

## **Board of Trustees' Report**

**June, 2015**

The Board of Trustees is very pleased to bring you our report this year. We believe that we have made significant progress in a number of areas, and we would like to share those with you. In addition, we see some real challenges for our Association, and we will share those with you as well. Several general areas are addressed in this report:

- Progress in the UUA implementation of Policy Governance
- Ministry and the UUA institutional response in the wake of clergy or professional misconduct
- The work of the Board's Inclusion Working Group, especially the Board's response to several Responsive Resolutions
- Update the Board initiative to transform the way we do GA and governance together

Each of these has been an area of focus for the work of the Board during this past year

### **Policy Governance Progress Report**

Change is challenging. Governance, at its best, is about deciding what we will promise to each other and to the world. Once we have made those promises governance is about making sure we are doing our best to make them real. We need to ask whether or not the Association is having the impact it intends. We call that "monitoring." Over the past two years the UUA Board and the Administration have made significant progress toward asking the right questions at the right time. Working together we're making good headway. At the beginning of the governance change there was extensive misunderstanding by both senior members of the administration and many board members about exactly what should constitute effective monitoring.

This situation along with the nature of and number of policies requiring formal monitoring reports helped to create an adversarial environment between the administration and the board. The most important thing in the past two years is move from that oppositional dynamic to far more respectful and cooperative and mutually accountable ways of working together.

In 2009 when we began PG monitoring, we had 115 executive limitation policies and sub-policies all of which were monitored annually. We now have 47 executive limitation policies, some of which are monitored by direct inspection by the Audit Committee as part of their annual audit responsibilities. The monitoring schedule has been totally revised so that policies that require close board attention are monitored annually, but others are monitored as infrequently as every ten years. I want to assure you that these changes have strengthened the Board's ability to exercise appropriate oversight while not interfering with day to day operations.

The board is grateful for the assistance of the Audit Committee for their work recommending various policy changes based on actual risk thereby reducing the number of monitorable policies while maintaining the highest standards of fiscal accountability.

In January 2010 we had 140 policies that directed operation of the board. All of them called for monitoring reports -- most of them annual. After a careful redaction, consolidation and reassignment of reporting requirements, we have 14 such policies. We have made executive limitations monitoring much easier while assuring that the Board can fulfill its stewardship responsibilities. The Board is excited about the progress President Morales and his Team have made on Ends monitoring. We are seeing a wholistic approach evolving where the data gathered for monitoring has an energizing potential to help both Board and Staff understand where things are really working well and where we are falling short.

We want to thank the many thoughtful and dedicated former Trustees who recognized the need to clarify and strengthen our governance process and especially retiring Trustee Lew Phinney for his years of focused attention to the changes being made. The Trustees are pleased with our progress in moving toward manageable and effective ways to evaluate the work of your Association. The Administration's view is best summed-up by President Morales who writes, I am delighted and, frankly, surprised by how our relationship has improved. Our work is focused, thoughtful and mission driven. It is a true religious partnership.

#### **Ministry & Institutional Response to Clergy or Professional Misconduct**

Moderator Key, at General Assembly in Providence last summer, pledged to hold all of us accountable to "values at our core" in addressing issues of clergy sexual misconduct. More transparency—and more compassion—was needed, particularly in the process of bringing a complaint of such misconduct to the Association.

This year, the Board, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and UUA staff have each taken steps to ensure parties to the complaint process are treated with care, respect and fairness.

Individuals who bring such complaints now have more voice in the review process. When an accused minister is invited to meet with the MFC Executive Committee, a complainant will be similarly invited. So that the investigation of a complaint appears and is objective, no member of the MFC—the body that reviews the complaint—will serve on the investigation team. In approving these MFC Rule changes, the Board invited comment from an Advisory Group that included survivors of misconduct.

The Board has recommended to the MFC "best practices" for receiving, investigating and resolving such complaints. The practices were suggested to ensure basic fairness, transparency, and integrity of the complaint process. The MFC quickly responded and made policy changes that provide better communications with complainants and assure greater fairness and transparency. More information on the work of Board, MFC and UUA staff in this area is available in the "Building Restorative Justice" workshop on Friday afternoon, and on the UUA Board of Trustees webpage.

We hope that voices of survivors continue to be included in this work, which the MFC will continue in the coming year. Any survivor who would like to comment on recent and future MFC policy changes

should contact the Board or Moderator Key. We respect privacy; we will not actively seek you out but welcome your concerns.

We thank Safety Net, the social justice organization from First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville, who first called for a national discussion of clergy sexual misconduct. And I thank all members of the Advisory Group. We have learned from you. It is your determination and compassion—despite your pain, despite your doubts of being heard-- that leads us to be a more caring community.

### **Empowerment Working Group Report**

This working group is tasked with assessing and furthering our deep commitment to become an anti-oppressive, multicultural, and truly welcoming board and Association. During the course of the year, we organize trainings and educational opportunities for board members. Our working group also addresses business items related to living into beloved community. In this report, we will reflect on two items on which we have spent considerable time this year.

As you may know, this body restructured board membership two years ago, letting go of district trustees and the youth trustee in favor of a smaller board comprised exclusively of at-large trustees. Although the position of youth trustee was removed, the board continued to invite a youth observer to participate as a full board member, without vote. We continue to invite youth into the boardroom because we know that our youth bring insight, creativity, and energy to our work. They often call us to be our best selves, a reminder that is especially welcome in the boardroom. This spring the board came to the conclusion that we would be best served by two youth observers. This decision was based on the belief that the youth who serve on the board should have the support to thrive on the board.

Another major piece of our work has focused on assessing practices and education with UUA committees that deepen our commitment to an anti-oppressive and multicultural movement. Two years ago this body passed a responsive resolution entitled “Deepening our commitment to an anti-oppressive, multicultural UUA. You instructed your board to “ensure that the Board and staff-appointed, Board-appointed, and elected committees of the Association are empowered and encouraged to identify existing and new practices and structures that will lead to greater diversity among participants in the work of those committees and a greater sense of inclusion among participants, and that will provide for youth and young adult led efforts”. Your board takes this work very seriously. We have interviewed the chairs of our committees to better understand what practices they currently have in place, how new members are welcomed and oriented to the work, and how each chair understands the mission of their committee as it relates to our commitment to deepen anti-oppressive behaviors and foster multiculturalism.

Our full report with recommendations will be made available following the October board meeting. Today I'd like to share two initial findings with you. First, while all committee chairs have sought out some form of training and competency building as it relates to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism, we were surprised to learn that the vast majority of committee chairs are in fact the same people who lead trainings and design educational opportunities to deepen these commitments.

These leaders bring deep personal commitment to this work and for that I am filled with gratitude and inspiration for the vast work that lies ahead.

We also found that when committees are given greater financial resources they develop better tools to address anti-oppression and multiculturalism. While this is not surprising, it indicates the high prioritization of this work within the committees. I look forward to sharing all of our findings and recommendations at the October meeting.

On behalf of the Empowerment and Inclusion working group, thank you for your support and dedication to building beloved community

### **Transforming GA**

In 2010, the Board passed a motion that established three priorities – indeed three commitments – for improving the governance of our association. One of these has been accomplished: putting in place a much smaller board. The second is well underway, which is to better align the role of districts (and regions) with our UUA governance structure and our polity. This initiative is intended to free the staff of the UUA from multiple layers of oversight and to free literally hundreds of talented volunteers to do other – hopefully more meaningful –work for Unitarian Universalism. The third initiative has taken longer to gain traction, but in many ways it has the most potential to be truly transformational. This is the initiative to transform General Assembly and the way we all work together to make the fundamental decisions that guide our Association. Done right, this can make our governance much more inclusive and engaging AND make it more likely that we will spend our time focused on issues that truly matter to the future of our faith and our Association.

The Board has been listening to many many Unitarian Universalists over the past several years. As a result of that time spent listening; we have developed some concrete ideas. We will be sharing what we have learned and those ideas in a variety of forums during this GA, beginning with the General Session on Friday morning and followed by a Board sponsored workshop on Friday afternoon.

There are several major priorities that drive our work in this area:

First, we envision a governance process that is much more engaging, fun and meaningful.

Second, we envision a process that is more inclusive -- economically and culturally – than what we have today.

And finally, we envision an agenda that is dominated by issues that really matter to the future of our faith and our Association.

The work that we do together at this GA will set the foundation for action at an upcoming GA – we hope in 2016.