

Vice Moderators Report
October, 2013

GAMAP & General Assembly Planning Committee Meeting

There are three meetings that I participated in representing the Board: The General Assembly Mission of the Association Partnership (GAMAP) meeting, the “Grid meeting” and the meeting of the GA Planning Committee (GAPC).

The GAMAP meeting has leadership from the staff, the Planning Committee and from the Board participating. We reviewed the delegate feedback from GA2013. If Board members are interested in the report, I can forward it to you. We discussed a variety of issues ranging from how we welcome people, to the possibilities for justice work at GA2014 and how the Planning Committee interacts with worship leaders to assure a uniformly high quality worship experience at GA. The meeting was productive and collaborative among all parties present.

Coming out of the Grid meeting and the meeting of the GAPC, the GAPC has posted the schedule grid for GA 2014, and a copy is attached to this report. Some highlights of the Grid:

- This grid reflects considerably less plenary time (now called General Session) than has been the case for several years. The Board will have General Session time that is on the order of what we had in Salt Lake City, but will certainly require careful management of the time by the Board and Moderator. The feedback from the attendees and delegates was that while they found plenary time valuable, they wanted more time for workshops and other gatherings.
- The morning General Session each day is colored as worship that then fades into General Session Time. The first 30 minutes of the General Session on Thursday, Friday and Saturday will be worship time. This worship time is in addition to the traditional plenary time allocated to the Board. In other words, the General Sessions were lengthened to accommodate worship.
- The Board has workshop slots available for our use.
 - We will use many of those slots for items that are required by the bylaws, primarily mini assemblies and the budget hearing.
 - We have 10 slots available for workshops by the Board or Board Committees.
- The Planning Committee is completely re-working the approach to in-gatherings and how we welcome people to GA. From the feedback it was very clear that the regional in-gatherings were not serving us well, and they will not be on the schedule for 2014.

Location of GA2017

The GAPC plans to have a recommendation for the Board to consider at the October meeting for the location of GA2017. There are two sites being considered: Austin TX and New Orleans LA. The

recommendation along with supporting information will come to us very late, most likely on Wednesday of our board meeting week. We should vote on it during our meeting.

GA Fees & Budget

In the past, the Board has reviewed the GA Budget when it becomes final (after the September meeting of the GAPC) and also voted on the GA fees. While this has been our practice, it appears to be a carry-over from the pre-policy governance structure. There is no basis in our policies for requiring the GA Budget be presented to the Board in September. The GA Budget is included in the budget that is presented to the Board in April and which we take to the General Assembly. The GA portion of the budget is considered preliminary at that time.

The relevant policy is in policy 2.7.4:

[The President shall not] Fail to monitor revenues and expenses against the Board-approved budget, or fail to make timely reports on significant variances.

- A. In the current operations budget segment, the President shall make every reasonable effort to avoid an operating deficit.*
- B. In the Beacon Press budget segment, the President shall follow the Beacon Press Financial Policy (Appendix 2.F).*
- C. In the General Assembly budget segment, the President shall make every reasonable effort to avoid an operating deficit (after taking into account the surplus or deficit carried forward from the prior year).*
- D. In the UU [Unitarian Universalist] Common Endowment Fund budget segment, the President shall follow the Investment Policy (Appendix 2.B) and the Endowment Spending Policy (Appendix 2.H).*

So unless there is a material shortfall expected, the Board does not need to review the GA budget.

The Board is required (by Rule 4.9.9 of the Bylaws) to establish the fees for GA. I will provide details of the proposed fees for 2014, including a comparison with the 2013 fees as soon as this is available.

Planning for GA2014:

The Board needs to begin now to prepare whatever bylaws changes or business resolutions we want to place on the GA2014 business agenda as we will need to adopt the preliminary agenda at our January meeting.

We have two C Bylaw changes that had their first vote at GA2013 and will need to have their second vote at GA2014:

- The proposed bylaws changes to recognize regions in addition to districts for those areas where the districts have consolidated into a single region and to acknowledge the Mid-America region.
- The change to the language of Article 2 regarding inclusion.

A new idea: 8th Principle

Paula Cole Jones facilitated a retreat for the GAPC for the first half day of their meeting. I'd like the Board to be aware of one item that came up at the retreat. Paula reported on work that she and others are involved in to propose an 8th principle. The draft language she showed us was:

[We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote]:

Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse multicultural Beloved Community that accountably dismantles racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

This concept was also discussed during the meeting of the Council for Cross Cultural Engagement. The CCCE discussed a variety of ways that this concept might be brought to the Assembly. For example, there was an exploration of whether this would fit better within our bylaws and have a better chance of success as an amendment to the Purposes section of the Bylaws rather than as an 8th principle. The CCCE did not have a specific recommendation, but overall the conversation indicated that the participants were intrigued with the basic concept.

Whatever approach is taken, any process to Amend Section II of the bylaws will not be quick. The process for changing Article II is recently revised, and while the procedures are somewhat more flexible than those previously in place, it is still intentionally a slow and relatively difficult process. These procedures are laid out in Article XV of the bylaws. In a nutshell, before Article II can be changed, there must be a study commission for several years of review before the proposed amendments can be brought to the Assembly. Once the amendments come to the Assembly, there will be at least two votes of the Assembly required in successive years, depending on whether additional amendments are adopted once the proposal comes to the Assembly for a vote.