

Southern New England UCC Conferences: Key Questions

The following questions were asked by the participants of the planning committee at the August 30 meeting. The order of the questions reflects those that the group rated as the most important to address near term to least important. At the end of each question, in parenthesis, is the suggested committee (s) to address the question in planning.

Most Important Questions to Address:

- Q. How will we connect with, or partner with, other organizations (religious or secular) to meet our vision? *(Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, future Program committees)*
- Q. How can we equip pastors and lay people for the radical adaptive, transformative change that is necessary? *(Governance, Communications and Outreach*, Staffing)*
- Q. How does it equip people to be disciples in the local church and in the world? *(Mission/Vision)*
- Q. How to get local churches on board, aware, inspired by what we're doing? *(Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, Governance)*
- Q. How do we encourage connectivity both electronically (around shared needs/interests) and in person (geographical)? *(Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, future Program committee)*
- Q. How do we communicate the vision of this conference such that local churches see themselves in it? *(Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, Staffing, Governance)*
- Q. How can we get those in the pews more involved in the wider/new conference? *(Governance, Mission/Vision, Communication and Outreach*, Staffing)*
- Q. How can we engage willing pastors to enter into major re-training so they are capable of leading the transitions before us? *(Governance, Mission/Vision, Staffing)*
- Q. How do we retain and how do we relinquish things no longer important? *(Governance, Mission/Vision, Staffing, future Program committee)*
- Q. How will structure (and vote) give a fair representation to all/each of the three conferences given great discrepancy in size/number of churches and members? *(Governance)*
- Q. How will the new conference help the individuals in the pews? *(Mission/Vision, Communication and Outreach*, future Program committee)*
- Q. What is the self-interest of the local church that we need to address? *(Governance, Mission/Vision)*
- Q. What we're talking about is a cultural shift in our congregations, including our clergy, from local (immanent thinking) to cooperative (transcendent thinking). Is it possible to turn this shift quickly enough to avoid the iceberg? *(Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, Staffing)*
- Q. How can we create an "on-ramp" for willing UCC congregations, and after them, with other denominations' congregations to affiliate so as to amplify the advocacy and activist voice? *(Governance, Mission/Vision, Communications and Outreach*, Staffing, future Program committee)*

Q. What can make the new conference known for its works/actions rather than its structure?
(Governance, Mission/Vision, future Program committee, Communications and Outreach)*

Q. How will each of the three conferences continue to have separate Boards of Directors?
(Governance)

Q. How can we increase communication and cooperation between local congregations? *(Governance, Mission/Vision, Staffing, Communications and Outreach*)*

**Rather than creating a Communications only committee, it is recommended that it be broadened to be the Communications and Outreach committee as a great deal of work required to introduce, “socialize” and evaluate the new conference should be done in face-to-face settings as opposed to only communications.*