

# Ministry Team Council Minutes

## August 17, 2006

This meeting was an open meeting with church Board members and other church leaders present. The primary focus of the meeting was to meet Larry Wheeler, a UU Fund Raising Consultant, and hear his preliminary appraisal of our congregation's current planning for campus renovation and the relationship of fundraising to strategic planning. The meeting adjourned early so that the Generosity Ministry Team could meet separately with Larry.

### **In attendance:** Ministry Team Council Members

– Ex officio: John Davis, Convener, and Joan Cudhea, Secretary  
Inreach – Suzette Southfox and Steve Howard  
Caring – Rev. Jim Grant and Dan Heiserman  
Worship and Program – Rev. Arvid Straube  
Denominational Affairs – Rev. Arvid Straube and Ardath Schaibly  
Generosity – Iris Masotti  
Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning – Liz Jones and Caroline Clark  
Social Justice – Rev. Jim Grant and Sue Haskin

**Absent:** Ken Herman, Beverly Joy, and Thelest Stewart

### **Board members**

Nancy Fisk  
Jan Gallo  
John Holl  
Dave Hunt  
Jim Talley  
Kathleen Garcia-Horlor

### **Observing**

Jackie Statman  
Dale Douglas  
Tomas Firle  
John Falchi  
Ruth Van Leeuwen  
Lisa Shafer  
Susan Harding  
Betty Boone

John Davis opened the meeting with a request that participants give their names and role, in lieu of usual check-in. The observers represented Social Justice Steering Committee, Journey Toward Wholeness Committee, Governance Action Group, Constitutional Revision Committee, and Generosity Ministry Team as well as "parishioners."

John briefly described the usual format of the Ministry Team Council (MTC) meetings.

He reminded Ministry Team Council members of the excellent Team Communication plan that Suzette had prepared for the Inreach ministry team, and then shared with other Ministry Team Council members. John then set the context for strategic planning. He gave a succinct summary of the Empowered Organization Governance (EOG) development over a period of five years, the Board's adoption of Outcome Statements last May, and the church's current status in a second year of a trial period of this new style of governance.

A final phase of implementing the Empowered Organization Plan and the main focus of the MTC this year will be to develop a strategic plan. The process for strategic planning is now unfolding. A leader to champion and coordinate the process has not yet been identified. John then turned the meeting over to Larry Wheeler.

#### LARRY WHEELER, CONSULTANT

Larry Wheeler began by sharing some of his extensive personal congregational UUA Board and Finance Committee history, his The Mountain Camp and Conference Center history (founder and staff), and his 14-year experience as a UU Funding Consultant, currently full-time – and recently at Summit and Mission Viejo (Tapestry) and other West Coast congregations.

His engagement at this time with the church is for an assessment. Larry has already had conversations with Arvid, Thelest, Dave Hunt, and others. He has acquired masses of data. He knows that the strategic plan which would be a normal prerequisite for an assessment is not in place. However, he has determined that a campus renovation project would not be dependent on a strategic plan. We can proceed with a parallel process without risking the support of church members.

#### Advice on structuring the strategic planning process.

Start with benchmarks: membership, donor units, Sunday attendance, religious education enrollment, religious education attendance, and the average and mean pledge.

In the planning, go out five years with proforma financial statements making clear your assumptions about growth in all those categories. Items in the plan can go beyond five years, but you need these proforma projections if you want to do a good plan, and if you want to apply for a loan or loan guarantee from the UUA.

Do an annual review at the end of each fiscal year. Redo the "out" 4 years, and add a fifth year. If we do this, we will never need to redo a strategic plan. This process could and probably should be under the purview of the Ministry Team Council.

We will need to decide whether to carry a mortgage. "Don't hesitate to carry a mortgage." Interest expense will fall in the annual budget. What too often happens, unfortunately, is that once churches have paid off their debt, they often do not put the continue the interest expense as a continuing transfer into a maintenance and replacement fund.

The UUA guideline (if helping with a loan or guarantee) is "no more than 25% in debt service of the total annual budget."

Larry left a sample strategic plan with Arvid, and will leave some others. He likes the format of the Charlotte, NC plan.

### Getting ready for a Capital Campaign.

Larry then asked how many years those in the room had been members of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego – by show of hands in four groupings. He noted that 17 of those present have been here for more than ten years, while only four have been here for ten years or less. We must find newer members to become active in church politics. At age 32, he became a canvasser and found it to be a great way to meet people. Religious education parents should canvass other religious education parents, for instance.

Larry asked: Who had a role in the Generosity Campaign last year? Who decides what kind of Generosity Campaign?

From the data he received, he has concerns (and he provided 3 handouts):

- 1) No quarterly monitoring and attention to those who pledged who are not paying: this is a pastoral concern.
- 2) New member process: many new members have not pledged or are not paying. Do not include pledge contribution card in new member packet; We must do face-to-face interviews with new members.
- 3) Suggested income/giving levels: need to add higher combined income categories capped near \$500,000. Data show that lower income members donate a higher percentage of their incomes to the church than do higher income members.

Recommendation: do or get a financial evaluation; giving against estimated income.

Aim for 80-85% giving from donor units. If too low a proportion, members who were not asked to contribute feel not included. This sets up a "we-them" mentality.

This church can aim for at least a \$2.1-\$2.4 million goal, which would be three times annual giving. Many churches achieve much higher levels – from 4 to 10 times higher than annual pledge fulfillment.

Larry is confident that a combined Annual and Capital Campaign can be united at this church in spring 2007.

Larry answered questions to clarify from Suzette, Dale, Betty, Jan and Kathleen. The one question that arises for the Generosity Team and the Constitution Revision Committee addressed a distinction between members and voting members with respect to pledges/payments/waivers and timing thereof.

At 7:10 Larry left to applause. John remarked: "That was an eye-opener."

#### RETREAT PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER 30

Suzette raised questions about numbers, starting and end times, food and goals. The newsletter has an open invitation, but the Common Room holds only 60 with chairs only, and less with tables. There were few answers to these questions.

John asked each MT Leader to give Suzette an estimate of numbers planning to attend by September 15.

Susan Harding asked whether it would be required to attend the full day. Joan responded that the intent (as so far envisioned) would be the introduction to strategic planning process in the morning, with break-out times for each ministry team in the afternoon to "practice" developing measurable objectives in line with Outcomes, and a wind-up for teams to share and for our facilitator to help fine-tune.

Lisa Shafer recommended that each ministry team do ahead as far as possible.

Dan Heiserman noted that many of us familiar with various forms and ways of doing strategic planning, and that it will be important for us all to be using the same framework and language.

Suzette asked everyone to become very familiar with all the Board's Outcomes Statements.

As soon as Paula Cole-Jones is confirmed for September 30 and a First Church coordinator is selected, further information will become available to all Ministry Team Council members.

Some names were suggested to Arvid as possible strategic plan coordinators, should his current prospects not be available.

## **REPORTS FROM TEAMS**

Secretary received written reports from Inreach and Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning Teams, with gratitude.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.