

Board of Trustees

MEETING: October 10-13, 2018

Pursuant to notice duly given, this meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association was held at UUA headquarters at 24 Farnsworth St. in Boston, MA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Atkins, Greg Boyd, Kathy Burek, Susan Frederick-Gray (President), Barb Greve (Co-Moderator), Chelsea Hendrix (Youth Observer), Sarah Dan Jones, Tanner Linden (Youth Observer), Manish Mishra-Marzetti, Patrick McLaughlin, Denise Rimes, Christina Rivera (Secretary), Lucia Santini Field (Financial Advisor), Elandria Williams (Co-Moderator), Latifa Woodhouse

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Carey McDonald (Recording Secretary & Executive Vice President), Tim Brennan (Treasurer), Stephanie Carey Maron, Chris Buice, and Danielle Di Bona (chaplains)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 10 – Closed session

Co-Moderator Mr. Barb Greve convened the meeting at 9:00 am, and moved the consent agenda to the Friday open session. Kate D'Adamo joined the meeting to facilitate discussion of Board norms and conflict of interest policies.

Board Norms and Conflict of Interest

Discussion focused on the role for this Board in 2018-19.

Values that were identified as key for this role included: being shepherds of transformation, providing a non-anxious presence and pastoral leadership, evolving from governance modeled on government to one that is grounded in values, holding space for voices that have been unheard, setting and modeling cultural norms, and holding the legacy of ancestors.

Members described the Board's role in this time of institutional change as cultivating a participatory democracy process for making decisions in Unitarian Universalism based on iterative aspiration, and strengthening the organization to engage and embody that practice and values in an ongoing way.

Discussion on the conflict of interest policy reflected the nature of the complexity of multiple roles and allegiances, both professional and personal, which Board members bring to the table. The Board agreed to spend time at the beginning of future Board meetings to review items identified as potential conflicts of interest, and the Governance Working Group agreed to consider any possible edits to the policy.



Role of Moderator

Discussion centered on the nature of the current role of moderator or co-moderator, shifts that the Board hopes to make in the role to make it more accessible and sustainable for different types of candidates, and the approach to the scheduled 2019 election for a new moderator.

Current duties of the co-moderators were identified as:

- Leading Board meetings, including setting agendas and facilitating;
- Providing General Assembly leadership, including preparing business session agendas and leading business sessions and debate;
- Acting as chief governance officer of the Association, including overseeing governance and bylaw change processes, receiving complaints, and addressing conflicts of interest;
- Representing the UUA in public communications, attendance at key meetings and summits, and participating in fundraising functions;
- Engaging in regular communication with UUA staff (President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer, Executive Assistant) about how staff support the work of the Board and the Board supports the work of the staff; and
- Caring for and tending to volunteers in other contexts (e.g. UUA committees), including attending committee meetings.

The co-moderators noted that their co-leadership structure requires an ongoing high level of communication between one another, and described one of their core functions as holding a long-term and balcony view of changes, needs and opportunities within the Association.

The Board affirmed the need to create an updated job description for the moderator role before candidates are approached, which reflects the planned changes in the role. Such planned changes are in discussion, with anticipation that they will be finalized at the January Board meeting, in time to submit any necessary bylaw changes to the General Assembly business agenda.

Members agreed that the best path forward was to find a way to postpone a 2019 election for the next moderator to allow changes of the role to be complete. If no candidates file petitions to run for moderator, the Board would be able to make an additional one-year moderator appointment to fill the vacancy, triggering a special election in 2020 for the remaining five years of the term. The Board agreed to work on a public announcement describing this process, to be adopted at the November meeting.

Friday, October 11 – Open session

The meeting opened at 9:00 am with worship led by Sarah Dan Jones.

Co-Moderator Mr. Barb Greve welcomed participants and observers at 9:26 am, and invited all present to introduce themselves.



Participants and observers – Online: Elaine McArdle, Ranwa Hammamy, Leslie Takahashi; Onsite: Brent Lewis, Michael Crumpler, Darrick Jackson, Theresa Soto, Heather Bond, Laura Conkle, Charles DuMond, Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg, Susan Howlett, Michael Hart, Carrie Stewart, Paula Cole Jones, Ted Fetter, Kim Hampton, Ben Gable, Christopher Hartley, Marcus Fogliano, Judy Bentle, Tracey Robinson-Harris, Ralph Brown, Debra Gray Boyd, James Kubal-Komoto, Mary Heafy, David Lauth, Dennis Wellnitz, Patty Lynch

Kathy Burek moved, Denise Rimes seconded, and the Board approved tabling the minutes to ensure key information is incorporated.

Commission on Institutional Change Update

Leslie Takahashi led the discussion on the work of the Commission on Institutional Change. She described the “collaboratory” gathering of 34 stakeholders and leaders who had gathered last week for a 3-day meeting in Walnut Creek, CA. The gathering focused on what actions will be able to transform the faith, recognizing the need for Unitarian Universalism to address racism and white supremacy culture as a core theological calling. By exploring models of equity in key areas of the faith, the gathering was able to identify characteristics of equity which the Commission can use to evaluate the overall progress of the UU religious community. The key areas were local faith communities, related organizations, seminaries, credentialing, the UUA, and truth and transformation. The Commission will be publishing a summary of the collaboratory’s ideas and takeaways.

Discussion noted that the Commission’s work on credentialing will be an increasing focus, including all types of professional credentialing, and that Commission members will be joining the LREDA Fall Conference in November and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee meeting in December to pursue these conversations.

Participants asked about the possibility of engaging the collaboratory’s themes for a wider audience, including adapting the process for congregations and other spaces. Noting that the crucial elements of the collaboratory’s process included the ability to get perspectives from outside Unitarian Universalism and the ability of all participants to engage as equals outside of normal positional or authoritative ways of being, members agreed it is possible to translate the process into congregational models and bring its themes into planning for General Assembly. It was noted that the attendees at the collaboratory were a unique group of dedicated leaders within the faith, which made it hard to replicate. It also meant that there were fewer younger participants, or attendees who are not religious professionals.

Mission and Aspiration – Presentation from the President and Executive Vice President

President Susan Frederick-Gray and Executive Vice President Carey McDonald shared an update on the mission and aspiration of the UUA administration. Their presentation explained the theme of the church year as building systems, when last year was focused on building relationships. They named the primary ways that the UUA impacts congregations through inspiration, modeling, resourcing and relationship, and described key cultural shifts away from white supremacy culture and towards liberation and healing. The presentation identified the priorities for the year in each of the UUA’s three core areas of equipping congregations, training leaders and advancing UU values in the world, as well as in the work of organizational change. It was also noted that Board members will be asked again



this fall to make calls to congregations about the Promise and Practice campaign to support Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism.

Following the presentation, participants and observers broke up into groups to discuss the question “how do we engage congregations or affiliate groups in the conversation about vision and practice in the key areas of the UUA’s work (equipping congregations, training leaders, advancing our values in the world, governance/organizational change)?”

Investment and Socially Responsible Investment Committees’ Joint Report

This discussion was led by Lucia Santini Field as financial advisor, along with Kathleen Gaffney as chair of the Investment Committee and Kathy Mulvey as chair of the Socially Responsible Investment Committee. They said their current goal is to integrate these two committees’ work and move towards a single committee, which would be precedent-setting with asset management processes in large institutions. They introduced their respective members, and recognized the breadth of their investment and financial justice experience. Noting that congregations and the UUA are owners of the common endowment fund, they articulated its dual objective to achieve consistent returns with moderate risk over the long term, and to use assets to advance UU values through environmental, social and governance focus (ESG).

Discussion explored the nature of community development investments, which can be concessionary. Members asked whether the UUA could increase its investments here, focused on community-owned and persons of color-led funds. Board members also noted the need for better training and processes for the Board to support its on fiduciary responsibility, and to engage with the kinds of questions put forward by these committees.

The Board unanimously affirmed the proposed statement of purpose on socially responsible investing and encouraged both committees to deepen and continue their work together.

The meeting broke for lunch at 1:08 pm and reconvened at 2:15 pm.

General Conference Discussion

Susan Ritchie joined the conversation to review the recommendations from the Renewing Covenant Taskforce to revisit the general conference framework. As chair of the Taskforce, which issued its recommendation in 2018, she described the way that general conferences were organized in the pre-merger Unitarian and Universalist traditions. Discussion noted that it was an annual lay-led gathering which focused on a series of open-ended theological discussions, both in a full group setting and in smaller conversation groups. General Assembly 2019 was described as being inspired by the general conference model, and acting more like a hybrid of the general conference and the typical General Assembly program.

Board members agreed to follow up on the possibility of creating a smaller working group to keep focus on the goals and framework for GA 2019 with the general conference model in mind.

The meeting took a 15-minute break at 3:10 pm.

General Assembly 2019



Tim Brennan and Jan Sneegas gave an overview of the GA budget, as created by the GA Planning Committee. They noted that estimates for attendance are conservative for GA 2019 in Spokane, which meant that the GA Planning Committee, in proposing the budget, made difficult decisions to reduce expenditures in most areas. Board members acknowledged those decisions, and affirmed the ability to revisit the budget in the coming months if attendance projections or other financial circumstances change.

Discussion highlighted that the GA budget is driven by attendance and asked how the UUA and UU leaders could we promote attendance this year. There was a recognition that, for years, it has been clear that the best systematic way to improve access to GA is to get congregations to sponsor their attendees and delegates, and participants asked how we move in that direction.

Participants and observers broke into small groups to continue the previous conversation about how to engage people in the mission and vision work of the Association.

Patrick McLaughlin moved, and Lucia Santini Field seconded, the move to transition into Executive Session, which was approved unanimously. The Board moved into Executive Session at 4:38 pm.

Executive Session

Leslie Takahashi and Marcus Fogliano, from the Commission on Institutional Change, joined as observers.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee members, who had been meeting at the same time as the Board, gave an update on their process for nominating. They noted they have extended the application deadline to November 15 to fill the four Board positions, including youth trustees, which will be elected in 2019 for three-year terms.

Both Nominating Committee and Board members noted the need to have better working relationships going forward, including working with UUA staff to build a more consistent pipeline for leaders who are ready to apply for UUA committees, creating a new process to support the nomination of youth trustees (created as a new role in the bylaws at General Assembly 2018), and being clearer about expectations related to nominees' conflicts of interest.

Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM)

Representatives from DRUUMM shared the history of the relationship between DRUUMM and the UUA, described the organization's current activities, and made a request for substantial, ongoing support for its operations. Board members agreed to discuss this in the open meeting the following day.

Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC)

Jesse King, as chair of the MFC, gave an update to the Board on the timeline for upcoming discussions about the future of ministerial credentialing, responding to the charge to the MFC which the Board adopted at its April meeting.



The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Saturday, October 13 – Open session

The meeting began at 9:15 am with opening worship led by President Susan Frederick-Gray. As part of the service, she shared with participants and observers that the UUA had received a hateful letter concerning Board member Christina River and her son, who is a volunteer leader with General Assembly youth. President Frederick-Gray condemned the letter, which targeted UU leaders of color including a high school student, described the UUA's response to safety and security concerns, and affirmed the importance of anti-racism work within and beyond the UUA.

Caucusing Time

Following the opening worship, the Board changed the day's agenda to allow participants and observers to break into racial identity-based caucusing to address concerns raised by the letter and the overall conversation about engaging UUs in discussing mission and vision. Conversation also addressed the proposal brought forward by DRUMM in Executive Session the prior day.

Caucusing Report and DRUUMM Discussion

Participants in both the white-identified and people of color caucus groups reported back on their discussions.

Board members agreed that 1) DRUMM needs ongoing sustainable support from the UUA, 2) some support is needed right now, and 3) there is a need to take time to do due-diligence in arriving at a full commitment.

Discussion noted it can feel hard for people from historically marginalized communities to trust the institution, recognizing the history of trauma and pain. It was also named that other groups who represent impacted communities will need support from the UUA as well, and that the UUA should reach out to these groups rather than waiting for them to make requests. Members raised the need to ensure Board and staff are leading together, with the Board's role to set policy, staff's opportunity develop a plan, and Board's ability to approve or adjust the plan. Participants described their hope that leaders are able to trust faithfully, leaning into relationship with individuals and institutions.

Responding to suggestions from the people of color group, the Board unanimously affirmed the following path forward:

- An immediate contribution of \$20,000-50,000 (this level of contribution is able to be determined by staff under Board policy) with an accompanying offer of administrative staff support; and
- UUA staff and DRUUMM will develop a plan in response to DRUUMM's request and will return to the January UUA Board meeting with a report on plans for long-term support and renewed relationship between the two organizations. Rather than affirming a specific dollar amount at this stage, the Board affirmed the urgency of DRUUMM's need and the commitment to develop a plan to address those needs.



The meeting broke for lunch at 12:38 pm and reconvened at 1:44 pm.

General Assembly 2019 Planning

Continuing earlier conversations about incorporating elements from the general conference model into GA 2019, members and observers viewed the currently proposed schedule grid for the event. Rather than delineate workshop and general session times, the schedule included a series of open blocks dedicated to supporting the theme of GA, “The Power of We,” in a variety of small group and big hall formats. This flexibility is intended to allow for a new level of thematic integration of the GA experience, helping to engage attendees in conversations about the mission and vision of the Association. The grid also included other essential elements of GA, such as the opening ceremonies and Sunday morning worship, which will continue as essential parts of the event.

Participants and observers broke into small groups to discuss the question: “What should be included in the thematic blocks of GA 2019?” Responses are captured in Attachment 1.

Board members requested that everyone present encourage others to attend GA 2019 in Spokane.

Financial Update

Treasurer Tim Brennan provided a first quarter financial update. He reported that the UUA is on track to break even for the year, and a \$500,000 decrease in income projections was offset by proportional decreases in expenditure (largely through open positions) and the use of the contingency fund. Part of the decrease stemmed from more accurate forecasting of the Annual Program Fund, which is in the midst of transitioning to a new formula based on ability to pay instead of membership counts, and the remainder was due to revisited fundraising targets in the absence of a Director of Stewardship and Development.

Board members noted that they would value regular updates on APF indicators like the ones that were provided in the update, so that they can stay abreast of how the transition to a new APF formula is progressing. Members said they would be willing to help reach out to congregations for appreciation and support in the APF transition and reaching out to potential new donors.

Regional Leaders Group Report

Members of the Regional Leaders Group (RLG) reported on the plan for a new structure to their organization which they had adopted. Previously the District Presidents’ Association, the RLG had been working to identify its core role in the era of regionalization. Working with senior UUA Board and administration leaders over the past year, they agreed to a new path forward as a national advisory council which will be soliciting feedback from congregational leaders about the UUA’s impact and providing it as linkage through the UUA’s planning and governance processes. Their new structure will also include direct representation from historically marginalized communities within Unitarian Universalism, so that their needs are at the table from the beginning, and the group itself committed to working on the diversity of its full membership.

The Board affirmed this direction and expressed its gratitude for the leadership of the RLG Members.



Closing

Members, participants, and observers went around and offered a word of gratitude.

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald

Recording Secretary



Attachment 1 – General Assembly 2019 Brainstorm

Group sharing for what needs to be included in The Power of We thematic blocks at GA 2019

- Conversations on the stage of differing perspectives as a way to intro small groups, modeling dialogue
- Organize tracks around UUA principles (1, 2, 7, 8) as a theological basis
- 50th anniversary of Stonewall
- Honor that we're starting on Juneteenth
- Telling truth about our history and our congregational polity
- Skill people up in how to lead conversations in their own context (congregations, district meetings)
- Identity-based caucusing, what does it mean for white folx to gain painful clarity about how to be both complicit and engaged
- Practical work for people in specific roles, e.g. investment
- See new leaders on the stage, local folx sharing and leading big conversations
- Ensure everyone gets a takeaway for their own further work
- Moving from a congregation based on individual needs to a collective focus on mission
- Create practice spaces to embody, do it less than perfectly and then do it better
- Lift up how "we" is different in UUism than in other denominations
- Multicultural worship, following Latinx Spanish language service
- Hear from accountability partners of various kinds; panel of religious professionals of color at GA18 was great
- Dialogue with and within related organizations (e.g. UUSC, seminaries, identity groups, etc.)
- Can we create a shared narrative?
- Liberation theology for UU youth, youth of color resiliency building
- Theological deepening for everyone, extend everyone's heart
- Ensure diversity of the chaplain team, continue Right Relationship and Safety
- Commission on Institutional Change needs time to speak to everyone
- Get three-part mission work of the UUA (+ organizational change) so that everyone can say it by the end of GA
- Worship!
- Could we eat together?
- Support for families
- Deep conversation about what it means to be in covenant
- Create space for people who are there by themselves to not feel so alone
- Engage multiple learning styles
- Theater! Can we physically embody what change feels and looks like?
- Set up arc of engagement to GA2020 in Providence
- Public apology from the Board for ways the UUA has failed in the past
- Everyone comes away knowing the mission of the UUA, of UUism and individual UU's



BOARD OF TRUSTEES SCHEDULE

- **Videoconference Meeting: November 12, 2018**
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Eastern)
Meeting URL: <http://zoom.us/j/529745195>
Meeting ID: 529 745 195
Join by Phone: +1 646-558-8656
- **Videoconference Meeting: December 10, 2018**
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Eastern)
Meeting URL: <http://zoom.us/j/299243682>
Meeting ID: 299 243 682
Join by Phone: +1 646-558-8656
- **Meeting: January 2019, Boston, MA**
Friday, January 25—Saturday, January 26, 2019
- **Videoconference Meeting: February 11, 2019**
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Eastern)
Meeting URL: <http://zoom.us/j/985901272>
Meeting ID: 985 901 272
Join by Phone: +1 646-558-8656
- **Videoconference Meeting: March 11, 2019**
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Eastern)
Meeting URL: <http://zoom.us/j/614125629>
Meeting ID: 614 125 629
Join by Phone: +1 646-558-8656
- **Meeting: April 2019, Boston, MA**
Friday, April 26—Saturday, April 27, 2019
- **Videoconference Meeting: May 13, 2019**
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (Eastern)
Meeting URL: <http://zoom.us/j/596473699>
Meeting ID: 596 473 699
Join by Phone: +1 646-558-8656
- **Meetings: June 2019, Spokane, WA**
Tuesday, June 18—Wednesday, June 19, 2019: Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 19—Sunday June 23, 2019: General Assembly
Monday, June 24, 2019: Board of Trustees Meeting
- **Meeting: October 2019, Boston, MA**
Thursday, October 17—Saturday, October 19, 2019
- **Meeting: January 2020, Boston, MA**
Friday, January 24—Saturday, January 25, 2020
- **Meeting: April 2020, Boston, MA**
Friday, April 24—Saturday, April 25, 2020
- **Meetings: June 2020, Providence, RI**
Tuesday, June 23—Wednesday, June 24, 2020: Board of Trustees Meeting



Wednesday, June 24—Sunday June 28, 2020: General Assembly
Monday, June 29, 2020: Board of Trustees Meeting

