

UU Board of Trustees Meeting
DPA Observer Notes
October 20-21, 2007

Saturday, Oct 20

- Opening words and chalice lighting by Charlie Burke
- Consent Agenda was approved

Secretary's Report – Paul Richter

- Reported on logistics and plans for the 2009 election
- Discussion of Board of Review rules

Executive Vice-President's Report - Kay Montgomery

- Hires – Kay reported on new hires for staff and districts. Dramatically increased people of color in senior jobs – we closely monitor hiring for diversity hiring. Been very encouraged about change in overall profile
- Tapestry of Life program – at least two new programs will be on line for children by the time of the next meeting. New content management system
- Kay delivered a moving tribute to Natalie Webber Gulbrandsen who died this week. She noted that Natalie was elected moderator at the same time as Kay was appointed exec VP.
- Work on the website continues – there is a survey out to gather feedback.

Treasurer's Report – Tim Brennan

- Overall - very good year for UUA – small operating surplus
- Glenn Charbonneau, assistant treasurer, left for a new position – for professional development reasons. Rachel Doherty will be replacing him and will begin early November. Florence Einhorn, director of accounting for 13 years, will be leaving at end of year.
- Audit completed – clean opinion letter received – no exceptions.
- Management letter – separate from “opinion letter” - critiques operation and makes recommendations for corrections and improvements. Last year's letter was 8 pages long – during the year, the UUA implemented the recommendations in last year's letter; this year – only two bullet points: 1) Close quarter and year more efficiently; 2) Document policy and procedures – keep it up. Audit committee will report to Board at January meeting.
- Strong performance for the year from Beacon Press
- FY08 budget increased from January to October – fund raising is up – primarily because of APF. Campaigns are up – Association Sunday. Half million dollars of restricted gifts held over to this year. Expenses up because of new program - new marketing campaigns – identity based ministries, congregational services and lifespan faith development increases. Increases in budget since January are for additions to existing program – not operational bleeding or staff.
- The General Investment Fund did well over the last year. Tim also briefed the Board on the current activities of the Socially Responsible Investing component.

- Reported on efforts to review all building systems and establish a baseline of current facility conditions and develop a 10-year maintenance and repair plan. Needs currently identified at \$3.5M over ten years. Plan will be presented at January meeting.
- Priorities for the coming year – recruit new controller, capital items, fixed asset system, Common Endowment Fund and LEED certification.

Board Members and Observers introduced themselves

First Vice-Moderator's Report - Jackie Shanti

- Jackie Introduced a motion proposed by the Commission on Appraisal which will be discussed and voted on later in the meeting. Gini addressed the UU-UNO Intergenerational Spring Seminar – UN-UNO would like a Board observer at the conference and beginning in January, will have an observer at the Board meetings. UN-UNO is one of remaining affiliated organizations.

Congregational Working Group – Eva Marx

- Reported on applications for affiliation and disaffiliation.
- Will Saunders reported on International affiliations and connections - ICUU
- Bill Sinkford reported on IARF activities and other international interfaith efforts and potential UUA roles. Various interfaith alliances are exploring potential of international young adult work.
- Gini Courter indicated that the Task Force to help Board examine its mission (why do we do work) and its ministry (how do we do that work) will be revived.

Growth Working Group – Doug Gallagher

- Reported on Harlan's effort to bring together twelve ministers of growing congregations
- There are seventeen nominees for this year's Breakthrough Congregations
- Solicited participants for regional marketing campaigns – there will be about three regional campaigns a year and interested regions should get their indication of interest in the queue.
- Reported on a possible trend identified by John Weston that there will be a shortage of ministers for large congregations – many of our ministers are over 50 and entrepreneurial spirit may not be there. Average age of new ministers has been increasing until recently – also short of qualified interim ministers. Common wisdom on the street is that there is an oversupply of parish ministers – reality is that it looks like there might be a shortage. With 400 ministers age 58 and over – can anticipate many retirements in the next decade.

Governance Working Group – John Blevins

- John provided a copy of the latest policy revisions (section 2) arrived at during previous sessions this week. The group is considering inviting members of large congregations and districts using policy governance to consult with the group.
- The master schedule for the governance initiative was provided for review, consideration and comment.
- Susan Stratton, Governance consultant, provided her observations on process and what might be done differently in the current meeting when the Board is under policy governance. She noted:

- that the Treasurer's report would come in through monitoring reports made to the Board as a whole – not just to a working group of the Board.
- Executive committee actions – some conversations regarding congregations might be done differently under policy governance – congregational working group would be more focused on ownership linkage.
- Growth working group – trends noted are huge developments regarding ends of the organization. What we hope to do about it – that is exactly the type of conversation that must be had at the Board level.
- Working groups are doing good work in raising up “ends” conversations. Example was small congregations issue – what UUA must provide for their survival and growth are ends issues – how does Board bring all those ends conversations up in an appropriate manner. Board is going to be focused more on those issues than operational issues which then become staff responsibility.
- Board's call work – must be integrated into the Board's ends process.

Living Our Faith Working Group – Tom Loughery

- Meeting with DRUUM leadership in January
- Exploration of accessibility issues – reflected on process used to understand ongoing issues.
- Gulf Coast work – adaptive work versus technical work. Post Katrina lessons – it was asserted by a trustee that the UUA and Quakers are the only religious organizations to have separated social justice work from its governance group – it happened 30 years ago – as a result, it is perceived that our work is not as strong. (Bill Sinkford later responded that collaboration with UUSC is complex and strong and comparison with Quakers may not be valid at this point.)
- There has been a shift from writing letters to congressman and getting out and doing actual work. This is happening in our congregations and our congregations are demanding these opportunities. Discussion from the floor pointed out the need as an organization to do more disaster planning and readiness.
- Recommended that Board meet in places other than Boston so that we can connect with our owners (congregations). Bill Sinkford noted that holding various meetings around the country has almost universally been a positive experience – appreciated by local folks and valuable for the meeting participants.
- Gulf Coast – new work for us because this is long term, not short term. It was noted from the floor that if we are going to move around, we should solicit invitations because our presence may be a burden rather than an opportunity – example New Orleans – hosts wanted to be good hosts and they were not equipped physically and emotionally to do so and it was a burden in some cases.
- Youth ministry summit – potential collaboration with Association Working Group
- Governance Work – Ministers of color
- It was also noted from the floor that there is a need for continuing discussion on the transition to this working group as the accessibility committee is due to disband in January.

Financial Advisor's Report – Dan Brody

- In 2007, the UUA benefited from bequests from several very generous donors – which mostly went to the endowment rather than the operating budget.
- APF came in over estimates and this year looks good.

- Beacon Press ran a surplus – assets balance has been increasing since 2001 which enables them to withstand several years of losses.
- Endowment performance (as compared to university/religious organization endowments about \$100M) – some years we outperform and some years we haven't. Current model of asset allocation adopted in 2003 – outperformed the first three years, and underperformed last two years – right in line.
- Total net assets of the current association are increasing, but as measured against inflation we are relatively flat – which is OK. We haven't fully recovered from dot.com drop, but assets are keeping their real value.
- Health Plan – projected surplus designed in at 10%. Initial years – 600 employees – claims experience more favorable than anticipated – about \$700K. Expenses expected to grow by 10-12%, premium will increase by only 4% due to surplus – benefits added are vision exam, adult immunizations and more (40) outpatient mental health visits. Health coverage has been expanded to those working 750+ hours rather than 1000 to include half timers who work only the church year.
- Audit Committee – working to generate a conflict of interest/whistleblower policy for staff and board members.
- Investment Policy – close to being finished for presentation to the Board. Will have two different approaches to socially responsible investing – complete ban on tobacco and weapons. There is some question about the source of this policy - did it come from GA resolutions or from committee preferences? Policy discussion will raise this to the Board. If there is an absolute ban, most mutual funds cannot comply – radically complicates work of investment committee. Favor/avoid language allows more flexibility to committee.

Process Observation – Charlie Burke

Ministerial Fellowship Committee Report – Jackie Shanti

- 23 candidates – 5 men, 18 women, 10 granted, contingent 8, 3 need additional work, 2 discouraged from continuing. Candidates are from Meadville Lombard 7, Harvard 4, Andover Newton 3, Starr King 2 and other non-UU schools 8.
- Reading list – purpose is to assist candidates to establish UU identity. Nearing completion – needs a bit more tweaking in consultation with IDBM and LREDA and SCM.
- In future, as of March 2008, candidate packages will require essay (in addition to theology and AR/AO/MC essays) describing a personal experience of ministering with children or youth and how this experience informs their philosophy of RE.

Religious Education Credentialing Committee Report

- Associate, Credentialed and Masters. It is based on competence, not excellence. RECC doing excellent work in a difficult task without benefit of MFC type criteria.

Association Working Group – Tamara Payne-Alex

- Reported on developments in Youth Ministry
- Independent Affiliate Status – Current organizations are DRUUM, Universalist Convocations, CU2C2 (Camps and Conferences), UU Urban Ministry. Purpose, mission and structure must meet criteria of coordination, collaboration and cooperation within

UUA tent. The Board engaged in an extensive discussion of criteria and clarity of criteria.

- Pending applications are from:
 - UU Ministry for Earth – Working group vote was very close to deny affiliate status – minority position brought to Board because the vote was so close. Arguments pro and con were presented to the Board. Board voted to table action until January.
 - Partner Church Council - recommended for affiliation because they are an umbrella organization – even though they are also a player.
 - Small Group Ministry Network – recommendation that SGMN NOT be accepted into affiliation status because it does not meet criteria. Mission is clear – they want staff support.
- Election Process – Board requested that staff recommend a process for 2009 elections and then have bylaw changes ready by January 2010. Staff presented plan for 2009; working group will research how other faiths select and elect leaders.

Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth – Bill Sinkford and Megan Dowdell

- In response to direction from Board in October 2004, the consultation process led to collection of data in over 70 meetings held at congregational and district level – immense amount of data collected leading to summit held this summer was wildly successful in crafting a vision to lead us forward. The consultation has issued its final report.
- A Youth Ministry Working Group has been formed to address curriculum, congregational service development and youth leadership structure. It is a several year agenda.
- Discussion with the Board about what youth ministry should look like in 10 years, what the Board's role is in developing and supporting that vision.
- The Board enthusiastically supported and affirmed this vision statement.

We envision a youth ministry that is central to the articulated mission of Unitarian Universalism, offers multiple pathways for involvement in our faith communities, and is

Congregationally based;

Multigenerational;

Spirit centered;

Counter-oppressive, multicultural, and radically inclusive.

Finance Committee Report – Lyn Conley

- Discussion of role of this committee under policy governance – ie – what is staff work and what is Board work?
- GA Registration fee – Because of increase in budget of \$3,500 for training on cultural misappropriation - \$5 increase in GA registration fee to \$290 early, \$330 late.
- Current budget practice is to propose and approve the budget for the following fiscal year at the January meeting. This requires staff planning to be done in November with only one month actual cost experience for the current year. The proposed change to be voted on later in the meeting is to use the January meeting as the target for staff to get list of priorities from the Board and then prepare the budget in February for approval at the April meeting. This permits Board to have actual impact and influence on the budget rather than reacting as may be the case presently.
- Board appoints the trustees of the Health plan – that board makes all decisions on benefits etc. UUA Board has only appointment and removal power.

- Pension benefits for staff of former affiliates who have now been disaffiliated have been grandfathered into the pension plan through Dec 2008.
- Maximum loan amount is proposed to be raised to \$900,000 from \$700,000. There is feedback from congregations that the loan program is too restrictive and not being used – approach is to reexamine criteria to open up eligibility while protecting exposure of the Association.
- There have been some complications on the Conejo Valley loan guarantee – need to approve a waiver to our policy to allow a greater than 10 year guarantee period. The changes required to get loan approval have been reviewed by counsel and the Administration believes the Association is adequately protected and that the changes are reasonable.

Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Assessment and Monitoring Team – Joan Lund and Charlie Burke

- Training in January will be facilitated by Paula Cole-Jones.
- Competency survey will be sent out to new members before that time. Important to include this work in our Policy Governance ends statement in a clearly articulated manner that infuses the principles into everything we do.
- Committees appointed by Board need to have training and working group will work with the Committee on Committees to coordinate implementation of this vision and compliance with the resolution at GA 2002 Quebec.

GAMAP Report – Eva Marx

- GA Planning committee is an independently elected committee – the Working Group raised the question about how will this be addressed under Policy Governance?
- Reported that the subsidies for congregational presidents at GA this year will be 25% - this is the last year of the subsidy. The Group intends to examine new and continuing ways to encourage such participation.
- Right Relations Team has been institutionalized into GA and is provided for in the budget.
- Bill Sinkford indicated that time will be set aside for a Public Witness event – Friday 5-7 P.M. – for someplace downtown Ft. Lauderdale – related to GLBT issues which are at a critical point in the locality. Bill Moyers has declined invitation for the Weir Lecture - we have not heard from the second choice.
- Because the convention center for GA in Ft Lauderdale is officially in the Port, there will be federal/homeland security issues that need to be addressed. Admission to the convention center will require official government issued ID's – conversations to date have elicited the reaction from federal security personnel that admission will not be denied to anyone “not posing a threat of terrorism.” Leadership is nervous about the potential for harm implicit in this statement. This is a significant concern and more vigilant planning and negotiation with both local police and homeland security will be necessary. The Board discussed whether it was advisable to immediately generate communication which 1) clearly points out the security concerns; 2) the need for government issued ID's, particularly for our youth, 3) steps that the members of our congregations can take to prepare to attend GA and 4) the GA Planning Committee's plan to work with both local and federal security personnel. The Board concluded that its concerns should be relayed to the GA planning committee with a recommendation to generate such a communication. The Board also addressed the varying reactions that

individuals on the Board had to this news and took note that the varying reactions (confidence and reassurance that this can be addressed effectively in contrast to the fear and anxiety that it wouldn't be addressed effectively) represented a microcosm of our culture overall – the varied reactions can be traced to identity and the varying experience of those claiming and experiencing those identities.

Committee on Committees – Pat Solomon

- Task Force to track changes in GA and envision the future for GA – 5th Principle Initiative.
- Need to identify committees that do staff work and make them staff appointed rather than a Board appointed committee . There is no reason why the Committee on Committees can't collaborate and provide candidates to staff for appointments.

Process Observation – Rev Jose Balléster

Sunday October 21

Opening reading – Lyn Conley

Miscellaneous

- Bill Sinkford distributed and briefly summarized the election protocols for the 2009 election
- Gini noted that all should take the time to read the Beacon Press report on the website as an educational and informative case study for the type of issues that the Board needs to address.

Reports on Saturday night meetings:

- Burton Carley briefly summarized the discussion related to forming partnerships and other collaborative relationships focused on defining and enhancing excellence in ministry. This was a wide ranging discussion which included the key constituent groups and will continue through these early stages.
- Justine Urbikas gave a brief summary of the discussion about establishing and maintaining a blog. There appear to be at least five individuals who have established and are maintaining a blog related to their role on the Board.
- Lyn Conley reported on the finance committee budget discussion.

President's Report - Bill Sinkford

- Association Sunday appears to have been a great success. The goals were two fold:
 - Raise cash for the Now is the Time Campaign - early signs look good; and
 - Strengthen the relationships that bind us. The feeling of common purpose has been palpable, including some of the most ardent critics of the UUA. Bill thanked Stephan Papa who personally visited over 200 congregations over the last year in preparation for the event.

- Time Magazine advertising campaign – we’ve gone and done it. The first ad was in the October 5 issue and sponsorship of the Time religion archive now includes links to UU web site. The initial ads through the “Person of the Year” issue at the end of the year are being paid for by donors – the continuation through the spring will be from Association Sunday proceeds. Time was chosen for its readership profile and includes 2M African American readers and 2.1M Latina/Latino readers. Reaction has been fascinating – some criticism of the “Is God keeping you Away from Church” theme. However, most reaction has been enthusiastic and thankfulness about coming out of the closet. Newsweek and NPR called soon thereafter.
- Concurrent efforts (conversation with 150 leaders) to prepare congregations to be welcoming to visitors. First Berkeley is going to give a copy of the DVD to each visitor.
- Proceeds from Association Sunday:
 - 50% to the ad campaign,
 - 25% to defray costs of settling ministers of color – six congregations have already applied and have been doing and are continuing to do intensive anti-racism work. It is important not only to select congregations, but to select the right ministerial candidates to participate in the program. Potential issues: We have more to do to support ministers of color already serving. Five of the first six settlements will be associate minister positions, one will be intern. Taking steps to identify senior minister opportunities;
 - 25% to districts for congregational grants.
- Bill reported that he delivered 15,000 UU petitions and J Thomas brought 60,000 from UCC to Washington calling for removal of troops from Iraq. Plans are in the works for a major protest in December in Washington.
- Working with ARE to explore reconciliation and reparation recommendations.
- Three regional marketing campaigns per year – for the coming year, Tampa Bay, Dallas Fort Worth and perhaps Westchester NY. Also working with cluster groups, small church groups in the Midwest and northern New England, satellite plans in Albuquerque and San Diego.
- Excellence in Ministry – communication and collaboration are going to be critical, with a target for a major consultation to be held in fall 2008.

Moderator’s Report – Gini Courter

- Open space process – an exploration focused on how we can improve methods used at GA. Open space was first attempt to engage in a process to discuss topics without motions that already stake out a solution. Feedback has been all over the place – those who didn’t participate didn’t think much of it. Of those who did participate, they were still all over the place. Some comments – sacred, holy experience. Others indicated that it fell short of their expectations. Some judged the value of groups by how many were there – example – “there were only eight people there” – Gini’s question - does a small group make a conversation less worthy?

Must do open space differently – cannot have conflicting workshop agenda. Dual nature of GA – good program can drive out good conversation. Open Space has never been tried before when there was a choice between program and conversation. This year, double workshop slots for congregational leaders using appreciative inquiry techniques. We will identify five to six critical issues for conversation – with no workshops on Thursday to conflict with these conversations.

Some of the output of the process was extraordinary – all statements are catalogued and captured on the UUA website. The detailed workshop notes have been distributed to the Board and it will be using these notes as a guide both in its “ends” conversation and as it continues its work across all fronts. The Board passed a motion thanking the open space team for all its work.

- National Leadership Task Force – Sue Stukey has agreed to chair this task force chartered to identify and recommend best practices to identify, develop, train and nurture future national leaders.
- Natalie Webber – Gini reflected on and encouraged the Board to be mindful of the contributions and presence of Natalie Webber Gulbrandsen. She invited Board members to make a contribution to the Natalie Gulbrandsen Scholarship Fund in their role as Board members – a letter will be sent to former Board members with whom Natalie served inviting them to contribute also.

Motions

The Board passed the following motions (see the Board minutes for exact language):

- Adoption of the UUA Bylaws Related to the Board of Review.
- Transfer of Congregational Properties and Loan Commission and Compensation, Benefits and Pension Committee from being Board-appointed to being staff committees.
- Created a Fifth Principle Task Force – which will present two or more recommendations on the future configuration and content of General Assembly (including off-site participation and voting, content, frequency and duration).
- After rejecting a motion to refer the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council’s application for Independent Affiliate (IA) status to the AR/AO/MC Monitoring Team for further review, the Board voted to accept the organization into IA status.
- Discussion: Independent Affiliate Status discussion – who do we want to be in relationship with. Board was in non-relationship with groups which thought they were in relationship with us. Thus, the Board tried to create set of loose rules designed to encourage conversation regarding relationship, not to set up a set of yes/no criteria that groups either meet or not meet. It was agreed that more conversation is needed in order to integrate AR/AO/MC considerations into the IA evaluation process.
- To raise GA fees by \$5 for GA 2008.
- Approval of FY08 budget as modified.
- Approved FY08 Capital Expenditures Budget as modified.
- Approved change in UUA budget cycle so that priorities are discussed at the January meeting and present operating budgets for current and future year at the April meeting.
- Approved the FY08 Beacon Press Budget.
- Authorized the Treasurer to amend eligibility requirements of the Retirement Plan, Trust Health plan and other insurance plans consistent with criteria identified in the motion.
- Approved changes to the UUA Loan Guarantee program to raise the maximum loan amount and loan guarantee amount.

- Approved a modification to the loan guarantee for the loan being taken out by Conejo.

The Board tabled the following motion for action in January:

- The Board to meet occasionally in locations other than Boston and that time be set aside to meet with local elected and called leadership of our congregations beginning in Jan 2009.

Governance Working Group asked for sense of meeting whether Board was ready to move on to the next stage of the policy work. Request that input, comments, suggestions and angst be communicated by Nov 19.

Committee on Committees:

The Board moved into executive session.

Notes prepared by
Ken Wagner
President, DPA

Gems of the Day:

“Let’s not confuse spiritual practice with communication techniques.” Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt

“We don’t need to think alike, but we do need to spell alike.” Gini Courter