

**Report to the UUA Board on the
General Assembly Mission of the Association Partnership (GAMAP), GRID and
General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) Meetings
September 2012**

REPORT FROM GAMAP: Boston, Sept. 10, 2012

Attendees: UUA Administration/Staff: Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President; Dea Brayden, Special Assistant to President; Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly & Conference Services(GACS); Terasa Cooley, Director, Congregational Life. **GAPC:** Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder, Chair; Bart Frost, Chair-Elect; Debra Boyd, Secretary; **UUA BOARD:** Gini Courter, Moderator; Jackie Shanti (GAPC Liaison); Donna Harrison (GAMAP); Rev. Dr. Michael Tino (Chair, Right Relations Monitoring Committee – RRMC).

The GAMAP meeting started with a review of learnings from GA 2012 and then focused on the future of GA. Here are some of the highlights:

- Delegates in Phoenix came with a level of thoughtful preparation and commitment born out of their experience on the floor of GA 2010 where the idea of a Justice GA began. GA12 was a “perfect storm” and we can’t reproduce that experience for every GA, but we know that experiential opportunities with local partners and other faith groups are aspects that we should make an effort to incorporate in future GAs. GA12 attendees appreciated the focused attention to justice through worship, education, witness, service and reflection.
- We need a focus grounded in what our congregations/GA delegates have asked us to do and what resonates with the community where GA is taking place. A focus should be more than a theme or label, and should allow us to plan and develop resources well ahead of time. We need to begin looking at least 2 years out when identifying the focus of GA.
- Taking a larger view means that leaders put out things that are needed to move us forward as a movement, not just respond to what congregations tell us they like or need.
- It will be helpful to look at evaluations from more than just GA12 to see what delegates have asked us to pay attention to. Currently, the overriding concerns heard by the Board include what are the promises we make to each other and how shall we gather? There is a clear need for conversations regarding covenant and the 5th Principle Task Force recommendations.
- A broad discussion of covenant needs to be multi-generational and multi-cultural and should address our promises to one another, to those with whom we share this planet, and to our faith. It should also look at how we come back to the table when the covenant is broken.
- There is also a need for intentional conversation around the tension between “incomers” or new converts to UU and lifelong UU’s. In general, lifelong UUs find their spiritual connections at gatherings like GA while “incomers” are more interested in congregational life.
- The Program Development Group (PDG) is a staff committee with representatives from all staff groups that has been setting criteria and selecting GA programs/workshops for the past three years. There will continue to be a GAPC rep on the PDG. The PC would like to be consulted when there is a proposed change in the chair of the PDG.
- It was agreed that the Accountability Group played a vital role in the success of Justice GA. It was acknowledged, however, that the structure of the group is not a sustainable

model for the future. The GAPC will integrate the work of accountability within their committee (see GAPC report). The Board will officially sunset the AG at their October meeting with much gratitude and with a report of how the work will continue.

- There was heightened need for the Right Relations Team (RRT) and Chaplains at Justice GA due to the intensity of our experiences around justice work. The line between the work of the RRT and Chaplains is not always clear but both groups dealt with ambiguity well Gini will convene a conversation with Bart, Michael and RRT chairs to look into developing a policy that will clarify the chain of command and accountability.
- A sub-group of Terasa, Jackie and Debra volunteered to draft a title and introductory paragraph for GA 13 to forward to the GAPC while they are meeting this week.
- The GA website is being re-vamped to include a list of what delegates need to do to prepare for the upcoming GA.
- Those around the table gained a new appreciation for the role that General Assembly can take in the future of Unitarian Universalism.

REPORT FROM GRID MEETING: Boston, Sept. 11 2012

Attendees: UUA Administration/Staff: Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly & Conference Services(GACS); Don Plante (GACS); Steven Ransom (GACS); Carey McDonald (YaYAM); Taquiena Boston, Director, Multicultural Growth and Witness; Craig Roshaven; Witness Ministries Director. **GAPC:** Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder, Chair; Bart Frost, Chair-Elect; Debra Boyd, Secretary; **UUA BOARD:** Gini Courter, Moderator; Jackie Shanti (GAPC Liaison); Donna Harrison (GAMAP); Rev. Dr. Michael Tino (Chair, Right Relations Monitoring Committee – RRMCM). **Other Attendees:** David Glasgow, GA 2013 Music Director;

The agreements and conclusions reached during the GAMAP meeting on Monday guided the attendees at the GRID meeting in designing the GA Grid for 2013, to be forwarded to the GAPC later in the week for their tweaking and approval. Discussion at the GRID meeting included the following:

- It was noted that there has been a successful culture change with GA attendees no longer wanting workshops or other programming opposing plenary times.
- Workshop presenters generally do not like Sunday slots since there is attrition of about one third of GA attendees by Sunday. It was noted that our AV costs are per day, so not having workshops on Sunday could save 5-10 thousand dollars in AV fees.
- The Ware lecture will be moved to Friday to accommodate the schedule of our speaker, Eboo Patel.
- David is very interested in making our choir more diverse, including youth and young adults. He is willing to adjust the rehearsal schedule and attendance expectations to encourage more people to participate.
- The Board has requested space for youth and young adult caucuses.
- Reflection groups were very successful and will be continued.
- There was near unanimous agreement that regional ingatherings need to be revisioned. If this is where folks will form reflection groups there needs to be an additional 15 minutes and we need to find a way to get youth and young adults to the ingatherings so we can have multi-generational groups.
- The Board will need 18 hours of plenary time in 2013 as well as time for a Candidates' Forum. By law amendments and other business had been postponed in 2011 and 2012 due to our commitment to limit business at Justice GA, so GA 13 will mean catching up on three year's worth of association business.

- The powerful witness and service experiences in Phoenix raised the bar and we need to be intentional about crafting witness and service opportunities that are aligned with the focus of the GA. Witness in Louisville will not need to be limited to the evening and will involve legislation and policies in Kentucky addressing environmental issues related to mountain top removal and other mining practices.
- Many attendees appreciated the increased focus on worship in Phoenix and we will continue with early morning worship, extending the time from 30 to 45 minutes. The Thursday morning worship will again be used to set the tone for the rest of GA. We want all of the worship experiences to be related, part of an arc that looks at the whole. Worship leaders will need to work closely with PC and staff to ensure that the worship theme is unified.
- The recommended Grid has 6 program slots for a total of 108 workshops, 74 of which will be assigned by the PDG. Other slots will be filled by the Board and include Mini-Assemblies and CSW workshops. It was noted that limiting the number of program slots to 6 will impact the youth caucus the most.

REPORT FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE (GAPC):

Boston, Sept. 12-16, 2012

Attendees (GAPC members): Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder, Chair; Bart Frost; Chair-Elect; Greg Boyd, Co-Vice Chair; Kathy Charles, Co-Vice Chair; Debra Boyd, Secretary; Tim Murphy; Ila Klion; Rev. Chip Roush; Rev. Nan White; Jacqui C. Williams; Jackie Shanti (Board liaison); Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly and Conference Services (GACS). **Other Attendees:** Jill Sampson, 2013 District Coordinator.

Guests at various times during the meeting included: Rev. Peter Morales; Gini Courter; Cary McDonald and Jeremie Bateman, Youth and Young Adult Ministries (YaYAM); David Glasgow, GA 2013 Music Director (phone); Sara Dan Jones, President, UUMN (phone).

The meeting began Wednesday evening with dinner, check-in and a brief report of the GAMAP and GRID meetings. Last year, seven out of ten members of the GAPC were new to the committee. This year they returned for their September meeting as tried and trusted colleagues, having joyfully pulled off a successful Justice GA in collaboration with the Administration and Board of Trustees.

The following morning was devoted to a retreat for members of the GAPC with Paula Cole Jones who led us in exploring the need for change from a dominant cultural paradigm to a multi-cultural paradigm. This was followed by an afternoon “Emancipation Tour” of Boston with Vincent Licenziato, visiting statues, sculptures and monuments in the Back Bay and South End neighborhoods of Boston commemorating people and events relevant to the African American experience in American history.

Friday’s meeting began with a review of task assignments and committee positions. A new position has been developed for a “Chair-Elect” to provide a mentoring process for the incoming chair since the two co-vice chairs are not directly related to the chair position. The Chair-Elect will manage/analyze the process observations from meetings, identify best practices, develop policies and act as executive-vice chair in collaboration with the two vice chairs. The roles of the vice chairs (for plenary and programming) remain the same. There will be “shadows” assigned for many of the PC positions to have mentoring and/or support and to provide continuity from one year to the next.

Meeting with the Moderator:

- The Council on Cross Cultural Engagement (CCCE) will be institutionalized and continue after the upcoming Moderator election. This is the only place where these conversations are happening in our Association. This past year there has been a rep from the GAPC and Gini will ask the CCCE about moving their future meetings to begin the Sunday the GAPC meeting ends.
- GA Orientation needs to be jazzed up. Gini is willing to play an as yet undefined role.
- It would be helpful to have someone from ITS attend script meetings during GA and develop a stronger relationship between the Moderator with regard to plenary.
- The Board has been responsible for recruiting volunteers for the mini-assemblies for the past 3 years. We are now looking at having the GA tellers be the same people who run the minis. We will need 5 governance volunteers (for procedural mike, pro/con mikes, amendment mike, and head teller).
- The PC and the Board will need to be in conversation about the recommendations and implications of the 5th Principle Task Force as the Board looks to engage the delegates with this during GA 2013.
- The Board will wait on making GAPC appointments until after the elections if the elections are contested. Otherwise, the Board will make 2 appointments in April 2013.
- There is concern about the future of the Young Adult movement in UUism. The Board will convene a conversation with YA Caucus at GA, probably over a meal. A Board conversation with our Youth may utilize a Youth Café model again.

Meeting with the President:

- Following sun setting of the Accountability Group, we need to carry the work forward, getting ahead of the curve and addressing concerns before issues arise if possible. We need to focus on building relationships. The PC members plan to adopt portfolios with specific groups, communicating regularly and reporting back to the Chair, who will manage the accountability relationships. What would it look like for the PC to covenant with these groups? (CUUYAN, DRUUMM, EqUUal Access, Interweave, LUUNA, TrUUst, Youth Caucus . . .)

Meeting with Youth and Young Adult Ministries:

- The Youth and YA Caucuses are joint sponsored/funded by the PC and YaYAM office.
- Registration for Youth Caucus was up from 167 to 307 in Phoenix. Groups of youth organized themselves and raised money. An abundance of low cost housing also helped.
- Registering for YA Caucus is optional for YA's so not all YA's check the box during registration and some that do never show up for the Caucus. This makes it difficult to track exactly how many young adults are registering for GA.
- The YaYA budget request is back to their 2011 level.
- The sustainability of YaYA attendance at GA is not solely the job of the PC and YaYA office. It needs to also be considered by the Board. How to engage our YaYA's in not just about the theme or available scholarships. We need to ask what does/should bring YaYA's to GA?
- The Scholarship process was reviewed. Carey is working with Stacey to revise the application.

Meeting with Music Director and UUMN President (phone):

- Out of 650 UUMN musicians, 50 attend GA every year. Having more UUMN folks at GA would increase the pool of musicians able to take leadership roles. David wants to broaden the reach to other musicians with some financial support. Jill will help David to identify local musicians in Louisville. The PC has an interest in making sure there are musicians of color included at GA.

Chaplain Report (Nan):

- Rev. Aaron Payson has been recommended as head chaplain for 2013. There will be an online application form for chaplains. The question was raised as to whether or not this would include chaplains other than ministers (for instance YA's who are often divinity students and Youth chaplains)?

GACS Director Report:

- GACS (General Assembly and Conference Services) Office hasn't been providing Conference Services due to budgetary restrictions. GA is supported by GA funds, so the GACS office has been charging groups to plan conferences. For this reason, groups haven't wanted to use GACS. Tim Brennan has proposed that GACS be given \$28,000 (based on occupancy rate) so that GACS could do the conference services work.
- Providence hotels are largely contracted with. The GA office is looking at dorms (RISD is close). This will be a different GA since the venue is smaller than usual and our attendance will be larger than usual.
- There was an \$184,000 deficit in GA budget after GA12. We can no longer budget to use the GA reserve. The reserve can be used to cover a deficit, but we need to budget to break even. We will need to be very conservative with this year's budget. We will need 3643 registrations in Louisville to break even. This includes a \$10 dollar increase in registration to \$330 and is based on 94% of projected income.
- Offsite registration in AZ was 80. The goal for Louisville is 120.
- We need to have a larger conversation with UUMN about how we value and are accountable to our UU musicians who provide music for GA. We will discontinue the practice of taking free registration out of their gig money in 2013.
- GAMAP has asked for there to be an arc that over-reaches all of the GA worship services. Individual worships wouldn't happen in isolation. We could also have an entire worship that reflects a particular culture instead of trying to represent multiple voices in one or all services.
- Young Fun: The overnight model is resource intensive and we won't be doing that again. We do want to have an 8-13 year-old program. Jan, Kathy and Debra will write an RFP for a day camp program content/schedule to be sent out broadly, including LREDA. We would still use Kiddi-Kor to provide the logistical support, structure and staff.
- The Accessibility Team needs more support at GA, especially around witness events. They need to be included in the decision-making process about such events.
- We need PC members to be in relationship with the DPA and our religious professional groups (LREDA, UUMN, UUMA, UU Administrators, and Community Ministers). The Executive Committee will draft a letter from the PC to all groups requesting time to meet/talk with them to share information about GA. Monitoring these relationships will be added to the Chair's portfolio.

- Jan provided a review of the FY12 budget and the projected FY13 budget.
- Jan will be on sabbatical from 10/1/12 – 11/19/12.

Actions by the GAPC included:

- Approval of the 2013 Grid.
- Adoption of a policy which creates a GAPC portfolio for managing the liaisons/ambassadors who have been tasked with being in intentional, accountable relationships with traditionally marginalized groups within our Association.
- Agreement on a proposed balanced budget for FY13, which will be sent to the Board for approval.
- Approval of the following focus/tag line for GA 2013 (this process was begun during the GAPC meeting and completed by email following the close of the meeting):

Building on the experience of Justice GA, the General Assembly Planning Committee, the UUA Board of Trustees and the Administration seek to create a General Assembly in 2013 that moves our Association "From Promise to Commitment."

Promises call us into relationship. The experience of making, breaking and remaking promises is the reality of our lived faith. We will gather in Louisville to examine and renew our covenant to our faith, one another, our congregations and the larger world.

Submitted by Jackie Shanti, Board of Trustees Liaison to GAMAP, GRID and GAPC