

Governance Advisory Team Annual Report 2019-20

Submitted by Paul Morris, Tom Reischl, Sandy Simon

The Governance Advisory Team (GAT) is a standing committee that advises the Board of Trustees (BOT) on governance issues. The GAT is also charged with helping train new BOT members in UUAA governance and with presenting information to the congregation that will help them understand our governance structures and procedures. The current committee members are:

	Term began	Term Ends	
Sandy Simon	March 2018	March, 2023	2 nd term - Reappointed March, 2020
Tom Reischl	May, 2018	March, 2021	Replaced Elizabeth LaPorte (resigned) 5/18
Paul Morris	May, 2019	March, 2022	Followed Tim Richards 5/19

At the 2019 Annual Meeting, June 2, the GAT presented bylaw change options on proxy and absentee voting. The congregation voted not to provide proxy voting, but to implement absentee voting. The GAT helped the BOT create procedures for conducting absentee voting. The BOT then used the new process at the January, 2020 meeting for a vote to sponsor the ordination of Theresa Rohlck. The process went well and only minor changes are needed in future.

In October, 2019 we finished our research on optimal Board sizes for UU congregations (and boards in general) and submitted a report to the Board for their future consideration. As the year has evolved, this does not seem to be an urgent priority for the Board this year.

This year considerable effort went into researching, writing and getting input for a document with guidelines for bringing resolutions to a vote in the congregation. We held review meetings for the document with the Board, the Social Justice Council, the staff, the Justice in the Middle East Group, and at an open Q&A session. The document was posted on the website and emailed to the UUAA leadership list for additional feedback. After several revisions, we feel ready to implement this, although we do not have consensus on the percent of yes votes that should be required to pass a resolution, so we will need to present this to the congregation with a number discerned by the wisdom of the BOT. We are now writing up proposed bylaw changes that are needed to operationalize the guidance document. This effort has been slowed, first by unfortunate interactions with UUAA's Justice in the Middle East group, and now by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we continue to work toward implementation.

Our meetings this year often include BOT President, Erik Stalhandske and Vice President, Laura Bolletino. Their presence helps us stay in sync with Board priorities and needs.

Future work: We are continuing our work on bylaw wording for bring resolutions and large decisions to the congregation. We hope to see this implemented in 2020-21. We anticipate taking part in training the new BOT taking office in June. There may be governance issues to discuss after reviewing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the running of UUAA. We need to start planning for more congregational education about governance. And it is time to revisit the Governance Task Force list of work to do.