



## MEMORANDUM

From: President Susan Frederick-Gray  
To: UUA Board of Trustees

Date: October 15, 2019

Re: Presidential Update for the October Board meeting

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Friends, I look forward to seeing you soon for the October UUA Board meeting. This summer, I shared our priorities for the year in each of our three mission areas: to equip congregations for health and vitality, to support and train leaders, both lay and professional, and to advance UU values in the world. I encourage you to review those priorities, and am including them again in your Board packet for this meeting. Additionally, in advance of the meeting, I wanted to share with you a few recent updates on the specific work we have been doing since the summer to pursue those mission priorities. We may not have the chance to go through each of these highlighted areas during our meeting, so this memo ensures you receive the information. I welcome your questions and your collaboration in leadership in each of these areas.

### **UU the Vote**

We are excited to share with you at the October meeting an update on our campaign planning for UU the Vote. Unitarian Universalists must seize this moment to bring our passion to the polls, using electoral engagement as a strategy for fighting for the issues and values we care about most deeply. Growing out of this multi-issue perspective, UU the Vote will be a first-of-its-kind, multi-tactic, scaled organizing project with on-ramps for participation at every level, including meaningful roles for individuals, congregations, State Advocacy Networks (SANs), and regional and national UU organizations and collaborations. UU the Vote is non-partisan and urges participation in the campaigns and voter engagement strategies which are most appropriate for each community, including deep involvement with secular and multi-faith partner organizations. The work on the ground will take a variety of forms in different geographic locations, with heavier investments of resources in the most strategic areas. This project will offer all UUs access points for engaging in meaningful work at the local, statewide, and national levels, and will aggregate UU involvement nationally to illustrate our combined impact.

At the October meeting, we will be sharing more of this organizing strategy with you as well as an integrated plan for the fundraising appeal to support this work. We hope the Board will affirm the direction of this campaign at this October meeting. For the January

meeting, we expect to be able to bring an updated budget framework for the campaign for the Board's approval.

### **Staff demographics**

Following the June Board meeting and feedback on our staff diversity report, we will present an updated report with reflects a different approach to gathering staff demographic information. Identity based information is critical for our internal accountability around the equity and diversity goals of the UUA. At the same time, we are committed to protecting the privacy of our staff members. For this report, we used data from our internal cultural assessment survey, which was conducted from May – July 2019. It was a survey created by the JEDI team (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team). The survey was anonymous and included a section on identity. We expect to repeat the survey in future years for monitoring our progress in nurturing an inclusive workplace where people of all identities thrive. We also recognize that this is an iterative process and that there may be area where the Board would like to see different data, or we may need to create additional ways to track and present data. We look forward to being in conversation with you about this and to sharing these figures with you at the Board meeting.

### **Conversations for Liberation**

As we have shared at previous Board meetings, UUA staff have been working with UU identity and professional groups to launch the “Conversations for Liberation” project to host open and principled conversations about the biggest questions in our faith. Available at [uua.org/conversations](http://uua.org/conversations), collaborative resources include an invitation from participating UU groups, a small group congregational discussion guide based on the questions posed for attendees at General Assembly 2019, and a growing list of resources for holding difficult conversations. The ongoing conversation with participating UU organizations has created an important roundtable for strategizing and collegial support, and is considering ways to equip, coach and connect congregational leaders going forward. We will ensure feedback from congregational conversations will be made available to the Board for its ongoing mission, vision and Ends work.

### **Ministry Search System Upgrades**

The UUA's system of ministerial search and settlement is the highest-investment work we do with our congregations. Over the past few years, we have been upgrading and standardizing this system so that it provides a more consistent and streamlined experience for congregational search teams and ministers. A new online system now includes all types of ministry placements and provides a smoother experience for all participants. Of the total cost of roughly \$10,000 per search (inclusive of UUA staff time, transitions coach stipends, travel costs, and Beyond Categorical Thinking training), the UUA currently subsidizes \$8000-9000, but fees vary by region. Going into the next search cycle, there will be a standard fee that fully subsidizes the cost except for the coaching fee for APF honor congregations, with a tiered fee for other congregations. We will also be requiring participation in the BCT training for the first time, and shifting

resources to start-ups, particularly for ministers from historically marginalized communities. I look forward to sharing more about this new phase of our critical ministerial search work in the months ahead.

### **Repair Process from Spring 2017**

This August, I was part of an in-person restorative conversation/repair process arising from the Southern Regional Lead hiring process in the Spring of 2017 and its ongoing impacts. This in-person gathering was the outcome of a months-long process that officially began in April 2019, and included myself, Carey McDonald, Elandria Williams, Barb Greve (who was not able to be there in person), Scott Tayler, and former trustees Christina River and Andy Burnette. The repair process, led by outside non-UU facilitators, used restorative justice principles to address various levels of ruptured relationships which came out of those events. There is a participant statement describing the process and outcomes which is being made public this week, and I will ensure the Board receives a copy. While there is not an action item for the Board coming out of this process, it is important that the Board be aware of this restorative effort in our Association.