

UUA Board Proposed Linkage in 2014-2015

1. Its Broad Purpose

At GA 2014, the UUA Board of Trustees is holding a workshop and General Session discussion, “Gathering for Purpose: Board Initiative to Re-Imagine GA.” The Board will invite comments on draft *basic* principles about General Assembly. Based on those comments, the Board now plans to create one or two specific proposals for changes to General Assembly. The Board plans to then seek extensive feedback and comment on such proposal(s) before deciding whether to put any proposal (with any needed bylaws amendments) on the agenda for GA 2015.

2. Proposed Structure

Feedback and comment will be solicited by both online survey and engagement with congregations.

Identifying Congregations to Interview. The Board would like to solicit feedback and comment from lay and professional leaders of at least 100 congregations (20 congregations in each region).

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Regional and district leaders can be particularly helpful in identifying those congregations to interview, and are be invited to do so. As districts within regions are collaborating and cooperating in different ways, it's really up to regional and district leaders to decide how may work together to identify congregations. (For instance, one region's districts may each want to choose its own reviewers, made up of district board and staff, to identify a certain number of congregations within its district. Another region may decide to have one review team, made up of staff or volunteer district representatives, that regionally selects 20 congregations.)

If a district or region has reviewers, they will be asked to identify congregations that show strong interest in providing governance direction and that, given their achievements or growth, will likely continue to do so. *Possible* considerations in selecting congregations include:

- Congregations that have a history of delegate participation in General Assembly in the past 5 years (with special consideration of those that were not able to send delegates to to participate in the conversations at GA 2014).
- Congregations that have had little or no participation in General Assembly, *primarily* due to financial barriers.
- Congregations recognized as Breakthrough Congregations in recent years, or Leap of Faith congregations, or (in CERG) Threshold Congregations.
- Congregations that have demonstrated outstanding achievements (not potential) in these areas:
 - multicultural/multiracial leadership
 - working class membership

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- youth programming
 - social justice programming
 - innovative worship
 - leadership in congregational cluster activities
- Congregations that in the past five years have actively encouraged and supported attendance at General Assembly by youth and young adults.
 - Except for very large congregations (those with over 1000 members), congregations that have grown 10% or more over the last 5 years.
 - Since the larger the congregation, the harder it is to hit the 10% mark, very large congregations that have grown at least 5% over the last 5 years.

Engagement with Congregational Leaders. The Board Linkage Group will invite each Region's review team(s) to identify and recruit 5-10 linkage representatives to interview the elected and called leaders of their 20 identified congregations during **Nov. 1- Dec. 15**. Of course, these representatives would not need to be members of district or regional boards or staff. representatives tshould have the interest, availability and ability to schedule and carry out electronic conversations with congregational leaders through a simple platform such as Fuze or Skype (instructions to be provided). Other than those basic requirements, each Region or its districts may have a different idea of the leadership that would best benefit from this linkage role. (For instance, districts in the Southern Region may consider this a role for volunteers such as "elders", while other districts may consider this a role of those active in building cluster relationships.)

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Interviews can include leaders of several congregations at a time, so that this can be a conversation among leaders as well as with the linkage representative.

Proposed Timeline:

June 28, 2014: UUA Board leads GA 2014 workshop and discussion on Board Initiative to Re-Imagine GA

By Sept. 1, 2014: UUA Board Linkage Group sends letter to Regional and District Presidents that:

- invites them to create a review team and process to identify 20 congregations for **Nov. 1- Dec. 15** linkage
- lists Region's congregations by districts (if applicable) and their history of delegate participation in General Assembly over past 5 years
- suggests guidelines for identifying congregations to participate in interviews
- invites reviewers to recruit 5-10 "linkage representatives" to engage in conversations with called and leaders of identified congregations for period of **Nov. 1-Dec. 15**. (Those volunteers *may* be invited to conduct additional interviews during the period **Feb. 15-March 31**.)

Oct. 16-19, 2014: At UUA Board meeting, Board discusses and decides on proposal(s) for which it would like feedback and comment.

By Oct. 20, 2014: Regional and/or District Presidents provide UUA Board Linkage Group with names and email contact of their linkage representatives and list of identified congregations.

Nov. 1, 2014: Linkage representatives receive packet, with :

- Interview guide
- Instructions for use of electronic platform (such as Fuze)
- Suggestions for contacting congregational leaders and scheduling interviews
- Instructions for taking notes and submitting them online via Survey Monkey

Nov. 1, 2014--Dec. 15, 2014: Interviews conducted and results submitted.

Nov. 15, 2014--Dec. 15, 2014: Online survey posted and participation encouraged by all called and elected leaders of congregations, youth and young adults and members of identity groups, and those who have participated in GA as delegates.

January 15-18, 2015: Analyzed results of linkage efforts reported at UUA Board meeting; Board determines proposal (if any) to be placed on Tentative Agenda for GA 2015; decides if further feedback needed.

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January 30, 2015: Regional and District Presidents and linkage representatives notified if further feedback needed and linkage representatives invited to participate.

Feb. 15, 2015. UUA Board Linkage Group provides packet to linkage representatives for further linkage efforts for the period **Feb. 15, 2014-March 31, 2015.**

April 23, 2015 (Telephone meeting). Based on results, Board determines if revisions are needed to any proposal (with bylaw amendments) to be placed on Final Agenda.