

UCC Strategic Plan – October 2011

With our 5-year Long Range Plan coming to closure June 30, the Board of Trustees convened a “Strategic Plan” (SP) team. The team included Barry Ahrendt, Dean Smith, Janet Swigler, Kevin Meredith, Bauer Westeren, Andrea Dudick (RE Committee Representative), Mike Paget (Chairperson), Neal Jones (Ministerial Consultant), Lisa Eason (RE Director), and Don Dodson (Strategic Planning Consultant).

The SP team received input from “Appreciative Inquiry” sessions held in the fall of 2010, canvass drive discussions held in the winter of 2011, and SP input sessions held in the spring of 2011. From this input the SP team developed a list of Priority Goals, which is published below. The goals involving staff are NOT intended to imply any plans to change current personnel. They are strategic priorities proposed without a formal timetable.

The plan was reviewed by the Board in August and received final approval at its October meeting. We will hold a Congregational Conversation on Sunday, November 6 after the service to formally present the plan and answer questions about implementation.

The Board will assign teams to implement the goals – either existing committees or task-specific teams. While there is no fixed timetable for implementing the SP, it is anticipated that a formal update/review/replacement of the plan be considered near the end of the 3rd year in 2014.

To nurture the SP process and the congregation, the SP team recommends that a process be created for the congregation to review and revise the mission, values, and vision of the UCC.

UCC Strategic Plan Priority Goals

Buildings and Grounds

1. Make cosmetic improvements to the RE wing that will improve the appearance and usability of the space without making structural changes.
2. Modify the sanctuary and social hall to improve aesthetics and increase seating for services.
3. At least annually provide a summary report to the congregation regarding buildings and grounds projects and how they relate to the long term goals of the Master Plan.
4. Expand and upgrade the restroom facilities.
5. Refinish the sanctuary and social hall ceilings to remove, replace, or conceal the existing acoustical tiles.

Finances

1. Develop a long term Financial Plan: operating expenses, capital funding needs, strategic, long-range etc.
2. Hire a full-time administrator to manage ACS, website, bookkeeping, and other duties.

3. Increase the average pledge by 2 percent annually.
4. Improve the procedures for timely and accurate pledge statements.

Membership Growth

1. Set a goal of 5% membership growth per year.
2. Strengthen retention of members and follow-up with new members and visitors.
3. Hire a part-time membership coordinator.

Outreach

1. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan: Expand website and social media; Disseminate UU values through multiple media; Post the minister's sermons on the website; Develop outreach plan for all higher education institutions; Improve signage; and improve the quality and availability of UU information placed in plain view for both members and visitors who walk into our building.
2. Take on highly visible causes, expressing our values as a voice of conscience in Columbia, and the greater community.
3. Host more social events, forums, and presentations open to the general public.
4. Increase congregational participation in community service projects that provide for basic human needs or help the environment.

Programming

1. Develop covenant groups: small groups with a spiritual emphasis that will deepen connections.
2. Have more congregation-wide social activities, and group service opportunities, that will deepen connections among and between members.
3. Increase hours for RE professionals for Lifespan (children, youth, and adults) RE to at least one full-time equivalent position.
4. Reflect environmentalism in all programs.

Religious Education

1. Increase Social Action initiatives for Children and Youth.
2. Study the feasibility of a religious education "Sunday School" hour for all ages.
3. Develop age-appropriate modules to prepare children and youth for discussions of religion and beliefs with non-Unitarian Universalists.
4. Develop a congregational commitment to mentoring high-school youth.
5. Partner with youth of other UU Congregations and other faiths for social action activities.