



Meet the Nominees For Board of Trustees and the Leadership Development Committee Election at the Annual Meeting, June 2, 2024

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Kay Aler-Maida (1-year term)

Kay has been a Member of UUCA since 2005. Currently, at UUCA, participating in Community Plate Committee, Women's Connections, a Covenant Group, Coordinating Sunday flowers and the UU Explorers Book Club. Previously, at UUCA, was a regular RE teacher and Committee member, Finance Committee, and Board. As a UUCA Board member participated in the development and implementation of the Policy Governance Document.

Previously was a member of 1 st Unitarian, Brooklyn for 30 years with leadership roles on Board, Finance, RE, Committee on Ministry, and the Anti-Racism Transformation Team (a UUA pilot project).

Worked professionally for 10 years as a DRE in one UU congregation and 17 years as Church Administrator in another. In these roles and in those of a lay leader I've participated in strategic planning, fundraising, financial planning, and property management.

I share an apartment with my grandson, Sam, and our cat, B.K. (aka Bad Kitty) and I love flowers, chocolates and adventures.



Ben Fleming (3-year term)

Ben has been a member of UUCA since 2008. He has served in a variety of positions including RE teacher, Coming of Age advisor, chair of the Religious Education Council, member of the Community Plate Committee, member of the Director of Lifespan Religious Education search committee, lead

organizer of the Alternative Gift Fair, and as a member of the Committee on Ministry for Associate Minister Claudia Jimenez.

Prior to arriving in Asheville and stepping into the role of full-time parent, Ben lived and worked in South America as an educator and raft guide. He then went to work as a program manager for a Florida-based volunteer organization with projects in Central America and the Caribbean. On moving to Asheville he stepped into the full-time dad role with the birth of twin boys. Most recently he has been a teacher, outdoor program planner, and property manager for The Learning Community School.

Ben's volunteer experience includes the Radio Reading Service for the Visually Impaired, team treasurer for the Highland Football Club, Cub Scout Den Leader, finance committee member at Evergreen Community Charter School, and as a StreamKeeper with AshevilleGreenworks.



Melissa Himelein (3-year term)

I've participated in a variety of committees and activities since joining the UUCA in 2004 (e.g., Worship Associates, Choir, RE Committee, Long-Range Planning Committee). I've also taught RE classes across the life span (e.g., OWL, Coming of Age mentoring, positive psychology and religion, UU theology for RE parents), and for four years, co-facilitated a family covenant group with my husband, Dale Wachowiak. Our twin daughters, Kenzie and Emma Himelein-Wachowiak, were raised in this community; from their dedication and thornless roses at age 6 to their bridging ceremony and thorned roses at the end of high school, they were involved in each stage of UUCA religious education. I am very grateful for the nurturance, intellectual richness, acceptance, and strong social justice values they received here. Currently, I am active in the newly-formed Reproductive Justice Ministry (thank you, Rev. Claudia!) and a member of the Soul Matters writing group.

I retired from UNC Asheville last summer (2023), where in addition to serving as a professor of psychology since 1992, I also directed the Center for Teaching and Learning for 10 years and was the Dean of Social Sciences for 2 years. In this new phase of life, I am training to be an Extension Master Gardener (currently an intern, hoping to be fully certified later this year), exercising daily (trying to appreciate walking more as my knees are unhappy with the toll of life-long running), enjoying reading and writing (for pleasure!), and (slowly) improving at duplicate bridge. I expect to be highly involved in election-related activities in 2024, given the critical importance of both state and national races this year.

In terms of Board-relevant skills, in my administrative positions at UNC Asheville, I oversaw department and university budgets (finance) and worked closely with the Faculty Senate on many projects and subcommittees (governance). I collaborated on a revisioning of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) that led to a major expansion of capacity and services (strategic planning), and a

significant focus of CTL programming was inclusive teaching (experience working with diverse groups). I have generally stayed clear of fundraising and have no expertise in that area.



Susan Andrew (3-year term)

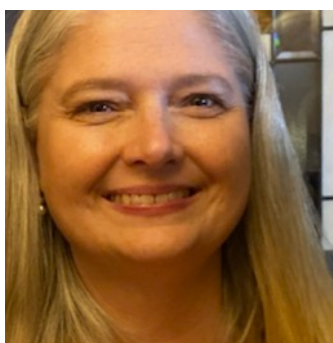
Susan Andrew has been a *member* of UUCA--with husband Mark and daughters Isabel and Olivia--since 2013, though we were attending for several years before that. I also attended the UU Church in Ann Arbor, Mich. with my mom, Ann McLellan, beginning when I was in about third grade.

I work for RiverLink in development and fundraising (successful grant writing, working with donors, annual budget is \$1.3M). When our girls were in middle and high school, I was involved in the RE program, facilitating sessions of Coming of Age and also YRUU. When they graduated, I joined the worship associates at Mark Ward's invitation, a role I have enjoyed very much. I served two or three years on the LDC when James Cassara recruited me. Part of the work I engaged with LDC was to help develop training modules to recruit and support new board members and highlight the linkages to faith development for emerging leaders at UUCA. I've also benefited from the (online) Leadership Experience training I've received with the inspiring staff of the Southern Region of UUA. Would love more time with them.

- Policy governance knowledge: I've worked for nonprofits or the school system for most of my career, so I understand how boards operate
- Management experience: Started in 1993 -- as a grad student I led field studies of bowerbirds in Papua New Guinea, managing a team of six field assistants. More recently I supervised a team of 6-7 case managers at Green Opportunities (2018-19). At RiverLink I manage the fundraising operation -- CRM database, donor relations, grant writing and reporting.
- Justice work -- is a personal commitment that is also woven through my professional activities with Buncombe County Schools, Green Opportunities, and RiverLink, which last year made equity and inclusion the #1 priority in its strategic plan.
- Experience working with diverse groups -- goes back to sixth grade when I was the only white kid in my class in inner city Detroit, and continued through international immersion experiences in my young adult years in Costa Rica and Indonesia. Continues today as I raise funds for RiverLink's work for water quality and environmental education in many of the French Broad's historically marginalized communities.
- Fundraising experience -- I started writing grants for the science program at Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition in 1999. Fundraising became the focus of my professional life when I accepted a position as grant writer and sponsorship liaison for Buncombe County Schools in 2013, and my career continues that focus today.

- Finance experience -- One can tell a lot about an organization by examining how it uses money. My grant writing experience means I know how to read/ communicate with a spreadsheet. I understand the value of robust, diverse revenue streams in creating a balanced budget -- for an organization or just one project. My understanding of finance got an extra boost when Jerry McLellan joined our family in 2003. Every generation is asked to create a balance sheet... ;-)
- Strategic planning experience -- I have participated in strategic planning with several nonprofits beginning in 1995 (Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Wild South, RiverLink).

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE



Deanna Banks (3-year term)

Deanna was introduced to Unitarian Universalism by her husband, Aaron, who was raised in a UU congregation. They have been members of the UU Congregation of Asheville since 2014. They have two daughters, Catelyn (age 19) and Zoe (age 15). They have appreciated the opportunity to raise their daughters within a community that reinforces their shared values. Over the past ten years, Deanna has volunteered with the RE program, coordinated UU family fun nights, participated in a covenant group for young families, and helped coordinate fundraising and trip planning during Catelyn's Coming of Age year. She currently coordinates the Explorer Book Group. Her hobbies include reading and traveling.

Deanna holds a doctorate in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and has worked as a Human Capital Consultant and Executive Coach for 25+ years. Her areas of expertise include leadership assessment and development, executive coaching, training and facilitation, succession planning, change management, organizational development, and employee engagement. She has worked with leaders at all levels across both the private and public sectors.

She currently has a private practice where she designs executive assessment, development, and succession planning programs, provides individual and team coaching, delivers leadership curriculum, facilitates teambuilding sessions, and guides organizational change initiatives. Before starting an independent practice, Deanna worked as the Director of Organizational Development Services for a commercial consulting firm where she led the organization's talent management, leadership development, and assessment businesses. She has also worked as a research scientist for the U.S. Army investigating best practices in leadership and team development.



Venny Zachritz (3-year term)

I joined UUAVL in 2015 when we moved to Asheville. Shortly after joining, the position of Connections Coordinator opened and I applied and accepted the role. I served in this position until December of 2023. The main role as CC was to interact with newcomers and current members and help them find a way to connect and serve the congregation.

Currently I am involved with the Landscape crew which helps to maintain the grounds and have just taken over as co-chair of the Environmental Action Team whose goal is to inform and empower people interested in environmental justice.

My hobbies and interests include gardening, hiking, cooking, and encaustic art. I also serve as a democratic chief judge during elections. As chief judge I supervise a team of volunteers, field any voter issues/questions and work directly with the Buncombe County Board of Elections.

As the Connection Coordinator I had many opportunities to hone my leadership skills and experience. I served as the staff liaison for the Sanctuary committee when we were becoming a sanctuary congregation; and staff liaison for the Care and Connect committee, one of our 3 pillars for support and connection. I led countless membership classes for incoming members and helped support the Soul Matters small group ministry with Rev. Claudia. And as a past staff member and current member of UUAVL, I am aware of the 8th Principle and all of our justice ministry work. Another benefit of having served as the Connection Coordinator is having a deep knowledge of our active membership and where certain skills may lie.