

President's Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

Submitted by Susan Frederick-Gray

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President's schedule - I will try to share significant upcoming travels or events

Previous:

August: Charlottesville, VA counter demonstrations against national white supremacist gathering; worshipped with the TJMUUC in Charlottesville.

September: Washington, DC: gathering with area POCI and multiracial families; preaching at All Souls D.C.

Memorial Service for John Wolf, Minister Emeritus, All Souls Tulsa

Upcoming:

October: Dedication for Unity Temple Oak Park, IL

Meetings with Panel on Theological Education, College of Social Justice and UURMAPA (retired ministers and partners)

Mosaic Makers and Stew/Dev visits CA

November: LREDA in Denver; President's Council in Boston; vacation

December: vacation: December 22 – Jan 1st.

January: Anniversary of Edict of Torda at Eliot Chapel in Kirkwood, MO; UUA Board in Knoxville, TN; UUMA Institute for Excellence in Ministry in FL

February: ICUU gathering in Khasi Hills, India.; SMOLUUC (Senior Ministers of Large UU Churches)

Highlights

In the future, I expect we'll have a conversation about reporting from the President to the UUA Board, but I want to share some information about what I have been up to in my first three months. These are only a few highlights to give you information on anything new or critically important. I and we will be learning as we go about what is useful for your knowledge and how I can best share that – but here is a beginning.

Staffing: The job postings for the Southern Region and New England Regional lead positions are up. Carey McDonald and Rob Molla have been working on implementing the new hiring procedures and training for hiring managers on the procedures.

Information/Technology: The UUA has had an IT project waiting in the background for attention and resourcing. Currently, the IT staff has identified over 100 separate databases within our organization. Some of this relates to the former district structures, but regions also have their own databases. This is because the UUA does not have a good Client Resource Management system to hold information on our congregations (our members). Consolidating and coordinating these databases would improve effectiveness, reduce long-term costs, give staff the information they need to do their jobs well and avoid redundancy. More significantly, it would be a tool to strengthen our knowledge, relationship, tracking and connection with our congregations. This is an important technology and infrastructure investment that will put the UUA in a stronger

position to stay connected with congregations and help staff have the resources they need to support congregations.

Mark Steinwinter is working on developing the plan and costs to create this database. Our estimates right now are that the project will cost \$150,000. Board policies require board approval for any expenditure not included in the budget that is in excess of \$50,000. Because of the nature of the project as technology infrastructure, the cost would be capitalized and amortized over its useful life in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, which would put the annual cost at around \$30,000 a year (and \$15,000 for this year).

Because of the lower amortized annual cost, this plan may not require Board approval. Nevertheless, I want to be transparent and mindful of the new policy. In addition, I want the board to be aware of this plan and my enthusiasm for it.

We are not ready for approval yet, but I did want to give the Board some background information. My hope is to bring an approval motion for the October consent agenda.

Leadership Council Retreat: We had the annual Leadership Council retreat September 20-22, facilitated by Parisa Parsa of Essential Partners. This was a chance for the Leadership Council to build a sense of teamwork with new and returning leadership council members. Our key goal was to develop a covenant to guide our work. To live out our vision of beloved community, dismantling white supremacy and building a multicultural future at the UUA, we need to learn some new cultural norms and practices and covenant is a useful place to begin that work. The Leadership Council left the retreat with a rough draft of a covenant that we will finalize over the next few weeks and revisit and renew each year or more as necessary. Our covenant intentionally seeks to nurture a spirit a collaborative leadership among the Leadership Council.

Additionally, I shared expectations and approaches of my leadership style with the Leadership Council as well as identified questions and needs I have from the first three months as President. Finally, we spent time reflecting on the last six months in the UUA and discussing how we might center the work of racial equity, staff diversity and dismantling white supremacy at the UUA and in our work as a Leadership Council. We brainstormed what this might look like six years out and what resources we might need to make it real. We left with ongoing commitments, especially from SFG and CM to look at how we might structure and resource ownership and accountability around our anti-racism and diversity efforts at the UUA and for Unitarian Universalism.

Monitoring/Ends

My next big task before our October meeting is to dive into the history of previous Ends Monitoring reports. I know this is part of a larger conversation with the Board and I want to begin by getting a handle on what has gone before.

General Assembly Planning Committee

On September 11 and 12th, Carey McDonald and I, along with Elandria Williams and Denise Rimes, met with representatives from the GA Planning Committee and staff to do the initial broad thematic and grid planning for the 2018 General Assembly in Kansas City, MO. Prior to

the meeting, Carey McDonald organized a call with local UU leaders and ministers in the greater Kansas City area to discuss the NAACP Travel Advisory to the state of Missouri and hear about local partnerships and organizing efforts on the ground. In addition, Lena Gardner of BLUU reached out to Carey to discuss an opportunity for BLUU to partner with organizing groups locally in K.C. to lead the public witness event(s) at GA.

Listening to the Lena Gardner and Kim Hampton, we were encouraged not to see the Travel Advisory as a boycott, but to think more deeply about partnership with leaders of color locally to make a positive impact longer term in the organizing in KC and MO.

Carey McDonald is continuing to work with BLUU around the public witness plan for GA. The theme for the GA is "All Are Called" and we discussed using this GA to provide a place for a larger mission focused conversation and to direct workshops to offer congregational and leadership development tools that are focused on mission, and how to organize aspects of congregational life around mission focus.

As the Board, Staff and GA Planning Committee all have a role in bringing GA together, this piece of reporting is really meant to follow up on what staff have done to gain local insight following the NAACP Travel Advisory and big thematic frame for General Assembly.