

General Assembly Way Forward Commission

Administrative Supplement
June 5, 2018

This Administrative Supplement is provided by the Way Forward Commission, with the concurrence of the All-Agency Review Committee, to all six national agencies of the PC(USA) and to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission (or other entity created or charged by the 2018 General Assembly with follow-up to the work of the Way Forward Commission). The ongoing Commission administrative actions during the past two years have been extremely helpful in initiating and encouraging collaborative conversations within and among national agencies that were long-needed, and the impetus of a commission often served to overcome institutional inertia. The following are several critical initiatives that are still works-in-progress, and it is our deep hope that they continue to be encouraged by agency leadership and by any implementation commission or entity that the General Assembly may establish. The partnerships and the energy that have been set into motion by these administrative actions of the Way Forward Commission will carry our church forward long into the future.

I. Communications.

Creating and implementing a collaborative “world class” communications strategy.

Few topics elicited greater interest and energized response than did the Way Forward Commission’s inquiry regarding denominational communications. Any membership organization might be expected to place a premium on good communication, yet the desire for improved, frequent, precise and increased two-way communication about the PC(USA) was a strong and persistent theme. In response, the Way Forward Commission initially established task forces working in four different areas of communications and subsequently drew the efforts together in a single working group comprised of communications professionals on the staff of all six agencies. The result was the development of a five-point vision for a denominational and interagency communication plan to be commended to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission.

“World-class communications” for the PC(USA). That was the goal expressed at one Way Forward Commission listening session and echoed many times over as the Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee engaged in conversations about a new openness in the Church functioning as one body in Christ. Early on in its work, the Commission rejected the concept of a single denomination-wide communications office for a variety of substantive programmatic and financial reasons. Yet, a coordinated and well-integrated interagency approach to communications was seen as essential going forward. After months of input from across the Church, certain themes emerged, shaping a new vision for effective denominational and interagency communications, responsive to the needs of congregations and the changing landscape of the 21st century. That feedback indicates the Church is best served by:

1. A unified denominational look and identity (“a branded family”) that clearly articulates who we are, what we stand for and what makes Presbyterians unique, reflecting the whole of the PC(USA), creating a family resemblance that allows us to look, sound and feel more like the connectional church we are;
2. Development of a strategic communications plan for the PC(USA), a guiding document, rooted in Reformed theology, that serves as the foundation for comprehensive denominational communications, while still acknowledging the audience-specific needs of each agency;
3. Compelling messaging — the foundation upon which we build a house of communications — delivered to common audiences in a unified voice across

multiple platforms, including social media, to effectively communicate the work the Church is doing locally, nationally and around the world;

4. An easy-to-navigate website focused on congregational resources, with a robust search engine;
5. Coordination of digital and print communication to avoid common audience overlap, redundancy and inundation of email and snail mail.

As part of ongoing administrative action, the Commission has continued to engage with the communications directors of the six agencies (“6Comm”) and agency executives to guide changes to denominational communications. Some of the initial projects/tasks include:

- Closer coordination of individual web development, fostering user-friendly approach and closer cooperation in sharing address change information where possible
- Message development in coordination and alignment with the Vision 2020 Team
- Development of coordinated visual identity guidelines (logos, color palette, etc.)
- Coordination and development of a PC(USA) website that meets the needs of the coordinated communications plan
- Development of an editorial style guide
- PC(USA) audience audit to identify overlap and share common audience contact lists where appropriate
- Coordinated approach to media relations
- Expansion of the PC(USA) social media roundtable strategy
- Expanded editorial calendar coordination
- Cross-agency promotion
- Continued communication resource sharing

Flowing from a strong church vision, a strategic communications plan would serve as a foundational document, establishing shared goals, objectives, strategies and tactics, as well as setting benchmarks from which we can measure future success. The plan might cover areas of common needs within communications and would identify common audiences and communication touch-points that cross agencies. With all six agencies working together, a world-class PC(USA) communications plan is within our reach as we continue to make our way forward together. In the immediate period ahead, such continued discussion among “6Comm” and with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission is a priority.

2. Inclusion & Equity.

Creating a collaborative Diverse Voices Table comprised of staff from all agencies.

Among its recommendations to the General Assembly, the Way Forward Commission called for the creation of a Diverse Voices Table which would engage in conversation and activity to prevent the perpetuation of practices which are unjust and prejudiced. Our call for the creation of a Diverse Voices Table with participation by staff from all six agencies ensures that this important work of inclusion and equity is not relegated to one office or group, but instead would become a unified effort that permeates the entire denominational structure and potentially beyond. The formation of the Diverse Voices Table will allow for coordination and collaboration around these efforts of equity and inclusion.

Approach:

- We recommend the creation of a Diverse Voices Table composed of 2 staff members from each of the six agencies, gathered in shared commitment to the vital and complicated work of justice, inclusion, and equity.

- We recommend that the Diverse Voices Table be seated by September 15, 2018, and meet regularly, no less than 6 times per year.
- It is imperative that the executive leadership of each agency support and encourage participation in the Diverse Voices Table by ensuring that their representatives are afforded both the responsibility and authority necessary for full engagement.

Purposes & Product:

- The Diverse Voices Table will provide the space for honest and constructive conversation among agency staff around issues of equity and inclusion in the various context of their work.
- The Diverse Voices Table will be responsible to ensuring agency “race audits” are completed by the end of the 2018 calendar year and thereafter every other year.
- Each agency shall determine which 2 staff members will represent them at the Diverse Voices Table. It is essential that these staff members have the full confidence by their agency leadership and afforded the authority to collaborate with other members of the Diverse Voices Table.
- The Diverse Voices Table will consult with racial ethnic caucuses, networks, advocacy groups, and advisory committees as needed for their work
- We envision the creation of the Diverse Voices Table as an opportunity and first step towards creating trust and practicing collegiality in an area of work that has been fractured and silo-ed.
- We anticipate that the Diverse Voices Table will think theologically and pragmatically about issues of inclusion and equity and how those are and are not evident in how we live out our shared denominational values.

Findings. We are a denomination that publicly celebrates and affirms the richness of God’s multicultural and multi-ethnic creation. Yet we have also demonstrated an inability to be sufficiently self-aware of how to translate that effectively and respectfully in our work. Whether it be curriculum development, promotional materials, or leadership development, we can do better by engaging with one another and sharing what has and can work, and what has not. The Diverse Voices Table can be a space that demonstrates to the church the power of cultural humility, collaborative efforts, and engagement with difficult issues such as power and privilege.

3. Translation Services.

***Locating the work of translation and interpretation
at the center of all the work we do as a denomination.***

Require that all translation services of the six agencies be moved to shared services under “A Corp.,” designated as Global Communications, and be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation and interpretation services to all six agencies for resources and original materials as requested. Prioritization and assignment of translation/interpretation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group within Global Communications. Translations services shall include denominational websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translations services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in “A Corp.”

Interpretation services will include simultaneous language interpretation for denominational gathering utilizing existing software technology such as *spf.io* as well as other resources still to be accessed or developed. The total cost of these services shall be allocated to and paid for by each agency as a percentage of shared services costs. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.

Scope of Work. We are convinced in order to continue to be and to become the church we espouse and aspire to be, Global Communications must become a higher priority and a regular facet of our lives and labors. These efforts cannot be limited to document translations as determined by senior staff, but rather

discerned by representative of communities requiring access. Global Communications must also include live interpretation of denominational events such as General Assembly, Big Tent, Mid-Council National Gathering, to ensure fair and full participation of all PC(USA) constituents.

Approach. We suggest a Global Communications Advisory Council comprised of:

- current (& future) translators,
- information technology providers
- representatives of constituencies served (racial/ethnic caucuses, networks, councils)

This Advisory Council would advise on structure, accountability and continued scope of the work.

Purposes & Product:

- Automatic translation of all official denominational statements and original material upon publishing.
- Translation of other English language church documents as requested by immigrant communities.
- Building language diversity across the 6 agencies.

Findings. Accessibility to information is power and essential for real engagement. All our PC(USA) members, regardless of what is their dominant or original language, must have equal access to resources. Similarly, the monolingual population of the PC(USA) should be afforded ecclesial materials written in non-English languages. Staffing and executing this strategy of World Communications will incur greater costs which (1) can be recouped through charging each agency for this shared service and (2) confirms that our commitment to inclusion is high enough priority for the church to invest in it.

4. Mid Council Ministries.

Calling for responsive and relationship-based collaboration and innovation with mid councils.

For too long, the approach of the denomination with respect to prioritization of assistance to mid councils has often been a top-down directive approach rather than a more collaborative and responsive approach to what the mid councils themselves believe is needed. Progress has been made in shifting this perspective. In ongoing collaboration and partnership with the Stated Clerk, the Commission focused on restructuring the Office of the General Assembly's Mid Council Ministries organization to establish the position of associate clerk for mid council ministries and adjust the mid council ministry areas under the new position. The Commission believes that a phase II of this adjustment is the creation of a pilot program that tests deployed staff in a shared staffing model between local mid councils and the Office of General Assembly in selected regions. The Commission recommends to the Stated Clerk, the Director of Mid Council Ministries and to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission or other entity created by the General Assembly for follow-up, the ongoing work of creating a Mid Council Visioning Team, which would help explore the considerations, possibilities, and opportunities of mid councils in order to maintain a robust relationship among and between presbyteries, synods, and the denomination.

5. Assessment re: Financial Sustainability.

Providing the data and tools needed to plan for a sustainable future for our denomination.

Among its recommendations to the General Assembly the Way Forward Commission called for the development of a Financial Sustainability Committee that would serve to counsel with the Presbyterian Foundation which has begun an inquiry into financial sustainability. Other agencies are encouraged to participate to better ensure the various ministries and missions to which the PC(USA) is called have adequate resources available to them in the future. In its administrative role and function the Way

Forward Commission has developed the following Scope of Work Memorandum and recommendations for the Financial Sustainability Study Committee.

Scope of Work. Balancing financial sustainability with core mission functions is always a challenge to the church in part because of the vagaries of the funding streams that support the life and work of the church. Managing financial viability in a rapidly evolving funding landscape and giving climate is increasingly a challenge for denominational church bodies in particular. To provide the best available financial projections to the various agencies and committees of the PC(USA) the study will seek to project the performances of extant funding streams of participating agencies over the next ten to fifteen years. Such income projections will provide a source of planning data and will articulate a methodology that will enable financial sustainability planning to be viewed as a dynamic and continual process within the organizational life of the church. Unquestioned reliance on historic giving and funding patterns is, in today's dynamic and diversified funding environment, a formula for miscalculation and ultimately crises management. The Study Committee will offer feedback and review of the study design, timing and methodology at the outset of the review.

Purposes and Product. The purpose of the financial sustainability project is to enable participating agencies to garner more precise projections regarding the financial resources that will be available to them in future years by applying the best available, applicable projection methodologies to each of their present sources of income or revenue streams and to explore potential for further diversification of funding for their particular work within the church's larger mission. In the aggregate the study will develop and analyze data that may be of use and have implications for congregations and mid councils as well as agencies of the church. This study will include close analysis of recent performance of each funding stream as well as consideration of the influence emerging environmental factors may have on each revenue stream. Factors as diverse as generational giving patterns, legislative initiatives and their impact on giving changes as well as in the giving culture of the church past and present will be considered in the development of the study. Particular attention will be given to performance and trend lines of income data for each revenue stream to determine continued viability. The Study Committee will receive the results and review the data to identify denominational trends, concerns and new potential sources of assuring financial sustainability.

Approach. Critical to the success of the financial sustainability study will be the engagement on the committee of persons with experience and ability to gather, analyze and apply data generated by a review of income from sources such as per capita, investment income, special offering and giving opportunities, bequests, property sales, etc. Moreover, the sustainability study will focus not only on historic patterns and practices but on emerging sources and their potential applicability in supporting church functions.

Findings. All findings and any recommendations of the financial sustainability shall be broadly reported by December 2019 to participating agencies as well as to on-going General Assembly planning and or review committees and/or commissions.

6. Institutional Culture.

Implementing urgently needed changes in attitude, approach and procedures to encourage nimble, responsive, respectful, transparent, and trust-building interactions both internally and externally.

There remains considerable work to improve institutional culture within and among the Presbyterian Mission Agency and all six agencies. Specific areas of engagement with the PMA – at both board and staff levels – include:

- engaging in conversation with the PMA Executive Director and the PMA Board to assist full understanding of the vision for function, structure and culture of the agencies as developed by the General Assembly's action on the Way Forward Commission's report and recommendations;
- refining the scope of work and engaging a consultant on implementing institutional culture changes, including strategies to incorporate institutional identity into training and ongoing staff development;
- convening conversations with PMA's Leadership Cabinet regarding significant changes to policies and procedures (both formal and informal) that interfere with healthy institutional culture;
- a deep and candid evaluation by a group of ministry users and qualified Presbyterian professionals, of the policies, procedures and performance of internal support functions, including legal, risk management, finance and accounting, and human resources;
- convening conversations with PMA's Leadership Cabinet regarding HR policies and whether any particular positions must be filled by a person with one of the following requirements: by a person of faith, by a Presbyterian, or by a ruling elder or teaching elder; and
- re-evaluating current practices of both PMA board and PMA staff with respect to confidentiality (including executive sessions and limitations on disclosure) and transparency of information, that have contributed to the erosion of trust.

7. *Shared Services.*

Creating opportunities for streamlined, effective and affordable services.

The Commission has partnered with AARC to engage with all six agencies to identify solutions for the cultural, cost, and efficiency issues within Shared Services; this work has only just begun. It is clear that the provision of such common services continues to be critically important to other agencies and entities, particularly OGA, Presbyterian Women, PILP and PPC, even as PMA has expressed a desire to cease providing such services for agencies other than the PMA. Goals for change include prioritization of program activities, proper policies and procedures, cost savings, and efficiency gains. Whether or not the Way Forward's proposal regarding the board of "A Corp." is adopted by General Assembly, in continued work all agencies and any implementing commission should use their administrative authority to clarify authority, responsibility, and delivery of shared services by

- conducting a review of policies and procedures with program directors and Shared Services leadership to refine, simplify, and amend procedures and policies to enable more nimble and responsive action and to affirm the decision-making power at the ministry/program level;
- convening work groups to complete a thorough cost and efficiency analysis to prepare recommendations for the insourcing, outsourcing, or sharing of shared services such as payroll processing, legal, information technology, and mail/printing/distribution services;
- identifying other areas of partnership and cost-sharing as they may present themselves; and
- exploring the logistics of integration of Translation Services under the Shared Services umbrella.

8. *Property and facilities usage.*

Encouraging collaborative and cooperative discernment and decisions about our physical facilities.

Executives and selected board leadership from all six agencies have gathered for a series of meetings regarding the building at 100 Witherspoon Street and all other facilities of the PC(USA). Topics under

continued discussion include the costs and feasibility of remaining within the building at 100 Witherspoon Street, possible use of facilities to promote mission, and hospitality within each denominational building. While at the current time, PMA remains in exclusive control of 100 Witherspoon where four of the six denominational agencies are located, the spirit of inter-agency collaborative and cooperative discernment and decision-making needs to be fostered, encouraged, and monitored to ensure it continues.

9. Seminary Relations.

Updating collaboratively our understanding of our relationships among and between our denomination and our seminaries.

In a series of conversations with the presidents and board chairs of our twelve PC(USA)-affiliated theological seminaries and with the Committee on Theological Education, it has become clear in our changing times that further discernment is needed with respect to the nature, scope, and opportunities in the relationships among and between our seminaries and our denomination. These collaborative conversations are continuing with enthusiasm and openness.

10. Financial Development Analysis.

Cultivating opportunities for transparency and efficiency in mission engagement and funds development.

The Commission has collected and collated information from all six agencies and other users of the Relationship Development Operation (RDO) team services, to engage in conversation about stewardship activities, including fundraising and identifying areas for further collaboration and cooperation. Specific topics of interest included (i) clarification of what stewardship (fundraising/funds development) activities are occurring within each agency currently including cultivation, solicitation, receipt, and acknowledgment activities, and (ii) identification of duplicated efforts and opportunities for coordinated and/or centralized stewardship activities. The Commission recommends to the agencies/organizations and the Moving Forward Implementation Commission or other entity created by the General Assembly for follow-up, further analysis of the collected information, as well as

- review of the policies, use, and budget impacts of specific giving opportunities across the agencies,
- review communication and interpretation of administrative costs and use of funds received,
- review events and activities that engage mid councils and congregations (i.e. Kaleidoscope),
- review of dedicated funds held at the Foundation and collaborative refinement of strategies, including cy-pres actions, to free-up available funds.

After consideration of all collected information and analysis, the goal is for the agencies/organizations to work collaboratively to clarify, simplify, streamline and coordinate activities.