

**ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**UUA Board of Trustees for 2010-2011**

The [Board](#) this year has been deeply involved in very fundamental work as we approach our fiftieth anniversary. Recognizing that we have largely been doing the work of the Association in much the same way as we did in 1961 and continuing to use work processes that were often created simply to help make a merger happen, we have tried to re-imagine and re-make ourselves for a UUA for the next fifty years. You will see the culmination of some of this work in proposals the Board is bringing to delegates in Charlotte. We made a promise to lead in looking at a new Board structure that is dramatically reduced in size, focused on governance and a vision for our potential in making a difference in the communities our congregations serve as a progressive religious body. These are not small changes; we are not just tinkering with the status quo, and they are not going to be easy and certainly not without controversy. We know that our method of selecting trustees based on geographic location cannot ensure that we represent the diversity of who we are now much less who we will become in the future. So, it will be not only a smaller board but one chosen very differently and with far more intentionality for the natural and acquired skill sets needed for our future.

The Board will be presenting a number of Bylaw changes to delegates in Charlotte this year. These include:

- Article III - Sec C-3.1 - 3.6 Member Congregations - Broadens the word "congregation" replacing words "fellowship" and "churches"
- Article IV - General Assembly Sec 4.5 Place of Meeting - Would permit voting by delegates not physically present at GA
- Article IV - Sec 4.8 Article V!! Sec 7.13(d) - changes the wording "religious educator - masters" to "religious educator - master"
- Article XII - Religious Education Credentialing - substantive changes adding language with additional detail on disciplinary actions for termination or administrative suspension of credentials.
- Article VII - Sec 7.6 - Ministerial Fellowship Committee - Changes minimum size of MFC and makes changes to constituency of the committee.
- Article IV - General Assembly Sec 4.16 Additions to Agenda of Regular GA- deletes AIWs from bylaws following GA 2011.
- Article IV - General Assembly Sec 4.16 Additions to Agenda of Regular GA- adds provision for up to three AIWs to bylaws following GA 2012.
- Article XV - Amendment of Bylaws - Sec C-15.1 - gives the General Assembly a role in reviewing proposed changes to Article II (Principles and Purposes)

- Articles VI, VIII, and IX - Restructures the size of the Board, terms of office and nomination process.
- Article V - Changes the term of office for the Nominating Committee from one - six year term to eligibility for two - three year terms.

Some are minor and others are not. They often represent the work of our Board through our Working Groups. Here is a summary of their work on behalf of the whole Board:

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

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

**Governance.** The Governance Working Group of the Board continued to devote much of it's energy to the process of monitoring the performance of the staff and ourselves under our governance system. This is done using "monitoring reports". This major transition has proven more complex than most of us anticipated. This has required more education for the Board, and more and deeper conversation with senior staff than we expected. This is all challenging, as you would expect for a group of volunteers, but our Trustees are committed to this cultural change, and are continuing to climb our steep learning curve. On the national front, the board has been engaged in the dramatic work, and creative thinking, being done by our District leaders today, as we all prepare to transition to a smaller UUA board and a new regional staff organization.

**Congregations.** During the year the working group received applications for UUA membership from four congregations, The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of McMinnville, OR; Unitarian Universalists of Blue Ridge, Rappahannock, VA ; UU Fellowship of Lake Norman, Lake Norman, NC; and All Faiths Unitarian Congregation, Inc., Ft. Myers, FL, and recommended to the Board that they be accepted, which they were. The working group recommended changes to UUA Bylaws Sections C-3.1, C-3.3, and C-3.6, which would broaden the definition of congregations, and proposed corresponding rules changes for Board approval should General Assembly 2011 approve the proposed bylaw changes. The working group planned two GA 2011 workshops—our annual networking opportunity for congregation presidents and an invitation to young adults, historically marginalized groups, and other interested UUs to discuss the implications of broadening the definition of a congregation for how UUs gather. The working group held a conference call with representatives of the District Presidents Association and field staff to discuss attributes of a healthy congregation and agreed that the Board champions assessment of congregations as a whole as opposed to evaluation of individual ministers and that congregation assessment is the work of staff. The working group recommended that the Congregations Working Group be discontinued for the

following reasons: many of the issues that we have addressed are more appropriately addressed by staff, the Linkage Working Group is charged with facilitating the Board's relationship with Congregations, and, staffing four working groups with the smaller board that would result from restructuring would be burdensome. Many thanks for Congregations Working Group members Jose Ballester, John Hawkins, Charlie King, Joan Lund, and Susan Ritchie for their diligence and commitment during the past two years.

**Excellence in Ministry.** The primary work of the "EXIM" working group is to maintain lines of communication between the Panel on Theological Education, which is responsible for allocating funds for ministerial education and support, the UU Ministers Association, theological seminaries and the UUA. Much of our thinking around credentialing, particularly with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and the Regional Subcommittees on Credentialing comes through this working group. Challenges and issues this year have included the adequacy of funding for these bodies as seminarians face a longer wait to present themselves and be interviewed by these groups.

**Linkage.** The Linkage Working Group provides tools and support for the Board's linkage work with its Sources of Authority and Accountability. Last year board members interviewed 73 congregations across the United States to answer questions such as "who speaks for your congregation?", "what does a healthy relationship between your congregation and the UUA Board look like?", and "what are the most important differences we could make in the world?" We have followed through on several recommendations made as a result of this work:

1. Linkage with all Sources has been defined in board policy as a high priority.
2. The UUA Board is working with the District Presidents Association to investigate how we might do collaborate on linkage. This includes Gathered Here, a larger effort that also include the UUA Administration, UU Ministers Association, and several other groups, that will "give shape to a shared vision for the future of our faith and the ways in which we, as religious leaders, will advance our faith on local and national levels".
3. Responding to the interest in evidenced in the interviews, create more 2-way communications with the Board. We have added a Facebook page, a Board blog, and videos with trustees highlighting key issues on the UUA website. You can find the full report at:

[www.uua.org/documents/boardtrustees/101016\\_healthy\\_relations.pdf](http://www.uua.org/documents/boardtrustees/101016_healthy_relations.pdf).

**GA 2012 in Phoenix.** It is not often that we are working so much during the year on a GA more than a year off and yet that is exactly what we have been doing this year. Based on a [business resolution](#) at last year's GA in Minneapolis, it was decided that we would have a different kind of GA in Phoenix in 2012: a Justice GA! Lest we forget, the Board brought a recommendation to GA that we boycott Phoenix in 2012. This was the result of the passage of SB 1070 in Arizona that seeks to deprive persons of their human rights based not only on their documentation but on perceptions of their documentation. Instead of agreeing to boycott Phoenix, the delegates of GA decided that our presence in Phoenix could serve notice that we reject the overt racism and political manipulation of persons

who would be denied their full legal and human rights. The resolution calls for a Justice GA in which we do not carry on business as usual but rather, we focus on supporting the work of partners on the ground in Arizona including our own UU congregations. In order to effectively carry out this work the Board is working closely with staff and the General Assembly Planning Committee. The Board has created an Accountability Advisory group to keep us mindful of the promise made and the resolution voted. There is much more on this that can be found from the [UU World article](#) following the Board's onsite meeting in Arizona this past January. It includes information on the meeting and the pre-meeting trip by some Board members and staff across the border and into the desert.

## **Other Business**

The Board has been working on a number of issues. In the past we relied almost exclusively on our face-to-face meetings four times a year. It improved with email in recent years and now we meet in open teleconference meetings between our face-to-face gatherings both at a Board level and committee/working group level. It has allowed us to take up a great deal more work and be much more efficient about doing it. As we move in to this new way of conducting governance we have seen that some of what we do is outmoded and has caused us to question how we do this work. Do we really need to have Board member liaisons on most Board appointed committees? Would we be better off having committee chairs meet with the full board directly rather than through the filter of a colleague? Increasingly the answer is yes. It is one way in which we can do our work with a smaller Board number.

The Board is very cognizant of costs, the financial challenges facing congregations and the resultant challenges facing the Association. The Board has supported the very difficult decisions the administration has had to make in bringing a balanced budget. We know these cuts effect people very directly. We have been gratified to know though that despite very difficult economic times congregational support of the Annual Program Fund has remained a strong priority for congregations. We will weather this situation and hopefully be the stronger for the lessons learned. The Board extends its appreciation to our dedicated staff and congregations for the work being done under trying circumstances.

## **The GA Schedule and Agenda**

There will be a number of times to meet in various workshops and other sessions with us in Charlotte 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.

You can follow the work of the Board in a variety of ways including our [Board Blog](#), [Facebook](#), the [UUWorld](#) and the [UUA website](#)

## **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 multi-culturalism](#). We invite you to be part of that transformative work. 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  
Trustee from the Pacific Southwest District