

Membership & Young Adult Coordinator Hiring Process

About Our Process:

For the Membership and Young Adult Coordinator role at UUSF, we wanted to make sure to lean into our 8th Principle commitments.

First, we resisted the temptation to hire someone right away. A year ago, we knew that we wanted to fill this role, but at that point, we hadn't done the work to ensure we would hire in line with our values, so we put the process on hold.

To figure out the process itself, we engaged with Edgility (www.edgilityconsulting.com), a consulting organization that specializes in aligning an organization's values with its practices and structures to build intentional equity. Edgility reviewed our entire hiring process and offered advice for improving it so it reflected best practices. They offered training on avoiding unconscious bias, for example, that all our hiring teams will go through going forward (and ours did for this hire) helped structure how we articulated who and what we were looking for.

One thing Edgility emphasized was focusing on actual needs for the role. This can help avoid biases around things like degree requirements that might rule out candidates who would be good and whose life experience or professional work is comparable or more relevant to the needs of the position. To do this, we interviewed stakeholders for this role (e.g. young adults, the membership committee, as well as people outside of UUSF with expertise in roles like this) and wrote a job description based on what actual skills and qualities we needed and most wanted to prioritize for this role.

Another thing Edgility emphasized was being as objective as possible in how we evaluate candidates. This is because, when folks go by gut feeling, we can be unconsciously biased towards people who are similar to ourselves even if someone different from ourselves would be the best fit for the role. So, we started with the job description and then broke it down into categories of skills (soft and hard skills) and wrote up what it would look like for someone to be proficient, above and beyond, okay-with-a-little-help, or still beginning. We brainstormed a list of questions that would be universally asked to all people to reduce variance – and did some of the questions in first-round interviews and the others at our second/final round of interviews. When we did interviews, everyone would take notes independently and score the candidate independently so that we didn't bias one another, but also while writing what evidence we saw and heard in the interview for the presence of those skills or concerns in those areas. Holding ourselves accountable for evidence also helps correct against scoring someone higher or lower because you are prone to assume things about their abilities. Then we would talk as a group.

We also made sure to post the job widely. In our UU circles, we reached out directly to our seminaries, to people we knew explaining our goals and needs, people whose networks we thought might know of folks we might want to access, to groups like DRUUMM and the obvious places like the UU Membership professionals association.

We also posted beyond our UU circles on platforms like Idealist, but worked into our interviewing and screening process various times where we checked in about values alignment. The person need not be UU, but they needed to be UU-friendly and even excited about what our mission and values were to do this job.

In the job description, we also explicitly mentioned our commitment to dismantling white supremacy culture, and in the interviews, we asked several questions to assess competency with and experience around antiracism and multiculturalism as well as a willingness to grow and learn in this area and be held accountable for this part of our work and growth, personally and collectively.

In the process there were five steps to our vetting of candidates (all resources/tools mentioned are attached):

1. Two people (Laura Shennum and Jordan Ong) reviewed all resumes looking for basic skills that were required and basic personal values orientation and looking for enough evidence of both to move the person forward in the process. 42 resumes were reviewed. 19 people moved forward.
2. Two people (Laura Shennum and Carrie Steere Salazar) then did phone interviews with a set list of questions with folks, assessing fitness for the job and answering basic questions by applicants to make sure they understood more about the position. Out of the 19 who were invited for a phone screen, 5 did not follow through or did not answer; 3 did not pass; and 11 moved onto zoom interviews.
3. The folks who moved forward went through a round of interviews on Zoom with at least 4 members (and usually all 5) of the search team present where we asked the list of agreed upon and universal questions and scored the interviews on set categories with evidence, as described above. 10 candidates followed through with the Zoom interview. One candidate decided to drop out of the interview process for a position with a higher salary. 5 were asked to move forward to in-person interviews.
4. In between rounds, Laura Shennum performed reference checks, in part to determine a candidate's ability to manage details and perform on a team and their emotional maturity. Because so many applicants were from outside UU circles this allowed us to have some outside input on the candidate's self-reported abilities. Carrie Steere-Salazar did a social media search to have another form of input to ensure values aligned with UUSF.
5. Our final round of interviews were in-person. 4 candidates participated in in-person interviews, one person flying in for the interview. One candidate decided to drop out of interview process to find a position with a higher salary and closer to where they lived on the East Coast. One will be offered the position next week and we will inform the congregation of that person's background and abilities and the timeline for their start date.

Our hope in this process was to center the skills and qualities we need in the person who takes on this position, and a clear sense of alignment in our values. We value different life experiences that could be brought to this position because this is the person who will, more than any, be in charge of welcoming any and everyone who comes through our doors.

This is the person who will help them find their place, who will smooth the path for visitors to become members, to grow and deepen among us and, who will grow and deepen us as they do so! So, we have looked in this process for someone who is comfortable and excited to be with people from different backgrounds (racial, ethnic, country-of-origin, economic, to name only a few), whose life experience has put them in those places, who are welcoming to folks whose sexual orientation, identity or expression may be different than their own, and who we think will delight in drawing the circle of love and welcome as wide as possible, as we do. Maybe even show us better ways to do all that! We look forward to sharing who we found to be part of that work with us.

In faith, The Membership and Young Adult Search Team

Rev. Laura Shennum, Minister of Congregational Life, Chair

Sam King, Board of Trustees, Worship Associate, Young Adult Community Member

Jordan Ong, Membership Committee, BIPOC Group

Carrie Steere-Salazar, Long-time Member, Music Committee, Choir; Former Board Moderator

Rev. Vanessa Southern, Senior Minister

Resources & Tools Used:

[Membership & Young Adult Coordinator job description](#)

[Initial Resume Screen & Phone Screen Tool](#)

[Zoom Interview Scorecard](#)

[In-Person Interview Scorecard](#)

[Zoom Interview Questions](#)

[In-Person Interview Questions](#)

[Reference Questions](#)