

President's Report to the Board of Trustees

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President's Calendar

The first half of the FY 2019 year was spent largely on the road for the major donor phase of the Promise and the Practice Campaign. In addition, justice and witness trips included two trips to the US's southern border, a presence at the Senate building during Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's testimony in the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court confirmation hearings, and Get Out the Vote efforts in Florida (Yes on 4) and Ohio (Yes on 1) for ballot initiatives focused on expanding voting rights and combatting mass incarceration. It was powerful to be a part of the success of Issue 4 in Florida, the Second Chances Amendment, that restored voting rights to nearly 1.4 million people. In Ohio, while ultimately unsuccessful at the ballot, our national presence helped bring attention to Issue 1 which would have reclassified low level non-violent drug possession from felonies to misdemeanors and to strengthen and support the local partnerships between congregations, the statewide UU advocacy group (UU Justice Ohio), and local grassroots organizing efforts.

My schedule for the second half of FY 2019 is already planned with a focus on congregational visits and attendance at organizational leadership events. This will include approximately 10 congregational visits and attending parts of the TRUUST (Transgender Religious professionals Unitarian Universalists Together) retreat, the Finding Our Way Home retreat (for UU religious professionals of color), the Mid America Regional Assembly, SMOLUUC gathering (Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations), the 175th Anniversary gala for Meadville Lombard Theological School, and General Assembly in Spokane.

Highlights

In this section, I share high level challenges or changes at the UUA, along with any action items or follow up on previous actions.

Ministerial Misconduct and Congregational Conflict

In all the UUA's systems for supporting, investigating and resolving conflicts or complaints with religious professionals and their congregations, we are tracking a considerable increase. Reports through our Office of Safety and Ethics tripled last year, and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee continues to have a high-water number of ongoing misconduct investigations this year. Each of these cases consumes an extraordinary amount of staff time and energy, requiring clear communication, professional skill, and compassion and care for those involved, because each represents a problem that was complex enough to rise to the level of UUA involvement.

Our goal is to help all parties move towards health and clarity in these situations, and to help the leaders involved figure out their path forward while avoiding future problems. There are likely multiple causes for the increase, including changes in the wider culture demanding accountability around gender, race, bullying and power dynamics. We believe it also represents

a backlog of urgent need that is now arising because more leaders see the UUA as a helpful partner in taking these concerns seriously and in moving towards resolution and accountability. As a result, we have shifted more staff time and consultant costs into these systems to address this increased demand and anticipate these numbers will continue to rise. We are also exploring restorative justice approaches as another tool or pathway for addressing harm and promoting healing in these cases.

Ministerial Search, Settlement and Departure

The search for a new minister is one of the most high-investment functions that the UUA provides for congregations. Along the spectrum of search, settlement and departure, we are investing in better systems and smoother process. In 2019, we are implementing a new, easier to use online interface for congregations and ministers in search, updating the previous system that dated from the 1990's. We are widening participation in the UUA's Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) program to promote inclusive and non-discriminatory hiring practices. In 2018, of the 33 settled ministers, 32 came to congregations which had completed BCT; of the congregations in search who failed to find a settled minister, 75% did not sign up for the BCT program. A new draft of UUA's fair compensation standards, which apply to all congregational staff, is currently being reviewed. This draft reflects the current reality of congregational staffing structures and provides more flexible guidance for new configurations.

Finally, we have invited the UU Ministers Association and the Liberal Religious Educators Association into dialogue about how to improve the UUA's Review Team process, which can hold ministers from future search if there is cause for concern. We are committed to making the process more counter-oppressive by getting more honest assessment of ministers who engage in bullying and bad behavior, and by supporting ministers who are abused by their congregations, including because of their identity.

Update on proposal from DRUUMM (Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries)

Several meetings have taken place between the Executive Committee of DRUUMM and UUA executive leadership (Carey McDonald and SFG). The UUA has contributed \$50,000 to DRUUMM for this fiscal year and provided for in-house administrative support.. Conversations are ongoing to implement consistent and ongoing support from DRUUMM, including the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UUA and DRUUMM to clarify our ongoing mutually supportive relationship. Additional information is included in Memorandum to the Board from EVP, Carey McDonald.

Proposal for reimbursement of foregone income for Board service

This past year, the Board has been in conversation about how to support our intentional goals of having a Board that represents the broad diversity of our faith, and the financial burden that our extended multi-day meetings can create. In January, Carey McDonald, Tim Brennan (CFO) and I agreed to consult with legal counsel and bring a proposal which provides limited reimbursement for income forgone in Board service. The proposal is included as a separate proposal to this report.

Promise and the Practice Campaign

As of January 15, 2019, we have raised \$4.2 million toward the Board's \$5 million commitment to Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. At the April Board meeting, Carey McDonald, Tim Brennan and I will present a more comprehensive report of the campaign, including fundraising income and expense totals and projections. Our goal, as the staff, remains that we fulfill this commitment by the end this fiscal year (June 30, 2019).

Staff Transitions and Hiring

A considerable amount of time continues to be invested in hiring at the UUA. I am delighted that the Rev. Lauren Smith will begin as the Director of Stewardship and Development on February 4th. We expect to have completed the hiring of a new International Director in the next month. Now our attention is turned to launching the hiring process for a new Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer.

In addition, we have had exciting transitions and changes within the UUA. In particular, we are welcoming Dr. Janice Marie Johnson as Co-Director of Ministries and Faith Development, Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen as the Director of the Organizing Strategy Team, a new configuration to our justice and witness ministries, and Gail Forsyth-Vail as the Interim Director of the Faith Development Office.