

TO: UUA Board of Trustees

FROM: Joan Lund, BOT Liaison to District President's Association

DATE: 11/07

The District President's Association met from November 1 -3, 2007 in Boston. Nineteen Districts were represented. This report will highlight general information and the events of the weekend.

General Information The DPA serves two chief functions. First, it helps district presidents share information and ideas about their responsibilities as president. Second, the DPA is a communications channel to educate UUA groups, including the Board of Trustees, about the needs and interests of district boards.

As a result of the 2001 revised DPA Mission Statement in recent years there has been a significant shift in the nature of the DPA function and meetings, from informative appearances by Staff to more active participation as partners with UUA leadership, stakeholders, and Staff. An example of this partnership occurred when the DPA invited the UUMA President to join them. As a result the UUMA are reviewing their guidelines, and asking the DPA to share their voice in the task. In addition to now being in partnership with Rev. Harlan Limpert, the DPA was also reminded that they were instrumental in creating UU University as a prelude to General Assembly.

Breakout Groups In four groups we were asked to discuss: What opportunities exist for growing our faith and helping our congregations are presented by the District Presidents meeting together? The broad categories emerged from the discussion that followed: growth, leadership, and identity. Leadership and governance are of concern to the DPA. How can we get our leaders the skills they need? Our faith needs to teach people to lead with influence in organizations recognizing the authority line. The authority our UUA has is what members give them. The DPs act as a conduit from our UUA to our districts. The issue of leadership, which will include the "deepening of faith", and identity will be continued at the DPA June meeting. Emphasis will be on DPA partnerships to make sure the discussion and ideas go forward.

Kay Montgomery joined the DPA on Friday afternoon. The DPA watched, and offered feed back to *Voices of Faith*. People who don't know UUism need to see this as well as those of us who need to be reminded as to why we gather, why we are here. The TIME Magazine national print ads were discussed noting there have been some negative reactions to them by UUs to "Is God keeping you from going to church"? The frustrations of the recently launched UUA web site were voiced. Kay informed the DPA that the internal Google search works best when looking for information and recommended that the group meet with Deb Weiner to discuss list serve issues. Kay noted a Committee has been appointed by Rev. Bill Sinkford to use the report from the Consultation on Youth and Ministry to determine our Association's next steps. There was

a discussion about how policy based governance will change the relationship between our UUA District Staff and the DPA.

Rev. Wendy von Zirpolo met with the DPA to introduce the Allies for Racial Equity Team (ARE). This group came out of issues at the Ft. Worth GA and started out as White Allies for DRUUMM. ARE's next conference will take place in Memphis on February 1-3, 2008. Abbey Tennis will be the keynote speaker at ARE Annual Conference and Clark Olson, who was with James Reeb when he died at Selma, will speak Saturday night. The Allies for Racial Equity would like to know the state of anti-racist/anti-oppression/multiculturalism work in our Districts. ARE hopes to have a "solid" annual conference program.

Gini Courter informed the DPA about the work of the UUA Board. Regarding the Board going to policy governance it was noted that ends reflect "what you are trying to do, for whom, and at what cost. The three statements that came out of GA Open Space: Youth Ministry, Anti-Oppression, and the Environment. The Appreciative Inquiry process will be used at the 2008 GA for elected/called and hired leaders. Excellence in ministry is also a concern/issue of the Association and work is being done in this area. The MFC does not fellowship for excellence, ministers are fellowshipped for competence, excellence happens in partnership with a congregation. What role does the DPA have to help the UUA Board develop their policy based governance ends? The Board and DPA will develop a plan for the two groups to meet together in October. Gini informed the group that 50 People of Color are in training for ministry, and the UUA realizes that there could be pushback when these ministers are looking for pulpits. Beyond Categorical Thinking does not deal with this because this training is mostly about placing gay and lesbian ministers; education is needed from denominational level. Gini and Wendy showed the DVD *Making Whiteness Visible* Friday evening followed by working in pairs, responding to questions asked by the facilitators.

Rev. Harlan Limpert Most of Saturday was spent receiving from, and in discussion with Harlan. He reviewed the qualities of leadership – through the cartoons of John McPherson. The roles and responsibilities of co-employed staff, the DE, and the Director of Faith Development (Program Consultant) were questioned as to the effectiveness of the positions for districts. Through discussion with Harlan, Districts can decide what works best for Districts. Concerns the deep disconnect between some roles and district boards. Some staff personnel are more connected to Boston than their district; they are being shared between neighboring districts. Association Sunday, deemed a success, results will be available in about four weeks. Harlan distributed for analysis and discussion Metrics information about districts, noting there could be some errors and the data must be looked at in context. Although Harlan has only been collecting district numbers for two years he noted in ten years these statistics will be very valuable. The numbers and facts in this document should be discussed with individual district boards. The DPA was reminded that if the number does not help us change the world, don't go there; there is ministry to do. Assessment of staff performance and feedback to them, was discussed and solicited several questions. Harlan indicated that assessment is too standardized but this is being worked on by customization. Harlan distributed his goals for this year and his personal priorities. He asked that co-employed staff factor these in.

He also gave us the “Specific Roles of District Staff Members”. Harlan reported on the success of the UUA Health Plan, noting a cost increase of 4%; benefits are being increased. Plan ended the year with a surplus, which give our UUA the ability to be offered to more employees with fewer hours required.

Laurel Amabile reported on the “Now is the Time” campaign; 71% of the goal has been reached. Laurel asked the DPs to help their districts achieve 100% participation. Development of the APF section of the UUA web site continues. There are two district pilot programs underway for collection of APF funds which involves a uniform ask and each pledge letter comes to Laurel and then they are sent off to the District. Overall APF is 9% ahead of last year. About 70% of congregations are Fair Share and next year’s ask will increase from \$54 to \$56 per member. Several issues regarding APF were noted: confusion about the relationship between APF and the district board and the situation that some congregations have no annual meeting thus timing around contributions can be confusing.

Elyse Reznick and Joe Sullivan distributed a draft of the Congregations Come First (CCF) Case Statement. Elyse gave the group background of the formation of this task force and listed the present members of the group. The task force felt that a case statement was needed to illustrate the need for the task force, and the result of the feedback received (50 pages). Discussion and questions followed. There is a systemic need to take a look at the unequal distribution of monies noting that some districts have endowments, and there is concern that there is no congregational input, as the name suggests. Inequities in staff and resources on a UU values level and on a justice level, is of concern. The CCF Task Force is trying to determine what “change management” is and the need to reflect what is role of Task Force. There will be a new election and President of Association soon; the allocation of resources is an administrative issue.

The Saturday Business Meeting included the reports from the DPA President, Treasurer, Nominating Committee, and APF Liaison. There was discussion of the possible joint DPA and BOT meeting in October, noting the DPA would need to extend their meeting a day. Twenty-five percent of this year’s Association Sunday will go back to the districts to be used for growth initiatives. District money will be allocated by ratio of contribution by districts and they will be accountable to our UUA on how the funds have been spent. Next year will emphasize lay and spiritual growth and excellence in ministry. It was noted that it had been decided up-front to work on a tracking document, but not at the end of the process. The DPA feels our UUA has put districts in the “hot-seat” to make certain they are responsive to ministers and donors concerning the wisdom as to how the money is used.

Post Meeting Discussion: What are the opportunities for growing our faith? Excellence in Ministry-should the DPA have a role and what would that look like? Process observation needed during DPA meetings. Information about GA Planning Committee was brought by Gini. DPA should be included in discussion about next year’s Association Sunday.

The DPA will meet in Ft. Lauderdale preceding GA.