



Executive Director's Report – P.DeJesús

June 2, 2018

Since the previous Board meeting on April 7, UUSJ has engaged in the following:

Highlights:

- 1) Our **Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps** made two visits, first on the Farm Bill to protect SNAP (Food Stamps) and then the RECLAIM Act which was backed by a Write Here! Write Now! (WHWN) campaign with the UU Ministry For Earth (UUMFE). See the Advocacy Oversight Committee report for details.
- 2) We held a webinar with Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) on Health Justice & Inequality, delivered by Dr. Margaret Flowers.
- 3) We convened a **Development Group**, which has made both suggestions and recommendations for the Board, and directed actions for the Executive Director.
- 4) We helped mobilize and support a UU presence at the **Poor People's Campaign (PPC)**, which UUSJ has formally endorsed.
- 5) **"House Visits"**: We made appearances at the UUC Frederick Friendly Forum to explain UUSJ, a share the plate at First Baltimore, as well as a Happy Hour at UUC Arlington, which also held a share the plate.
- 6) An informal **finance huddle** has occurred by email to open a Brokerage Account in order to accept charitable donations in the form of stock and marketable securities.

Management Activity:

Our **Board Composition** will be changing as several Board Member terms are ending, and replacements are being sought. Nevertheless, **leadership needs remain dominant**. The **Executive Committee** continues without a Vice-Chair. A new financial volunteer, **Joseph Schmitz**, UU Church of Arlington, is expected to start in July. The Core Group continues handling operational activity and management in lieu of a full Executive Committee. Between Board meetings, the Core Group is handling strategic and tactical decisions.

UUSJ would not be able to function without the participation of the current team of **Martha Ades, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Al Carlson, Bob Denniston, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings** and **Mike McCord**. We deeply value their contributions. We remain in need of new participants and referrals to folks with specific skills and interests (e.g. extracting maximum value from SALSA, Social Media branding, and copy editing) related to organizational operations and a willingness to assist in the month-to-month work of UUSJ.

Since the previous meeting, I have collaborated with the volunteers of UUSJ, and we have:

- 1) Prepared a more optimistic, excitable and sellable budget as well as a basic plan on how to match that with improved income.

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- 2) Convened a **Development group**. Please see that report.
- 3) Continued collaboration with UUJEC and UUMFE.
- 4) Improved our profile and visibility among UU organizations such as the **UUA**, which has been appreciative of our role helping UUs engage the Poor People's Campaign.

Needed actions remain:

- Continued recruitment of **Executive Committee** candidates;
- Re-constitution of **standing committees** (Finance and Nominating);
- Sorting out of our program support vs. membership growth **outreach and networking** needs, and how that links to organizational branding and development dynamics; and
- Follow-up on management and governance dynamics.

Advocacy & Related Activity:

Lavona Grow continues as chair of the Advocacy Oversight Committee and **Anna Rhee** contracting on our advocacy work. In this area we have:

- 1) Continued cementing the UUSJ presence of Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps.
- 2) Held UUSJ strategy and agenda setting meetings for both our **Immigration Task Group** and our **Escalating Economic Inequity Task group**. See those reports.
- 3) Been present and visible with/for UUA on the PPC, have endorsed and seen a general growth in our twitter followers and re-tweets, as a result of our coverage/participation. This social media impact needs to be quantified better.

Needed actions include:

- Greater specificity among the priority issue teams on what, who and how they will move from analysis to analytically driven action.
- Branding and messaging improvements anchored in UUSJ's unique value added for UUs around advocacy linked to UU values and principles in the federal forum.
- Those reported previously: a) the need for a nucleus of dependable volunteers for witness engagement, as well as a witness oversight committee if need be; and, b) articulating for new participants, both individuals and congregations, first, how UUSJ executes decision making and maintains democratic process among its teams and organizational functions; and, second, how UUSJ cultivates new leadership and ensures that the volunteer experience is both meaningful and empowering.

Operational Activity:

We continue to lean upon our staff, contractors and the Core Group plus other dedicated volunteers to conduct UUSJ operational duties. In particular we feel the absence of our **administrative assistant (AA)**. Nevertheless we have:

- 1) Closed a first round attempt to hire for the AA position.
- 2) Unlocked **\$2,500** from our 2017-2018 UU Funding Program Challenge Match, having taken on 35 new donors that made contributions amounting to \$2,525.

- 3) Completed our eNews and various eBlasts for April, May and the start of June without an AA, but we continue to suffer a cost in volunteer satisfaction.
- 4) Continued planning for:
 - a. A classic membership drive
 - b. Repeating our issue survey
 - c. Opening a brokerage account
 - d. A “Join Me” campaign directed at large donors
 - e. Identifying potential institutional donors (Grants)
 - f. Presence at General Assembly.

Needed actions include:

- Engaging UUSJ member congregations that haven't had a UUSJ visit in a while;
- Piloting board-driven outreach to non-UUSJ member congregations; and
- Continued outreach and networking to UU funders and players helping to grow the name recognition of UUSJ.

Forward Looking:

The Core group has been challenged by the Board to develop more optimistic budget plans. It has done so. The implicit commitments now require that UUSJ Board Members help shepherd home substantive and noteworthy improvements in:

- 1) Fundraising and booster culture and outcomes.
- 2) Friend growing, networking and outreach culture and outcomes.

Planning continues to:

- Revamp materials, sharpen messaging to make our value punchy, visible and relevant; and
- Frame out a GOTV program for 2018 mid-term elections.

Feasibility queries continue regarding:

- A formal relationship with the Coalition of Unitarian Universalist State Action Networks.