

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Commission on Appraisal



October Meeting, 2009

Boston, MA

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Friday, October 30th

Present: Erica Baron, Barbara Child, Megan Dowdell, Pete Fontneau, Bev Harrison, Nana Kratochvil, Don Mohr, Michael Ohlrogge. Facilitation provided by Keith Kron.

Team Building with Keith Kron

The morning began by a worship led by Don. Keith led an opening exercise and went into facilitating a series of team building exercises:

Review of Mission Statement & Covenant

Mission Statement:

-The Commission considered the Commission's Mission Statement and covenant. After discussing potential revisions, the Commission decided to keep them as they are, for the present time.

The Commission broke for dinner and re-gathered, having completed its facilitated work with Keith Kron and now working on its own.

Present: Erica Baron, Barbara Child, Megan Dowdell, Pete Fontneau, Bev Harrison, Nana Kratochvil, Don Mohr, Michael Ohlrogge, Jacqui Williams

Remaining Article II Business:

Responsive Resolutions:

Summary of Responsive Resolutions passed by GA '09:

- Request that the UUA Board of Trustees "place a motion to substitute the recommended language of Section C-2.4 "Inclusion" for the current bylaw C-2.3 "Non-discrimination" on a General Assembly agenda as soon as possible."
- Request that congregations "act upon the pledge and covenant expressed in [the] proposed [inclusion section]" and that congregations report their actions in response to this to the UUA Board before the 2010 General Assembly
- Strongly Urge the UUA Board of Trustees to "facilitate a continuation and further deepening of the discussion of the Principles and Purposes begun by the review conducted by the UUA Commission on Appraisal"

- Submit to the UUA Board for review Section C-15.1 of the UUA bylaws, the provision which prohibited substantive amendments to be made to the Commission on Appraisal's proposed revision of Article II.

-The UUA Board tabled the issue of what to do with the 2009 GA Responsive Resolutions pertaining to the CoA's report. These will be taken up at its January 2010 meeting.

-Barbara offered consultative capacity on these to Gini & Peter.

-Resolution requesting substation of “inclusion” section for current “non-discrimination”:

+The commission discussed this and concluded no action needed to be taken by the Commission. The CoA also noted there will be a two year delay before such a motion will be in order.

-Resolution requesting congregations to report on their actions in the spirit of the “inclusion” section:

+The Commission decided it would like for Barbara to contact Tom Loughrey, UUA Secretary, to follow-up on his communication to the congregations regarding this responsive resolution.

-Resolution urging the UUA Board to facilitate a continuation of the discussion of the P&P started by the CoA:

+ The commission discussed this and concluded no action needed to be taken by the Commission.

-Resolution for the UUA Board to review Section C-15.1 of the UUA Bylaws:

+ The commission discussed this and concluded no action needed to be taken by the Commission.

Publications Stemming from Article II Project:

-Already, the proposed revision and the rationale for the proposal were distributed to the board and printed up at GA and given to approximately 500 people there. So far, this is the only thing relating to the project that has been published.

-Jacqui, Bev, and Michael will work on the wrap-up archive work for Article II. Don will provide support as necessary. Jacqui will be the project manager for this. This includes:

- Consulting with Ned on legalities of archiving
- Consulting with archive people
- Reporting back to the CoA with any last questions, issues for approval.
- The committee will make any necessary decisions about further publishing or making materials available on this and report back to the whole CoA with its decisions.

The evening ended with a worship service led by Bev Harrison.

Saturday, October 31st

Present: Erica Baron, Barbara Child, Megan Dowdell, Pete Fontneau, Bev Harrison, Nana Kratochvil, Don Mohr, Michael Ohlrogge, Jacqui Williams

The morning began with a centering activity led by Megan and Michael

Approval & Review of Minutes:

Don made a motion to approve the March 2009 minutes, Barbara seconded and the motion passed with no objections or abstentions.

+Barbara recognized the need for continued follow-up on website issues. Michael and Don will follow-up on this.

+The Commission also discussed the need to establish a specific procedure for election of CoA officers. This issue will be tabled to the January 2010 CoA meeting.

New Topic Selection:

-The Commission received input from approximately 250 people through Survey Monkey, responding to requests for suggestions on topics of future study for the CoA.

-Erica and Don presented on the data sheet they created for the input the CoA received on future study topics. The sheet groups responses by category.

-The Commission then worked to identify critical questions suggested by the comments in each category that would indicate the focus of a potential study done on that category. Key questions and categories identified are as follows:

Condensed & Clarified Questions from List of Topics Suggested to CoA

Social Justice:

-What implications do our social justice actions have on the relevance and growth of UUism?

Growth, Polity, UU Identity & Relevance:

-What factors of our mission, values & polity can best lead to growth & strengthening our UU identity?

Polity:

-How does democracy manifest in the UUA & Member congregations?

+How do different groups (clergy, laity, staff) impact decision making?

+How does it enhance / inhibit full participation of various ID groups?

+Includes election of officers, congregational leadership, selection of justice issues.

-What is effective leadership in a congregation? How do we identify and train leaders and enable them to lead?

- What do congregations need from the UUA and how is it delivered? & What does the UUA need from congregations and how is it delivered?
- How do we resolve the creative tension between being a spiritual home and being a center for activism?

Spirituality / Theology

- How do congregations promote theological depth, spiritual practice, faith development, and religious identity?
- How do we support the faith journeys and spiritual health of those who convert to UUism?

AR/AO / Classism:

- What is it about UU culture that generates resistance to inclusion?
- What would we need to transform our culture?

RE:

- How do we develop a strong sense of UU identity throughout our lives?
- Is the separation of the main serve & RE harmful?

Ministry:

- Who or what is our ministry?
- What is the relationship between congregations and ministers?
- What do UU ministers need to know and how are they getting to it?
- How are aspirants and candidates supported or not supported by the MFC, RSCC, UUA, and sponsoring congregations? Including financially?

Lay Ministry:

- What is the place of lay ministry in UUism?
- How can lay ministry be most effective?
- Should there be a credentialing process for lay ministry? If so, what is it?
- What is staff development for lay ministry?
- What is the difference between lay ministry and lay leadership?

Worship:

- What is meaningful worship? How does the definition of meaningful worship vary across subcultures and ages? Where are we now / how are we doing? How does this relate to growth & diversity?*
- What resources (hymnals and music, rituals, liturgy, liturgical calendar, technology) do congregations need to support meaningful worship?*
- How is the unique religious identity of UUism expressed in worship form and content?*
(the content of this will be included in other areas, such as AR/AO or Growth / Relevance)

Concept Papers on Potential Topics

The Commission decided that each commissioner would volunteer to write one or more concept papers on one of the topics or sub-topics suggested above. These concept papers will enumerate the key questions that a report or section of a report on the chosen topic would elicit. The papers will be used by the Commission at its January meeting to gain further focus on the next topic for its study.

Topics to write concept papers on:

- Lay Ministry & Ministry – Nana
- Growth, Polity, UU Identity & Relevance – Don
- How do congregations promote theological depth, spiritual practice, faith development, and religious identity? – Michael
- Relevance – Erica
- Relevance – Bev
- Follow-up on CoA reports of past 20-30 years (What has their impact been and have their recommendations been implemented?) – Bev, Megan
- What is it about culture that generates resistance to inclusivity? – Pete
- Follow-up on '92 Ministry report – Jacqui
- Is the separation of our children from worship harmful? – Jacqui
- How are the different understandings of lay & professional ministry in our congregations affecting congregational life & growth in our association? – Barbara

Additional Input:

- The CoA will put out an additional call for input on the next study topic with a deadline of January 7th. Megan will work with the UUA Communication's Office to do this.

Treasurer's Report by Don:

- Bottom line is that we have overspent in the last two fiscal years. FY 08 we overspent by \$19,564, FY '09 we overspent by \$13,257.
- Our new budget this year is \$1,000 less than last year – it is \$34,000.
- We can get access to the UUA's quarterly reports, showing our expenditures quarter by quarter.
- Technically, the handbook says that the treasurer receives reports from the Commissioners, but Don sees this as unnecessary if we're getting the quarterly reports from the UUA.
- The Commission agreed that we will now just send our reports to Nancy Lawrence.
- Don will get from the UUA the last two years of quarterly reports. He will perform and analysis of what we are spending our money on, how much things are costing, what we could do to reduce costs.

Upcoming CoA Meetings

January Meeting Details:

- Megan provided an email giving logistical information about the January meeting.
- We will begin at 6:00 PM on Thursday, January 21st. For the meeting, we will meet and work on Saturday evening and won't meet on Sunday morning.
- Megan and Michael will work to arrange for a hearing on Saturday, January 23rd. Megan and Michael will work with the local leaders to arrive at the most advantageous time and location for the hearing.
- Bev will contact the Pacific Central District board/leadership to invite them to the hearing on Saturday and inquire of them when / if there is an advantageous time for them.

Dates of Future CoA Meetings:

- January 21st to the 24th – Berkeley, CA (Church Divinity School of the Pacific & Starr King School for the Ministry)
- April 22nd – 25th 2010 – Boston, MA (Pickett & Elliot)
- June 23rd – 27th, 2010 – GA – Minneapolis, St. Paul
- September 30th – October 3rd, 2010 – Heartland District
- January 20th – 23rd - Washington DC area.
- April 14th – 17th, 2011 – Albany, NY
- June 22nd – 26th, 2011 – GA – Charlotte, NC

GA 2010:

- We'll be making a report during plenary and doing a hearing during one of the programming slots.
- The CoA decided that we won't have a booth at GA this year.
- The CoA will decide in January whether we would like a suite at GA.

The Commission broke for a dinner out.

The evening session ended with a closing worship led by Pete Fontneau and attended by all Commissioners.

Sunday, November 1st

Present: Erica Baron, Barbara Child, Megan Dowdell, Pete Fontneau, Bev Harrison, Nana Kratochvil, Don Mohr, Michael Ohlrogge, Jacqui Williams

Publicizing Images of the CoA at Work:

- The Commission discussed ways of providing pictures on our website and facebook page to give people beyond the Commission a sense of what the Commission looks like at work, the nature of the Commission and the nature of the Commission's work.
- The Commission will bring this issue up again in January for further discussion.

Interfaith Issue Lab Research Inquiry:

- A person with this above named organization emailed the Commission, wanting us to join an online research community that they have. The Commission agreed that there is no need for us to join such an online forum at this time.

The meeting ended with a checkout and a closing led by Barbara Child.

Respectfully Submitted
Michael Ohlrogge
Secretary, Commission on Appraisal