



Executive Director's Report – P.DeJesús – Sept. 2018

---

September 29, 2018

Since the previous Board meeting on June 2nd, UUSJ has engaged in the following:

Highlights:

- 1) Our **Capitol Hill engagement**: the Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps (the Corps) added an August outing, making four planned outings, positioning us to complete a full twelve monthly outings in our second year. See the Advocacy Oversight Committee report for details. **Plus, just this week, both the Immigration Task Group** and the Corps and went out for the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's Faith Week of Action, responding to a request for assistance by the UUSC.
- 2) At General Assembly we were able to move forward on the CUUSANs agreement, which you will review (9/29), and meet lots of new people.
- 3) We started our **2018 Voter Mobilization** for UUs with a webinar hosted by the **UUA**, and followed up with a Zoom meeting of strategic stakeholders.
- 4) The Immigration Task Group [facilitated sign-on](#) to an Amicus brief [DACA SD Texas](#) where UUSJ was able to help the UU Service Committee (UUSC) join as well.
- 5) We completed our policy survey of our membership.
- 6) We continued **Development Group** work, which has made suggestions and recommendations. The group is organizing an exciting lead off event [at River Road UU Congregation on December 2](#), with **speaker Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD)**.
- 7) We continued mobilizing and supporting a UU presence at major rallies including the **Poor People's Campaign (PPC)**, and **Families Belong Together (FBT)**
- 8) **"House Visits"**: We led a Congregational Advocacy Training (CAT) session at UUC Rockville, and made pulpit appearances at Cedar Lane UUC and Bull Run UU.
- 9) We opened a brokerage account with **TD Ameritrade** in order to accept charitable donations in the form of stock and marketable securities.
- 10) We took in **\$7,335** from 44 individual donors (34 for our membership drive). Of those, 5 were large donors giving **\$4,900**, with 2 mid sized and 37 small donors.

Management Activity:

Our **Board Composition** has changed somewhat recently. **Kalman Rupp, Ph.D** of UUC Rockville replaces Sean McCarthy. **Marti McKenzie** of Towson UU replaces Jane D'Ambrogi. **Gary Magnuson** and **Bill Cranmer** of UUC Frederick join as member and alternate respectively for UUC Frederick, our new member congregation. **Rev. Robert**

**Blinn** joins for Arlington. While back in April **Osk Huneycutt** joined as BRUU alternate and **Terry Grogan** joined as Reston alternate. Nevertheless, **leadership needs remain dominant**. The Executive Committee continues without a Vice-Chair. We need members and alternates to volunteer for Finance, and Nominating Committee duties, as well as working-group activity. Note our new financial volunteer, **Joseph Schmitz**, needed to delay his start till December 2018 or January 2019.

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.

In management, we remain in need of new volunteer participants and referrals to folks with specific skills and interests (e.g. SALSA, Social Media branding, copy editing, power mapping, grant writing, and volunteer management) 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) Continued the deliberations of the development group. Please see that report.
- 2) Fulfilled the pledge to conduct a Membership Issue Survey.
- 3) Executed a Membership Drive.
- 4) Continued our collaborative interactions with the **UUA and UUSC**.

Needed actions remain:

- Continued recruitment of **Executive Committee** candidates; and,
- Re-constitution of **standing committees** (Finance and Nominating); and,
- Start of a Membership work-group to look at issues raised by the Development group, and a Friend Growing team for concerted word-of-mouth outreach; and,
- Follow-up on management and governance dynamics that present as comingled.

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 (the Corps), which went out on four outings (June-Sept.) to engage on: (a) the Senate version of the Farm Bill, (b) the Administration's "zero-tolerance" policy and family detention, (c) on Farm Bill/SNAP as the Senate and House bills went to conference, and (d) on the Kavanaugh nomination to the Supreme Court.

- 2) Supplemental to regular outings, just this week, the Corps joined the **Immigration Task Group on an outing** around “Not one more penny for family separation, ‘zero tolerance’ prosecutions, and detention.”
- 3) Been present and visible with/for UUA and UUSC helping to mobilize UUs on the Poor People’s Campaign and Families Belong Together rallies and, to a lesser extent the Kavanaugh nomination rally.
- 4) On-boarded more churches participating in our Write Here! Write Now! program.
- 5) Signed-on to six policy issue letters covering topics such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for our Yemeni neighbors, opposition to round 2 of Trump-GOP Tax Cuts, opposition to family separation & incarceration and to keep families together, to stop drastic cuts to refugee resettlement, [supporting SNAP](#), and support of both the State Department’s Office of Religion and Global Affairs (RGA) and Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF).
- 6) We also [joined](#) as Amicus (friend) to a brief on [DACA SD Texas](#).

Needed actions include:

- Those reported previously: a) movement to analytically driven action among our policy teams; b) branding and messaging improvements; c) dependable witness volunteers; d) clear messaging on how UUSJ produces content, makes decisions and maintains democratic volunteer centric process; and, e) cultivation or transition planning for new leadership.

Operational Activity:

We keenly feel the absence of our **administrative assistant (AA)**. Nevertheless we have:

- 1) Had a successful presence at General Assembly.
- 2) Completed re-certification for our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which now includes federal retirees and generates close to **\$7,000** annually for UUSJ.
- 3) Completed a membership drive clearly taking in **\$3,050** between 8/18 and 9/19, with an additional **\$2,180** coming in after that, but likely in response to the drive or perhaps the membership survey. 34 donors are attributed to the drive, 3 of which were large donors.
- 4) One large donor responded to a pulpit appearance.
- 5) Completed our membership policy survey, exceeding our last response rate.
- 6) Received a demonstration of the new SALSA platform.
- 7) Completed our eNews and various eBlasts without an AA, but we continue to suffer a cost in volunteer satisfaction, and work falling through the cracks.
- 8) Included six commentaries and three testimonials in our outreach.
- 9) Placed a new larger advertisement on CFC in UU World.

Needed actions include:

- Continue planning for:
  - Hiring an AA an/or parceling out similar work across several contracts.
  - A “Join Me” campaign directed at large donors
  - Identifying potential institutional donors (Grants)
  - A December 2 Fundraising Reception
  - Our CFC 2018 outreach
  - Holiday messages to assist in achieving saturation effect
  - End of the Year Appeal (EOYA) 2018
- Strategic evaluation of moving towards membership drives twice per FY in addition to the EOYA, ideally during early spring and late summer.
- Adoption of more donor centric fundraising language and donor level marketing or messaging, paired with update of auto response materials
- A database cleanup effort paired with follow-up with self-identified volunteers
- Those reported previously: a) outreach to UUSJ member congregations that haven't had a UUSJ visit in a while; b) pilot board-driven outreach to non-UUSJ member congregations; and, c) continued outreach and networking to UU funders and players helping to grow the name recognition of UUSJ.

Forward Looking:

Challenged by the Board to develop more optimistic budget plans the Core Group has done so, but achieving solvency and annual stability in support of our successes remains paramount. To do this we need to improve:

- 1) Excitement to support UUSJ
- 2) Robust familiarity with UUSJ to facilitate eagerness to spread the good word
- 3) Fundraising and booster culture and outcomes
- 4) Friend growing, networking and outreach culture and outcomes

Planning continues to:

- To revamp materials, sharpen messaging to make our value punchy, visible and relevant; and,
- Consolidate and polish our list of accomplishments; and,
- Configure administrative and technical support needs.

Feasibility queries continue regarding:

- A conference, duplicating and building upon the success of our conference in 2017
- A larger more fundraising focused GALA in 2019