



TO: UUA Board of Trustees
FROM: Lyn Conley for the Virtual Teams Taskforce
RE: Status Report
DATE: October 15, 2008

Imagine:

- ⇒ A Committee member from Portland, OR reports to the UUA Board via webcam instead of flying across the country for a 10 minute face-to-face session.
- ⇒ A UUA staff member located outside of New England reports to a Working Group via a webcam. For that matter, it could save someone an hour trip and parking!
- ⇒ Your congregation uses webcams to hold weekly meetings between the minister and Board members thus reducing the travel time and gas to meet. [Happened in Gainesville, FL]
- ⇒ Your Board holds their monthly meetings via phone conference calls (every other month) thus reducing the carbon foot print. This could expand the volunteer base allowing parents or those who don't travel at night to serve on the Board. Everyone calls in and the chair is at the congregation on speaker phone for any people who show up to "attend the meeting" and to host special guests. Meetings which are more complex that require face to face conversation are still held in person. [Happened in Gainesville, FL]

At the General Assembly Finance Committee meeting the idea to create an interdisciplinary taskforce was hatched. This is now know as the Virtual Teams Taskforce and is comprised of:

2 members of the Fin Committee - Lyn Conley & Linda Laskowski
2 members of the Committee on Committees - Roger Comstock & Tom Loughrey
2 members of the Nominating Committee - LoraKim Joyner & Megan Selby
2 members of the UUA Staff – Harlan Limpert & Mark Steinwinter
[We also still are trying to find a member from the Ministry for Earth group.]

Our goal: Live out our values by reducing our carbon footprint which will result in increased efficiency and freeing funds for programming.

The idea is make full use of technology to reduce the amount of time and travel required to produce the same or better results. We have had two conference calls to date. On the last call we decided that we, the Board of Trustees, should lead by example and use as many ways as possible to reduce the carbon footprint we create.

As we know, the primary source of carbon emissions comes from travel. The form the Board's actions may take in the near future is that individual or group reports to the Board may be made via webcam or conference call. This can happen for committee or working group meetings as well as the full board. Innovation is encouraged!

Our results will be the basis for creating a "How To Guide" for committee chairs.

To that end we ask the Board to consider the following resolution:

WHEREAS our Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle promotes a respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;

WHEREAS human activity is known to be accelerating the creation of greenhouse gases that are increasing the adverse effect of global warming of this interdependent web;

WHEREAS transportation, in particular airplane transportation, is known to be one of the greatest contributors to greenhouse gases;

WHEREAS the cost of travel has increased substantially in the past year, comprising approximately 7% of the entire UUA budget, and is expected to further increase, reducing our ability to do other programming; and

WHEREAS we understand the value of human contact and building relationships as essential to the workings of our faith;

BE IT RESOLVED

That the UUA Board of Trustees further affirms and promotes the Seventh Principle by committing to a reduction in travel in connection with UUA activities, incorporating and encouraging the use of technology where feasible to create and maintain the trust relationships needed for effective collaboration.