

VOCATIONAL PROCESS ACCOUNTABILITY

Origin:

1. **What is the issue?** While there is a great deal of accountability for Candidates and Inquirers within the denomination, there is virtually no accountability for those overseeing the vocational process.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to:

- Ensure that Candidates for Ministry are treated equitably, competently, and with compassion
- By ensuring that the Offices of Vocations and Candidacy Boards are transparent and accountable with their processes
- And are subject to review by the broader church as well as by past and current Candidates and Inquirers

2. **Why is this issue important?**

- The call to ministry is a sacred covenant with God that needs to be respected and cherished. Those who are called to this covenant will be treated with respect and justice.
- There is a wide divergence in requirements for vocational training across the Regions, and even from Candidate to Candidate within individual regions. There is also a broad divergence in the competence of Offices of Vocations and Candidacy Boards.
- The new governance model promised greater flexibility and more individualized pathways to ordination and commissioning, but this has opened the door for favouritism and/or discrimination. (We know of Candidates whose process has increased in time and requirements, we know of none whose time has decreased no matter what previous education or experience the Candidates had.)
- The National Church voted against “settlement” at GC43. Some Candidacy Boards and Offices of Vocations appear to be re-implementing settlement by unilaterally appointing students to particular communities of faith without appropriate input from the students or the communities of faith.
- We are a justice seeking church, and justice requires fairness and impartiality.
- If we do not address this issue we will continue to see a rise in distrust between General Council, the Regions and the Communities of Faith who are in relationship with Candidates and Inquirers which subsequently leads to distrust between the broader church and Clergy and Communities of Faith.

3. **How does this proposal help us to live into our church’s commitments on equity?**

Many students have been consulted in the drafting of this proposal. They have identified feeling discriminated against on the basis of age, gender identity, education, disability and race. Students who are named under each of these identities have been actively consulted in the development of this proposal. Creating a more transparent and equitable vocational process benefits our Candidates; future (and present) clergy; and the congregations they serve.

4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

The (Regional Council) proposes that the General Council could:

Name a possible response that the General Council might consider:

- A. An oversight body (of the Candidacy Board and Offices of Vocations) will be put in place that includes past and present Candidates and Inquirers
 - With a mandate to conduct regular assessments of the Offices of Vocations and Candidacy Boards
 - The assessment will include an analysis of how many Candidates complete the process over what period of time
 - There will be SMART (Standardized Metrics that are Achievable and Realistic in an appropriately Timely manner) requirements for Candidates and Inquirers including a set expectation of how many Learning Competencies and additional education modules (eg. CPE) are required
 - There will be an analysis of how many Candidates/Inquirers maintain the baseline and how many diverge from that baseline. Any divergence will require a written rationale from the OV Minister and the Candidacy Board.
 - Upon ordination or commissioning ordinands and commissionands will be invited to conduct a confidential review of the Candidacy Board and the Office of Vocations.
- B. Candidates and Inquirers will have the right to a support person of their choosing to attend any meetings with the Candidacy Board, Office of Vocations or their representatives.
 - The options for attending support persons will not be limited by the Office of Vocations or Candidacy Board. (eg. Faculty, Family Members, or Members of Denomination Staff may not be excluded)
 - The support person of any Candidate or Inquirer will attend all meetings of the Board or Office in which the Candidate or Inquirer is discussed, so as to provide transparent and accurate feedback for the Board and the Candidate or Inquirer. Candidates and Inquirers will apply for Learning Sites through ChurchHub
- C. The Office of Vocations and Candidacy Board will not appoint or dismiss students to/from sites without consultation and authorization of the Community of Faith and the Candidate or Inquirer.

If you have questions regarding this proposal please send them to info@generalcouncil44.ca.