

September 16, 2009

Dear UUA Board Members,

The Openness Implementation Committee wants to bring you up to date on some of the things we have been doing and also has some requests. As you know, we do not currently have a Board liaison and are looking forward to working with someone new. John Blevins was so committed to what we are doing and was an invaluable liaison. We were looking forward to working with Anna Olsen and are sorry she was unable to continue on the Board.

We have continued to struggle with how we change the culture to make the work of the UUA more open and transparent. The Board and many committees have made great strides over the past few years, but there is still much work to do to ensure that transparency is a priority. We do not believe people are intentionally avoiding openness, but that many still do not consider that how they act and make decisions is less open than it should be. In an effort to try and take our work beyond the simple guidelines we created, we have prepared the attached document "What Transparency Looks Like." This lists simple steps that we can all take to ensure that our work is as transparent as possible. Please let us know if you have any responses to the document. We would like to distribute it to the committees and post it on our web site.

We are pleased that one of the ideas that we had proposed, a new email list for UUA news, is already up and running, thanks to the work of our member, Carol Agate, and the staff. We realized that people often are unaware of all that is happening because they do not know what has been posted to the web site. The goal of this new list "UUA-Updates" is to send a reminder that something is happening, that something new has been posted, or relay other news relating to the work of the UUA that might be of general interest. We hope that you will urge folks to subscribe.

One of the things that we have continued to address in our committee is how, if at all, openness and transparency will be impacted by the change to policy governance. We believe that it would be beneficial to meet with the appropriate working group and the staff to address how we can continue to ensure transparency under policy governance. We know that you are very busy with all of the transitions but are hopeful we can schedule such a meeting in January or April 2010. Please let us know.

We have had discussions in our committee and with the Board about the future of this committee. If you anticipate changes, please make sure we are included in the discussions. In the meantime, we have found our name to be burdensome and not transparent! We have proposed a name change in the past which was turned down. Many, however, do call us "Open UUA" (including the listing on the web site!). We are again requesting a formal name change and are happy with "Open UUA" if the Board agrees.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Openness Implementation Committee
Evelyn Spurgin, Chair