



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

September 20, 2019

Since the previous board meeting on June 15, UUSJ has engaged in the following:

Highlights:

- 1) We continue in need of 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 completed our formal Salsa data migration, June 17. We are re-learning by use.
- 3) During General Assembly 2019 several board members represented UUSJ well.
- 4) We anchored several events of import for UUs. They included: the Poor People's Campaign events for Witness Wednesday, the Moral Action Congress, and the recent launch of the Mobilizing Organizing, Registering, Educating Bus Tour. As well as the 2019 Rally & Vigil to End Detention Camps. See our [Facebook page](#) or [Twitter](#) feed.
- 5) We saw a 5.43% response rate on our paper appeal, made \$3,072 in profit, about 50% from small donors, and 50% from a couple large donors.
- 6) We had share the plate visits to both River Road and Paint Branch, a Board member covered a Cedar Lane event.
- 7) We collaborated with the National Sanctuary Collective, for their Immigrants Living in Sanctuary Press Conference on Capitol Hill and some visits. We also connected their UU activists to Cedar Lane and other local networks.
- 8) We held a convening for our new **Defending Our Democracy** priority task group.
- 9) We collaborated with UUA on two webinar events, one related to mobilization for elections, the other a debrief on UU participation in the PPC movement.
- 10) The immigration task group continued and deepened its activity. See the report.
- 11) We held our second **strategic planning** process meeting with **Evan Junker**; we got stakeholder feedback and identified working groups for values, covenant and governance.
- 12) Completed 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.
- 13) We covered September 20 Climate Strike activity in DC trying to document UU involvement. However, we did not formally anchor this event in DC for UUs.
- 14) **Gala 2019** plans proceed; the web page was published, an awards team convened and made selections. Ticket sales have picked up with announcement of the awardees. However, we need board support in promulgation and sales to have a successful event on October 6. Board members are expected to attend, so please mark October 6 for UUSJ.

Management Activity:

Our **board composition** has changed. Mike McCord kindly ties off duties as treasurer and John Gubbings will act as such in an interim capacity. The nominations committee has been informed. Marti MacKenzie of Towson has withdrawn from the board. A conversation about new member identification will occur. 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. Minutes of those meetings have been provided to the board.

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) Completed our co-hosted advocacy and action conference with **UUJEC, UUMFE** and **All Souls** on economic and climate justice and using UU values to shape a Green New Deal, during September 2019.
- 2) Been onboarding and testing our new Advocacy Consultant, Sara A. Abdelkhalek, who started in May. This process has required more time than anticipated. We extended Sara's trial period by 90 days, rather than confirm an ongoing relationship.
- 3) Continued interactions with UU partners:
 - a. With **UUA** we collaborated on two webinars and they joined our co-hosted conference in a sponsorship role; and,
 - b. With **UUSC** they joined our co-hosted conference in a sponsorship role and we assisted in gaining them meetings during the conference. They have subsequently raised additional collaboration opportunities pertaining to visits in DC.
 - c. With **CUUSANS** we participated in their bi-monthly briefings; and,
 - d. we've completed the advocacy conference during September.
- 4) Delayed the large donor appeal that will now occur Fall 2019.
- 5) Began exploring how to develop a mission based budget and the nuance of communicating our value added in an expenditure driven manner and easily digestible document.

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,
- We continue wanting board assistance setting visits and to their congregations; and, progress addressing funding (see the Treasures Final report) and growing membership.

Advocacy & Related Activity:

Lavona Grow continues as chair of the Advocacy Oversight Committee but we currently 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 in July and September but not August. Topics included: (a) Immigration – keeping families together etc. (b) Safety Net: Tax Credit Policy and Criminal Justice Appropriations, and (c) Economic & Climate Justice
- 2) We held an info session for Write Here! Write Now! partner congregations.
- 3) We gathered a **Defending Our Democracy** priority task group, working group. They began work to frame basic monitoring and analysis.
- 4) We participated in several witness events of national import to UUs, key among them PPC events, Rally & Vigil to End Detention Camps and the Climate Strike. See our [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter \(@UUSJ\)](#) feed for coverage.
- 5) The **immigration task group** was active this summer and continued setting the gold standard for how we want our priority task groups to behave. They:
 - a. Joined the Advocacy Corps in July, preparing materials for WHWN and leave behind letters for this visit.
 - b. They objected to planned ICE raids.
 - c. Accompanied the National Sanctuary Collective to the Hill, developed a UUSJ statement opposing related fines and offered some of these visitors lodging.
 - d. Prepared statements in response to DHS’ diversion of FEMA and other funds to ICE enforcement budget, and sent them to the House and Senate budget committee leadership.
 - e. Joined in witness events.
 - f. Developed and submitted two Amici Statements of Identity and Interest; one on the boarder wall and a forthcoming one on DACA.

Needed actions include:

- Encouragement and cultivation of the nascent Defending our Democracy priority task group. 2020 will be important for this group.
- Re-development of the Environment/Climate Justice and Economic Justice priority task groups.
- Development of a UUSJ witness team to help show UU presence at events.

Operational Activity:

We continue to feel the absence of our **administrative assistant (AA)**. The treasurer report speaks briefly to these issues and the organizational complexities. Yet we have prepared to re-post and re-open the search during September. 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) We completed our formal Salsa data migration, June 17. We are re-learning by use and striving to re-develop the capacity we had grown accustomed to in the legacy platform. Without an AA chunks of this work go slowly and in fits and starts and rely heavily upon volunteer assistance at a higher level than preferred.
- 3) Adopted work around strategies using contractors, chiefly in the areas of: graphics, Google group re-development and potentially eNews editing.
- 4) Related to our data, we declined to engage the College of Information Services, iConsultancy to help make better use of the new platform. Proposals for a new project charter are in concept development, will be referred for stakeholder evaluation and brought forth if concurrence is gained.
- 5) **Donor outreach:** In the spring we sent 589 letters in a donor appeal, to any donor ever, and is therefore much more likely to donate again. The basic results are:
 - a. It immediately covered its direct material and special skill costs
 - b. Achieved a respondent rate of 5.43%, which the development team thought was in fact good, better than expected
 - c. Made \$3,072 in gross profit, about 50% from small donors, and 50% from a couple large donors, with \$1,571.92 in smaller donor profits
 - d. Helped us identify bad/old addresses
 - e. Served to remind people passively of what UUSJ is doing and why and hopefully set the stage for our thank you/did you know call campaign
 - f. Showed it's worth doing, especially if we can pull it off cheaply. (At least further testing is warranted.)

Needed actions include:

- Exploration of peer-to-peer membership growth and fundraising.

Forward Looking:

UUSJ has an exciting basic model, something to be proud of. Our strategic planning process should help us focus on the core value added components and perhaps identify areas for growth. However, Evan Junker's early findings suggest the bar has been set high for UUSJ within the context of UUism.

This remains exciting work for good cause; so we need and want your talent and dedication, in service to our organization. I will still need your help. Inspired by the Climate Strike, dare I say future generations of UUs need us to do this work.