

# **YOUTH MINISTRY TASKFORCE MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 1-3, 2005**

## **Contents and Major Outcomes:**

### **List of Taskforce Members and Meeting Attendees**

### **Discussion of the Goals of the Youth Ministry Initiative**

### **Reviewing the History and Projected Timeline of the Consultation on Ministry to and With Youth**

### **Visions for the Role of the Task Force (Including Accountability Models)**

### **Covenanting**

#### **Creation of the Youth Ministry Survey**

- The survey will be taken exclusively by youth in Jan-Feb 2006, specifically targeting (1) Youth involved in YRUU (including youth groups), (2) Youth in congregations who are not involved with YRUU, (3) Youth who are no longer involved in their congregation.
- The results of the youth survey will inform congregational conversations taking place in the spring of 2006.
- Results of survey and conversations will go to District and Stakeholder gatherings in 06-07 congregational year.
- Results of all meetings will go to Summit on Ministry to and With Youth in July 2007.

#### **Brainstorming things to be included in Process Guides for:**

- **Congregational Conversations** - Will involve many people, youth-adult shared leadership, will produce report with details about the congregation and the conversation.
- **District Gatherings** - Co-facilitated by a youth-adult team from the taskforce, with possible assistance from Chrysalis Trainers.
- **Stakeholder meetings** – Basic guide for self-facilitated dialogues in non-core stakeholder groups. Process varies by core stakeholder group.

### **Communicating with Various Groups**

#### **Working with YRUU Leadership in this Process**

#### **Dividing up Tasks and Responsibilities**

- Survey & Process guides
- Working with Districts and Stakeholder groups
- Identifying youth
- Meta-Communication with UUism
- Communication with each other & forming a quick-response team

## **Taskforce Members**

**Bill Sinkford** – UUA President, Consultation Co-Convener

**Megan Dowdell** – Former Youth Trustee, Consultation Co-Convener

**Judith Frediani** - Director of Lifespan Faith Development

**Sarah Eskrich** – Youth, Madison, WI, Local Youth Rep.

**Tom Rylett** – Youth, Toronto, Ontario

**Beth Dana** – UUA Youth Ministry Associate

**Tera Little** – UUA Lifespan RE Consultant for Pacific Southwest District, LREDA

**Jesse Jaeger** – UUA Youth Programs Director

**Hannah Stampe** – Youth, Asheville, NC, Interweave, Representing GLBPTTQQI

**Jova Vargas** – Youth, New York, NY, Former YRUU Steering Committee

**Homer Karvonides** – Youth, Biddeford, ME, DRUUMM Rep.

**Ian Moore** – Youth, Birmingham, AL, Youth Council Rep.

**Julian Sharp** – Youth Trustee

**Rachel Davis** (Not Present until Sunday) – Youth, Teaneck, NJ, DRUUMM Rep.

**Rev. Shana Goodwin** (Not Present) – Minister, All Souls Church, Washington DC

### **Also In Attendance:**

**U.T. Saunders** – Facilitator

**Amy Davidoff** – Survey Consultant, Indianapolis, IN

**Ethan Field** – UUA Youth Office Assistant, Note-Taker

# **SATURDAY:**

## **Introductions**

### **Brief Worship**

To honor the feelings the group has about the recent hurricane disasters in the US Gulf Coast, and the ensuing human rights catastrophes.

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### **Mocktail Party / Coffee Klatch / Tea Time Social Mixer**

A pairs-based personal get-to-know you game led by U.T., leading to the question...

## **If the youth ministry initiative is successful, what will be occurring in the movement that does not take place today?**

### **Jova/Judith**

More adults would be eager to be with youth and see it as a privilege. Youth-adult relations would be defined. Both would grow together. Learning more mutual. Youth more appreciated. More trust on both sides. Youth Office with Youth & Adults working together. Not everything works for everybody – different things for different people. More financial resources. All youth ministry recognized: Youth-youth, youth-adult, lay & professional ministry recognized as well as adult-youth.

### **Tom/Tera**

Need to revitalize local youth groups with funding and paid staff. Need people closer to congregations than Youth Office - not everyone calling Jesse. More trainings and more (financially and geographically) accessible trainings for youth groups. Stronger support network for youth leaders and youth advisors – nobody would feel unsupported. Canadian situation: we have no money! Need to split off the Maritime provinces, to have them be strong enough on their own & connect with US districts. Dissuade the CUC Boards from acting randomly & changing the rules without input.

### **Sara/Julian**

Want to “fill the gap” between RE programs and youth groups – and build a mountain! What we create will be so dynamic that youth all over will flock to UU churches and be welcome. Utilize youth energy to drive congregations especially around progressive and sustainable social change. Youth are involved in many different ways and we need to make sure that we’re addressing all those ways, and how they can be involved. Widespread AR/AO work for all members and friend of congregations. Look at classism and how it tears us apart (individually and as a faith). An understanding of privilege and power dynamics. Real youth-adult partnerships with respect, understanding, and involvement. The movement will be younger, bringing its idealism and energy; youth will work constructively with that energy. Will build and implement change, especially spiritual change. Stand on the side of love.

### **Homer/Beth**

Have a place where youth can come and their voice could be heard. Youth should have resources (money, etc.) to get to that place. Expanded vision of “ministry”: youth-adult, youth-youth, resources (financial, emotional, spiritual, etc.). Youth-adult collaboration should have mutual respect and mutual learning. All UU youth should have a place in the denomination. Youth should feel like they have support in whatever they want to do. A positive feeling of support. Youth need ministry just like adults (not just programs). Unitarian Universalism should share their communities with other communities, and network among congregations.

**Hannah/Ian**

Accessible – Include a HUGE number of youth, not just the same ones who always come. Have that community be safe; focus on AR/AO work. Let's keep the things we love and cherish about YRUU – retain its character. Intellectual through experience – gaining growth by becoming more intellectual. Caters to more ways to explore spirituality. Need more resources, mentors, youth ministers.

**Megan/Amy**

Youth ministry currently seen as a problem – separate, disconnected, underserved. Vision is that youth ministry goes from being a 'problem' to being an asset. Good congregational *health*... congregations really need to be there for their young people, so that youth in crisis have a place to go (not just relying on other youth or advisors.)

**Jesse/Bill**

There should be multiple places for youth to be involved, not just youth group. More youth will remain UU as they grow older. Youth ministry has become its own religion in some ways – we need to recreate one faith... where youth can both self-differentiate *and* integrate with the rest of the congregation. Youth Office would focus less on continental YRUU programming, and more on congregational support. Refocus the whole ministry on the congregation.

**Reflections:**

- The gap between RE and youth group is significant. Youth group not perceived as a reason to move forward in UUism. Youth group just another place to hang out with (other) teens.
- Would like to see a greater focus on Junior High Youth Programs.
- There are two “gaps” – between RE & youth group, and between youth & adulthood.
- Youth Office needs to support congregations AND congregations need to network with each other to improve their programming.

**U.T. leads reflection** about the difference between vision and prediction.

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**Break**

**Review of Weekend Schedule** (U.T.)

**Logistical Announcements / Things to Add to Taskforce Binder** (Beth)

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# Review of History and Future Timeline of The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth

Megan Dowdell reviews the document on the history of the Consultation found in the Task Force Binder.

- January 2003 - YRUU Long-Range Planning Meeting
- Youth Council 2003/4 Common Ground III Resolution
- October 2004 Board of Trustees Meeting
- February 2005 Consultation
- April 2005 Design Team Meeting
- June 2005 – Beth Dana hired as staff support for the Consultation process
- General Assembly 2005:
  - Building buy-in for process
  - Presentation to congregational presidents
- Youth Council 2005:
  - Presentation of process
  - Youth Council request for additional taskforce members & deliberate inclusion of youth voice in the survey creation (no less than 500 youth participating in survey)
  - Models of accountability for the task force
  - Anxiety around adults ‘hijacking’ the process – congregational conversation facilitated by youth and adult, from another congregation.
- September 2005 – Applying for “Fund for Unitarian Universalism” Grant. Total budget will be ~\$250,000.

## Going Forward:

### 2005

- 9/30-10/3 Taskforce on Ministry to and With Youth meets
- 10/8/05 Workshop at the Mountain Desert District Annual Conference in Grand Junction, CO; led by Beth Dana
- 10/21-24 Workshop at the LREDA Fall Conference in Philadelphia, PA; led by Jesse Jaeger and Judith Frediani
- 11/5 Workshop at the Pacific Central District Leadership Day in Palo Alto, CA; led by Yvonne Rochon and Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward
- 11/29 - 12/4 Workshop at the Big Complex Meeting for district staff in Cambridge, MA

### 2006

- 7/24-7/28 Taskforce on Ministry to and With Youth meets and receives facilitation training for district/stakeholder gatherings

### 2007

- 5/4-5/7 Taskforce on Ministry to and With Youth meets
- 7/23-7/27 Summit on Ministry to and With Youth

## Reflections on Timeline:

- Jova: Real concern about making sure that the youth / YRUU voice is really present in the process & survey.

- Julian: If you haven't have time to read everything yet, be sure to read the process guidelines from the design team.
- Beth: Highlights feedback from GA 2005 and other sources about the process.
- Bill: There was concern from YRUU that the long-range plan had not been fully implemented yet.
- Jova: That concern was the main reason why the CGIII resolution didn't pass Youth Council. There has been lots of controversy about this whole process in the YRUU leadership. Lots of fear and concern about what's going to happen to YRUU, it's confusing. Worried about loss of continental community. CGIII was youth-proposed and youth-led with adult support; now there's a concern that this Consultation process is mostly driven by Bill.
- Jesse: More detail about Long Range Planning meeting: Started as resolution at Youth Council; in coordination with the Capital Campaign. The idea was to dream big... which was part of the problem – it was financially impossible. Did succeed in: transforming AR work, initiating CGIII process, revisioning GA Youth Caucus. Mostly set clear priorities that folks followed up with.
- Jova: YRUU concerned about power dynamics, this process felt imposed by the administration and people in power and not from grassroots.
- U.T.: Sounds like LRP didn't distinguish between vision, mission, and long-term objectives.
- U.T.: Lots of the concerns I'm hearing are what has already been happening, and what will continue to happen – we will need to keep those in mind.
- Bill: It was reported to me that YRUU felt that I had an agenda that I was going to impose regardless of what other people gave as input.

## Visions for the Role of the Task Force:

- U.T.: This group will be a steering mechanism
- Design team did define some of the roles and responsibilities:
  - Implement the process.
  - Review the process guides that will be created by staff.
  - Select and work with additional staff/consultants.
  - Facilitate the process in districts and core stakeholder organizations, and be consultants for congregations.
  - Prepare and publish the reports created by the congregational, stakeholder, and district gatherings.
  - Work to create buy-in from all stakeholders.

Also:

- Having creative license to give life to the basic structures & process which would engage as many people as possible in this process.
- Oversee the process and maybe making corrections in the process.
- Not doing everything, but making sure everything gets done.
- Accountable for inclusiveness of extant and potential stakeholders.
- Beth would like to get feedback from the Task Force about what they would like from her. U.T. says we should revisit that on Monday morning.
- U.T.: We've got people from different identities and constituencies, and people would like to represent them. I think the people from this Task Force should be a source of intelligence about what the norms in the community. This will be vital. What is X- community like? What are the power dynamics there? What would the reaction to this process be there? What can we do to bring them on board? Those insights will be critical to our success.
- Judith: Seeking buy-in is really important. Folks on the task force need to seek buy-in from their communities on this process, in addition to sharing knowledge from those communities with the task force.

## Models of Accountability for Task Force

There are lots of different definitions of accountability. One way to think about accountability is that (for example) Tera as LREDA Rep is carrying the info from all religious educators and must represent them; and then must report back to them. Another way to think about it is that the *entire* task force is accountable to the relevant constituencies.

- Tera and Sara agree that they couldn't possibly represent *all* of the people in their constituencies.
- Jova: The sources of intelligence thing *together with* the shared accountability thing works.
- UT: What does accountability to *somebody* mean? Does it mean seeking input? Does it mean needing to keep them informed? Does it mean that we have to do what they expect us to do and not do what they want us not to do?
- Tera: Feel accountable to the mission of the initiative: to grow our movement through effective youth ministry.
- Hannah: Accountability means that I want our process to be inclusive of my constituency.
- Judith: We are developing feedback structures (survey) that will bring the feedback from communities not represented here.
- Bill: To me, accountability does *not* mean seeking approval from constituencies and giving them veto power over what you do. It's more about communication than about power.

- Amy: Sounds like YRUU is concerned about their future. How can we help relieve some of those concerns. Wants to make sure that the survey results are seen as credible.
- Jova: Make sure to remember the diversity among constituencies – not everybody in YRUU feels the same way I do. U.T. reflects the there are more differences within groups than there are between groups.

Beth makes process observation that some folks are talking a lot, other folks not talking at all. Some people are raising hands and others aren't.

Hannah observes that we don't have a covenant for how we work together.

Julian: Covenant needed. Process observations needed (should be structured). Chalice needed.

### **Break for Lunch**

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## **Review of Covenant from February Meeting**

- Step up, Step back
- Engage in dialogue, not debate
- Speak from your own experience (use "I" statements)
- Don't take things as a personal insult or as directed against you
- Try to use clear language, not UU lingo (and ask if you don't understand)
- Assume the best
- Challenge assumptions – your own and others'
- Disclose your thinking before soliciting others' (tell us why you're asking the question)
- We will attend to balancing youth and adult voices
- We need to hear from less visible/vocal constituents

### **Points to add:**

- Be conscious about balancing conversational participation across identities (age, race, gender, etc.)
  - Follow through on your commitments
  - Be honest about when you can't follow through on your commitments.
  - Don't be afraid to ask for help
  - Try to help if you're asked.
  - Address problems when they arise, and as directly as is possible.
  - Be as authentic (being real with the people you're with) as we can be. Be honest about where you are in your comfort level at all times. Don't dance around the issues. Try to speak your feelings accurately.
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## Youth Ministry Survey Creation

1. What is it that we want to try to document? What will it do?
2. What is the content of the survey?
3. What is the process through which the survey will be conducted?

### **What is it that we want to try to document with the survey?**

- Capture the impact/voices of all youth, regardless of whether they stayed in the church or left the church, and document their involvement / non-involvement
- Where is your spiritual home (where your needs are being met)? Church? District? Continental? Home? Other?
- What makes successful youth groups successful? What makes struggling youth groups struggle?
- Can't assume everyone has a youth group, so what is the story of the 'life' of a youth in a congregation?
- We want a 'snapshot' of what's going on in congregations *right now*, not historically.
- What options are there for youth in your congregation (child care? choir?)
- How many youth are there in the congregation? How many participate in YRUU cons & trainings?
- If they don't participate, why not? Lack of info? Lack of money/drivers/adult support? Rules against involvement?
- Where and with what do youth need support (concerning life issues)?
- What makes a spiritual home for youth?
- What are youth-adult relations like? youth-advisor? youth-DRE? youth-minister? youth-adult members? Where do youth fit into the congregation?
- Whose responsibility is it to do youth ministry? Advisor? DRE? Minister?
- What do youth want from UUism and from a congregation?
- How do youth advisors get chosen?
- (Broad category) What are the educational opportunities that religious professionals (Ministers, DREs, youth advisors) have for education about youth ministry? Where are they getting education?
- Do leadership opportunities for youth exist in congregations? What about age ranges for membership? Youth involvement in committees & congregational/district board, RE, etc.?
- How does each respondent feel about the quality of support for youth in their congregation?
- Need to learn more about the passageway from RE to youth ministry. What's the 'fallout' rate and what do people think the cause of it is?
- Document what people consider gifts of youth in their congregation? What do they get/appreciate about the presence of youth in their community (actually, not ideally)?
- What is the greatest challenge around youth ministry?
- What is the congregation's connection to YRUU?
- Want specific numbers from congregations: Demographics: race, age, etc.
- What is the relationship of youth group size, to the total youth in congregation, to congregation size?
- How does the congregation know there's a youth group? How does the youth group engage with the congregation?
- What do adults and youth in a congregation think about how the (other) youth in their congregation feel about the quality of youth support in their congregation?
- Economic class background of the youth involved? How well are they supported by their families? Who is left out of activities/trips, etc? How economically accessible are our congregations to youth?
- Analysis of what youth's spiritual beliefs are, with lots of non-traditional categories? (There is also a caution about doing this, the answers may be misleading, divisive, and counter-productive.)

- Use of worship space/time for youth vs. whole congregation? Are your religious beliefs reflected in the Sunday worship? How accessible are Sunday morning worship services (music? Liturgy? Spiritual beliefs?) Is Sunday worship spiritually/intellectually engaging?
  - Ask campus ministry / young adult groups about their experience in YRUU. Why did they stay? Why did others leave?
  - Usability of survey: When we start doing district / stakeholder group conversations, want to be able to break out information *for that particular group*.
  - What have youth advisors done before? What's their background? Were they in youth groups themselves? Were they in LRY? How long have you been a UU?
  - This survey needs to be easy to take – let's narrow this down?
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### **Summary of Survey Brainstorm Presented**

- Some of these questions are uniform across a congregation (how many youth in your congregation, etc.) The base-level survey will be an individual survey.
- Will be distributed in the UU World, paper resources, and online.
- Goal of 2000 completed surveys, attempting to get an accurate cross-section.

There will *also* be a congregationally-based report back which includes the *quantitative* data from the whole congregation, and the *qualitative* results of the congregational conversation. People should take the individual surveys *before* they participate in the congregational conversations.

### **Additional Issues**

- How long do we have for this survey? Can we wait to have the congregational conversations?
- How to get to youth in congregations? Utilize district staff to make sure congregations distribute the survey and make sure people take it.
- A facilitated self-assessment at the congregational level.
- It may hurt more than help to give congregations the survey feedback before the congregational conversation.
- Another image: The “survey results” that would come back to the congregations would be nuggets of wisdom rather than hard data.
- How are we going to motivate disinterested youth to actually take the survey?

### **Questions:**

How do you want to use the results of the full diagnostic process?

- The Summit will use the information
- There is transformation just in the process of having the conversations.
- There is already a widespread acknowledgment that the conventional approach to youth ministry is largely problematic.

### **Possible Process: What if we just did a individual survey of only youth?**

- Youth survey
- output goes to congregational conversations including adult input
- output then goes to district/stakeholder gatherings
- output of all go to Summit

Three categories of youth we need to reach:

- 1) Youth involved in YRUU (including youth groups)
- 2) Youth in congregations who are not involved with YRUU
- 3) Youth who are no longer involved in their congregation

**Jesse, Jova, Julian, Sara, Beth, Amy decide on survey process:**

Survey: January 2-February 28

Survey Analysis: March

Then write Congregational Process Guide questions.

Congregational Conversations: April 1-May 31

Amy will take this information and craft a survey. First she'll run it by the Design Team to help with wording, and will send a revised and reworded copy to the entire taskforce for approval. Amy will also develop a distribution strategy for the taskforce.

**Taskforce Approves!**

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# SUNDAY:

## Brainstorming for Process Guides

### Process Guide for Congregational Conversations

- Facilitation how-to: Learning styles, techniques, co-facilitation with youth & adult, group discussion guidelines
  - How Long? At least 2 hours. Different models – 2 hours, 1 day.
  - Coordinator for logistics will probably be DRE and 1 or 2 youth from youth group.
  - Who will take part? DRE, Minister, youth/youth group, congregational board, middle-schoolers, youth advisors, COA teachers/mentors, parents of youth, RE committee
  - How many? As many people as want to
  - Spiritual element, connection to principles: religious professional leads opening, closing music, etc.
  - Don't spend too much time on complaints
  - Vision: understand what doesn't work in system
  - Process suggestions:
    - Youth-Adult caucusing with focus or questions
    - Force-Field Analysis on status quo → vision
    - See Philosophy-Making process guide
      - Various models; plan A, plan B, “buffet”
    - Artistically represent visions: audio, visual, kinesthetic
    - What does your understanding of UUism say about this community's commitment to ministry to/with youth? What do the principles say?
    - Exercise designed to produce report
  - Should be explanation of *why* we're doing the exercises (for facilitators)
  - Congregational outreach strategies, get youth buy-in. DREs & ministers as allies.
  - FOOD to attract/engage people.
  - Diagnosis → vision → needs assessment → what do we need to do more of / less of / differently
  - Facilitation: understanding of process & dynamics – good to have process observers, with process observation forms to be filled out by individual youth and adult, or in caucuses. Hand out forms at the beginning.
  - Report-back form: short & standard:
    - Include minutes as a supplement
    - Who attended
    - Name of congregation
    - How long was the conversation
    - Membership info
  - Guide will be color-coded and clear
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## **Process Guide for District Gatherings**

### **Topics:**

- Should take form of pluses & deltas
- Safety
- Age range
- Leadership opportunities (for youth & adults)
- Accessibility of youth programming
- Communication
- District support for programming
- AR/AO
- Visioning
- Needs → inter-relationality among congregations, districts & UUA
- Surveys & congregational conversations.

### **Outcome:**

- Visions & next steps
- Commitments to enacting changes (involvement, finances, etc.)
- Re-energize folks and provide resources → take to grassroots.

### District Level Objectives:

- To establish a shared appreciation of the challenges and opportunities for youth ministry.
- To begin to develop a vision that will feed into the Summit
- To build commitment for implementing change.
- To catalyze congregational collaboration.
- Get background – state of youth ministry in district level.
- What do you want? – visioning for change
- What resources do you need – from the UUA/from congregations? What do congregations need from the district?
- Reenergize people, resources.
- Take this back to the congregation.
- Connecting congregations to do youth ministry in collaborative clusters. Come out of isolation.

District gatherings facilitated by 1 youth and 1 adult from the taskforce.

Who should go? – Leaders from congregations, YAC/DYSC, UUA Trustee, district staff, district president, more.

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## **Process for Working with Stakeholder Groups**

Need to communicate with groups as directly as possible. Need to be very clear with them about what we want, and they will be clear about what their reactions and needs are. U.T. suggests we should craft a communication for each stakeholder group that includes our own assessment of where they are and what we would like from them.

### **UUMA**

- 1) *Education* (includes an altar call for ministers to approve and support the congregational conversations)
- 2) *Chapter meetings*: Getting them on board, use force field analysis.
  - a. We want to know what *they* are going to be changing personally in their ministry as a result of this process.
- 3) *GA Professional Days workshop*
  - What does it mean and how does it affect our conversation if “Ministers are afraid of youth.” Do we need to acknowledge that? If there is denial about it, it will continue to serve as a barrier.
  - Lots of ministers want to connect with youth, but go about it the wrong way. Ministers need to understand that they are (sometimes) hurting those they’re trying to serve.
  - Some DREs are afraid of youth too; don’t know how to address conflict.
  - Will likely need to talk to the MFC, Regional Sub-committees, and the UU seminaries.

### **YRUU**

- 1) *Education* (Conferences, YRUU Steering Committee, online forums)
  - a. Building buy-in will mostly be a matter of calming nerves.
  - b. Do we need resources/handouts to give out at cons?
  - c. Presenting to YRUU will be complicated – it will involve expanding their view of youth ministry as being beyond just YRUU.
- 2) *GA FUN TIMES*
- 3) District Youth-Adult Committee / Youth Steering Committee Meetings
- 4) Youth Council 2006: Presentation & Force Field Analysis

### **DRUUMM**

- 1) *Education* at November Conference
- 2) *Presentation* to YaYA Steering Committee
- 3) *2006 Fall Conference*: Force Field Analysis and Review Process

### **LREDA / REs**

*Want from them:*

- Be central (organizing) to the congregational meetings
- Engage people & Create excitement
- Involve youth (all) in surveys & conversations
- Work with youth on co-leadership of conversation
- Participate in diagnosis process with other REs
- Spread the word to other REs

*Strategies:*

- Force field diagnosis at LREDA Fall Conference 2005
- Lead the diagnosis of local RE groups
- Altar Call at LREDA Fall Con - willing to play this role?
- Use LREDA Newsletter, LREDA-L, Volunteers, Program Consultants
- Need to follow up after the Summit

- Chapters, clusters, District RE committees need to have conversations about implementation

### **Youth Advisors**

Aren't a lot of great ways to get Youth Advisors together, so:

- Do survey of Youth Advisors (September-November 2006)
- Train advisors to lead district-wide conference call (task force members on calls just to listen in).
- As district gatherings happen, up to 3 weeks after there will be at least 5 conference call time options for youth advisors to call in and talk about youth ministry. Aggregate data from survey is shared with them.

*Tasks:*

- Create survey
- Recruit and train youth advisors to facilitate conference calls in each district (Fall 2006)
- Schedule conference calls
- Arrange for task force member to be on each call, possibly the task force member that worked on that district gathering

*What:*

- What their role is
- Feedback – How did the meeting go? What can be done in the future?
- Diagnosis and needs assessment.
- Why they do youth advising
- What is their ideal vision of the future

### **District Staff (Allies)**

What are our expectations of them?

- Work with and support district youth leadership
- Partnership with youth could be a model for congregations as well
- Communication link
- Allies to youth
- Advocate for districts financial support of gatherings (and youth ministry in general)

*Where?*

- We'll have two hours at the Big Complex Meeting this winter
- District gatherings.
- Leadership days
- When might they do the district conversation? District gathering or no?
- District staff stakeholder group meeting at BCM 2006

*Timeline:* District gatherings: 06-07 church year

### **CUC**

*Expectations:*

- More support for youth governance bodies
- An openness to change from current structures
- Resources for youth
- Financial support
- What's your vision for Canadian Youth ministry and how are you going to support it?

*When can we talk to them:*

- Make use of CUC ACM
- Regular updates in monthly mailings
- Distribute the Consultation information via regional gatherings

*Canadian situation* (congregation size and geographical spread) is illustrative of how difficult it will be to contact youth and get them to take the survey.

## **Interweave**

### *Expectation:*

- How they can be more involved in ministering to queer youth?
- We expect them to support all queer UUs.

### *Education:*

- Need to talk to their leadership (Board) before we go to the group at large – haven't gotten buy-in from them.
  - Define issues for queer youth
  - Solicit help for giving out guide for congregational groups
- Meeting with Board at GA / Convocation
- Process Guides for congregational interweave groups
- Convocation – stakeholder meeting to design plan to engage Interweave in discussion about role in queer youth ministry.

### *Concerns:*

- There are queer youth advisors out there, but there are no known models for queer adults to role model for queer youth.
- It's important not to come at this from a combative standpoint; we need to invite them into the process as a key group.

## **CUUYAN**

- More of an allies group than a core group
- Easily accessible
- More supportive of revisioning. Easier to self-facilitate.
- Closer to the age group & more recent historical knowledge

### *Expectation:*

- Share their vision and feedback about their youth experience
- What do they know about why they stayed / why others left?
- (If you were a UU youth) If you were advising the infrastructure, particularly through the youth age, what should they do that would help young people to move into young adulthood?
- (If you were not a UU youth) What attracted you to the movement? What would attract others similar to you?
- Should also have a conversation about what they can do

### *Education*

- Educational web posting (uuyan.org, CYF web site)
- Process guide for district groups, Opus & ConCentric
- Networking at GA to solidify the process guide and bringing everyone together

## **Processing stakeholder conversations:**

- Jesse: Concern about staff workload to write all these process guides, processing the data
- We may be able to get some contractors to help us do some of this work.
- Can possibly utilize interns from local universities
- Question: How can we aggregate the results of a force field analysis?
  - Answer: You can predict that most of the answers will fall into one of ~5 broad categories to find consensus, and *weight* each one.
  - All of the process guides for all groups need to be standardized.
  - Also need to build in the idea of what you can change and how much impact it would have? Or maybe that should be done by the Summit with the aggregate info.
  - Folks at least need to be able to look at the force field analysis, step back, and ask "So what is the state of affairs here?"

## Communications:

Considering how hard communication is, it's a wonder that we're able to communicate as well as we do!  
How can we communicate with someone who has a different agenda than we do?

Sender → (Message a.k.a. "Directly observable data") → Receiver

- The meaning is in the sender and receiver, not in the message
- We can communicate because we share some codes of meaning
- Meaning is affected by sender's and receiver's:
  - Past
  - Identity
  - Relationship with other person
  - Current issues
  - Interpersonal dynamic in conversation
- Intentions and effects sometimes match, sometimes not. Many times receiver will project effects back on the sender's intentions. Clearer communication about that can undo a lot of difficulties.
- Here's the point: All these different groups have their own codes and systems of meaning and agendas, etc. When we communicate with them, we have to "know the code" and communicate with those groups in a way that they are ready to hear. We need to draw on our own wisdom in order to do that.
- How do we keep from miscommunication:
  - Important to cultivate internal allies
  - Have them tell us the politics, the internal language, the 'codes',
  - Speak in terms that are meaningful to them and are in sync with their own agendas
  - Goal is not to communicate my version of reality, but to *elicit* the way the other person is making meaning.
  - Most of us tend to drift towards the status quo - when someone pushes us to do something different, we tend towards conservatism and push back. When people push back, let's try and find out what their meaning is.

## Discussing working with YRUU

- It will either work when we bring it to Youth Council, or it won't.
- Huge trust issues, seems like adults are poised to take away all our power and autonomy, like they always have. Con Con decision, power of SC to recommend the YPS. Why should we work with these people who have done this to us.
- Lots of youth in congregations don't even have an awareness of district/continental YRUU.
- Many YRUU youth have experienced their spiritual UU home as being based in YRUU districts or continental YRUU. Most of the people we know *need* continental YRUU, and it's the place where they get the most depth of experience.
- We would like to provide that depth of experience on a local level...past experiences trying to "take it home" haven't worked out so well.
- It's important to stress the positives of YRUU when presenting this. We're sick of getting a bad rap; there's a lot of YRUU bashing going on out there. We work so hard to show how great we are, and yet all this stuff keeps happening to us.
- There will be a lot of new Youth Council members this year, so presentation will be *key*. YRUU has bought in to the process by having members on this task force.
- Bill: In part, because of the autonomy that continental YRUU was given, YRUU has developed its own distinctive culture which is not recognizable by the rest of UUism. We have religious cultures which have diverged considerably. There is no common understanding of terms (e.g. 'youth empowerment', etc.)

- U.T.: Communication around the issue of autonomy has been very difficult – lots of different code and misunderstood language & meaning.

How does this conversation affect what we do going forward?

- Most of what the YRUU reps have said is the reason we're here: so we can 'take it home' to the congregations.
- Be aware of *power* and loss of power and be very strategic about presenting it.

### **Conversation Processing the Day's Experience**

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# MONDAY: Dividing up Tasks and Responsibilities

## Feedback from Yesterday:

We've got a *huge* task before us, lots of work to do. Looking forward to dividing up the work today.

<b>R – Responsibility</b> <b>A – Approval</b> <b>S – Support</b> <b>I – Should be Informed</b>	Youth Office	Office of President & conveners	YRUU Leaders	District Staff	Resource Development Office	CUC/ YAG	Design Team	Task Force	
Develop survey	R						S	A	
Develop force field model with procedures	R				R			I	
Write Process Guides	R				S			S/A	
Who will work with/at districts									
Who will work with stakeholder groups									
Engaging YRUU / UUMA /LREDA means engaging with them at a district / chapter level									
Scheduling stakeholder meetings									
Communications task – taskforce needs to be communicating with UUism	S	R							
Developing promotional organizing strategy	R								
Training youth advisors to facilitate conference calls in their districts									
Implementing survey									
Finding youth (utilize LREDA members)	R		S	S		S		S	

## Working with Districts:

- District presidents meeting (Bill & Megan)
- Big Complex Meeting (Bill & Megan)
- YAC & DYSC meetings (Megan and Beth will work on talking points for these and other chapter meetings.)
- Facilitating district gatherings in 06-07
- Educate and achieve buy-in
- If we're going to assign people now to work with districts/stakeholders, they should start building relationship immediately. Liaison / educate / consult. (Julian, Sara, Jova, Beth, Jesse will establish district liaison teams and tasks.)
- District staff could help facilitate gatherings, but not in their own districts

### Complications:

- Want districts to be comfortable
- Build rapport
- Harmony and working relationship with the youth-adult team
- *We need to figure out what the time commitments will be and see if this will work.*

Using district staff as communicators is a good way to go.

**For the Fall:**

Describe the process

Encourage youth to take the survey

Encourage adult constituencies to schedule congregational conversations

**Identifying youth**

Buy-in from DREs at LREDA

There needs to be a letter written explaining the situation

Letter needs to be followed up by individual, personal contact with direct personal connections.

**Meta-Communication: (Megan & Bill)**

- A grand public communication: UUA Website, Congregational mailing, Synapse
- Beth/Office of Electronic Communication setting up a massive online calendar that shows all the different ways to plug in with the consultation (District meetings, DYSC meetings, etc.) – Task force members should send Beth info on events/meetings they'll be at.

**Communicating with Each Other as a Task Force:**

- Primarily e-mail, sometime conference calls
- Email list should be active, with confirmation of stuff sent out – helpful to know that people have read it
- Do we need an executive committee? It has effectively been Bill, Megan (as co-conveners), Jesse and Beth. Need a youth.
- **Decision: Quick-Response team will be: Bill, Megan, Jesse, Beth, Homer.**

**Closing and Photo-Op**