

YRUU Response to YRUU Structure Question from Summit on Youth Ministry July 2007

In response to the questions regarding the role of YRUU in a new vision of youth ministry, Youth Council is making the following statement:

YRUU¹ provides a valuable space for youth empowerment and allows youth to govern within their faith community. Many youth, as a result of their involvement and empowerment on the district/regional and/or continental levels, also become more invested in their congregations. We, Youth Council, believe that youth empowerment (as defined by the Task Force on Ministry to and with Youth) must be protected. The restructuring of YRUU and youth ministry should maintain our core youth programming (see below) because it is valuable to the youth that YRUU already serves. However, youth ministry, of which YRUU is a part, must expand to better accomplish the visions of the Summit on Youth Ministry. Youth Council believes that a youth continental leadership structure must exist; however, it is open to changes involving the current continental structures such as YRUU Steering Committee and Youth Council.

It is unrealistic for YRUU to meet every need of all UU youth; however, it does meet needs for many through current services such as:

- Leadership development, especially through the Chrysalis Trainings,
- Youth programming at General Assembly,
- Continental, district/regional, and congregational youth governance,
- Providing youth groups with resources,
- Synapse, list-serves, and other forms of communication,
- Groundwork and other AR/AO trainings,
- Ministries to Youth of Color,
- Ministries to queer youth².

We, Youth Council, recommend that YRUU could serve more youth by implementing the following objectives, including but not limited to:

- Closer communication between congregations and district/regional-level youth governance,
- Closer communication between Steering Committee and youth district/regional governing bodies (YACs/DYSCs/RRYSC),
- Closer communication between continental YRUU Steering Committee and Canadian Advisory Youth Adult Committee (CAYAC),
- Closer communication between Steering Committee and DRUUMM YaYA,

1 YRUU is a youth organization sponsored by the UUA and is primarily organized on three levels:

- As youth groups in UU congregations,
- As Youth-Adult Committees or Youth Steering Committees on a District/Regional level which plan conferences and trainings for youth and youth advisors, and which advocate for youth on a congregational and district/regional level, and
- On a continental level as Youth Council, Steering Committee, and at continental events and trainings.

2 This includes youth who identify outside of the gender binary.

- Creating new and improving existing safe spaces for and ministering to Youth of Color and queer youth,
- Redesigning existing or designing new trainings for shorter events or a series of mini-trainings,
- Mentorship between congregations with strong youth ministries and those struggling or just getting started,
- Sharing of resources between districts/regions,
- District/regional services that help protect youth groups from conflicts involving political fluctuations in congregations,
- More opportunities for direct representation of congregational youth, specifically on the district/regional level,
- Encouraging direct mentorship between youth leaders.

We, Youth Council, recommend that youth ministry expands to also accomplish the following objectives, including but not limited to:

- Offering more ministry to non-congregational youth,
- Offering more ministry to youth in congregations who are not served by youth groups,
- Creating youth ministry training for ministers,
- Creating youth ministry training for religious professionals and laypeople,
- Creating new and improving existing safe spaces for and ministering to Youth of Color and queer youth.

We, Youth Council, recommend these actions to accomplish the above objectives:

- Providing conflict resolution services for youth in congregations with conflicts involving political fluctuations in congregations,
- Creating an extension of the Church of the Larger Fellowship specifically for youth,
- Encouraging youth representation on search committees for people who minister to or advise youth,
- Encouraging youth representation on leadership bodies traditionally reserved exclusively for adults,
- Implementing a more frequent feedback process from congregations and districts/regions to the Office of Youth Ministry,
- Better publicizing and advertising youth leadership positions.