

**Report to the UUA Board on the
General Assembly 2012 Design Meeting and the
September 2011 General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) Meeting**

Background: During the UUA Board meeting in Charlotte prior to the start of the General Assembly (GA), the Board passed Policy 3.10 on General Assembly Relations. This policy called for the Board to convene a task force to facilitate regular communication and issue resolution among the Board, Administration, GAPC, and the GA 2012 Accountability Group. A GA 2012 Design Meeting was planned for September 2011 and included the Arizona Immigration Ministry (AZIM). This Design Meeting replaced the regular annual meeting of GAMAP (General Assembly Mission of the Association Partnership) and incorporated the GA Grid meeting which proposes the schedule for GA.

Expected outcomes from the GA 2012 Design Meeting, as stated in Policy 3.10.1 (a) are:

- 1) a common definition of “justice” in the context of the work that will be done at GA 2012 in Phoenix;
- 2) desired outcomes for Justice GA 2012; and
- 3) criteria and timetable for GA 2012 programming, public witness, worship and plenary.

REPORT FROM GA DESIGN MEETING: Boston, Sept. 12-14, 2011

The meeting was facilitated by Linda Stout (Spirit in Action) and B. Loewe (NDLON – National Day Laborer Organizing Network). Members of the Facilitation Team included Gini Courter, UUA Moderator; Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris, Chair, Accountability Group; Taquiena Boston, Director for Multicultural Growth & Witness.

ATTENDEES:

UUA Administration/Staff: Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President; Rev. Harlan Limpert, V.P for Ministries & Congregational Support; Dea Brayden, Special Assistant to President; Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly & Conference Services(GACS); Stacey Dixon, Administrator GACS; Don Plante, Meeting Planner GACS; Rev. Ken Brown, District Executive, PSWD.

GAPC: Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder, Chair; Bart Frost, Co-Vice Chair; Tim Murphy, Co-Vice Chair; Kathy Charles, Secretary.

GA 2012 Accountability Group (AG): Rev. Sean Parker Dennison (TRUUsT); Rev. Patricia Jimenez (LUUNA); Suzanne Fast (Equal Access), Sarah Surface (GA Youth Caucus)

AZIM: Rev. Susan Frederick Gray, Director; Sandy Weir, Organizer.

UUA BOARD: Gini Courter, Moderator; Jackie Shanti (GAPC Liaison); Donna Harrison (GAMAP); Rev. Dr. Michael Tino (Chair, Right Relations Monitoring Committee – RRMC).

Other Attendees: Kellie Walker, GA Music Coordinator; Carolyn Saunders, District Coordinator GA 2012.

Susan Frederick Gray provided a summary of the August 10, 2011 meeting with partners in Arizona hosted by AZIM. During that meeting partners described the critical issues currently facing migrants in Arizona, resources they could offer to UUs, and ideas for Justice GA activities that could benefit partners and prepare UUs for longer-term migrant justice work in their own communities. These recommendations were considered and incorporated into the proposed GA Grid coming out of the Design Meeting.

It was clear from our Arizona partners that some of the ways we had envisioned doing large scale service projects would over burden the local community’s resources and only serve to

make UUs feel good about themselves. The Design Meeting acknowledged that accommodating UUs in multiple off-site service projects would also tax our own resources and have implications for the other aspects of GA. We imagined some service projects, such as filling back packs for school children, that could be done at the convention center and would not make demands on local partners, in addition to a limited number of service opportunities in the Phoenix area. We also considered how witnessing, which our partners welcomed, could be done daily in a variety of venues, with the goal of having them be fully accessible and multi-generational. GA 2012 will offer ways to be of service, but they may not look like what we expected. The bottom line is that we want to engage in ways that will be truly helpful.

The Design Meeting was marked by a commitment going forward to inclusion and collaboration as opposed to “informing” interested stakeholder groups or partners about plans and decisions. This collaborative and inclusive approach was modeled by participants during the Design Meeting. It was agreed that planning for GA 2012 would not be the arena in which the Board and Administration would work on governance issues.

Members of the Design Meeting broke out into three working groups to focus on the following areas and make recommendations which were discussed and affirmed by the entire meeting. Highlights of those decisions are listed below:

GA Grid:

- Education and preparation for doing witness and service is a priority. Our local partners want us to truly understand not just the issues they face, but the history behind those issues.
- The Program Development Group was charged with identifying programming to provide education and preparation that will build the capacity of Unitarian Universalists to stand in opposition to systemic racism and to witness on immigration, racial and economic justice. To merit consideration, proposals submitted for the 2012 GA should be related to the issues of migration and borders, and/or racial and economic justice. Workshops and other events that serve to educate and prepare attendees to publicly witness and to perform service, both in Arizona and at home, are especially sought. Every proposal need not be about immigration; however, a reasonable person must be able to draw a clear connection between the proposed topic(s) and the issue of Justice. For example, a program on water scarcity would be considered, as its relationship to immigration and economic justice is easily demonstrated.
- Plenary time will be decreased by 40% and not all will be unopposed time. It is important for GA attendees to gather together in one body at least once daily to foster community and communication.
- Worship will be offered multiple times daily, and be infused into all that we do.
- Saturday will be designated a National Day of Witness and Service and may include voter registration and a citizenship fair. Congregations will be encouraged to imagine how they might participate in this National Day of Witness and Service in their own communities, involving congregants who are not able to attend GA.

Roles and Responsibilities: The Board, GAPC and Administration are basically doing the work they've always done. New roles and responsibilities were assumed by the AZIM and the AG.

All agreed on who is responsible for what:

UUA Board

- Approval of GA budget, including registration fees
- Business agenda
- Decision on the “ask” during plenary
- Collaboration with Accountability Group
- Overall responsibility for the success of GA 2012

GAPC

- Developing budget
- Program and logistics
- Collaboration with Program Development Group (PDG)
- Finalizing Grid
- Volunteer services
- Exhibit Hall
- Arranging for blocks of hotel rooms
- Music and choir
- Worship/ Opening Celebration/ Closing Celebration
- Right Relations Team
- Crisis Management
- Childcare
- Financial Aid
- Service project for Sunday offertory
- Evaluation and feedback

Administration/Staff

- Administering Budget
- Program Development Group (PDG)
- Public witness
- Sunday morning worship
- Selection of Ware lecturer
- Service of the Living Tradition
- Youth Caucus
- Stewardship and development
- Website/ IT/ streaming
- UU World/ media coverage
- Provide resources in Exhibit Hall
- Promotional materials and “take aways”

AZIM

- Witness and service in collaboration with UUA Advocacy and Witness office
- Organize support among Arizona congregations
- Relationships and liaison with local groups
- Collaboration with Program Development Group (PDG)

Accountability Group

- Provide feedback for the UUA Board, General Assembly Planning Committee, and UUA Administration including the Arizona Immigration Ministry to help these groups planning Justice GA 2012 proactively address the physical and spiritual safety and accessibility issues for members of communities historically marginalized within the UUA.
- As part of helping ensure spiritual safety, hold the UUA Board and other planning groups accountable to honor both the provisions of the GA 2010 Business Resolution and the invitation from leaders of Phoenix human rights groups to replace our traditional General Assembly with a justice and human rights convergence.

Communications: Design Meeting participants agreed on a statement crafted by the Communications Working Group to be released at the close of the Design Meeting summarizing the shared vision for GA 2012. We also discussed the importance of continued communication between all groups at the meeting during the coming months leading up to GA2012. Ways in which we will communicate include:

- GAPC meets in Sept/Jan/April/June. The AZIM and Music Coordinator will be included in the GAPC meetings. There will also be involvement of the Accountability Group with the specifics to be determined. As Board liaison to the GAPC, I will be reporting back to the Board following each GAPC meeting; and I will be reporting to the GAPC at each of their meetings from the latest Board meeting.
- The GAPC has had at least one observer at Board meetings and will most likely continue this practice.
- The Board's Right Relations Monitoring Committee will be in regular contact with the Accountability Group.

REPORT FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE (GAPC):

Boston, Sept. 14-18, 2011

Attendees (GAPC members): Rev. Dr. Walt Wieder, Chair; Bart Frost, Co-Vice Chair; Tim Murphy, Co-Vice Chair; Kathy Charles, Secretary; Greg Boyd; Debra Boyd; Ila Klion; Rev. Chip Roush; Rev. Nan White; Jacqui C. Williams; Jackie Shanti (Board liaison); Jan Sneegas, Director, General Assembly and Conference Services (GACS).

Other Attendees: Rev. Susan Frederick Gray and Sandy Weir Arizona Immigration Ministry (AZIM); Kellie Walker, GA Music Coordinator.

Guests at various times during the meeting included: Rev. Peter Morales; Gini Courter; Cary McDonald and Jeremie Giacoia, Youth and Young Adult Ministries (YaYAM); David May, Chair, Commission on Social Witness (by phone); Doug Zelinski, Chair, Program Development Group (by phone); Rev. Don Southworth, UUMA (by phone); Rev. Sarah Lammert, Director of Ministries and Faith Development (by phone); Mark Steinwinter, Director Information Technology Services.

The meeting began Wednesday evening with dinner, worship and a report on the Design Meeting. The following morning was devoted to a retreat for members of the GAPC. Of the ten members, seven were new to the committee. They began building a sense of community and exhibited wonderful team spirit despite a shaky start in June following the resignation of the Chair and Vice-Chair. Following the retreat, Susan, Sandy and Kellie joined the GAPC for three days of visioning and planning. Everyone left the meeting on Sunday with specific assignments and areas of responsibility.

AZIM: Susan Frederick Gray reviewed the history and goals of the AZIM. There was discussion about the differences between service and witness, the opportunities and challenges in providing these experiences as part of GA2012, and how to balance the expectations of attendees with the needs of our local partners.

Meeting with the Moderator: The meeting with Gini Courter covered a wide range of topics:

- The GAPC asked how the Board might assist if there is a gap in funding for local non-UU partner scholarships, support for exhibitors, etc. Gini felt that there are ways right now we could raise money from congregations and districts to support the AZIM/GA2012. We have time to figure out with Administration how to do what needs to be done. This will be put on the agenda for the October Board meeting.
- The Right Relations Team (RRT) will be going to a co-chair model. We need to institutionalize the chair position so we know each year coming into GA who will be chairing the team. For GA 2012 we will definitely need a larger team, probably 20 people. It was suggested that for this year the RRT would have 5 volunteers with expenses paid, some designated space and a budget. It was also noted that it is important that RRT has access to unpaid registrations because we don't have a large core of young people anymore who already have their way paid to GA since YRUU no longer exists. The team leader has been the one who chooses the team members. We may need a conversation about how the members are chosen and what it would look like for the RRT to be closer to the GAPC. This will be put on the Board agenda for January or April.
- Gini stated that the Board will take the heat for the business agenda and amount of plenary time, which is about 40% less than last year. The Board needs to get the message out that we need plenary every day. The community needs to gather daily to accommodate changes and issues, especially at this new type of GA. It's the announcement time and place for communication with the delegate body and other attendees.
- The AZIM partners have requested that we consider a resolution calling on President Obama to adopt the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People. Gini explained that the Board has already gone through the protocol of checking about putting this resolution related to the Doctrine of Discovery on the agenda for GA. We want congregations to be informed about this before coming to Phoenix, so the resolution will need to be published in the tentative agenda for GA. There will also need to be a mini-assembly scheduled.

- Gini shared her understanding of the outcome from the Design Meeting. The purpose was to make sure we had a visible start/launch. “We needed a clear path forward and clear roles and responsibilities. It was a really good meeting, what we had hoped for. We have a solid agreement. We set up clear parameters for lines of communication and accountability. We agreed on the Grid and have a common statement for our vision of 2012 GA. We have a chart that delineates responsibilities. We’re not changing how things happen but how we monitor and report on this particular GA because the Board needs to provide assurance to our member congregations. Leadership by example always works.”

Meeting with the President: Peter expressed the need for more frequent communication than in previous GA’s between himself and the GAPC. Peter welcomes suggestions for the Ware Lecture. With the Administration taking the lead for the Sunday morning worship, the GAPC will forward bullet points for him to share when inviting a minister to present the sermon so they will know the resources available, boundaries, copyright concerns, etc. Peter stated that there aren’t large amounts of money available in the UUA budget and that we need to encourage and inspire our congregations to raise funds to support their members in coming to GA 2012. In reflecting on the Design Meeting, Peter said “It went as well as reasonably hoped. We sometimes confuse catharsis for progress. Now we need to pull it off.”

Meeting with Youth and Young Adult Ministries: Cary McDonald and Jeremie Giacoia presented budget requests for the Young Adult and Youth Caucuses which called for a 20% increase over the amount budgeted by the GAPC for 2011. The increased funds were targeted for additional staff for GA 2012 due to the expected high turnout of youth and young adults.

The Young Adult Caucus wants to add a second chaplain so that one can actively serve as a community chaplain while the other one focuses on worship. Another new position would be an on-the-ground liaison/coordinator to build stronger connections with the Arizona YAs before and during GA. The Young Adult Caucus made adjustments to their budget, cutting their annual orientation dinner, in order to make more money available to provide staff support for the many young adults who they believe will attend Justice GA. The Youth Caucus also proposed a youth community liaison to work with event planners on community action and outreach efforts at GA. A second Youth Caucus position would be additional adult support to help in providing a safe environment for youth in Phoenix and is a response to concern the office has been fielding from parents, advisors and DREs.

A third budget proposal was submitted for funding Youth and Young Adult Accessibility at GA 2012 to support direct scholarships as well as creative options for ride-sharing, housing and food service. The total YaYA Accessibility budget was for \$25,000, with \$10,000 being requested from the GAPC. The remainder would be funded by the Office of YaYAM and Youth Caucus Scholarship Contributions.

Meeting with Information Technology Services: Mark Steinwinter, Director ITS, met with the GAPC to review results of the 2011 offsite voting project and present the budget request for offsite voting at GA2012. The Offsite Voting Project Team, which Mark co-chairs, wants to continue development and operation of offsite voting in 2012. They have a vision for future GA experiences that extend beyond support for just delegate voting. Mark also presented the budget requests for the Web Team and the Periodicals staff group.

Conversation with Commission on Social Witness (CSW): We spoke with David May, Chair of the CSW, who noted that the main change for the CSW would be the absence of AIWs in Phoenix. David said the CSW would be meeting soon and would determine how many volunteers they need to support their work and will submit a request to the GAPC. It was agreed that the GAPC will provide the timekeeper. The role of the CSW in orientation was discussed. David is willing to work with the GAPC to identify the best process. The CSW will work with the Program Development Group with regard to workshops and program slots for the SOC, CSAI and CSW sermon contest winner.

Conversation with Program Development Group (PDG): Doug Zelinski, Chair of the PDG, had not seen the proposed Grid yet so we did not discuss specific programs. It was agreed that the PDG would collaborate with the AZIM and the Accountability Group. The PDG will keep the usual deadlines for submission of proposals but be prepared to be flexible.

Conversation with UU Ministers' Association (UUMA): Don Southworth, Executive Director, stated that the UUMA plans to have meaningful and compelling programming for it's members related to the theme of Justice GA. They have had conversations with Ken Brown and have been exploring ideas, waiting to see what the trajectory will be coming out of the Design and GAPC meetings. They may focus on education, witness, and human rights. The UUMA will be encouraging ministers to be engaged and involved in Justice GA. Ways in which the UUMA might connect and help: presence at Touch Groups, helping to promote National Day of Witness/Service across the country, other worship during GA, and chaplain service. Patricia Jimenez from the Accountability Group will be contacting Don as volunteer coordinator for the chaplain program. The UUMA Executive will meet the end of October in Phoenix.

Conversation with Ministries and Faith Development: Rev. Sarah Lammert, Director, described plans for the Service of the Living Tradition (SoLT). The liturgists will be Rev. Mitra Rahnema and Rev. Sean Parker Dennison. The sermon will be delivered by Karen Tse, international human rights attorney and an ordained UU minister. Tse is the founder of International Bridges to Justice. It was noted that the SoLT is open to the public and that means name badges would not be required. The question was raised as to whether or not this would present any challenges for GA2012. If local partners are included in the SoLT and/or invited to attend there may be need for translation services.

GACS Director report:

- Final registration for GA 2011 was 4081. Feedback surveys on Charlotte were generally very positive with especially high marks for the 50th Anniversary celebration and reception in the Exhibit Hall; Synergy worship with Nick Page involvement; and the Ware Lecture
- Hyatt has the largest number of OSHA complaints and injuries in the hotel industry. We signed a contract with the Phoenix Hyatt long before issues arose in Boston. The Hyatt in Phoenix is not on the UNITE HERE boycott list.

- Providence, R.I. GA in 2014 is anticipated to have a huge crowd due to East Coast location. The convention center is smaller than usual so some programs and events will need to take place in nearby hotels.
- Jan provided a review of the FY11 budget and the projected FY12 budget.

Actions by the GAPC included:

- Approval of a Grid for GA2012 following feedback from all partners involved in the Design Meeting.
- Agreement on asking profit-making exhibitors to contribute in ways that would provide resources for local partners to have booths in the Exhibit Hall (such as donating 10% of profits, sharing booth space or purchasing booth space for local partners).
- A letter from the GAPC will be sent to the District Presidents' Association (DPA) asking them to call upon District Presidents to be creative in finding ways for districts and congregations to raise funds to support historically marginalized UUs who might not otherwise be able to attend Justice GA. Ohio-Meadville and the Pacific Southwest Districts are already engaged in efforts to offset economic barriers for GA attendees.
- Agreement on a proposed balanced budget for FY12 based on projected attendance of 3853 in Phoenix. The proposed FY12 budget will be sent to the Board for approval. Highlights include:
 - Increased funding for both Youth and Young Adult caucuses
 - Full funding of scholarship request by Youth and Young Adult Ministries
 - Provision for 500 scholarships for non-UU partner group members in Arizona
 - \$50,000 to support witness and service activities
 - Doubled amount of financial aid available for UUs from previous 3 years
 - Continued support for environmental justice through greening GA program
 - Provision of free downloads of all workshop content for all attendees
 - Increased support for chaplain program and Right Relations Team
 - Commitment to increased offsite delegate participation
 - Increase in registration fee from \$310 to \$315, with \$5.00 increase going toward a justice centered service project.
- Adoption of GAPC vision statement: To provide the occasion to create a broader, deeper, inclusive community, living out our Unitarian Universalist values.

Submitted by Jackie Shanti, Board of Trustees Liaison to the GAPC and GA2012 Design Meeting