



Report to the UUA Board of Trustees, March 26, 2013

Because the UU College of Social Justice is a joint project of the UUA and UUSC, I would like to plan on providing the UUA Board of Trustees with updates on our progress at least biannually. I have now been in the position of Director for eight months, so it seems that my first real update is past due! I will endeavor to provide the next update for your first meeting of the fall, 2013.

The core mission of the UU College of Social Justice is:

To help Unitarian Universalists catalyze justice, in community, through experiential learning grounded in UU history, theology and contemplative practice. We intend to fulfill this mandate through a series of programs -- service learning trips, justice trainings, young adult internships and skilled volunteer placements -- that are each founded in a widely adaptable core curriculum. What follows is a quick overview of what we've accomplished in our major areas of focus, and where our trajectory is carrying us for the coming year.

Service Learning Trips: By the end of June we will have led eleven experiential journeys to Haiti, Mexico, Guatemala, Tanzania/Burundi, and India, involving 120 participants. We have been particularly pleased by the expansion of what we call "congregational delegations" to Haiti, in which all or nearly all of the participants are drawn from the same congregation. This makes it easier for people to assist each other on re-entry and generate the momentum for ongoing justice work. As I write this report, we are preparing to host twenty-five of our alumni from the Haiti delegations in Washington, DC for Haiti Advocacy Days. We see this kind of linkage as the template for what we most hope to accomplish: face-to-face encounters that deepen commitment, which is then harnessed through specific actions for justice.

For fiscal 2014 we will more than double our service learning offerings, to 24 journeys; and we will continue to put an emphasis on congregational delegations not only to Haiti but to our other destinations. We have developed a domestic option with UUSC partner ROC in Chicago (Restaurant Opportunities Center), which will directly support the UUA and UUSC justice priorities of Ethical Eating/Compassionate Consumption. Our second new domestic journey will be an exploration of the water justice issue in California.

Creation of the UUCSJ Core Curriculum: Our Core Curriculum is the framework of multicultural education, theology, contemplative practice and justice theory that will undergird each service learning trip. In partnership with Dr. Mark Hicks, Director of the Fahs Collaborative out of Meadville Lombard, we pulled together a design team for this work. We met in January to hammer out the framework we would need, and have been hard at work in curriculum

development through the winter. We expect to be able to use the curriculum by this summer, and we are very excited about the ways it will strengthen and enrich all of the UUCSJ programs.

Volunteer Program Leaders: Our first priority in using committed volunteers to expand our reach has been through program leaders. In November 2012 we trained 14 ministers, seminarians and lay leaders who had already experienced our Haiti trip and who indicated interest in becoming program leaders. We have deployed about half of these volunteers, with tremendous success -- these are terrific leaders! We will bring them back to Cambridge in October and add ten more volunteers to their numbers, training all of them in how to use our UUCSJ Core Curriculum which we expect to have available by this summer.

Youth Justice Offerings: We're pleased and excited to report that we have three offerings for high school youth scheduled for summer 2013. We have developed an expanded Youth Justice Training in Boston that will run for 3 weeks, in partnership with Boston's City School; this program will include internship placements with UU organizations in the area. Our second Youth Justice Training will be held for a week in August in New Orleans, a new initiative in our partnership with the Center for Ethical Living. By the summer of 2014 we will have two more youth justice regional trainings, in the Midwest and on the West Coast.

Our third offering for high school youth is a new version of the Civil Rights Pilgrimage we piloted last summer. This year we've established a full partnership with the UU Living Legacy Project; with their help, we'll introduce our youth not only to the history of civil rights but to the current day struggle against voter suppression.

Internship Opportunities for Young Adults: With assistance from both UUA and UUSC partners in the field, we have developed and posted eight summer internship opportunities, and within the first week had received six applications! We have potential placements in New Orleans, Cambridge, London, Ghana, Kenya and Haiti. It is a very capital-intensive proposition to subsidize or support a young adult for 6-8 weeks in these kinds of placements. Happily, we have discovered that many universities have grants programs specifically designed to support students in opportunities like the ones we have created. One of our 2013 interns will be fully supported by such a grant, from Brandeis University, and in future years we expect many more of our placements to be supported through this kind of partnership.

I hope this quick overview is enough to allow you to share our sense of accomplishment at what we have created thus far, and our excitement as our vision continues to unfold. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or ideas you may have.

Rev. Kathleen McTigue
Director, UU College of Social Justice