

**FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION**  
**Section of the Americas**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

To the Section gathered in Pisac, Peru - JANUARY 2016

***A worshipful gathering:***

The working sessions of the Executive Committee of the Section of the Americas continue to be meetings for worship under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The sense of covering has been constant and palpable during our face to face meetings. We do experience the miracle of communion in work by phone and in virtual meeting rooms; but unreliable connectivity and other technological difficulties still require the exercise of all the gifts of the Spirit (patience, gratitude, love, and faith) to keep us effective as an Executive Committee. We are aware and concerned that the same difficulties in long-distance communication exist in the work of other committees in the Section.

***Reconsideration of the pace of Strategic Plan implementation:***

Since the presentation of our Strategic Plan at the Mexico City Section Meeting in March of 2015, the Executive Committee has been primarily concerned with the realities and the pace of the plan's implementation. You have heard from each of the Section's committees about the details of their work and faithfulness. In this report I will focus on the overarching concerns of the Executive Committee for the good and sustainable ordering of our work as a Section.

During our September Executive Committee retreat we labored with the Gospel truth of Luke 10:2: "...the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Even that early in our cycle of implementation a question arose: "are we being too ambitious, trying to move too fast with implementation of our new plan? Might we need a mid-course correction on our expectations of the rate of progress?" (FWX15-46).

In November (FWX15-83) we appointed a subcommittee to discern priorities and propose modifications to the timeline for implementing the Strategic Plan. The Executive Committee has not yet approved these recommendations, but they have been circulated among its members. Responses received by the Clerk so far portend likely approval during our next worshipful discernment in February. This Section Meeting in Perú offers an opportunity for Section representatives to take a look at the **attached** subcommittee recommendations for "Trimming the Sails" and to offer any feedback, ideas or concerns you may have to ExeCom members present at the World Plenary.

***New staff, re-affirmation of Executive Committee liaisons' work, and a renewed sense that our work gets done by volunteers:***

Since the Mexico City Section Meeting, the Executive Secretary has hired a very capable staff and has invested substantial care and time in its training and orientation. Meanwhile Executive Committee members have focused on the importance of their own liaison roles with each of component parts of the Section. Liaisons work closely with the clerks of Section committees to ensure that committees are connected to the Executive Committee with clear channels of reporting and consultation, to ensure that the initiatives

of each committee remains informed by the policies established by the Section and the Executive Committee, and that committees are adequately supported and allocated appropriate resources to do their work.

### ***Executive Secretary review and reappointment***

The Executive Committee approved Robin Mohr's reappointment as Executive Secretary of FWCC Section of the Americas through September 30th, 2017 (FWX15-47). During the extensive evaluation process the review subcommittee requested and received careful comments from respondents internal to the Section, and from executive leaders of most major national and international Quaker organizations.

### ***The Section and the constitutional restructuring of the World body***

If the proposed constitutional changes regarding the frequency of FWCC World Plenaries are approved at this meeting, the Executive Committees of the four sections will be asked to take on new responsibilities. It is likely that the four Sections will assume the key role of nominating members to the Central Executive Committee (CEC). One possibility is that the clerks of the four Section nominating committees may become part of the World Nominating Committee in the way that Section Treasurers are part of the World Finance Committee. At our Section meeting during the World Plenary these concerns for the role of the Section in the constitutional re-structuring of the World body will be some of the major items for discernment.

### ***Committee tasks and officer job descriptions***

The Strategic Plan has redefined some Section functions and created new ones. To address these changes, the Executive Committee and Section staff members have revised and created new job descriptions for committees and officers. Committees and officers have already begun working with these newly defined roles, and are proposing corrections or revisions to the descriptions as their work requires.

### ***The Audit and Oversight of Fiduciary and Financial status***

The Audit Committee included members of Finance Committee and a member of the Executive Committee. It has taken longer than expected to bring the audit to completion, but we have responded in good order to the advice of the auditor, and have no concerns at present. The financial position of the section is currently strong. Nevertheless, development and fund raising efforts need to remain a high priority for the organization because much of our positive financial picture hinges on the receipt of one generous bequest during the last fiscal year.

### ***Section By-Laws***

A delay in the reconsideration of the Section by-laws gives us an opportunity to take up that task with the emerging FWCC-World by-laws and constitution more firmly in place. We will have an opportunity to adjust our by-laws to reflect the increased accountability of the Section's Executive Committee and Nominating Committee for the functioning and oversight of the World body and its Central Executive Committee.

In the Love that makes us Friends,— Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Clerk

## **Proposal to Executive Committee Concerning Setting Priorities for 2016** **[Attached to January 2016 Executive Committee Report to Section]**

*Trim the Sails Subcommittee:*  
**Dorothy Grannell; Kelly Kellum; Ann Stever;**  
**Robin Mohr; Benigno Sánchez-Eppler**

The Trim the Sails subcommittee met on December 9, 2016 to make an honest review of our progress, to identify what is going well and what is not, and to determine what to postpone from the current plan of work. Also, we discussed the Executive Secretary's priorities and how to reassign some of her responsibilities. Fund raising and the engagement of Representatives in the work of the strategic plan are the main priorities for the Executive Secretary in 2016. With so many changes, it is easy to overburden our staff and resources. Our overall concern is that we do this divine work well, at a pace that is in-step with the Spirit's leading and our capacity to follow.

The subcommittee makes two recommendations:

1. that the Executive Committee liaisons take a larger role in supporting the committees and program groups with which they work.
2. that the working groups that have not yet been formed not move forward until the Section meeting in March of 2017.

### **Liaisons**

The first task is for each liaison to contact the clerk of the committee to which they are assigned within the next month (no later than January 15) to discuss the agenda for the committee or program group meeting. This meeting must include the completion of the committee/group work plan for 2016. The work plans were to have been completed by the end of December so this task effectively extends that deadline to the end of January. At the next meetings, the committee/program group schedules for the remainder of the year should be developed based on the demands of the emerging work plans. Individual talents as well as time constraints must be considered and appropriate items as these plans are developed.

The second task of committees/program groups is to review their descriptions. Committees will review the descriptions then forward them through the liaisons or clerks to the Executive Committee for updating.

The third task is to for committees to make a list of items that should be considered when making the next two-year budget. Clerks will receive information about items that are in the current budget. These may change due to the work plan that is developed. A list of future budget items should be forwarded to FWCC Section office by March of this year. Where possible include estimated costs. The groups will be provided with the section of this year's budget to work from.

### **Working Groups**

Funding Innovations, Youth Spiritual Leadership Development and Sister Meetings Working Groups will not be started until the section meeting in 2017. Much progress has been made on the strategic plan and each of the program groups is functioning. The World Plenary

and the hiring of new staff has slowed progress toward goals for the present but the staff and the results of the Plenary will move us forward from here on out. At this point in time, however, we do not have the capacity to launch three working groups until the Section Meeting in 2017.

Each Executive Committee members attending the World Plenary Meeting will be asked to designate which consultation meetings they will attend and to bring a report to the February 2016 Executive Committee meeting. We will work to insure that each of the 4 consultations is covered. Gathering information as well names of individuals who have interest in the working groups will help in establishing the working groups as we move forward during 2016.

Expectations are changing at all levels of the organization as we move deeper into being a more volunteer driven organization. Greater clarity regarding responsibilities of Representatives, Committee and Program Clerks, Executive Committee and Staff must be effectively communicated. Staff and Executive Committee Liaisons are the primary messengers to and among the Representatives.

### ***Patient Trust***

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability— and that it may take a very long time.*

*And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.*

*Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.*

*—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Hearts on Fire*