



President's Report 2010 - 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

After four years as AUUA President, it is time for me to step down to let others lead the way. I want to let you know how much I treasure the support and encouragement that your AUUA Board and I have received over the past years. We have been building a professional organization that not only serves the members of the AUUA, but also serves our great liberal religion as we move forward into this new century.

I know that you will continue to support us in this effort, and hope that you will help us bring other UU administrators into the fold of our organization.

First, I want to acknowledge the dedication of the AUUA Board of Trustees. This hard working group of people meet once a month via conference call, and spend much time between meetings working for the AUUA as volunteers – all the while caring for their congregations' administrative health. Let's give a great cheer to: Debbie Bieber, Julie Slayton Frank, Shaye Gambrell, Rina Jurceka, Katie Loughary, Mary Ellen Morgan, Mark Pedersen, and Jeter Walker.

I want to thank those of you who take the time to share your wealth of experience and knowledge on the AUUA list serve. This is an invaluable service that we provide to one another, for together we offer not only practical advice and tips, but peer support and understanding to those who need that encouragement.

I also want to thank the good folks at the UUA who have helped us so much – I can't name all of them, and I'm sure to miss some important people. But I do want to hold up the Rev. Richard Nugent and the staff at the Office of Church Staff Finances. They have been watching UU administrators' professional interests for many years! Another is the UU Ministers' Association President, Rev. Bill Hamilton-Holway, who has rekindled the conversation between our sister professional organizations, and that can only be a good thing. The Rev. Sarah Lammert at the Department of Ministries and Faith Development has made sure that the AUUA is in the loop on all UU professional matters – thank you!

I would certainly be remiss in not recognizing the contributions made to this organization by Rev. Wayne Arnason. Wayne is currently the Co-Minister of the West Shore UU Church in Cleveland OH, with his wife, Rev. Kathleen Rolenz. Wayne has a vast amount of experience in ministry and organizational development that he shared with us, freely, thoughtfully, and constructively. He came before us as our main speaker at Professional Day 2002 in Quebec, and laid out the groundwork for what constitutes a successful professional group that can effectively serve its membership. He came back to us at Professional Day 2008 in Ft. Lauderdale, this time to urge us to consider the ethical

dimensions of our professional organization and how we could best honor our professional relationship as peers in a covenantal religious organization.

We have taken some great steps towards fulfilling that vision that was so freely and lovingly shared with us by Rev. Arnason, and we are in his debt.

I'd like to share with you some of the projects and accomplishments that were finalized this last year:

Certification: the Certification Task Force met in Hyde Park (Chicago), home of Meadville-Lombard, in October 2010 and completely re-organized our Certification Program. Taking three levels down to two, sharpening the focus of the 11 areas of study in each level, simplifying the pay schedule (\$50 per module instead of a yearly fee), awarding certificates for each module completed --- thus making our program more accessible and affordable, while maintaining high standards for professional Continuing Education. Thank you Debbie Bieber for hosting this group in her home and at Meadville-Lombard, as well as working with Rina Jurceka, Mary Ellen Morgan, Jeter Walker, and yours truly.

Code of Ethics: the Code of Ethics Task Force (Julie Slayton Frank, Mark Pedersen, Chuck Rosene) met in response to a request put out by the Rev. Beth Miller, Director of the UUA's Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group at the 2008 General Assembly, for each professional group to study and align their Code of Ethics with one another's. The AUUA Code was a fine initial effort at articulating standards of professional conduct and covenant, but needed to be expanded and made more explicit about our covenantal relationship with our congregations, other staff members, and amongst ourselves.

After meeting on conference calls two times, and consulting the Codes of our sister professional groups, Mark Pedersen took the lead and re-wrote the AUUA Code of Ethics into a comprehensive, professional document. This revision will be submitted for approval to the 2011 AUUA Annual Meeting.

Mission Statement: when the AUUA first gathered at General Assembly in 1983, our members were very concerned with the fact that many UU administrators had no recognition in their congregations that they were team members with other professionals in a religious setting. Almost 30 years later, the AUUA has achieved much in terms of professional recognition, compensation, peer support, and continuing education.

That is why we thought it was time that our Mission should focus on the larger movement at this time in our history. So we will propose at this year's Annual Meeting a new Mission statement for the AUUA:

The Mission of the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators is to promote and strengthen Unitarian Universalism through effective administration.

Web Site: Thanks to our new Communications Consultant, Kimberly Donnelly, and our technical wizard, Garrick Linn, we have rolled out a new web site, and are in the process of stocking a "Members Only" section with documents and templates for AUUA members to use and share. A search engine powered by PicoSearch will facilitate this online library of resources for AUUA members.

Large Church Administrators – “Metrics and Data Standardization Group”: I want to give a “shout-out” to the Task Force that came out of a group of administrators that met at the Large Church Conference in March 2011 in Minneapolis. Sean Hale, Executive Director of the First UU Church of Austin, TX, and Charles Lewis, Administrator for Eliot Chapel in Kirkwood, MO, have taken the lead on this effort, which now involves Laurel Amabile from the UUA Annual Program Fund office and Linda Laskowski, PCD UUA Trustee and author of the *Churches that Count, Count!* workshops and webinars. This is important work, as we have not been comparing “apples to apples” when trying to assemble data that might give us a clue on where we’ve been, where we are, and where we may be going as a religious movement! Thanks, folks!

But Wait! There’s More to Do! While those accomplishments might bring a sense of satisfaction for work well done, there is even more to be done before we will be truly valued as a professional organization by our Association:

Membership: our membership numbers are slowly approaching 200 members, up from 165 four years ago. This is out of an estimated total of 700 congregations that employ some kind of administrator. This low number of members is just not going to “cut it” when it comes to representing UU administrators as a professional organization.

Of course, in order to attract members, an organization needs to offer “benefits of membership.” Over the past four years we have been working diligently to bring those to our members, and to attract new members. We have achieved all but the last item on this list, and once the first four are firmly rooted, we will start work on the AUUA Good Offices training and program, so we can say:

AUUA Benefits of Membership:

AUUA list serve: for collegial advice, practical work tips, and peer support;

AUUA web site: for useful documents & templates, suggestions, and news that is useful to the UU administrator;

AUUA Certification Program: for the UU administrator’s continuing education and professional advancement;

AUUA Code of Ethics: professional guidelines for conduct in a UU congregation with other professional staff, congregants, and AUUA members;

AUUA Good Offices Program: for collegial support in trying times.

I look forward to the day when we have successfully completed the Good Offices program and have it in place in our Association.

Church-admin-uu: We are also going to make good on our plan to make the Church-admin-uu list serve “members only.” I don’t understand why over 100 list serve members think that it is OK to use the services of a professional organization that they aren’t supporting. It reminds me of the old story: “Who will grind the wheat?” asked Henny Penny.” We have identified those individuals and will be contacting them to see if they would like to join the AUUA. Then we will be cutting off access to the list serve to non-members. This will be accomplished by September 1st at the latest – which is coincidentally the day for everyone to renew their membership!

Cluster groups and District Meetings: Even in this day of electronic communication, nothing beats the occasional face-to-face meeting to help us get to know our professional neighbors. We have few “cluster meetings” across the county, and few district meetings that include an administrators’ gathering on the agenda. I would hope to see these kinds of events increase in the coming years, and please feel free to ask your AUUA Board to help you set-up these meetings. We need one another, and we need to bring other UU administrators into our circle of support and resources.

I could go on, but that’s it for this time around!

In closing, I want to **THANK YOU**, the members of the Association of UU Administrators! I know that you are the ones who are reading this report. I want to thank you for the care and dedication you show to your brother and sister administrators, and most of all, I want to thank you for your care for this wonderful, beloved, sometimes crazy liberal religious movement of ours.

Good administration is the backbone of any organization’s Mission, and you are all some of the best that there is – anywhere!

Thank you!

Onward and Upward,

Chuck

Charles B. Rosene, President
Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators