

Open UUA Committee – February 1, 2012 Meeting Notes (DRAFT)

Present: Sam Trumbore (Chair), Dick Jacke, Cheri Cody, Jennifer Carver, David Jackoway (Observer)

1. Agenda Review: We discussed the agenda and agreed that a covenant would be discussed at the next meeting/call.
2. Introductions: Since three of the four committee members are relatively new (Dick and Cheri appointed in October; Jennifer appointed in January), each member gave a brief introduction to his/her background and relevant experience. Committee members have a wide range of involvement and experience at the congregation, district, and UUA level, and all have been Unitarian Universalists for many years (ranging from 19 years to lifelong). One member has experience working under open government sunshine laws in the state of Florida.
3. History of the Open UUA Committee and its Charge:
 - a. We discussed the history of the Open UUA Committee based on members' review of materials available on the UUA website (mainly at <http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/ouc/index.shtml>) (also see items on left sidebar). Members feel that the committee's charge (from 2004, to the new "Openness Implementation Committee") needs to be reviewed to clarify the current charge for the committee. The charge is to monitor UUA board and committees (both of the board and other UUA committees).
 - b. We discussed whether the committee should have a long-term monitoring function and what it might be. Sam provided insights from a conversation with UUA President, Peter Morales. Issues raised during that conversation that warrant further discussion by the committee include 1) executive sessions of the UUA board and 2) ensuring the UUA committees are providing information about their work in a timely, transparent manner.
 - c. **Action Item**: Continue to work on the committee charge and request a revised charge from the UUA board as appropriate. As the next action on this issue, Sam will also talk to Gini Courter, UUA Moderator, to get her input about the committee's charge.
4. Current Committee Work/Monitoring: This discussion took place at various times during the call. The main points are summarized here.
 - a. Following the discussion of the committee's charge, we discussed ongoing monitoring and work that the committee can be undertaking in the meantime. In the past, committee members planned to monitor UUA committees to determine their level of compliance with the transparency guidelines. While the Open UUA Committee does not have specific enforcement authority over the guidelines, we discussed a need to establish compliance standards for posting information about committee work. Specifically, we discussed a need

- for the following: 1) Set standards for posting to measure compliance by committees, and 2) at end of the year, generate a report of how people are doing, including UUA board.
- b. We discussed that there should be an opportunity for committee members and others to provide input into the revision of the committee charge and development of the compliance standards. Such a process would hopefully increase the likelihood of compliance. Once standards are developed, committee members could check in with committees every 6 months and generate a report to the UUA board at the end of the year.
 - c. We discussed the need to institutionalize openness as part of the culture of how committees work, making it a routine part of UUA business. The committee could develop training for committee chairs and members in transparency and openness, similar to such training used to ensure open government. We discussed that it is Important to articulate the importance of being open and how it contributes to the UUA and Unitarian Universalism. It's a whole way of being, communicating and operating that should involve all committee members.
5. Electronic Communications: We discussed the Open UUA email list hosted by the UUA and agreed that we should do most of our business on the list to ensure openness. We also discussed the UUA_Updates email list, which was started by a former committee member to provide information about important events, news, actions, etc., related to UUA business. There is a need to clarify the purpose of that email list and who has responsibility for maintaining the list and posting information.
6. Additional Areas of Concern for Openness
- a. District Presidents Association (DPA): Should the DPA or DPA committees follow openness guidelines? There is very little information available about the DPA, its work, and district consolidation process.
 - b. Related organizations: How does the need for openness affect other organizations that are not part of the UUA? The committee can serve to increase awareness of standards that such organizations can (should?) follow as Unitarian Universalists. Committee members should review transparency guidelines for potential revisions.
7. Action Items:
- a. Continue to work on the committee charge and request a revised charge from the UUA board as appropriate. As the next action on this issue, Sam will also talk to Gini Courter, UUA Moderator, to get her input about the committee's charge and options for training committee chairs and members.

- b. Conduct a brief survey of UUA committees to determine compliance with current guidelines. Each committee member will assess compliance of UUA committees listed on the website as follows: Sam (Committees from A-E), Jennifer (F-I), Dick (J-O), Cheri (T-Y). Dick will make a checklist/guidelines of what we should check on to standardize the inventory.
 - c. Sam will touch base with the UUA board's Communication Working Group per a suggestion made by the meeting observer. Erik Carlson is chair.
8. Observer Comments: The observer felt that the committee was on the right track, asking valuable questions.

After a brief check out, the following next meeting time was set for **March 7, 2012, 9:00 PM ET (6:00 PT)**. Conference call information and an agenda will be posted to the OpenUUA email list.

Submitted by Jennifer Carver