

***MidAmerica Region, UUA
Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 5, 2019
St. Louis, MO***

Trustees Present: Brian Bach, Kyrie Bock, Mitra Jafarzadeh, David Lauth, Tammy Lemmer, Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Christopher Sims

Trustees Absent: Janell Hill and Omega Burckhardt

Staff present: Ian Evison, Sharon Dittmar, UUA Director of Congregational Life Jessica York

UUA Executive Vice President Carey McDonald and Southern Region Co-lead Connie Goodbread joined for a portion of the meeting.

Introductions: Board members and staff introduced themselves.

Worship: Ian led worship with a theme of community and journeys.

Ice Breaker: Sharon introduced a set of “get to know each other” questions for discussion.

Regional Assembly Update: Ian provided a brief overview and update on the concerns about the Regional Assembly theme. After worship on Friday night, program staff will be available to discuss the Region’s decisions, and there will be an opportunity Saturday night to review and discuss a TED Talk featuring Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Regional Lead transition: Jessica provided an update on the anticipated timeline and process for filling Ian’s position as Regional Lead. The position will remain vacant “as long as it takes to find the right person.” The job posting is live and has been shared with various channels. Changes to the job description include no longer requiring a Master of Divinity degree and stressing a commitment to justice and diversity. Jessica would like to have a representative from the Board serve on the search team.

Until the position is filled, Jessica will manage administrative tasks (approving vacation, etc.) with Connie Goodbread and Natalie Briscoe, Co-leads from the Southern Region, providing staff support. Jessica plans to participate in Board calls and meetings, and Sharon was asked to continue participating as well. Carey thanked Ian for his leadership and his assistance to UUA, including his support for the Southern District during their transition.

Review/renewal of three-way covenant: David provided some background and history of the three-way covenant between the previous Director of

Congregational Life, the MAR Board, and MAR Staff. With the Regional Lead position open, we deferred any discussion of a new covenant at this time.

Status of regional and national advisory work: Jessica, Ian, and David discussed the evolution of the original District Presidents Association to the Regional Leaders Group, and the new proposed roles of the Regional and National Advisory Councils. The purpose is to strengthen communication streams to and from the UUA. In addition to regional representatives, the national model includes participation in each region by two liaisons from traditionally marginalized communities.

The question remains whether the current Regional Board could or should serve as the Regional Advisory Council. There is a National Advisory Council meeting scheduled for October. MidAmerica representatives, including one liaison, will need to be identified by then.

Review/renewal of Board covenant: Mitra led a discussion on various approaches to covenants, and the concept of being “in community” with and within Unitarian Universalism. Covenants should be voluntary, and rely on good will and self-monitoring. Mitra agreed to review the current language to pull out the aspects of the covenant that read like a job description, and to focus on the Principles of Praxis (Heart-“How will you live this?” Mind- “Commitment to learn.” and Hand-“What is the Work?”)

Board Goals: David led a review of the current goals and a discussion of proposed goals for next year. We discussed maintaining a connection to the larger movement and providing a source of deeper understanding of our faith. This year’s common read activity was viewed as enjoyable and valuable.

There were questions about the results of our commitment to engage in micro-actions, which after some discussion we realized may have been more prevalent than previously acknowledged. Members agreed to recommit to reporting out/checking in, with a spotlight placed on this, during meetings.

The shared responsibility of a rotating chair for our calls was viewed as positive. There are opportunities for more social action engagement, with support of a workgroup or subcommittee in between meetings.

Tasks: Sarah agreed to research digital filing options to help manage communication and documents. Mitra will work on refining the covenant language. David, Kyrie and Christopher will help organize/connect with social justice efforts for our in-person meeting this fall.

Process for appointment of Board officers: David and Tammy reviewed the impact of the proposed bylaw changes that will require sitting Board members to elect Board Officers. The biggest concern is in identifying people with

appropriate skills and knowledge for the Treasurer position. It was noted that the role of the Nominating Committee is critical, and they can help serve as “agents of change.” The idea of having a Nominating Committee member sit in on a Board call periodically might be helpful. It was determined that we will discuss this further at the July Board meeting.

Schedule for 2020 in-person meetings: Board members discussed options for in-person meetings in 2020. There has been no decision yet on whether to hold a Regional Assembly next spring, but having the Board meeting in conjunction with the Assembly was a possibility. Board members value the opportunity that RA provides individuals, but acknowledged the hard work required of staff.

October was the preferred time frame for a retreat, and Kansas was noted as a possible location. Sara forwarded a recommendation for a B&B in Kansas. Tammy will follow-up with Andrew to request that he check in with the site for rates and available dates.

Approval of March 2019 minutes: David moved approval of the minutes from the March 6, 2019 Board meeting. After a second from Brian, the motion passed.

Other Business: Connie Goodbread introduced herself to the Board and offered her assistance as well as her appreciation for Ian’s assistance offered during their transition last year. She is grateful for the cross-boundary collaboration that exists with Mid-America.

Process Observation Comments/Check-outs: Comments reflected appreciation for the comfortable, safe, intimate opportunity to connect with each other. The day flowed well and did not feel rushed, despite a full agenda. Members enjoyed linking the Board meeting and RA.

Closing Words and Adjournment: Following closing words from Ian, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm