

2011-12 Strategic Plan

**Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
Unitarian Universalist Association**

October, 2011

Updated 10/27/11





Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to provide an intentional framework for the allocation of the Youth and Young Adults Ministries Office (YaYA) resources for the 2011-12 church year: staff, time and budget. Articulating our goals for the year will help us communicate externally about the rationales for our programs and projects, and will allow us internally to hold ourselves accountable. It is the product of discussions with each staff member in our office about what they would like to accomplish, and conversations with outside offices, staff and stakeholders about the needs they see in the communities we serve.

It is intended to be a living document, which will be revised as the year goes on to reflect changes in our priorities. Items may be added or removed, postponed or enhanced, but the context of the entire document forces us to consider the tradeoffs in those adjustments.

The plan is organized by the constituencies we serve, and includes an additional section for internal functions. Items which appear in multiple sections are indicated in italics. Our mandate to serve historically marginalized groups is integrated throughout the planning process, and initiatives in each section are geared towards those constituencies.

Note that some items may be multi-year projects, especially those indicated as scheduled during the summer. Items are prioritized as follows:

Highest Priority – 100% of items implemented by July 1, 2012
Priority – 80% of items implemented
Important – 50% of items implemented

We hope that this plan will prove to be an effective tool for focusing our work in a manner that is coherent, effective and ambitiously realistic.

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Young Adults

We embrace a vision of young adult ministry that is as diverse as the young adults we serve. The young adult time of transition and discernment is a universal experience, but one that is different for every person, and ministering to young adults means partnering with them wherever they are in their search for truth. Our YA programs must be grounded in the hopes and needs that young adults articulate as they move through their transitions, and programs will change as the needs of young adults change.

We recognize the need for content delivered in a variety of ways, because our young adult constituency consumes information through multiple venues. This includes blogging, webinars and social networking platforms, as well as more traditional forms of email, congregationally-based communication, and publications. We hope to push the boundaries of current thinking in how to communicate through technology in the coming year (e.g. smart phone apps, social networking beyond Facebook, podcasts, etc.).

Young adults represent a tremendous opportunity to expand our faith’s ministry through new approaches, forms and identities. The YA experience is a microcosm of our congregations and our faith at large. Healthy ministry of any kind occurs through constantly evolving intentional community, and is built by listening deeply and supporting each person wherever they are on their journey. The growing segment of our country’s young adults who are liberal, spiritual, searching and unaffiliated represents a huge growth potential opportunity for Unitarian Universalism, but we first have to focus on creating the infrastructure necessary to support the ones we attract.

I. Leadership

	Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consistent structures for communication with young adult leaders at the congregational, district and regional level, including young adults as leaders in multigenerational communities. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help connect YA leaders at different stages with mentors who can help them with the goals for their YA groups. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Anchor Congregation program to reflect current goals and standards of young adult ministry, including applications, website, and recognition/awards. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Continue support for the Multicultural Leadership School.</i> 		✓	✓



II. Program Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide grants for innovative YA programs that produce a write-up or materials that can be used by other groups. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote cluster and regional gatherings of Youth and YAs of color. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Discontinue support for Connect UU, replace necessary functions currently served by Connect UU:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote connections to YA resources through existing high-use social media platforms (e.g. Facebook) Integrate YA groups into the UUA's congregational directory, with an independent search function Create an event planning and registration online tool 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share success stories and new ideas through the YaYA blog and other platforms and outlets. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a resource audit of YaYA materials to determine which need to be re-introduced, revised, etc., esp. w/ AR/AO/MC lens. 	✓		

III. Denominational Connections

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect YAs with the Gathered Here appreciative inquiry process, to ensure their voices are heard in the visioning for our denominational future. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the RDO in its project to publish a young adult-scaled curriculum of Building the World We Dream About; consider other curricula that could be useful in a young adult-scaled format. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide webinars to congregational staff and ministers about appropriate YA ministry, work with the related professional organizations to pinpoint specific needs, esp. w/ regard to high-need and historically marginalized groups. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular communications with other UUA offices and UU-affiliated groups (including C*UUYAN) on their ministry to youth and young adults, for information, consultation and accountability purposes. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with district and regional staff to identify potential areas for growth. 	✓	✓	✓

IV. Justice General Assembly 2012

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue support for Young Adult Caucus and YA-specific space at Justice General Assembly 2012. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist caucus co-moderators and staff in re-envisioning programming to focus on justice issues and harmonize YA Caucus with the goals of Justice GA. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide logistical and financial support to improve accessibility to GA for young adults. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect YA's with resources to help them prepare for GA and follow up afterwards. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the larger GA planning process makes room for youth and young adult leadership in a multigenerational space. 	✓	✓	✓



V. Spirituality and Service

	Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop resources to help YAs fund and support service trips, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a Young Adult Matching Program, an online service to match UU Young Adults with others who want to sponsor their service trip. ○ Publish a guide to effective fundraising ○ Develop a model for a congregational Young Adult Service Committee, which can be used in any congregation that wishes to serve Young Adult service needs/interests ○ Compile additional external resources on domestic and international issues related to service experiences 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote better awareness of service experiences by consistently promoting service projects to YAs via Facebook, Twitter, Campus Groups, YA Blogs, and Email Lists. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue growing partnership with UUSC, including through educational programming, partnering on experiential learning trips, and developing trips with explicitly UU identity and spirituality. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help at least 10 young adults pursue service trips with partner organizations. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore ways to provide resources for longer-term service experiences and commitments (e.g. CityYear, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.). 	✓	✓	✓



Youth

Youth leadership today across the country is diverse in structure, but is as vibrant as it has ever been. We understand that youth ministry must be grounded in congregations that support youth and embrace multigenerational leadership. We aim for our work to be value added in doing things congregations or districts do not have the resources to do (e.g. collecting best practices, creating online resources). YaYA also advocates for youth empowerment and interests across the denomination. We hold ourselves accountable to denomination-wide initiatives focused on youth, including the recommendations of the Youth Ministry Working Group and the Youth Ministry Advisory Committee, as well as the final report of the Mosaic project.

Each district, region and cluster has developed a different organization of youth leadership and staff support, following the elimination of the national YRUU structure in 2009. In practice, this means that some places have much more support available for supporting congregational and regional youth programs than others. YaYA seeks to work with districts to help connect them to the larger vision of youth ministry, identify and assist them with their needs, wherever they currently are in their ability to equip congregations for youth programming, to help even out the quality of youth ministry nationwide. This will also include outreach and input from UU partner and professional organizations, such as LREDA and the UUMA.

Though there is no shortage of steps in the short term that can be taken to strengthen youth ministry and networks of youth leaders, YaYA is aware that there also needs to be a long-term conversation about what structures are necessary and appropriate to support youth ministry and leadership. YaYA and the UUA should be at the forefront of this conversation to help lead it in a productive direction.

I. Leadership	Fall	Spring	Summer
• Examine structures for connecting, communicating with and supporting youth leaders at the congregational level, and district level where appropriate, including youth as leaders in multigenerational communities.	✓	✓	✓
• Create youth leader recognition program, consider ways to recognize and honor adult youth allies and advisors.	✓	✓	
• Utilize the common read selection “Acts of Faith” to encourage youth leadership in a multigenerational setting, including through sharing stories and grants for book purchases.	✓	✓	
• Complete user administrative manuals for Chrysalis leadership training programs and revise record-keeping protocols.	✓		
• Update or create addendum for Chrysalis youth advisor training manual.		✓	
• Continue support for expanding and creatively enhancing Goldmine leadership development programs.	✓	✓	✓
• Connect and communicate with Interfaith Youth Core trainers and events.	✓	✓	✓
• <i>Continue support for the Multicultural Leadership School.</i>		✓	✓



II. Program Support

• Investigate worship resources for youth-led worship (e.g. Worship Web).	✓		
• Offer webinars, podcasts and other resources to youth leaders and adults working with youth (both staff and volunteers/advisors).	✓	✓	✓
• Initiate development of an AR/AO training for youth (e.g. leadership module, weekend or youth conference model, etc.).		✓	✓
• Provide grants for innovative youth programs that produce a write-up or materials that can be used by other groups.	✓	✓	
• <i>Share success stories and new ideas through the YaYA blog and other platforms and outlets.</i>	✓	✓	✓
• <i>Conduct a resource audit of YaYA materials to determine which need to be re-introduced, revised, etc., esp. w/ AR/AO/MC lens.</i>	✓		

III. Denominational Connections

• Continue support for the Youth Ministry Advisory Committee.	✓	✓	✓
• Create youth involvement guidelines for UUA groups/offices/committees.	✓		
• Investigate expectations for professional staff credentialing (ministers, DREs) in youth ministry competency, including high-need youth and youth from historically marginalized groups.		✓	✓
• <i>Establish regular communications with other UUA offices and UU-affiliated groups on their ministry to youth and young adults, for information, consultation and accountability purposes.</i>	✓	✓	✓
• <i>Work with district and regional staff to identify potential areas for growth.</i>	✓	✓	✓

IV. Justice General Assembly 2012

• Complete GA youth caucus planning guide, create in-depth position description “guides” for youth caucus staff.	✓	✓	
• Continue support for Youth Caucus and youth-specific space at Justice General Assembly 2012.	✓	✓	✓
• Assist Youth Caucus Deans and other staff in re-envisioning programming to focus on justice issues and harmonize with the goals of Justice GA.	✓	✓	✓
• Improve coordination with between the YaYA Office, GA Office and GA Planning Committee, including registration and required forms.	✓	✓	✓
• Provide leadership training at GA for youth (and possibly young adults) for: justice work, bringing GA experience back to home congregations, anti-racism or other anti-oppression training.	✓	✓	✓
• Connect youth with resources to help them prepare for GA and follow up afterwards, as well as with groups that want to tie local or regional activities to the Justice GA purpose.	✓	✓	✓
• <i>Ensure that the larger GA planning process makes room for youth and young adult leadership in a multigenerational space.</i>	✓	✓	✓



Campus Ministry

College students have been under-resourced and underserved by Unitarian Universalism and denominational leaders in the last few decades. YaYA’s campus ministry efforts are currently focused on trying to support and grow successful programs and help new ones get off the ground. It seems that every week we hear about a new and exciting campus ministry initiative around the country.

We promote a vision of campus ministry as part of the mission of local congregations, assisted by district and national support. Over the last year, YaYA has connected existing campus ministry leaders in support and camaraderie to lay the groundwork for more focused leadership development. In the coming year we aim to provide more in-depth resources for long-term growth of campus ministry groups.

I. Leadership

	Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to experiment with structures for connecting, communicating with and supporting CM leaders, and giving them the space to support and mentor one another 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for ingatherings of CM leaders at regional or national events (e.g. General Assembly, LREDA Fall Conference) 	✓	✓	✓

II. Program Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and promote the revised CM handbook “Being More Visible, Changing More Lives,” an in-depth resource for congregations on how to start, build and sustain campus ministry. 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a “Campus Ministry in a Box” congregational resource that shows how to build a simple and low-commitment CM program. 	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate development of four “tracks” of CM programs, adapted from existing curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Whole Lives Standing on the Side of Love Small Group Ministry Interfaith Cooperation 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote bringing Our Whole Lives courses to college campuses, including through campus residential life staff. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Discontinue support for Connect UU, replace necessary functions currently served by Connect UU:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promote connections to CM resources through existing high-use social media platforms (e.g. Facebook)</i> <i>Integrate CM groups into the UUA’s congregational directory, with an independent search function</i> <i>Create an event planning and registration online tool</i> 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Share success stories and new ideas through the YaYA blog and other platforms and outlets.</i> 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Conduct a resource audit of YaYA materials to determine which need to be re-introduced, revised, etc., esp. w/ AR/AO/MC lens.</i> 	✓	✓	✓



III. Denominational Connections

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue webinars and provide additional venues (e.g. conference workshops) on appropriate CM programming, work with the related professional organizations to pinpoint specific needs (e.g. monthly conference calls for idea sharing, monthly webinars for program development and continuing education resources). 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate outreach program to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) on new ways for CM groups to participate in CLF activities and explore other connections. 	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a relationship between the National Campus Ministry Association (ecumenical) and UU CM groups. 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Establish regular communications with other UUA offices and UU-affiliated groups on their ministry to youth and young adults, for information, consultation and accountability purposes.</i> 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Work with district and regional staff to identify potential areas for growth.</i> 	✓	✓	✓



YaYA Office

Our office has seen its share of transition over the past few years, including changes in staff, organizational structure, budget and goals. After a restorative year under an interim director, we believe it is time to establish some long-term priorities and get things moving! This strategic plan is one step in that direction. We included a section on the office itself to recognize the importance of moving through transition and to hold ourselves accountable for that progress. By paying attention to internal operations, YaYA will be able to serve our constituencies more efficiently and effectively.

	Fall	Spring	Summer
• Develop and launch YaYA blog, with consistent and varied high-value content that serves each of our constituencies.	✓		
• Review YaYA blog structure after 4-5 months of use to consider improvements/revisions.		✓	
• Amplify and connect YaYA blog content with other social media platforms [Facebook, email/listserves, Twitter, UUA webpage, Tumblr(?)].	✓	✓	
• Explore new media venues for reaching our constituencies (Youth advisor app? iTunes or podcast platform?).		✓	✓
• Revise Bridging Connections structure to require less staff time and conduct outreach to improve response rates (work with LREDA?).		✓	
• Improve OWL trainer database collection.	✓	✓	
• Create a communication policy around records retention, branding and formatting, and listserves.	✓		
• Review UUA webpage presence within the context of new staff, website reorganization, and the YaYA blog.	✓		
• Improve advance planning around the YMAC, including meeting prep and communication with external groups.	✓	✓	
• Complete archives of youth and young adult resources and documents.	✓		
• Create a yearly calendar of youth and youth adult deadlines to assist in advance planning, and make those dates known to congregations and staff.	✓		
• <i>Conduct a resource audit of YaYA materials to determine which need to be re-introduced, revised, etc., esp. w/ AR/AO/MC lens.</i>	✓	✓	✓
• <i>Establish regular communications with other UUA offices and UU-affiliated groups on their ministry to youth and young adults, for information, consultation and accountability purposes.</i>	✓	✓	✓