

Recommendations on Governance to KUC Board

Transition Team April 2010

A. Overview

“Religion transforms people.....organization, on the other hand, conserves. The need to balance both sides of this paradox – the transforming power of religion and the stabilizing power of organization - makes leading congregations a unique challenge.”
“Governance and Ministry-Rethinking Board Leadership” by Dan Hotchkiss

“Good mission statements make clear what good the congregation means to do, whom it hopes to benefit and how, and what it claims as its central principles or values. Articulating mission is a central role of governance. Major choices about goals and objectives also belong to governance, as does deciding who will be responsible for implementing them. Governance requires delegating power to those who direct the daily work and holding them accountable for their performance. Governance means seeing that the congregation’s money, property and people are kept safe and that the congregation lives in harmony with its own values....Governance is holding the whole institution and its work in trust, voicing its intentions, and taking responsibility for its performance.”
“Governance and Ministry-Rethinking Board Leadership” by Dan Hotchkiss

A Board’s role is to serve and support the congregation’s stated mission as an expression of God’s will in this place and in this time. A Board provides leadership to help realize a positive transformation in the lives of the people touched by the congregation’s work. In doing all this, the Board is more than the sum of its members with a distinct role to play collectively. A Board works on supporting the establishment of broad themes, goals and objectives as common threads in the church’s life and work. It should integrate its mission goals and objectives across the organization, breaking down silos and helping Committees broaden their focus to support and facilitate thematic approaches.

Kanata United Church

The Transition Team has had many opportunities over these past two years to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of governance at KUC. The Transition Team encourages the KUC Board to spend more time reflecting on its own spiritual leadership through shared study and varied spiritual practices.

The Board needs to continually think about the changes going on around us and the implications for and impact on KUC and on the Board itself. Commitment to a church, for example, is often less central to family and individual life today given the many competing demands and pressures, varied opportunities and interests. This means,

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among many things, that Board Committees may have difficulty in recruiting enough members. This suggests more attention and effort to help congregants identify their gifts while being flexible, agile and adaptable in recruiting individuals or groups into specific opportunities for ministry that are often well-defined, time-limited and lead to specific results.

The Transition Team's approach to governance builds on the congregation's mission and on its decision to focus on Faith Development and Learning as expressed in our paper on FD&L considered by the Board in February 2010. Our concept as reflected in the attached "bubble" diagram reinforces both the strong interconnection between our Worship, Faith Development and Learning, and Reaching Out and the importance of those Committees that facilitate and support the various aspects of the work of the church.

The Transition Team does not propose any significant downsizing or re-structuring of the Board at this time. We see organizational reform as part of an ongoing process as the implications of a focus on Faith Development and Learning deepen and as new staff arrives. **The Board should give ongoing consideration to its structure and the frequency of its meetings.** The concept of being more interconnected, for example, may present opportunities to reduce the Board's size by consolidation of some Committees under umbrellas e.g. Finance within the Stewardship Committee. (This would require strengthening of Stewardship). One Presbytery representative could attend KUC Board meetings on a rotating basis amongst our representatives.

The Transition Team's approach is further translated into the attached organization chart, reflecting the recommendations outlined below.

B. Recommendations – Phase One

The Transition Team proposes that the Board proceed immediately or by no later than June 15, 2010 to implement the following:

Recommendation 1: that the Board change its name to "The Kanata United Church Council"

Based on The Manual 2007 and as observed by our two Ministers, KUC's current governance structure is more that of a Council (see Manual 215-228). The Church Council model emphasizes the responsibility of all members of the congregation or pastoral charge to be engaged in ministry. The Church Council acts as a coordinating body, as a forum for some decisions, and as a place for sharing committee plans and actions. The Church Council develops policy and make plans, which are implemented by the various committees and groups of the congregation. The change in name to "Council" had been proposed in the past but never enacted. This action would not impact on the existing

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operations or functions, but would make KUC's governance structure more properly understood by external audiences within the UCC.

Motion: *Moved that the name of Kanata United Church's governing body be changed from Kanata United Church Board to Kanata United Church Council effective immediately to reflect better its existing organization structure as outlined in the 2007 UCC Manual and that this change be communicated to the KUC congregation and to Ottawa Presbytery.*

Recommendation 2: that the Council create a Planning Group

This Group would have a Chair represented on the Council, with Bob Richards invited to be the initial Chair. Membership in this group would include a representative from each of Worship, CD and Outreach, plus others identified with an expressed interest in planning for Faith Development and Learning. Its mandate would be to:

- facilitate the consideration and coordination of KUC's intentional focus on Faith Development and Learning by the Council and Committees
- support the Council in an annual planning exercise looking at thematic goals and objectives in cooperation with Stewardship/Finance
- support a congregation-level strategic planning exercise (e.g. Oasis) on a regular 3 to 5 year cycle.

This Committee would be created for two years, after which its continued usefulness and role would be reviewed.

All members of the Council must take ownership of the congregation's decision to focus on Faith Development and Learning and integrate this focus within ongoing Committee work. That said, the coming months will be one of ongoing change for the Council, as it works to deepen its understanding of greater inter-connections, to facilitate thematic approaches to programming and operations, and to welcome new staff. The Transition Team will also conclude its mandate in July, 2010. The Council will benefit from a small group which can support this thematic inter-connection, the integration of FD&L and facilitate annual and strategic planning to establish goals and objectives that will advance the congregation's mission. The Planning Group may need to meet frequently on occasion and will maintain close contact with the Council Chair, Chair Elect/Past Chair and Ministers without requiring their regular participation in all the group's deliberations.

Motion: *Moved that the KUC Council establish a Planning Group consisting of a Chair, a representative from each of Worship, CD and Outreach, plus others identified with an expressed interest in planning for Faith Development and Learning. This group would facilitate the consideration and coordination of KUC's intentional focus on Faith Development and Learning by the Council and its Committees; support the Council in an annual planning exercise looking at thematic goals and objectives in cooperation with Stewardship/Finance; and*

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support a congregation-level strategic planning exercise on a regular 3 to 5 year cycle. The role and continuation of the Planning Group would be reviewed by the Council within two years of the adoption of this motion.

Recommendation 3: that the Council takes action on the secondary JNAC

Recommendations which were (a) to invite CD, Pastoral Care and M&P to discuss with the Council their structure, staffing, budget and/or workload to consider if/where support may be required as KUC moves towards a new model of ministry and calls (and/or appoints) new staff; and (b) create a small Welcoming Committee in cooperation with the JSC and M&P to support the arrival and integration of our new ministerial staff.

Motion: *Moved that the Council, in light of the 2010 JNAC recommendations regarding the potential implications of the phased arrival of new staff, invites CD, Pastoral Care and M&P to present at its May and/or June 2010 Council meetings any concerns or considerations that they may wish to raise regarding their structure, programs, staffing, budget and/or workload as KUC moves towards a new model of ministry.*

Motion: *Moved that the Council decides to create a Welcome Committee under the leadership of XXX to support the arrival and introduction to KUC of new staff members to be called and/or appointed later in 2010 and early 2011. The Welcome Committee will invite members of the congregation to participate in this exercise and work with the other staff and Council Committees as appropriate, taking into account the specific roles and accountabilities of the JSC and M&P.*

Recommendation 4: that the Council ask the Communications Committee to present an immediate interim Communication strategy

In creating a new Communications Committee, the Council recognized that communications with members of the congregation and with the broader community needs considerable strengthening. It was understood that the roles and responsibilities and functioning of this new Committee may need to be reviewed. The activities of the JSC, the pending arrival of new staff and the congregation's newly adopted focus on Faith Development and Learning suggest that this priority deserves a renewed impetus, addressing matters such as:

- completing asap the updating of the website, even if outside resources are required
- reviewing newsletter formats and exploring other options for keeping in touch with congregants (email, social networks like Facebook)
- continued support for FD&L, including external publicity

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***Motion:** Moved that the Council invites the Communications Committee to present as soon as possible an immediate interim strategy outlining opportunities, challenges and constraints to improve KUC's internal and external communications.*

Recommendation 5: that the Council confirm that Committees are authorized to spend their approved annual budgets. They should be allowed to make adjustments within their budget as required to meet emerging needs.

As the Council shifts the focus of its own deliberations to its broad goals and objectives and thematic approaches, it needs to reinforce the responsibility and accountability of Committees to implement programs and take actions within their areas of activity, as consistent with their stated goals. KUC's culture as reflected through the budget process has indicated that Committees consistently under-spend their budgets, thus potentially limiting their effectiveness.

***Motion:** Moved that Council confirms that Committees be fully accountable and responsible for the allocation and use of their approved annual budgets and that they are encouraged to make full use of the funds available.*

C. Recommendations – Phase II

The Transition Team proposes that the Council implement the following over the coming months and no later than by **June 2011**:

Recommendation 6: that the Council formalize the function and role of an Executive Group

The UCC Manual in Section 275 indicates that "a Pastoral Charge or Congregation may appoint an Executive to deal with specific matters assigned to it by a Session, Official Board, Church Board, or Church Council, with its authority to act within specifically defined limits."

Experience at KUC suggests that it would be appropriate to formalize such a group to deal on an as needed basis with issues of a confidential nature that might arise (e.g. involving a congregant's actions or behaviour) and also in dealing with emergency situations, calling on other Council members as required. This group may also meet to consider the functioning of the Council itself and consult on future agendas. This group would be composed of the Chair, Past Chair/Chair Elect, Secretary, and Minister(s).

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Recommendation 7: that the Council give greater emphasis to Policy Development and create a Policy Book

The Council's governance role should shift to more strategic functions such as establishing priorities or monitoring our vision and mission rather than being involved in administrative and managerial matters. Creating and updating policies is one way to help guide and control many decisions over time and avoids the Council falling back into micro-management. The Council's own efficiency, effectiveness and ability to focus on broader issues would be enhanced. Over time, the Board may migrate to a more integrated policy governance type model.

A Policy Book would be the repository of all official Council policies (including previous Board policies still in existence) and be updated as appropriate. Maintaining the Policy Book would be the responsibility of the Council Secretary, and must be easily accessible to Council members and the congregation.

Recommendation 8: that the Council invites a group of congregants to examine KUC's approach to Christian hospitality and welcoming

“Christians welcome strangers as we ourselves have been welcomed into God through the love of Jesus Christ. Through hospitality, Christians imitate God's welcome ...hospitality is not a program, not a single hour or ministry in the life of the congregation. It stands at the heart of a Christian way of life, a living icon in the wholeness of God.” *“Christianity for the Rest of Us” by Diana Butler Bass*

KUC is an open, friendly spiritual family. We live within an increasingly diverse, mobile community of people who are to be welcomed for who they are in all their uniqueness. This of course can sometimes be risky. KUC would benefit from renewed attention to its internal dynamics and approach to welcome and engage visitors and new members and to being more intentional and inclusive in connecting with the wider community. The Worship Committee is responsible for new members but not for any follow-up with visitors and persons considering regular participation in the life and work of KUC. There is a Welcome table, special coffee mugs and efforts by Naomi and greeters to speak with people as they enter and depart on a Sunday morning. But congregants sometimes still too often keep within their own circle of friends and people also come into the life of the church through many doors beyond Sunday worship. Our church no longer has “elders” who were active in keeping in touch with members, adherents and new people moving into the neighbourhood.

It is felt that KUC would benefit from looking at how to reinforce its culture of Christian hospitality and identify more systematic efforts to invite and welcome people into community. Some options or ideas that could be explored include:

- undertake an audit of what happens on a Sunday morning with newcomers in mind.

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- continue efforts to develop a roster of Sunday greeters who would be present on a more regular basis to identify both newcomers and those who are missing for any extended period.
- review the mandate and role of a Fellowship and Hospitality Committee
- consider expanding the role of Pastoral Care to include making pastoral visits to newcomers where appropriate.

Recommendation 9: that the Council create a Talent Resource Group

This small group of 2-3 people would maintain job descriptions for Council members and consider a list of skills and/or qualities that the Council needs. It would support the recruitment of new Council members and could support Committee chairs in recruiting new Committee members. This group could also support the Council in considering a process to encourage the movement of Committee members across Committees based on people's skills and attributes. Council should consider the possibility of establishing limits for the terms of individuals on Committees to invite other members into the life and work of KUC.

We have recognized on many occasions that we need to do a better job of identifying and attracting additional lay members into the life and work of the church through its Committees, other groups and activities. This past year, for example, represents another occasion where the incoming Chair was left to fill Council vacancies. Activities like the annual book fair have relied on a small core group for many years, while CD had gone through a difficult period in attracting new participation in its work.

This group would come under the umbrella of Stewardship. Stewardship will continue to coordinate the overall effort at identifying people's gifts and talents while considering new approaches and strategies for engaging individuals in the life and work of the church that responds to the changes going on in the community around us.

D. Other Comments

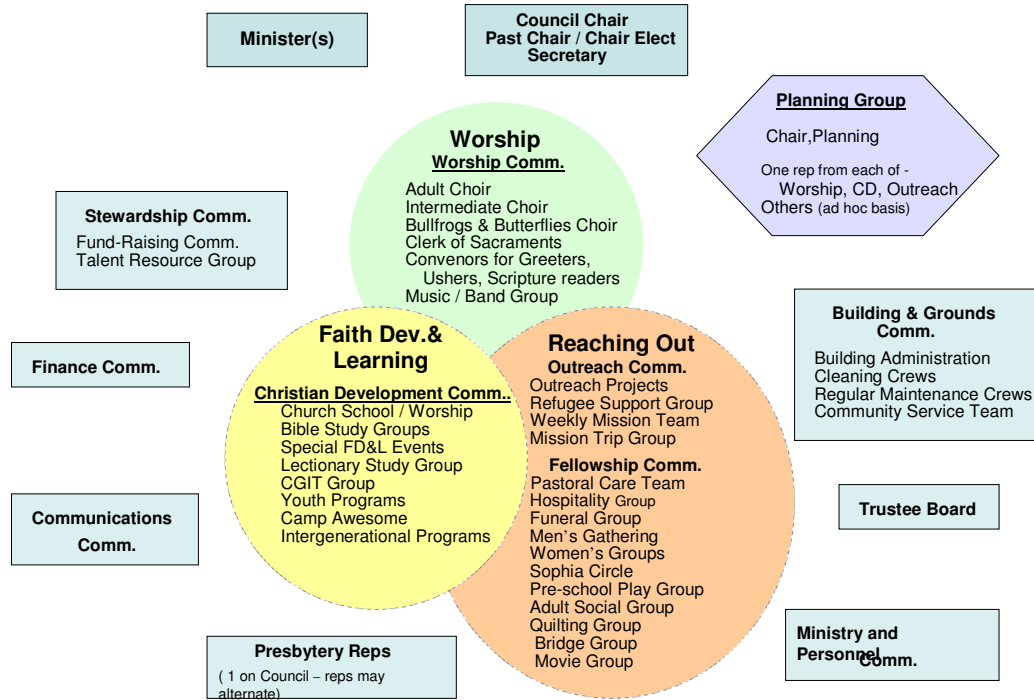
The Council should undertake an annual review of KUC membership trends, as it does with its finances. KUC tracks worship and Sunday school attendance on a regular basis. KUC also provides to the UCC annual updated statistics on its membership, which should be considered and approved by Council before being transmitted. The church's historic role requires more regular attention given our mobile population and ageing demographic.

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The Council would benefit from greater interaction with the wider church, drawing on ideas and approaches available from other United Churches and from Ottawa Presbytery [e.g. YAYA resources and youth elders]. Presbytery representatives should be encouraged to be more active in bringing back and sharing ideas and programs that are relevant to KUC, while representing KUC's goals and objectives as appropriate in any Presbytery discussions and decisions.

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KUC Council Concept



Council Members are Chairs/ reps of committees/groups in bold font Planning Group is an interim measure

- Committees surrounding the "bubbles" are Resource Supports
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