

**UU Board of Trustees Meeting
DPA Observer Notes
October 18-19, 2008**

Saturday, October 18

The Board traveled to Worcester, Massachusetts on Saturday morning to participate in the New England Regional gathering. With the assistance of Unity Consultants, the Board conducted an exercise among attendees which was designed to gather feedback regarding the Global Ends Policy for the Association that the Board had drafted following meetings and discussions (including meetings with members of the DPA and the Executive Committee of the UUMA) during the previous two days, as well as the core values that the Board had identified earlier.

The core values are: Wonder, Connection and Transformation.

The draft Global Ends Policy reads as follows: “Grounded in our covenantal tradition, the UUA will inspire people to lead lives of humility and purpose, connection and service, thereby transforming themselves and the world.”

Following lunch, the Board returned to Boston to begin its meeting.

- Opening words and chalice lighting by David Friedman.
- Consent Agenda introduced by Jackie Shanti and approved by the Board.
- Gini Courter reviewed the agenda for the next two days.

Secretary’s Report

Paul Rickter reported that February 1, 2009 is the certification deadline for congregations for voting at GA 2009. He said that absentee ballots will be recorded electronically this time and that the Board will receive a demonstration of the process in January. Legal counsel has reviewed the bylaws to determine that electronic balloting is permissible.

First Vice Moderator’s Report

Jackie Shanti reported that safe boundaries work is moving forward at the Congregations Working Group. She said that the ARAOMC assessment team has drafted a code of conduct policy for Board members. The Audit committee will take up a proposed “whistle blower” policy.

Finance Committee

Lyn Conley reported that the committee will propose two motions. One will be to increase registration, child care and certain exhibitors' fees as recommended by the GA Planning Committee. The other will be to include the GA budget as a separate segment within the UUA budget beginning in FY 2010. Any surplus in the GA budget existing at that time will be carried forward into the segment.

ARAOMC Assessment Team

Joan Lund presented a draft Board Code of Conduct Regarding Interpersonal Relationships. There was discussion of such issues as notification, confidentiality and implied consent. It was suggested that the matter needs more reflection and should be revisited in January. There is also a need for process observations within each working group and the team has prepared a form to facilitate this process. The process observations should be turned in to Chuck Wooldridge.

GA Planning Committee

Eva Marx said the Planning Committee needs guidance regarding hearing requirements for proposed Article II changes. Gini said that both an open plenary hearing and a one session mini-plenary are needed. The Coordinating Council of the Board is working on allocation of workshop slots and use of time reserved for congregational presidents.

Growth Working Group

Doug Gallagher reported that there are no action recommendations at this time.

Our Association Working Group

Justine Urbikas said that the group will propose a motion to accept Interweave Continental as an Independent Affiliate. She said the UUJEC will not be considered for IA status because it has not provided required documentation.

Living Our Faith Working Group

Tom Loughery said that the group has no motions to propose. They are requesting feedback from Districts and others on the Journey Toward Wholeness reports for 2007 and 2008.

Congregations Working Group

Eva Marx reported that the group will propose a motion to move the Unitarian fellowship in Murfreesboro, Tennessee from the Thomas Jefferson District to the Mid-South District.

Governance Working Group

John Blevins reported that the group will make no motions at this time. He said that COCO will consider how to deal with policies still under consideration and that the Board will need to discuss plans for ownership linkage in the coming months.

Virtual Teams Task Force

Lyn Conley stated that the task force wants the Board to commit to being as carbon neutral as possible as it does its work, in accordance with the Seventh Principle. The task force will propose a motion committing the Board to a reduction in travel and to the use of technology where feasible. John asked that any new policies be written to conform with the new policy manual.

NERG Debriefing

Board members gave their reactions to the session at NERG. Everyone felt it was a positive and valuable learning experience.

Chuck Wooldridge did the process observation for the day.

Sunday, October 19

Following worship conducted by Doug Gallagher and Celia Thurston, the Board reconvened. Lyda Adair did the chalice lighting.

John Blevins conferred the Rev. Charle B. Ortman Memorial Traveling Coat of Many Colors upon Linda Laskowski.

President's Report

Bill Sinkford talked about the UUA's response to the shootings in Knoxville, Tennessee and the continuing development of the UU Trauma Response Ministry. The tragedy and the UUA's response put Unitarian Universalism and its message in the national spotlight. Bill said that planning is underway for a renewed national marketing effort that will focus on UU values and seek more press coverage as opposed to paid advertising. The UUA's position on human sexuality is viewed as a promising area for such coverage.

Bill said that the Trauma Ministry receives modest support from the UUA and is a voluntary effort. Rosemary Bray-McNatt said that support is needed in the area of infrastructure, including finding people to be trained and regionalizing the effort so that trained responders are close by. Rosemary also said that work is needed in deciding how to follow up to tragedies in the longer term since short term response is not enough.

The newly configured Youth Ministry Working Group met for the first time in October and it is hoped that a new structure can be in place next year.

Beginning November 4, Bill will spend three weeks in Africa, focusing on emerging congregations, UUSC activities and HIV-AIDS work. He said the trip will include interactive internet meetings on Sunday mornings with young people in the U.S.

Bill said that plans are underway to include bicentennial celebrations of the lives of Margaret Fuller and James Freeman Clark at GA 2010.

As far as UUA finances in the current financial crisis, Bill reported that APF is currently on track for both pledges and receipts, although there are anecdotal reports of congregational anxiety and cuts. The Friends of the UUA program and unrestricted major gifts are on track to meet their previously reduced goals. Endowment value has declined and fluctuates greatly. However, investment income for the year will not fluctuate for the year due to the 13 quarter rolling average system used for endowment draws. The UUA took prudent steps to reduce its spending and income assumptions in face of the crisis. The financial situation will continue to be monitored closely.

Executive Vice President's Report

Kay Montgomery said that new program consultants have been hired in the Joseph Priestly and Massachusetts Bay Districts: Joseph Priestly District Program Consultant – Patricia Infante and Mass Bay District Program Consultant – Sue Phillips. She said that Monica Cummings has been hired as Associate for Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color and that Gail Forsyth-Vail has been hired as Adult Programs Director in Lifetime Faith Development.

The Knoxville Relief Fund has raised approximately \$180,000. An additional \$145,000 has been raised for advertising, much of it from the same donors.

Kay reported that addictions ministry work has made positive progress.

An accreditation program for professional musicians is in the works.

The observation was made that there is a need to get UU advertising into second tier media more efficiently. Kay said she will follow up on that.

Treasurer's Report

Tim Brennan noted that asset values are down significantly in the current market. However, he added that income is fine so far due to the previous 4.9% reductions in revenue and expense projections arising out of quarterly re-forecasting. These were made without the need to cut staff or major programs. The reduction in revenues is due

to the drop in endowment value and fundraising (especially campaign fundraising) and not operations.

Tim reported that an RFP was issued in August for an administrator for the UUA retirement plan, which has been managed by Fidelity since 1998. He said this was in part due to a need to revisit such matters periodically and also due to concerns about Fidelity's positions on proxy voting and the situation in the Sudan. Only Fidelity and TIAA-CREF responded to the RFP. A decision will be made in the spring.

The audit for FY 2008 is nearly complete and the final report is due in November.

Tim said that his top priorities are improved controls and procedures, improved budgeting, a revised chart of accounts, improved endowment reporting and LEED certification for 25 Beacon Street.

Financial Adviser's Report

Dan Brody stated that cutting spending by approximately 5% is prudent in the current financial climate. He noted that the impact of reduction in endowment value is minimized by the spending policy that uses a 13 quarter average to determine how much may be spent. He said that the AFP income projection in the FY 2009 budget was already conservative and that Friends of the UUA was close to achieving its lowered expectations. Beacon Press ran a \$180,000 surplus in FY 2008 and has reserves of \$2.5 million. There was some discussion about writing a policy giving the President of the UUA some discretion regarding investment of these reserves if remaining liquid assets and unrestricted net assets exceed 20% of prior year expenses.

The UUA health plan experienced strong performance in its second year. There will be no need for an across-the-board premium increase in 2009. The plan is moving to one-year age bans (rather than 5 years) and premiums for individual participants may increase or decrease by as much as 5% from 2008 levels.

Dan also discussed the proposal to include the GA budget as a separate segment in the UUA budget so that GA surpluses or deficits will not impact current operations. Such segmentation will also facilitate keeping track of the relationship between GA-related costs and general UUA overhead.

Growth Working Group

Doug Gallagher reported that the group is considering what is the 21st century model for a congregation, including the implications of the use of technology on how we relate to one another and how technology affects religious practices.

Our Association Working Group

Justine Urbikas reported that the group is considering a shift to single 8 year terms for UUA President and Moderator, which will require a bylaws change. The Board will take more time to consider the implications of such a change before proceeding.

Living Our Faith Working Group

Tom Loughery said that there will be discussions at the January meeting regarding crisis planning and trauma response, and how these should fit into a policy governance system.

Congregations Working Group

Eva Marx reported on 2 congregations that have undergone name changes, one district change and one disaffiliation:

Name Changes: **1.** Unitarian Congregation of S Peel (Mississauga, Ontario) to: Unitarian Congregation in Mississauga; **2.** River Road Unitarian Church to: River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

District Change: Unitarian fellowship in Murfreesboro, Tennessee from the Thomas Jefferson District to the Mid-South District.

Termination of Membership: due to dissolution of congregation: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marietta, GA

Governance Working Group

John Blevins reported that a draft “speaking with one voice” policy for the Board will be discussed by COCO. There was discussion regarding the commencement date for monitoring reports under policy governance. Bill Sinkford expressed the view that July 2009 is too soon since a new president will have just been elected and staff will not have had time to adjust to policies once the Board has adopted them. This issue will also be discussed by COCO.

There was also discussion about how to deal with conflict between bylaws and policies in the early stages of policy governance and this will be discussed with legal counsel.

COCO will also take up the question of where professional religious leadership fits in the policy governance model. There also needs to be discussion of the role of the Financial Adviser under policy governance.

The Governance Working Group will make the slides used at NERG available to Board members for use in their ownership linkage efforts over the winter.

Executive Session

Fifth Principle Task Force

Jose Ballester reported that the task force will sponsor a workshop at GA entitled “The Status Quo is No Longer Acceptable: GA 2011.” He said the task force will bring final recommendations to the Board in January.

Board Member ARAOMC Reflections

Elizabeth Greene, Charlie King and Will Saunders shared their thoughts. Elizabeth said that activities and interest are up in the Pacific NW District. Charlie gave a sermonette entitled “Humility in the Presence of Great Good and Great Evil” in which he talked about aspects of the lives of Samuel Eliot, Henry Ward Beecher and Thomas Jefferson and the need to have humility. He said the catalyst for this was a criticism at his NERG session of the presence of the word “humility” in the draft Global Ends Policy. Will said that intentional antiracism work has been largely absent in the Northern New England District and that the staff was taking steps to address this, including consultations with Paula Cole Jones. There are emerging African immigrant groups in the District. He also described tensions between religious groups and the Penobscot tribe over casinos. UU churches have given financial support to the Penobscots.

Motions Passed by the Board (see minutes for exact language)

To approve GA 2009 fees as recommended by GA Planning Committee.

To make GA budget a segment of UUA budget beginning in FY 2010, with any GA surplus existing at end of FY 2009 to be transferred to the GA segment.

To commit to reduce travel and use technology in Board work where feasible to reduce impact on environment.

To accept Interweave Continental into Independent Affiliate status.

To direct the Executive Vice President to seek advice of legal counsel to assist the Board in its January deliberations about the elections process for President and Moderator.

To approve moving the membership of the UU fellowship in Murfreesboro, Tennessee from the Thomas Jefferson District to the Mid-South District.

Executive Session

Notes prepared by
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