

Moderator's Report

January 1, 2015

Jim Key
UUA Moderator
Chief Governance Officer

January 4, 2015

Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

For some time I have been focused on ways to make our delegates to General Assemblies more diverse and more accountable to their congregations. I offer this proposal for the Trustee's consideration.

Background:

There is a desire and need to enhance our democratic process and for our delegates to the General Sessions of our General Assemblies to be more diverse and representative of our membership.

Generally, our delegate bodies represent only 40 percent of our congregations, meaning that as many as 600 congregations have no voice in the governance process of our Association. Additionally, approximately 80 percent of those attending are self-funded with no financial support from congregations. As a result, those on the margins are under-represented: youth, young adults, people of color, people of the LGBTQ community, and those unable to attend due to economic and other constraints. Moreover, few delegates are elected or charged by their congregations, and many arrive with little awareness of the business agenda, rules of debate, or sense of their congregation's views on the issues to be debated.

As a result of this self-selection process, delegates tend to come from the dominant culture creating the fiction of a democratic process that does not represent the multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-generational delegate body we seek or the Beloved Community we seek to live into.

Therefore, as a pilot project, I propose establishing a scholarship fund of \$50,000. This is an unbudgeted item and requires the approval of the Board of Trustees and would be charged to the cost of governance. The Treasurer and CFO advises there are sufficient unrestricted funds to support this pilot program.

The fund would be administered as follows:

1. \$10,000 designated for each of the five regions
2. Expectation that additional grants to these funds will be made from regional/district assets
3. Expectation that congregations will contribute to the financial support of the delegates which are selected
4. Selection of delegates to be administered by the regional lead in consultation with a representative(s) from the district boards within each region
5. Selection of delegates will ultimately be the responsibility of congregational called and lay leadership who will make the final selection of any delegates representing their congregation
6. Selection of potential delegates to be made in consultation with Y/YA leadership, DRUUMM, TrUUst, and other groups as appropriate with selection priorities as follows:
 - a. Youth and young adults
 - b. People of color
 - c. LGBTQ community
 - d. People with accessibility concerns, both physical and economic
 - e. Consideration of development opportunities' for new or future leaders
 - f. Focus on geographic diversity within the region
 - g. Focus on congregations that have not sent delegates in recent years
 - h. Preference to congregations that are Fair Share
7. Expectations of delegates receiving scholarships
 - a. Charged by the congregation as a delegate accountable to that congregation and is expected to report back at a congregational service or meeting
 - b. Attendance at a pre-GA video conference to review the agenda and business that will be discussed, debated, and voted
 - c. Attendance at the orientation on the first day of GA
 - d. Completion of a post-GA survey to assess this pilot program
8. Expectation of a check-in and support process during General Assembly for delegates chosen under this program

The Moderator will host a videoconference or meeting in the late summer or fall of 2015 with the selection teams to assess this pilot program.

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Should the board approve the motion below, I will need to engage the DPA and Director of Congregational to ensure our engagement with congregations is clear.

Moved: That the board of trustees approve the establishment of a \$50,000 scholarship fund for the purpose of selecting, charging, training, and debriefing delegates who would otherwise not be chosen nor able to attend General Assembly as an accountable delegate from their congregation.

Since my last report of October 2014, I have participated in scores of audio and video meetings with board working groups and many other passionate Unitarian Universalists about a wide range of interests and concerns. I would like to call the board's attention to four of these conversations.

In the first, a minister in New England wants the Board and Administration to begin thinking about how the 400th anniversary (2020) of the Pilgrims landing in Plymouth might be best celebrated or noted. Both Unitarians (UUA) and Congregationalists (UCC) lay claim to this heritage, and it would be in the interests of both institutions to work on this commemoration together with consideration of any celebration's impact on Native Americans who might approach the anniversary as a time of national mourning. The minister is suggesting one approach would be to bring a Business Resolution to the 2015 General Assembly that would call for a commission to be created to recommend appropriate ways to commemorate this potentially sensitive event.

In the second, a caller who had lodged a complaint of non-sexual abuse against a minister wanted me to know of her continued deep pain, several years later. She felt strongly that my apology should have come from a minister rather than the Moderator and that the apology was not broad enough; that it only covered sexual misconduct and not abuse of power or bullying. Moreover, she finds the current web site and instructions on how to file a complaint, hard to find and opaque once found. I reported on the status of the Boundaries Working Group and activities that would soon lead to an improved process.

In the third, Bill Sasso, President of MidAmerican Region, wanted to express the Region's desire that any by-law changes being considered-

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-as a result of the Southern Region's actions--ensure that regions retain the same rights as districts currently have under our bylaws. The MidAmerica Region provided this resolution:

"Resolution Requesting Recognition of Inheritance by the MidAmerica Region of UUA District Rights

Whereas the Bylaws and Rules of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) recognize the MidAmerica Region as "autonomous and shall be controlled by its own member congregations to the extent consistent with the promotion of the welfare and interests of the Association as a whole and of its member congregations" (Section C13.4);" and

Whereas the Bylaws of the UUA (1) define districts more specifically, recognizing their bylaws, geography, and member congregations (Rule G-13.2.1); (2) reserve to districts the specific ability to add business resolutions to the General Assembly Agenda (section 4.11); and (3) reference districts in several congregational capabilities regarding business items for consideration by Special General Assembly (section 4.15) and nomination by petition of candidates for UUA office (section 9.6); and

Whereas the UUA Bylaws in their current form do not specifically recognize or empower governance regions in an equivalent manner; and the MidAmerica Region was created by a dissolution and merger of the Districts contained therein;

Therefore, be it resolved the Board of Trustees of the MidAmerica Region hereby requests that the UUA recognize that the MidAmerica Region has inherited the rights and responsibilities of the former districts that now comprise the region."

In the fourth call, I spoke with Rev. Leslie Takahashi about Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development programming in general and for Y/YA people of color specifically. I agreed to engage the Board's Inclusion Working Group and the Administration's Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to assess what additional board focus might be appropriate.

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Congregational and other visits

October 24, Berkeley, CA – Conducted a leadership workshop for Pacific Central District

October 25, Oakland, CA – Preached at First UU Church of Oakland

November 1, Athens, GA – Was Keynote speaker at 60th Anniversary Celebration of First UU Congregation of Athens

November 2, Athens, GA – Conducted town hall meeting between services

Meetings with committees and organizations

November 6-8, Boston, MA – Met with District Presidents Association

November 13, San Diego, CA – Met with Susan Weaver on board business

November 14-16, Boston, MA – Met with President's Council

January 8-10, Columbus, OH – Met with GAPC

January 12-13, Boston, MA – Met with Appointments Committee