

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

July 8, 2006

Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship, Bloomington, MN

Present: Sam Womley – Chair, Eric Severson, Virginia Wolf, Elaine Rockwell, Karen Kress

Guests: Gina Dugan and Sharon Carter (Archives Committee, Rev. Phil Lund  
Minneapolis local arrangements for 2007: Rev. Lisa Friedman, FUS

Minutes to: Nancy Heege, Sarah Greene

#### Nuts and Bolts

- Elaine Rockwell agreed to succeed Suzanne Owens-Pike as recording secretary
- Introductions and brief check-in
- Agenda accepted
- Minutes of February 4, 2006: Accepted
- Agenda item for reviewing notes from the April 30, 2006 meeting at the Iowa City Conference was tabled as notes were not yet available
- Expense requests: None noted
- Replacing Suzanne Owens-Pike on the committee: Karen reported this is in progress; committee members invited to send suggestions to Carol Jackson
- Updates from Karen Kress: The Awards Committee met in the spring, are adding a new person to replace Ted Downey.
- Date for fall meeting: October 14, 2006, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m
- Nominations for future PSD Conferences – Omaha 08, Duluth 09 (too far?), Ames or Davenport 2010; GA to be in Minneapolis 2010

#### Review Iowa City Conference

- Karen Kress: Issue to be addressed for future conferences - accessibility to the speaker platform and in general to all activities of the conference as presented in a message from Rev. Brian Eslinger, District President; Lisa Friedman took note of the issue for next year's conference
- Valerie Ackerman communication: Suggested that having the honorarium and reimbursement for travel at the venue would be preferred to waiting until after the conference. She also noted that food was a problem for folks with allergies or vegetarian needs. Discussion: In 2001, attendees were permitted to opt out of

- meals; 2002 Ames offered “accommodations on request” for special meal needs. Committee discussed reviewing how the registration form asks about meal issues.
- Karen Kress suggested adding “hotel liaison” to one person’s job description as part of the local arrangements assignment.
  - ACTION: Lisa Friedman agreed to discuss with the hotel for next year 1) what they can do to be flexible and accommodate special food needs and 2) accessibility requirements
  - Evaluations included many comments about food and accessibility.
  - Youth involvement: Sam’s experience in one workshop with adults and youth together was that both were more engaged and the workshop came alive.
  - The conference title was not well communicated – the meaning and original intent did not come across.
  - Overall, the conference was excellent.
  - Final budget: Iowa City final report to be ready after end of June statement was received. Early report: big profit due to large turnout. Estimate \$1,400 to be sent to the District.
  - Discussion: should we encourage the Board to conduct an evaluation of the conference to determine the purpose of the conference and whether it is meeting the PSD goals.
  - Agreed it is a Board function to do that kind of evaluation, not the function of the program committee.
  - Agreed: The upward trend in number of attendees should be taken into account for future site selection.

#### Review 2007 Conference

- Theme has been set: Nurturing Our Faith Communities
- Discussion of Judy Lecturer – Phil Lund to follow up with confirming commitment of Rev. Roland D. Martinson
- The 2007 local committee is very excited and looking forward; budget is the number one question. Lisa is waiting for the Iowa City budget to help clarify draft budget for 2007, will be meeting with the hotel soon. Has questions about the number of youth meals taken with the adults vs. youth on their own. Committee recommended a strategy of budgeting for several levels of attendance (e.g. 250, 300, 350, 400).
- Conference registration fee discussion: Fee needs to recover actual costs without discouraging registration. Last year the cost of online registration justified a slight fee increase. Sarah Greene is the source for information about exhibitor fees.
- Sarah Greene requested a discussion of conference taping. It is done at GA.

Questions include who would do it, who would pay for it. Speakers have been asked by attendees for an email copy. No good solution seems available; in the past transcripts were requested in advance but speakers are reluctant to furnish when not in final form, and reluctant to do after the fact editing. Issues include intellectual property (for speakers) and justice (for those unable to attend). The intellectual property issues are customarily addressed in a contract or verbally or in an e-mail agreement. Some hotels require that they do all taping which can be costly. Suggestion: tape only the two major speakers. ACTION: Lisa will get information from the hotel about costs of taping.

- Speaker honoraria is \$300 plus travel and hotel and food expense reimbursement. UUA speakers are not allowed to accept honoraria. RECOMMENDATION: Increase honorarium to \$500 and formalize the process with a letter of confirmation on PSD letterhead to the two special speakers. Karen Kress agreed to create a format or template for the letter.
- Elaine Rockwell volunteered to be the onsite assistant (speaker handler) for Rolland Martinson.
- Discussion of Kickoff speaker: determined the possible list would be approached in the following order: Rebecca Parker, Laura Holman, Suzanne Meyers, Rob Hardies, Caroline Owen-Towle
- September 30 was set as the deadline for workshop applications.
- ACTION: Agreed to prepare and send an email cover letter announcing the 2007 conference would be sent including information to encourage youth attendance, asking congregation leaders to distribute to their congregations, with no physical copies to be mailed.
- Eric stated he would contact Sarah for a list of “what goes and when”
- Nancy Heege: Requested discussion of the possibility of a separate programming track for Ministers’ during the PSD Conference to enable more Ministers and their families to attend, rather than the current situation in which the Ministers’ meeting follows the conference. Phil Lund suggested a similar “family track” approach. Question was raised: Do we need to rethink how we do the conference for 2008?
- Discussed strategies to increase percent of evaluations returned by conference attendees to get more information. Suggestions included sending a post-conference e-mail requesting feedback; rewarding those who turn in the evaluation at the conference with candy kisses.
- ACTION: Committee agreed to make evaluations a separate mailing post-conference and collect e-mail addresses as part of the registration process to enable this effort.

- Details about the youth track idea: One track that would be definitely youth oriented, with youth presenting workshops. Question: Do youth know there is no “con” this time – that they will be integrated? Also, the UUA will have a team present to gather input and will need workshop space dedicated during each of the three time slots.

#### Review 2008

- Potential themes: global warming, environment, families, growth in the district, GA resolutions, spirituality, community, education, motivation, skills, interdependent web (faith, community, ecology, global warming, sanctuary) moral values for a pluralistic society; weaving the web of life, civic sense, civility, “Civility, Common Ground, and the interdependent web of spiritual life.”
- Discussion: It will be an election year. Other suggestions: Reclaiming the American way; Reclaiming our principles; Reclaiming democracy; Making democracy work; living our democratic faith; rebuilding a faithful democracy.
- ACTION: Consensus – Making Democracy Work

#### Archives

- Gina and Sharon presented a terrific array of reports generated from work done to date to capture significant statistics for the PSD archives. Data spans 1990 to present and captures a variety of useful facts in one place, including fees, attendance, location, keynote and Judy lecturers, date, etc. In addition, they prepared charts of patterns in participant attendance choices by workshop theme.
- Next step is to define categories of information to collect, such as focus areas, number attending, standardizing questions asked on the registration form.
- Discussion: Committee was greatly impressed and delighted with the work. Noted we do not want to duplicate what the PSD office is collecting. We need to be more specific about what data we want for the archives.
- ACTION: The committee thanked and commended Gina and Sharon for their work and encouraged them to continue compiling and analyzing information.

#### Youth track discussion

- Discussed “what is youth’s role in the conference” when Rev. Lund arrived.
- Requested Local arrangements/Lisa to determine how to orient youth and provide housing if other than the hotel (since financial cost is likely to be a barrier to attendance); need someone to help coordinate/facilitate and offer guidance. Phil will identify a LifeSpan RE person to attend the Oct. 14 meeting who will work with the youth and RE at the Host church (FUS). This may be the new dedicated

Youth Coordinator for PSD.

- Examples of costs: breakfasts Friday pizza, lunch and dinner Saturday.
- Discussion: Need some consistent way to do intentionally high quality youth programming; need to model the programming we want to see congregations doing.
- The template for local arrangements registrar is the one used by Unity