

Southwestern Conference

Unitarian Universalist Association

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DBLE 2010 Expectations and Participant Nomination Process

Once again the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience offers a chance for turbocharged training for leaders – lay and clergy alike. From organizational skills to worship arts, from UU history to contemporary trends, from lifespan faith development to mission and vision, from small group ministry to stewardship, there is nothing to compare to the intensive and diverse lectures, exercises, case studies, theological dialogue, and skill building that occurs during DBLE.

From our goal to translate the DBLE experience into tangible congregational health and vitality, we are preparing for the 2010 DBLE somewhat differently than in years past. Factors that appear to make a difference in how DBLE effects congregational health include participants who serve significant leadership roles in their congregation, participants who come in teams of two to four from a congregation, congregations who send teams of leaders to DBLE for several years in a row, and congregations that have an intentional process for selecting their DBLE registrants and integrating knowledge and skills from the experience into the life of the congregation.

This letter is the call for you to nominate your congregation's participants for the 2010 DBLE scheduled for July 25-30 at the Stillwater Conference Center in Glen Rose, TX near Fort Worth. We ask that you carefully consider the leaders you would like to participate in DBLE and to submit the accompanying nomination form to the District Office by April 15th. We plan to announce the 2010 class before May 1st. The earlier registration process will allow us to better prepare participants for the experience. Preference will be given to leaders who will be serving in board, staff (particularly ministers and DREs) or major committee/ministry leadership roles, as well as to congregations sending teams of participants. We want to encourage you to include your best youth leader(s), 16 and older, as part of your team. Youth leadership presence and participation is important both in our congregations today and for the future of our faith. We are asking congregational presidents, or their designees, to please complete and submit the **DBLE Nomination Form** to nominate participants from your congregation. You can also access and submit the form electronically through the SWUUC website at www.swuuc.org.

What to expect from our 2010 DBLE -- For the fifth year, we will welcome UUA Credentialed Religious Educator and Program Consultant for Mid-South, Northeast and Florida Districts, Connie Goodbread to join Susan in teaching our values-based, theologically grounded approach to congregational leadership. Connie and Susan have taught together for several years and

are devoted to raising up lay elders of our faith who understand leadership as covenantal religious vocation. Connie is also a student of Peter Steinke's and has been authorized by him to adapt his Healthy Congregations work for Unitarian Universalists.

We plan to continue a program begun at last year's DBLE to help congregations and participants align congregational leadership needs with individual leadership strengths and goals. The program led by DBLE Dean Joe Sullivan will involve a pre-DBLE survey of participants' leadership experiences and attributes, and current or expected leadership roles; creating personal leadership development and action plans during DBLE; and periodic post-DBLE teleconferences for peer and coaching support of participant leadership plans. 2009 DBLE graduates have found this follow-up support quite valuable in addressing immediate leadership challenges and in further cultivating helpful connections with leaders in other congregations. Joe brings to DBLE years of leadership experience in our UU movement at congregational, district and national levels. In his consulting practice he helps congregations and related organizations to envision and enable futures that bless and transform lives and communities.

We urge you to consider now which leaders would help your congregation benefit most from this experience and nominate them. If you are new to the Southwestern Conference yourself or have not attended DBLE, join us for a stimulating, challenging continuing education event. This program qualifies for continuing education grants offered by the Rev. Michelle Bentley of the UUA. We look forward to seeing you and yours there this summer.

Sincerely,

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District Executive

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***If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be.
Now put the foundations under them. HD Thoreau***