

Commission on Social Witness



Notes – Video conference 11/19/2014

Commissioners present: David Breeden, Caitlin Cotter, Susan Goekler (Chair), Christina Sillari

Susan convened the meeting at 7:00 PM on line with GoToMeeting. Caitlin provided a chalice lighting.

We reviewed and approved minutes of October 5th meeting.

After GA, UUA Staff liaison Jessica Halperin raised issues she had noted with the CSAI process.

a. Need to amend bylaws to remove “sponsored organizations” as allowable proposers of CSAIs.

Susan will check on the process for suggesting amendments to the bylaws.

b. Need to clarify the process for endorsements.

We agreed to remove any references to endorsements at the CSAI proposal level.

c. Need to review proposer’s guide to determine whether more explanation would result in better proposals, especially in the Actions section.

Other issues discussed were

a. Varying lengths of CSAI proposals.

We did not enforce the limits in the guide and that might have created an uneven playing field. This occurred because of the newness of the Commission – a lack of long time members with institutional memories. If questioned, we will apologize and promise to do better next time.

b. The AIW process

The CSW met with the Board in January of 2012 and presented four possible alternative options for immediate witness, asking for Board feedback. The CSW shared the options at the 2012 GA and did a straw poll at our booth in the exhibit hall. We presented this information as part of our report.

Commissioners are to review the options document before the next call.

c. The lack of understanding of the CSAI process by most UUA.

We reviewed the materials on the CSW portion of the UUA website and shared marketing that has been done in the past includes: ministers’ chat, social justice list serve, CSW and GA list serves.

Other suggestions: write an article or letter to editor to the UU world (Christina offered to do a draft) and posting on FaceBook.

d. Suggestions for beefing up instructions in the Proposers' Guide so we get better CSAI proposals:

1) include Possible ideas for engaging individuals or congregations in education, direct action and policy/advocacy around the proposed issue. These should encourage broad congregational participation across the lifespan.

2) contain 5-10 questions that are suitable for education and theological reflection across generations in congregational group discussion

e. CSW's role vis a vis staff and board with respect to social witness

There is lack of coordination and role confusion about social witness and who is responsible for what vis a vis the CSW, the Board, and the staff. Some questions include:

- How is the UU doing social witness?
- What is the role of the CSW in the process?
- How does what we do intersect with the type of activism like Standing on the Side of Love which seems to be separate and independent of CSW.

Review of assignments from last call:

- a. David consulted with UU Rise and UU staff to develop and submit a proposal on implementation of the immigration as a Moral Issue SOC.
- b. Caitlin worked with Jessica to develop and submit a proposal on reproductive justice.
- c. Christina contacted Heather Rion Staff (former Commissioner) about developing a proposal for the sermon contest winner's worship service; and will develop and submit such.
- d. Susan developed and submitted proposals on mini assemblies for proposed CSAI, proposed AIWs, and a hearing on the newly selected CSAI.

Susan will send a poll to select next call date and time. David provided a closing reading.

Caitlin provided process observation.

Notes by Christina Sillari