

ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY UUA Board of Trustees for 2009-2010

In odd numbered years, such as 2009, we always have a change in the membership of the [board](#) as approximately one-third of the districts elect new trustees. In 2009 we had the additional election of a new president, Rev. Peter Morales. Moderator, Gini Courter and Financial Advisor, Dan Brody were re-elected for another four year term of service. New members always bring new ideas, new perspectives and help us establish a new personality within the culture of the board. Inevitably, that new personality begins to change the culture of the board itself.

Since GA 2009 in Salt Lake City, the board has had a very significant and intentional change in our culture from our adoption of Policy Governance[®]. It has been a new way to govern for us and a new relationship with the staff. The sources of authority for our [policies](#) are derived from our congregations and it is to you to whom we report. These policies have been developed over the past several years and beginning with this current term we have been in the process of monitoring the policies and how well we are doing in complying with the policies themselves. Inevitably, we have times when a policy needs to be re-visited to make sure it is serving the [global ends](#) of our work. Both the staff and the board take this work very seriously and with our focus on our ends.

Here is some the work we have taken up in the past year:

Working Groups. In order to efficiently take care of our business we divide the board members up into working groups. This year we revised our [working groups](#) to include:

- [Governance](#)
- [Congregations](#)
- [Excellence in Ministry](#)
- [Linkage](#)

Governance. After the formal adoption of a new set of governance policies based on John Carver's Policy Governance[®] model, in April 2009, the Governance Working Group of the Board devoted it's energies to transition the Board to operation under the new policies, which began on July 1, 2009. During the remainder of the year the Group focused on helping the Board begin to practice new methods of processing staff reporting, which in our governance model is known as "Monitoring Reports". This involved continuing education, regular consultation, and deep conversations with senior staff. We all now understand more clearly that a major governance transition is as much a cultural change as it is a governance change.

Congregations. During the year the working group received applications for UUA membership from two congregations, the San Gabriel UU Fellowship of Georgetown, Texas and the Heartland UU Church Indianapolis, IN and recommended to the Board that they be accepted. The working group planned two GA workshops—our annual networking opportunity for congregation presidents and a panel discussion of the implications of cultural and technological changes for how we gather and define

congregations. The working group made recommendations for improving the process of identifying Distinguished Service Award recipients. One outcome of the ongoing Excellence in Ministry discussion was a Board commitment to encourage congregations to perform assessments of congregational ministry and not of individual ministers. Consequently, the Congregations Working Group is investigating tools for assessing the health of congregations and promoting their use. At a meeting with a representative from The Journey Toward Wholeness transformation Committee, the working group began a discussion of how to increase congregational commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism, another issue that emerged during the Excellence in Ministry discussions.

Excellence in Ministry. In December of 2009, the UUA's Panel on Theological Education invited some sixty participants, representing the full range of "stake holders," to a Summit on Excellence in Ministry. Since then, the administration, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, and the Board, through the Excellence in Ministry Working Group, have worked closely together to further the areas of concern and opportunity identified by the Summit. Of particular concern to the Excellence in Ministry Working Group's ongoing work is ministerial and congregational culture and credentialing.

Linkage. The Linkage Working Group is a new group formed to support the Board's efforts in direct dialogue with "Sources of Authority and Accountability". The primary focus has been with member congregations, so the first "formal" linkage activity has been between board trustees and a randomly selected sample of 100 congregations across the United States, about a "healthy relationship" between that congregation and the UUA Board. The working group will be reporting out on these dialogues during plenary at GA 2010. The working group is tapping into the values of two more of our "Sources", "current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists" and "the "heritage, tradition, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism", through a workshop at GA with Youth and Young Adults, and bringing in an historical perspective of the issues being discussed into Board meetings. The Board will be meeting jointly with Youth Caucus at General Assembly as well.

Other Business

A very significant event took place in January when the board met outside Boston for a scheduled regular meeting. Not only did we have our usual business meeting, we had the opportunity to meet with a number of local folks, both UU and of other faiths doing work in immigration rights, public school issues, and other human rights areas. We also met with area congregations from all over southern and central Texas. We also learned a little about Texas hospitality from the San Antonio church who had a fabulous fiesta for us. This was a trip that we know we want to repeat in other areas and currently are planning a meeting in Phoenix in the coming year.

We are meeting more often now and doing it electronically. We have set time aside each month for a virtual meeting using a web based meeting site and conference calling. This has been very successful particularly in the ability of observers to join us. Time is reserved on the third Thursday of each month at 8PM eastern time in the months when we don't meet in person.

The GA Schedule and Agenda

There will be a number of times to meet in various workshops and other sessions with us in Minneapolis at GA. Check the [GA schedule](#) for the times and venues.

Much of our work done during the year comes back to the delegates of GA in the [agenda](#) and particularly the resolutions, bylaw amendments and the mini-assemblies related to those resolutions and amendments. Several are notable including a bylaw amendment to revise the procedures for nominating the president and moderator as well as revisions of the term of office (one six year term compared to the current two four year terms). Very importantly the delegates will take up the issue of a board sponsored resolution to have the GA Planning Committee recommend a site outside of Arizona for the 2012 GA. You can read more about this on the [UU World Website](#).

In addition to these resolution and bylaw changes you will see some proposed language for bylaw changes dealing with the number of trustees that make up the board. These will be presented formally in 2011 at GA in Charlotte, NC. More information is available in an article appearing in the [Summer 2010 UU World](#).

Summary

The board does its work with many lenses that call us to examine what we do and how we do it, mindful of our commitment to [anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism](#). We invite you to be part of that transformative work. You can follow us on [Facebook](#) and we will soon have a blog for the board. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the [trustee from your district or one of the at-large trustees](#). See you at GA!

For the Board,
Tom Loughrey
Secretary and Trustee from the pacific Southwest District