leadership. Organizational development for UU congregations — Learn more about congregational culture. Systems thinking — Acquire a systems perspective for congregational life. Size dynamics — How does the size of your congregation affect your role in the church? Working with staff — Making the most of human resources. Conflict management — Learn how to manage conflicts effectively. UU heritage and values — Strengthen your knowledge of Unitarian Universalist history and its meaning in today's world Worship — Join with others in planning and presenting worship.
Weekly Schedule	
Covenant	
Cost of the Program	\$700 (by June 1) — \$775 (after June 1 – payment received date - not postage date)
Staff: How are they selected, trained?	Selected by the Director, Learning Center for Leadership
Capacity/ Average	
Structure and relation to District?	This school is a function of a UU affiliated training facility and is independent of the districts
Is the DE involved?	No, I don't believe so.

The Mountain's Leadership School for Religious Educators is not scheduled for 2005.

Leadership School Compared

School	UniLead Lay Leadership School
Website	www.unilead.org
Contact information	Laura Shemick at lshemick@comcast.net
When in 2005	July 17 – 23, 2005
Where Is It Held?	Kirkridge Retreat and Conference Center, Bangor, PA
Mission Statement	<p>A Note To Prospective Participants</p> <p>In the early 1980s a group of concerned and interested Unitarian Universalists decided to address the issue of training Unitarian Universalist lay leaders. Too many members of congregations found themselves in positions of responsibility with no real idea of what was required of them. Burnout and frustration were often the results.</p> <p>We decided to organize a school -- one where leaders and potential leaders of congregations could learn, not just leadership skills, but skills for our particular denomination. Team building, working with groups, and volunteerism were addressed, but so were issues concerning spiritual and ethical values at a personal level. The school has continued to address these process skills and personal explorations (as opposed to the nuts and bolts operations of a church). Over the course of my 16 years of association with UniLead, I have come to believe its success can be attributed to three major components: experienced and concerned leaders and facilitators, a program that balances leadership training with time for contemplation and spiritual growth, and the always diversified student body.</p> <p>With our expanding UU denomination it is more important than ever to have leaders not just willing, but able to take on the multitude of tasks facing them without losing that special connection that makes them Unitarian Universalists.</p> <p>I invite you to take this opportunity to spend a week with other UUs in honing your leadership skills, learning new ways of addressing the problems our congregations face, and exploring and strengthening your spiritual values.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-- Laura Shemick, School Director</p>
Areas of Focus	See Schedule below
Weekly Schedule	<p>July 17, Sunday</p> <p>3:00 - 5:00 p.m.-- arrival, welcome, getting settled at housing 5:30-6:00 p.m. -- refreshments in Turning Point Lounge 6:00-6:45 p.m. -- dinner in Turning Point Dining Room 6:45-8:00 p.m. -- orientation in Turning Point Meeting Room</p>

	<p>8:15-9:45 p.m. -- credo groups meet in lounges, small meeting rooms. Topic: Our Unitarian Universalist Journey.</p> <p>July 18-July 22, Monday through Friday</p> <p>7:45-8:15 a.m. - Breakfast in Dining Room.</p> <p>8:30-9:00 a.m. - Faculty-staff-led worship service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Organizational/Leadership Development lecture and small group work.</p> <p>12:30 - 1:15 p.m. -- Lunch</p> <p>1:25 - 1:50 p.m. -- Worship service review, Turning Point Main Meeting Room</p> <p>1:50 - 2:00 p.m. -- Credo topic presentation, Turning Point Main Meeting Room</p> <p>2:15 - 3:15 p.m. - Quiet reflection time, anywhere</p> <p>3:00 - 5:00 p.m. - Free time, anywhere</p> <p>4:00 - 5:00 p.m. - Open discussion time, Turning Point Meeting Room</p> <p>5:00 - 5:30 p.m. - Social half-hour, Turning Point Lounge</p> <p>5:30 - 6:15 p.m. -- Dinner</p> <p>6:30 - 8:00 p.m. - Religious Values presentation, Turning Point Main Meeting Room</p> <p>8:15 p.m. - 9:45 p.m. - Credo groups meet, topics as announced at 2 pm.</p> <p>Generally, breakfast is followed by a lay-led worship service. The Leadership Development presentation follows, after which leadership development groups do their exercises and discussions. All return to Turning Point for discussion. Lunch is followed by an analysis and review of the morning worship service. A brief presentation by the Religious Values lecturer is followed by credo-writing time, meditation time, open discussion on selected topics, and free time. After dinner, the Religious Values presentation and discussion takes place, after which participants and facilitators break into their credo groups.</p>
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	<p>July 23, Saturday 7:45-8:15 a.m. -- Breakfast</p> <p>8:30-11:00 a.m. -- Organizational/Leadership Development presentation, Turning Point Meeting Room, and small group meetings</p> <p>11:15 - 12:00 -- Worship/Graduation ceremony</p> <p>12:00 - 12:30 -- Free time</p> <p>12:30 - 1 p.m. -- Lunch and good-byes</p>
Cove nant	
Fees	<p>The conference fee of \$325 may be paid by the participant, by the participant's sponsoring congregation, or by scholarship. UNILEAD prefers that the sponsoring congregation pay at least part of the conference fee, as an indication of its commitment to lay leadership.</p> <p>The room and board fee of \$450 may be paid by the participant, by the participant's sponsoring congregation, or by scholarship.</p>
<p>Groups: How are they formed? How many?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Credo Groups</p> <p>We explore our values and belief systems through lectures and small group sessions. These groups, composed of 4-5 participants and a facilitator, meet daily for members to share thoughts and to discuss concerns that may have arisen during the day. Specific topics are addressed in journal and credo writing, topics which require introspection and personal deliberation in order to communicate one's thoughts clearly.</p> <p>Members of Credo Groups are selected by staff on the basis of congregation of origin and other important factors. Credo Groups meet in the same place every evening.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Leadership Development Groups</p> <p>Unilead uses a developed leadership course, and with the assistance of experienced facilitators, you will learn how different leadership styles work within a group. You will develop skills to communicate with those in conflict and to manage conflict. Study groups work on typical problems faced by churches/fellowships. In learning the process of group decision-making, you will expand your own understanding of committee work, team building, and volunteer motivation.</p>

	<p>Leadership Development Groups have between five and eight members, including a facilitator. Members are selected by staff on the basis of congregation of origin and other important factors. Leadership Development Groups meet for 75 to 90 minutes daily, each day in a different meeting room. Groups return to the Turning Point Meeting Room after their exercises to report on their activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Worship Groups</p> <p>In an experiential exercise, participants in small groups create and lead a daily worship service. This gives participants a chance to immediately witness and practice the interpersonal skills they are studying. It also provides them the opportunity to experiment with different worship service formats, or to design their own.</p> <p>Worship Groups are self-selected. On Day One, each participant is asked to sign up for a morning worship service. The Religious Values Leader supplies a topic 48 hours prior to the service, and the group, which includes three to six students, develops a service. Groups are encouraged to make use of readings, art and music brought by others, and may call upon the Religious Values Leader for guidance and feedback. Groups may also ask the Music Director, the facilitator who leads songs in the Religious Value presentations, for assistance. After presenting its service, members of each worship group publicly evaluate how well the group worked together, and evaluate the content and presentation of the service.</p>
Capacity/ Average participants?	Unilead accepts between 18 and 32 students annually.
Structure and relation to District?	UniLead is an independent school serving the Metro New York and Joseph Priestley Districts
Is the DE involved?	No, neither DE is involved

ASSESSING OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS 2004-2005

Summary and Conclusions

It is difficult to come to any conclusions as I end this study for I have very mixed feelings. I have to admit I had mixed feeling coming into the project and now, here at the end, my feeling are no less mixed – maybe more.

I came into this study with conflicting feelings about the effectiveness of the school. Part of me wanted the schools, into which I had invested a lot of time and energy, to be shown to be very effective. And another part of me, with only personal and anecdotal evidence, expected that the schools would prove not to be all that effective after all.

I sensed that my colleagues on the District Based Staff had some of these same mixed feelings. So, even before I started my formal study I asked my colleagues a couple of questions:

1. In your opinion, has your Leadership School significantly improved the effectiveness of the leaders in you districts' congregations?

By and large, the staff who are involved in their school said yes, though not all; and those who are not involved or who have stopped having week-long schools said no, though not all.

2. In your opinion, has your Leadership School significantly improved the effectiveness of the leaders in your district?

Likewise, the answers to this question were the same as they were to the first question but there were more who answered that they were just not sure one way or the other.

So, now let me get to the conclusions I have been able to reach. I'll do so following the goals I set for this study and spelled out in the *Introduction* of this Report. As I wrote there:

I believe that this revised plan has allowed me to somewhat accomplish my original goals of:

- **increasing our knowledge of what these schools teach,**
- **what methods they use,**
- **what their goals are and whether they achieve their goals,**
- **how effective their training is for the participants**
- **and, more importantly, whether they provide a benefit to the congregation and district as well as to the individual?**

I certainly have an increased **knowledge of what these schools teach**. Using the descriptions seen in the individual school’s profiles, I believe the following grid lets us know what these schools teach. The * in a column indicates its presence in the school’s curriculum. I guess I should also say, from what I do know of the usual LS Curriculum, just because there is no “X” in a box doesn’t mean that it is not part of the school, just that they don’t promote it on their website.

	DB	EA	FL	GM	MW	NE	PC	RL	MT	UL
Growth and Organizational Development	X	X							X	X
Strengthen UU Institutions							X			
Worship and Ultimate Values	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Theology						X				X
UU History & Traditions	X	X	X	X				X	X	
Systems Thinking			X		X				X	
Personality & Leadership (Temperaments & styles)	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
Personal Empowerment	X									
Size Dynamics									X	
Personal Growth and Spirituality		X						X		
Working with Staff									X	
Governance and Polity		X						X		
UU Values										X
Group Dynamics		X		X			X	X	X	
Leading Productive Meetings		X								
Handling Conflict		X			X				X	
Creative Activities								X		
Personal Creed (Credo)		X	X	X				X		X
Personal UU Identity							X			
Navigating Change					X					
Networking					X			X		

Is it any wonder that one of the most common complaints on the post-school evaluations is that there is not enough time in the day for everything they want to do. Introverts especially complain that there is no processing time to deal with the input of ideas and data. Trying to replicate a Leadership School in a weekend format solves some of this problem but planners still wonder what to leave out.

I hope it is not too much but I want to put in another table showing the various ratings of the lists of **Leadership School objectives** from three of the surveys. The first column is obviously the objectives that I listed. The next two columns come from the Congregational survey. The first listing asked for **Reasons** to send someone to a Leadership school and the second one asks which of the objective they feel the Leadership Schools **Accomplish**. The next three columns are from the Ministers’ Survey. The **All** column is the composite ranking, **Been** is the ranking of those ministers who had been to a Leadership School, and the **Not** column is the ranking of those ministers who had not. The Final column is the ranking from the Survey of Religious Educators.

	Congregations		Ministers			REs
	Reasons	Accomplished	All	Been	Not	REs
To become a more effective leader	1	1	1	4	1	1
To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments	3	3	2	2	3	4
To learn about group life cycles and group processes	5	6	8	10	9	2t
To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture	2	5	4t	8t	2	2t
To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life	6	8	3	3	4	5
understand how congregational size affects the leader's role	10	10	9	9	5t	8t
To explore how to make the most of human resources	9	9t	7	7	7	7
To learn how to manage conflicts effectively	7	9t	5	5	5t	3
To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values	4	2	4t	1	6	8t
To join others in planning and leading worship	11	7	10	8t	10	9
To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life	8	4	6	6	8	6

In some ways there is some consensus across the grid. Training more effective leaders and knowing ones own leadership style rank consistently high. Congregational size dynamics and leading worship, both touted as important at most of our school, rank consistently low. The others seem to be all over the list. As you go through the Survey Statistics and Comments you will see that there are probably some reasons for the rankings. Leadership Schools would do well to re-examine their curriculum in the light of these preferences by our congregations and the religious professionals.

Going next to **what methods do they use?** Following the model developed years ago in the Pacific Northwest, all schools use a variety of methods to inspire and inform leaders. The overall approach continues to be learn-by-doing. From what I know or have learned all, or most, of these methods are used in all, or most, of the schools:

- Printed resources
- Lecture/didactic presentations
- Questions and Answers
- Small group exercises
- Small group projects
- Small group religious exploration
- Journal and other individual writing

Individual faith exploration
Informal give and take discussions
Worship experiences
Networking
Informal one on one contact with presenters and staff

Although there is no way to know for sure which school is using which method on any given day or year, all of these ways of approaching the adult learner have been in use. The effectiveness of each method is a study waiting to happen.

My next goal was find out **what their goals are and whether they achieve their goals**. Some of the websites list the school's goals. I'll not repeat them here. However, the more crucial question is whether the participants know what the school's goals are and whether or not they achieve them during the school. According to the surveys, 84% of the Graduates, 47% of the Ministers, and 49% of the Religious Educators say that they do. What concern me most is that 45% of the Ministers and 44% of the Religious Educators are not sure if they do or not. That is way too high a number for a program that has been around as long as Leadership Schools have. These Ministers and Religious Educators are also the folks who are the most likely people to encourage Leadership School attendance and to help to procure funding for their leaders. If they don't know what their Leadership School's goals are, why should they encourage their churches and leaders to invest in them?

The next goal I set was to determine **how effective their training is for the participants**. This one was easy. Just look at the numbers from the Graduates' Survey. 90% of these Graduates told me that attending their Leadership School made a difference in their lives. They further identified the areas in which the difference was made. 81% said that Leadership School has strengthened their abilities as a leader in their congregations. 75% said that this experience deepened or enriched their religious or spiritual life. 49% saw an improvement in the professional or work life and 39% reported an enhancement of their personal or family life. 60% of them also assured me that they had increased their participation in their congregation. And fully 94% of the respondents said that they have or would encourage others to attend. Clearly Leadership School Graduates proclaim the effectiveness of their training. The congregations and their professional staff are not as sure.

And that was the fifth goal, **whether they provide a benefit to the congregation and district as well as to the individual?** I wish I could say that the results of the survey are more conclusive than they are. Clearly the LS Grads are overwhelmingly positive about Leadership School. For them it was a "transforming" experience. I wish I had asked more "effectiveness as leaders" questions, but with the answers they gave are so positive in terms of making a difference in their lives, participating more in their congregations, using their skills learned, and belief that the schools achieved their goals; there is no doubt in my mind that "effectiveness" questions would have been answered as just as positively.

At the same time, the other 3 survey cohorts also gave a pretty solid “effectiveness” rating – 60% for Congregations, 70% for Ministers, and 63% of Religious Educators answered “Yes or Maybe” to the question about whether Leadership School was effective. However, the fact that 21 to 24% of all three groups said “Maybe” may express more hopefulness than actuality. It is also notable that 9% of Congregations, 18% of Ministers, and 31% of Religious Educators said that, “No,” Leadership Schools are not effective.

So, are our Leadership Schools effective at developing the skills, abilities, and attitudes that make competent and effective congregational leaders? Yes and No!

Should we continue to put our effort and resources into these schools? Yes and No!

For a limited number of leaders who are able and willing to invest a week of their time and, who along with their congregation, can invest several hundred dollars, especially for leaders of small and mid-size churches; there seems to be enough evidence to encourage their continuance. However, as respondents to all four surveys said, in various ways, we need to find other ways of providing leadership training and development. While there may be advantages to the week-long format, it can not be relied upon to be the only way of providing this training.

The work that the Pacific Southwest and other districts are doing to provide weekend and other shorted leadership training opportunities show great promise. The work that the Pacific Northwest District is, and has been, doing to provide leadership training for youth and young adults offers a model for reaching another whole segment of Unitarian Universalists who are not being reached by traditional schools. And the success that The Mountain’s School for Religious Educators has had suggests that specialized school may also provide for the enrichment of another under-served segment of our population.

If we assume that we have limited resources for providing leadership development, it is even more important that those resources be directed to the broadest and most needed segments of our potential and developing leaders. More and more of our largest congregations, those that have expressed their concern that the existing Leadership Schools do not really meet their leaders’ needs, are making leadership development a priority in their programs and creating their own in-house schools. District and national resources, if made available, might make these efforts even more effective.

So, what are closing conclusions? I would say that for the Leadership Schools to continue to be relied upon to deliver Leadership Training they need to look to the Congregations and their Ministers and Religious Educators for their input. They need to know what these folks expect and needs their leaders to know and how their leaders need to be as leaders. They would like to know more about what your goals are. They would like to be included more in setting those goals. They would like to be assured that the lay leaders who participate come home to take their place as effective leaders and that those leaders are not trying to undermine the work of their professionals. And they would like for costs to be more affordable and/or that other, more cost effective, ways of providing leadership development and training is found.

ASSESSING OUR
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS
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Appendixes

Surveys with raw data

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Survey of Leadership School Graduates

Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists (mostly lay leaders) have attended one of our eleven Leadership Schools in their attempt to equip themselves to be an effective leader in one of our congregations. Attending a Leadership School requires a major expense and commitment for both the individual and the congregation. To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive study of these schools to try to answer questions about how effective that training is for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations. Do they achieve their goals? Do they provide a benefit for the congregation and district as well as for the individual?

This Survey is an attempt to answer some of the questions about effectiveness. Please answer the following questions as candidly as possible.

1. Which school did you attend? 251 Responses_____
2. In what year did you attend? _____
3. Who paid for your leadership school participation? (Please check one answer)
 - o 43 I paid for it all.
 - o 81 My congregation paid for it all.
 - o 124 My congregation and I split the cost.
 - o 20 Scholarship
 - o 11 Other _____
3. After attending your leadership school, generally speaking, did you:
 - o 150 Participate more in the life of your congregation?
 - o 7 Participate less in the life of your congregation?
 - o 90 Participate to the same extent as before in the life of your congregation?
4. Did attending your leadership school make a difference in your life?
 - a. 227 Yes
 - b. 12 No
 - c. 12 I'm not sure
5. If attending your leadership school made a difference in your life, check all that apply:
 - a. 204 It strengthened my abilities as a leader in my congregation.
 - b. 189 It deepened or enriched my religious or spiritual life.
 - c. 122 It improved my professional/work life.
 - d. 99 It enhanced my personal/family life.
6. Have you used the skills/knowledge/insights from leadership school in your church?
 - o 222 Yes
 - o 7 No
 - o 23 I'm not sure
7. If "yes," in what way(s) have you used them?

8. I am currently . . .
- a. 204 An active member of the same Unitarian Universalist congregation as when I attended the school
 - b. 21 An active member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation other than the congregation to which I belonged when I attended the school
 - c. 3 An active member of a non-Unitarian Universalist congregation
 - d. 15 A relatively inactive member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation
 - e. 0 A relatively inactive member of a non-Unitarian Universalist congregation
 - f. 5 Not now a member of any congregation of any faith
9. If you are currently an active member of a UU congregation, please check all that apply: I am a . . .
- a. 17 Layperson who is not active in any congregational leadership activities
 - b. 193 Layperson active in general congregational leadership activities
 - c. 13 Non-ordained religious professional active in religious education activities
 - d. 13 Non-ordained layperson employed by a UU congregation
 - e. 0 Ordained, and work primarily in religious education
 - f. 11 Ordained, and work primarily in parish ministry
 - g. 0 Ordained, and work primarily in community ministry
11. **If you are ordained**, please check one:
- h. 4 I was ordained when I attended leadership school
 - i. 2 I was in seminary when I attended leadership school
 - j. 5 I was thinking about attending seminary when I attended leadership school
 - k. 4 I had not thought of entering the ministry prior to attending leadership school
12. **If you are a lay member** of a UU congregation, please check all that apply:
Since attending leadership school
- o 101 I have been involved in UU activities at the district level
 - o 33 I hold or have held a leadership position at the district level
 - o 29 I have been involved in UU activities at the national level
 - o 16 I hold or have held a leadership position at the national level
 - o 48 I have attended more than one General Assembly since attending leadership school
13. In your opinion, did the leadership school you attended achieve its goals with you?
- o 211 Yes
 - o 8 No
 - o 28 I'm not sure
14. Have you, or would you encourage others to attend your leadership school?
- o 237 Yes
 - o 9 No
15. Why?

16. Have you maintained any contact with the other participants or faculty you met at leadership school since the school?

- 189 Yes
- 58 No

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Thank you for participating in this survey.

Return to: Rev. Rod Thompson
200 W. Main St., #19
Ravenna, OH 44266

Survey of Congregational effect of Leadership Schools

Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists (mostly lay leaders) have attended one of our eleven Leadership Schools in their attempt to equip themselves to be an effective leader in one of our congregations. Attending a Leadership School requires a major expense and commitment for both the individual and the congregation. To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive study of these schools to try to answer questions about how effective that training is for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations. Do they achieve their goals? Do they provide a benefit for the congregation and district as well as for the individual?

Please help us assess the effectiveness of leadership schools for your congregation.

1. Congregation Name 125 Responses _____
2. Congregation City _____
3. District _____
4. Have leaders from your congregation attended a leadership school?
 - o 100 Yes
 - o 24 No
5. If yes, which one? _____
6. Approximately how many have attended over the past ten years? 579 _____
7. Of these leadership school participants:
 - How many are still active in your congregation? 462 _____
 - How many are still in leadership positions? 369 _____
8. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your congregation?
 - o 59 Yes, in most cases
 - o 26 Maybe, in some cases
 - o 11 No, not significantly
 - o 6 I'm not sure
9. Assuming that you at least helped pay for your leaders to attend leadership school, has your investment been worth it?
 - o 44 Yes, a high return on investment
 - o 40 Yes, a moderate return on our investment
 - o 10 Little or no return on the investment
 - o 1 A waste of the investment

10. What is your congregation's policy regarding payment for leadership school?
- 14 We have a written policy to send at least one person to leadership school and pay at least part of their way (with or without a line item in our budget)
 - 32 We regularly send folks to leadership school, paying at least part, but without a policy
 - 48 We deal with attendance to leadership school on a case by case basis
 - 10 We expect leadership school participants to pay their own way
11. How do you decide who to send to leadership school?
- 14 The President Elect/Vice President is expected to go when elected
 - 42 We send promising new leaders as they emerge
 - 31 We send those who volunteer
 - 36 We don't really have a way of deciding
12. Please select the top 5 reasons why you send leaders to a leadership school.
- 77 To become a more effective leader
 - 53 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments
 - 42 To learn about group life cycles and group processes
 - 60 To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture
 - 41 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life
 - 18 To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role
 - 27 To explore how to make the most of human resources
 - 33 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
 - 49 To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
 - 14 To join others in planning and leading worship
 - 29 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
 - _____
13. Which of these objectives seem to be well accomplished?
- 60 To become a more effective leader
 - 45 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments
 - 34 To learn about group life cycles and group processes
 - 36 To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture
 - 22 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life
 - 15 To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role
 - 18 To explore how to make the most of human resources
 - 18 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
 - 48 To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
 - 26 To join others in planning and leading worship
 - 40 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
 - _____

14. Please tell us who you are by checking all that apply:
- 34 I am the president of the congregation
 - 62 I am the minister of the congregation
 - 11 I am on the staff of the congregation
 - 17 I was the one who was asked to fill this out (my role is _____)
 - 35 I am a leadership school graduate

15. Please tell us about your congregation:

Size:

- 22 Family <75
- 40 Small 75-150
- 32 Mid-Size 1 150-250
- 21 Mid-Size 2 250-500
- 5 Large 1 500-750
- 3 Large 2 >750

Setting:

- 21 Rural
- 43 Urban
- 59 Suburban

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Thank you for participating in this survey.

Return to: Rev. Rod Thompson
200 W. Main St., #19
Ravenna, OH 44266

Survey of Ministers regarding the effectiveness of Leadership Schools

Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists (mostly lay leaders) have attended one of our eleven Leadership Schools in their attempt to equip themselves to be an effective leader in one of our congregations. Attending a Leadership School requires a major expense and commitment for both the individual and the congregation. To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive study of these schools to try to answer questions about how effective that training is for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations and their ministers. Do they achieve their goals? Do they provide a benefit for the congregation and district as well as for the individual?

Please help us assess the effectiveness of leadership schools for your ministry.

Which District are you in? 100 responses _____

1. Have you attended a Leadership School yourself?
 - 52 Yes
 - 48 No (please skip to question #5)

2. If yes, which School? _____

3. If yes, please check one:
 - 18 I was ordained when I attended leadership school
 - 10 I was in seminary when I attended leadership school
 - 15 I was thinking about attending seminary when I attended leadership school
 - 8 I had not thought of entering the ministry prior to attending leadership school

4. Has attending your leadership school made a difference in your ministry?
 - 39 Yes
 - 9 No
 - 3 I'm not sure

5. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your congregation?
 - 46 Yes, in most cases
 - 20 Maybe, in some cases
 - 17 No, not significantly
 - 3 I'm not sure

6. On the whole have Leadership School grads been an asset to your ministry?
 - 53 Yes, in most cases
 - 22 Maybe, in some cases
 - 10 No, not significantly
 - 4 No, they have hindered my ministry

7. Comment?

8. Which of these Leadership School objectives, if accomplished by leaders attending a leadership school, would be of the most value to you and your congregation in your ministry? Please check your top 5.

- 58 To become a more effective leader
- 54 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments
- 19 To learn about group life cycles and group processes
- 46 To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture
- 49 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life
- 16 To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role
- 22 To explore how to make the most of human resources
- 40 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
- 46 To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
- 9 To join others in planning and leading worship
- 32 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
- _____

9. In your opinion, do leadership schools achieve their goals?

- a. 44 Yes
- b. 5 No
- c. 42 I'm not sure

10. Have you, or would you, encourage others to attend leadership schools?

- 76 Yes
- 13 No

11. Why?

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Thank you for participating in this survey.

Please return to: rodomdc@sbcglobal.net

Rev. Rod Thompson
Ohio-Meadville District
200 W. Main St, #19
Ravenna, OH 44266

Survey of Religious Educators regarding the effectiveness of Leadership Schools

Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists (mostly lay leaders) have attended one of our eleven Leadership Schools in their attempt to equip themselves to be an effective leader in one of our congregations. Attending a Leadership School requires a major expense and commitment for both the individual and the congregation. To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive study of these schools to try to answer questions about how effective that training is for the participants and, more importantly, for their congregations, their ministers, and their religious educators. Do they achieve their goals? Do they provide a benefit for the congregation and district as well as for the individual?

Please help us assess the effectiveness of leadership schools for your ministry.

Which District are you in? 70 Responses

1. Have you attended a Leadership School yourself?
 - 34 Yes
 - 36 No (please skip to question #5)

2. If yes, which School? _____

3. If yes, please check one:
 - 2 I was volunteer Religious Educator when I attended leadership school
 - 30 I was a professional Religious Educator when I attended leadership school
 - 1 I was thinking about RE as a profession when I attended leadership school
 - 0 I had not thought of entering the profession prior to attending leadership school

4. Has attending your leadership school made a difference in your RE work?
 - 30 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 1 I'm not sure

5. Since leadership schools exist to help train effective leaders for our congregations, we need to know your assessment of how well we're doing. Please think about the leaders from your congregation(s) whom you have sent to leadership school. In your opinion, has leadership school significantly improved the effectiveness of these leaders in your church?
 - 27 Yes, in most cases
 - 17 Maybe, in some cases
 - 2 No, not significantly
 - 15 I'm not sure

6. On the whole have Leadership School grads been an asset to your RE work?
 - 26 Yes, in most cases
 - 13 Maybe, in some cases
 - 15 No, not significantly
 - 1 No, they have hindered my ministry

7. Comment?

8. Which of these Leadership School objectives, if accomplished by leaders attending a leadership school, would be of the most value to you and your congregation in your Life Span Faith Development work? Please check your top 5.

- 44 To become a more effective leader
- 33 To learn their own leadership styles and temperaments
- 40 To learn about group life cycles and group processes
- 40 To learn more about the dynamics of congregational culture
- 32 To acquire a systems perspective for congregational life
- 24 To understand how congregational size affects the leader's role
- 25 To explore how to make the most of human resources
- 37 To learn how to manage conflicts effectively
- 24 To strengthen their knowledge of UU heritage and values
- 12 To join others in planning and leading worship
- 31 To deepen their personal religious/spiritual life
- _____

10. In your opinion, do leadership schools achieve their goals?

- a. 34 Yes
- b. 0 No
- c. 31 I'm not sure

11. Have you, or would you, encourage others to attend leadership schools?

- 61 Yes
- 2 No

12. Why?

If you have any additional comments, please add them below. Thank you for participating in this survey.

Please return to: rodomdc@sbcglobal.net

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Comments from some of the Leadership School Graduates

#8 How have you used what you learned?

It affirmed and clarified many of the principles of small group work that I had learned previously.

Running board meetings; staying balanced in the center of the fray; recognizing and trying to meet the human foibles and needs of board members, including myself; access to resources; a sense of the larger picture.

I have applied some of the conflict resolution/awareness skills, I have been more aware of communication needs.

I sing sometimes. I let others speak.

Since I attended leadership school, I have landed a new job as an adjunct English instructor at a university. I use everything I learned: let students work in small groups, ask for regular feedback from the students to improve my teaching, make the course applicable to the students' lives. Most of all I make my classes fun, the way those leaders made my leadership school classes fun.

Became more of a leader in my church. Deeper personal growth. Changed how I view myself and my relationship with my Fellowship.

I brought back lots of ideas of how to address stagnant membership numbers and other issues at my church. I learned about diverse ways of worship and that different ways are meaningful to different people.

More effective chair of committee. Better at delegation. More positive attitude. Find it much easier to offer input. More Sunday service participation.

I stepped up. I was always willing to be supportive on a committee, but rarely wanted to be higher than the #2 person on any venture. I now not only take a #1 position from time to time, but also am very supportive of "growing new leaders" and helping them along.

Served on many committees and then decided to attend seminary.

Leadership school gave me more confidence in my leadership abilities and I feel much better able to express myself in church leadership positions.

I am more likely to value the efforts of others.

The biggest lesson I learned is that relationships matter more than issues, and process is more important than outcomes. This has enriched my personal, religious, and professional lives and helped me on the path to become a more integrated and whole person.

#15 Why encourage others to attend/

Yes, if they are heterosexual. On the whole a positive experience. Challenged me to be a bit more extroverted. To realize my opinions matter. Extremely stressful and emotional time; however. Good supportive staff on some issues.

I want to expand the cadre of lay leaders who have shared this experience. There are 6 of us, and we “get it” in similar ways.

Broadening of perspective; sense of wider purpose; opportunities to learn more about self; board and group dynamics.

Contacts of other UU leaders is an inspiration and leaves long lasting relationships. Awareness of leadership challenges are enhanced and solutions/options are taught. Self awareness is highly increased in leadership areas.

It was wonderful to meet with other UUs from various states. Stronger UU connections. Great to learn our UU history.

Even for strong leaders the thoughtful programming, including applied learning in simulated situations, is illuminating. The UU history and polity series of sessions also was interesting and informative. A week with 30-40 UUs in intensive environment is an unforgettable, rejuvenating experience.

Wonderful growth opportunity – both personally and for UU

Because of the connections developed and friendships developed; the information about UUs and the UUA that can be useful; finding out things about yourself you didn't realize; and become more spiritual.

Because it helps the lay member better understand leadership as a UU, as well as the opportunity for growth as a member of our congregation.

Our congregation gives 2 partial scholarships (75%) each year. We feel it has helped our congregation grow intentionally. It has helped foster the culture of good will that is very strong in our congregation.

I thought the school was a waste of time. The teaching was very touchy-feely and poorly focused.

Transformational experience.

At least for some people in my congregation it would be a worthwhile experience, enhancing knowledge and, most of all, awareness of congregational dynamics. For others, it would be too intense an experience.

The skills taught/experienced are relevant to UU congregational life as well as work and family. The offerings really underscore the principles we covenant to affirm and promote and work well!

A fabulous experience and gives a good grounding in our faith and in its practice.

It's a transforming, confidence building activity which connects you with many other UU leaders. Leadership School helps for a very important bond with your fellow classmates and thus, you feel tightly connected to them. This makes working in our district much easier, more worthwhile, and also more fun!

For personal, professional and spiritual growth opportunities.

I came away with a deeper appreciation of the UU faith and history, found many useful tools for working with others on projects, developed more confidence in process vs. product and came to understand the covenant process much more.

It is valuable to learn constructive communication techniques, to deepen one's understanding of UUism, to practice creating and participating in unfamiliar Worship Service styles, most importantly to learn ways to create and nurture "beloved communities."

Networking, thinking on a broader scale than just local.

Other comments

This was a most rewarding experience for me. I experienced growth in many ways besides having a very enjoyable experience meeting other sharp UU leaders/teachers/ministers. It was fun!

1. costs for enrolling must somehow be contained, or alternative strategies for leadership training developed.
2. Need for planning follow-up – bringing "graduates" together for "refreshment" and reinforcement on an annual basis.
3. District recognition of congregations for participation in the school.
4. active district effort to involve "grads" in the life of the district.

I was disappointed in the OD material.

It is a week that will transform your world . . .

The one thing missing from leadership school was information on the relationship between minister and congregation/lay leaders. It seems that UUs protect minister from lay criticism, often at the congregations peril.

My session was stressful as we had significant staff challenges – I expected more professional leadership – our small group leader had a difficult time not following what seemed to be her agenda. I did not connect, I felt censored.

I felt the quality of most of the instruction was poor – some did not seem to know their material and when stopped for a question, had difficulty getting back on track. Maybe I was looking for the wrong thing. I had hoped to find out more about UU. I have received more help attending district conventions and the one day meetings in our area.

I think MWLS is very difficult for introverts. It, like most things, is geared toward extroverts. Perhaps some consideration could be given to how to better accommodate introverts.

This is one of the most valuable experiences offered within the denomination. I wish that more people could take advantage of it.

Great resource materials.

It was a very intense, exhausting week. I'm glad I did it, but not sure I'd want to do it again.

In our very small congregation most people who attend leadership school come back with enthusiasm and tools. They jump into leadership positions with a lot of enthusiasm. Then after about a year they often leave the church. Why? People in the congregation are not open to improvements, lack of trust in trying some new ideas. It is so disappointing when you have seen the power, but they do not share your vision!

Was a bad experience for me. I left with a distrust of UUs at the district and national level, as well as UUs in general. Leadership School left me questioning whether I am a UU, or even whether I want to be. I will not participate in UU activities outside my congregation, and will resign my membership in my congregation, although I may remain a friend.

Even after 1 ½ years at a very fine seminary, I still look back on that week of leadership school as some of the best hours of education that I have had about just what it means to be UU.

The curriculum does not address social justice issues and the place of social action in church life, or, racial justice and how churches (congregations) can promote it and what is our UU grounding – spiritual and historical – for that work – ie. How we can make congregations more powerful instruments of creating the changes we say we believe in.

Congregational Additional Comments:

People had positive experiences of attending leadership school but it has not spread to other members of the congregation.

Sending board officers or members to leadership school would be an excellent investment for the congregation if we could afford it.

We have not sent anyone to leadership school for two years due to uncertainty about whether larger church governance, culture, and issues are able to be reflected in the leadership school curriculum.

NELS was an excellent experience for me, personally and as a church leader. I believe it was also very meaningful and successful for a few others in my congregation. However, some seemed to have gained little from the experience.

The most disappointing thing about our Midwest Leadership School is that grads from our congregation rarely offer on-going support or leadership.

We have found over the years that our Dwight Brown Leadership School is a good experience for the individuals who go, but does not help prepare them for large Church Leadership. We currently have people involved at the organizational level, but do not encourage members to attend.

I've served on the staff of two leadership schools and feel the intensity is too overwhelming for retention. I also believe in order for leadership to be an agent of change in the congregation, the "lone ranger" model doesn't work, even if two attend at the same time. Our current strategy is to send teams of four or more to local cluster events sponsored by the District. Our experience with the graduates of the leadership school model hasn't been useful to church life and leadership expertise.

Larger congregations seem to have their own "in house" leadership school.

We'd love to be able to send folks, and believe if we ever did it the payoff would be so immense we'd send more every year. Each fall we put leadership tuition in our dream budget, but it never makes the final cut. You might consider scholarships or grants to small Fellowships and churches to help pay for first time attendance. Could be based on both need of congregation and merit of applicant.

I've been a bit dismayed by some of my colleagues who teach at leadership school seeming to want students to come home and tell their minister – me—how to do things the "right" way – meaning their way. Some organized shared or collaborative ministry with the congregation's minister might be an antidote

Some have commented a week is more than they could be gone from jobs, etc. for the school. Possibly long weekends would work.

People who have attended from our congregation have loved EAGLES, but I have not seen any marked changes in their leadership skills or involvement on their return. I personally didn't feel that I came back with any tangible, specific leadership tools or skills. I think most people mainly get personal benefits from the experience.

I'd like to see NELS more connected to UUA leadership training and District training. Too much focus on basic UU history & beliefs and very little on real leadership skills. Builds loyalty to NELS, not UU.

Just recently our congregation devoted some of its budget to supplement the cost of leadership school. We are big believers in its effectiveness and want to send more folks.

Board presidents should be consistently encouraged through written and verbal communication for the District and/or UUA on the reasons why leadership school is not only valuable but essential to the health and well-being of the congregation.

Ministers' survey Comments:

7. Comment?

In most cases, either did not help or actively harmed. Some did help.

LS grads tend to be more aware of their spiritual commitment to serving/ministering, and they en-vision better, without being bogged down by those parts of reality that fall short.

Depends on specific needs at a given moment in time.

I don't know if anyone in my current congregation has gone to leadership school but in previous congregations it was very helpful to have people who had attended.

It depends more on the readiness of the volunteer than the content of the LS, I think. It affirms them in their commitment, but doesn't go a lot further.

Good leaders have become better, but those with psychological or anticlerical issues seem to have those issues reinforced.

Out of the 12 or more graduates, only 3 continue to be active in the congregation – and two have been a negative influence.

Mostly “grads” have returned with an inflated sense of their skills.

LS has been good...for them...but if the criteria for effectiveness is their taking “leadership” for us, it has been very limited.

I wish we could come up with a different format. The week long program is a significant deterrent to many people.

Too many folks think of LS as nuts and bolts skills development. I think of it as religious leadership identity formation. I think it is not overly successful on the former, and highly successful on the latter.

Often participants saw it as a kind of graduation from active leadership at the local level and did not (in most cases) become involved at a higher denominational level.

Lack of appropriate intimacy boundaries caused one marriage to break up and another to undergo great stress.

11. Why?

Because it can help people become more effective leaders in a church setting, where many volunteers – even those who have leadership experience in other contexts – do not have much previous experience.

I was told I couldn't attend a leadership school because I was ordained. I wanted to, felt left out. There is nothing comparable for ordained.

Negative experiences have outweighed positive. Also, if I'm going to encourage, I need to know more.

I think the rewards to the individual are justification enough for making that encouragement a part of my ministry; any benefits the congregation realizes are icing on the cake.

When they have a readiness or desire to enhance capacity and can share issues/concerns with like minded folks in a safe setting and develop networks of relationship for support/consultation even beyond the event.

I think I would encourage a few folks to go to leadership school.

I personally enjoyed, and I witnessed another person (lay) personally benefit at the PCD school.

Deepen faith & leadership commitment

It's very worthwhile.

To understand congregational life and the role of the lay leader better.

I think leadership training can be a very effective tool for lay-leaders in congregations. It is also very valuable to make connections with leaders from other churches.

It's the best we have to offer for lay leaders to take themselves seriously. . . most people don't have time/resources to devote to the major lay leader training.

For the potential benefits to the individual, and to the congregation, to give them an inkling of the diversity among UUs. It may not always work, but when it does, it can be life-changing.

I was advised to use LS as a way to assess whether I was ready to be more of a congregational leader. It was definitely a good thing for me.

I have not seen people dramatically transformed from bad leaders to good ones—we don't seed bad leaders. I have seen people come back with some new information and

skills, and perhaps more important, with a sense of excitement about and connectedness to our movement. They have all reported being glad to have been given the opportunity for the experience.

There are certain types of leaders who benefit less. My engineer types, i.e. Problem solvers aren't thrilled with it. But most folks come back with new energy and skills for church work.

Additional comments:

Re #9. "I'm not sure" that the LS stated goals are clear, accurate, or even honest enough to say whether they're achieved.

I taught at Leadership School for 5 summers – and given the alumni who have returned I cannot recommend it ever again.

My worry about leadership schools is that they are inevitably geared to the culture and governance structures of small and mid-sized congregations, rather than large congregations.

Because it involves taking time off work for most people I think it would help to play up the usefulness of this to people in their work life as well. Maybe we could even get some work places to co-sponsor participants or give their employee work time to attend rather than having people use vacation. Maybe a separate brochure to give to one's employer. I don't think UU heritage and values needs to be an important part of these schools (people should get that in their congregations). Down playing UU specific parts would make it more likely employers would support it as well.

I have no knowledge of [local] leadership school, even after 10+ years in district. This suggests one challenge for leadership schools is building links with clergy and congregations.

Most UU congregations have a minister (or more, or in part). My hope-prayer is that leadership schools teach collaborative ministry as a value, even in lay-led congregations.

"...a key aspect of congregational guidance that gets overlooked in leadership schools. Your introduction paragraph used the phrases "effective leader" and "effective training," yet you only ask questions about "achieving goals." Effectiveness cannot be discerned by whether or not goals are achieved. Effect is pervasive/contextual/transformational and embodied. Goals are results, often measurable results/achievements/states of arrival. This is not trivial. It matters greatly." Roy Reynolds

In far too many cases of which I am aware, LS graduates turn out to be disruptive elements in their congregations after attending LS. While this might be more the congregation's responsibility in choosing the wrong person to send to LS, still, I hope LS's could do more to alleviate this unfortunate result.

Every congregational president since we started the program has been a leadership school graduate. It has totally changed our leadership cadre and congregational culture in ways no other experience has or – I think – could.

The leadership needs in a church of 100 are vastly different from those in a church of 300, and different again in those of 500+. A cycle of 3 years offerings with excellent trainers, tailored to specific sizes of church, would be something I could support.

We have tried to pay the cost of leadership school (\$700+). It's a huge investment for sometimes minimal returns. I totally support it, but somehow wish it could be emphasized (maybe even covenanted) that for someone to have their way paid they would need to agree to take on significant leadership roles afterward.

Leadership School has broadened my attendees' sense of other churches and how they work. The Leadership School has focused on small and medium sized church leadership – so it has not been helpful as a training tool for our large church structure and mission. I believe they are good for smaller churches but not for larger ones.

Sometimes Leadership School becomes an in-group. How are faculty chosen and for how long? How is curriculum developed? How are leaders/teachers trained? Do congregations get input in defining needs and goals?

Religious Educator's Survey Comments

Question 7

Those who are interested in RE came back willing to do more and with a better understanding of why we teach UU history and values. Those with no interest in RE originally came back with no change.

The success of the program is affected by the personality of the participants. Some return to their congregations energized, others used some of what they learn in a low key way. It also depends on the congregation itself: is it supportive? Are there issues or conflicts? Etc.

The Leadership School that I have "sent" people to has been Goldmine. Two youth have gone. One has come back as an evangelical UU – jumping in and getting more involved in the congregation. The other is quieter but has definitely developed a stronger sense of being a UU.

Leadership School processes help us remember we are a religious organization and help bring spirit into the routine work.

#11 Why?

If nothing else it provides networking experiences.

I found leadership school helped me better understand how I work as a leader in different settings, and it gave me a better perspective on what I can and cannot do.

Because if you are passionate about your work you learn skills, you reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and you network with colleagues.

In my work as DRE, I have not seen anything "spectacular" or even remotely helpful for work within our lifespan program.

People who go say it's a transformative experience and they generally come back passionate about congregational work.

For me, EAGLES helped me learn more about myself, my beliefs, and how to work within committees and congregations. And of course it's always good to "network" with other DREs and congregational leaders. As always, after attending any kind of gathering of UUs I come away with a renewed sense of pride in being a UU and a deepened conviction of the importance of the work I do.

1. I find most training outside the congregation where there is some networking and cross fertilization of ideas raises the level at which people work.
2. To have as many leaders as possible trained allows for everyone to be working with the same language and skills.
3. Because I believe that an aware leadership usually works better.

I think it's always a positive experience for participants, and a good process; I'm just not sure how much behavior is actually changed or to what extent the tools learned are actually applied. If more lay leaders understood church systems, dynamics and had an intentional opportunity to deepen their spiritual life we'd have tremendous leaders.

The more people who have been through leadership school, the easier your goals can be met, the stronger the vision, the easier it is to communicate with one another.

I think they have a lot to offer, but vary in their effectiveness. Most attendees I have known have found them to be personally valuable and empowering.

Further comments

In my experience, most people selected for leadership school already have leadership skills – at least some. What they seem to need is confidence, understanding how leading in a church is very different from other places, i.e. the corporate or academic world; and why we do what we do. If they can also learn that this can be a spiritual practice (not a chore) then we've really done our job!

We are organizing a leadership development team for churchwide leadership education and development. It gets more and more difficult for people to go away for a full week or even a weekend.

I think local churches don't advertise Leadership School well – and we don't hear about them easily to be of help. Try using the REACH list or district packets if not used already.

I believe it was after leadership school that the Board Pres. and Vice Pres. began complaining about all the volunteers the RE program takes. I was in a congregation of 250 adults with 200 children and 2 services so a lot of volunteer energy was required to sustain RE naturally. As a result RE began to be viewed as a problem. It became divisive (adults vs. kids needs) rather than being approached as a mutual challenge requiring mutual solutions.

In regards to our congregation our leaders need to be able to plan, assess, recalibrate programs. Effective leadership allows you to move with flow, change culture as needs and congregation changes. We often are caught up in everyone's feeling, comforts, etc. Our leaders are slow to get anything done.

I would like to see attendees use the skills they've learned in the church. For religious educators, I would recommend attending leadership school as early in one's career as possible. I went after almost 10 years experience. I think it would have been most helpful to have the experience earlier in my career.

I wish we could afford to send more people.

Multi-School Evaluation Tool

In my original Sabbatical Project Proposal I said “I propose to participate in, or at least visit, each school during its session to be able to observe and get a feel for and the sense of each school. I would develop an evaluation tool, with the help of the Directors of the Leadership Development Office and the District Staff Team, in order to ask the same questions across the country from the participants in each school so we can compare answers between schools.”

I used the tool at three Leadership Schools in the Summer and Fall of 2003. You will find the results of the first two parts of that Evaluation on the next two pages. After compiling these results I determined that the information gathered through the remainder of the form would not be helpful for this study so I have not included them here. Each school did keep a copy of the forms for their own use.

Here are those first two parts:

Name _____ Date _____ School _____

I. General Evaluation: Please rank the following on a scale of 5-1

	Extremely Satisfied	Well Satisfied	Adequately Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
A. How do you feel about your overall Leadership School experience?	5	4	3	2	1
B. How well did we achieve our goals?	5	4	3	2	1
C. How well did you achieve your goals?	5	4	3	2	1
D. How did you feel about the facilities?	5	4	3	2	1

Comments:

II. Staff Evaluation: Please evaluate our staff using the same scale

A. The Leadership Training Presenter	5	4	3	2	1
B. The Heritage & Values Presenter	5	4	3	2	1
C. The Worship Resource Presenter	5	4	3	2	1
D. Your Small Group Facilitator	5	4	3	2	1
E. Other _____	5	4	3	2	1

Comments:

Multi-School Evaluation Tool Summary -

Schools = EAGLES, Russell Lockwood (MDD), and Florida

I. General Evaluation: Please rank the following on a scale of 5-1

Extremely Satisfied	Well Satisfied	Adequately Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied
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E. How do you feel about your overall Leadership School experience?

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert		25	1	10		1		
Florida		4	1	4				
Eagles	1	16	1	9				
Total	1	45	3	23	0	1	0	73
Percentage	1.4	62	4	32		1.4		

F. How well did we achieve our goals?

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert		21		12			1	
Florida		5	1	3				
Eagles		10		15				
Total		36	1	30			1	67
Percentage		54	1.4	45			1.4	

G. How well did you achieve your goals?

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert		19		10	3	1	1	
Florida		3	1	3	1			
Eagles	2	10		12	1			
Total	2	32	1	25	5	1	1	67*
Percentage	3	48	1.4	37	7	1.4	1.4	

- one said they did not know what to expect so gave no answer

•

H. How did you feel about the facilities?

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert		25		6	3			
Florida		3	2	4	1			
Eagles		13		9	2			
Total		41	2	19	6			68
Percentage		60	3	28	9			

Comments: The comments that were added were overwhelmingly positive for all 3 schools. They all included words like valuable and wonderful. Interestingly the school that seemed to me to have had the most nuts & bolts information (Mt/Desert) elicited a comment from one person who wanted more nuts & bolts. One other MD person expressed the feeling that they had not prepared enough ahead of time.

Only MD folks commented on the goals questions. Most said that their personal goals had either become clearer or were realized. One went so far as to say that the experience had renewed their sense of spirituality. Only one MD person expressed that they were unclear about the school's goals.

All 3 facilities were rated well. It was not surprising that there were comments from the EAGLES folks about the hard beds. A/C problems were mentioned by one each from EAGLES and Florida. All comments about the food was that it was good, if qualified as "for institutional food." Many commented on the beautiful setting for the Mt/Desert School.

III. Staff Evaluation: Please evaluate our staff using the same scale

F. The Leadership Training Presenter

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert	1	19		11				
Florida		9		1				
Eagles		20		4	1			
Total	1	48		16	1			66
Percentage	1.5	73		24	1.5			

G. The Heritage & Values Presenter

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert	1	15	1	14	2			
Florida		5		5				
Eagles		21		5	1			
Total	1	41	1	24	3			69
Percentage	1.4	59	1.4	35	4			

H. The Worship Resource Presenter

	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert	1	20	1	12	2			
Florida		8		2				
Eagles		7		4	1			
Total	1	35	1	18	3			58
Percentage	1.7	60	1.7	31	5			

I. Your Small Group Facilitator

	7	6	5	4.5	4	3	2	1	Total
Mt/Desert	1	1	20		10	1	1		
Florida			9	1					
Eagles		1	22		4				
Total	1	2	51	1	14	1	1		71
Percentage	1.4	3	72	1.4	20	1.4	1.4		

J. Other	Staff	5	4	3	2	1
		1 MDD	3 MDD	1 MDD		
Location		1 MDD				
Credo or		3 MD				
Covenant Gp		1 FL				
		3 Eagles (plus one 6)		1 3.5 Eagles		

Comments: when describing the staff of all three schools most of those who commented used words like: dedicated, wonderful, excellent, inspiring, outstanding and well prepared. The only negative comment had to do with the perceived cliquishness of the staffs.

There were comments about the helpfulness of the group work from an EAGLES participant, while another needed more and/or a better differentiation between the types and function of the different groups.