



Executive Director's Report – P.DeJesús – October 2020

October 2, 2020

Since the previous board meeting on June 13, UUSJ has engaged in the following:

- ❖ We continue adjusting to Covid-19, especially in our advocacy and development.

Highlights:

- 1) For September 30, UUSJ submitted a **UU Funding Program** grant proposal “Shifting to Collective Environmental Justice through Partner Engagement and Virtual Federal Advocacy” in the amount of \$26,000 (\$17k direct, \$3k match, \$3k to raise, and \$3k from our budget). It seeks to fund partner development with moral owner groups, both impacted communities and UUs, in the environmental/economic justice space.
- 2) During September, we built on our summer efforts to **stay active in advocacy** when the **Immigration Justice Task Group (IJTG)** went out on oversight of the Department of Homeland Security and inclusion of immigrants in COVID Relief as a dual appropriations matter. They helped UUSJ go deeper into testing “virtual” and “remote” alternatives explored by L.Grow, J.Peterson and discussed with Advocacy Corps (AC) members. The IJTG effort amounted to a **mini-mega UUSJ Hill outing** uniting three program silos and testing new items: simultaneous Action Alerts (AA) to both Senate and House, deploying an [on-line Write Here! Write Now! \(WHWN\) platform](#) version of our classic WHWN, and perhaps most importantly including WHWN participants in our virtual meetings. Special thanks to Charlotte.
- 3) The **Development and Membership Committees** are piloting engagement of our supporter base using appreciative inquiry and calling people with giving history.
- 4) [Bob McCarthy](#) has secured **U.S. Representative Jerry Connolly (D-VA)** as policy keynote for our December 12, 2020 online fundraising event. Save the date.
- 5) **Kelsy Cowger** continues to lead our joint Reeb/UUSJ non-partisan voter mobilization project, and begins a transition to the Get Out The Vote phase of work.
- 6) During August, we began transitioning away from Lavona Grow’s day-to-day management of UUSJ advocacy programs. The **Ad-hoc Committee on Advocacy Program Oversight and Sustainability** continued review of our advocacy posture.
- 7) During August, we hired **Anna G. Hooker**, Consultant (Advocacy Program Assistant), to provide WHWN and AC support. She functions as project manager.
- 8) During July we executed a **summer membership appeal**, and specifically sought to leverage a \$6,000 board donor match to incentivize non-donor contributions. We

took in about \$6,500 but incentivized behavior was less successful than expected.

Management:

Our board remains unchanged as did the **Executive Committee** which handles much activity, between board meetings. Charlotte has shared minutes.

In addition the **Development Committee** and **Membership Committee** were active, as was the **Ad-hoc Committee on Advocacy Program Oversight and Sustainability**, and the often overlooked, de facto, **Communications Team** as well as our **Database Team**.

Under strategic planning, the **Governance sub-committee** continued its work and an **Ends sub-committee** was convened.

Thank you all for your participation and leadership.

- ❖ Zoom overload and a sense of being busier than in pre-pandemic days is reported by UUSJ volunteers.

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

- 1) Executed an exciting grant proposal application centered on partner engagement looking at several of our newly identified moral owner groups. An ad-hoc team came together to prepare the grant mentioned above. A concept paper was developed, a brainstorming session was held with multiple internal stakeholders. A team including a professional writer was charged to execute the proposal. We requested and received agreement to enumerate three potential UU partners: UUs for Just Economic Community, UU Ministry for Earth and the Coalition of UU State Action Networks. We listed three prospect examples of non UU partners: [Green the Church](#), the [Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy](#), and the New Social Economy Assembly.
- 2) Continued planning for *20th Anniversary* activities and drafting a development calendar through the **Development Committee**. As stated above they secured a policy keynote, but have also procured music talent, and put out an RFP for the needed tech support. Of strategic note, they have articulated interest in pursuing non-UU grants and engaging donors more intentionally, and collaborating for supporter engagement with the Membership Committee. See that report.
- 3) Deepened our commitment to supporter growth, retention and cultivation through **Membership Committee**. Of strategic note, they committed to engaging members outside the DMV area and highlight the need to build relationships to achieve fundraising success. See that report.
- 4) Continued review of UUSJ bylaws in detail. The strategic planning **Governance**

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sub-committee has offered several updates. Please see their reports. Also, Evan Junker's September memo offers important context.

- 5) Convened the strategic planning **Ends sub-committee**. They were charged with developing initial "input draft" materials for the board to consider.
- 6) Begun discussion of **survey approaches, plans and interactions** between our priority issue survey and strategic planning survey interests. The complex of issues has implications that need reconciliation. See Evan Junker's September memo.
- 7) Moved from theoretical discussion into application with the continued work of the **Ad-hoc Committee on Advocacy Program Oversight and Sustainability**. Here activity downshifted, focusing on reconciliation of evaluations and transition in response to Lavona Grow's mini-sabbatical. With informal application of the Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team method, our approach took on elements in the team's June proposal.
- 8) Finalized and made payment against our memorandum of understanding for the 2020 **Reeb Project/UUSJ** Voting Campaign Organizer and related project.

Needed actions:

- Completion of end of year appeal plans and draft calendars.
- Decisions on the UUSJ priority issue survey and our strategic planning interests.

Advocacy:

Lavona Grow led our advocacy programs and assessment of "virtual" and "remote" alternatives during July and August in collaboration with AC volunteers and WHWN participants. By mid August we began transition to more management by staff and contractor with support by volunteers in "AIM style" interactions.

- ❖ With discussion and concern around vaccine take up and herd-immunity factors our assessment that the "virtual/remote" posture of UUSJ will last till January 2021 probably needs to be revised into the Spring, perhaps the Summer of 2021.
- ❖ The September 2020 advocacy outing offers clues about what this might look like.

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

- 1) Scheduled [Glenn Hurowitz, CEO, MightyEarth](#), to speak with UUSJ and UU Ministry for Earth, about his global campaign work and the topic of "Indigenous Communities and the Fight for Climate Justice Amid the Pandemic" on [Monday Oct. 12 \(RSVP\)](#).
- 2) Held a **mini-mega Hill outing led by the IJTG for September 2020**, so far we scheduled twelve virtual advocacy visits, and incorporated the participation of eight UUs with no prior participation in our IJTG or AC. These "guests" were a mix of

WHWN participants and friends of such folks, two of whom were affiliated as leadership of UU State Action Networks (Iowa and Florida). Among AC members, the take up rate for joining meetings was lower than expected, three joined meetings. A debrief by the IJTG, and others is warranted.

- 3) Participated in the [Washington Interfaith Staff Community \(WISC\)](#) Racial Equity Workshop showcasing Bread for the World's pilot of a [policy assessment tool](#).
- 4) Joined [Detention Watch Network](#) as an official dues paying member alongside the UU Service Committee, among other large advocacy organizations, as well as smaller grassroots organizations. The move is part of UUSJ's commitment to learning from and being guided by the people most impacted by immigrant legislation and regulations. It also meets a stated donor request.
- 5) Collaborated as part of the **UUA's Poor People's Campaign Leadership Council**, helping to organize UU engagement, as well as mobilizing directly in support of PPC.
- 6) Joined an advocacy call organized by the **Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)** with the office of **US Senator Tillis R-NC**. We were able to bring two leaders from the [UU Justice Ministry of North Carolina](#), Rev. John Saxon, Board President and yet to be ordained, Lisa Garcia-Sampson, Executive Director. Bob and Lavona established a relationship for UUSJ with the Rev. Saxon during a past trip to NC. This relationship points in an important direction for UUSJ. Kelsey Cowger and Lisa have been in collaboration for our Reeb/UUSJ voter mobilization project, frequently paired as a dynamic duo for activity dovetailing with [UU the Vote](#).
- 7) Participated in the Coalition of UU State Action Networks, bi-monthly briefings.
- 8) **Continued experimenting with a modified advocacy approach**, switching to "remote" AC and WHWN offerings by opting for online gatherings and briefings in lieu of face-to-face programs. Our first experiments on remote Hill meetings were with UUs out of NJ and John Perterson with Accotink members. Under the rubric of "virtual" advocacy we used Action Alerts (AA) and WHWN to cover:
 - [Secure Our Vote](#) (July AA)
 - Make Police Accountable: Justice in Policing Act -- [classic](#) (July WHWN);
 - [Demilitarize Civilian Law Enforcement](#) (Aug AA);
 - Senate: Support immigrants' rights to humane DHS treatment and to COVID relief payments -- as both [classic](#) and [on-line platforms](#) (Sept. WHWN);
 - [House: Support immigrants' rights](#) to humane DHS treatment (Sept. AA); and,
 - [Senate: Support immigrants' rights](#) to humane DHS treatment and to COVID relief payments (Sept. AA).

Needed actions:

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- Continue experiments with “virtual/remote” activity and debrief about September.

Operations:

We are adjusting to the operational aspects of a shift in hours favoring advocacy. It has been immensely helpful to have Anna G. Hooker join UUSJ in a project management and volunteer engagement capacity for WHWN and AC.

- ❖ I foresee a need for Zoom capacity upgrades to handle our December fundraising event as well as the need for multiple virtual Hill meetings at the same time.

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

- 1) Received an “ASK” from **Rev. Ashley Horan**, Organizing Strategy Director, UUA resulting from discussion with **UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick Gray**, that UUSJ to plan towards housing assistance through our supporters and contacts, should post election reactions to the results require the deployment of UUA staff, UU Clergy or our Head of Comunión--Rev. Frederick Gray.
- 2) Completed our **eNews and eBlasts**. Paulette resumed project management for this. Special thanks to Bob Denniston who consistently and plays the role of chief editor ensuring that UUSJ is putting out a solid, consistent media product.
- 3) Problem solving email difficulties with our server host, **BlueHost, DNS records specifically our SPF and DKIM settings**. UUSJ will likely need to revisit the issue of migrating to google g-suite for nonprofits. We must be confident our emails are getting through to recipients. SALSA seems to be sending well, but @uusj.org accounts seem to have intermittent difficulties. We will need to monitor this.
- 4) Begun planning of logistics for our 20th Anniversary policy keynotes, and rolling membership renewals. See the Development and Membership Committee reports.
- 5) Collected 77.4% of our fairshare grand total and **96.7% of fair share target (80%)** funds for FY 19-20. For FY 20-21 we collected 11.1% of our grand total with share the plates at Accotink, FU Baltimore, Cedar Lane, Fairfax, and Paint Branch.
- 6) Claimed our FY 19-20 UU Funding Program challenge grant of \$4,000.

Needed actions:

- Reply to the UUA “ASK” for lodging assistance, what I call our “home-stay” program.
- More database housekeeping to set up donor cultivation, including the appeal.

Forward Looking:

The fall and winter will be important. We need to leverage our 20th Anniversary planning and end of year appeal and fundraising.

These two areas of activity will have several operational components to manage.