

Report to the Board on the April 2008 General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) Meeting

The GAPC met April 3-6, 2008 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the site of the 2008 General Assembly.

Attendance. As of early April registration for GA was low compared to the two previous years. However, it is difficult to project registration before the end of April when many people register to avoid the May 1 fee increase. Trustees can be helpful by promoting GA attendance in their districts, through newsletters, annual meetings, and other communication strategies. In addition to having access to excellent programming, congregational lay and professional leaders will have the opportunity to influence the future of our Association by participating in the Thursday afternoon Appreciative Inquiry session, congregation presidents/chairs will have 25% of their registration paid, and congregation presidents/chairs can meet with the UUA President and Moderator as well as network with other leaders. At this time, hotel space is still available. The 2008 GA program will be available on-line no later than May 1.

Kudos to the GAPC. Our UUA will receive the IMEX Silver Award for green meetings at the IMEX trade show in Frankfurt, Germany on April 23. IMEX is an international meetings industry trade organization. Last year's award recipient was the Sierra Club. In addition, the Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau awarded our UUA the Travel Portland award, which is given to the client whom they liked best and would work hardest to bring back. Portland's criteria for selection included our greening efforts. According to Jan Sneegas, UUA GA and Conference Services Director, there is much excitement about greening in the meetings industry and our UUA is on the leading edge.

Greening 2008. The Fort Lauderdale convention center has been very cooperative regarding greening strategies. Consequently, Meeting Strategies, the company that manages greening at GA, is concentrating on work with Fort Lauderdale hotels. Although shuttle buses will be provided in Fort Lauderdale, the GAPC agreed to avoid sites that require shuttles in the future. About one-third of GA registrants are choosing to make carbon offset payments and about one-third are choosing not to have programs mailed, but few are choosing both.

Meeting with the Moderator. In her conversation with the GAPC, the Moderator covered an array of topics. She observed that General Assembly is a congregation with special worship needs, which this year will include concerns about security, immigration, and youth and young adult ministry. She invited GAPC members to participate in the Thursday Appreciative Inquiry session at GA. At its October meeting the Board will be using what is learned at that session to inform ends development. Outcomes of that October meeting are likely to have implications for the GAPC which the committee will want to discuss in January.

Redesigning GA. The GAPC has been in conversation with the organizers of UU University about integrating UU University into GA. GA attendees would have the

option of choosing from multiple specialized tracks, scheduled from noon on Thursday and to noon on Friday. These tracks would include, in addition to UU University, topics such as AR/AO, social justice, music, or a pot pourri for those who prefer more traditional programming. This redesign would offer better alignment with the needs of our congregations by providing access to more intentional programming, opportunity for active engagement in quality in-depth learning, and increased accessibility for those who have neither the time nor resources to attend both UU University and GA. The GAPC hopes to initiate this redesign at the 2009 GA in Salt Lake City. The GAPC voted to empower the Executive Team to lay out a prospective overall program redesign for General Assembly and asked the GAPC executive committee to communicate with the UUA Board, the UUA Leadership Council, and other stakeholders in order to prepare a draft plan for the GAPC to discuss at its September meeting.

Youth. The GAPC met with Youth Caucus staff to communicate about the upcoming GA. The meeting was productive and collaborative. Youth's primary concern was uncertainty about how UUA organizational changes would affect the direction of our Association's ministry to youth and young adults. These changes might have implications for the organization of youth activities at GA as well.

Revisioning Young Fun. The GAPC discussed offering more structured programming to 12-14 year-olds participating in Young Fun, a residential program for youth ages 8-14. This programming would provide 12-14 year-olds with a better understanding of Unitarian Universalism and prepare them for participation in GA youth activities at subsequent GAs. Starting in 2010, programming could include activities such as community projects, a bridging circle, intergenerational activities at GA, and relevant field trips. Another change might be the elimination of the residential component for Young Fun participants. This would make Young Fun more economically accessible but would require evening programming for this age group. Other stakeholders such as LREDA and youth volunteers will need to participate in this conversation.

Anti-racism. The GAPC reviewed draft statements on multiculturalism and counter-oppression and asked the drafters of the statements to consult with other stakeholders to expand the way the oppressions are addressed. The final statements will be posted on the GAPC website. The post-GA evaluation will include a question about AR/AO/M.

Right Relationship Team. Scott McNeill, a second-year student at Meadville-Lombard and the recently-appointed chair of the 2008 Right Relationship Team, joined the GAPC for much of the meeting. He explained that this year the team will have two components—a core team and links to stakeholder groups that do not need to participate in all activities but need to be kept in the loop. The UUA President, Moderator, and chair of the previous year's team appoint the chair. The team is funded by a line item in the budget and links to chaplaincy but is not a replacement. The GAPC reaffirmed its support for the team.

Fifth Principle Task Force. The Fifth Principle Task Force was established by the Board at its October meeting and charged with presenting recommendations on the future

configuration and content of GA. The GAPC was disappointed that it had not been consulted on appointments to a task force that has such direct implications for its future and suggested that a member of the GAPC be appointed to the task force. The GAPC asked the Board liaison to communicate this concern to the Committee on Committees.

GA Evaluation. Two questions will be added to the post-GA evaluation, one addressing the AR/AO/MC environment at GA and the other addressing greening efforts associated with GA. There will be increased reminders to attendees to complete their GA evaluations, which the GAPC considers carefully in planning subsequent General Assemblies.

Other items of interest:

- A conference call with President Bill Sinkford was primarily informational and included a review of plans for the Ware Lecture, the President's role at Opening Worship and Closing Celebration, a summary of the GA redesign discussion, and a reminder of policies around script deadlines and copyrights and permissions.
- The GAPC voted to pay the Usher Conflict Management Trainer \$225 and institutionalize this function by including it in future budgets.
- The 2008 Service Project is Hispanic Unity of Florida, an agency that serves immigrants and has as its mission empowering Hispanics and other members of the community to become self-sufficient and lead productive lives. Its goal is to help clients achieve citizenship and life with dignity.
- The GAPC Scholarship Committee received 74 applications and awarded 44 scholarships for a total of \$23,000.
- The GAPC voted to adopt policies and procedures for the use of copyrighted materials at General Assembly to be in compliance with the law. Appropriate language will be incorporated in the 2009 program information, worship leaders agreements, and UU Musicians Network contracts.
- GAPC staff is looking at site selection for 2013 and has received proposals from Columbus, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, and Louisville.

Respectfully submitted,
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Trustee, Ballou Channing District