

To: UUA Board of Trustees

From: John Blevins, as liaison to the Openness Implementation Committee (OIC)

Date: 20 March 2007

**Subject: Transmittal of the Openness Implementation Committee's
Report for April, 2007, and Related MOTION**

The report following brings you up to date on the thinking and planning of the OIC at this point in time.

They include several ideas for action that they are considering recommending in a future report.

One request that they make is that they receive a response from the Board and the Committee on Committees (CoC) acknowledging that we will accept and delegate the appropriate responsibility to insure that our Association will continue to achieve the called for openness in our business matters, as required by By-Law G-2.1.

MOTION:

I move that the Board assign the preparation of a response to the OIC's request for the Board to acknowledge its ongoing responsibility for the openness of the Association, to the Governance Working Group and to the Committee on Committees, and that their joint response on behalf of the Board of Trustees be delivered to the OIC prior to GA 2007.

Signed,

John Blevins

UUA Trustee, PSD and Liaison to the OIC

CC:

Members of the OIC: Art Ungar, Carol Agate, Evelyn Spurgin

Openness Implementation Committee

Report to the UUA Board

March 20, 2007

The Openness Implementation Committee (OIC) was created by the Board in 2004 to aid in the implementation of Rule G-2.1. Democratic Process (see Appendix A). We have met in person twice at a General Assembly, and by Internet phone conference call several times a year. This is an annual report that presents our current situation and recommendations. We have been in direct contact with the key committees, most more than once. We have presented workshops at two General Assemblies.

Implementation by the UUA Board

The Board has made great strides in making its work available on the web. Agendas, minutes and reports are made available in a timely fashion. The Board is considering making the minutes of the working groups available. However, our suggestion that audio recordings of the board be put on the web has not yet been accepted. The Board is aided in its work by having staff support.

According to the Rule, the openness requirement applies to all UUA committees, commissions, and task forces. However, it is not clear whether “maximum transparency” requires that opportunity be given for people to apply to serve on all committees and task forces. It is clear that once appointed, all task forces must conform to the openness requirements by posting personnel, minutes, agendas and reports. For example, the Congregations Come First (CCF) Task Force web page does not indicate when or where it will meet. In an interesting attempt at openness, the CCF created a blog, linked from their web page. However, there has been only one comment posted since last June.

Implementation by the Committees and Task Forces

Implementation by the many committees and task forces is uneven. Some have done well, others have not had any relevant information to post, and others have simply not taken action on the requirements (See Appendix B). There could be many reasons for not posting information on a timely basis, including that it is not a priority, that it has not yet become embedded in the committee cultures, and the lack of volunteer time.

We would like the committees to have the same level of compliance as the Board. For those committees that have a staff liaison, we recommend that the staff be given the responsibility of encouraging their committees to comply with the openness guidelines.

When the Rule was passed in 2004, it seemed that the implementation of a Content Management System (CMS) for the web site uua.org was imminent. However, it is now scheduled for April, 2007. The CMS is intended to enable individual Committees to directly manage their own web-page content. We do not yet know how committees will respond if they are given control over their own web area for the posting of their information. Certainly, they will need some training, both in the technical aspects of the CMS and in the effective use of the web. Some committees have staff liaisons who could encourage and aid the committees in posting their information. Exec VP Kay Montgomery has agreed to serve as the contact point for staff liaisons, when asked.

Responses to the Openness Implementation Committee

Our General Assembly workshops in 2005 and 2006 had small and declining attendance. We therefore decided not to present a workshop in 2007. We have had an email list open to all for reading, opennessimplementationcomm@uaa.org, where we have posted our reports, and many of our discussions. However, there has been little response from the few outside readers. We have an email address, openness@uaa.org, but it has not been used.

Future Actions

We are currently considering recommending that the Openness Implementation Committee be sunsetted at the end of 2007, when the terms of all of the current members expire. We will be meeting at the General Assembly to develop a detailed implementation plan, and intend to have our completed report to the Board for your October 2007 meeting. While the staff has not yet published their Content Management System roll-out schedule, we hope that by the time of GA the new web site using the CMS will be firmly established, and that there will be clear procedures established for the use of the web site by committees.

We recommend that the Board adopt governance policies to provide an appropriate level of oversight of our Association's implementation of the openness Rule. Whenever the Openness Implementation Committee's tenure indeed ends, there will need to be an annual review of the implementation of the Rule, at least until a culture of transparency has been firmly established.

The Openness Implementation Committee believes that continuing the work on implementing the Rule can most effectively be done by staff and the Committee on Committees (CoC). The CoC now insures that all appointed Committees are informed of the openness Rule. They are in regular communication with most of the committees and deal with their concerns, such as their charges. Because the ongoing implementation can best be done by staff and the CoC, it is recommended both groups work to insure that all committees are informed of the openness Rule.

We have previously recommended to the CoC that an orientation packet be developed and sent to committee chairs that would include information on how to implement the Rule on Democratic Process, and they have agreed to do this. We (the OIC) have agreed to provide a section on openness before the end of our terms. We are planning to assist the CoC in their meeting with representatives of committees at the 2007 General Assembly. That would give an opportunity to discuss with the committee representatives the implementation of the openness Rule.

The Board may wish to charge the staff to support committees by encouraging and assisting them in attaining the desired openness in their work.

Responses Desired from the Board and CoC

In order to prepare our final report, we would like a response from the Board and the Committee on Committees as to whether they are prepared to accept oversight responsibility if the Openness Implementation Committee is sunsetted.

Submitted by Arthur Ungar, Chair

Members: Carol Agate, M. Evelyn Spurgin, John Blevins, Board Liaison.

Appendix A

Rule G-2.1. Democratic Process.

Because the Association is committed to the use of the democratic process, because its governing institutions are accountable to our congregations, because accessibility is critical to countering systemic and institutional oppression, and because openness and trust are characteristics of a healthy religious community, the UUA Board shall establish policies to allow for the maximum transparency of its proceedings and of the proceedings of all UUA committees, commissions, and task forces, consistent with their effective functioning. These policies shall include:

- (a) providing advance notice of dates and locations of regular business meetings and making agendas, reports, and minutes available promptly;
- (b) providing avenues for comment on issues on the meetings' agendas;
- (c) accommodating observers at regular business meetings, with the exception of executive sessions.

Implementing this rule shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The Board shall designate a specific person or committee to whom comments about adherence to this rule may be addressed. The Board shall report to the General Assembly annually for the next three years on its implementation.

From the Minutes of the 2004 General Assembly
<http://uua.org/TRUS/minutesga04.pdf>

Charge:

"The Openness Implementation Committee is charged to clarify and implement the functional application of Rule G-2.1 to the UUA Board and all UUA committees, commissions and task forces. The Committee will:

- a. In collaboration with committee, commission or task force leadership, create a clear, detailed process for each group to establish effective openness practices and policies
- b. Provide a mechanism for congregations and individuals to submit comments about adherence to this policy
- c. Report no less than annually to the Board of Trustees

Oversight: will be provided by the Board of Trustees

Timeline: On-going, subject to oversight and re-evaluation after three years

Appendix B

Committee info status on UUA.ORG web as of 03/19/2007

OIC = Openness Implementation Cmte contact person Initials CA= Carol Agate, AU=Art Ungar, ES=Evelyn Spurgin

Committee	UUA Contact	O I C	Charge	Most recent meeting	Next Meeting	Committee members	Comm. email	Minutes reports	Comments
Accessibilities	Helen Bishop	C A	Yes	6-1-05	No	Full info	Yes	3/28/06 condensed notes	Little info; plans for St. Louis in mtg notes; nothing for Portland
Audit	Edwin Merck, chair Tim Brennan, staff liaison	C A	Charter	5/19 & 10/6/06	No	Names only – finger pointer but no link	No	Not since 1/18/05.	Not much info but not sure there needs to be any more. Has audited financials for 2005; here and for investment committee, only contact seems to be treasurer
Funding panels (Just Society, Uuism, Social Responsibility, International)	Hillary Goodridge, director Susan Adams, grants administrator	C A	Yes	No	No	Names and email	On own web site (Link on bottom of each fund's page.)	Own web site has annual reports to 2006	Own web pages have mostly info for applying.
Investment (Combine with Socially Responsible Investing)	Not stated	C A	Yes	11-17-05 Send email before attending	No	Yes	Yes	Link to endowment funds performance as of 12-06	
JTW Transformation	Simona Munson, staff liaison	C A	Yes	3-16-06	3-15-07 and GA	Names and email	Yes	3-16-06	Substantial improvement here
Melcher	Thomas Mikelson	C A	Yes	1 or 2 times/yr + mail		Full info	Yes, on "meetings" page	Awards: 2005 is most recent	
MFC	Jory Agate, chair	C A	Yes, plus bylaws, rules & policies	9-28-06	All, to 12-4-08	Names and email	Yes	News instead	Site designed primarily for candidates, but committee info also there
Board of Review	Silvio Nardoni, Chair	A U	Yes	No, but has no scheduled meetings		Names and terms	Members and emails	No	Meets only on demand. Confidential, so no public mtgs.
Commission on Appraisal	James Casebolt, Chair	A U	Yes	October, 2006	Yes and workshops	Names and terms	Yes, and members	Yes, plus workbooks, response form	The format is very different from others.
Commission on Social Witness	Susan Smith, Chair	A U	Yes	Yes	Yes	Names and terms	Yes	No minutes. Links to guides and agenda	Format differs from standard.
General Assembly Planning Committee	Linda Friedman, chair	A U	Yes	Agenda for Jan 2005	Yes	Names and terms	Yes	Minutes for September 2006	
Nominating Committee	Helen Bishop	A U	Yes	No	No	Full info	Yes	Fall, 2006	Information seems complete. Minutes are not appropriate?

Committee	UUA Contact	O I C	Charge	Most recent meeting	Next Meeting	Committee members	Comm. email	Minutes reports	Comments
Special Review Commission	Gini Courter	A U	Yes	No	No	Names	Yes	October 15, 2005: Preliminary Report	Final report not shown, although it is shown on the April board agenda
Best Practices (Moderator Appointed)	John Blevins, chair	A U	Yes	Yes	Yes	Names	Yes	See Board minutes	
Annual Program Fund Committee	General Chair: Barbara Brown	A U	Yes	No	No	Names	Yes, members	Agenda for Oct, 2005. Quarterly newsletter Jan '07	
Committee on Committees	Sue Stuke, Chair	A U	Yes	Yes	April 21, 2006 (?)	Complete information	Yes	Yes	Application form
Moderator's Task Force on Economic Accessibility at GA		E S							I have never been able to find out whether this still exists. I emailed Gini a couple of times and got no response. No longer listed on Committee page.
Openness Implementation Committee	Not listed	E S	yes	Doesn't state – only that can join email list Still not listed		Names and emails only	yes	No – only refers to email lists Only notes posted are from October 2006	Should post our meeting and minutes on here also. Not everyone wants to be on email lists. We should be doing a better job keeping current w/our meetings and meeting notes.
Pamphlet Commission		E S							Not on committee page any longer. A few months ago I searched all over the web site for information and could find none.
Panel on Theological Education	Rev. David Petee	E S	Yes!	10/06 last meeting Next meeting April 2007		Names and emails only	Yes	Reports and meeting notes posted	Big improvement!
Religious Education Credentialing Committee	Rev. Beth Williams	E S	Not listed as "charge" but nice description.	October 2006 Future meetings listed		Names and emails only	Yes	Yes with all sorts of reports, rules, etc.	Another big improvement!
Scholarship Committee		E S							Still listed on the committee page but no information. I emailed some people a few months ago to see if it exists and got no response. Still no website

Committee	UUA Contact	O I C	Charge	Most recent meeting	Next Meeting	Committee members	Comm. email	Minutes reports	Comments
Compensation, Benefits, and Pensions Committee	Ralph Mero	E S	Yes	4/12/06 (no agenda) Nothing new		Full info. Not clear if current	Yes	April 2006	Looks good – page is easy to understand and information appears current. Only thing I see missing is agendas for meetings. It appears that the page has not been kept current.
Congregational Properties and Loan Commission	Wayne Clark	E S	No	Not listed		Names and emails only	No	No	This page appears to have gotten mixed up with the Committee on Committees. When you click on some of the items in the margin, you get COC info. UUA needs to correct.