

## **NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE LONG-RANGE PLANNING INTERVIEWS**

This is an Executive Summary of the outcome of the long-range planning interviews. The interviews were conducted by the Long-Range Planning Committee, Co-Chaired by Robert Buesing and Peggity Cooper. Other Committee members were Carl Krave and Randy Cooper. The long-range planning process was established under the guidance of Ken Hurto of the UU District Office.

The Committee used the successful strategic planning process of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas as its template. Following review, the Committee formulated five questions:

- How do we want our congregation's vision and mission to live out there in the world?
- How will UUC influence the lives of the congregational community?
- What distinctive contribution will the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater make to the lives of the people in Tampa Bay who do not belong to our church?
- How do you envision two services supporting and enhancing our commitment to growth?
- What physical and organizational changes are we willing to consider as our congregation grows, for example Social Hall upgrades, collaboration with the broader UU community, etc.?

Almost 100 members of the UUC community attended one of four UU café's. In the cafés, participants spent about an hour and a half discussing each of these questions in small groups of 3 to 5 people under the guidance of a facilitator. The raw data from these exercises is available for review.

### **Overall Themes**

1. The congregation appears strongly supportive of growth.
2. Social action is core to many of our members.
3. We have shortcomings and room for improvement in extending our selves and promoting our selves in the outside community.
4. We observed support for some specific and relatively inexpensive improvements to our physical campus but in the near term (5 to 10 years), we do not see support for significant changes to the campus such as completely tearing down and rebuilding facilities.

### **HOW DO WE WANT OUR CONGREGATION'S VISION AND MISSION TO LIVE OUT THERE IN THE WORLD?**

Social Action is core to the lives of many of our members. They see the Church as restorative but for deeper meaning, the messages must be taken to the broader community. There was broad support for the Split the Plate program, for our public actions on behalf of social justice, and assistance for those who need it – and a desire that we expand our public action. These views were echoed in the UU Marketing campaign materials that coincidentally came out at about this same time. In fact, that campaign has framed and articulated many of these views as well or better than we can. We can incorporate them directly into our Long Range Planning process.

### **HOW WILL UUC INFLUENCE THE LIVES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY?**

Many of our members cite the inspiration they get from others in the community and from its leadership. Areas that can be improved concern outreach to those who feel less than fully integrated into the community.

### **WHAT DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION WILL THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF CLEARWATER MAKE TO THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN TAMPA BAY WHO DO NOT BELONG TO OUR CHURCH?**

Members cited our work on the Susan Stanton controversy as an example of when UUC made a positive impact on the overall community. By providing courageous leadership, our members take pride in UUC. Again, the marketing campaign has framed the answer to this question.

### **HOW DO YOU ENVISION TWO SERVICES SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING OUR COMMITMENT TO GROWTH?**

Members are supportive of growth and the positives that come from growth. The second service is seen through that filter – if it helps growth it is good but if not, then it may not justify the cost. No one was opposed but people weren't sure if it sustains itself.

### **WHAT PHYSICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES ARE WE WILLING TO CONSIDER AS OUR CONGREGATION GROWS, FOR EXAMPLE SOCIAL HALL UPGRADES, COLLABORATION WITH THE BROADER UU COMMUNITY, ETC.**

A variety of physical changes to our campus were raised by the members. Clearly the

number one requested physical change is bathroom upgrades in the Social Hall. More specific architectural plans have been drawn for the congregation's consideration of that change.

Both the external signage along Nursery Road and the internal signage on the campus were commonly mentioned. Both of these are very relevant to our goal of making the church more visible to the outside community and more welcoming to visitors. Several new members noted that it was difficult to locate commonly mentioned rooms (i.e., the patio room) because there was no uniform signage or directions. This issue has been referred to the Building Committee.

As to the Octagon, several people noted the poor condition of the windows on the second level and the darkness in the lobby area. The Building Committee is investigating.

As to the Manse (the small house on the northeast part of the campus), many people mentioned that the building was outdated and not laid out in a functional way. Committee members met with an architect and contractor to review the building and received a recommendation that the building not be demolished but instead be upgraded and remodeled. Specifically, demolition and rebuilding of a new building might cost \$200 a square foot whereas upgrading the current facility might cost \$60 per square foot. More investigation is required as to which walls can be removed but we feel we can recommend to the congregation that the building be saved and reused rather than demolished.

As to the Social Hall, the ideas of the congregation were reviewed with an architect. He concluded that the current Social Hall space can be updated with improved floor covering, new light fixtures, sound attenuation wall coverings and the like. However, the building is not designed to have the ceiling raised. Accordingly, other than the bathroom upgrades and an upgrade to the entry foyer, the architect only envisions decorative and cosmetic changes.

The question of adding a second floor to the Social Hall was raised with the architect. He reports that this is not a feasible idea. The site is pretty much built out in terms of the ratio of floor space to parking spaces and green space. Absent a parking deck – which is of course very expensive – we do not have expansion space on this campus. Thus, the decision to have two services is the most practical way to expand our capacity.

Other ideas raised included upgrading the kitchen facilities. The committee met with several catering companies (who might, for example, cater wedding receptions) and were told that most professional caterers will prepare food either off site or using outdoor cooking facilities and grills. The professional caterers viewed our current kitchen facility as a serving location, not a food preparation location. One of the caterers recommended that some improvements be made outside the kitchen to the east where a concrete pad could be poured and perhaps a metal roof covering installed. The view of the caterers was that an expensive upgrade of our kitchen facility would not cause them to use it as it is not an efficient way to prepare large meals.

In accordance with our role, the Long Range Planning Committee has turned over the results of this process to the Building Committee which is working on many of the short term items. They will separately develop budgets for the Social Hall bathroom upgrade and the signage upgrade and continue work on the Manse upgrades for use by the church leadership.

