

Transforming GA Working Group Report to Board - January 2014

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We have agreed on a set of guiding principles that we would like the Board to consider at the January Board meeting, and we will facilitate a discussion of these principles during our agenda time. Our goal coming out of the meeting is to have agreement on a set of principles that will provide the foundation for the ongoing work of this working group and the Board. These first draft principles are presented below in the section titled "Proposed Guiding Principles."

In addition, we have developed a proposed work plan that is consistent with the overall work plan that was developed at the October, 2013 meeting of the UUA Board. This work plan provides for a rich discussion of the Guiding Principles and of two alternative ways of fulfilling those goals at GA2014 in Providence and then consideration of a final proposal at GA2015 in Portland. The schedule is presented following the Guiding Principles in the section titled "Proposed Work Plan." We would also like to get Board feedback and commitment to a work plan at the January 2014 meeting. We fully understand that depending on how things go at GA2014, the plan may need adjustment.

Proposed Guiding Principles

We want a delegate body with strengthened accountability and where delegates have a more meaningful role

- Fewer delegates
- Multi-year commitment from delegates
- The form of our gathering will have more conversation and less presentation
- No automatic delegate status for ministers
- Board will be on ongoing relationship with delegates between National General Assemblies

We would like to have multi-year plan for big conversations that is driven by the delegates

- National General Assembly agrees on "big question"
- If we move to a biennial model, Regional Assemblies in the off year discuss that question so that the delegates will arrive at the next National General Assembly informed and with input from the regional assemblies. If we continue with annual assemblies, we will have a two year cycle.

We envision a strong role for Regional Assemblies

- These could happen in the "off years" in a biennial model
- Regional Assemblies provide an opportunity for local discussion of the "Big Question" that will be on the agenda for the next National General Assembly.
- The Board will commit to have trustees present at regional assemblies.

We will make GA participation more economically accessible.

- We will earmark some portion of the profits from the sale of Beacon Street to governance.
- Limit business days to Saturday and Sunday

We need a plan to promote diversity in delegate body

- At large delegates selected with regional input.
- We are cautious about going back to the district selection model.

Proposed Work Plan

January 2014 Board Meeting

- Board agrees on major goals and assumptions for transforming GA
- Board agrees on key message points for communications to congregations and other constituents
- Board agrees on overall work plan

April 2014 Board Meeting

- Board agrees on details of two proposals that will be the basis for discussions with the delegates at GA. We will consider 2 approaches (to be developed by the Transforming GA working group) that fulfill the goals and assumptions agreed to in January. One approach will assume biennial GAs, the other will assume we continue to have annual GAs.
- Board agrees on key message points for use in materials that help delegates prepare for GA
- Consider whether there is budget for a GA discount for delegates committed to 2 year terms and who plan to attend in both years.

Preparation for GA2014

- Board includes Transforming GA initiative in webinars and other materials that are used to prepare delegates for GA
- Would we like to offer a special webinar ahead of GA for those delegates whose congregations have selected them for a 2 year term as delegates? This would also include ministers and Masters Level DREs as they automatically have delegate status.

June 2014 Meeting, GA2014 (Providence)

- Transforming GA initiative overview provided in Thursday morning General Session. We will present the goals the Board has as for transforming GA and will present the two alternative approaches.
- Would we like to offer a reception and conversation for those delegates whose congregations have selected them for a 2 year delegate term. This would also include ministers and Masters Level DREs as they automatically have delegate status.
- Mini Assembly on Transforming Governance will be held on Thursday. At the mini assembly are primarily interested in getting feedback on the proposals and suggestions for improvement. As part of the mini assembly we will ask delegates who are interested to form groups or caucuses that will meet to craft a statement that presents key points for delegates to consider as they assess the options. We

will give caucuses priority at the microphones during the discussion of the proposal at the General Session.

- During the Friday General Session we will give a short report of what occurred at the Mini-Assembly. We encourage delegates who want to know more to attend the "Meet the Board / Meet the Board Candidates" reception / workshop that will be scheduled for later in the day on Friday.
- On Saturday we will have discussion of the proposals during the General Session. Caucuses will be given priority at the microphones. We will instruct delegates that we are not looking so much for advocacy as we are looking for important strengths or issues of concern with the two proposals. We will take a non-binding straw poll at the conclusion of debate.

October 2014 Board Meeting

- Agree on proposal for transforming GA to be used in linkage discussions to be help beginning in November at the DPA meeting. We need a plan for linkage work - Can the Linkage working Group be prepared to present a plan at the October meeting?
- Agree on message points to be used in webinar with delegates that had committed to 2 year terms.

January 2015 Board Meeting

- Review proposed bylaws changes to implement option agreed to at the October 2014 meeting. Place these on the preliminary agenda.
- Any other special communications to delegates committed to 2 year terms?

April 2015 Board Meeting

- Consider feedback from linkage work. Make any needed changes to the final proposal to be considered by delegates.
- Agree on key message points to be used in materials that will go to all delegates.

June 2015 GA

- Delegates consider and vote on proposal

Additional Questions for the Board to Consider at the January 2014 Meeting:

We have several additional questions for which we need decisions on at the January meeting:

- Is the Board interested in providing incentives or benefits to congregations to select delegates that are committed to 2 year terms for GA2014 and GA2015? There are a variety of things that we can do under the bylaws, including financial incentives (such as a discount on registration that the Board would need to fund) and non-financial incentives (such as access to special webinars or receptions for multi-year delegates, CLF type worship for multi-year delegates).
- As reported in the Vice Moderators report, we need to commit now that should the delegates decide to go to biennial GAs through a vote at GA2015, the earliest year that we could implement that and have an "off year" would be GA2019 and possibly not until 2020. Are we willing to commit to GA2019 before the delegates vote in 2015?
- Is the Board prepared to host webinars to prepare delegates for GA2014? The Transforming Governance working group believes that this outreach is essential since we no longer have a trustee in

each district working to prepare the delegates in each district. We need to identify the leader and team on the board that will be responsible for preparing content and agree on a basic schedule for this. We will also need support from the staff to make sure these are done well assuming that the board moves forward with the webinars. The team working on the webinars should also consider what other material the board should prepare to help delegates get ready for GA. In general, we should “Begin as we mean to Continue” in terms of strengthening the relationship between the Board and the delegates.