

ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY UUA Board of Trustees for 2012 - 2013

A year ago we reported to you that this would be the last year the Board would consist of district elected trustees and trustees elected at large. This is all part of the transition approved by delegates the year before to have a smaller Board of Trustees made up entirely of trustees elected at large. Trustees will be elected for three year terms and may run a second time for a three year term. In this transition year four trustees from the current board were appointed for continuity to two year terms. Three persons were nominated for three year terms and four nominated for one year terms. Much of our work this year has been in preparation for a smaller board. A significant part of this has been to eliminate the Board's Committee on Committees and replaced it with a new Appointments Committee which is comprised of non-Board members to take up that work. In addition, the Board has critically reviewed Board member liaison positions with many committees to make sure we are only having Board member liaisons where required. In many cases we had duplication of roles with the Financial Advisor and a Board member as liaisons. The Board of course will continue to approve all appointments as it has in the past.

As part of our work this year we have addressed several issues around governance with the administration. An important part of this has been to review the Ends of the Association around which policies are constructed to achieve those Ends. More information on these efforts will be presented and discussed in small group sessions at GA. The **Governance Working Group** of the Board had several priorities this year. First, we organized and shepherded the process for the Board's review of the Ends Policies of the Association. The Ends Policies are the Board's best efforts to articulate the goals of our work together as an Association. The Board anticipates the adoption of revised Ends Policies at the pre-GA meeting in June, 2013. Secondly, we worked to streamline the Board's work under Policy Governance. We reviewed the policy manual and recommended the elimination or consolidation of a variety of policies. We expect this to make it easier for both the staff and the Board to assure compliance with Board policies going forward. In addition, we instituted a number of procedural changes in the way that the Board does its work under Policy Governance that should enable a new smaller board to operate effectively. And lastly, we worked together with the Committee on Committees to clarify Board policies relating to the various committees of the Board and of the Association.

The Linkage Working Group provides tools and support for the Board to have meaningful dialogue with those to whom we are accountable:

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

This year we added feedback from the above last 4 of what the Board calls our "Sources of Authority and Accountability" to what we have done in previous years with our member congregations. This took various forms, including focus groups, interviews, anthologies, and surveys. Our District Board partners interviewed over 50 of our most vibrant member congregations. In all, we received feedback on the draft outcomes of the Association from nearly 1000 Unitarian Universalists, about 60% of which directly represent the above groups. Most agreed the draft accurately reflected their values, though few could resist making suggestions for change – some minor, some quite substantial. As of the writing of this report, the board is incorporating this feedback into a new draft, with the final adopted at pre-GA Board meeting. The final report of this feedback "Hearing Voices," can be found on the UUA site.

This is also the fourth year we have participated in a World Café with Youth Caucus, and have added an "Open House" series of discussion with the Young Adult Caucus.

The **Communications Working Group** continues to manage the Board Blog and the Board Facebook page. In addition, the Communications Working Group has taken a significant part of the responsibility for preparing a letter to congregations following each face-to-face Board meeting. We have done this for the last two meetings and it has already shown to have a broad reach to congregations and stimulating conversation in various blogs and other outlets.

As mentioned, the **Committee on Committees** (CoC) makes its last report: The CoC has happily rendered itself obsolete. The newly-created Appointments Committee, which has a trustee liaison but no trustee members, now recommends to the board candidates for most board-appointed committees. The exceptions are staff-recommended appointments to credentialing committees. Board policies have been updated to clarify and articulate accountabilities for open recruitment, diversity in committee appointments, transparency, anti-racism anti-oppression multi-cultural competencies, staff support, and board action on committee recommendations. The Committee on Committees held its final meeting in April 2013.

The **Right Relations Monitoring Committee** reports they had long and interesting conversations with representatives from Leather and Grace and their allies about the inclusion of people in the kink community in our congregations and on our Association staff. Leather and Grace came with a detailed information packet for us, including recommendations for the UUA Staff. First, we addressed institutional concerns within UUA headquarters, particularly with respect to the Administration's operational definitions of our policies with respect to non-discrimination (particularly Policy 2.1.1). We discussed the need to explicitly name consensual sexual expression as a category covered by our non-discrimination policy as a subset of "affectional or sexual orientation." We also discussed the need to clarify what is appropriate workplace conversation—particularly the boundary between appropriately identifying oneself as a member of the kink/BDSM community and inappropriately discussing personal sexual behavior. There was also a larger conversation about culture shift in Unitarian Universalist congregations and in our Association as a whole. We identified ministers and religious educators as key players in culture change, and both Young Adult Our Whole Lives and the Welcoming Congregation program (currently undergoing major revisions), in particular, as potentially useful existing tools in helping this conversation progress.

The **Finance Committee** does much of its work around the budget. The committee closely monitors budget variances at each meeting and receives reports from administration on steps taken to deal with variances in the budget. Of particular concern has been the need to eliminate ten positions on the staff this year due to not receiving anticipated revenues from congregations. As part of the multi-year budgeting the administration is predicting a 3% decrease in revenues, primarily from congregations dealing with financial realities of their own. The administration submitted a balanced budget reflecting the shortfall and this budget was approved for recommendation to the full Board. The Treasurer's report along with the report of the Financial Advisor will have more information. Final passage of the budget will occur at the Board meeting in Louisville preceding the opening of GA.

The relocation of UUA Headquarters. An important and historically significant step was taken this year to transition the headquarters from Beacon Hill to Farnsworth Street in Boston. This came about as the result of a long and detailed study on all our options. It became very clear that the cost of rehabilitating all of our property on Beacon Hill could exceed the cost of a new location and still not provide the space and technology we need to be effective in fully meeting our Ends. In addition, we realized that there was no readily apparent source of funding that would be sufficient for a full modernization effort of these properties. We also recognized that a decision to do nothing would be both a poor fiduciary choice and a poor operational choice. A significant issue was whether we should even be in Boston. The administration convinced the Board that a decision to relocate away from Boston would have a very negative impact on staff retention

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

- Bylaw Section C-3.6, 13.1, 13.2, 13.4 and Rule G-13.2.1 all related to incorporating Regions into bylaws.
- Article IX – Sec 9.10 and Rules G-9.13.4 and G-9.13.5 dealing with proposed language to incorporate electronic voting.
- Articles V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX, and related rules concerning Elections, Appointments, and Committees
- Article II - C-2.3 regarding inclusion language in our Purposes and Principles
- Articles VII and X – Sections 7,7,7.8, C-10.6 and C-10.7 regarding provisions concerning investments.

All the proposed changes will be submitted to delegates in a mini-assembly prior to presentation in plenary. Proposals to change the amendments may be made during the mini-assemblies.

Other Business

Near the completion of the April Board meeting it became clear that the Board and administration had reached an impasse on our collective ability to provide the kind of metrics based on strategic plans that the Board feels is necessary to carry out one of our primary duties: monitoring policies to achieve the Ends of the Association. It was mutually agreed we should solicit expert help in providing assistance to do this work. At this writing a joint statement of the Board and administration is being prepared to explain the need and the anticipated benefit such assistance will provide. This statement will be available on the UUA website.

The GA Schedule and Agenda

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

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