

Report to the Board on the September 2008 General Assembly and Mission of the Association Partnership (GAMAP) and General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) Meetings

This report integrates the GAMAP and GAPC meetings. Much of what was discussed at the GAMAP meeting was affirmed and expanded upon at the GAPC meeting.

GAMAP met September 9, 2008. Participants were Rev. Bill Sinkford, UUA President; Gini Courter, UUA Moderator; Beth McGregor, Tim Murphy; and Ginger Brown, GA Planning Committee; Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly and Conference Services (GACS); and Rev. Burton Carley, Pat Solomon, and Eva Marx, Board of Trustees. The following items were discussed at GAMAP and subsequently discussed and, as appropriate, agreed to by the GAPC.

Fort Lauderdale Debrief. Opening worship grounded in our identity and sources was a wonderful way to start GA. This was the second successive year with no major crises. Participants found the quality of their experience at a smaller, more intimate gathering satisfying; however, low attendance cannot support the costs of GA. Attendance at and engagement in Appreciative Inquiry was positive; however, asking people to work on the floor to develop collages presented accessibility issues. Shuttles posed logistical problems and were costly and polluting; the GAPC subsequently voted a policy not to choose sites that require shuttles. GA with its emphasis on worship, greening, accessibility, right relations, etc. can serve as a model for congregations and other UU gatherings.

Budget Issues. The 2008 GA lost \$189,000, which could be covered by a \$217,000 GA reserve, leaving \$28,000 for contingency. Dan Brody, Financial Advisor, is recommending the creation of a separate budget section for GA, similar to Beacon Press. This would allow GA to hold funds over from year to year. Jan and GAPC members expressed concerns about the inclusion of overhead for space in GA Office costs. Details will be discussed with the Finance Committee and voted by the Board at their October meeting.

UU University. UU University will be incorporated into 2009 GA as nine hours of in-depth track programming (Thursday, 1:00–6:00 pm and Friday, 8:00 am to noon). Harlan Limpert, Terasa Cooley, and Nancy Bowen are coordinating this effort and are recruiting leaders for each of six tracks, which will address governance, generosity, multi-generational programming, multicultural congregations, theology, and social justice. The change responds to requests for program tracking by GA participants, makes in-depth programming more affordable for those who found pre-GA offerings too costly in terms of time and money, increases program scope by offering more options than the pre-GA UU University's single track did, and provides in-depth opportunities for leadership development. In addition, ministers and other professionals whose professional days conflicted with UU University will be able to participate as will youth, who had no provision for early arrival, all of which enhances opportunities for multigenerational

shared ministry. The GAPC suggested adding “21st Century Best Practices for Our Congregations” as a tagline to the UU University ..

Participants will be asked to select a track when registering and will be encouraged to stay with that track to gain full benefit. Presenters will be asked to incorporate worship into all tracks and to tailor program content to address the needs of diverse congregation sizes.

Participation by ministers. The UUMA is exploring scheduling its continuing education opportunities at a time other than in conjunction with GA. Moreover, June is a difficult time for ministers to meet. This has serious implications for clergy participation in GA and the governance of our Association. The UUMA needs to participate in GAMAP and GAPC conversations and consider itself a part of our larger Association. How do we provide incentives for clergy to participate in our democracy? Suggestions included inviting UUMA representatives to next year’s GAMAP meeting and inviting a UUMA liaison to the GAPC. Bill will organize a conference call to include representatives of the UUMA, Center Day planners, UU University organizers, the Board of Trustees, the GAPC, and Association administration to discuss how continuing education is provided for lay leaders and ministers, how our capacities can help to support ministerial education, and how this process relates to the business of our Association.

Worship. Although daily morning worship at recent GAs has been scheduled before the plenary, it will instead be incorporated into plenary in a way that is more responsive to the content of the session. Recognition of the Knoxville congregations, both memorializing and honoring the ways in which they responded to tragedy and continued their mission, will be presented in a worshipful context in plenary. Bill will ask Stewardship and Development to develop a more worshipful approach to tributes to departed UUs who left legacies.

Multiculturalism and cultural misappropriation. The formation of the Cultural Misappropriation Task Force (CMTF) has resulted in positive relationships among the UU Musicians Network, Allies for Racial Equity (ARE), and DRUUMM. The task force’s impact needs to reach the broader Association, including clergy. The CMTF will be invited to offer a workshop at GA and also to participate in conference calls to prepare GA worship leaders. The GAPC needs to ensure that major worship pieces such as Opening are reviewed with an AR/AO/MC lens. Projecting 30-second messages beginning with “Ten things I need to know to develop my cultural competency. . .” was suggested as a strategy for increasing awareness.

Elections. The GAPC, the UUA Secretary, and the Election Campaign Practices Committee need to collaborate on making arrangements for candidates’ forums, setting boundaries on the length of speeches and campaigning, and fostering a non-adversarial spirit at GA.

Public Witness. First Church in Salt Lake City is working with the Mormon and Catholics churches to plan an interfaith public witness event scheduled for Friday

afternoon, focusing on immigration and calling for a moratorium on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids.

Article II. The Board needs to decide whether to bring Article II as drafted by the Commission on Appraisal to the 2009 General Assembly. According to the rules, no substantive amendments can be made at GA. Bringing the proposed article to GA in 2009 may be premature given that Board has not yet agreed upon ends.

Ware Lecture. Kofi Annan has been invited to deliver the lecture in 2009 and has been asked to respond by October 15. Recommendations for alternative speakers if he cannot accept are welcomed. The GAPC is also seeking suggestions for 2010. It would like to announce the 2010 Ware Lecturer in Salt Lake City.

The future of GAMAP. GAMAP has become a forum for conversations that do not occur elsewhere among the leadership of sectors of our Association. Expanding GAMAP to include representatives of UUMA, Center Days, and UU University has the potential to extend its effectiveness. GAMAP conversations have led to increased collaboration within our Association, improved alignment of GA with the mission of our Association, and the creation of capacity for change through relationship development. The work of the Fifth Principle Task Force does not duplicate GAMAP's work. Because GAMAP is currently convened by the UUA President, the nature of its work might change under a new administration.

The GAPC met in Boston September 11-14, 2008. Guests included:

Gini Courter, UUA Moderator
Bill Sinkford, UUA President (by phone)
Don Plante, GACS staff
Mara Dowdall, Interim Director of Youth Ministry
India McKnight, Program Associate, Office of Youth Ministries
Amelia Harati, Youth Caucus Dean
Royal Forest, Co-Moderator, Young Adult Caucus
Tom Bozeman, CUUYAN Liaison to Young Adult Caucus
Nancy DiGiovanni, Acting Co-Director for Young Adult Ministry
Erik Kesting, Acting Co-Director for Young Adult Ministry
Scott McNeil, Team Leader, Right Relationship Team (by phone)

The meeting began with a retreat facilitated by Terasa Cooley, MassBay District Executive. The retreat addressed the GAPC's mission, structure, and covenant and what it means to lead in times of change. The GAPC also spent considerable time examining roles and tasks in preparation for reorganizing its task groups and assigning committee members to the new configuration.

2009 GA Programming. To prepare attendees for participation in a General Assembly that differs substantially from previous years, an orientation scheduled for 2:45-4:00 pm on Wednesday will target all GA participants, not just first-timers. Changes in this year's grid include the incorporation of a modified UU University with nine hours of track

programming, thus reducing the number of slots available for other programming; two candidates' forums in preparation for an election of new leadership; and increased opportunities for worship. The Berry Street Lecture, scheduled for 4:30 pm, will be offered at the Convention Center, making it accessible to a broader audience. Also scheduled for 4:30 pm is a slot for Presidents Networking, for which the Board will need to prepare.

District in-gatherings will be optional for districts (some indicated that in-gatherings were not a productive use of time) and will be scheduled from 10:00–11:00 pm following Opening Worship. What was formerly called “Evening Entertainment” will be labeled “Evening Activities,” designed to appeal to a range of interests. Suggestions include AR/AO films and game nights as well as more traditional opportunities for music, dance, and open mics. Youth and young adults will be involved in planning these activities.

There will be two candidates' forums—one on Thursday from 7:00-8:15 pm and a second one incorporated into Friday's plenary.

The GAPC is striving to ensure that remaining program slots include topics that UU University tracks do not address, such as worship, and also that some individual workshops cover the six topics that are addressed by UU University for the benefit of congregations that do not have enough attendees to cover all the tracks..

Worship. The Banner Parade will open the first plenary on Wednesday evening. Opening Worship will follow at 8:30. Instead of holding a pre-plenary worship on Thursday morning, the plenary will incorporate worship for all GA attendees. The multigenerational Synergy/Bridging worship is scheduled for Thursday evening. UU University leaders will incorporate worship into their sessions. The Service of the Living Tradition has been moved to Friday; the Rev. Mary Harrington will deliver the sermon. Saturday morning's worship will be the CSW award sermon. The Saturday morning plenary will conclude with a pre-election worship, after which the polls will open. A post-election worship will precede the Saturday night Ware Lecture and will include announcement of election outcomes. A morning sing will precede the Sunday morning worship; the Rev. Abhi Janamanchi will deliver the Sunday morning worship sermon. Closing Worship is scheduled for 6:30–8:00 pm to give people time to eat following the afternoon plenary. GAMAP proposed and the GAPC agreed that closing worship needs to include recognition of leadership, installation of newly elected officers and committee members, and charges to our new leaders and our congregations.

Meeting with the Moderator. Gini shared reflections on change, culture, and collaboration.

Youth. Amelia reported that, although youth attendance was low in 2008, participation was good. Synergy Worship presented some organizational challenges that will be addressed in 2009. Youth especially appreciated a conversation with President Sinkford and Moderator Courter in Fort Lauderdale. The GAPC expressed gratitude for youth and

young adult presence on the Right Relationship Team. Mara said that the Youth Office is in transition but remains committed to Youth Caucus.

Young Adults. Royal shared that the Young Adult Caucus is focusing on young adult empowerment in a time of transition. GA will be a time for building community. She would also like to change Bridging in a way that those who have just bridged and other young adults do not go their own ways immediately after the ceremony. Nancy spoke about the challenges of organizing young adult ministry to meet the differing developmental needs of a group with such wide economic and age ranges.

Right Relationship Team. Scott agreed to serve as team leader for another year. He reported that, although the team was kept busy in Fort Lauderdale, there were no major issues. He pointed out that the team's charge is to address issues of identity and oppression; other issues are referred to GA chaplains. He anticipates that levels of anxiety might be high in an election year. Gini suggested that Scott contact John Gibbons, chair of the Election Campaign Practices Committee.

AR/AO/MC. The GAPC has adapted the Board's process observation form and has incorporated process observations into its meetings. The GAPC voted to require all GAPC members beginning a new term, whether previously on the committee or not, to participate in the post-GA AR/AO/MC trainings offered in election years. The GAPC will receive training by the Cultural Misappropriations Task Force at its January 2009 meeting.

The GAPC formerly contracted with Project Equality to rate hotels on how well they integrate people of color. However, the rating does not include LGBT issues and occurs after GA. Although this raises awareness of some UU values, it does not affect GA. The GACS is seeking an alternative.

Greening. The GAPC's greening efforts deserve wider recognition. The Portland conference center reported that the UUA's presence had a significant impact on Portland's greening pursuits. In 2009 GA registrants will be required to pay to have programs mailed; at the same time, the online program will be made more user-friendly. The GAPC will suggest that UU University leaders minimize the use of paper for handouts, possibly using flash drives.

Banners. Pictures of 205 congregation banners were taken at the 2008 GA. Those congregations will be contacted to request pictures of their buildings.

Distribution of GA programming. The GAPC voted to appoint a task force to recommend policies and best practices around the streaming, recording, and distribution of GA programming. There are legal, quality, and cost issues related to speakers' permissions, copyright, and distribution rights. What should be the policy about people/organizations posting excerpts to their own websites? What policies do other organizations and faith traditions have?

Conversation with Bill Sinkford. The GAPC reviewed with Bill the changes in programming proposed for 2009. The GAPC also asked for Bill's help in implementing a 2007 Responsive Resolution that asked the GAPC to discuss using time during the opening for delegates and attendees to work together to gain insight, skills, and experience with (1) our own individual assumptions when encountering new people, and (2) engaging in compassionate response and witness when we fall short of our aspirations to expand our capacity to be allies to our fellow Association members and our larger community. There was also discussion of potential security issues if Kofi Annan agrees to be the Ware Lecturer as well as the need for more effective escorting of featured speakers, especially at egress.

Meeting with the Fifth Principle Task Force. The GAPC met with the task force and responded to the following governance-related questions:

1. Is there enough governance and oversight business to justify annual meetings?
2. Please comment on the current Commission on Social Witness (CSW) process: length, effectiveness, reasons for considering change.
3. What improvements would you suggest for the plenary process?
4. Do you favor consideration of biennial or triennial GAs? Why or why not?

Issues for Board consideration.

As discussed at GAMAP, ministerial involvement in GA planning is important. The GAPC suggests that the Board consider providing a UUMA-elected seat on the GAPC, perhaps by expanding GAPC membership in the future. In the interim the Board might consider having one of its appointees be a minister recommended by the UUMA.

Will the Board ask the GAPC to accommodate a Board hearing, a mini-assembly, or discussion time in plenary to consider changes to Article II?

As result of the reduction in the availability of program slots associated with the incorporation of UU University into GA, the number of workshop slots allocated to organizations will be lower than previous years. The Board will have five slots in 2009, as opposed to the six it has had in previous years. One of those slots will be used for the budget hearing. This means that there will not be a slot available for each working group. Options include working groups sharing a slot or returning to the previous practice of working groups brainstorming possible topics and then having the Board as a whole agree upon who will take responsibility for the workshops.

How do we want to use the Congregation Presidents networking time at 4:30 pm on Wednesday?

The GAPC has a policy not to wear campaign buttons or engage in other campaign activities when wearing GAPC shirts and acting in an official capacity at GA. What is/will be the Board's policy?

A workshop for congregations to share how they are responding to the Youth and Young Adult Empowerment Resolution might be part of the 2009 program. The GAPC is asking the Board and the Secretary: What are suggestions for report back at GA 2009? Will the Secretary have a role in reporting to General Assembly regarding implementation?

The GAPC is presenting to the Finance Committee several changes in fee structure to compensate for the inclusion of the \$26,141 Space Overhead charged to the GACS office by the UUA and a \$10,000 increase in the Planning Committee travel line to account for the increasing cost of airline tickets.

Proposed changes in fees for GA 2009 are:

1. Increase in registration fee of \$10 for full-time registration to cover space overhead charge and program cost increases. Full-time registration (for 5 days, including UU University) will be \$300.
2. A \$5.00 per child increase in childcare and day camp programs, raising the cost from \$25 to \$30 per day per child. Parents will be informed of the actual cost for providing childcare and will be asked to pay what they are able with the \$30 per day as a required minimum. Childcare hours will be extended to accommodate track programming and the candidates' forum.
3. UU booth fees will increase from \$500 to \$600 for a 10' x 10' booth. The GAPC determined that those qualifying as UU groups will be UUA Staff Groups, Districts, Member Congregations, Associate Members, Independent Affiliates, Theological Schools, and Professional Associations. Fees to non-UU booths will not increase in 2009 in consideration of groups moving from UU to non-UU status due to changes in Independent Affiliate status.

The next GAPC meeting is scheduled for January 8-11, 2009 in Minneapolis, the 2010 GA site.

Submitted by Eva Marx, Board of Trustees Liaison to the GAPC
September 22, 2008