

NOTES: GAMAP (GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE MISSION OF THE ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP) MEETING 9/12/06

Beth McGregor

Present: Ginger Brown (GAPC), Burton Carley (BOT), Gini Courter (Moderator), Linda Friedman (GAPC), Eva Marx (BOT-GAPC liaison), Beth McGregor (GAPC), Bill Sinkford (President, convener), Jan Sneegas (GACS Office), Pat Solomon (BOT). Also for portion of meeting: Kay Montgomery, John Hurley

UPDATE ON PREACHERS/WARE LECTURER FOR PORTLAND:

Bill and Barbara Hamilton-Holway for SLT, Josh Pawalek for Sunday worship. Al Gore is being approached for Ware; alternatives are being lined up.

CONVERSATION ON ANTI-RACISM:

We would like something significant on race around the Journey Toward Wholeness 10th anniversary, that looks at our whole history and scope of activity (not just JTW) and acknowledges what congregations are currently doing, esp. in context of report to GA 07 required by GA 06 responsive resolution. This might involve stories of past and present, told by a whole range of people, spread throughout GA. Possibly display of a timeline and an opportunity for people to record their own brief stories onsite. Presentations may include video, photos, and other archival materials. Research on this would need to start soon. Bill and Gini will put together a team to develop this.

Cultural Misappropriation conversation next weekend. Linda F. will be a participant and report to GAPC. Aims include building a DRUUMM-UUMN-ARE relationship and developing a system for dealing with questions of cultural appropriation that is proactive rather than reactive and does not rely on individual definitions and reactions.

Youth are good at identifying racism and see that as their leadership piece; need help in expanding their vision of their leadership as partners in more aspects of institutionalized anti-racism. Recommend GAPC-GA youth staff discussion in April.

Keep Opening Ceremony short, celebratory, and welcoming, but also give Bill and Gini a chance to introduce the theme, give focus, frame the work of the Association at GA.

THEME:

'07 theme is 'Choices that Matter.' Encourage shaping of programs and events to reflect that.

'08 theme should be something about our commonality, unity, what holds us together (fitting in with COA's last report and its current work on the Principles and Purposes). COA will present report on review of Principles in '09.

Proposed titles for GAPC consideration and refinement:

What We Share

Common Threads

Out of Many, One

Unity in Diversity

Sharing a Path of Transformation

What We Hold in Common

[Note: GAPC subsequently discussed theme and selected "Common Threads."]

MAJOR PROGRAMS

Bill advocated for prominence for Pentagon Papers (being reissued, with major speakers), and for William Cross on Lessons Learned from Katrina on Race and Class.

"Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society" is SOC for this year; tie in to that along with "Choices that Matter" theme.

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR 'IMPORTANT PEOPLE'

Much discussion on various 'preferred' constituencies, including Jan's dilemmas when faced by special requests during the year, as well as onsite issues. At her discretion, she can refer such requests to President, Development, other offices, and keep GA office consistency.

UUA staff have responsibility to work within established procedures, not assume exceptions.

Work on a process that's a process for everyone, with a reasoned path for exceptions.

To avoid stress on ushers and other volunteers, have a designated small ombudsperson group that they can send people to. Use board members and staff to back up ushers at stressful events.

Recognize the complexity of relationships, be aware of how we're treating people and why.

GA BUDGET

GA '06 nets out at about \$118, 000 in the black because of unexpected high level of attendance, after set-asides for GA reserve and reimbursement of 50% presidents' registration.

Extensive discussion of Bill's proposal: Move CSW out of GA budget into Advocacy and Witness staff group, accountable to Meg Riley. Move areas of more GA relevance and similar financial impact into GA budget; probably technology/web coverage and GA-site marketing.

GAPC needs some control of things within its budget, but can't supervise other staff.

Bill and Linda will have further discussions. Accountability needs to be defined and communication frequent and clear in any case. Bill sees any change as being budget-neutral this year. If changes are made that affect the GA 07 budget, GAPC will adjust for them in January.

We recognize two visions of GA: primarily for the paying onsite participants, or for the whole Association and the local area. How it's organized and financed reflects choice of vision. We're increasingly incorporating the latter.

Technology, Music: High AV expenses (way over budget in 06). Is it time to spend more and upgrade AV as we've gotten more sophisticated and raised expectations? Improvement of sound for people onstage needed. Musicians and presenters need to know ahead of time what equipment is available, adjust plans accordingly, and help define and prioritize needed improvements. Don't finalize plans without consulting about technical resources. Captioning will work if scripts are in early, by June 1. Again, communication is key. Event request forms needed from staff for AV. GAPC needs to create a form for putting plenary events into the AV request system.

INTERSECTION WITH BEFORE AND AFTER GA PROGRAMS

This needs further work. In addition to pre-GA programs, there will probably be anti-racism training after GA 07.

In a sense "GA" is the whole time UU's are there. How to define boundaries but share resources, costs, management among the sections?

GA services like accessibility are provided to Ministry Days and UU University, paid out of GA budget. UUMA benefits from sharing site. UU University paid GA office for help on site in '06. UUMA will be using Convention Center spaces that GA isn't otherwise using in '07, so will pay separately for them. Music coordinator, musicians and other GA personnel should feel free to set boundaries, charge separately or not take on tasks outside GA itself if needed.

GA SCHEDULE

It's desirable to end GA earlier on Sunday so that people can fly home that night. Feedback from participants confirmed this. Can we end early enough to also allow for groups to schedule evening events after the official closing of GA? These would be off-program, not funded or supervised by GAPC.

DRUUMM REQUEST FOR CONCERT TIME

DRUUMM has interest in such a concert this year. Fundraising events can't be on program, and we can't adjust program to accommodate them, and staff can't have responsibility for them, but can advise them in organizing. Sunday evening would be no conflict and a positive addition.

CONGREGATIONAL FOCUS

Congregations should decide what mission and goals we need to claim, what ends we should be aiming for, what difference UUism should make in the world. GA is an opportunity for this, but plenary time not very effective. Gini proposed “Open Space” discussions (in Thurs. and Fri. time blocks) and report-outs. Board comes up with the overall question and the subtopics for about ten ‘domains’ of 400 or so. Board members or other trained facilitators would handle domain rooms and help keep topics on focus. Discussion is to be on ends (‘what’), not means (‘how’). May use device like badge number to assign to domain, or allow self-selection. Participants create subtopic questions and subdivide themselves within the domain based on their interest in the various proposed topics posted. Grass-roots creation of the agenda. Data entered onsite and compiled; top items selected in domains (‘convergence’ session). Ballot on priorities in plenary session based on report-out, with congregations encouraged to confer and their delegates voting. Whether Open Space will work logistically depends on room sizes, configurations, availability. (Looks OK—other logistics to be addressed later.)

INDEPENDENT AFFILIATES

Around 52 have been approved by the Board for 07; each thus eligible for one program (application due 1/31/07), option of applying for second (due 11/30/06). Board’s expectation is that with new criteria this number will shrink drastically in ‘08 to a few umbrella groups.

Timeline for 07: IA applications for second program due to GAPC by 11/30/06, with decision by 12/15; applications for guaranteed program due 1/30/07.

Timeline for 08: Board sends letter to IA’s with deadline of 4/30/07 for applications for IA status under new guidelines, makes decisions on acceptance by June meeting. Board needs to decide how much to help organizations create new umbrella groups or just leave them alone. By Sept. 08, GAPC works out and publicizes process for selecting GA programs in the new landscape.

If people have concerns about the Board’s decisions, route complaints to the Board via Nancy Lawrence. They can address GAPC about access to program slots.

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING

We need to discern priorities; is it the mission of GA to support attendance of families with children, where does that rate among other pieces of the mission? Is running onsite care the best way to do it, or would grants to help people make other arrangements be better? What about liability issues?

We raised fees to decrease subsidy of costs in 06 (cost to families about \$10/hr) and registration plummeted, with complaints that we’re not committed to families. People who used child care were satisfied except wanting slightly longer hours. Child care (age 0-7) served less than 65 families in ‘05, 14 families in ‘06. We’re still subsidizing heavily, because we’re providing highly professional, bonded children’s programs, not volunteer babysitting.

GAPC will frame questions for Board to consider about child care policy.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF GA

Staff groups tracked costs in 06—travel, registration, time at GA, prep time, booth fees, printing etc. It came to \$1,600,000, in a budget of \$22 million. Calculating benefit will be trickier.

BIENNIAL GA'S

We could get the business of the Association done with GA's in odd-numbered years, with a few years to set it up and regional gatherings in off years. Would keep GACS office. This may emerge in the next few years as an outcome of the vision-mission-ends process.

Notes recorded by Beth McGregor