

**REPORT OF
A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN STUDY
FOR
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP OF TOPEKA**

DECEMBER, 2007

**PARTNERS IN
PHILANTHROPY, INC.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWARD	.....	1
INTRODUCTION	.....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	.....	3
PERCEPTIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP	.....	4
PROPOSED PROJECT	.....	8
FUNDRAISING POTENTIAL	.....	12
CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP	.....	15
RECOMMENDATIONS	.....	17
APPENDICES		
Persons Interviewed	.....	20
Interview Questionnaire	.....	21
Interview Request Letter	.....	23
Case Statement	.....	24
Survey Responses	.....	25

Note: The names of persons interviewed and of survey participants have been deleted by the UUFT Board in order to maintain confidentiality.

FOREWARD

This is a confidential report contracted by the Board of Directors of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka (UUFT). The intended purpose of the report is to provide feedback from the Fellowship's membership and friends regarding its plan to expand and/or remodel its current facility. Along with my recommendations, this information will assist the Board of Directors in determining prudently the scope of its proposed plan and a realistic goal for a capital campaign to finance it.

Changes in individual circumstances such as illness, death, employment, economic conditions, etc. can substantially affect the results of the study, recommendations and the outcome of a campaign. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Fellowship to make its decisions as soon as practical.

All information contained herein is strictly confidential. The Board of Directors has sole authority and responsibility for any use or distribution of this report in full or in part.

INTRODUCTION

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka is considering construction of an expanded facility that will enable the Fellowship to more adequately accommodate programs, services, and social activities and to allow for future growth. The Board of Directors engaged Partners In Philanthropy to conduct a campaign study to determine:

- how the Fellowship is perceived by its members and friends;
- whether the vision for building for the future is accepted as vital;
- whether the case statement is sufficiently compelling;
- an appropriate goal for the campaign; and
- credible, capable leadership for a campaign.

The Fellowship's Fundraising Committee in consultation with Partners In Philanthropy compiled the list of potential interviewees. Personal letters requesting interviews were signed by Board President Mike Wilson. A description of the need to construct new facilities and proposed project elements was enclosed.

Consultant Mike Maude conducted 25 interviews with 34 persons. Interviews generally were 45 minutes to one hour in duration mainly at the Fellowship. Interviews were guided by a common questionnaire developed specifically for this project by Partners In Philanthropy. All other members of the Fellowship were invited to complete a survey, which elicited 43 responses, three of which were received late and are not included in the survey results in the Appendix. Apparently, there was some overlap between those interviewed and surveyed, so that interview and survey responses cannot be added together.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on information gained from interviews and surveys I believe that UUFT can raise between \$450,000 and \$750,000 for the project from its membership and friends depending upon the commitments of identified leadership. Two charts of gifts later in the report illustrate the size and number of gifts required to reach each level. The lower amount is a conservative estimate while the higher one is a stretch but within reach.

The Fellowship is valued highly by its members and friends. It occupies a significant place in their lives and the friendships made here are often among their closest.

Virtually all of those who were interviewed and who responded to the survey believe that the time is right to undertake a campaign to expand facilities.

Religious education classrooms are at the top of the list of priorities. A new or expanded sanctuary and separate space for social activities have evenly divided support as the next most important space needs to be addressed.

Every member interviewed and a majority of those responding to the survey intend to make financial commitments. Many of those commitments will entail adjustments in spending habits or support of other charitable interests. A new or expanded kitchen ranks fourth in priority. Other features are desirable but of lesser importance.

A high proportion of survey respondents volunteered to help with the campaign. Thirty individuals were identified in interviews as capable leaders for a campaign with about a dozen volunteering themselves to work in various capacities.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Sometimes the obvious is worth stating. There is no other spiritual community like Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka in the city. The differentiating keys are community and acceptance.

While other denominations demand adherence to a creed in order to be accepted into community, UUFT members and friends place their emphasis on the connection with other like-minded individuals, like-minded meaning those with a liberal approach to societal issues and pursuit of spiritual meaning in their lives. This is an extraordinarily high value for members and friends. One person summed it nicely, “The Fellowship contributes something different than you find at any other place of organized religion. It’s a more human experience; they’re not trying to follow ritual. God is not the important part. The important part is helping people to live in the present, trying to improve life on earth and not being so concerned about what happens after life. This place gives a home to a lot of people to think about the present and its impact on the future.”

The sense of belonging is quite evidently important. Comments throughout the interviews and surveys underscore this over and over. “The [UUFT] community is important; they’re extended family.” Another person said, “This place is kind of like family – you accept them as they are. This is my family; I’m comfortable here.” When people feel connected intellectually and emotionally there is a high likelihood of support for major undertakings that are collectively decided.

There is correspondingly a high degree of respect for and trust in the Fellowship’s lay leadership. One interview put it succinctly, “I like and trust everybody who’s involved.” That’s not unusual for a small congregation where people tend to rotate through leadership positions. There was no detectable sense among those interviewed that decisions are being made without broad input or opportunities to voice opposing

opinions. It appears that there is a healthy climate of open discussion and acceptance of divergent opinions.

That is not to mean that everyone is satisfied with decisions that have been made. Several years ago there was consensus among the membership to employ a minister, which led later to a full-time position, and then a religious education director. To some members this has been accompanied by the intrusion of ritual in services and greater religiosity generally. One stated, “Services have become more of a religious ritual. What are we worshipping? We’re taking on the vocabulary of church – hymns instead of songs, offerings instead of collections.” Naturally, a minister precludes substantial reliance on lay-led programs and injects more formality in processes. As one would expect, it is long-term members who are most likely to object to these changes. The discontent is not focused on the minister personally, though. Some feel that her sermons are high quality and challenging; others do not. There don’t seem to be personality conflicts.

This sense of dissatisfaction doesn’t smack of simple nostalgia. There is acceptance of decisions by a majority of members of the Fellowship to take a particular pathway. It is likely that those who rejected these decisions have left the Fellowship. Rather, it is a sense of displacement from community and devaluation. As stated at the beginning the keys to UUFT are community and acceptance. There is a yearning for the full experience of community and acceptance that they once enjoyed. For them there is nowhere else to go. One interviewee said plaintively, “I don’t feel valued or listened to.” There is an ineffable quality to the Fellowship that is difficult to renounce as expressed by one member, “I didn’t come for three or four years to services, but I came for social community activities. There seemed to be a spiritual shift. I’m coming to services again to connect with others that I didn’t see regularly.”

At the same time they acknowledge that the Fellowship is attracting new members particularly young adults and young families. “I don’t know that I appreciate all the changes. On the other hand, I see a lot of neat things going on. We’ve got lots of kids

involved. The place is better kept than ever before. It's exciting to see young families coming."

The relevance to the campaign is this. In spite of feeling disaffected, nearly every person voicing such complaints also indicated an intention to support a campaign financially. Their commitments won't be large, but symbolically they are important. They want to be contributing members of the Fellowship and to support what the majority believes is important. It is perhaps a sense of duty, of owing the Fellowship for the benefits they have received over the years. Of all places, surely UUFT can find ways to imbue a sense of acceptance among all members of the community in conformance with its principles. The Fellowship will be stronger for it.

Representative comments:

"I've been connected so long, I don't know what else to do."

"The people here have our kind of views. The programs leave me something to think about."

"It's the liberal thinking, the acceptance of all views. Everyone is trying to find their own spiritual path. We developed friendships faster here; people reached out more. They're also like-minded."

"My main interest is the adult religious education group – the Seekers."

"This place is kind of like family – you accept them as they are. This is my family; I'm comfortable here."

"The diversity of belief and tolerance attracted me and the humanistic perspective here."

"It's with regret that I say I'm not synergized; I'd like to be."

"People are comfortable speaking their hearts and minds; people are very accepting."

"We were looking for a social and intellectual community."

"The [UUFT] community is important; they're extended family."

"This is a spiritual home for me. Most people think similarly to me."

“The [UUFT] community is important to me; its’ ebbed and flowed over the years.”

“The reason I come is for the fellowship.”

“I’ve never found anything closer to my own personal beliefs.”

“I feel at home with these people. I like them and have warm feelings.”

“We have developed and maintained close friendships here.”

“We had a lot of trouble with our [child] and no one ever judged us. I can’t imagine very many places that would have been accepting.”

“These are a bunch of liberals that you can’t find anywhere else.”

“I still like the place when I think of alternatives.”

“This is a group that raised our children with us.”

“It’s a group of like-minded people who have a more liberal, tolerant perspective. They’re willing to continue to educate themselves, read, question.”

“This place really means a lot to me.”

“My commitment is to liberal religion in this community. We were the first to accept gays and lesbians. We need a place in our culture for that. The flourishing here may be a reaction to the extreme conservatism in society.”

“The Fellowship contributes something different than you find at any other place of organized religion. It’s a more human experience; they’re not trying to follow ritual. God is not the important part. The important part is helping people to live in the present, trying to improve life on earth and not being so concerned about what happens after life. This place gives a home to a lot of people to think about the present and its impact on the future.”

“Some things feel artificial; there’s too much superficial ritual. I don’t find it spiritual. It’s not as spiritually honest as it used to be. Worship is a phrase that seems odd to me. There’s not as much diversity of thought. But I’m really committed to UU values. I’m really frustrated right now.”

PROPOSED PROJECT

There is no question in anyone's mind that the Fellowship has need for more space. That being said, there are members who question whether the Fellowship has actually grown. They acknowledge that there are greater numbers of young adults and young families, but they also believe there has been a corresponding decline in the numbers of members who have chosen to leave or moved from the area. Overall, they don't perceive growth in total membership. However, this doesn't diminish their belief that facilities need to be expanded to better serve the membership. To them growth in membership numbers is just not a credible reason for expansion.

Some people, of course, believe the need is more urgent than others. At one end of the spectrum are those who see the need as urgent, represented by this comment, "You've come to a point of crisis. Something has to be done. Not only has the number of adults grown immensely, but the kids' groups are growing. There's no reason to think it will change."

At the other end are members who are ready to support the will of the majority but are less excited about the project as this person reflected, "I'm pretty well satisfied with what's going on. It's an important place for me in my life. If they want to expand, fine. If not, that's fine, too."

Some members also remember the financial struggles of the Fellowship after building the sanctuary when there were at times three mortgages to be paid that precluded more robust funding of programs. They are reluctant to undertake a project that is too ambitious.

The online survey responses reinforced the prevailing view expressed in interviews. A commanding 81% of respondents agreed that now is the time to act. Most of those who did not agree further explained that they simply don't have enough information to make an informed decision.

This is an opinion shared as well by friends of the Fellowship who were interviewed. They do not participate as fully as members in attending services or engaging in programs. Also, they have not been involved in the deliberations regarding the need to expand. They need more information to become fully committed to the project.

Those interviewed were not asked to make a forced choice regarding the greatest needs for space as were those who completed the online survey. However, 15 interviewees or 60% cited religious education classrooms as the highest priority as did the majority of survey respondents. Religious education programs especially for children and youth are a high priority for many members. As one said, “If we have more classrooms, we could attract more children and youth to impact the community.” Another lamented, “There’s a lot of things we can’t do like having adult classes on Sunday morning.”

Without building plans to look at most interviewees were unsure how to respond to questions about the sanctuary and multipurpose space/entry space. They were confused about what is being proposed. Also, narthex is a term unfamiliar to many people. However, the need for sanctuary improvements and separate accommodation for social activities are a high priority ranked below religious education classrooms. These desired improvements drew essentially the same level of interest. About half of those named a new or expanded sanctuary as important to them and the other half designated a new entry or activity space. One person stated, “I don’t like the Fellowship Hall used for services. A new sanctuary would be our first priority if it were off-limits to food and drink.” What is clear is that members and friends desire to have a separate space for services and for social activities.

Several people, while agreeing with the need for additional space, stated strongly that new or enlarged spaces be used for multiple purposes, which they believe is an important reflection of the Fellowship’s values. As one person said, “It’s really

cumbersome to have events like a wedding, but there needs to be some other use of the space except on Sunday morning. It seems wasteful.” Another person suggested ways in which additional space could be used productively, “There’s a great deal of potential for this building with speakers, movies, things that would bring this idea of a liberal philosophy to have an impact in Topeka.”

A new or expanded kitchen is the fourth most important feature of the proposed project as it is seen as central to supporting so many activities that take place at the Fellowship. Other proposed elements of the project are of considerably less importance to interviewees and survey respondents, although most agreed they would be nice if they could be afforded.

Representative comments:

“We need more space. We couldn’t put all our kids and adults in this place anymore. The kitchen’s not adequate.”

“We [the Seekers] meet in the annex. It’s a pretty sad situation, but that’s not important.”

“It’s obvious they need more of a facility. They need to have building plans to generate enthusiasm, though.”

“I’m all for it. I grew up in the [denomination] church and we always had a building fund going.”

“The annex gets really tight. The noise bleeds over from one room to another.”

“We need larger bathrooms.”

“I don’t like ‘churchy’ areas. If you start building a sanctuary, what’s it going to look like? What’s it going to represent? It becomes more focused on a worship service. I’m less enamored with ‘holy’ space for baptisms, etc.”

“It’s getting really crowded and uncomfortable in the sanctuary. It seems shabby and doesn’t accommodate things being done well.”

“It would be great if enough money could be raised that we could make more of a physical presence – a statement to Topeka that we’re flourishing.”

“I’m more excited than I’ve been in years. We’re trying to run a lot of quality programs in a very compromised space. If this goes on, people will get frustrated and walk out and may not come back or they may create another congregation. We’ve done everything with this space that we can.”

“I would love to have a bigger, better kitchen.”

“If we could go back to having one service, that would be a benefit for me.”

“I’m pretty well satisfied with what’s going on. It’s an important place for me in my life. If they want to expand, fine. If not, that’s fine, too.”

“It’s vitally important that we have eight classrooms.”

“We need a larger sanctuary. I didn’t like going to two services. It has diminished the sense of community, but it has opened other opportunities, too.”

FUNDRAISING POTENTIAL

“In most congregations something like 80 percent of the donations comes from something like 20 percent of the people, which means that the typical congregation’s financial livelihood depends on the minority of its people who are the best givers.”

Mark Chaves

Chapter on Religious Congregations

The State of Nonprofit America, 2002

This is a truism that applies to annual pledge drives as well as capital campaigns. It has primarily to do with the distribution of income and assets in this country than anything else. The other major factor, though, is that volunteering and leading directly correlate to greater giving.

There are several reasons to be optimistic about a campaign. 1) A high number of giving units made pledges to the recently completed pledge drive. 2) Over 40% of those who pledged this year increased their pledges. 3) Every member interviewed indicated financial support of a campaign could be expected. 4) More than 60% of survey respondents are prepared to make a commitment to the campaign in addition to their annual pledges. Many of those who cannot commit financially at this time cite reduced incomes or similar limiting circumstances. 5) Over 80% of survey respondents and an equally high proportion of interviewees indicated that now is the time to address the Fellowship’s facility needs. 6) Over 40% of survey respondents are willing to help with a campaign. This is an unusually high percentage underscoring the degree of commitment to an expansion.

This is a very positive foundation on which to build. It is important to keep in mind that all of these commitments were made with no building plans to see or react to yet. Being able to see actual floor plans and elevations will substantially increase the sense of excitement. Also, excitement will build once the Fellowship makes a decision to move forward. More often than not, people will actually commit larger gifts than indicated in interviews or surveys. When several large pledges are made and communicated, other members will become more confident that the campaign can be

successful. Momentum will develop and compel people to participate in a successful, collective effort. As people are given options for how their gifts may be made, their commitments typically increase.

I was struck by the number of people in interviews who thought aloud about how they could accommodate a pledge in their annual budgets by giving up routine expenses, delaying large purchases, or reducing support of other causes important to them. Further, it is significant that even people who don't feel as connected to the Fellowship as they once did are committed to contributing to a campaign. Their commitments may be less than what they are financially capable of doing, but at least it provides the Fellowship an opportunity to strengthen relationships and perhaps realize greater contributions.

I estimate that conservatively \$450,000 can be raised in a campaign. However, through a well-conducted campaign with the committed, energetic leadership of well-respected members, it is within reach to raise \$750,000. The following gift charts illustrate the numbers of gifts needed at each level to achieve these totals.

<u>Gift level</u>	<u># of gifts/total</u>	
	<u>\$450,000 goal</u>	<u>\$750,000 goal</u>
\$150,000	0	1/\$150,000
\$100,000	1/\$100,000	0
\$ 75,000	0	1/\$ 75,000
\$ 50,000	1/\$ 50,000	2/\$100,000
\$ 25,000	4/\$100,000	6/\$150,000
\$ 10,000	7/\$ 70,000	10/\$100,000
\$ 5,000	20/\$100,000	25/\$125,000
all others	30/\$ 30,000	50/\$ 50,000
Total gifts	63/\$450,000	95/\$750,000

Several interviewees offered opinions that borrowing to pay for part of the cost of construction and/or using the unrestricted portion of the Fellowship's endowment were acceptable options in order to meet the Fellowship's needs for space.

Representative comments:

“We would have to; we’re members. The need is obviously there. It will be a tough thing, but it’s got to be done. We could have even more people coming.”

“I support other things, so I’ll have to consider what I want to sacrifice.”

“To give what we want to this campaign, we’ll have to reprioritize our charitable giving.”

“I’m not a wealthy guy, but I’ll do the best I can.”

“The time is right. People step up for short-term needs. We just exceeded our pledge canvas. I’m optimistic. We’ve been working on stewardship for three years and even the kids have gotten the message.”

“We’ve been talking about this for twenty-five years. We finally have the leadership to take this on and we have a critical mass.”

“I’m not a hundred percent behind it unless there’s a realistic plan that can be supported by a campaign. We’re still struggling to raise the money we need for our programming.”

CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

Nothing is more important to the success of a campaign than volunteer leadership. Ideal candidates demonstrate passion for the mission, commitment to the goals of the project, and willingness to make stretch financial commitments to assure that the organization will reach its goal. Additionally, candidates are well known and respected. Just as important, they have the reputation for getting things done. These are people who can be relied upon to follow through on commitments they make and motivate others to do likewise.

A remarkable number of Fellowship members were identified by interviewees as candidates to provide leadership for the campaign. Many have held positions of responsibility and so have demonstrated their reliability. In total 30 persons were mentioned. Those who were identified most often include the following.

Duane Johnson
Joanne Roudebush
Phil Roudebush
Janine Silsby
Frank Taff
Mike Wilson

Others who were also mentioned one or more times included these individuals.

Don Chronister
Chuck Fantz
Beth Foerster
Vicki George
Don Jacobs
Todd Jefferies
Deb Kirmer
Melanie Kitchner
Bill Lucero
Linda Lucero
Jim McHenry
Ramon Powers
Gary Price
Micah Rolfs
Scott Rothschild
Sue Rothschild
Judy Sasser

Bobbi Schaeffer
David Schaeffer
Irv Sheffel
Saundra Snyder
Laurel Vogt
Linda Williams
Stan Williams

As indicated earlier, 15 of 35 survey respondents expressed interest in helping with the campaign, as did a dozen of those interviewed. Not all of those are willing to ask others for gifts, but they are willing to provide support services. This is a large number of willing volunteers and others will certainly step forward if personally recruited by campaign leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study augmented by my experience, I offer the following recommendations to prepare UUFT for a successful major campaign assuming that the Board of Directors approves a campaign.

1. The Board of Directors with input from the Finance Committee/Treasurer should determine whether the Fellowship is willing to borrow funds and, if so, the amount that can be borrowed based on the Fellowship's ability to make monthly payments. The Board also should determine whether the Fellowship is willing to allocate part of all of the unrestricted endowment to the project.
2. Those persons identified most often by those interviewed as capable campaign leaders -- Duane Johnson, Joanne and Phil Roudebush, Janine Silsby, Frank Taff, and Mike Wilson (all of whom were interviewed) -- should meet together to collectively commit to providing leadership and to determining appropriate roles. This group should also identify others to serve on the Campaign Committee and define the specific responsibilities each should be asked to assume. Those responsibilities essentially are to make a significant commitment to the campaign, solicit other significant gifts, and recruit volunteer solicitors for each discrete segment of the Fellowship. Those segments should be based on common friendships and interests. The key is to recruit people who will be perceived as peers and trusted friends by those they will be soliciting. The Committee should probably be in the range of 10 to 15 persons depending upon how many segments are identified. Among the Committee members should be a number of those in the Fellowship who can make the largest gifts to the campaign.
3. Once recruited, the Campaign Committee should meet first to accomplish three things. 1) Offer their individual or household commitments to the campaign. 2) Identify and evaluate the other 10 to 15 members and friends who may be able to make significant gifts to the campaign. 3) Develop specific strategies for

soliciting these individuals and couples. It may be advisable to use outside counsel for this meeting. Commitments from Campaign Committee members and other identified significant prospective donors will account for approximately 80% of the total that will eventually be raised.

4. With the gift commitments from Campaign Committee members, evaluations others who can make significant gifts, and the decisions regarding borrowing and use of endowment funds, the Board will be in a position to determine the financial resources that can be devoted to the project. Keep in mind that most pledges will be paid over a period of years, so there will be short-term borrowing costs as well.
5. At this point an architect can develop preliminary plans and cost estimates. These plans should include a floor plan as well as some exterior elevations and interior sketches. These should be included in campaign materials to be shared with Fellowship members and friends.
6. While an architect is developing plans the Campaign Committee should be assigning members and friends to campaign solicitors, planning the launch of the campaign, designing campaign materials, recruiting people to speak at services, and establishing the timeline for campaign activities including deadlines similar to the annual pledge drive.
7. When the preliminary architectural plans and costs have been approved by the Board of Directors, the campaign materials can be completed. The campaign should then be conducted in the same way as the annual pledge drive.
8. I recommend recruiting people from each of the identified segments to speak to the Fellowship – one at each service during the course of the campaign. These brief presentations should focus on why the Fellowship is important to them and why they have chosen to make a generous gift. (Obviously, they will have been solicited prior to or as a part of recruiting them to speak.) They should speak

from the heart and keep in mind that their audience is their peers. I also suggest having one or more youths speak to the Fellowship as to what they have gained from their religious education and relationships with their peers.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Note: The names of persons interviewed and of survey participants have been deleted by the UUFT Board in order to maintain confidentiality.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you value most about being a member of the Fellowship?
2. Do you believe you are well informed about the need for the expansion and renovation of the facilities?
3. If no, what questions do you have?
4. Do you believe the need to act is urgent?
5. If no, why?
6. What do you believe is the strongest appeal to make to the membership?
7. Are you prepared to make a gift or pledge to the project in addition to your recent stewardship commitment?
8. If yes, what would be the probable amount of your gift or pledge?
9. Over what period of time would you anticipate making your pledge?
10. If you will likely not make a gift or pledge, why?
11. What do you believe are the greatest obstacles to overcome?
12. What do you believe is the best way to approach members of the Fellowship?
13. In your estimation, what is a realistic campaign goal?
14. Whom do you think should lead the campaign?
15. Would you be willing to help with the campaign?
16. If yes, in what way? Are you willing to call on a few (up to five) members to discuss their support of the project?
17. As you know the bequest from Toby Scanland made a major impact on the Fellowship. Have you included the Fellowship in your estate plan?
18. If yes, would you mind sharing any details of that gift?
19. Would you be willing to discuss your plans confidentially with someone from the Fellowship? Whom would you be comfortable with?

20. Do you have any other questions, concerns or suggestions you would like to share with the Committee regarding the project and the fundraising campaign? Any other concerns you would like to communicate?

INTERVIEW REQUEST LETTER

October xx, 2007

Dear -----:

I am writing to ask you for about an hour of your time to discuss preliminary plans to build a new sanctuary and additional space for our many activities. The Fellowship has long recognized the need for:

- additional classrooms for both youth and adult religious education;
- a sanctuary to seat 200 people; and
- additional space for gathering, bathrooms, expanded kitchen, and offices.

Drawing upon extensive study since 2004 involving many of our members, the Action Plan Committee sought further input at a Town Hall meeting last February. Subsequently, the Board voted unanimously to conduct a feasibility study to determine whether we can raise the funds needed to undertake this project.

The Board seeks your guidance regarding our plans. We have hired Mike Maude with Partners In Philanthropy to conduct the feasibility study on our behalf. The purpose of the study is to determine if our plans are perceived as prudent and whether the project is likely to attract the charitable commitments it will require for success. You will **not** be asked for a contribution or commitment at this time.

A member of the Fundraising Committee will be calling you soon to arrange a time for a personal interview that is convenient for you either the week of November 12 or 19. Your comments will be held in confidence by the interviewer, so we encourage your candid response.

Thank you for your assistance. We will appreciate your time and thoughtfulness.

Sincerely,

Mike Wilson
President and Chair

Fundraising Committee: Duane Johnson, Jim McHenry, Janine Silsby, Linda Williams

**CASE STATEMENT
FOR A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF TOPEKA**

1. We desperately need larger and more R.E. classrooms. How we take care of our children and their places of r.e. reflects on how we think of them.
2. Need larger sanctuary – big enough to hold entire congregation in one room and large enough for a wedding of 200 at least.
3. If we are to be a “Beacon of Liberal Religion” in Topeka – where does our building reflect that image?
4. Need better kitchen
5. Need better and more offices for staff.
6. Need better restrooms.
7. Need more storage.
8. Need a way to have better building security during the day.
9. Would like to have a space where we can have separate services and other activities at the same time – or be able to have set up without immediately setting up after a service in the same room.
10. Connect the east and west sides of the building by creating a common entry.
11. Would like an entry with room for greeting and transitioning people into and out of the building with a place for coffee.
12. Would like a better presence – or face - to the community.
13. Better and more parking.
14. Better access from the east parking lot.
15. Facility as it now stands is cobbled up and held together with bailing wire, we are to close to our building to really recognize how it looks to a first time attendee – is it really how we want others to see us? Does it represent who we are?
16. A larger, more accommodating building would help us execute and render our Mission more successfully by being an inviting, exciting place to come and share our visions of how we think the world could or should be.
17. Our image and therefore our credibility suffer by how we represent ourselves to the world. Our current modified “house” is not an accurate representation of who we are – forward thinking religious liberals.
18. Want a “Green” building.

SURVEY RESPONSES

1) What do you value most about being a member or friend of the Fellowship?

(all results shown)

- the Fellowship of the people
- Having a spiritual home, being a part of the beloved community.
- the connections to people with similar openness and questioning about religion and faith
- connections with other UUFT members
- Being part of a community of caring, accepting, deep, intelligent, interesting, and connected people
- Community and help raising kids.
- The freedom to select and refine my own spiritual path(s), according to my set of ethics and morals, and to adopt the lifestyle with which I am the most comfortable.
- I value the PEOPLE who belong to UUFT and I value the presence of Unitarian Universalism in the community
- The connections I feel I obtain from the chalice,
- The UUFT's commitment to tolerance and freedom of inquiry.
- I feel welcome.
- The fellowship with people who think the way I do.
- Opportunity to exchange ideas with like-minded individuals within a community where such individuals may be difficult to find.
- There are other places in town that might have like-minded individuals, but it would be in spite of the church organization rather than because of it.
- Community of compatible, compassionate people. Emphasis on social justice.
- The people, along with our minister and DLRE. It is a surrogate family to us.
- The fact that it is a rare home in Topeka for liberal religious practice.
- Sense of community support
- THE PEOPLE
- Support and encouragement for spiritual growth.
- Relationships and spiritual community
- I know that there is a group where I can feel connected through social action.
- Personal Contact, ability to serve and make a difference. to be around others with similar values, to have a spiritual outlet
- The sense that we are making a difference in the world, and educating our kids in our values so they can, too
- The shared values and ideals of UUFTs.
- worship services, children's RE
- The community it has allowed us to be a part of.
- Interaction with like minded individuals
- The Fellowship's commitment to a liberal, humanistic interpretation of religion.
The Fellowship's carrying out of that interpretation of religion by having a wonderful, committed, and caring community within the Fellowship.
- I value the fun, the friends, the chance to grow spiritually through learning and discussion and the chance to work for the future.
- community
- The ideology of UUs is a good fit for me, and I often go away from a service feeling inspired or thoughtful.
- The people I get to know, the thoughtful sermons.
- The warmth and diversity of the congregation.
- I value being able to communicate with who have similar systems of belief, as far as valuing diversity etc.. I also value that there are differences in our beliefs and that is accepted.
- Sunday morning services

Friendships with members

- Having a spiritual home that meets my needs, being with others who share my beliefs, receiving support and fellowship
- Associating with, communicating with, interesting people.
- -acceptance of all spiritual journeys
- fellowship with people whom we are happy to call friends
- a thoughtful, caring pastor who is willing to challenge us in positive ways
- x

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2) Do you believe you are well informed about the need for an expansion and the renovation of the existing facilities? [Chart Wizard](#)

Yes	83.3%	30 responses
No	16.7%	6 responses

3) If no, what questions do you have?

(all results shown)

- **I have no questions, just some comments. We should be as fiscally conservative as possible. No actions should be taken without funding in place. No debt should be incurred for any improvements. We should EMBRACE LADY POVERTY rather than building meaningless shrines and temples.**
- **I am new to the congregation and am not aware of the expansion/renovation.**
- **Will this be a new building or expansion of the current one? How long will it take?**
- **What options are available, the varying costs/benefits of each option**
- **...have not attended regularly enough...**
- **I believe that I am fairly well-informed as a "Friend" of the Fellowship, but probably not as well informed as some members. I am convinced that there is a need for renovation and expansion of the present facility. But I will not try to 'rank' the priorities in question 6 below, because of my lack of a detailed familiarity.**
- **I certainly don't question the need but I have no information on our financial position and what our options are. For example, I have no idea what size mortgage we could safely take on.**
- **I don't have any questions.**
- **It's just I'm too new to have a comprehensible appreciation of the congregational needs.**

- x

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4) Do you believe the need to act is now? [Chart Wizard](#)

Yes 81.1% 30 responses
No 18.9% 7 responses

5) If no, why not?

(all results shown)

- **Thoroughness is necessary when using fellowship money. We should remember our puritan roots, living simply and greenly and close to the land. NO MEMBER SHOULD USE A CREDIT CARD OR PLEDGE MONEY THEY DO NOT HAVE ON HAND.**
- **I don't have enough information to answer this question.**
- **Don't feel the urgency.**
- **I am not clear of all the considerations, so I would not act until I have a better understanding. If it is determined that the best options is expansion, then acting at the appropriate time makes sense, which could be now.**
- **...only because I don't know so am not a good judge...**
- **Can't give you an answer as I'm too uninformed (meaning I don't have a deep sense of the congregation yet)**
- **I believe it is important to start now.**
- **x**

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6) What do you believe are the greatest needs of the Fellowship should an expansion be undertaken? (1 being the most important.) [Chart Wizard](#)

	Average score	Responses
R. E. Classrooms	2.00 / 6	33
A New Sanctuary	2.86 / 6	29
A New Entry Area (Narthex)	2.96 / 6	27
A New Kitchen	3.03 / 6	29
New Restrooms	4.03 / 6	29
Other	4.09 / 6	11

7) Are you prepared to make a donation or pledge to the project in addition to your recent stewardship commitment? [Chart Wizard](#)

Yes 61.1% 22 responses

No 38.9% 14 responses

8) If yes, what would be the probable amount of your gift or pledge?

(all results shown)

- \$3000 over a period of three years.
- perhaps \$500 a year for 3 years
- \$1,500
- \$500.00
- This is very difficult to predict, since there may be a move out of state in our near future.
- \$200-\$500 per year.
- \$1,500
- \$1000
- \$1,000
- \$1000
- I cannot make additional contributions at this time. Hopefully next year will be more flexible.
- ...recent sudden & unexpected loss of 75-80% income....
- About \$500
- Probably \$1,500 to \$3,000 total
- Time, skills and maybe a couple hundred dollars if lump sum. More if spread out over time.
- 1000
- At least one hundred dollars (\$100), perhaps more.
- Probably not more than \$50 per month
- 100
- I could donate \$100 immediately, and another 300 over the course of a year.
- I don't know if I can give more.
- \$1000
- It would be limited maybe 100-250 only because I have limited means at the moment.
- \$1000.00
- \$3000-5000
- Still cogitating on that number.
- are still in process of making that decision

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9) Over what period of time would you anticipate making your pledge? [Chart Wizard](#)

Lump sum immediately	25.9%	7 responses
One year	14.8%	4 responses
Two years	18.5%	5 responses
Three years	40.7%	11 responses

10) If you will likely not make a gift or pledge, why?

(all results shown)

- **My finances are too unstable right now.**
- **I'm not able to make that decision now, when I do it would most likely be under \$500 but possibly for each of the 3 years.**
- **I'm living on under \$900 per mo. Social Security Disability & am having a hard time affording rent, food, e I'm not sure that I can afford anything beyond my stewardship pledge, but will make whatever small donation that I can manage along the way.**
- **Insufficient funds for the next couple years.**
- **I am just above the poverty level. My earth-based spirituality does not demand an ostentatious lifestyle. I am a minimalist in all my pursuits.**
- **I've contributed what I think is a fair percent of my income ever since I joined. I've taught RE every year, which involves additional expense. I am nearing retirement age, and I am comfortable with my present level of giving.**
- **see above**
- **Moving out of state.**
- **I live on Social Security, a very small pension, and whatever I can earn from my free-lance editor/writer business. Recently, clients have been scarce. I've had to drastically reduce my giving to UUFT and other worthy causes in the past few years because of my reduced income and increased expenses.**
- **Our retirement income (which is decreasing over time) is such that we can not afford to take on any additional commitments. With the costs of drugs, dental, & inflation we are stretched to the point of concern & worry about the future.**
- **I cannot make additional contributions at this time. Hopefully next year will be more flexible.**
- **financial circumstances and saving for retirement**
- **We are just starting out and in over our heads with our own household expenses. We make efforts to help in other ways.**
- **Lack of funds**

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11) Would you be willing to help with the Capital Campaign?

Chart Wizard

Yes 42,9% 15 responses

No 57.1% 20 responses

12) As you may know, the Toby Scanland bequest made a major impact on the Fellowship. Have you included the Fellowship in your estate plan? [Chart Wizard](#)

Yes 13.5% 5 responses

No 86.5% 32 responses

13) If yes, would you mind sharing any details of that gift?

(all results shown)

- **At present, my trust contains a provision of \$500 payable to UUFT on my death, if any funds remain at that time. However, it is a revocable trust designed primarily for my children. I review it from time to time, and it's always possible that I would decide to eliminate this provision either because I no longer wish to support UUFT or because the funds are so low as to threaten the support for my children. On the other hand, if someone gives me \$1 million, I might be inclined to share with UUFT.**

- **About a third of my estate**

- **UUFT gets \$25,000 from my life insurance policy**

- **I think 12 should be a response box, and my response would be, What estate plan?**

- **currently, my bequest provides 15% of the residual to UUFT.**

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14) With whom would you be most comfortable discussing your pledge, gift, or bequest with the Fellowship? [Chart Wizard](#)

A member of the UUFT fundraising committee? 65.4 % 17 responses

A member of the UUFT Board? 11.5% 3 responses

An independent consultant? 23.1% 6 responses

15) Do you have any other questions, concerns, or suggestions you would like to share with the Committee regarding the project and the fundraising project? Any other concerns you would like to communicate?

(all results shown)

- I hope that we are able to create a nice new home for UUFT. I hope that we are able to preserve a nice outdoor space as we now have in our UUFT backyard.
- I was part of a congregation in Lawrence that built a new building, and it was painful to watch. Many members of the building committee said they would leave the church before they participated in another building project. I believe that UUFT is well-positioned to avoid a lot of the conflict that church experienced (can't see you guys arguing over a bell tower), but I'm still a little wary. I'll do my best to model optimistic acceptance and patience - maybe it will work better this time around. :-)
- I believe that we should launch one time, cash-only, aggressive campaign to build a complete new church annexes, selling off our present holdings. Cash should be raised well in advance of any plans for a new facility. Put the money in CD's and let it garner interest. WE MUST BE FRUGAL! We should not be leaving debt to the next generation, as the federal government is doing.
- Not at this time.
- Having raised my pledge amount each of the last several years, I am at my limit so it will be a stretch to give as much as I'd like to a building campaign.
- Re: #11. I might be willing to help prepare written material, but I wouldn't want to canvass anyone.
- We have a grave need to build a much-much larger storage capacity convenient to the area(s) of use. Our caretakers is not being adequately compensated for what is in the job description. It is woefully inadequate & unfair. Consideration should be given to the Boards relying on the decision making of the Committees and be careful not to micromanage.
- My main concern/suggestion is that if we move forward with a major renovation we do so using green alternatives and being ever mindful of the environmental toll our choices may have.
- I'm not sure about what a narthex is or what it's benefits would be.
- If we do expand our buildings, I think we should expand enough to accommodate at least the next ten years of projected growth.
- need a fellowship hall so that a sanctuary is not required to do double duty for social functions (lunches, etc.
- It is important that any additions that are made and made with the environment in mind. Green building should be considered.
- Good luck with the fundraising campaign!
- We need a lot more shared information and a sophisticated structure for giving
- I know that many members think our primary space need is more RE rooms, but I think if we ADD a new sanctuary, we'll be able to use the old sanctuary as both RE rooms and a gathering place for meals, etc. A new kitchen would benefit both UU activities and its potential for earnings as a rental facility.
- I think that the most important is RE the rooms are crowded.
- No, but thanks for asking.
- no
- mw

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16) If you are comfortable doing so, provide the name(s) of those filling out this survey:

Note: The names of persons interviewed and of survey participants have been deleted by the UUFT Board in order to maintain confidentiality.

17) Are you a Member or Friend of the Fellowship? [Chart Wizard](#)

Member	94.6%	35 responses
Friend	5.4%	2 responses

18) How long have you been involved with the Fellowship? [Chart Wizard](#)

Less than one year.	18.9%	7 responses
1 - 5 years	21.6%	8 responses
5 - 10 years	27.0%	10 responses
10 - 20 years	21.6%	8 responses
20 - 30 years	8.1%	3 responses
Over 30 years	2.7%	1 response

