



Executive Director's Report – P.DeJesús – June 2021

June 21, 2021

Since the previous board meeting of March 2021, UUSJ has done the following:

Highlights:

- 1) Sponsored an Action of Immediate Witness “Stop Voter Suppression and Partner for Voting Rights and a Multiracial Democracy” by the **Democracy Action Team (DAT)** for General Assembly 2021. If you attend GA, support our proposal.
- 2) Filled our first ever [national board slate](#), achieving broader diversity and a composition reflective of our moral owner quartet, including 2 non-UUs.
- 3) Held 2 sessions with **Paula Cole Jones** on Widening the Circle of Concern, which resulted in a motion to adopt the **8th Principle**, at our annual meeting ([pdf-deck](#)).
- 4) Held 2 fabulous **Expert Opinion Briefings**. The first with guests from Sen. Booker’s office and the Agriculture at the Environmental Defense Fund on A Just Transition to Climate Friendly Agriculture ([video](#)). The second with Faith In Action and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Pathways to Citizenship ([video](#)).
- 5) Conducted two “full tilt” advocacy outings. One under the auspices of our **Environmental Action Team (EAT)**, they held [11 meetings](#) in April and May. The other, during June, under the auspices of our **Immigration Action Team (IAT)**, they scheduled [17 meetings](#), held 15, and are rescheduling 2 for July due to Juneteenth, or S.1 negotiation, interruptions.
- 6) Continued deeper into coalition advocacy work with [Faithful Democracy \(FD\)](#) led by the **DAT**, they have held 7 meetings with Senators Baldwin, Burr, Capito, Collins, Hickenlooper, Murkowski, and Portman, in addition to joining FD meetings. And their [first S.1 action alert](#) sent **1,100 messages**, for a new record.
- 7) Collaborated on an event with UU the Vote and others, “Democracy Today! A Faith Call for Justice & Democracy” ([video-reg](#)).
- 8) Held 2 immigration justice educational webinar events. The first on the history of immigration in the U.S. ([video](#)) the second a town hall to solicit input from moral owners, including impacted folks, to refine issue selection for IAT’s June outing.
- 9) Completed our priorities survey, and [announced](#) topline [results](#).
- 10) Held a **Spring Appeal** composed of 2 emails featuring a [volunteer](#) and a [donor](#), with target segmentation, and intended to drive recurring donations. We gained 7 new recurring donors, 3 are board members. We took in \$251, during the appeal for \$3,018 over the next 12 months.

Management:

Our board composition remains unchanged as did the **Executive Committee** which handles much activity, between board meetings. Charlotte Jones-Carroll, board secretary, has posted [minutes](#).

The **Nominating**, the **Development**, and the **Membership Committees** continued activity. As did the **Communications**, and **Survey Teams**.

Charlotte furthered the draft budget proposed in March, in consultation with others, as the **Finance Committee** did not reconstitute.

Thank you all for your participation and leadership.

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

- 1) Continued the work of the **Policy & Advocacy Review Committee (PARC)**. The PARC resolved a request from the DAT on the matter of the filibuster and S.1 the For the People Act, and referred the matter for a board vote by mail. (See their updated [S.1 Action Alert](#) for why.) They sought a policy clarification, in effect a policy carve-out for S.1. Also, **Serena Lowe** developed a synopsis of the priority survey results which we distributed ([email](#)), on behalf of the PARC and the **Survey team**.
- 2) Held two sessions with **Paula Cole Jones** on Widening the Circle of Concern ([pdf-deck](#)). The first was well attended, the second very intimate. It's unclear why. It's possible that attendees didn't realize they had to RSVP, and simply presumed they would be invited. At least a handful told me so. These sessions galvanized an interest in bringing forth the **8th Principle motion** before the board in June. It also shed some light on the work ahead as we account for the robust interest in racial justice expressed by survey respondents.
- 3) The **Nomination Committee** completed its work, rendering a first ever [national board slate](#) for UUSJ. They met their charge of gaining geographic diversity and went beyond, achieving diversity among other factors. They also showed bravery for inclusive justice making. We now have 2 non-UUs on the slate. This spring, we learned what it means to have non-trustees involved in the process, as a protection against self dealing. The pioneer NomComm set a high bar. The team was composed of 3 trustees and 5 non-trustees ([4 confirmed in Dec](#))([1 confirmed in Mar](#)).

Needed actions:

- On-boarding the new board, will be the central management commitment
- Establishing standing committee chairs and board authorization to continue work

Advocacy:

We continued the transition which began in August 2020 to more management by staff with support by volunteers in “AIM style” interactions. See the staff advocacy [report](#).

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

- 1) Conducted a June **Immigration Action Team (IAT) advocacy outing**. We scheduled [17 meetings](#), held 15, and are rescheduling 2. In preparation for the outing, the IAT hosted an astounding 3 webinar events; one on the [history of immigration policy](#), a [town hall discernment](#) on strategy and issues, plus an [expert opinion briefing](#). The town hall was a major victory for UUSJ. We can also be proud that the outing engaged both parties, and included many constituents. 39 constituents were listed. Noteworthy, this outing included 2 impacted non-UU folks (IA) and 1 former TPS holder, a UU (CA), UU ministers and SANs folks. The outing was logistically more complex than previous outings. Staff foresaw some difficulties based on February and April, and used new tactics. We need to refine practices and find volunteer help.
- 2) Conducted an April **Environmental Action Team (EAT) advocacy outing**. We held [11 meetings](#). In preparation, the IAT collaborated with UUMFE and UUJEC as part of Earth Month, and the EAT had a major victory with its expert briefing, by procuring a guest from **Sen. Booker's office** ([video](#)). We had 266 registrations. The outing was a bit complex for non-EAT participants, as we covered two bills, the [Justice for Black Farmers Act](#) (S.300) and the [Climate Stewardship Act](#) (S.1072), under one concept, a Just Transition to Climate-Friendly Agriculture. Staff noticed odd dynamics related to take-up spending on the specific messaging used.
- 3) DAT furthered its **impact meeting work** engaging 7 offices in addition to joining FD meetings. And helped UUSJ further **UU the Vote** collaborations, by participating in an event “Democracy Today! A Faith Call for Justice & Democracy” ([video-reg](#)). Pablo represented UUSJ with DAT members offering substantial support.
- 4) We also met a request by **Nicole Pressley** that we assess participation in a UU deep canvass experiment on policing issues around defund vs. abolition, with an eye towards eventual engagement on the **Breath Act**. We've tapped **Rev. Elenore Piez** for the role through July. This project is important for our strategic relationships and perhaps the work indicated by the priorities survey on racial justice.

Needed actions:

- Encouragement of impact meeting and coalition behavior among our action teams
- Transitions in action team leadership
- Chart a path forward based on our survey results

Operations:

We were consumed by preparations and logistics for two basic sets of activity. First, various educational events. Second, strategic plan, work-plan, preparations. (In particular plan feedback opportunities for each action team and all committees or teams within UUSJ, and one special session for action team convenors. And the drafting.)

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

- 1) Offered more educational opportunities than in previous quarters with: 2 expert opinion briefings, for our April and June advocacy outings; 2 action team webinars, for our IAT work; 2 membership base sessions on Widening the Circle of Concern; and, 2 guest appearances by Pablo. One appearance with UU the Vote, the other for a **First Unitarian of Honolulu, HI**. Note, after this appearance for Hawaii, 7 constituents joined our IAT advocacy outing, including their Senior Minister.
- 2) Completed our eNews and various eBlasts, and postings to Facebook and Twitter; inclusive of multiple mobilizations in allyship with partners or coalitions such as the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, Faithful Democracy, 51-for-51, WISC H.R.40, and WeAreHome/WeAreEssential.
- 3) Received our **2021 CFC application** approval with some final steps due by Aug 6.
- 4) Followed up on **Fair Share** letters to UUSJ member congregations. We are running at close to 50% revenue. See the treasurer's report and fairshare report. And have been following up with several board members. We hope more donations will come in, and can be attributed to the closing FY 20-21, even if they arrive during July or early August. But as we anticipated was possible, the pandemic has greatly impacted congregational giving, which in turn has impacted fair share contributions.
- 5) Held a **Spring Appeal** composed of 2 emails featuring a [volunteer](#) and a [donor](#), with target segmentation, and intended to drive recurring donations. We gained 7 new recurring donors from the appeal, 3 are board members, the other 4 were in our database previously. They gave a total of \$251, during the appeal for \$3,018 over the next 12 months. In addition, 8 people made one-time gifts, totaling \$3,583. Among those we received \$2,000 from 1 donor, and \$500 from 2 donors, with 5 people contributing \$583 in small donations. During the quarter covering the appeal, and inclusive of those figures, we took in \$7,700 from a combination of one time donors and previous recurring donors. That means \$3,866 in donations arrived outside the reasonable bounds of our appeal.

Needed actions:

- Planning towards our social justice awards ceremony in the fall
- Donor base engagement and congregational membership outreach