



Executive Director's Report – P.DeJesús – June 2019

June 13, 2019

Since the previous board meeting on March 9, UUSJ has engaged in the following:

Highlights:

- 1) We need a treasurer, and a vice-chair. I ask that the nominating committee continue its work, and board members consider taking up these roles.
- 2) We held our first **strategic planning** process meeting with **Evan Junker**; we covered a lot of educational ground and framed basic process. Key was the need for a Strategic Outreach working group, to manage the appreciative inquiry we will need to do. See his internal memo distributed via email on June 13.
- 3) We began gathering a **Defending Our Democracy** priority task group. The team convener is resident to **Massachusetts**, which represents an exciting development.
- 4) The immigration task group finalized its vision for comprehensive immigration reform; see the appendix of the Committee and Task Group report. They also made a public comment on a **proposed HUD rule that targets immigrants**.
- 5) We gained our 2019 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) eligibility status.
- 6) The Development Committee issued a letter donor appeal during late May, and we will start planned phone outreach to larger donors. See their report.
- 7) We joined several witness events, key among them **Where are the Children?**, the PPC Moral Witness Wednesday, and End Child Detention. See our [Facebook page](#).
- 8) We will complete our Salsa data migration, June 17. Following that we will begin learning by use. In conjunction, we are exploring collaboration with UMD, College of Information Services, iConsultancy to help make better use. **The matter should receive board review**. See the Project Charter provided elsewhere.
- 9) Gala 2019 plans proceed and will speed up. A web page is forthcoming during July. Award categories were distributed via email and in eNews. Please solicit nominees. Board members are expected to attend, so please mark October 6 for UUSJ.
- 10) Plans for our **co-hosted advocacy conference** in collaboration with UUJEC and other UUs, are speeding up. You are asked to attend, please mark September 15 - 17.
- 11) We were awarded a UU Funding Program Grant for FY 19-20 in for \$12,000, plus a \$4,000 challenge grant for NEW members. We will all need to help unlock the funds.

Management Activity:

Our **board composition** has changed. Joining us are Pat Behenna, Paint Branch, Charlotte Jones-Carroll, At-Large, Suzan Chastain, Arlington, Liz Echols, Davies, Emily Koechlin, All Souls, Sean McCarthy, Rockville, John Peterson, Accotink, David Shilton, Arlington, and

David Strauss, At-Large. The core group continues handling operational and management activity, as well as strategic and tactical decisions, between board meetings. UUSJ would not be able to function without their participation. We deeply value their contributions.

In management, we remain in need of volunteer participants and referrals to folks with specific skills and interests related to the month-to-month work of UUSJ.

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

- 1) Focused on decision-making regarding our UU Funding Program Grant proposal, our Strategic Planning process proposal and retreat, attendance at GA 2019, the 2019 Social Justice Awards Gala (Oct. 6), and our co-sponsored advocacy conference on **the Climate Justice and shaping a Green New Deal, during September 2019**
- 2) Hired a new Advocacy Consultant, Sara A. Abdelkhalek, who started in May.
- 3) Continued interactions with UU partners:
 - a. With **UUA** they have paid for my registration in the PPC Moral Action Congress, asking if UUSJ can anchor the UU presence and August debrief; and,
 - b. With **UUSC** we met twice, once by Zoom, once face to face, to share about our work and consider opportunities for collaboration. We explicitly collaborated on the campaign to End Child Detention; and,
 - c. With **CUUSANS** we participated in their bi-monthly briefings; and,
 - d. With **UUJEC and UUMFE** we've continued to frame roles, intent and branding for the advocacy conference during September. We also on-boarded **All Souls Church Unitarian (DC), UUA and SWL.**
- 4) Framed next steps for the large donor appeal that will occur summer 2019.

Needed actions remain:

- **Nominations for board positions, we need a treasurer, and a vice-chair.** Please think about non-board candidates that might be invited to join the board; and,
- **Finding more volunteers for our Strategic Outreach working group;** and,
- We continue wanting: visits with board members and to their congregations; a GALA planning team and awards team; as well as, progress addressing funding (see the Treasures report) and growing membership.

Advocacy & Related Activity:

Lavona Grow continues as chair of the Advocacy Oversight Committee but we now have **Sara A. Abdelkhalek** contracting on our advocacy work, she started in May. In this area:

- 1) We continued our Capitol Hill Advocacy Corps outings, with "Write Here! Write Now!" components, on: (a) Immigration – HR 6, (b) Earth Month, the climate crisis, and (c) prescription drug costs and other medical expenses leading to disparities

and bankruptcy. See the report for detail.

- 2) We began gathering a **Defending Our Democracy** priority task group. I hope you saw those calls in our eNews and other emails. They aim to meet via Zoom after GA 2019. This represents an exciting development, in so far as the team convener is a member of **First Parish in Concord Massachusetts**, not a resident of the DMV.
- 3) We participated in several witness events, key among them the Rally to End Gerrymandering, the Equality Act interfaith vigil, **Where are the Children?**, the PPC Moral Witness Wednesday, and End Child Detention. See our [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter \(@UUSJ\)](#) feed for coverage.
 - a. In particular look at the **Moral Witness Wednesday**, and **End Child Detention** items. We received higher than typical responses on social media and President Rev. Susan Fredrick-Grey thanked us for coverage on Twitter.
 - b. Please note, the End Child Detention campaign dovetailed nicely with our support for **Where are the Children?**, the event led by the youth of **UUC Columbia**. That became a press conference opportunity for the youth, with a visit to Speaker Pelosi's office. Immigration staff was not available. **Consequently, the UU youth made a soft request that UUSJ assist getting a follow-up meeting. This might be an opportunity for intergenerational work, and a role might exist for either the Advocacy Corps or the Immigration team.**
- 4) We will be helping to anchor the **PPC Moral Action Congress**, and play a role in a UU participant debrief during August. CUUSAN and UUs from beyond the DMV will be attending, so it looks to be a great opportunity to network for UUSJ.
- 5) The **immigration task group** finalized its vision for comprehensive immigration reform; see the appendix of the committee and task group report. They also made a public comment on a **proposed HUD rule that targets immigrants**. UUSJ has submitted a comment [found on our webpage](#) and prepared a [flyer and guide](#)

Needed actions include:

- Preparations for the advocacy conference; board members are asked to attend, so please mark September 15 - 17 for UUSJ.

Operational Activity:

We continue to feel the absence of our **administrative assistant (AA)**.

We interviewed three AA candidates and made offers to two, in succession, and queried the third about possibilities. None accepted our offer. Our top candidate took a job the day prior to our offer. Our second choice declined, likely due to personal life circumstances. The third was not available when we circled back. We took too long on the entire process. We are now seeking referrals, but may have to re-post the description. Nevertheless we have:

- 1) 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.

- 2) Set the date of Monday June 17, to complete our Salsa data migration. Once the switch occurs we will begin learning by use and expect to benefit from new features.
- 3) Related to our data, on a **matter that should get board review**, we are exploring collaboration with UMD, College of Information Services, iConsultancy to help make better use of the new platform. Normally this student driven consultancy requires a fee for service on the order of \$5,000-9,000. However in deference to our non-profit status and size we are being asked for \$1,000 as our skin in the game contribution.
 - a. The item has been placed on the June 15 board meeting agenda to gather a sense of our disposition. See the Project Charter shared elsewhere.
- 4) Gained our 2019 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) eligibility status as a regional non-profit. This is important since we gain good revenue from the CFC, although tracking presents challenges. Related listing steps are needed by July 25.
- 5) **Donor outreach:** we sent 589 letters in a donor appeal, to any donor ever, and is therefore much more likely to donate again. This dovetailed an email-campaign targeting non-donors, and lapsed donors. Results are still coming in and need to be sorted. The process needs to be streamlined for any future efforts. Related to this:
 - a. **Peter Bishop and I will spend the summer contacting donors with a history of larger donations.** We will be able to reference the letter as a starting point in conversations about supporting UUSJ, and underscoring what we have done.

Needed actions include:

- Board consideration of the iConsultancy Project Charter. **I'm soliciting input**, but it is my current view that this will help with database cleanup and management; and,
- Exploration of peer-to-peer membership growth and fundraising.

Forward Looking:

UUSJ has a wonderful basic model and what I believe is a unique, value added, niche within the UU constellation of organizations. This speaks well for our strategic planning process. However, Evan Junker underscores, and I agree, we must both manage the current operations of UUSJ and do the strategic work, the transformative work—it's both at once.

Strategic work is a dual track process. We cannot ignore our current reality, nor be so invested in what we do now, and how we do things, that we ignore the deep work, the blank canvass work, of the strategic process. And, this is exciting work for good cause; so we need and want your talent and dedication, in service to our future as an organization.

I will need your help. Your board peers will need your help. This organization requires your participation. Our mission merits your attention, deepest thinking, and wisest counsel.