

PROPOSAL #8

WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Title: Student and Candidate Support Network

Originating Body: WOW Executive

What is the issue?

Students and Candidates for Ministry are a part of a Regional Council but have no standing in the Council unless they are at a point in their education where they are serving in a supervised ministry. This means they have no natural way to build relationship or learn about the Regional Council.

Traditionally in the United Church Presbytery and Conference Education and Students Committees were responsible for oversight and support of inquires, students and candidates for ministry. In our current structure these responsibilities fall to the Office of Vocation through the Candidacy Board with support being offered by the individual's Circle of Accompaniment.

What has been lost is a connection to the Regional Council. Until a student is in a supervised ministry, which differs for each student depending on their path, they have no place in the structure of the Regional Council unless they represent their own community of faith. This means they have no natural way to develop relationships in the regional council or way to grow in understanding of the wider church. While they create natural relationships within their own education program, there is no place to connect with and learn from students/candidates from other programs.

Why is this issue Important?

The Candidacy Path and paid accountable Ministry can be very isolating. The more relationships individuals build before and after their ordination or commissioning the more support they will have. The stronger the relationships within our regional councils the better equipped we will be to connect, support and transform our communities of faith to deep spirituality and daring justice.

What might Western Ontario Waterways do?

Establish a Student and Candidate Support Network

Mandate

The Student Candidate Support Network's responsibility is to provide opportunities to build relationships with individuals on the candidacy path

The responsibilities of the Network include:

- connect with students as they are identified by the Office of Vocation and orient them to the region
- celebrate the approval of candidates (The Manual C.2.7 a) in person or on Zoom at a regional council meeting,
- support opportunities for individuals to connect with others on the candidacy pathway within the region

- ensure students/candidates are aware of learning opportunities within the regional council where they will be able to build relationships.

The Network will be seven to 12 people selected through the Recruitment process and will include at least one ordained minister, one diaconal minister, one student/candidate for ordination, one student/candidate for diaconal ministry and one lay person.

The Network would relate to the Human Resources Commission and the Pastoral Relations Minister. They would have access to admin support to set up Zoom gatherings once or twice a year. An optional in person gathering once a year could be funded.