

Board of Trustees Annual Report, 2020-2021

Submitted by Erik Stalhandske, President

Description of the Board of Trustees

Per our Bylaws, the Board of Trustees (The Board) “is charged with establishing, maintaining, and communicating policies and strategic priorities that are forward-looking, congregation-wide, and reflective of the values and mission of the Congregation.”

The Congregation elects lay leaders at the annual May/June meeting to serve on the nine member Board of Trustees, including four officers and five members at large. Terms of services are rotated to ensure stability. Each year, the Congregation votes on a slate, presented by the Leadership Development Team (LDT). In addition, the Senior Minister actively participates in Board meetings and is a non-voting member.

The Board conducted four Board member orientation/retreat sessions in Summer of 2020, and met virtually September 2020 through May 2021 for our formal Board meetings. We also conducted less formal Board of Trustees meetings for discernment and team building in September, December, and May. All virtual Board meetings were widely publicized with encouragement of visitors. All meetings had at least one non-Board member at the meeting.

Members of the Board of Trustees: (May 31, 2020-June 6, 2021)

- Officers: Erik Stalhandske (president), Laura Johnstone (vice president), Vanessa Campbell (treasurer), Rick Witten (secretary)
- Trustees at Large: Erin Krajcik, Toni Wander, Gregg Peterson, Glenn Harris, Kathy Edgren
- Senior Minister for entire year: Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti

2020-2021— Summary:

Operations in the midst of COVID: This year as a society, UUAA community, and individually, we continued drastically modified aspects of our lives. As mentioned last year, in-person services were curtailed as of March 15, 2020. With a one-week hiatus to prepare, Sunday services commenced virtually on March 22, and have continued to the present day.

The board has served a key role as collaborator, consultant, and support for the Senior Minister on a host of policy matters related to these transitions.

Vision 20/50: This year witnessed substantial efforts around our purpose and vision 20/50 work. During the Summer of 2020, the Board appointed a transitional team to map out a course of action for the year. Their recommendations were adopted, resulting in the Board appointing Rick Witten and Kathy Edgren as co-chairs for the Vision 20/50 steering committee. That steering committee met throughout the year. Their report provides extensive detail on their activities. The Board is kept apprised through monthly updates, and other occasional special meetings and briefings as needed.

Our UUAA website contains extensive information on the Vision 20/50: uuaa.org/vision.

Bylaws and Governing Policies: We are fortunate to have the wisdom and energy of Tom Reischl, Sandy Simon, and Paul Morris supporting the Board and the congregational work on the Governance Advisory Team (GAT). In addition to annually orienting the Board members, GAT provides advice and staff work on policy and governance issues. This year, the Board adopted a new governance policy on Congregational Resolutions that we have jointly worked on over the past two years. In addition, we sought counsel on implementing updates to the by-laws for some areas that needed attention. These will be presented and voted on by the congregation at our annual meeting on June 6, 2021. The GAT also provided counsel on bylaw support for electronic meetings and implementing absentee ballots in the age of virtual meetings.

Board Activities and Accomplishments can be broken down into six main areas, as delineated in detail in our work plan.

1. Support the Vision 20/50 Activities

This was identified as one of our primary tasks, and the Board devoted time at every Board meeting to this activity. In the Summer of 2020 we constituted an Action Planning Workgroup, and adopted their recommendations including establishing a Vision 20/50 Steering Committee.

2. Provide Leadership in fostering our beloved community

As needed, assist in resolving conflict between congregants, identifying the behavior and working to schedule restorative justice activities. Living our Values and Shared Ministries team have been collaborative partners in these endeavors, along with the Senior Minister.

The board reads part of its covenant with each other at each meeting and is deliberate and loving in identifying behavior or incidents that fall short of our ideals and expectations, holding ourselves and each other accountable.

3. Honor our Shared Leadership through governance formulation and updates

Board Leadership meets with the GAT approximately every other month to support their work in recommendations on by-laws, policies, and Board skill development. Major accomplishments: Adoption of governing policy on Congregational Resolutions, development of proposed by-law changes, and forum on the proposed by-law changes. We appointed a workgroup that developed a process and standard for choosing delegates to the UUA General Assembly. They are continuing their work in the 2021-2022 year. Members on the workgroup from the board are Glenn Harris and Vanessa Campbell. Laura Bollettino, former Board Vice President is also a member of the workgroup.

A separate board workgroup continues in dialogue with UJME leadership about the process of responding to the 2019 petition for a special congregational meeting. This workgroup is also working to codify a member meeting process that meets the current needs of our community. As one outgrowth, we will initiate an independent process moderator at our annual meetings starting in June 2021. The workgroup is chaired by vice president Laura Johnstone; other board members are Gregg Peterson, Glenn Harris, and Toni Wander.

We have instituted absentee ballots as an option for voting for some items at our all-congregational meetings. For June 2021, we are implementing absentee ballots in our virtual meeting. Based upon our experience and feedback, we will modify and adapt for future meetings.

4. Communicate and engage with the congregation

Updates occurred in our on-line services about Vision 20/50, and Board activities from Board Secretary videos (Our inimitable video persona Rick Witten).

Regular summaries of the Board activities were presented in bulletins and newsletters.

The Board workplan was communicated electronically in Sunday bulletins and newsletter, and posted online.

A virtual forum over Zoom on the proposed bylaw changes occurred. It was led by Board members Laura Johnstone and Gregg Peterson, and the Governance Advisory Team.

5. Address policy issues

After due consideration and in-depth briefing by Board member Toni Wander, the Board approved a policy regarding investing our non-restricted endowments in the UUA Common Endowment Fund. At our January 24th, 2021 all-congregation meeting, the Congregation was briefed on the new policy.

Personnel working group continues to support and collaborate with the Senior Minister on personnel issues (contracts, staff organization, and other issues).

6. Check-in monitoring sessions with different ministries and programs

In reviewing our time commitment to in-person reports from different professional staff, we reached the decision to allow written reports and updates from the Senior Minister on activities. We will revisit what will best support the Board's desire for updates, and the time constraints of Board meetings. We received live updates from the acting Administrator Ed Lynn at regular intervals, and from the director of Worship and Music. On a monthly basis, we receive written reports on Finance and our social media presence and engagement. Also written reports were received from the Welcome Ministries Coordinator (Hannah Hotchkiss) and the Executive Minister (Rev. Cassandra Hartley).

The Board President talks and meets with the Senior Minister at least every month, with regular consultation between these meetings. The Vice President often participates.

The Board President supports the chair of the Leadership Development Team in goal setting and consultation.

We helped the Senior Minister in finalizing his work goals for the year, and likewise he contributed to our development of a workplan.

The Board is pleased with what we accomplished. We acknowledge that regularly we fall short of our ideals and aspirations, and continue to search for truth in love, and to help one another.

In Community,
Erik Stalhandske

President of the Congregation | Chair, Board of Trustees