

**Election Campaign Practices Committee: Meeting by online/phone conference
March 10, 2016**

Participants: Manish Mishra-Marzetti, chair; Elisabeth (Beth) McGregor; Katherine (KC) Slack; Rob Eller-Isaacs, UUA Secretary (ex officio); Harlan Limpert, UUA Chief Operating Officer; Margy Levine Young, UUA Web Team Manager

Much of the meeting focused on how election-related information and discussion will be provided for on pages of the UUA website, clarifying procedures, policy, and lines of committee and staff responsibility.

In addition to its other responsibilities, the Election Campaign Practices Committee learned that it is responsible for maintaining information on the Elections page of the UUA website and an online Elections Forum for discussion of the elections, supported by committee liaison Stephanie Carey Maron and members of the Information Technology staff. Official notices are the responsibility of the UUA Secretary.

The former Elections listserve for subscribers has been changed to the Elections Forum on uua.org, and the ECPC is responsible for the structure and for moderating of it. KC Stack agreed to be the ECPC lead on website matters.

This year brings some unusual circumstances. Because of the withdrawal of one of the two candidates put forward by the Presidential Nominating Committee (PNC) after the deadline for the committee to make nominations. Per the UUA by-laws, additional candidates for the Presidency are required to certify their candidacies by running by petition, and the ability to run as a petition-based candidate remains open until February 1, 2017. A petition-based candidate must have nominations from the governing boards or congregational meetings of 25 UUA-certified congregations, with no geographical distribution requirements.

Harlan reported that he and Stephanie had reviewed and made revisions to the online forms used by congregations to nominate candidates by petition. The updated, more user-friendly forms are now available on the UUA website, and nominations submitted on the older version are still valid. Once a candidate has 25 or more completed petitions in hand, the package of petitions is to be submitted to Stephanie Carey for initial review who will then forward them to Rob Eller-Isaacs as UUA Board Secretary, who will “certify” the individual’s candidacy for the Presidency. Per UUA by-laws, there is no preferential treatment for a PNC nominated candidate versus a candidate who has been certified by petition.

Given the change in the candidate field, a new Presidential candidates’ covenanting meeting will be held. This is set for April 14 in Boston, and will be attended by Rob, Manish, and the candidates who have been nominated or made themselves known as actively petitioning.

It is hoped that candidate covenants, once agreed upon, will be public information, but that will depend on the candidates themselves. If the covenants are made public, they could potentially be available on the UUA Elections website, the candidates' sites, etc.

The UUA Board is considering hosting/organizing a small number of regional joint appearances by candidates. This arrangement is only in the proposal stage, but might help relieve candidate anxiety around campaign expense limits.

A number of broad issues have already emerged that invite the possibility of future electoral reform or revision. It was agreed that rules and procedures should not be changed during the current election cycle, but that we should continue to discuss and evaluate larger issues as we look ahead. It was agreed that Beth as committee Secretary would maintain a "parking lot" file of concerns that arise and matters we feel may need further review and/or action.

The first task of the committee after the April candidate covenanting process is to create and open the Elections Forum on the UUA website. The committee had many questions, and Harlan brought Margy Levine Young, the UUA web team manager, into the meeting to address some of them. Margy offered to set up an Elections Forum page based on the committee's requests but will not make it "live" until we review and approve it.

The ECPC has agreed that a moderated web forum structure - where we could review and approve items in advance, rather than take them down after the fact - would be preferential. Margy felt it would be possible to set up, but will research and confirm this, reporting back to Manish. KC agreed to serve as primary manager of any web-based communications fora, calling on the rest of the committee as needed.

The next ECPC online meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20 at 2 PM EDT.

Respectfully submitted
Elisabeth McGregor