

UCE Volunteer Leaders Workshop  
Saturday, November 23, 2019

42 UCE Volunteer Leaders attended.

Here is a summary of expressed hopes:

- To be inspired and uplifted and more hopeful and enthusiastic
- To listen and learn and be heard: improved communication
- To identify strategic alliances and priorities and alliances
- To coordinate how groups fit into the larger whole of UCE
- To be both more joyful and content to live with mystery
- To seek clarity
- To imagine a future bigger than the past/ to find a path forward
- To find greater support for families and children
- To tap into the wisdom in the room
- To find ways to expand the diversity and number of leaders
- To be more inclusive
- To get information and find the “pulse of the church”
- To hear the wisdom in the room
- To extend possibilities for the future

Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire that included the following questions relative to the group (s) they represent at UCE:

- How long have you been involved ?
- Number of others involved on a regular basis?
- How often do you meet and what is the purpose of your meeting?
- In a few sentences, how would you describe your group or activity to someone new to UCE?
- In what ways does your group relate to the UCE Mission and Ends Statements of UCE Board?

- What is the average tenure of someone involved in your group or activity?
- How does someone join your group? How do they leave it?
- How are leaders chosen? How often? Have you considered a succession plan for leadership of your group that includes support for new leadership? Where do you get support for your leadership?
- How does your group's work align with the UCE Leadership Toolkit?
- Where does your group's work fit in the Organizational scheme of UUCE?
- How does the work/purpose/meaning/ value of your group get communicated or acknowledged?
- How is appreciation for your leadership acknowledged?
- What would it take for your group to bring you more meaning or joy?
- What is really working in your group?
- What larger dream do you have for this congregation?

Participants met for 30 minutes in groups of 5. and were asked to share key insights or observations that emerged from their conversation:

Needs or desires identified:

- Better communication
- Multi-generational activity and connection'
- Greater accountability
- More diversity
- Attention to existing resources (Leadership Tool Kit)
- Vetting and training for volunteer leadership
- Greater connection of programs to ends statements and UCE Mission
- Useable data base
- Leadership succession planning and recruitment
- A clearer path to leadershipCommunication coordination
- Continued proactivity of Board in process and planning

Open questions to ponder:

How might we:

- Provide orientation for our leaders?
- Understand our “audience”?
- Make our communication more reciprocal (two way) between leadership and congregation?
- Listen more carefully?
- Leverage our tools (like the Leadership Tool Kit)
- Seek out the voices that are not there?
- Get out of our bubbles - seek relationships beyond our comfort zones?
- Clarify our message (what and to whom?)
- Help each other move from personal agendas to a relationship with the whole?
- Utilize the practice of One on one?
- Be more hospitable?
- Tackle barriers to communication?
- Create meaningful feedback loops?
- Evaluate our groups’ missions?
- Communicate our best intentions?
- Identify what must succeed or continue to keep UCE viable?
- Make all the little things add up to more?

This was a time of stimulating conversation and thoughtful participation. This was, I believe an important first step. Volunteer Leadership Workshop Two is scheduled for January 11 from Noon to 4pm. Please put it on your calendar. At that time we will set some goals and priorities and divide and assign some of the tasks to smaller groups who will begin crafting plans to address some of the bigger questions.

In the meantime, I hope you will keep this discussion live with curiosity and creativity. We have the luxury here of a system that is already working well enough to generate a history of good institutional energy and commitment enough to bring out 42 leaders on a Saturday!

I look forward to being with you all soon.

Karen