

Open UUA Committee

Notes from April 18, 2012, Teleconference

Present: Sam Trumbore (Chair), Jennifer Carver, Cheri Cody, and Dick Jacke. No observers were present.

Sam opened with a reading by Rabindranath Tagore, followed by check-in.

1. Agenda was accepted as distributed.
2. Dick agreed to take notes.
3. Letter(s) to Committees – Dick had provided a draft letter with a sample reports of compliance on the J-O group that he had researched. This letter would work well if all committees were aware of the expectations of openness. Although we believed that all of the chairs should have been made aware of the expectations, we decided that we were not certain that we could rely upon that assumption. **Dick agreed to redraft the letter in a more general way without a listing of areas of non-compliance.**
4. Conversation with Gini Courter – Sam was finally able to connect with Gini Courter and discuss the Board's expectations around openness. Gini and the Board have not been pressing on compliance, but is concerned that the expectations of openness and transparency actually lead to better and more accountable process. Gini cited a recent situation with the GA 2012 Oversight group in which she felt that the process may, in fact, have suffered due to openness. She was also concerned that the move to Policy Governance, which came mostly after the Open UUA Committee was established, has moved more policy making and implementation decisions to the staff. How should that be addressed in our openness policy? It probably would need to be reflected in an Executive Limitation policy established by the Board to govern transparency in the operation of staff (where appropriate). **Dick will research the existence of such an Executive Limitation policies in other organizations that might be samples for our Board.**
5. Communications Working Group – Sam reported that the Communications Working Group has spent some time discussing openness, but it has not been their primary concern. They are concerned about how to make materials available. They are looking into making some available on request, with Kay Montgomery deciding what can and cannot be released. This policy is still in the works. **Sam is still expecting to speak with John Hurley and Erik Carlson about openness.**
6. Training for New Committee Chairs – **Sam will be attending the orientation session for new chairs, and will find out what incoming chairs are being told about**

expectations of openness. He may even have an opportunity to help with the training in that area. Sam will also check to see whether or not there might be an opportunity at GA for us to engage with committee chairs. He will check on the date and time of the training for new committee chairs.

7. **Sam will see that the Open UUA Committee site is up-to-date with the agendas, meeting dates/times, and notes.** It is important that our group model the openness and transparency that we are asking of others.
8. We agreed that it might be helpful in our work to be able to cite examples of why an open and transparent process is important. **We all agreed to give this some thought.**
9. Our report to the Board will include the baseline data that we have been collecting on openness compliance. It was agreed that the sample that Dick provided was a good format to follow in reporting this data. **The other members of the committee agreed to provide this data for their respective groups no later than May 20.**
10. Although our committee has had a liaison from the UUA Board in the past, we have not been assigned a new liaison. This is not unexpected. Because the Board will be reduced drastically in size very soon, it would be impossible for the remaining Board members to provide liaisons to all of the existing committees and task forces. They are, therefore, discontinuing the practice of assigning Board liaisons to such groups.
11. **We are all to check our GA calendars with an eye to available times for our meeting(s) there. Presumably, we can discuss possible dates and times at our next meeting.**
12. Covenant – Postpone until meeting at General Assembly. Jennifer will lead process.
13. Next committee conference call tentatively set for Wednesday, June 6, 2012 at 8:00 pm EDT.
14. Sam closed the meeting with a haiku from Izumi Shikibu.