

**UUSJ Committee and Task Force Reports  
for September 9, 2017 UUSJ Board Meeting**

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**Committees that did not submit a report or had no new information to report since the last Board meeting:**

- Audit Committee (not a standing committee)
- Green Activists - Environmental and Climate Justice Task Force
- Gala Planning Committee (not a standing committee)
- Governance Task Force (formerly Bylaws and Standard Operations Committee; not a standing committee)
- Issue Selection Process Task Force (not a standing committee)
- Nominating Committee

## Advocacy Oversight Committee Report – September 7, 2017

### Members

Bob Denniston, Loretta Garcia, Lavona Grow, Ed Kringer, Anna Rhee, David Strauss (resigned August 30 and replaced by Sean McCarthy representing the Immigration Task Group), Larry Underwood

The purpose of this group is to coordinate UUSJ's advocacy activities, materials, and infrastructure to support advocacy work; and to help identify, guide and provide feedback regarding UUSJ's advocacy program and opportunities.

**The Advocacy Oversight Committee** has been meeting about three times per year. We've decided we need to meet monthly, at least when Congress is in session. Current issues being addressed: lines of reporting authority, revision of the 2012 Board guidelines for sponsorship and endorsement, using the name of UUSJ, and how to prioritize issues for advocacy consideration including for Advocacy Corps Hill visits.

### Questions for Board consideration:

— We need to revise the 2012 guidelines for sponsorship and endorsements. It hasn't been updated since we started conducting advocacy activities. The AOC will meet September 8 and will consider recommendations to the Board.

— The Board voted at the February 4, 2017 to move forward on going nationwide. We discussed some implementation issues at our April 8 Board meeting (see minutes) but the following questions still remain.

- What is our transition plan and timeline?
- What is the estimate of cost and how will this effort be funded? - **short term new grant as of June 2017**
- Does our infrastructure and governance structure support such a transition? (including how to represent, welcome, and accommodate Board members or congregation from outside our region) - **Governance Task Group has been renewed, chaired by Hannah Connolly.**
- Specifically, how does going nationwide impact the model of member congregations and "fair share" donations?

### Old Business:

From June 3 Board Meeting regarding Lobbying Restrictions and Reporting Requirements Recommendations. Status of recommendations:

- To ensure that UUSJ is in full compliance with relevant regulations, UUSJ should add to its Policy and Procedures manual to include specific details on advocacy efforts, such as documenting advocacy activities (both lobbying and non-lobbying), tracking actual expenditures for any work that is defined as lobbying (including staff and consultant time via time sheets), office supplies, database access, etc. Records should clearly separate

costs for direct lobbying and grass roots lobbying. **Question for the Executive Director and Treasurer on status.**

- To ensure that UUSJ board members and volunteers understand what constitutes lobbying (both direct and grass roots), the Advocacy Oversight Group should include guidelines in training sessions and periodic reminders in prep sessions. **Incorporate in new orientation materials for Advocacy Corps and share information with issues task groups conducting advocacy.**

### **Update on Questions about Advocacy to the UUA Presidential Candidates:**

The three questions that Al Carlson, Bob Denniston and Lavona Grow drafted for the Presidential Candidates were not submitted in time for consideration. The questions focused on their positions on UUA interest and resources for advocacy in Washington, DC, including in their role as President; in the UUA office in Washington, DC; and what role congregations, state action networks and UUSJ should play. At the September 9 Board meeting we may have an opportunity to ask the new UUA President these questions.

### **Needs:**

We need help from Board members to promote the UUSJ Advocacy Program. Direct people to UUSJ's website or to contact us at [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org).

- Help arrange a Congregational Advocacy Training event at your church.
- Encourage and recruit new members to the Advocacy Corps.
- Promote "Write Here! Write Now!" resources (including bookmarks) for use at your congregation.
- Identify people interested in GOTV efforts.

Advocacy Corps support materials and resources: includes UUSJ notepads of paper for writing personalized notes to Hill staff who are not available to meet with us. We have an ample supply of business cards. We have a draft Advocacy Bookmark but it requires graphic design. Ideally all the bookmarks would have a similar look. Brochure and website requires updating to better reflect advocacy work.

### **Advocacy at General Assembly:**

Thanks to the generosity of the UU Ministry for Earth UUSJ had a table in the Exhibition Hall. UUs wrote letters to their senators on the healthcare bill, as part of a "Write Here! Write Now!" campaign. More than 130 letters were written, covering 31 states. These were delivered to senators' offices by the Advocacy Corps.

### **UUSJ Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps:**

- June 13 Focus: Healthcare - Protect Medicaid and keep the Affordable Care Act (ACA) viable during any transition. Eleven Advocacy Corps members met with staff and delivered letters to the 21 offices. Six volunteers went back to the Hill on June 28, after General Assembly, to deliver letters that were collected at GA or sent to us to 28 Republican senators.
- July 11 Focus: Healthcare - As a Senate vote on health care loomed, we continued to encourage calls and emails to Senate offices. We also made a concerted effort to reach

out to UUs in Maine and Nevada as their senators were pivotal in the health care vote. In the end, the Senate finally voted on July 28 and did not repeal/replace the Affordable Care Act.

- August (no lobby day)

On the Near Horizon:

- September 12: the [UUSJ Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps](#) will join with the inter-religious community in celebration of [Season of Creation](#), September 1 - October 4, celebrated around the world each year with prayer services and care for creation activities. Join the prayer service at 9:30am at the United Methodist Building, 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., followed by visits to senators' and representatives' offices to share our concerns for the Earth including adequate funding for environment and climate justice programs.

**Issue Working Groups:** See separate reports from each group.

**UUSJ Thanks Key Senators for Healthcare Vote:**

Bob Denniston, UUSJ Board Chair, delivered personalized thank you letters to Senators Collins (Maine), Murkowski (Alaska), and McCain (Arizona) for their courageous stands against the Senate's healthcare bill last month. UUSJ's Advocacy Corps has been encouraging senators to hold out for accessible, affordable and quality healthcare since April, and has delivered more than 600 letters from UUs across the country to their members of Congress. That includes Pat Behanna of Paint Branch UU Church, who brought 31 letters from her congregation members on healthcare for delivery to Maryland senators. Watch a video of Pat telling us why this is so important — see the September 1, 2017 eNews.

**Partners and Networking:**

Continuing to work with the UUs for a Just Economic Community on webinars focused up to this point on healthcare but in October will branch out to escalating economic inequity.

Washington Interreligious Staff Committee (WISC): Lavona continues to represent the UUA at the Ecology and Environment working group (table) attending meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. In addition, she attends the monthly all WISC “third Friday” meetings, which covers special focus issues and concerns.

Coalition of UU State Action Networks (CUUSAN): At General Assembly, Bob Denniston and Lavona Grow had a meeting with Evan Junker, the Executive Director of UU Justice Ministry of California and former member of the Executive Committee of CUUSANS, and Steve Buckingham (former UUSJ Board member and UULM-MD co-chair). We discussed developing a covenant with CUUSAN by June 2018 and further developing a “relationship model” to work with a limited number of interested SANs in the short term. Evan shared a copy of the covenant between CUUSAN and UUA and the UUSC. In addition, Bob and Lavona attended the CUUSAN annual meeting held the day before GA.

**On the Horizon:**

Citizen Engagement - Virginia election (NOTE: there is NO UU Funding Program GOTV grant available in non-Presidential election years.)

Virginia is one of just two states that is holding a gubernatorial election in November 2017. Partly because it is an “off year,” there is a need to bring this election to the attention of voters and offer education and mobilization tools. UUSJ may be able to repackage and reuse the resources from our 2016 GOTV project and network with Virginia congregations (especially outside northern VA) and partner organizations to raise the visibility and importance of citizen engagement in this election.

**Advocacy Issues on the Horizon:** Dream Act 2017, detention/deportation issues, Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), debt ceiling debate (may be tied to flood relief funding) federal budget, tax reform.

Submitted by: Lavona Grow, Chair  
advocacy@uusj.org

## **Communications Committee Report – August 31, 2017**

### **Members**

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Bob Denniston

The Communications Committee is researching a tool which will allow for easier creation of our monthly eNews as well as blasts. There are interactive tools which will build responsive HTML which we can use in Salsa.

We still need regular commentaries so if your minister writes an article for you church newsletter, or for social media, that pertains to a social justice issue that you think would be of interest to our members and eNews recipients, please send it to [info@uusj.org](mailto:info@uusj.org).

Several Communications items need to be addressed regularly. For this we need more members for the Communications Committee. We need people to help with the following:

### **Follow up on eNews**

- Since changing to sending eNews once a month we need to track how have the open, read, unread, statistics changed.
- We need to track eNews stats monthly.
- The links from each article in the eNews are tracked by Salsa, so it would be helpful to know which types of articles receive the greatest number of clicks.

### **Facebook Stats**

- Need to regularly review and evaluate Facebook statistics, which reach the most, which prompt the greatest number of post clicks.
- Need someone with Facebook experience with suggestions on how to improve our performance.

### **Twitter Stats**

- Need more consistent Tweets. Generally the individual articles from the eNews are tweeted.
- We need to regularly produce Twitter stats.

### **Brochure change**

- The brochure will be updated to reflect current information.
- Ultimately our brochure needs a complete redesign. Suggestions are to have the membership form be an insert so that a third of the brochure is torn out for mailing.
- It has also been suggested that we use a service called Fiverr.com, a freelance service, to come up with a new brochure design. We could use a volunteer to assist with this.
- The brochure is also be supplemented with a smaller information version that will fit on a post card.

Submitted by: Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

## **Escalating Economic Inequity Task Group Report – August 30, 2017**

The EEI holds regular meetings online the first Sunday of each month.

**Members** (regular participants at recent EEI meetings)

Martha Ades, Earl Koteen, Serena Lowe, Bob Denniston, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Peter Clark, Sean McCarthy, Rita Roth

**Healthcare Focus.** Over the last several months EEI focused on opposing legislative efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, which would have exacerbated economic inequality by taking away healthcare from poor and marginalized Americans while giving a huge tax break to the rich. EEI members helped solicit letters to members of Congress and participated in UUSJ lobbying efforts.

**Member Survey.** To help plan new activities for the coming year, we surveyed people with an interest in EEI to determine the type of activities they were most interested in and likely to support. Of those responding, 4 said their main interest was in research and writing; 2 said lobbying and advocacy; and several were interested in planning and policy. EEI will use the results to help plan activities and support UUSJ's lobbying program.

**Upcoming Priorities.** EEI plans to engage on the tax reform proposals likely to be debated in Congress this fall by conducting research and developing information and talking points to use on the Hill. Based on the interests of its members, it will also focus on the economic aspects of criminal justice reform, environment and climate change, and healthcare.

- Together with UUJEC, EEI plans to co-sponsor a webinar on October 5th with Chuck Collins to discuss his recent major study “Reversing Inequality.”

Submitted by: Adam Wasserman

## **Immigration Task Force Report – June 1, 2017**

### **Members**

Dean Wanderer, Bob Denniston, Paola Renjifo, Pablo DeJesus, Lavona Grow, David Strauss, Charlotte Jones Carroll, Don Chery, Ron Outen and John Gubbings

Activities and Accomplishments:

**Priorities for the forthcoming year:** At our August luncheon meeting we affirmed the following priorities. Comprehensive Immigration Reform is our top priority but there are many moving parts in its development. Our present efforts include the support of the Deferred Action or Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative by advocating for the Dream Act and opposing any end to the existing program, the end of mandated detention bed-fill numbers, the end of family detention of those mothers and children who have arrived in the US without permission, opposition to wall funding and supporting the requirement that ICE's performance is in compliance with lawful standards.

We agreed to extend our efforts to include witnessing, letter writing, and sanctuary information sharing.

**Detention Watch:** We continue to expect to visit the Farmville Detention Facility in support of the establishment of a Detention Watch program in Virginia.

**Advocacy:** We are conducted visits to Senators Cardin and Van Hollan in Washington. With Senator Cardin, we discussed our opposition to oppose three immigration-related bills, the "Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act" ("the Davis Act") and H.R. 2406 and H.R. 2407 that give an unprecedented expansion of authority to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). We also advocated with Senator Van Holland to cosponsor the Dream Act.

**Vigil in support of DACA and TPS:** With the UUA and UUSC, we cosponsored an Interfaith Immigrant Rights White House vigil in support of DACA and the extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for various countries. The details are set forth in the newsletter. September 3, 2017 is designated as the day that the Unitarian Universals will take responsibility for the Vigil, to include two clergy-led prayer services.

**Interfaith TPS petition:** We endorsed an interfaith letter in supporting the extension of TPS for Haiti and 9 other countries.

Submitted by Dean Wanderer and David Strauss

## Program Committee Report – August 31, 2017

The UUSJ Program Committee holds monthly meetings.

### Members

Martha Ades, Chair, Hannah Connolly, Pablo DeJesus, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Marsha White

Each year the Program Committee plans and organizes UUSJ programs to support our mission. Since the June Board Meeting the Committee has worked primarily on the Awards and Awards Celebration planning.

The Board confirmed at the June Board meeting that we will celebrate Social Justice work and honor Social Justice Activists by giving awards and holding an awards celebration in the Fall. The awards were announced in June with a deadline for making nominations of September 6. Twelve categories of awards were agreed to:

- 1. Collaboration Award** – effective congregational social action/justice program reflecting and elevating UU values and principles that has involved cooperation with another UU congregation(s), other faith based groups, and/or non-religious organizations.
- 2. Racial Justice and Beloved Community Award** – work, witness and/or advocacy by congregations or program leaders who are transforming their ministry through racial justice and inclusion, carrying out one or more of these actions: confronting racism and oppression as barriers to social change and healthy human relations; building multicultural community and solidarity; achieving diversity in congregational membership, leadership, and staffing.
- 3. Innovative Social Justice Programming Award** – creative, inventive congregational program or elements of a program that has made a significant contribution to social justice reflecting UU values and principles or was replicated as a model that changed in an innovative way.
- 4. Congregational Social Justice Program Award** – transformative and comprehensive congregational program of social justice and/or advocacy that can serve as a model, and involve service, education, fitness, advocacy, and/or community organizing.
- 5. Multigenerational Programming Award** – a social justice program that spans the entire congregation, from the youngest to the eldest in a way that encourages both learning and action. This programming can encompass work with interfaith or community based groups, and direct action and advocacy.
- 6. Economic Justice Award** – effective work, witness and/or advocacy for the systemic changes needed to promote a more just economy and compassionate society.

**7. Environmental/Climate Justice Award** – effective work, witness, and/or advocacy in response to environmental challenges and climate change.

**8. Immigration Award** – effective work, witness and/or advocacy that can serve as a model for the ways to transform concern into action for justice for immigrants.

**9. Minister/Senior Leader’s Award** – leading, inspiring, supporting and/or expressing effective social action reflecting UU values and principles.

**10. Youth Activist Award** – an individual 13-18 years of age who is inspiring, supporting and expressing effective social action reflecting UU values and principles.

**11. Emerging Leader Award** – an individual who is emerging as a lay leader inspiring, supporting and expressing effective social action reflecting UU values and principles.

**12. Lifetime Achievement Award** – an individual who has spent at least 20 years as a lay leader supporting and expressing effective social action reflecting UU values and principles.

An awards team, responsible for review of nominations and making of awards, was convened. Members include Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Pablo DeJesús, John Harris and Marsha White. They will begin their review on September 6th when all nominations are in. Expectations are for 8-10 nominees.

The planning for the Awards Celebration began. A gala team was formed including Martha Ades, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Hannah Connolly, Bob Denniston, John Gubbings, Armele Vilceus. A review was held of lessons learned from the 2015 gala.

Location, date and time were decided upon as being held at Cedar Lane UU on Sunday, October 29, 2017, starting at 5:30pm with a social hour with heavy hors d’oeuvres, beer and wine followed by the awards ceremony. The theme will be Building a Better World. Bob Denniston has agreed to be the Master of Ceremonies.

Planning meetings were held throughout the summer. Nominees will be given an opportunity to display information about their projects. In an attempt to make the program a reasonable length, the nominees will not be asked to speak. A communication plan was put in place to remind congregations about the opportunity to nominate and to encourage people to attend the celebration. A caterer was selected.

The Committee also assists with Board Meetings. The Board Meetings for the remainder of the year are scheduled as:

- December 9, 2017 – Virginia Congregation
- March 20, 2018 – Maryland Congregation
- June 2, 2018 – Virginia Congregation

Future activities for which the Program Committee will be involved are:

- Scheduling Zoom calls for Board meetings between the quarterly face-to-face meetings
- Supporting webinars -- at least one addressing the New Economy
- Planning for a program in the Spring that will gather Social Justice Leaders from all congregations to learn from each other by sharing their activities and programs.
- Support for programs and meetings conducted by the three task groups and the Advocacy Corps.

Submitted by Martha Ades, Program Chair