

GA Planning Committee Meeting – Providence, RI

Thursday September 17, 2009

Present: Beth McGregor (chair), Barb Atlas, Joan Benziger, Lynda Shannon, Ginger Brown, Fred Cole, Melodie Feather, Bart Frost, Kim Hampton, Tim Murphy, Walt Wieder; David Lauth (DC 10), Eva Marx (Board liaison), Jan Sneegas (staff), Alan Niebanck (facilitator of Retreat)

8:30 AM –Retreat

1:30 PM - Meeting Convenes

Debriefing the Retreat - How are we using it as a committee?

Reviewing the task group structure and portfolio

Discussion of the process of signing up for portfolios

Description of portfolio jobs

Copyrights and Permissions added to Plenary Hall Task Group

Script Management

Local Community Services to be added

Greening was eliminated because it falls under a staff role

“Feedback Session” changed to “Feedback Process”

Discussion of “Pre-GA Event” portfolio

Last Meeting’s Minutes

Accepted

Updating Contact Information

Updated

Executive Committee Report and Discussion

Positive conversations with staff (in packet)

GAMAP Report

GAMAP is GA and the Mission of the Association Partnership which is a review of General Assembly chaired by UUA President with Board and PC reps.

Discussed the Mission of General Assembly

That people learned, contributed to the agenda of the Association, and connected with others.

Growth Discussion: In the past the Growth Team used a marketing model that assumed if we raise awareness and get people in the door we will grow.

The model now being proposed assumes an engagement process of connecting members and visitors to the community..

Leaders of fast-growing congregations had “Excellence” plans, not marketing or growth plans

Staff programming as a way to help congregations promote growth, not just a “dog and pony show”

Staff programs subject to vetting, creating paths of accountability.

Governance Discussion: Governance is the bylaw-stated purpose of GA but it’s neither the only kind of Governance nor the only purpose that GA serves..

Districts could probably have a greater role in Governance and in bringing issues to GA.

Fixation on New England Town Meeting styles rather than alternative ways of doing governance has kept both congregational and Association governance less than engaging to UUs.

Discussion about “Who governs the Association”? No.

5th Principle TF-GA as business meeting of Association leads to question what is the business of the Association? Procedural governance, growth, leadership development, inspiration, UU identity, promoting the values of the faith, witnessing?

Grid discussion pushed to tomorrow.

Discussion about job portfolios.

Process Observation from Alan.

Meeting Recessed

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Site visit debrief: Loved it, might overwhelm Providence Convention Center.

Major issue is size

Only place for BCD to host

Town would be ours, we'd be the only convention in town

Hotel rooms are not a concern, meeting space is

Space would help us do the goals for GA

Motion to recommend Providence as a site for 2014

Revisiting GAMAP

Programming: Movement towards mission-based programming that includes direct accountability for both quality and results.

GAPC would move from doling out programming – accountability by entitlement, toward a model of setting standards and values and awarding program slots based on mission focus and excellence. Conversations move away from who is entitled to a workshop to what is wanted in workshops.

GAPC provides to staff ground rules and vision

UUA Board is responsible for selection and vetting of Board programs including Board Appointed committees and the CSW process slots and mini-assemblies.

Introducing accountability into program allocation is the goal.

GAPC's main role is coming up with vision and criteria, creating slots, but it would still be collaborative

UUA Affiliated Groups do NOT get program slots as they were clustered under staff groups -> seeking to make the process more accountable

Associate member organizations are not included in this model

Planning Committee's job is at a higher and harder level

Who gets to apply for PC sponsorship? This year everyone, there are

fewer slots, it will be referred on. Discussion with Harlan about a proposal for staff vetting of all administration programming tomorrow.

Staff would be responsible to the PC, feedback loop that goes both ways.

2010 specific issues: Concerns with Service Project in regards to liability but offsite is okay, need to connect with people who have done this work before

Peter is thinking about doing Sunday morning Worship

Ware Lecturer is Winona LaDuke

2011- Will invite either Bill Moyers or Karen Armstrong

SLT is in the works

Fifth Principle Task Force

“Biennial, delegates only with delegates fully funded for fair share congregations, so that the focus of GA would be to do the business of the Association.”

Peter had two concerns, one about cost and the other mentioning GA is so much more than a procedural governance meeting – more of our UU “tribal gathering” Erik spoke about relevant programming to youth and the development of youth leadership

Money issues, need to find alternative ways

Needs concrete off-year programming

A maybe plan: Two days programming, two days delegates

Question: Percentage of fair-share congregations? High 60s? Probably going to be lower because of economy

Most lay delegates a congregation could have would be 4, with 100 at large delegates

What about a weighted representative process? Not good for stuff that happens at the meeting, only for a preset agenda

Moderator’s Report

When was the last time a district put an item on the agenda? No answer.

Last time by petition? , It was in Long Beach and the item was the Openness initiative.

People don’t take advantage of the processes, the system games the delegates (budget motions)

Discussion of policy governance

GAPC as implementers or policymakers? Right now, both...future GAPC to be more of staff responsibility

Not in the hourglass of policy governance right now, will be “staff” in the future [a small, tweeting bird has now joined the group]

How is the Board prioritizing by-law changes? Governance working group.

By-law changes, if delegates have to vote for them, and they don’t...what next?

This year is going to be interesting, because some of the roles of the Planning Committee are changing

[Bird left, apparently it wasn’t interested in observing?]

Checking the rest of the Agenda

Grid Discussion

New type of Grid, should save \$20k by not taking break out space in the Convention Center on Saturday and Sunday.

Allows non-delegates more free time

Initial reason was to save money

Public Witness falls in the middle of the large Pride Fest

Ingatherings, just after the dinner break are envisioned to flow into the opening celebration with regional clusters more likely to sit together in the Hall.

Banner parade stuff might be prolonged, it’ll be done differently than before

20 minutes for the Banner Parade might not be enough

District In-Gatherings to be 45 minutes, 6:45-7:30

Two late night worships, live on the grid and once it is decided it will be described

Hymn sing before Sunday morning worship? Not likely this year as the GA Choir will be singing at the Sunday Worship. Perhaps before Plenary 7? Can be added after Grid is accepted

Need clarity on Social Witness Strategy -> Need to talk to David May and Susan Leslie

Clarified Synergy Reception, Joys and Concerns scheduling. Neither appears on grid.

Worship and Celebration Task Group Break out and Report Back

Process Observation

Strenuous morning, late to meeting due to site review

Lack of clarity in some issues

GA Planning Committee Meeting – Providence, RI

Saturday September 19, 2009

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Meeting convened and the agenda was reviewed.

Breakout into Plenary Hall and Services/Constituencies

Erik Kesting, Jeremie Giacoia, and Harlan Limpert arrive

Discussion about Programming to meet the needs of Youth and Young Adults

Response to submitted Youth Caucus budget will happen after GAPC Budget discussion

Discussion about evening YaYA worships

Worship is important because it is a different style of worship and it is within their peer groups

Of four nights: One night will be Synergy, two nights will separate and not listed in the grid

The other night would be in the grid and a co-worship with the Youth and Young Adults in the Youth Caucus space or the choir room

Blank space in grid on Wednesday

Synergy Reception not in the Grid, but will be in the Program Book

Larger Vision for GA

Setting a model for congregations to follow

Question is not about welcoming but rather about relevance

Answer is not to ask YaYAs to co-facilitate programs

Using ID caucusing as a way to involve YaYA supported programming at GA

ID Caucusing

Creating ID Caucus programs—Monica Cummings willing to help

No Youth Caucus budget implications

Most Important Aspect of Youth Budget

Staff registration but need to communicate with HUUPERS

Discussion with Harlan about Programming

The creation of a task group organizing programs based on values and programming, instead of entitling staff groups

Question about numbers of workshops. GAPC will determine.

GAPC and others discuss mission foci, GAPC sets parameters for programming, and Program Development group and GAPC interpret it into the creation of General Assembly

Process would be slowed down by having to get everything approved

Budget implications? Maybe, it will be discussed, figured out, and brought back

Program Development Committee Discussion

Ideas: Theology, Governance, Interactive Worship Arts, Worship Arts, Multigenerational, Growth, Size Transitions, Lay Leaderships, Practical Church Issues (linked based on size), Spiritual ?, Spiritual Practice (including Worship Services?), Inclusion/Radical Hospitality, Family and Theology, Managing and Supervising Staff (part of Practical Church), AR/AO/MC, UU Identity and History, Religious Education

Number of tracks? Some track programming and some workshop programming? Themed programming?

Direction we want to go this year: Will include new President's priorities of Growth, Learning to do more with less, continuing public witness, multicultural "do America"?

UU History would fit in well next year

Remember "well-fed" people bring back and help "feed" their congregations

Narrowed Down: Theology, Practical Church, Reaching Out

Not needing to fill all slots with themed programming; focus on quality not fillers

Make sure all the programs have copyrights and permissions; this is responsibility of sponsors (in most cases Administration).

Discussion about Copyrights and Permissions

Something we have really been trying to honor especially with music but it goes beyond to all the programs and materials

Music side has acquired permission or used public domain songs

Guidelines for fair use?

Permissions for readings that are videotaped and distributed

Things changed once things are taped and put on the web

GAPC has the responsibility for making sure that the permissions have been obtained

Forms state that Sponsors are granting permission for speakers to be recorded and posted on the web

Need to create structures for this, are we tasking the task group with this as well?

Can we task script management for C&Ps? We need support for this.

Do we need to record everything?

Three team leaders get together and figure out a place for it to be.

Back to Program Development Committee

Beth will make the motion, we will have a number of slots for the PDC.

How are we balancing this, delegating responsibilities?

Recommending that the GAPC sets the boundaries and empowers the Task Force to accept and create workshops

One-year, subject to review

Thematic input, not dictating specific themes, but we are advising that some themes are priorities of the committee

E-Level decision making, Harlan to bring back a report at the January meeting of the Planning Committee

Harlan, Erik, and Jeremie leave.

Programs Task Group

Revisit the mission of Evening Activities

Partnering with more groups?

Local person for some of the logistical pieces, not everything though

Break for Lunch

Reconvene

Local Special Events Coordinator

Discussion: Need one VC member to be “Special Event Coordinator”?

How much funding? Do we need two volunteers instead?

No change from former practice; restore VC special events job..

Jan’s Report and Budget

Site selection oversight, we forgot to invite area ministers for a breakfast meeting.

She will come back real quick and visit with them.

Staff reorganization, Don finished sabbatical, Jan’s sabbatical will be next fall

New report, five years worth of data on General Assembly

Not needing the contract space on Saturday and Sunday by not having programming...might be unintended consequences

Concerns about attendance, and local people being able to attend

We need to make the weekend exciting

For GA 2011, Don and Jan to Charlotte to be in conversation with CVB and trying to renegotiate

2012 GA Contracts have been signed with Wyndham and Hyatt, not the Sheraton (wouldn’t lower price)

Budget (see packet)

Results of 2009 reviewed

2010 Discussion-drastic cuts

Financial Aid – Keep it low for now, if lots of registrations can keep it up

Advertising – Keep it at 7k

Space Rental – Keep it as a slush, but know it’ll be less

AV Rental – looking at 10k less, so could be lower. Reducing CMI sound engineer and adding a third screen by Charlotte

Youth Caucus – Seeing possible cuts, keeping it the same as last year (18,000)

Programs – Leave current amount to be allocated after Program situation figured out

Electronic Support – ES Volunteers are not GA Volunteers, take 4500 out of VC Line Item and add to ES

Young Adults – keep same as last year (2,000)

District Coordinator Report - David

Volunteer Committee Status – only 4 slots to fill, but people in mind for now
Service Project – “Hope Community” which would do something for the community. Going to talk to Tim Wilson about building something tangible that will stay in the community for a while. Training sessions at booth or workshop slot. Need local community approval.

Needs to have buy-in with locals, so if we can't complete the program

Possibilities for money donation

Referred back to services

Need to have conf. call with Exec C, DC, and Local Ministers

Local Promotion – 6 meetings with local congregations

VC applications will be available March 1st

Status of design work – logo and volunteer shirts

Real interfaith connections? Ask Peter to get involved in this.

PC to talk about communication with DC, VC, and ?

Board Report - Eva

Shift to policy governance, report backs from staff soon

Responsive Resolutions

Communication and discussion about 5th Principle

Hasn't really met yet, just e-mail correspondence

More working groups to deal with policy governance

Save opinions on 5th Principle Project until Jan., but impress that deadlines are coming up fast

Break into Worship and Celebration, Programs

Meeting recessed

GA Planning Committee Meeting – Providence, RI

Sunday September 20, 2009

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Worship

Meeting Convened and Agenda Review

Ware Lecture

2011 Lecturer list compiled and will be passed to Peter. Can be used for other featured speakers.

Communications and Marketing Considerations

Do we want communications person to come up with big screen slides? Stock photos, no new content, don't hurt anything but uses time

Does district want to give the content? Stop micromanaging content, tech just turns it on and run it

Guidelines for GA Communications and Boundaries: Taking it offline

Exec. has a verbal agreement with staff for promoting the programs online

Welcome letter to local congregations

Send something to PSD newsletter from GAPC

Service Project Revisit

David to circulate detailed proposal to ministers

What does the committee feel about this?

Sunday Morning Ask as focus, build in hands-on experience

Primary activity is Standing on the Side of Love (Public Witness Event)

Promise of offering from Sunday Service money and let Tim Wilson recruit volunteers, direct him to certain groups (Young Adult Caucus, UUCF, and UUs for Just Economic Change...Long Haul might be a good source for information)

Training, advance notice/sign up, and a Workshop Slot (Proposal needs to be in by October 15th)

“Service and Justice” Track? Service Project workshop could be a part of it.

Joan is contact for Tim Wilson.

Worship and Celebration Report Back

The Task Group includes Lynda, Melodie, Bart, Kim, Walt and Tim.

Opening Worship this year will again be on the grid as Opening Celebration

Discussed Banner Parade, would like to converse with Joan about some ideas for organizing the registration.

Gini wants to close the Opening Celebration with Plenary I.

There are possibilities for other worships that night

Need to know who is responsible for contacting new congregations (Ginger did it last year) Board used to do, didn't designate a GAPC person. Nancy is the person to get the names

Need to have a conversation with Gini and Nancy about the new congregations, a communications piece with new congregations

Closing Celebration

Feature musical event – UU Children's Choir

Joy over the week that was just experienced as well as , sadness that we are leaving, the message to go forth and share what you have learned in your congregations, and welcome to come to the TJD for GA 2011 at closing plenary or closing celebration – need to get Gini's opinion on this.

Pre-Plenary Worships

Ginger will liaison to CSW for the morning worship, might make more sense to have CSW Sermon Award worship to Friday. Open to flexibility for Saturday or Friday morning

Other one, working with Prairie Star folks for a Multigen worship (Melodie and Barb)

Sunday Morning Worship – Peter will probably preach Lynda will be the liaison from the PC.

Synergy will be handed over to YaYAM Office with Melodie supporting. SOLT – Walt

Banner Parade

Don't want banner parade people to miss Opening so it needs to be the first thing during Opening Celebration.

Talk about connecting time for banner registration before and even during the District and CLF in-gatherings

Everyone who can help will help with Banner Parade this year.

Plenary Report Back

Team is Bart, Melodie, Barb, Joan, Beth, Ginger

Set up to learn each other's jobs

Adding to Plenary Hall group a Script Management position, big job, Stage Director doesn't have to do it

UsherCoord won't be Richard Bird (he'll be Head Usher) and Marlene Brown will be Usher Coordinator and have an in-training person as well

Need two people for the tech liaisons, recruit a 24 hour volunteer for some pre-work and plenary and the other person taking care of everything else

Pulling contact of convention center and design back into the house manager position

Making PH contact with staff more smooth

We still pay for CSW volunteers concerning who pays for volunteers, Planning Committee will provide the timekeeper; we'll cut CSW volunteer allotment by 1..

Starting in 2011, CSW will recruit and pay for their volunteers. For 2010, we will pay for CSW volunteers. If the CSW can't find volunteers, we will assist them in this.

Registration and Exhibit Hall Costs

Exhibit Hall Hours: Last year 12-6, Wednesday wasn't until 2-3

This year: Open right after registration (1 or 2) until 7

Thursday 11:30-7

Friday 11:30-7

Sat 11:30-7

Sun 10:30-2

Post food hours? Subject to change. Two sets of hours

Fees: Have had "UU-related and not UU related"

Important that Exhibit Hall break even? 850 from a financial perspective

Is this the year to do some promotion? Fresh vendors? Increasing the value of the 850?

One pricing level, minimum 850

Do pricing in stages

Registration Fees: Options: Current Budget and stay at \$300, budgeting for 3300 \$305 or 310? Budget for 3247 and 3194 respectively

\$310 this year, no increase for 2011

Providence Ministers Site Visit

Programs Report Back

110 to Staff Group (Includes Professional, theological schools, CLF, president, and others), 30 to the Board and 20 to the GAPC

Workshops to Choir Rehearsals (3), Associate Members (9), GAPC (8)

Keep \$5,000 if needed and give \$15,000 to the PDC

Need two people as liaisons to the Program Development Committee (Will be Barb and Beth)

Need to have better evaluations, don't need paid volunteers for that, can supplement them by asking others to monitor

GA Sponsored Programs conversations will still happen

Accountability to programming: Staff members accountable to Admin., committees to Board, all to GAPC for overall quality and values.

Who needs to be contacted that they are not currently entitled? Independent Affiliates need to be told they've been lumped back into staff groups by PDC

Services and Constituencies Report Back

Adding a new Local Congregation/Minister Liaison (was Local Community Services) with David being in that role, assisted by Lynda and ?

Didn't address the movement of Kickoff Reception from Committee of Whole to Services (Will be David, Ginger, Lynda)

Policy Manual Revisions

A lot of revisions this year

Section added, event liaison duties (what it means to be an event liaison)

Five or six chaplains? Five.

One local, mental health professional needs to come in and meet the chaplains
Getting John Hubert to April meeting? Figure it out.

Lynda has received a proposal from Nick Paige for a 75 minute “New Epiphany Revival Show” for this GA at a time TBD. There was considerable support for Nick as he has done similar programming at other GAs and around the country in Districts.

There was a discussion about the AR/ AO/ MC considerations given the title that includes “Revival”.

Where can it fit in? Need to do some connecting with GAMC John Hubert and others who will be part of the Opening Celebration Planning.

One place to consider slotting Nick’s program would be after Opening in the Worship slot on the grid.

Discussion included moving Opening time earlier or cutting a few minutes from Nick’s proposal.

Need to talk and think about this

Decided to take worship off the grid on Wednesday evening for now. The grid is subject to change even after it is posted.

Communication Lines

Task group heads to put heads together about this and report back

Review Travel Schedules

Unfinished Business

Reviewing and Voting on the Motions

Selling T-Shirts for Standing on the Side of Love

No on raising fees so everyone got one

No opt-in on registration

GA Calendar

Note earlier deadlines so Program Book is available when Registration opens.

Discussing Providence as a GA Site with BCD DE, Bill Zelazny

District active at GA usually? About 60-100 from district at great distances.

Problems in Providence? Traffic, Money, Neighborhoods “that don’t talk with each other” (“Current mayor has changed the governance”), Strong Unions

How would you characterize the relationship of the congregations? Ministers meet in clusters regularly. Ministers like each other. District Board pushing for congregations to connect with one another and now they are starting to talk more with one another. Have co-hired a Religious Educator. Joint Youth Groups.

District newsletter is being better utilized. Congregations holding local conferences.

Safety for People of Color and GLBT folk: City supports GLBT people, not aware of great problems happening with People of Color. Neighborhoods divided ethnically, downtown area is safe

Review and Feedback on the Retreat

Time was well-spent, movement around the room, seeing each other in different ways.

No “So what? How are we going to use this to work together?”

Little turn over, so information from the retreat isn't as useful because the GAPC still follows its previous actions and divisions of labor.

Five different levels of how decisions are made; useful to apply to Exec, GAMAP , other decision definitions.

Process Observation

Meeting Ends

Motions and Action Items

Subject of Motion 1: Site of GA 2014

Motion: Moved that the GAPC convey to the UU Board its unanimous recommendation of the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence as the site of GA 2014.

**Action: Eva to take recommendation to UUA Board
Accepted Unanimously**

Subject of Motion 2: Grid for GA 2010

Motion: That the GAPC accept the Grid for GA 2010 presented at its September meeting with the following changes:

- 1) On Wed. 6/23 change the time of District/Regional and CLF In-Gatherings to 6:45-7:30;**
- 2) On Fri. 6/25 remove Synergy reception 9:00-10:00 from the Grid;**
- 3) Change Closing Worship to Closing Celebration;**
- 4) Take Worships Wed. 9:45-10:30 off the Grid;**
- 5) Change time for Opening Celebration and Plenary to 8:00-9:45.**

**Action: GACS revise the Grid and send the update to GAPC and others who attended the Grid meeting.
Accepted Unanimously**

Subject for Motion 3: UUA Board Coordination and Responsibility for Program Slots at GA 2010

Motion: That the GAPC delegates to the Board of Trustees responsibility for up to 30 program slots in GA 2010. These will include Board and moderator's programs,

programs by Board-appointed committees and all elected committees except GAPC, and business mini-assemblies and hearings.

The Board will inform the GAPC and the Program Development Committee of its planned program slot usage.

Action: Eva informs Board

Accepted Unanimously

**Subject for Motion 4: Coordination and Accountability for 2010 GA Programming
Motion: With the parameters set by the GAPC at its September 2009 meeting, the Planning Committee will delegate to the UUA Administration the responsibility for 110 program slots at the 2010 GA.**

The Planning Committee will appoint two members of an Administration-led Program Development Committee. The GAPC will retain direct responsibility for up to 20 program slots.

Action: Appoint GAPC members of Program Development Committee: Barb Atlas and Beth McGregor. Communicate with Administration.

Accepted Unanimously

Subject for Motion #5: Budget for GA 2010

Motion: That the GA Planning Committee approve the budget as amended at the September GAPC meeting.

Action: GACS Office make adjustments in the budget and send copies to GAPC.

Accepted Unanimously

Subject for Motion #6

Motion: Moved that the GA registration fee for 2010 be increased by \$10 to \$310 from full-time registrations and other fees adjusted accordingly.

Also moved that there be a single tiered fee structure for the exhibit hall for all vendors with the minimum fee being \$850.

Action: Jan brings to Finance Committee.

Accepted Unanimously