

Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation Long Range Planning February, 2005 Final Report

The ALUUC amended its bylaws in 1994 to create a Long-Range Planning Committee, which was charged with the development of a 5-year plan as a guide for the future.

In 1999, an extensive long range planning process was undertaken that involved focus group meetings resulting in a draft report that was discussed at a Sunday service. The congregation voted its priorities using multi-voting after the discussion. 62 options were available within 11 categories, and each participant received five votes. From this, eleven of the highest priorities were highlighted as part of the entire Final Report. See attached.

After approximately five years from the last report, the current board of directors requested the Long Range Planning Committee to engage in another long range planning process. It was a time when evaluation and planning was essential. The congregation was in a time of transition. ALUUC had celebrated its 50th Anniversary last February and recently called its first full-time minister, Rev. Martin Woulfe as well as a new Coordinator of Religious Education, Marla Johnson.

Long-range planning is designed to help a congregation clarify its preferred future and to determine the steps it needs to take to get there. An effective long-range planning process serves two purposes: It articulates what a congregation will look like in a given period of time and it outlines the strategies a congregation needs to take to get there.

The long-range process will benefit our congregation by:

- improving our effectiveness as a congregation,
- helping us address directly some of our critical issues,
- being a wise steward of our resources, and
- making decisions based on our priorities.

ALUUC's Long Range Planning Process

Focus Groups – Information Gathering

Four focus groups were be offered in January to allow congregation members and friends the opportunity to informally discuss the future direction of the congregation. The following questions were open for discussion:

- What about our congregation are you most proud of ?
- What hope do you have for our congregation that is still unrealized?
- What changes would you like to see in our congregation?
- What sustains your involvement in our congregation?
- What inhibits your involvement in our congregation?
- How should we be living out our mission as a congregation in the surrounding community?
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Focus Groups were held on the following dates at the congregation. Congregational committees were invited to attend on specific dates, but all members and friends were invited to each focus group to discuss any issue of interest. Altogether, 45 members and friends participated in the focus groups.

- Jan 9 after service
- Jan 16 after service
- Jan 18 Committee Night
- Jan 30 after service

Long Range Planning Committee members then identified the most important areas of congregational life expressed in the focus groups and created a list of possible goals for congregational consideration.

Multi-Voting - Identifying Congregational Priorities – Feb. 13 and Feb. 20

After two Sunday services in February, congregation members and friends had the opportunity to cast votes for items on the list of possible goals. Each person received six votes and could cast all votes for one goal or a vote for each of several goals. Proxy voting was allowed, and seven people did so.

After the multi-voting, the Long Range Planning Committee tallied votes and created this report of results for consideration by congregational leadership.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Hagan
Carol Kneedler
Co-Chairs, ALUUC Long Range Planning Committee

Vote Ranking

Votes	Item
53	Pave the parking lot.
47	Maintain and increase a liberal religious voice in Springfield
33	Develop an organized way of connecting new visitors with small groups and committees
30	Increase financial support for the Coordinator of Religious Education
29	Build a sanctuary
26	Continue Youth RE class start time at 10:30 a.m., concurrent with adult service
25	Develop and implement a “signature” program that responds to a particular community need
21	Increase financial support for the Office Administrator, adding bookkeeping responsibilities
20	Outreach to current members who no longer attend
20	Outreach to community to build membership... By increased publicity
17	Increased support for music: choir leader, grand piano, practice space, community youth choir.
16	Service topics should be more spiritual
16	Provide our youth with tools to make good decisions in today’s society
15	Consistent communication to members, friends and parents concerning leadership decisions
15	Increasing operational revenue through pledging
14	Change Youth RE Class start time to 9:30 am and have children over 6 attend Sunday service with the adults
13	Begin fund drive(s) now for future Building and Grounds projects
12	Finance Building and Grounds projects by building up reserve funds (by saving)
12	Finance Building and Grounds projects by extending long-term debt while continuing level operating budgets
12	Fundraising should only be used for special projects, not for operational expenses.
11	Address outdoor aesthetics: landscaping, pond, signage, trees, windbreak
10	Increase awareness of Endowment Fund
10	Adult Religious Education – add new Adult RE classes with all offerings published in a brochure at the beginning of the church year
9	Improve the playground
9	Increasing operational revenue through fundraising
9	Youth / young adult outreach
9	Greater parental commitment for children to attend classes
7	Growth and retention of members and visitors... by campus ministry
6	Develop a pastoral assistant program
6	Service topics should be more secular
5	Give a percentage of Sunday collection to charity
4	Strengthen denominational ties with the UUA, Meadville, Central Midwest District (CMwD), and other congregations within the CMwD to pool resources
3	Become an active teaching church with an assistant minister
2	ALUUC should develop a Vision Statement that is congruent with our Mission. A vision statement answers the question, “What would this congregation look like if we were effectively fulfilling our mission?”
2	Find ways to involve adults with no children in the Youth RE Program
2	Purchase more land
1	Transportation for members and friends to church events (write in)
1	Emphasize program and other things will follow (write-in)
1	Increase visibility and involvement of Jr. and Sr. Youth Groups in leadership and Sunday service.

Votes Within Categories

	Denomination (4 votes)
4	Strengthen denominational ties with the UUA, Meadville, Central Midwest District (CMwD), and other congregations within the CMwD to pool resources
	Facilities (104 votes)
29	Build a sanctuary
53	Pave the parking lot
11	Address outdoor aesthetics: landscaping, pond, signage, trees, windbreak
9	Improve the playground
2	Purchase more land
	Finance (83 votes)
10	Increase awareness of Endowment Fund
12	Fundraising should only be used for special projects, not for operational expenses.
	Ways to fund Building and Grounds projects
12	Finance Building and Grounds projects by extending long-term debt while continuing level operating budgets
12	Finance Building and Grounds projects by building up reserve funds (by saving)
13	Begin fund drive(s) now for future Building and Grounds projects
	Increasing operational revenue
15	Increase operational revenue through pledging
9	Increase operational revenue through fundraising
	Pastoral Care / Outreach to ALUUC Members & Friends (19)
4	Senior outreach
6	Develop a pastoral assistant program
9	Youth / young adult outreach
	Leadership (17 votes)
2	ALUUC should develop a Vision Statement that is congruent with our Mission. A vision statement answers the question, "What would this congregation look like if we were effectively fulfilling our mission?"
15	Consistent communication to members, friends and parents concerning leadership decisions
	Membership (80 votes)
	Growth and retention of members and visitors
20	Outreach to current members who no longer attend
33	Develop an organized way of connecting new visitors with small groups and committees
	Outreach to community to build membership...
20	By increased publicity
7	By campus ministry
	Program (39 votes)
17	Increased support for music: choir leader, grand piano, practice space, community youth choir.
	Service Topics:
16	Service topics should be more spiritual OR
6	Service topics should be more secular

	Religious Education (76 votes)
10	Adult Religious Education – add new Adult RE classes with all offerings published in a brochure at the beginning of the church year
	Youth Religious Education:
9	Greater parental commitment for children to attend classes
2	Find ways to involve adults with no children in the Youth RE Program
16	Provide our youth with tools to make good decisions in today’s society
	RE Class Time:
14	Change Youth RE Class start time to 9:30 am and have children over 6 attend Sunday service with the adults OR
25	Continue Youth RE class start time at 10:30 a.m., concurrent with adult service
	Staffing (54 votes)
3	Become an active teaching church with an assistant minister
	Increase financial support for staff:
30	Increase financial support for the Coordinator of Religious Education
21	Increase financial support for the Office Administrator, adding bookkeeping responsibilities
	Social Action (77 votes)
25	Develop and implement a “signature” program that responds to a particular community need
5	Give a percentage of Sunday collection to charity
47	Maintain and increase a liberal religious voice in Springfield
	Write In Votes (3 votes)
1	Transportation for members and friends to church events (write in)
1	Emphasize program and other things will follow (write-in)
1	Increase visibility and involvement of Jr. and Sr. Youth Groups in leadership and Sunday service.

Category Ranking

Because there were more choices in some categories than others, the rankings may not actually reflect the importance of each category to our congregation.

Votes	Item
104	Facilities
83	Finance
80	Membership
77	Social Action
76	RE
54	Staffing
39	Program
19	Pastoral Care
17	Leadership
4	Denominational Ties