

## ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY UUA Board of Trustees for 2011-2012

The [Board](#) this year has been deeply involved in very fundamental work as we begin our next fifty years. 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. Last year you saw the culmination of some of this work in proposals the Board brought 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.

This will be the last year in which each district has an elected representative to the Board. At the close of next year's GA in Louisville, the entire Board will expire and a new Board of eleven trustees at large will be elected. Four of those will be elected from current Board members by the Board for a two year term, four will be elected for a one year term and three for a three year term. All terms after that will be for three years with a maximum of two full terms.

Also in 2013 we will be electing a new moderator and a presidential search committee. The newly elected moderator will then serve a single six year term. In 2017 a new president will be elected who will also serve a single six year term. In January the Board [nominated Tamara Payne-Alex and Jim Key](#) for moderator.

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

- Article III - Sec C-3.1 - 3.6 Member Congregations - Broadens the word "congregation" replacing words "fellowship" and "churches". This is the second year vote on this amendment.
- Article X – Sec C-10.9 – Deletes the word “full” from the requirement for pension participation. This is the second year vote on this amendment.
- 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). This is the second year vote on this amendment.

The full agenda including the full text of bylaw amendments can be seen [here](#).

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

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

- Governance
- Communications
- Linkage
- Committee on Committees
- Finance

**Governance.** The Governance Working Group of the Board continued to devote much of its energy to the process of monitoring the performance of the staff and ourselves under our governance system. During this year we saw real progress as a growing number of the monitoring reports required under Policy Governance were written, reviewed and acknowledged without need for discussion during the Board meeting. The Governance Working Group has begun several initiatives needed to position the smaller Board that will take

office in 2013 for success. We are evaluating software solutions to make the assessment and archiving of monitoring reports less labor intensive for the volunteer trustees and the staff. In addition, the Governance Working Group is reviewing the existing policies with an eye towards elimination of duplicate policies and clarification and streamlining of policies wherever possible.

**Committee on Committees** - The CoC has seen the culmination of years of evaluating its work in the context of proper and effective governance roles. Historically charged with recruiting and recommending to the board every other year approximately 150 appointments to at least 19 committees and taskforces, as well as increasing mid-term appointments, the CoC was so overwhelmed that its members were not able to concentrate on the most crucial roles of trustees – monitoring, visioning, and linkage. Therefore the committee recommended and the board approved the transfer to staff of program-related appointment responsibilities and the creation of an Appointments Committee, made up of individuals who were not trustees but would recruit and recommend to the board candidates for board-appointed committees, and assist the board in supporting committee work.

**Linkage.** The Linkage Working Group provides tools and support for the Board's ongoing linkage with its Sources of Authority and Accountability. Last year we formed a partnership with the District Presidents Association to work together on dialogue with our congregational leadership, and are co-sponsoring Gathered Here with the UUA Administration. Gathered Here has been endorsed by 8 UU organizations (see complete list [here](#)) and will provide valuable input into helping the Board and Administration move toward a common vision that [you help us](#) articulate. The Board is also working with [Unity Consulting](#) to identify ways of linking with our non-congregational Sources:

- current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
- the heritage, traditions, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
- the vision of Beloved Community
- the Spirit of Life, love, and the holy

We anticipate having the methodologies in place for testing by the end of this year. And for the third year, this General Assembly includes a “World Café” between the UUA Board and Youth Caucus, this one on important social justice issues.

**Communications** – This has been the first year for this new working group and reflects our growing sense and need for frequent and transparent communication. Much of the UUA website has been updated and re-done to make it easier to access information but in many respects it remains a challenge to find exactly what is needed. The Communications working group recommended several policy changes to the Board with one of the most important being the recording and availability of Board meetings. All meetings are recorded and are available upon request to the office of the Executive Vice President for individuals affiliated with member congregations. The working group is also taking more responsibility for the [Board Blog](#) and for content to the [Board Facebook](#) page.

**Finance Committee** - As budgeting responsibility has moved from Board to staff along with many other issues of finance, allowing the committee and Board members to focus on policy matters. A significant issue, approved by the Board, was a motion to separate the Common Endowment Fund to a separate corporation. This is being done primarily to protect the assets of individual congregations and other entities who have deposits in the CEF. In the unlikely event a judgment would ever be entered against the UUA, this will protect those assets.

**[GA 2012 in Phoenix.](#)** It is not often that we are working so much during the year on a GA. Based on a [business resolution](#) at 2010 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**

During this year we have been intently working on how we conduct our business with a much smaller Board. Key to this work has been our focus on policy and how the staff carry out our policy, measure the results and report out that performance. This is really hard work but we have seen significant progress with our very dedicated staff. This has been a journey to get to this point and while we still have, and will always have, work to do, the path is clearer and we have a much greater sense of collaboration and cooperation.

During this year we have had an opportunity to look at our facilities in Boston and just how well they work for us. We have three buildings on Beacon Hill including "25". There is much to consider as we evaluate these facilities including technology, space, ability to collaborate, property values, market conditions, operational cost, maintenance, accessibility, heritage and more. We are persuaded that at this point it is in the best interests of our Association of Congregations to relocate our offices to take advantage of high market values for residential property on Beacon Hill with lower market values for modern property in Boston. Why Boston? Why not some other location in the US? The Board asked the same question and in the end we were persuaded that it would be difficult to have most of our staff move. Combined with moving costs, re-training and hiring new staff plus other transition costs, we agreed that a move out of Boston would set us back too far in our ability to effectively carry out our work. We are just starting this process and will keep you informed as we go along.

## **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