

Board of Trustees

MEETING: April 23-24, 2021. All times are Eastern Time.

Pursuant to notice duly given, this meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association was held via Zoom conferencing.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Genevieve Baldwin (youth trustee), Greg Boyd, Kathy Burek, Barbara de Leeuw, Charles Du Mond (Co-Moderator), Suzanne Fast, Susan Frederick-Gray (President), Sherman Logan, Leslie MacFadyen, Patrick McLaughlin, John Newhall, Lucia Santini Field (Financial Advisor), Meg Riley (Co-Moderator), Tom Schade, Rebecca Throop (youth trustee), Bill Young

Meeting Minutes

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Carey McDonald (Recording Secretary & Executive Vice President), Andrew McGeorge (Treasurer), Stephanie Carey Maron, Marcus Fogliano, Danielle Di Bona (chaplain), Mary Heafy, Laura Conkle, Greg Boyd, Darrick Jackson, Ren McFadyen, Larry Ladd, Kim Hampton, Elizabeth Mount, Martha Nichols, Mary Nordhagen, Kathryn Alexander, Lannie MacAndrea, Marie Bjork-Haugen, Meg Richardson, Darbi Lockridge

Co-Moderator Meg Riley opened the meeting at 11:00 am, recognizing it was a difficult week with the decision in the George Floyd murder trial.

Consent agenda

The consent agenda was unanimously approved, including:

- New congregations – All Souls UU Congregation in Palatka, FL; Inland Northwest UU Community, Spokane, WA
- Draft Meeting Minutes – January, February 8 and Feb 25, March 8
- Final language for bylaw amendments for sections 4.16, 9.5, 9.6 and Rule G-9.13.7
- Received Reports – Financial Secretary, Role of Liaisons

Co-Moderators Riley and Charles Du Mond officially welcomed members of the Inland Northwest UU Community who had joined the call, extended appreciation for the work they had done to establish a new congregation and offered them blessings on their journey as a community.

President's Report

Reflections

President Susan Frederick-Gray reflected on the painful year of the pandemic, noting it will also be a difficult time with congregations as the pandemic recedes.

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She recognized every leader is tired, we are all holding trauma, and communities are ripe for conflict so it is important to hold one another with compassion.

President Frederick-Gray noted that it is more complicated to reopen now that it was to quickly shut down a year ago, with many more factors to balance. There are ways to gather safely as more people get vaccinated, but indoor worship cannot be the leading edge. The UUA provided guidance on April 15 to member congregations to plan for a multi-platform operations for the coming year, following the principles of basing decisions in consent, trusting the science, being slow and flexible, and being humane and realistic. While the UU won't be able to give an "all clear", it will regularly update guidance on UUA.org, and practices will vary based on the congregation and community.

She noted that multi-platform operations will provide flexibility given the ebb and flow of the pandemic, and that it is also an important future direction for congregations to become more accessible and agile. It is important to not idealize the pre-pandemic past when there were already needs for greater accessibility, flexibility and welcoming.

President Frederick-Gray identified the three priorities of the UUA in the coming year as continuing to help congregations adapt coming out of the pandemic, to grow and deepen infrastructure for justice organizing following the successful UU the Vote campaign, and to implement the recommendations from the Commission on Institutional Change. She reiterated that the UUA's work on dismantling white supremacy and patriarchy, and commitment to organizing, has positioned the organization to be able to respond to the pandemic and come out of it stronger.

Implementation of Commission on Institutional Change Recommendations

Marcus Fogliano described the UUA's process in the past nine months of reviewing *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the Commission on Institutional Change's (COIC) final report and recommendations. They restated five-stage flexible process of discussion, discernment, project development, implementation and sustaining and monitoring which had been presented at the January Board meeting. Executive Vice President Carey McDonald noted that the UUA will be mapping the ten chapters and 36 recommendations of the WCC onto the mission and operations of the UUA, to ensure that the work of every staff team is rooted in the report. EVP McDonald and President Frederick-Gray described key implementation projects within each of the UUA's three mission areas of equipping congregations and communities, training and supporting leaders, and advancing UU values, as well as within the areas of theology and governance. The highlighted projects including collaboration with UU seminaries on theological education, developing a framework for anti-racism and full inclusion based on the Mosaic Makers program for multicultural congregations, and aligning and expanding lay leadership development opportunities.

EVP McDonald reviewed the memo on the democratic sources of accountability for the UUA's anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism work, including decades of affirmation by the General Assembly.

FY22 Budget Proposal

Treasurer Andrew McGeorge reviewed the proposed FY22 UUA Operating Budget. Referencing the more detailed budget memo, he noted the UUA was taking the opportunity coming out of the pandemic to permanently reduce its travel footprint,



which made it possible to invest in greater staff capacity in across every area of the UUA's work. He noted the usage of a portion of funds from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program to make up for anticipated shortfalls in congregational giving, and the employment of limited one-time funds for COIC implementation which were set aside at the close of FY20.

Treasurer McGeorge discussed the financial agreement which the UUA had nearly finalized with Beacon Press. The agreement defined mutual support between the two entities, provided for a reasonable contribution to the UUA's carry costs, set forth strategic reserve targets for Beacon, and provided for financial backing and relief in weak performance years with surplus-sharing in strong performance years for Beacon. He noted that Beacon's historically strong sales in FY20 and FY21 put the press on a solid financial foundation, and was enabling new investments in its staff, its authors and its mission going forward.

He also reviewed the FY22 Capital Budget. With upcoming capital investments, he noted continuing investments in information technology security, and the importance of remaining flexible with building expenses as UUA staff return more to the office in the coming year.

Director of Stewardship and Development Lauren Smith invited all Board members and participants to become Faithful Sustainers, monthly donors to the UUA at any level.

The meeting took a break from 1:35 pm – 2:30 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board went into Executive Session to consider appointments and discuss personal work following the October disability justice training.

The meeting ended at 5:15 pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Carey McDonald (Recording Secretary & Executive Vice President), Andrew McGeorge (Treasurer), Stephanie Carey Maron, Chris Buice (chaplain), Marcus Fogliano, LaTonya Richardson, Larry Ladd, Debra Boyd, Kim Hampton, Laura Conkle, Stephanie Samson, Meg Richardson, Becky Brooks, Alex Spitzer, Elizabeth Mount, Ed Klein, Melissa Carvill-Ziemer

Co-Moderator Charles Du Mond opened the meeting at 11:05 with a reading. He gave updates to the agenda - there would be an additional Executive Session to consider appointments at the end of the day, and a discussion on the elections process would replace the section on board liaison roles

General Assembly 2021

Proposed business resolution on suspending sections 5.8, 5.9, 5.11

Co-Moderator Du Mond said the Board had initially discussed the possibility of this resolution at the January meeting, since then had reached out to the affected committees for their input and reviewed language in the Deep Divers bylaws working group. The draft would suspend for operations of the GA Planning



Committee, Commission on Appraisal and Board of Review until 2024, giving the Board time to propose amendments for how to address these functions in the long term. He noted the Board was considering this resolution because these committees address key areas for implementation of the recommendations from the Commission on Institutional change, which also called for streamlining governance: General Assembly, system-wide oversight, and ministerial credentialing. With new nominees joining the committee each year, it has made it difficult to have conversations over time about is needed for the next phase of the UUA's work in each of these areas. He finally noted that Board heard no opposition from the BOR, was met with willingness to work together by the GAPC, and had not received any response from COA.

Discussion with Board members highlighted the value of creating flexibility, rather than having structures and systems locked down in bylaws which undermines innovation and mission commitments. They articulated the importance of directing UUA volunteer capacity and resources towards the priorities of implementing COIC recommendations and completing the Article II Study Commission project. Reviewing the language, Board members agreed on the need to clarify how the Board would address these functions if the committees were suspended and that nominations and appointments would not proceed while the committees were suspended.

The Board affirmed progress on this resolution, with the intent to revisit it at the May meeting.

GA Business Agenda

Board members reviewed the sequence of the proposed business agenda. Board members were invited sign up for opening words for each General Session.

The Moderation Team for GA business discussions and voting, or "Mod Squad," was identified as Charles Du Mond, Meg Riley, Kathy Burek, Suzanne Fast, John Newhall, Greg Boyd, Genevieve Baldwin, and Tom Schade.

Board members reviewed plan and calendar for GA webinars that will introduce the business agenda and other GA highlights. They described plans to create chat forums for business items on the Whova app for GA. They also noted they will continue the first Tuesday Board open houses in the months preceding GA.

They noted the value of having American Sign Language interpretation for General Sessions this year, which should be appropriately integrated with the livestream.

Board members asked what the UUA can we learn from the Canadian Unitarian Council's process, where proposals which require votes are made public out far in advance and amendments are received before the meeting where they are considered.

Rules of Procedure

Members of the Mod Squad and EVP McDonald discussed revisions made to the Rules of Procedure this year. This year, the initial adoption of the rules would not debatable or amendable, since the Assembly must have rules in place to amend them. It also included simplified time limits displayed in a chart for easier reading.

Board members raised the previous question of whether to create a plain-language guide to the rules, noting how many delegates find the rules complicated an



inaccessible. The Board agreed that, rather than a guide which could create competing interpretations of the rules, they would rewrite the Rules of Procedure entirely this year with a plain language approach. Tom Schade and Genevieve Baldwin volunteered to write a first draft, working with the Mod Squad, EVP McDonald, legal counsel and the parliamentarian to finalize.

Board and Co-Moderators' Reports

The Board brainstormed what to address in their GA reports, including: the Article II Study Commission process, implementation of COIC recommendations, work on disability justice, greater practices of inclusion (e.g. regular open houses), preview of work gearing up to rewrite the UUA bylaws, the experience of the Board with the passing for former Co-Moderator Elandria Williams, a recap on the Board's support of the Young UU Project, and planning for future multi-platform General Assemblies and the possibility of virtual business meetings going forward.

Plain language commitments

The Board reviewed its commitments to using accessible, plain language commitments for the Rules of Procedure for this year, script and cue cards for GA business sessions, and the Board and Co-Moderators' reports. They agreed to work on bylaw revisions and the Article II Study Commission process with this in mind for the coming year. Can the Board set a commitment to review things before they are released with plain language guidelines, then a future time to evaluate whether we've met that commitment?

Plain language documents should:

- Pay attention to sentence structure and flow of paragraphs. Avoid complex sentences or paragraphs that bury the point.
- Avoid jargon and insider language and spell out acronyms.
- Avoid circular references, or things located in multiple places for no reason.
- Give clear framing so you know what the purpose is.

They recognized this commitment is not about simpler words or a lower reading level, per se. It is about making it easy to understand the key points and context of the document.

Future GA Planning

Director of GA and Conference Services LaTonya Richardson shared that she is circulating the following language with UUA stakeholders, including professional and identity groups as well as seminaries and other major GA participants:

We are seeking stakeholder feedback on rethinking the pattern of our UUA General Assembly to alternate annually between an in-person gathering and a 100% virtual gathering. Our in-person GA's will offer a substantial virtual experience and, because of that, we anticipate that attendance at in-person GA's may be reduced. Our virtual GA's honor our values of equity, inclusion, and sustainability and will be shorter in duration (i.e. over a weekend) and focus primarily on the business of the association, with significantly less attached programming. During the years that we host GA virtually, the UUA Congregational Life regional Staff will offer more robust



programming to educate, equip, and inspire professional and lay leaders. The scope of this programming will be determined by the Congregational Life Staff as they balance the needs of our member-congregations with the expectations of the UUA.

2022 and 2023 will be in-person GA's (local contracts already committed) with a substantial virtual experience for those registered. 2024 may be a 100% virtual GA in this alternating pattern. UUA Congregational Life regional Staff will host a virtual assembly in October 2021 and, beginning in 2024, the staff group will begin more robust bi-annual programming to coincide with years of virtual GA.

She said that early feedback was positive, and even asked whether the UUA should consider less often than every other year. Many wanted participation in the business sessions to be as accessible as possible. Stakeholders reported that they would be able to work with a new structure, as long as they had enough time to prepare. Some said they would consider reorienting other events to ensure they do not compete with an in-person GA.

LaTonya affirmed the need for impacted and marginalized communities to be a part of the conversation from the beginning, noting they are being built into cycles of feedback. She noted that the shape of regional events during virtual GA years was still an open question. In particular, there was a need for further conversation about what regional events would be able to offer for youth and young adult communities.

Board members discussed the need to tease out what business sessions and voting really mean in a multi-platform GA. They raised the possibility of spreading out the time to engage with delegates over months or perhaps a full year. They also noted the need to prioritize equitable multi-platform design for the business sessions, so that the experience is equally valuable for both online and in-person participants.

The Board named the following considerations in making future decisions about General Assembly:

- Getting the right approach to the business of our Association to maximize inclusion, democratic participation, and governance that advances the UUA's mission and principles
- Meaningful connection for marginalized communities
- Inspiration and in-person connection for UUs with the wider Association
- Economic accessibility (e.g. cost of travel, complications with kids, barriers to being involved in business)
- Modeling for multi-platform inclusivity at the congregational level
- Minimizing the carbon footprint from travel, especially jet airline travel
- Sustainable event for staff and volunteers, and financially sustainable
- Checking in re future GA planning – are we on the right track? Yes, will need to hold space for the Board to design business meeting at multi-platform GA in 2022. How can Board help with outreach on this early stage of conversation?



Staff agreed to provide a summary of how and with whom this proposal is being circulated. Board members said they would discuss questions about the future of GA at an open house.

The Board unanimously affirmed a commitment to making GA22 the best multi-platform experience possible, recognizing it will be an experiment with this type of event format.

The meeting took a break from 1:35 – 2:30 pm.

Article II Study Commission

Members of the Article II Study Commission (A2SC) gave an update on their process. They shared that the Commission laying groundwork for stakeholder outreach around four themes:

- Shared UU values
- Purpose or mission of Unitarian Universalism, and the role of UUA in that mission
- Inspirations (sources, learnings and history)
- Covenant

They noted their appreciation for an initial meeting A2SC members had with UUA staff to explore these stakeholder questions. They also met with UUA staff who worked on UU the Vote to discuss how communications/volunteer engagement was successful, recognizing that shifting the foundation of a faith community has much in common with community organizing. They shared upcoming communications, including an video series of Conversations with Commission member Satya Mamdani, a new RSS feed for email updates, and an appearance on the VUU YouTube series by the Church of the Larger Fellowship in June.

The A2SC wants to engage in ongoing dialogue with a range of UU leaders, seeking to avoid the “pick your brain and then we go do our work” approach which is sometimes used with stakeholders, They are creating resources for congregations to have their own deep conversations on the topics the A2SC has identified. They are working with the Nourish dinner church ministry to create a program for youth groups, and working with Wellspring to create a faith engagement program for adults. During GA, the A2SC will focus on introducing the Commission and its process, and practicing discussions which participants can lead at their congregations

A2SC members noted they have received questions from congregations adopting the proposed 8th Principle for anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism. Since the proposed 8th Principle was included in the Commission’s charge to consider, members clarified they welcome congregations to discuss and adopt the 8th Principle. They also noted that the A2SC was started in part to broaden the conversation beyond an 8th principle, so want to continue to hold a broad frame of possibilities and language for what direction the principles may take.

FY222 Budget Approval

Kathy Burek moved, Lucia Santini-Field seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the proposed FY22 operating, capital and consolidated budgets,





UUA Board Election

Secretary Bill Young recapped the planning for the contested election for #8 Board slot, noting the deadline for further petitions is May 15. He said had spoken with candidates Sam Trumbore and Jay Kiskel, both of whom have a booth at GA. He noted the candidates have also met with the Election Campaign Practices Committee (ECPC) to create a covenant of how they will conduct their campaigns.

Secretary Young reported that the election schedule is set, with delegate voting starting on start June 1 and ending midnight ET on Friday, June 25. There will be a page on UUA.org with information on the Board election, statements from candidates and links to their websites. GA delegates will receive emails about the campaign and about how to vote.

He noted there will be a candidate forum at GA facilitated by the ECPC, and that additional candidate events may be considered. There will be rules on campaigning at GA from the GAPC and ECPC. He is working with the ECPC, the GA Conflict and Covenant Team, and EVP McDonald to plan for how to respond to issues that may arise during GA.

Board members discussed whether they would make a statement about the candidates, noting the need to speak with one voice. They recognized that the leadership of Board itself is being raised as an issue in the campaign. They agreed to consider making a statement at the May meeting that supports the slate put forward by the Nominating Committee, since those nominees affirms the Board's commitment to implementing the COIC report and recommendations. Board members agreed not make any endorsements prior to that meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved to executive session at 4:05 to consider appointments.

They later reported following appointments:

- Andrea Briscoe to Appointments Committee
- James Snell, Denise Rimes, Marva Williams, Jaimie Dingus, and Cathy Seggel to the nominated positions on the Presidential Search Committee
- Rev. Jason Lydon and Rev. Theresa Soto to the appointed positions on the Presidential Search Committee

The meeting ended at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald

Recording Secretary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES SCHEDULE

- **Meeting: May 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, May 10, 2021; 7:45pm Eastern
- **Meetings: June 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Tuesday, June 22, 2021: Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 23—Sunday June 27, 2021: General Assembly
Monday, June 27, 2021: Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Meeting: July 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, July 12, 2021; 7:45pm Eastern
- **Meeting: August 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, August 9, 2021; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: September 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, September 13, 2021; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: October 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Thursday, October 14 – Saturday, October 16, 2021
- **Meeting: November 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, November 8, 2021; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: December 2021, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, December 13, 2021; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: January 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Friday, January 21 – Saturday, January 22, 2022
- **Meeting: February 2022 Zoom Meeting**
Monday, February 14, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: March 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, March 14, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: April 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Friday, April 22—Saturday, April 23, 2022
- **Meeting: May 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, May 9, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meetings: June 2022, Portland, OR**
Tuesday, June 21—Wednesday, June 22, 2022: Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 22—Sunday June 26, 2022: General Assembly
Monday, June 27, 2022: Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Meeting: July 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, July 11, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern



- **Meeting: August 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, August 8, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: September 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, September 12, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: October 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Thursday, October 20 – Saturday, October 22, 2022
- **Meeting: November 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, November 14, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: December 2022, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, December 12, 2022; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: January 2023, Zoom Meeting**
Friday, January 20 – Saturday, January 21, 2023
- **Meeting: February 2023 Zoom Meeting**
Monday, February 13, 2023; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: March 2023, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, March 13, 2023; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meeting: April 2023, Zoom Meeting**
Friday, April 21 – Saturday, April 22, 2023
- **Meeting: May 2023, Zoom Meeting**
Monday, May 8, 2023; 7:00pm Eastern
- **Meetings: June 2023, Pittsburgh, PA**
Tuesday, June 20 – Wednesday, June 21, 2023: Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 21 – Sunday June 25, 2023: General Assembly
Monday, June 26, 2023: Board of Trustees Meeting

