

## **UUA Board of Trustees Meeting Notes January 21-22, 2006**

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### Topics

**President's Travel** - Dan Brody, Financial Advisor, reported that a plan is in place for the President's travel. Auditors recommend that the Board of Trustees or a designee approve the president's travel. Kay Montgomery approves the moderator's travels. The recommendation is that for the well being of the president and moderator, they should travel business class and that his/her spouse or partner should be able to travel with him or her at Association expense, but that not more than 25% can be used for the spouse or partner. The question was raised re: who receives the flyer miles accrued. Kay Montgomery stated that there is no policy, but that practice has been that the miles go to the holder.

**General Investment Fund** -It takes two full-time staff to monitor the fund. Administration wants unrestricted funds to go into an endowment fund if possible. That move would remove some risks. It is also recommended the Reserve Fund be eliminated because it is losing money due to low interests rates and the cost of management. A question was raised: Are there other restricted funds not paying their fair share for administrative costs? To the question regarding the possible ramifications of downsizing, Dan answered that it would be gradual and investments would not be disturbed.

**Capital Campaign**—Will be paid for by borrowing and repaid by charging a fee, currently 2% of market value. Income designated for a congregation or district will not be charged the 2%.

**Investment Committee and Socially Responsible Investment Committee**—A report requested by the Board of Trustees at their October meeting may not be ready by the Board's April meeting. The Committee on Socially Responsible Investing wants to do a redraft. Stock screening will apply to all large investments. The question was asked about what to do if there is no screening. Two other questions followed: 1) Do we still need two committees? 2) How can they work better together?

### **International affairs**

The Congregations Working Group presented the following resolution:

*Resolved that the Board of Trustees reaffirms the staged reduction in funding for the International Association for Religious Freedom (IRAF) and further resolved that the BOT supports the efforts of President Sinkford to continue the staged reductions in UUA funding for IRAF and appoints Trustee Saunders as a UUA*

*delegate to IRAF Congress in March 2006, representing the UUA Board of Trustees.*

The CWG also recognized that the Partner Church Council (PCC) has been extremely effective in creating strong relationships with international congregations and expressed interest in exploring the development of strong connections between the PCC and the UUA. Will Saunders will attend the PCC's annual retreat in February.

### **Proposal for a three-hour workshop for congregational presidents at GA2006**

Elizabeth Greene and Joan Lund will work with Bill Sinkford and Gini Courter to develop an agenda to be presented to the BOT at its April meeting. Other ideas regarding congregational presidents from the CWG: Ask them and their districts to take financial responsibility congregational leadership's participation at GA, since they will have no UUA subsidy in two years.

### Growth Topics

#### **Pathways Church**

Probing questions have resulted in honest feedback. As a result, the Growth Working Group (GWG) has made the following recommendation and motions.

The Growth Working Group Recommendation:

*Recommend to the Growth Team and growth staff: That the growth strategies update format be revised to ensure that nomenclature is consistent, that there are links to additional information (e.g., easily accessible on the website), and that it is complete (e.g., program consultants are not currently evident as any part of our strategic plan for growth). Also, that break through congregations can be encouraged and supported in building mentoring relationships with congregations.*

**Motion: Moved that the UUA administration assure that all growth projects in which the UUA has a financial interest have rigorous plans that include financial risk mitigation and evaluation components.** At the suggestion of Trustee at Large Tamara Payne-Alex, *assure* was changed to *insure*.

The independent review group for Pathways is made up of Larry Ladd, Stephan Papa, and Nancy Eisenheimer, with Stefan Jonasson as staff liaison. Concern with need for a liaison resulted in the suggestions:

- 1) that a typical liaison gives the background and the institutional history and
- 2) that it's a question of efficiency.

Given those two suggestions, it was suggested that *support* might be a more appropriate term than *liaison*. It was also noted that the independence of the panel would not remain unchallenged.

Three motions were made as a result of the concerns about Pathways.

**Moved: That the UUA Administration develop a comprehensive plan prior to embarking on growth projects in which the UUA has a financial interest. This plan should include a clear projection of (a) funding sources, (b) level of financial risk, and (c) a scheme for annual evaluation of progress during the first three to five years of the project.**

**Motion carried.**

**Moved: That the Moderator appoint a task force to plan for an effective institutional response to the 2005 Commission on Appraisal Report.**

**Motion tabled until April meeting.**

**Moved: That the First Vice-Moderator present to the Board for its approval at the April 2006 Board meeting a plan for responding more rigorously and reliably to reports received and/or approved by the Board.**

**Motion carried.**

**Moved: That the First Vice-Moderator, in consultation with the Secretary, present to the Board for its approval at the April 2006 Board meeting a plan for effective and efficient responses to letters, e-mails and other communications addressed to the Board.**

**Motion carried.**

It was noted that letters to the Board should go by Kay Montgomery, UUA Executive Vice President. The Board of Trustees has received letters from three ministers regarding Pathways. The letters will be acknowledged and will be discussed at the April meeting. It was also acknowledged that there is wisdom in all three and much to be learned.

### **Special Review Commission Interim Report**

The discussion of the Report was led by José Ballester, Trustee at Large and member of the Commission. The other members are Hafidha Acuay, Rachel Davis, Janice Marie Johnson, and Rev. Margaret Keip. The Commission had been appointed to examine events leading up to distressing incidents involving UU youth of color at the Fort Worth GA. The stated goal is “to identify learnings about the structures of racism and ageism both within and outside our faith community.”

The group met for the first time in September and submitted a [preliminary report](#) to the Board of Trustees in October. The final report was scheduled for the January meeting; however, the Commission, with Gini Courter’s approval, decided that more work needs to be done and submitted a fourteen-page interim report, with the final report now scheduled for the April BOT meeting. The report includes a trajectory of events from the 1960s to the GA in Fort Worth with some preliminary recommendations.

Discussion at the January BOT re: the report included the following issues:

- The use of the term White Allies and “POC”: this is not parallel terminology as the term “White Allies” identifies, while “POC” describes.
- How to involve the youth in all planning for GA
- Youth were not in same hotel at GA
- GA planning needs to include knowing the culture of the site, including information such as curfews
- How do we find adults to be responsible?
- The necessity of everyone wearing nametags at GA
- It’s a much larger, deeper problem than wearing nametags
- Massive culture thing: Association jobs having youth in the title not being applied for
- Lack of parity of compensation for youth ministers
- It’s about creating systems, letting youth have room and guiding them
- Bigger issue than youth...the need to fix it for adults
- The importance of being honest...don’t promise more than we can deliver...we’re *working* on being Anti-racist
- Need more conversations about “belonging”
- Board is ready to take further steps

A suggestion from the meeting of the General Assembly Planning Committee and Janice Marie Johnson, president of DRUUM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries): Include more programming opportunities for Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression learnings such as JUUST Change consultancies, Identity-Based Ministry workshops, all orientations (including District In-Gatherings) DRUUM, LUUNA, and at Opening /Closing ceremonies.

### **Independent Affiliates**

The Association Working Group has drafted a letter to Independent Affiliates explaining new criteria as well as the fact that it is the General Assembly Planning Committee that allocates GA resources. Several questions and comments surfaced in the discussion of the status of Independent Affiliates in preparation for a vote on the new criteria later in the meeting. Among them were these:

- If we work in isolation in identity-based groups, we may be comforted, but not transformed; how do we work together to develop fellowship?
- They (IAs) tend to lack focus on congregations
- If something is not working, do we stop and look at a way to fix it?
- What would it look like if we looked at relationships instead of resources?
- All IAs do not need to collaborate, if they meet the criteria

The Congregation Working Group offered a motion re: Independent Affiliates:  
**Moved: The Board will send out communication regarding changes to the Independent Affiliate criteria and the timeline for implementation.**

### **Consultation on Youth Ministry**

Comments by President Sinkford included these:

- There is passion on this Board for youth
- 3000 youth have been surveyed
- 160 congregations have signed up for youth consultation
- UUMA is behind it, but there are not enough ministers on track.

### **Information Technology and Electronic Communication Committee**

A report was given by Committee member Margaret Sanders.

On behalf of the committee, she offered these recommendations :

- Simplify and Standardize
- Change the world
- Outreach and connection
- In 1996 there was no email on Board...UUA has made progress
- How can we make ITEC a reality?
- Training, training, training!
- Posting of congregation websites
- Work more effectively with whole Association, including congregations

Comments, observations, and suggestions in response to the report were made by Board members, Margaret Sanders, and IT Services Director Mark Steinwinter and Gini Courter, including these:

- Electronic Communication can be used as a reaffirmation of faith (the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombings were cited as an example)
- Must not forget marginalized groups
- Economic divide not nearly as wide as it was
- On line communities for the disabled...more availability
- UU children can connect
- Create community around curriculum
- No email folks feel oppressed...yes not perfect yet
- Computer for every Board member who does not have one
- Maybe congregations could do something
- A way to share our theology
- Cannot separate program from overhead.

### **Gulf Coast Relief Fund**

\$3 million has been raised, plus a \$500,000 gift from the Shelter Rock UU congregation. Of the total \$3.5 million, about \$250,000 has been spent on congregations and \$170,000 for community relief thus far.

### **Report of strategic planning group for Gulf Coast Relief**

Represented in the group are representatives from the three New Orleans area congregations (North Shore UU, Community Church UU, First UU Church), Southwestern UU Conference, and UUA staff (Wayne Clark).

A policy has been drafted on Fund Raising for Disaster Relief that tries to formalize the process of how we raise money and distribute funds so we don't have to work on the issues *after* we raise the money.

- There is considerable dislocation of congregations, as leadership of the three New Orleans congregations is scattered and may not return.
- The three congregations have very diverse histories and cultures.
- A strategic planning group has drafted a policy on Raising Funds for Disaster Relief that is intended to clarify how to raise and distribute funds for future disasters and will formalize the process so we don't have to work out these issues after the money has been raised.

### **Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee Report**

Motion from Living Our Faith Working Group:

**The UUA Board affirms the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee's vision of assessing and monitoring the UUA's transition to becoming an anti-racist, anti-oppressive and multi-cultural institution by narrowing its focus to in-depth analysis in one particular area each year.**

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison, Monica Cummings, and Bob Gross presented the JTWTC report. Comments included these:

- Focus is too broad ... will now be on districts
- Charge has been modified ...JTWTC will now monitor and assess progress on way to an AR/AO/MC institution
- Starr King and Meadville/Lombard have been monitored

President Sinkford affirmed the direction of the Committee...thinks it may be ready to look at the gaps

Other observations and questions included these:

- Conceptual map for working with district boards and staff? (Response: No map yet...will work with three or four districts)
- Can Trustees of those Districts be kept informed?
- Wide disparity among districts...will every district be surveyed?
- What is the process once recommendations are received? (Response: Will be modeled on the Commission on Appraisal)
- Report may contain suggested need or best practice
- Will the group share its assessment tool with BOT? (Response: Details not worked out yet...will be inspired by vision - Seeing assessment as tool)

- Timetable for report? (Response: First report will be ready for the Committee's March meeting)
- Concern to make sure to work together so things won't fall through the cracks...JTW was not kept in the loop after Fort Worth. (Response: This will not happen again).

### **DRUUM and White Allies Report**

Questions and observations:

- Who are UUs who are not white allies or POCs? Let's be careful with our words
- Who gets to define white ally?
- White Allies has a long history as a group
- White Allies plan a presence at GA (from AR/AO/MC Notes) To make this GA a safe place for people of color by:
  1. Supporting and responding to needs identified by DRUUM: Assuring communication between adults, young adults, and youth about racist incidents; having a system of trained white allies and chaplains in place to respond immediately and appropriately to racial incidents that arise
  2. Providing transformational opportunities for white people to model anti-racist behavior
  3. Increasing the visibility of and membership in the white allies organization and by offering workshops at GA

### **Motions from the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee moves that the UUA Board of Trustees:

- 1. Agree to the following, for those congregations in Southwest and Mid-South Districts that were severely affected by the fall 2005 hurricanes as determined the District Executives and/or District boards:**
  - a. The District Grant calculations be adjusted so as not to penalize the Districts in the grants they receive in FY2006/07 based on FY2005/06 contributions.**
  - b. The affected congregations will be certified to send delegates to the 2007 General Assembly even if they make no contribution to the Association in FY2005/06.**
  - c. Requirements to be Fair Share in 2005 in FY2005/06 in order to qualify for UUA grants, loans, etc. will be waived in FY2006/07.**
- 2. That the BOT approve the fiscal Year 2007 Operating Budget**
- 3. That the BOT approve the Fiscal Year 2007 Capital Expenditures Budget**
- 4. That the Board affirms that the Administration proceed with the development of a plan to test for enrollees to make a UUA funded [health**

**insurance] plan financially viable. With appreciation of the work done this far, the report should be available to the Board for the April meeting.**

### **Discussion and observations of the Finance Committee Report:**

It has come to light that contracts signed with hotels for General Assembly would not protect us in a situation where there is a boycott or picket line. Two issues: financial risk and exposure and social activism. The Audit Committee will be asked if it is amenable to examine the risk issue.

The Annual Program Fund is doing well although contributions are down for large congregations. It was noted that Laurel Amabile, the new APF Director, will work half time for the moment.

*[Editorial note: The Thomas Jefferson District has now hired a new District Executive, Annette Marquis, who will begin work in April. Laurel will finally have the opportunity to do ONE JOB, after juggling two or three at the time for several years with great finesse and effectiveness - MEH]*

A question was raised about District Staff raises? They are, it was stated, grossly underpaid.

**Self-insurance health plan:** A new survey will determine if a large enough number enrollees are interested to make this plan viable.

Questions:

- Will congregational boards be contacted?
- District staff may also be eligible

**The board agrees that the Administration should continue to pursue the plan.**

### **General Assembly**

Discussion occurred about providing a GA table for members of the BOT, staff, and GA Planning Committee volunteers to alternate coverage to answer questions (see DRUUM /White Allies report).

Other notes:

- Arrangements have been made for additional security plans plus the presence of an EMT on site.
- Ware lecturer: Mary Oliver ...part lecture, part reading
- Planning Committee recommends Minneapolis, MN for GA 2010, June 23-27.

**The Board of Trustees' Sunday morning worship service was led by Ned Wight assisted by five Trustees on the theme, "What Makes God Laugh?"** *[Ed. Note It was worth the whole trip! - MEH]*

### **President William Sinkford's Report**

Highlights included these notes:

- Need to find a place for all our youth
- The State of Israel named UUSC founders Martha and Waitstill Sharp as “Righteous Among the Nations”
- The relationship between the UU Service Committee and the BOT needs to improve
- Looking at merger or consolidation for our divinity schools

Observation: BOT should approve and authorize whatever comes out of Bill’s endeavors with regard to divinity schools.

### **Executive Vice-President Kay Montgomery’s Report**

- Four districts are in search for District Staff: Central Mid-West; Southwest; Vermont/New Hampshire; Thomas Jefferson.
- UUWorld is now on line
- Congregational Handbook is on line
- We need to deal with class
- RE needs to deal with people of all ages

### **Moderator Gini Courter’s Report**

Gini asked: What would the BOT really like the relationship with the UUSC to be?

Other items discussed:

- Lots of AR/AO/M coming to GA...Last GA events provided a focus

Lots of energy directed toward “What will we make a beloved community?”

What is community? - AR or AO or MC on every workshop slot

- In the GA opening ceremony Bill and Gini will address basic cultural competencies...do we make mistakes that we don’t even know we’re making?
- Lots of “good business” coming to GA...what does it mean to be democratic together?
- If we can deal with motions expediently, we can schedule three hours “without business” on the floor. What should we discuss? Example: the good discussion of “language of reverence” at GA 04 (?) Possible discussion: What can we do together? How do you bring your religious sense to your congregation? We are looking for questions that deal with “us,” not “me.”

### **Motions**

*[I need to explain that the notes that follow are incomplete. I do not have all the written motions. Most of the motions that I quoted from the earlier reports note whether the motions carried. One was tabled (noted previously) and one was amended, as I will note later. I assume that all the motions in their official language will be in the minutes, or found some place on the /TRUS website at some point. - MEH]*

The earlier motion (cited above) from the Finance Committee was amended as follows:

**That the UUA Board of Trustees agree to the following, for those congregations in Southwest and Mid-South Districts that were severely affected by the Fall 2005 hurricanes specifically to include the three congregations in the New Orleans area plus Gulfport, MS. Parts a., b., and c. did not change.**

All other motions passed.

**Observations, questions, and suggestions during discussion of motions and other matters :**

- BOT approved Minneapolis for GA 2010.
- The Board is trying to get away from institutionalized Late Packet...materials in late packet will be reviewed to decide upon including them on the agenda
- Re: terms and partial terms of Trustees: District by-laws trump UUA by-laws

Further discussion **needs for youth at GA:**

- Youth need a safe space
- Julian Sharp, Youth Trustee and Jazmin Luz Sandoz-Rosado, Youth Observer, are willing to take a room that youth can go to as it's clear that youth need a room in which to "hang out"
- Youth reception?
- Meditation room with chaplain? Guidelines will be worked out later
- Discussion ended when a BOT member declared that "this is an experiment...let's go with it!"

From Best Practices Committee: The Board's [Policy Manual is on the web](#).