

ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UUA Board of Trustees, 2008-2009
Submitted by Rev. Elizabeth L. Greene, assistant secretary and
trustee from Pacific Northwest District

Your UUA Board has been very busy this year, as in the past, with many threads weaving through our work. As “businesslike” as we are in our coming together (appropriately—we are your Board), our dearest hope is to contribute always to love and justice, and to help congregations feel their true strength and joy.

Below is a list the projects and events in which we have been involved, and wherever possible, I will provide a website where you can find detailed information.

UUA Board Shift to Policy Governance. Having worked intensely on this project for four-plus years, we intend to implement the new governance system in the later part of 2009—the primary value of this system is that it will allow us to focus on policies, as opposed to operational dictates, embodying broad vision and strategic directions as we serve congregations. The candidates for UUA President are both already engaged with the transition planning work. See <http://uua.org/aboutus/governance/policy/index.shtml>

Review of our Principles and Purposes. This deep review is mandated by our Bylaws and the task was graciously taken on by the Commission on Appraisal, at the request of the UUA Board. It was completed in Dec 2008, and the Board approved it with one change. The proposed document will be voted upon at GA 2009 and again in 2010. It must be approved in both years for adoption, and it is an “up-or-down” vote both years, a simple majority this year and a 2/3 majority in 2010. You may read about this most simply by going to the Feb 2nd post on the UUWORLD.org blog, at this address: <http://www.uuworld.org/blogs/web/?h3>

Excellence in Ministry. In December 2008 a major summit was held, opening the door to consideration of the entire area of ministry, professional and lay, with the complex and sometimes-difficult avenues this whole subject opens up. Follow it at <http://www.uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittees/paneltheological/121902.shtml> and on Rev. Christine Robinson's blog <http://www.iminister.blogspot.com/>

Consultation on Youth and Young Adult Ministry. This multi-year effort will culminate later this Spring. A full report of proposals will follow.

Independent Affiliates. In 2004 the Board began to work on the Independent Affiliate system, which had been growing for years, with over 40 organizations, most of which operated non-congregationally and seldom collaborated with other organizations. (Plus, one of the primary reasons for existence as an IA, for many, seemed to be automatic entitlement to a GA workshop.) New rules designed to encourage organizations to work collaboratively were instituted. A notable result of this decision was that a lot of folks were confused and angry. We on the Board began to see that harnessing the talent, passion and experience present in this group of dedicated UU volunteers should be a staff matter, not a Board (policy) matter.

This year, the Board voted that new applications will not be accepted as of June, 2009. Additionally as of June, 2010, renewal applications will no longer be accepted, contingent on UUA staff creating a strategy to honor and support these organizations.

General Assembly and the Mission of the Association: A few years ago, relations between the UUA Board and the GA Planning Committee were sometimes contentious. The role of congregations—the churches and fellowships that make up our Association—at GA was limited. To address these issues, a small representative group from the Board, the Planning Committee, and staff now meets annually to review the successes and failures of the previous year and set a framework for the next.

There have been major changes, especially regarding the involvement of congregations. GA is now known as “A Meeting of Congregations.” Registration fees for congregational presidents were waived (and then phased down), and special networking and educational sessions just for presidents were initiated. Scholarships now require a congregational match to assure that real working leaders are chosen for assistance to attend. Workshops slots were drastically altered to allow congregations an opportunity to present or sponsor programs. UU University at GA, now in its fourth year, is an opportunity for in-depth leadership training led by top-notch experts in church life. As of this year it is included in GA registration rather than a separate charge.

The **Fifth Principle Task Force** has been convened, chaired by former moderator Denny Davidoff, to look at how we gather as a religious community at General Assembly, to examine ways of making delegate participation more significant. All aspects of why, when and how are on the table. Their report is expected in the next year. You can find a pdf report of their work at <http://www.pcd-uua.org/fifth.pdf> Pacific Central District trustee Linda Laskowski has an interesting blog at <http://pcdtrustee.blogspot.com/2008/11/fifth-principle.html>

Anti-racism, Counter-oppression Work. This is obviously a complex, multi-dimensional arena, one that the UUA Board addresses every meeting, in workshops, presentations, process observations, and general awareness.

You can find a brief timeline of UUA counter-oppression work from 1784, here:
http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/araomc/racialdiversity_timeline.pdf

Finances. The APF ask was scheduled to rise \$2/person for the '09-'10 fiscal year, but we voted to hold it at \$56/member. In addition, the budget has been scrutinized, with major cuts to accommodate the current economy.

Items Not Directly (or Completely) in the Board's Purview, But To Which We Pay Attention

Presidential and Other Leadership Transition. This is an important year, with excellent candidates Rev. Laurel Hallman and Rev. Peter Morales vying for the UUA presidency. One of them will be elected at GA, as will moderator Gini Courter and Financial Advisor Dan Brody, both running uncontested for a second full term.

Tapestry of Faith curriculum roll-out. This work is having and will continue to have dramatic impact on our youth programming. See <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/>

Association Sunday is October 4, 2009 on theme of Growing Our Diversity. Note there is a grants-based program for lay theological education included.

<http://www.uua.org/giving/associationsunday/index.shtml>

Let me close with words from John Blevins, trustee from the Prairie Star District. John looks at all the threads the UUA Board is dealing with, and likens it to fishing lines of the hundreds of people with lines in the water on trout fishing opening day, standing shoulder to shoulder, casting, tangling, untangling.

So, as we all work our lines in the water, seeking that perfect trout, we must decide how we will collaborate or cooperate with our neighbors. Must we cut someone's line to untangle? Or could we tie our lines together and cooperate to pull in that lunker? (this works best if we are all pulling in the same direction...) Or just let go of our lines, and go seek another stream (gonna be hard to find one..). Or maybe we decide to provide lunch for the fisher-people.

Every one of these forces at work today has the potential to change our lives together in ways that we cannot visualize today. The tension on the lines can be high at times. Sometimes a line will break. But we can deal with this, if we keep the goals and purposes (to catch the metaphorical fish...) in mind, and keep love in our hearts.

May our fishing be fruitful and comradely; may we keep the love in our hearts.