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# **CUC FIVE-YEAR EVALUATION**

Prepared for and Presented to the CUC Board  
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## 1. SUMMARY

The new responsibilities and funding resources transferred to the CUC from the UUA in 2002 resulted in new structures and new staff. The design of a “new” CUC was set forth in a 2002 report called “Of Regions and RNGs.”

The report anticipated an evaluation of the implementation of the plan. With strategic planning underway for the next five years, the Board decided the time was right to take a look back to see how we’ve been doing since 2002.

In June and early July of 2007, an online survey of key stakeholders from across Canada was conducted to collect opinions and recommendations about the CUC’s goal achievements, service delivery, and structure since 2002. The results of that survey form the basis of this document.

Overall, the results of the survey are positive. Where ratings were called for, the average rating was in the positive to very positive range. Where comments were possible, many positive ones were received.

Many respondents gave kudos to the substantial accomplishment of CUC staff for building an organization of strength from its modest beginnings five years ago. Appreciation was also frequent for the growth and establishment of a national made-in-Canada movement, a validation of the energy expended in order to create the CUC that is now in place. References were common regarding the strength of the Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM) and the Regional Fall Gatherings (RFG) in uniting people, as were frequent compliments about the development of services, workshops, and training programs.

Many respondents also cited the distance factor, especially for smaller, rural congregations, and the size of regions and the country itself as impediments to successful collaboration. Other areas of dissatisfaction included the volume of e-mail; many are not prepared for the rapid introduction of online forms of communication. More than one person complained about the lack

of notice or lead-time when it came to scheduling training workshops and several complained about an unresponsive board of trustees or referred to an organization that was “top down”.

A few expressed concerns about the quality of services, suggesting for example, that a best practices assessment is needed, and there were many who yearned for a stronger public presence for the UU movement, often linking this issue to the failure to meet growth expectations. (We have been growing, though not at the hoped-for levels.)

It is worth noting, as well, that many respondents chose to skip many questions. Additionally, of those who completed a question, the answer “N/A or Don’t Know” was a frequent response, in a few cases the single most common response to a question. As will be discussed below, it is important to be aware that many of our key stakeholders appear not to be familiar with the full range of functions performed and services provided by the CUC.

Results in specific survey categories include:

1. In terms of **overall CUC mission and goal achievement**, responses indicate that the organization is particularly strong in the area of respecting and affirming diversity. It is seen as somewhat less successful in promoting effective professional ministry and in acting as a national voice for our liberal faith community.
2. In the area of **Lifespan Learning**, the integration of all ages into events to promote a multigenerational community was ranked as the most successful effort. On the other hand, it appears that there is work to do in facilitating communication between the RNGs and the regional Youth/Adult Committees (YACs) and in encouraging congregations to create or strengthen youth and young adult groups. That youth work remains continental creates challenges. The level of respondent awareness appears to be low for the programs and services of Lifespan Learning.
3. Mission, vision, and planning consultations and workshops were among the most frequently used **regional services**, while worship skills workshops were among the least frequently used. Mission, vision, and planning

was ranked second, after “congregational life and wellness,” in terms of the importance of having the service, but fourth in quality of the services provided, while worship skills were considered fourth in importance, but first in quality. Some comments addressed a lack of awareness of what is available, and those insights were corroborated by high levels of “N/A or Don’t Know” responses.

4. Questions measuring satisfaction levels with **services and supports** also drew high “N/A or Don’t Know” responses. Those who knew about these services and supports, however, generally rated them as satisfactory or very satisfactory. The Canadian U\*U Leadership school and program received the highest rating, with training and support to lay chaplains not far behind.
5. On **CUC structure**, the regional boundaries and the regional gatherings received the highest rates of approval, while the rates of approval were significantly lower concerning opportunities for congregational leaders to reflect together on CUC policy and levels of participation by youth and young adults.
6. Respondents thought their congregations received more **information** from the CUC and provided more information to the CUC than they had five years ago; they saw some improvement in connection with other congregations in their areas.
7. Asked to reflect on **continental arrangements** with the UUA for professional ministry and for youth and young adults, nearly half of respondents rated both service delivery and communication in these areas occasionally to often effective—the rating averages were among the lowest given for anything in the survey, and nearly half the responses were “N/A or Don’t Know.”
8. The **annual conference and meeting** received the highest overall ratings in the survey and garnered the fewest “N/A or Don’t Know” responses.
9. The *Canadian Unitarian* newsletter ranks as the best-known **means of communication** within the organization, and it is also the highest rated with 86% of respondents finding it often or always effective, followed closely by e-mail connections and teleconferencing. The CUC

website, congregational mailings, and online discussion groups are ranked between “occasionally effective” and “often effective” on average.

Based on the survey results, recommendations include:

- continue to evaluate procedures and programs
- establish a task force to make Unitarian Universalism better known
- strengthen connections with professional ministry
- refine the use of technology
- assess current operations and governance
- consult with youth and young adult leadership
- improve awareness about CUC services and supports
- ensure follow-up for workshops and programs
- provide more advance notice of workshops and programs
- assess costs and benefits of congregational mailings
- find ways to extend benefits of RFG and ACM beyond those who attend
- develop leadership programs for youth

## 2. EVALUATION GOALS

The goals of this evaluation were to:

- Collect opinions about the effectiveness of service delivery and improvements that might be made
- Measure the impact of the CUC’s structure and program delivery models on its various constituencies: professional ministers, congregational leaders, and members.
- Stimulate a dialogue about what is working well and what needs to be done to improve effectiveness.

Excluded from this survey were detailed questions that might directly refer to staff performance (already being regularly evaluated) or to Board performance (to be evaluated annually beginning this year). Detailed questions were not asked about the outcomes realized by the Regional Fall Gatherings (RFGs) and the Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM), both of which are also regularly evaluated at their conclusions. Also, fall gatherings were the subject of a summary evaluation in late 2006.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 SURVEY DESIGN**

As the study's main goal was to gather individual perspectives, a descriptive study was implemented, using primarily qualitative data. Numerical values are attached to the rating scale responses, enabling average scores to be easily compared among answers.

The survey orientation featured questions posed from an **historical perspective**, asking respondents to reflect back over the last five years with the CUC and its programs. It was not possible to cover all areas of interest with detailed questions, as a longer survey would contribute to poor response rates. The survey was not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to offer a snapshot at a point in time.

Each set of questions was followed by an **open-ended question** designed to elaborate on and describe the subject of the questions in the respondents' own words and to provide opportunities for the respondents to contribute descriptive information. A content analysis was utilized to summarize similar responses and identify unique or exceptional answers.

Some basic **demographic questions** were posed to determine how the people who have responded represent the CUC's stakeholders and to aid in identifying differences in responses among different sub-groups (e.g. do responses differ in a significant way by the roles people have played in their congregations and in the CUC?).

#### **3.2 POPULATIONS**

A combination of strategies was used to identify people who would have an important and meaningful perspective about the CUC's work over the last five years. This posed some challenges in terms of identifying people who no longer occupy congregational or CUC leadership positions but have in the past. It was also acknowledged that people with a new perspective on the local or national scene may have 'fresh eyes' to see positive and negative attributes of the organization.

Therefore, while this study targets individuals from the following categories, many other 'key informants' were also added through word-of-

mouth board and staff consultations. The cover letter encouraged recipients who did not feel they could contribute meaningfully to forward the message and link "...to another member of your congregation who you think might have more to say."

Invitations to respond to the survey were sent to a subset of roughly 10% of our total membership; these were people selected as having been active in their congregations at least some of the last five years and/or active in the CUC at least some of the last five years. The idea was to seek people who would have some direct experience of the services and programs of the CUC, from at least one and perhaps from several perspectives. Categories included:

1. CUC Board and committee members
2. Professional Ministers
3. Directors of Religious Education
4. Congregational leaders: (including Presidents and Past President)
5. Regional Network Group Volunteers from each region
6. Youth Adult Committee members
7. Lay Chaplains

#### **3.3 PROCESS**

This study was conducted between the end of the 2007 Annual Conference and Meeting in May and early July in order to gather the most responses before the beginning of the summer holiday season. It was agreed that:

- The study would be designed by the Communications Director in consultation with the CUC President, the Executive Director, and selected board and staff members.
- The study would utilize online technologies by way of an e-mailed cover letter (see Appendix A) to members of the survey population.
- The e-mail cover letter would contain a direct link to the online questionnaire.

#### **3.4 COLLECTION**

Survey data was collected online using Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)).

## 4. LIMITATIONS

### 4.1 BENCHMARK COMPARISONS

As no benchmark data was collected in 2002, the 2007 data cannot be compared to the pre-evaluation period to firmly measure changes in outcomes and perceptions of stakeholders.

### 4.2 HISTORICAL FOCUS

The evaluation task was complicated by the fact that some revisions have taken place since 2002 (e.g. elimination of congregational networkers, changes to youth structures). As a result, this evaluation often invites comparisons between the current and the original structures and functions, rather than comparisons of the same structures and functions over the five year period of this evaluation.

### 4.3 DESCRIPTIVE NOT CAUSATIVE

All of the data collected is descriptive, relying on individuals' perspectives, and cannot be inferred to show cause and effect. We do not know if the opinions expressed by the people who responded are representative of all CUC stakeholders or of the UU membership across Canada.

### 4.4 OPEN-ENDED INFORMATION

The survey provides numerous opportunities for respondents to add comments or make suggestions in their own words. While this enriches the rating scale impressions, the content analysis used to summarize written material cannot replicate all the useful information contained there. Efforts are made to note themes that keep emerging, note well-expressed comments or suggestions and provide a balance between critical and supportive comments.

To truly benefit from the comments made in the open-ended questions, a full reading is recommended.

## 5. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Invitations to respond to the survey were sent directly to 213 individuals, and another 272 on email lists, for a total of 485.

From those asked, 28% have self-selected by taking the survey, presumably people interested enough in the CUC to take the time to do the survey and

experienced enough within UUism to believe their input could be useful. Of 135 who began the survey, 116 completed it.

*Analysis:* An overall response rate of 28% could be termed modestly disappointing, given the in-group nature of the survey, presuming that all invited to respond were involved in some manner in CUC affairs and would have a stake in bringing their perspectives to the fore.

Militating against a better response rate was the late June timing of the request, which may have conflicted with summer holidays. As well 'survey fatigue' may be a factor because of the recent ACM survey, likely sent to many of the same individuals. Finally, a significant number of respondents, while active in their congregations, have not played roles in the CUC; it is reasonable to guess that this was true of even more of those who chose not to respond in the belief that they would not know enough about the matters being surveyed to provide useful data.

### 5.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

#### 5.1.1 BY GENDER

Seventy-three percent of those who responded indicated that they were female.

*Analysis:* Responses were heavily weighted (73%) towards females. An unscientific scan of the CUC database containing all Canadian UU's suggests a 64/36 percentage split of females to males. Despite the significantly higher percentage of female respondents as a whole, the gender breakdown of those surveyed who occupy "top" roles—parish minister and board president—is lower than the general population split: 60/40.

Does the survey response suggest that males are less likely to be involved in CUC affairs than females, or that females were more likely to be invited to respond, or were more likely to take the time to respond? Does the drop in number of females in the "top" roles reflect UU demographics generally for Canada?

### 5.1.2 BY AGE GROUPING

Middle-aged and older people comprised almost 90% of all respondents.

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 20 or under    | 4.7%         |
| 21 to 35       | 6.2%         |
| 36 to 60       | 46.5%        |
| <b>Over 60</b> | <b>42.6%</b> |

**Analysis:** Concerns expressed within the survey about the limited profile of youth and young adults in their congregations are reflected by the modest national participation of youth (6) and young adults (8) in the survey. However, an 11% share of the respondents may accurately reflect the degree to which younger members are present in UU congregations and are represented in the affairs of the CUC.

### 5.1.3 LENGTH OF UU MEMBERSHIP

When asked about the length of their membership in a UU congregation, 88% indicated membership of more than 5 years, while the largest percentage (37%) have been members for more than 20 years.

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Less than 5 year     | 11.6%        |
| 5 to 10 year         | 26.4%        |
| 11 to 20 years       | 24.8%        |
| <b>Over 20 years</b> | <b>37.2%</b> |

**Analysis:** Strong representation was seen from longer term members, as would be expected given the nature of the sample selection process and the age profile of those selected.

### 5.1.4 SIZE OF CONGREGATION

The largest percentage (49%) of respondents indicated that they come from medium sized congregations of 51-150 members, while 22% come from larger congregations (151-300) and the remainder equally (14%) from small (under 50) and very large (over 300) congregations.

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 50 or fewer      | 14.0%        |
| <b>51 to 150</b> | <b>48.8%</b> |
| 151 to 300       | 22.5%        |
| Over 300         | 14.0%        |
| Don't Know       | .8%          |

**Analysis:** The April 2006 issue of *InfoTopics* presented a compiled breakdown of the number of members by size of congregation, compared in the

following chart with the congregational size of the respondents:

*Size of Congregations across Canada compared to Size of Respondents' Congregations*

| Congregational Size | % of UU Members in Canada | % of Respondents to Survey |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Under 50            | 9%                        | 14%                        |
| 50-149              | 34%                       | 49%                        |
| 150-299             | 32%                       | 22%                        |
| 300+                | 25%                       | 14%                        |

The results indicate that the survey was more likely to be answered by members of smaller congregations. Then again, we do not know if the people invited were or were not representative of the overall breakdown of Canada's UU membership by congregational size. In part, this may be explained by the fact that all presidents and past-presidents of congregations, regardless of size, were invited to participate; therefore smaller congregations were overrepresented in the invitation.

We can ask the questions: does this result suggest that people from smaller congregations are more likely to be involved in the CUC than their counterparts from larger congregations and why might this be?

### 5.1.5 CONGREGATIONAL ROLES

Respondents checked off all of the roles they have held in their congregations over the last five years. In addition, another 30 people listed specific committees or roles such as choir membership, pastoral care, treasurer, worship/service leader, social action/justice, student or retired minister, all of which were mentioned more than once.

**Analysis:** The people who responded to this survey fill a variety of roles within their congregations, most often serving on working groups or committees and/or on the board. They also held a variety of positions: minister, lay chaplain, Director of Religious Education, youth leader, all of which suggests that they constitute a legitimate group of congregational leaders – those we expect and hope are the most likely to have knowledge of and contact with the CUC.

**5.1.6 CUC ROLES**

| <b>6. What roles and responsibilities have you had with the CUC over the past 5 years? (Please check off all that apply to you.)</b> |                         |                       |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| CUC board of directors   | 17.4%                   | 16                    |
| CUC Committee or working group member  | 34.8%                   | 32                    |
| CUC 'Friend' (donated \$100./year)   | 41.3%                   | 38                    |
| Member of a CUC Regional Networking Group  | 19.6%                   | 18                    |
| Regional Service Consultant  | 10.9%                   | 10                    |
| Congregational Networker   | 6.5%                    | 6                     |
| CUC Staff  | 0.0%                    | 0                     |
| <b>Participant on a CUC chat line or other on-line group</b>   | <b>62.0%</b>            | <b>57</b>             |
| Youth leader   | 7.6%                    | 7                     |

When asked to describe the various roles they had undertaken for the CUC, 43 people skipped the question, presumed to be an indication that a significant portion of respondents, while active in their congregations, are not or do not consider themselves to be active participants in the CUC.

Eighteen people added open-ended comments, noting roles that didn't fit the offered categories such as "Attended two regional meetings", and "CUC Refugee sponsorship representative", or to elaborate on the specific nature of their involvement, for example, "on the Globalization Task Force" or "Chair of RFG committee".

*Analysis:* Many (43) skipped this question. Respondents were selected by certain categories. These included congregational presidents, past presidents, ministers, DREs, and lay chaplains—many of whom do not have a formal role with the CUC.

**5.1.7 CUC REGIONS**

The Eastern Region led the way with 30% of all respondents, followed by the Western Region (28%), British Columbia (22%), and Central (20%).

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Eastern</b>   | <b>29.8%</b> |
| Central          | 19.9%        |
| Western          | 27.5%        |
| British Columbia | 22.1%        |
| Not sure         | .8%          |

*Analysis:* 2006 statistics document the number of members by region, which is compared to the same numbers reported in this survey.

*Comparison of Regional Percentages of Canadian Members and Respondents*

| Region           | Number (%) of Members* | % of Survey Respondents |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| British Columbia | 26% (1308)             | 22%                     |
| Western          | 20% (1028)             | 28%                     |
| Central          | 30% (1520)             | 20%                     |
| Eastern          | 24% (1251)             | 30%                     |
| Total            | 100% (5107) *          | 100%                    |

\*September 2006

We can see from the comparison that some regions (Eastern and Western) are over-represented in the survey responses while the Central and B.C. regions are under-represented. Central region represents 30% of the overall membership but had a 20% response rate.

We do not know if this is the result of unbalanced survey invitations, a reflection of the extent to which each region is engaged in the CUC, or a case of more easterners self-selecting.

**5.2 CUC MISSION AND GOAL ACHIEVEMENT**

When asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of affirmative statements about success in meeting CUC goals, those who chose a rating most often chose the "Often Agree" or "Always Agree" categories; in every instance, these two taken together formed more than two-thirds of the ratings responses, and in several instances they formed nearly all of them.

| <b>8. To what extent do you agree with the statements:</b>  |                     |                    |                   |                   |                   |                |                |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | Do not agree at all | Occasionally agree | Often agree       | Always agree      | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| The CUC is flexible, responsive and driven by the concerns and needs of congregations.  | 0.8% (1)            | 8.9% (11)          | <b>65.3% (81)</b> | 20.2% (25)        | 4.8% (6)          | 3.10           | 124            |
| The CUC work reflects the principle that individual members 'own' their congregations and congregations 'own' the CUC.        | 2.4% (3)            | 12.2% (15)         | 37.4% (46)        | <b>43.1% (53)</b> | 4.9% (6)          | 3.27           | 123            |
| The CUC is a strong, respected Canadian voice for our liberal faith community.  | 3.2% (4)            | 21.8% (27)         | 31.5% (39)        | <b>36.3% (45)</b> | 7.3% (9)          | 3.09           | 124            |
| The CUC takes a responsible role in the international community of Unitarians and Universalists and the interfaith community. | 1.6% (2)            | 7.3% (9)           | 33.9% (42)        | <b>35.5% (44)</b> | 21.8% (27)        | 3.32           | 124            |
| The CUC respects and affirms diversity both within and among its congregations and within the Canadian mosaic.                | 0.0% (0)            | 8.0% (10)          | 32.8% (41)        | <b>57.6% (72)</b> | 1.6% (2)          | 3.50           | 125            |
| The CUC connects, nurtures and empowers Canadian Unitarians and Universalists and their congregations.                        | 3.2% (4)            | 12.0% (15)         | <b>46.4% (58)</b> | 35.2% (44)        | 3.2% (4)          | 3.17           | 125            |
| The CUC's Lifespan Learning fosters the growth and outreach of the movement.  | 1.6% (2)            | 11.2% (14)         | <b>43.2% (54)</b> | 25.6% (32)        | 18.4% (23)        | 3.14           | 125            |
| The CUC promotes effective professional ministries.   | 2.4% (3)            | 13.0% (16)         | <b>40.7% (50)</b> | 25.2% (31)        | 18.7% (23)        | 3.09           | 123            |
| The CUC promotes effective lay ministries.  | 2.5% (3)            | 9.0% (11)          | <b>44.3% (54)</b> | 30.3% (37)        | 13.9% (17)        | 3.19           | 122            |
| The CUC fosters active participation in national social issues.   | 3.3% (4)            | 16.3% (20)         | <b>41.5% (51)</b> | 32.5% (40)        | 6.5% (8)          | 3.10           | 123            |
| The CUC provides tangible support for religious exploration, spiritual growth and social responsibility.                      | 0.0% (0)            | 15.3% (19)         | <b>45.2% (56)</b> | 33.1% (41)        | 6.5% (8)          | 3.19           | 124            |
| The CUC is efficient, effective and above all, a reasonable investment of our financial and human resources.                  | 2.4% (3)            | 12.2% (15)         | <b>43.9% (54)</b> | 37.4% (46)        | 4.1% (5)          | 3.21           | 123            |

**Rating averages:**<sup>1</sup> A rating of 3 or higher indicates general agreement with the statements. The most positive and highest level of agreement was given to the statement that “The CUC respects and affirms diversity...” (rating average of 3.52) followed by “The CUC takes a responsible role in the international community ...” (3.32) and “The CUC work reflects the principle that individual members ‘own’ their congregations and congregations ‘own’ the CUC” (3.27). The lowest level of agreement was attributed to “The CUC is a strong, respected Canadian voice for our liberal faith community” and to “The CUC promotes effective professional ministries”, both rated at 3.09.

**Analysis:** Two of the themes that emerged from the written commentary throughout the survey substantiate the lower ratings:

1. Many comments focused on wanting the CUC to do more to make the denomination known to the public, to be a leader in the faith community, and to demonstrate commitment to social justice.
2. While support to professional ministries remains a continental responsibility of the UUA, many expressed a belief that professional ministerial involvement in the CUC needs to be improved. Some suggested that a professional minister be added to the staff, while others suggested stronger CUC links with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada (UUMOC) as a means of increasing charismatic leadership and as a way of ensuring that congregational and CUC communications are improved.

**Respondent Comments:** Forty-two individuals provided responses to the open-ended question that followed this question. Several additional themes emerged, most of them repeated throughout the survey. Staff workload and funding, concerns about burnout and a rich stew of both high praise for and complaints about CUC staff persisted throughout the responses. Many referenced the issue of technology, with praise on the one hand, offset by concerns about being “deluged with e-mail” or signed up to too many discussion groups on the other.

Another theme that emerged from several respondents concerned the CUC’s ‘style of operation’, again with a variety of concerns about a “corporate business model”, “rules imposed” and “top-down” management, but balanced by many very complimentary remarks about staff leadership and the staff as a whole.

In all, four themes are repeated:

1. working relationships between congregations and CUC
2. national presence
3. CUC’s style of operation
4. funding for paid staff

The following is a summary of those remarks:

Many referenced the **working relationship between the CUC and congregations**: “Our congregation has not availed itself of much of the Lifespan Learning resources other than for children.” “There does not seem to be a way to share governance material with others...” the CUC does a good job supporting congregations”, “the CUC is not a very visible “power” in our congregation. In my estimation there is less interest in the bigger world than when we were part of the UUA.” “the CUC supports professional ministry in the congregations in the strongest way;” “I think the parish minister could be more supportive of the CUC;” “we are making great strides at achieving these goals but in some instances we have not, as yet, been able to reach everyone or every congregation;” “I have experienced a “diversity” of effectiveness and efficiency from one region to another and sometimes from one service to another... the effectiveness of the services can vary according to the individual skills of the consultants in their areas.”

Several people expressed a desire for a stronger **national presence**: “don’t know what the reputation of the CUC is on the national scene, are we a respected voice? I can’t recall seeing us in national newspapers on any social justice issues;” “on social issues, when we speak we do well. Gay Marriage. Terminator. There are many issues we don’t speak on;” “I wish that we were better known and a stronger voice in the Canadian religious landscape.”

<sup>1</sup> “N/A or don’t Know” responses are not counted in the rating averages in this report.

Comments were also made about the CUC's style of operation: "The CUC should change its corporate business model in its dealings with congregations and employees;" commented one respondent, and two cited the Lay Chaplaincy program for being too "top-down" and imposing rules "on reluctant congregations and boards." "CUC seems staff- and board-driven, not responsive to initiatives that come from congregations;" commented another. On the other hand, "Our biggest challenge is to come up with a clear vision to motivate people for the next growth thrust, and resources to back it up. We have built the structure – now what do we do with it?" "the CUC does an excellent job of integrating new volunteers and giving them the tools they need to be effective."

**Funding for Paid Staff.** Several respondents noted that the CUC "needs more paid staff members to accomplish more. I believe the staff is stretched to meet the demands on them, and do a great job under the circumstances..." and another: "I think it (CUC) is hampered by limited funds/not enough staff/poverty mentality." "It is a pleasure to deal with the folks at the CUC but one has the impression they are sometimes overwhelmed", "staff have done a yeoman's job given the vast distances, varied needs, and little \$. Are we pushing them to burnout?" "CUC's lifespan learning has great potential to foster the growth and outreach of the movement, but is not always successful in doing so; largely due to lack of resources."

**Other issues raised:**

**The past and current links to the UUA:** "I do feel that in some ways we are still too closely tied with the UUA (minister search is a case in point)."

**Communications:** "idea of the Wiki site for use by CUC-LCCs is brilliant;" "prefer telephone contact to on-line communications;" "The e-mail connect strategy is so essential for us and yet ... we get so much mail and need so much face-to-face." "The internet is a very valuable tool, but cannot replace personal contacts"

## **5.3 SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **5.3.1 LIFESPAN LEARNING**

Lifespan Learning covers services and supports for religious education and other learning activities across the age spectrum. Respondents were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with Lifespan Learning services and supports with which they were familiar.

As with the previous question, of those who rated the items, the most chose ratings on the positive side of the ratings scale. However, some items did receive significant "Very Unsatisfied" or "Somewhat Unsatisfied" ratings.

**Rating averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates general agreement with the statements. The rating averages show that the highest levels of satisfaction were recorded for "Training for Religious Education leaders" (RA = 3.66) and for "Youth and young adult conferences, workshops, programming, leadership training" (3.35). The lowest ratings were given to "Facilitating communication between the Regional Network Groups and the regional Youth/Adult Committees (YACs)" (2.83) and to "Encouraging congregations to create or strengthen youth and young adult groups and assure these constituencies adequate ministerial attention." (2.85)

In addition, a substantial number of respondents (ranging from 19 on one item to 79 on another) apparently felt they were not sufficiently familiar with certain Lifespan Learning services and supports to rate them, and accordingly chose "N/A or Don't Know". Of the eight items listed, six received more "N/A or Don't Know" responses than they received ratings responses of any kind.

**Analysis:** The responses to this series of questions indicated a general comfort level with RE training and the CUC's work on 'Youth and young adult conferences, workshops, programming, leadership training.' Youth ministry and supports were seen quite differently, especially when it came to integrating youth and young adults with local congregations and gaining their involvement with the CUC.

There appears to be both a desire and a dilemma in maintaining a North American youth service and support environment within the Canadian, regional and local contexts. How can we be inclusive of youth and young adults in our Canadian contexts and yet, in the case of youth at least, expect an American organization, however credible, to take responsibility for services to them?

**Respondent Comments:** Thirty-nine people added comments about Lifespan Learning. Comments about youth and young adults touched on a variety of observations and complaints: “too much is left up to the youth” versus “listen to our youth and always involve them democratically in congregational life”. An ethic of “youth empowerment” runs headlong into a “lack of designated space”, inattentive ministers, advisor burn-out and local congregations that fashion their programs and worship times for the older majority. Comments were largely focused on:

1. Youth ministry and supports
2. Children’s and RE programs
3. Young Adult groups

The following is a summary of those remarks:

Numerous and sometimes dissatisfied comments on **youth ministry and supports** suggest this as an area for further investigation. “A big effort has been made on youth ministry, but there are still many kinks to work out and I know many of the youth are unsatisfied with the current structures.” “When I was involved in the organizing of the youth program, on behalf of the host congregation, for the regional conference last fall, I was dissatisfied with the lack of support, communication and poor direction when dealing with the regional youth leadership/group.” “Some ministers do not give attention to youth at the level the CUC promotes.” “One significant area of weakness I see is in youth programming. I think too much is left up to the youth, so that there is no consistency in quality of youth cons.” “I am commenting on the high effectiveness of the training that I have experience with, but I wish there could be more frequent training available for advisors

and for youth.” “Let us remember to listen to our youth and always involve them democratically in congregational life.” “An ideology of “youth empowerment” seems to pervade, giving our youth a sense of entitlement, but not of involvement in the local congregation.” “The fact that youth work remains continental, saps CUC effectiveness in that area.” “In my congregation, the youth group especially has faced a lot of challenges, from a continuing lack of designated space to advisor burn-out.”

Mostly positive remarks were made about **Children’s and RE programs**. “Our DRE is very happy with the training/ support that she receives for children's programming.” “When we particularly need RE advice, Canadian curricula, or workshops (for OWL or in training the DRE, etc.) I have found the CUC regional RE coordinators to be helpful.” One respondent, however, did note: “I don't know how regional RE communication happens. I am an RE committee chair.” Another stated, “It would be great to have more opportunities to connect RE committee members in different congregations... also a need for basic training for teachers and committee members in small congregations.”

**Other comments included:**

“The CUC provides strong support and encouragement to congregational leaders. I think we could benefit from more congregational support, but I recognize that the CUC is working with limited resources. [CUC Program Staff] are wonderful.” “In response to a question about ways to promote a multigenerational community I found the suggestions rather superficial.” “There are a lot more programmes and training opportunities that are offered “back east” than here in the west or BC.”

**10. The following lists various services and supports provided by CUC staff and volunteers as part of the Lifespan Learning outreach. Please indicate to what extent you have been satisfied with their effectiveness and quality. If you are not familiar with these services, please check N/A**

|  | Very Unsatisfied | Somewhat Unsatisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied    | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
|--|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Regional leadership and spirituality conferences and advisor training.   | 1.7% (2)         | 3.3% (4)             | <b>36.7% (44)</b>  | 25.8% (31)        | 32.5% (39)        | 3.28           | 120            |
| Training for Religious Education leaders (Renaissance, Spirit Play, Coming of Age, Our Whole Lives etc)  | 0.8% (1)         | 0.0% (0)             | 16.8% (20)         | 39.5% (47)        | <b>42.9% (51)</b> | 3.66           | 119            |
| Lifespan religious education (LRE) programming/workshops.  | 2.6% (3)         | 1.7% (2)             | 21.4% (25)         | 20.5% (24)        | <b>53.8% (63)</b> | 3.30           | 117            |
| Support and training to DRE's for children's programs.   | 0.9% (1)         | 4.3% (5)             | 22.2% (26)         | 20.5% (24)        | <b>52.1% (61)</b> | 3.30           | 117            |
| Youth and young adult conferences, workshops, programming, leadership training.  | 0.0% (0)         | 5.9% (7)             | 23.7% (28)         | 25.4% (30)        | <b>44.9% (53)</b> | 3.35           | 118            |
| Integration of all ages into events to promote a multigenerational community.  | 3.4% (4)         | 7.6% (9)             | <b>36.4% (43)</b>  | <b>36.4% (43)</b> | 16.1% (19)        | 3.26           | 118            |
| Facilitating communication among the religious education leadership of the congregations through the Regional Network Groups.                  | 1.7% (2)         | 8.4% (10)            | 31.1% (37)         | 16.8% (20)        | <b>42.0% (50)</b> | 3.09           | 119            |
| Facilitating communication between the Regional Network Groups and the regional Youth/Adult Committees (YACs).                                 | 1.7% (2)         | 10.9% (13)           | 12.6% (15)         | 8.4% (10)         | <b>66.4% (79)</b> | 2.83           | 119            |
| Encouraging congregations to create or strengthen youth and young adult groups and assure these constituencies adequate ministerial attention. | 1.7% (2)         | 22.7% (27)           | 26.1% (31)         | 16.0% (19)        | <b>33.6% (40)</b> | 2.85           | 119            |

**5.3.2 REGIONAL SERVICES**

The most frequently used services were “Mission, vision and planning,” and “Financial stewardship”, each receiving almost 70%. 32 respondents did not answer.

**5.3.3 IMPORTANCE AND QUALITY OF REGIONAL SERVICES**

Respondents were asked to rank five service areas from most important to least important, and in a subsequent question, to report their perceptions of quality of services they had received. The following table summarizes the rankings of importance and of quality of these five service types.

| Importance | Service Type                     | Quality |
|------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| 1          | Congregational life and wellness | 2.95    |
| 2          | Mission, vision and planning     | 2.94    |
| 3          | Financial stewardship            | 3.22    |
| 4          | Worship skills                   | 3.26    |
| 5          | Transitions                      | 2.82    |

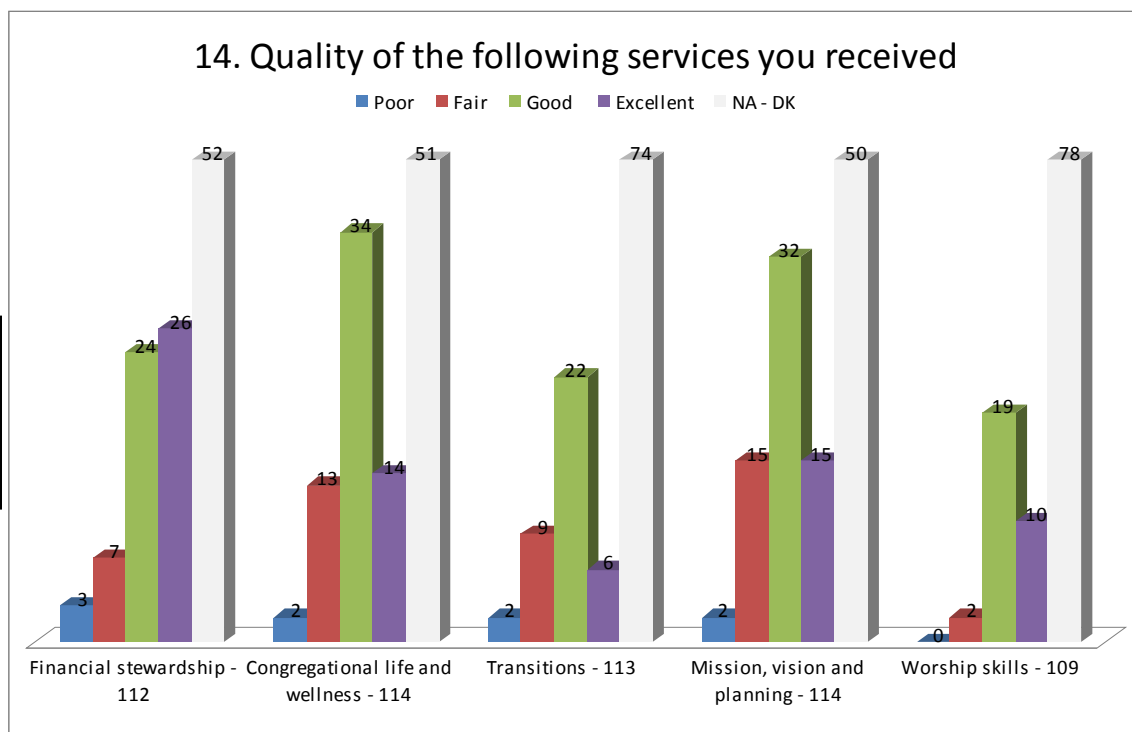
**Rating Averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates services were perceived as being good to excellent. Worship Skills and Financial stewardship received the highest ratings (3.26 and 3.22 respectively). Transitions services received the lowest rating at 2.82. There were more “N/A or Don’t Know” responses than responses at any of the rating levels.

Note that the descriptors for this four-point ranking are not directly comparable with those for some other questions. In this case, “2” is “fair”, while in some questions “2” is “somewhat dissatisfied” and in still others “occasionally effective.” Thus, in some questions an average rating below 3 suggests dissatisfaction, while in the case above it does not. In all cases a 1-4 scale was used.

We recognize that this may have been confusing to respondents, and that it certainly makes

comparison across questions difficult; in future surveys, we will align the descriptors more closely.

| 12. Which of the following 5 areas for Service consultation and/or workshops (other than Lifespan Learning) has your congregation used: |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
|   | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Financial stewardship (Dreams and Dollars, canvass training etc.)   | 66.0%            | 68             |
| Congregational life and wellness (Healthy Congregations, Conflict management processes etc.)  | 58.3%            | 60             |
| Transitions (Exit and Transition Interviews when a minister departs, Search Committee retreats etc.)                                    | 43.7%            | 45             |
| <b>Mission, vision and planning (Long-term planning facilitation, Visioning workshops etc.)</b>   | <b>67.0%</b>     | <b>69</b>      |
| Worship skills (Weaving our Worship, Service Leader training etc.)  | 31.1%            | 32             |



A Visual Representation of the Results for Question 14:

**Analysis:** The variety of different questions about regional services, measuring different dimensions (e.g. rank order of importance, quality, level of use, level of satisfaction) did not result in a cohesive understanding or comparison of the ratings and perspectives of the respondents to these services.

One does get the impression that many – even CUC insiders – are not aware of many CUC services and that the survey may have had the benefit of educating respondents. This raises questions about how the CUC can become more visible, more known.

There were a number of references to the use of “canned programs” and a lack of practical value in workshops and to the absence of needed follow-up and assessment after the workshop has been conducted to ensure that the information and training has had an impact.

There were also many positive comments about regional services and the staff’s effort and “dedication”. While specific references to staff names were usually avoided, there is a thread, throughout the comments, of recognition of the staff workload with “burn-out” and “overburdened” being common descriptors of issues facing staff.

| 14. How would you describe the quality of the following services you received?                       |          |            |            |            |                   |                |                |
|--|----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | Poor     | Fair       | Good       | Excellent  | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Financial stewardship (Dreams and Dollars, canvass training etc.)                                    | 2.7% (3) | 6.3% (7)   | 21.4% (24) | 23.2% (26) | 46.4% (52)        | 3.22           | 112            |
| Congregational life and wellness (Healthy Congregations, Conflict management processes etc.)         | 1.8% (2) | 11.4% (13) | 29.8% (34) | 12.3% (14) | 44.7% (51)        | 2.95           | 114            |
| Transitions (Exit and Transition Interviews when a minister departs, Search Committee retreats etc.) | 1.8% (2) | 8.0% (9)   | 19.5% (22) | 5.3% (6)   | 65.5% (74)        | 2.82           | 113            |
| Mission, vision and planning (Long-term planning facilitation, Visioning workshops etc.)             | 1.8% (2) | 13.2% (15) | 28.1% (32) | 13.2% (15) | 43.9% (50)        | 2.94           | 114            |
| Worship skills (Weaving our Worship, Service Leader training etc.)                                   | 0.0% (0) | 1.8% (2)   | 17.4% (19) | 9.2% (10)  | 71.6% (78)        | 3.26           | 109            |

**Respondent Comments:** Forty people provided additional written remarks.

Comments make it clear that respondents cannot always identify CUC-provided services, and do not always distinguish them from other services and workshops that may be available to them or that their congregations may organize separately. This makes it difficult to know whether comments are really about CUC-provided services.

Comments were made particularly in these areas:

1. Lack of awareness of services
2. Workshop follow-up
3. Service quality

Several commented about a **lack of awareness of services** and/or inability of the congregation to use them: “have not taken advantage of most of these training opportunities”; “Haven’t used any of these services”; “Sorry I don’t know much about the services our congregation has used”; “If individuals

in the congregation receive these trainings, members are not always aware”

**Follow-up after workshops** was frequently referenced, though it is not always clear that respondents are talking about follow-up by the CUC. “Tends to be inadequate communication among CUC volunteers after workshop presented. Crucial re follow up to ascertain what aspects were effective and used.” “With the congregational wellness workshops, the services provided by the CUC were very good, but it was hard to know how to follow up in the congregation and translate it into positive action.” “The help we got in conflict management was not followed through.” There were a number of compliments and complaints about **service quality**: “...workshop was terrific. ... retreat was okay but felt somewhat last minute. When we were ready for a ... retreat ... there was no service consultant available.” “I have particularly appreciated the ... workshops where several congregations in the area get together to share ideas.” “We have also used a number of Lifespan learning Resources very successfully. I have a sense that a number of congregations could use [these] workshops.” “Having outsiders organize visioning or planning may be useful since it frees someone inside from having to do the work, but sometimes it just seems like I'm spending time on an exercise that will have little practical use.”

“Not positive about services received - seems workshops had different titles.” “There has been an assumption that those gathered have no basic knowledge on which to build.” “We tried for several months to work out a date for a [particular] workshop, but the volunteers were ultimately unable to come. Very disappointing, especially as Board members were fired up about it.”; “Excellent experience with one consultant. Very unsatisfactory experience with a different presentation.”

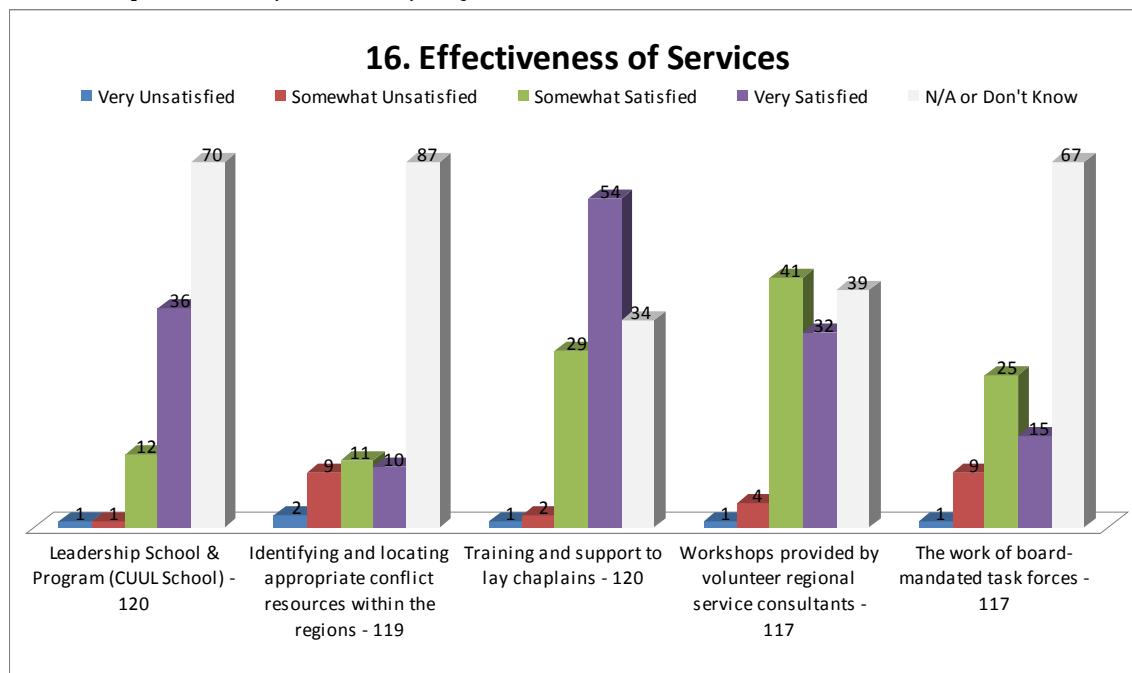
**5.3.4 SATISFACTION WITH REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS**

Questions were asked about satisfaction levels for a range of regional services and supports provided by staff and volunteers.

**Rating Averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates general agreement with the statements. Those who indicated their level of satisfaction gave “Leadership School & Program (CUUL School)” the highest Rating Average of 3.66, followed by “Training and support to lay chaplains” (3.58) and “Workshops provided by volunteer regional service consultants” (3.33). The lowest rating was given to “Identifying and locating appropriate conflict resources within the regions” at 2.91.

| <b>16. The following lists various services and supports provided by CUC staff and volunteers as part of Regional Service delivery. Please indicate to what extent you have been satisfied with their effectiveness and quality. If you are not familiar with these services, please check N/A</b> |                  |                      |                    |                   |                   |                |                |
|--|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | Very Unsatisfied | Somewhat Unsatisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Very Satisfied    | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Leadership School & Program (CUUL School)  | 0.8% (1)         | 0.8% (1)             | 10.0% (12)         | 30.0% (36)        | <b>58.3% (70)</b> | 3.66           | 120            |
| Identifying and locating appropriate conflict resources within the regions.  | 1.7% (2)         | 7.6% (9)             | 9.2% (11)          | 8.4% (10)         | <b>73.1% (87)</b> | 2.91           | 119            |
| Training and support to lay chaplains.   | 0.8% (1)         | 1.7% (2)             | 24.2% (29)         | <b>45.0% (54)</b> | 28.3% (34)        | 3.58           | 120            |
| Workshops provided by volunteer regional service consultants.  | 0.9% (1)         | 3.4% (4)             | <b>35.0% (41)</b>  | 27.4% (32)        | 33.3% (39)        | 3.33           | 117            |
| The work of board-mandated task forces.  | 0.9% (1)         | 7.7% (9)             | 21.4% (25)         | 12.8% (15)        | <b>57.3% (67)</b> | 3.08           | 117            |

A Visual Representation of the Results for Question 16:



**Respondent comments:** Twenty-four people added comments. These included praise for CUUL school, for regional consultants on RE, and for the Dreams and Dollars workshop, as well as expressions of desire for “resources to deal with crisis management” and “follow-ups on assessments, types and number of services.” Reference was made to “the first implosion of the Visioning Task Force and the delays of the Principles Task Force” and lack of satisfaction with participation levels for task forces.

**5.4 CUC STRUCTURE**

A series of positive statements about CUC structures was presented and respondents asked to provide their level of agreement with the statements.

**Rating Averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates general agreement with the statements. The strongest level of agreement was given to ‘The boundaries established for the four Regions are appropriate.’ (Rating Average = 3.43), followed closely by ‘The RNGs have organized successful gatherings and celebrations.’ (3.40).

The lowest level of agreement was attributed to the statement ‘Sufficient opportunities have been provided for congregational leaders to reflect together on CUC policy and plans’ (2.69) followed by ‘Youth and young adults participate fully in the CUC.’ (2.75).

**Analysis:** There was a general agreement expressed regarding the regional boundaries and the value of the Regional Network Groups. There were mixed reactions concerning the effectiveness of RNGs and the Regional Fall Gatherings (RFGs), especially when it comes to making more members aware of the UU world outside their own congregation.

Some comments were directed at the structures of Youth Adult Committees (YAC’s) which have recently undergone changes; the new structures will need a further evaluation down the road to determine if they have resolved youth concerns about their place in the UU family.

| <b>18. To what extent do you agree:</b>  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                |                |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | Disagree Strongly | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat    | Agree Strongly    | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| The boundaries established for the four Regions are appropriate.   | 0.0% (0)          | 7.3% (8)          | 35.5% (39)        | <b>45.5% (50)</b> | 11.8% (13)        | 3.43           | 110            |
| The Regional Network Groups (RNGs) have succeeded in connecting congregations with one another.  | 6.3% (7)          | 16.2% (18)        | <b>45.9% (51)</b> | 14.4% (16)        | 17.1% (19)        | 2.83           | 111            |
| The RNGs have organized successful gatherings and celebrations.  | 2.7% (3)          | 9.0% (10)         | 24.3% (27)        | <b>47.7% (53)</b> | 16.2% (18)        | 3.40           | 111            |
| The RNGs have provided or managed sufficient training opportunities to enhance leadership skills and the quality of life in the congregations.                                     | 0.9% (1)          | 15.7% (17)        | <b>41.7% (45)</b> | 17.6% (19)        | 24.1% (26)        | 3.00           | 108            |
| The RNGs have provided necessary services to congregations, such as congregational transition, part-time ministerial settlement, conflict resolution, and gathering opportunities. | 1.8% (2)          | 10.0% (11)        | 34.5% (38)        | 17.3% (19)        | <b>36.4% (40)</b> | 3.06           | 110            |
| Sufficient opportunities have been provided for congregational leaders to reflect together on CUC policy and plans.  | 6.4% (7)          | 17.4% (19)        | 23.9% (26)        | 11.9% (13)        | <b>40.4% (44)</b> | 2.69           | 109            |
| The regional youth-adult committees are effective structures for supporting youth ministry and governance in Canada.   | 1.8% (2)          | 10.9% (12)        | 19.1% (21)        | 8.2% (9)          | <b>60.0% (66)</b> | 2.84           | 110            |
| Youth and young adults participate fully in the CUC.   | 6.4% (7)          | 17.3% (19)        | 23.6% (26)        | 14.5% (16)        | <b>38.2% (42)</b> | 2.75           | 110            |

**Respondent Comments:** Twenty-eight added comments following this question. The themes included:

- Size of regions and distance
- Regional gatherings
- Youth and Young Adults

Regarding the **size of regions** and the difficulty of connecting across large distances, one commented “the Eastern Region is too large to work for close congregational contact and networking; Conferences, trainings etc are often far away and therefore too expensive to attend” and others noted that “Our region still has to contend with geography and the small size of congregations in our “cluster;” “I am in Thunder Bay and the issue of “connecting” with other congregations and congregational leadership is a difficult one.”

Regarding **regional gatherings**: “I have been to one...and found it interesting and helpful in terms of some of the issues we were dealing with as well as a good opportunity to meet other Unitarians.”; “very well run and very effective in networking and workshops. I think there should be increased opportunity for intergenerational contact and ways devised to improve the involvement of non-participating UU members”; “I think we should work harder to build the CUC at this level.”

**Youth and young adults**: “More work must be done to develop suitable and effective structure for youth and young adults.”; “There is still a “gap” in the transition from youth to young adult”; “youth need more guidance from adults to make sure programs offered look after the needs of participants on a consistent basis. If this does not happen youth will be wary of attending events”; “Where a YAC can only afford to meet by telephone, they have little chance to create a team which can be effective. Some face-to-face work is needed to build community. A few youth make the leap from local to regional and national roles with CUC, but most youth can’t see what the larger youth movement is about”; “What I do know is that youth appreciate the opportunity together at ACMs and Regional Gatherings, but I don’t know whether they feel involved at other levels.”; “Youth are segregated. No social justice opportunities.”; “The boundaries do not reflect the needs of youth. Regional YACs are for the most part disintegrating. Youth programming is waning.”

Some other comments:

- “Not aware of any opportunities to reflect on CUC plans, except perhaps some very general Q&A sessions at regional gatherings”
- “Suggest programs (eg. weekend workshops) be announced a minimum 3 months in advance. Preferably 6 months.”
- “There seems to be a need for basic training on a regular basis about governance, leadership, etc”
- "Part-time" ministerial settlements have not been handled adequately in this region. There needs to be more liaison with the UUA-sponsored ministerial settlement people”; “I recently found out that there exists little in the way of a transparent complaints process for people who have serious concerns with professional ministry”
- “I haven't had a strong sense of connection of the congregation to CUC things”

**5.5 COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION COMPARISON**

*Analysis:* Respondents thought their congregations received more information from the CUC and provided more information to the CUC than they had five years ago; they saw some improvement in connection with other congregations in their areas.

| <b>20. Compared to five years ago:</b>                            |                 |                                   |                   |                   |                |                |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | Less frequently | With the same frequency as before | More frequently   | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| My congregation receives useful information from the CUC          | 0.9% (1)        | 15.2% (17)                        | <b>49.1% (55)</b> | 34.8% (39)        | 2.74           | 112            |
| The CUC requests and receives information from my congregation    | 1.8% (2)        | 18.0% (20)                        | 33.3% (37)        | <b>46.8% (52)</b> | 2.59           | 111            |
| My congregation is connected with other congregations in our area | 7.1% (8)        | <b>39.3% (44)</b>                 | 29.5% (33)        | 24.1% (27)        | 2.29           | 112            |

### 5.6 CONTINENTAL SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS WITH UUA

**Rating Averages:** In terms of services still provided for Canadians by the Unitarian Universalist Association (for professional ministry, young adults/campus ministry and youth), ‘Service delivery’ received an effectiveness rating average of 2.55 and ‘Communication’ a 2.49. A rating of 3 or higher indicates the arrangement is considered to be often or always effective, whereas 2 indicates “occasionally effective.” Fewer than half of all respondents answered these two questions about continental service arrangements.

areas,” that will lead to a Made-in-Canada program approach “without severing links to UUA endeavours and programmes.”

**Respondent Comments:** Comments concerning service delivery from and communication with the UUA ran the gamut from suggestions that the arrangement is working quite well to indications that it is not working well at all or that the CUC should be taking over these functions:

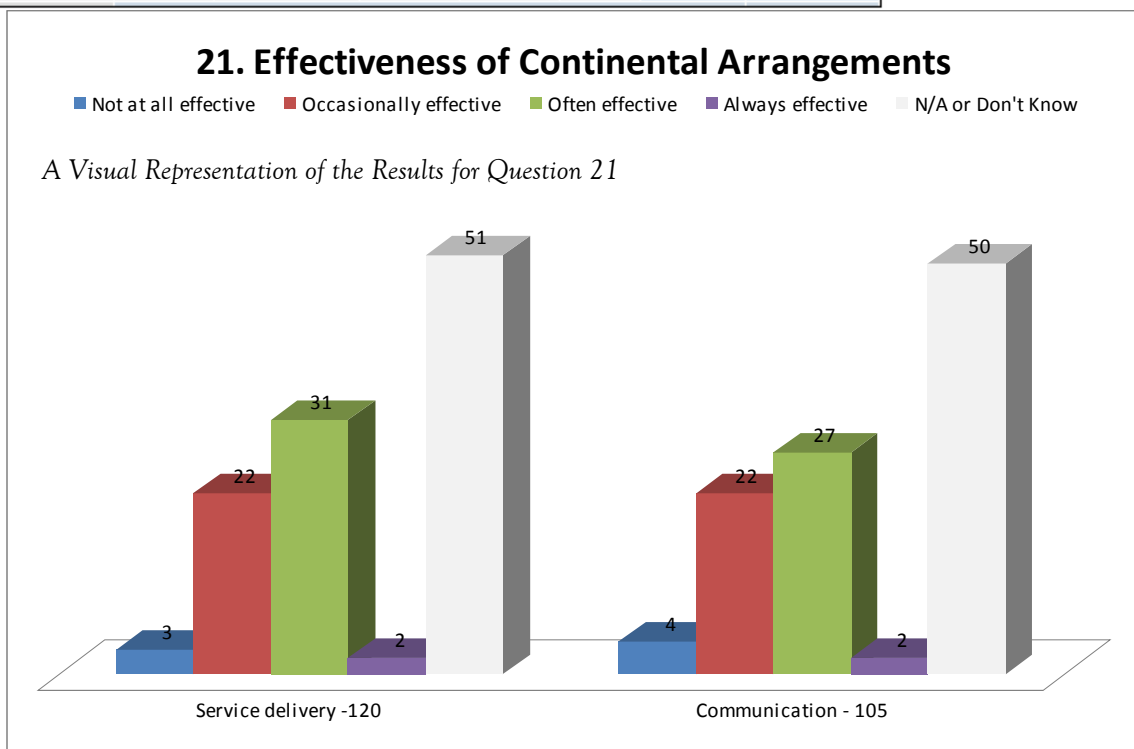
“CUC UUA connections for youth and young adult and campus ministry services need to be maintained”; “our youth activities don't get the same attention, or organizational and financial support as they would in the UUA.”; “I think there is increasingly less need for the UUA to provide

services to Canadian youth, although an ongoing continental connection should be fostered ....

**21. In 2002 it was determined that the areas of professional ministry, youth, young adults and campus ministry would continue to remain continental services with appropriate UUA staff interaction and information sharing with RNG teams. To what extent has this arrangement been effective in terms of:**

|                  | Not at all effective | Occasionally effective | Often effective | Always effective | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Service delivery | 2.8% (3)             | 20.2% (22)             | 28.4% (31)      | 1.8% (2)         | 46.8% (51)        | 2.55           | 109            |
| Communication    | 3.8% (4)             | 21.0% (22)             | 25.7% (27)      | 1.9% (2)         | 47.6% (50)        | 2.49           | 105            |

**Analysis:**  
Responses to questions about the continental service arrangements were mixed. They generally acknowledged that 1) the CUC is not financially or structurally ready to assume full responsibility in these areas, and 2) there needs to be an evolution – a “development and strengthening of Canadian institutions in each of these



Also, there are problems with the UUA providing most services to professional ministers in Canada, but the CUC probably does not have the resources to take over these services entirely.” “I would like the CUC to provide these services as well. We need Canadian ministers in our congregations, Canadian programs for youth, young adults and campus ministry. I find that the individual members and congregations don't benefit from communication with the UUA. The exception is UU World, which is excellent.”; “It's a good thing that they remained with the UUA because the RNG has not supported the YA and CM programmes here”; “Professional ministry seems to work well. I have been involved in the search process for a minister and have been satisfied. I ... have strong reservations about the youth programs.”; “Shared [youth] con[ference]s and ministerial mentorship are wonderful; however, we most certainly would reap great benefits from made in Canada theological training and further support and more curriculum development.”

There were a number of comments that did not deal directly with the UUA/CUC service delivery question, but rather with how the CUC is doing since the change:

“It has been helpful to have a reasonably stable staff complement at the CUC, which has given us a chance to build useful working relationships... Continued links with the UUA have been helpful too.”; “Appears need for more direct Youth and Young Adult presence in policy/program/staffing”; “The CUC is now a much more effective organization for Canadians since the transition from the UUA.”; “Cross border Regional Gatherings were more beneficial...,”

due to the # of congregations and proximity”

“I would continue to encourage the development and strengthening of Canadian institutions in each of these areas, without severing links to UUA endeavours and programmes.”

**5.7 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEETING**

An important part of the CUC structure is the Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM). Stakeholders were asked to agree or disagree with 3 positive statements about the effectiveness of the ACMs.

**Rating Averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates general agreement with the statements. The strongest level of agreement was given to the statement regarding the ACMs’ success in connecting individuals with one another” (3.61), followed by “...providing and/or managing training opportunities...” (3.48) and providing opportunities for congregational leaders to reflect together on CUC policy and plans” (3.28).

**Analysis:** The ratings given for this series of questions were strong, and the following comments positive, with two recurring exceptions: 1) The affordability of the annual conference is a major issue for many people. The existence of subsidies was not mentioned and it raises the question of whether the availability of subsidies is publicized

| 23. To what extent would you agree with the following statements:  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                |                |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | Disagree strongly | Disagree somewhat | Agree somewhat    | Agree strongly    | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| The Annual Meetings and Conferences (ACMs) have succeeded in connecting individuals with one another.                                | 0.0% (0)          | 2.7% (3)          | 30.6% (34)        | <b>59.5% (66)</b> | 7.2% (8)          | 3.61           | 111            |
| ACMs are providing and/or managing training opportunities to enhance leadership skills and the quality of life in the congregations. | 0.0% (0)          | 3.6% (4)          | 40.5% (45)        | <b>46.8% (52)</b> | 9.0% (10)         | 3.48           | 111            |
| The ACMs have succeeded in providing opportunities for congregational leaders to reflect together on CUC policy and plans.           | 0.0% (0)          | 10.0% (11)        | <b>40.0% (44)</b> | 33.6% (37)        | 16.4% (18)        | 3.28           | 110            |

well-enough, and if it was, would there be enough funds available to make a significant difference since national air travel is often quite expensive. 2) A number of comments were made about the inconsistent quality of the workshops.

**Respondent Comments:** Thirty-three people added comments.

Some comments praise the ACMs: “Any new leader to a congregation should be encouraged to go to the ACM, it really made a difference to me in terms of connection in general and putting names to faces,” “but more could be done in the area of reporting so those who did not attend can benefit too.” “Quality of the ACM programmes continues to improve,” “The ACM’s are wonderful. The integration of the generations is excellent. There is time for both work and play.”

Some comments point to concerns: “There is no community building happening at ACM’s except in the Youth community. The adults need the same sort of connections built.” “The ACM’s are modelled on business conferences, but we are more than businesses.” “The number of workshops opposite business meetings will mean people may focus less on CUC issues and more on general development issues;” “They are too ‘busy’...too many workshops...and not enough focus on specific relevant issues.” “Open-ended, bottom-up reflections regarding our Canadian U & U movement and organization don’t seem to happen much.”

Several address a perceived need for workshops especially geared to congregational roles and six people expressed concern about the cost of traveling to ACMs.

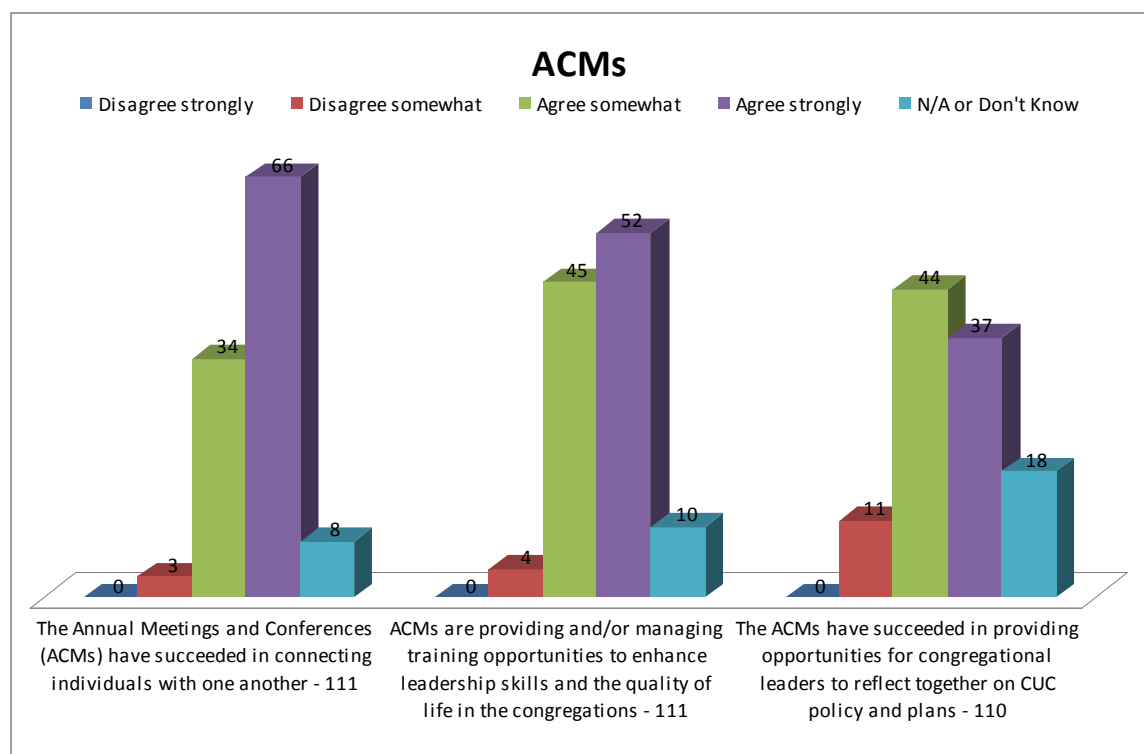
### 5.8 CUC COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES

A series of questions asked about the effectiveness of various CUC methods of communication.

**Rating Averages:** A rating of 3 or higher indicates the arrangement is considered to be often or always effective, while 2 indicated occasionally effective. The *Canadian Unitarian* newsletter received the highest rating average of 3.31, followed by ‘E-mail connections’ (3.03) and ‘Teleconferences’ at 3.02. The lowest effectiveness rating was given to ‘Online discussion groups’ and ‘Online surveys’, both at 2.65, an average rating between “occasionally effective” and “often effective.”

**Analysis:** There were repeated complaints about the volume (“deluge”) of e-mail, the amount of paper in congregational mailings, concerns about limited distribution of mailings within congregations, and about the appearance and complexity of the CUC website.

A Visual Representation of the Results for Question 23:



Canadian Unitarian Council

1-888-568-5723

www.cuc.ca

The ratings given, aside from the newsletter and the teleconferences, were weak and suggest some dissatisfaction with the amount of and style of communication.

Technology, with its frequent new innovations, is a tough sell for many of the members and the recent use of many online surveys to conduct necessary evaluations may be responsible for the very low rating they received.

It is worth noting that most people were familiar with the CUC website, CUC e-mail communications, congregational mailings, the CUC newsletter, and online CUC discussion groups. Not so familiar were online photos, only surveys, and teleconferencing.

**Respondent Comments:**

- “I love the CUC newsletter and monthly mailings - they are informative and useful.” But as well several expressions of concern that “Congregational mailings don't always get to the right person” and that “Regular mailings I receive seem to contain so much paper.”
- Several expressions of concern over the quantity of e-mail: “My problem with email is that there is way too much of it. I would like to be engaged but I just don't have the time.” “The amount of email I receive from the CUC is overwhelming”

| <b>25. The CUC uses a variety of communication vehicles to deliver programs and communicate with its stakeholders. To what extent have the following been effective vehicles for communicating with CUC stakeholders:</b> |                      |                        |                   |                  |                   |                |                |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | Not at all effective | Occasionally effective | Often effective   | Always effective | N/A or Don't Know | Rating Average | Response Count |
| CUC website   | 0.0% (0)             | 18.9% (21)             | <b>55.9% (62)</b> | 18.0% (20)       | 7.2% (8)          | 2.99           | 111            |
| E-mail connections  | 0.0% (0)             | 15.5% (17)             | <b>63.6% (70)</b> | 18.2% (20)       | 2.7% (3)          | 3.03           | 110            |
| Congregational Mailings   | 3.6% (4)             | 26.4% (29)             | <b>40.9% (45)</b> | 13.6% (15)       | 15.5% (17)        | 2.76           | 110            |
| Online discussion groups  | 3.7% (4)             | 24.8% (27)             | <b>38.5% (42)</b> | 6.4% (7)         | 26.6% (29)        | 2.65           | 109            |
| The Canadian Unitarian newsletter   | 0.0% (0)             | 9.0% (10)              | <b>47.7% (53)</b> | 38.7% (43)       | 4.5% (5)          | 3.31           | 111            |
| Teleconferences   | 0.9% (1)             | 13.5% (15)             | 22.5% (25)        | 16.2% (18)       | <b>46.8% (52)</b> | 3.02           | 111            |
| Online photos   | 1.8% (2)             | 20.2% (22)             | 33.0% (36)        | 8.3% (9)         | <b>36.7% (40)</b> | 2.75           | 109            |
| Online surveys  | 2.8% (3)             | 20.2% (22)             | 29.4% (32)        | 5.5% (6)         | <b>42.2% (46)</b> | 2.65           | 109            |

- Several comments about how “it is hard to search the Web site for information,” “not especially easy to navigate,” “a frustration for me...I often have trouble finding materials,” and it “is not user friendly.”<sup>2</sup>
- Concern was also expressed that the “website...needs an image overhaul as does the logo,” needs “a fresh eye.”
- On teleconferencing: “Teleconferences are better than not meeting at all, but have limited effectiveness.”; “Teleconferences effective with less people”; “teleconferencing is effective in reaching those in a leadership role. We need to work at ways to reach the average congregant.”
- “I’d like to see something like the congregational networkers again, since I am not sure that the board members really have time”
- Acknowledgement that “Communication is our toughest job”

### 5.9 THINGS WE LIKE MOST

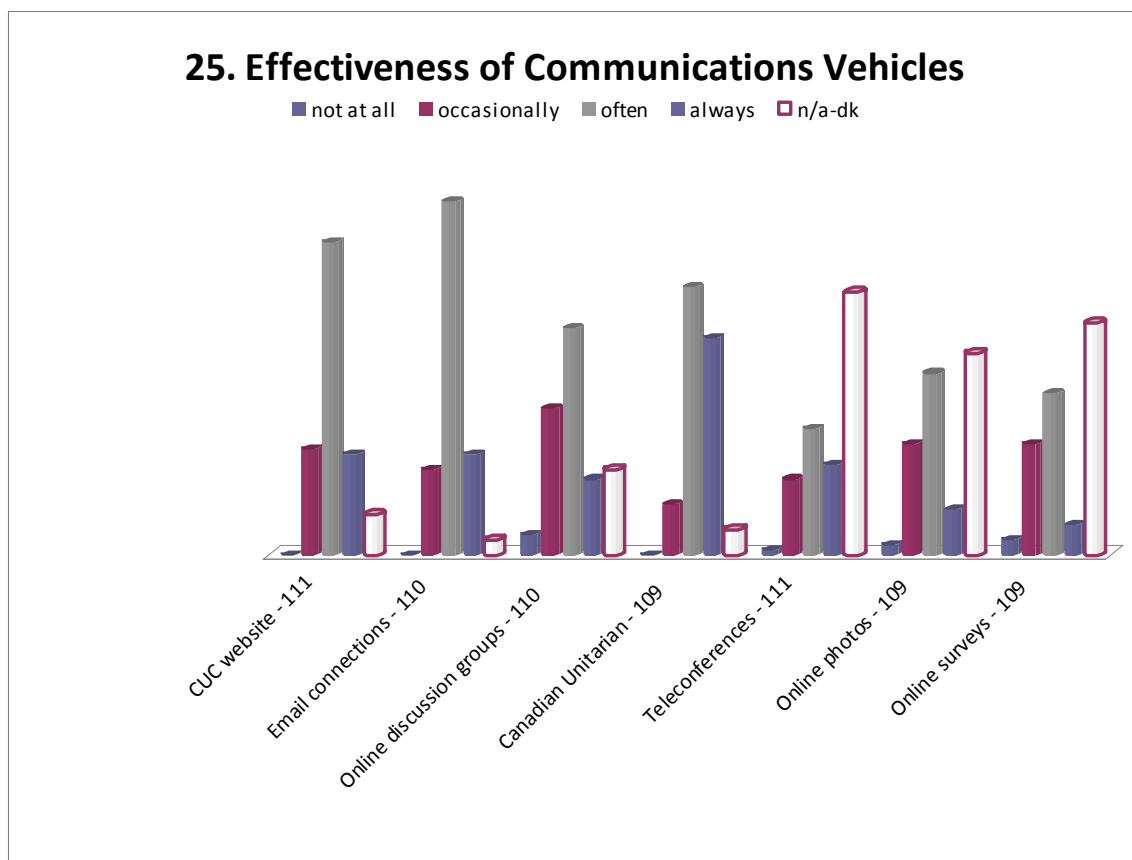
When asked to record what they liked most about the CUC, 83 people responded.

*Analysis:* What respondents liked most was reflected in the many kudos for the staff, for their dedication, energy and enthusiasm. It has clearly been a substantial accomplishment of CUC staff to create and build an organization of strength from its modest beginnings five years ago.

Appreciation was also frequent for the growth and establishment of a national made-in-Canada movement, a verification of the energy which was expended in order to create the CUC that is now in place.

References were common regarding the strength of ACMs and RFGs in uniting people, as were frequent compliments about the development of services, workshops, and training programs.

Visual Representation of Responses to Question 25:



<sup>2</sup> Subsequent to this survey, the Google search engine has been installed on the website.

While evaluation research such as this quite reasonably emphasizes problems and the search for solutions that will improve the organization and its services, the positive indicators – the things people believe are being done well – must be acknowledged, sustained and when appropriate, amplified.

**Respondent Comments:**

- Twenty-five people commented positively on the CUC staff. A sampling: “I like the people working with the CUC and have always found them helpful ... they have been visible, encouraging and supportive. Some of the good things that have happened in our congregation are due to the CUC staff's efforts.”; “much has depended upon leadership style and commitment - nothing like having that 'personal touch' of knowing who to go to re issues that require assistance”; “[CUC Staff]'s incredible skill at connecting a very diverse membership across a vast nation.”; “Dedicated staff members who go way beyond their responsibilities”; “We are fortunate to have such approachable [Staff] at the helm.”
- The ACM: “The growth of interest and numbers at the ACM is great too.”; “efforts to make Annual Meeting age inclusive strong and effective effort on same sex marriage issue”; “I believe that the Board is trying. I liked the choices that this years AGM provided for non-delegates”; “positives for me have been the national (ACM) and regional (fall gatherings) meetings”; “The way that youth and young adults have been integrated into CUC programming, in particular the ACM.”

**Other things:**

- The Canadian Unitarian newsletter
- Improved communications and connections
- Internet-based communications
- Succeeding financially and doing a lot with limited resources
- Workshop and training resources
- Leadership School
- New programs

- Organization of and communication among lay chaplains
- Support for youth programs
- Increasingly Canadian movement
- Taking a stand on key social and political issues

**5.10 THINGS WE LIKE LEAST**

When asked what they liked least, 69 people responded.

**Analysis:** Many of the comments in this section repeated previous concerns about the distance factor, especially for smaller, rural congregations, the size of regions and the country itself as an impediment to collaboration.

The volume of e-mail, as well as other technology issues kept a high profile. Many are not prepared for the rapid introduction of online forms of communication.

More than one person complained about the lack of notice or lead time when it came to scheduling training workshops and several complained about an unresponsive board of trustees or made references to an organization that was “autocratic”, “bureaucratic” and “top down”.

Some concerns were expressed about the quality of services, suggesting for example, that a best practices assessment is needed and there were more who yearned for a stronger public presence for the UU movement, often linking this issue to the failure of the denomination to meet growth expectations.

On the whole, however, responses to this question were far more likely to be unique than for the previous one.

**Respondent Comments:**

- “The challenges of distance” – “I don't know who you are and I feel like an outsider”
- Too many e-mail groups
- Scheduling of training and lack of advance notice

- “CUC Board is basically an unknown force” that “turns a deaf ear on good proposals that come from congregations.”
- The principles task force: premature and unnecessary
- Groups formed by Council resolution seem to slip below the horizon unheard from
- Being underfunded, understaffed, and too reliant on volunteers
- CUC overworked and confused about its mission
- Sporadic and not always good quality service delivery
- Congregational confusion about from whom they receive various services.
- No strong public presence
- Lack of a CUC Ottawa political office.
- UUA offered more intellection stimulation.
- Perception that CUC does not do anything for people.
- “Our membership numbers are not increasing significantly.” “Where’s the evangelism?”
- That our average age seems to be retirement age.

Finally, some people don’t like “Lack of professional ministry at the national level” and think that “being a minister in Canada still looks like a very lonely job; more in Canada ministerial support would be excellent”. Others disagree with “trying to foist ministry on congregations that cannot afford them or do not feel the need for one.”

### **5.11 NEW SERVICE SUGGESTIONS**

Sixty-three people responded to the question asking about new services the CUC should consider offering.

*Analysis:* While not many actual new services were mentioned, there was a fair amount of comment about improving process, and communication methods, delivering more or better rather than new services, and managing professional ministerial concerns. One exception was a request for a Youth Leadership School, to enhance the leadership skills of youth.

There was a split between those who want more internal supports in running their congregations, and those concerned with our external image and contacts with non-UU’s.

#### ***Respondent Suggestions:***

- More up-to-date children’s RE curricula, including Islam and environmentally sustainable activities (less paper and supplies used)
- Support for francophone outreach
- “Direct services from the professional staff rather than the largely ineffective volunteer consultants”
- Youth Canadian UU Leadership School
- Implementation of Terre Commune [Youth Leadership Planning Meeting Fall 2006] recommendations
- Different format for RFGs, rather than miniature ACMs.
- Clarity on how a congregation can initiate a project
- Support for the search for part-time ministry
- Workshops, handbooks on contracting for professional ministry
- More Canadian UU brochures
- Better media representation and visibility in communities
- Expanded newsletter on UU beliefs and practices
- President or another role should be a full time minister with no congregational association traveling the country and speaking to congregations and the country
- National database on membership, money, involvement, other measurables of congregational performance
- Facilitated national webconference rooms for committees or interest groups
- Fix the line of communication that keeps the average congregant from knowing what the CUC is all about
- Stick to improving delivery of current services; consider paying consultants and bringing in occasional UUA people.
- Help larger congregations get together to discuss common concerns
- Provide guidance on Human Resource management and personnel review

- “Teleconferences connecting presidents in each region to encourage them to bring more CUC services into clusters
- More accessibility to attend ACMs
- Better conflict resolution
- “Interfaith/interspiritual liaison and representation”
- Advertising
- Help youth learn to speak effectively, act maturely, organize intergenerational services
- Workshop on care and concern
- Workshops on size transitions
- Speakers bureau with motivated speakers on the issues of our times

### **5.12 ANYTHING NOT COVERED?**

When asked to comment on anything that had not been covered, 33 responses were added, covering everything from a need for more intentionality about interfaith linkages to a need for professional audit or evaluation by outside experts to a need for evaluation of ministers and help for them in improving their ministries. Some earlier themes were sounded again (more of a national presence, “more spirituality and less “organization”). Many respondents spoke with varying degrees of passion and pride about the CUC’s “progress” made over the last 5 years.

There were also some kind words about the reduction of the CUC deficit, about the CUC staff, and the CUC Board. One comment suggested congregations need more information on whether they are already receiving support and what support they can ask for.

There was a comment indicating that the survey was much too long and that not many would want to contemplate these questions, and another offering thanks for a “very well constructed survey.”

Other comments included:

“We have only seen our [congregational networker] once in the last 5 years. Was this an idea that just didn't work?”

“I think CUC needs to remember that congregations are already involved in their own day-to-day work, planning, activities, etc. Making room for CUC activity (eg. Go 4 it workshop) needs lots of lead time. Also, more personal communication (rather than material only through the mailing) would create better connections.”

Finally, a number of comments on the service delivery model: “I think the CUC has developed very well over the past five years - with lots of learning and adjusting to reality over that time. I hope we can continue to try new models of providing resources and support - and nurturing - to congregations across the land.”; “Over the next fifteen years, the CUC can move from “service delivery” (the UUA district model on which it was founded in 1961) toward becoming the association of UU congregations in Canada.”; “How do we better utilize resources to become a stronger presence in Canada?.”; “Who speaks for us? Who leads? What are meaningful programs we can work together on? Do strategic plans longer than 3 years really work?”

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Undertake evaluations using a similar survey instrument every 3 years, so that results can be compared over time, while allowing enough time between surveys for implementation of new procedures and programs.
2. Consider how to engage more people in CUC affairs and in future evaluations from demographic groups (youth, young adults, males, people from Central region, people from large and very large congregations) that appear to be under-represented.
3. Establish a task force of board, staff, and congregational leaders to brainstorm and initiate actions that will make the UU denomination known to the public, to be a leader in the faith community, and to be more widely known as a faith committed to social justice.
4. Strengthen connections with professional ministers through increased contact with UUMOC and undertake to jointly identify ways that the CUC can provide appropriate supports to professional ministers and congregations needing support around ministry.
5. In recognition of the numerous comments about technology, consider:
  - an in-depth analysis of current technological practices
  - a comparison of the design and content of websites from similar organizations
  - how to make more judicious use of online discussion groups
6. Assess current approaches to identify possible reasons for the perception of the CUC as “autocratic”, “bureaucratic”, “top-down” and implement changes if there is cause for the complaints.
7. Consult with leadership of youth and young adults to determine what actions can be taken to address the concerns expressed about services and supports.
8. Meet with congregational leaders to brainstorm to create better awareness among leaders and among ordinary UU members of the many CUC services and supports.
9. Continue to conduct evaluations of all training workshops and programs to assess the extent to which they provided practical, useful information to participants and to ensure that there is follow-up to all such services.
10. Increase the notice in advance of workshops to increase access and provide opportunities for pre-workshop planning in collaboration with leaders of the congregation(s) hosting the workshop.
11. Assess the costs and benefits of congregational mailings given concerns about staff burn-out, and that the mailings may not be accessed by enough people to achieve their communication purposes.
12. Consider the establishment of fund-raising to accumulate funds that could be used to subsidize members who cannot afford to attend RFGs and ACMs.
13. Consider the request for a Youth Leadership programs to enhance the leadership skills of youth.

## **APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION INVITING RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY**

Dear Friend,

You have been identified as someone who has had an active role in UU affairs in Canada as a congregational leader and/or as a CUC participant over the past five years. We need your help!

In 2002, new structures and functions were introduced for the CUC as it assumed responsibilities previously carried out by the UUA. One of the recommendations of the "Of Regions and RNGs" report was that an evaluation of the organization take place after these changes had been in operation for five years. That's where you come in. We'd like to ask you to respond to an online survey.

The purpose of this survey: to gain the impressions, opinions and recommendations of key stakeholders to determine the extent to which the CUC has carried out its new responsibilities and to assess the extent to which the organization's new structure has supported this work.

We are primarily interested in overall results although some individual comments from the open-ended questions will be quoted to explain and represent the range of opinions offered. While we will not identify the individuals who made the responses quoted, you are advised that your comments may be identifying to some readers.

The survey is easily completed in 15-20 minutes by clicking on this link ([link here](#)). We are requesting your response by June 22, 2007<sup>3</sup>. Copies of the summary and full reports generated by the survey will be available online and in print form for those who request it.

I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to assess the CUC's past and to shape its future – for the benefit of our congregations and members across the country. Thank you in advance for helping us with this process.

Yours truly,

Jean Pfleiderer  
President, CUC

PS If you feel you have received this message in error, or that your experiences with CUC service delivery are very limited, please feel free to pass along this request to another member of your congregation who you feel might have more to say.

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<sup>3</sup> This date was later extended.

## **APPENDIX B: YOUTH RESPONSE**

The general survey results feature a substantial amount of feedback about the way youth and young adults are included and served by the CUC. Results were filtered to isolate the responses of youth and young adults for the purpose of noting any dissonance or any special concerns that might emerge from this group.

No substantial differences appeared in ratings of mission and goal statements although the youth and young adults were a bit higher overall than the general survey population; very balanced comments, with gentle plaudits and criticism.

Lifespan learning ratings were again generally higher than those given by the overall survey population with one striking exception: ‘Support and training to DREs for children's programs’ was poorly rated by youth and young adults (2.50) when compared to the 3.30 average rating of the whole population.

Service rankings were similar but almost no one was willing to provide a ranking on the issue of satisfaction, with almost every person skipping or answering the question with a ‘Don’t Know’

Regional services: again a very small number responded.

CUC structure questions were answered by most with little difference from the general population, except for a much lower approval rate (2.90) on regional boundaries, as opposed to 3.43 of most respondents. There was one comment saying that “regional boundaries do not reflect the needs of youth”.

The question about the areas of professional ministry, youth, young adults and campus ministry remaining continental services provided similar ratings to the general population.

Young people were generally more positive about the ACMs which highlighted the Canuudle experience with a rating of 3.78 when it came to “connecting individuals to one another.”

There were lower ratings only in Congregational mailings and on the CUC newsletter; otherwise youth and young adults were more positive than the general population about communication vehicles.

These results taken as a whole would certainly deflate any unstated assumptions that youth and young adults are more negative or isolated from the CUC than the general survey population. Actually the results hint at the opposite, as young people, when they felt comfortable responding, were generally more positive than the larger group; likewise none of the more emotional negative complaints of the general report could be found in the young people’s responses to the open-ended questions.