

ABCUSA Intentional Interim Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Addressing ABCUSA Culture

The overarching goal of the Office of the General Secretary during this intentional interim period is to promote and enhance a positive and productive culture within the Office of the General Secretary and among its constituents. This will be accomplished by focusing efforts upon the systems, structures, people, and symbolic actions associated with the Office of the General Secretary. Intended actions related to each of these areas are shown below. As of August 2021, several of the tasks have already been completed, achieved with perhaps more to come, or are in process.

ABCUSA Systems

- Strengthen relationships with regional and national partners. {In process}
- Clarify the values that drive Office of the General Secretary procedures. {In process}
- Clarify the mission, and purpose of Office of the General Secretary, maintaining flexibility for the vision to be influenced by the next General Secretary. {In process}
- Develop and adopt a process for the General Secretary search process. {In process}
- Adopt guidelines for statements made by the General Secretary. {Completed}
- Adopt new staff personnel guidelines. {Completed}
- Align job descriptions and positions with the mission of ABCUSA. {In process}
- Conduct a communication audit of ABCUSA press releases. {In process}
- Expand the opportunities for Mission Summit Conversation activities. {In process}

ABCUSA Structures

- Successfully migrate 25 years of data from our internal ABCIS software to the Oracle NetSuite platform. {In process}
- Develop a new narrative for United Mission that is based upon input from our regional and national partners and is supported by them.
- Request that a Standing Rules Committee review our current Standing Rules to ensure alignment with best organizational practices and compliance with current mission.

ABCUSA Staff Development (Staff personnel)

- Provide training and development for Office of the General Secretary staff to include:
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion {Achieved}
 - Sexual harassment {Completed}
 - Personality indicators
- Conduct at least one leadership team retreat {Date set}
- Adopt guidelines for the following staff policies
 - Public statements {Completed}
 - Telecommuting arrangements {Completed}

ABCUSA Partnerships

- Broaden the planning team for the National Leadership Council to include REMC Officers and NEC members {Achieved}
- Expand the opportunities for interaction among the members of the National Leadership Council {Achieved}

- Encourage the members of the National Executive Council to share perspectives on common issues affecting the denomination such as healthy congregations, empowering leaders, hosting meetings, etc. {In process}

Board Development (Directors)

- Develop and adopt operational guidelines for BGM committees and commissions {Completed}
- Enhance the process for orientation of new BGM members {In process}
- Conduct a gift assessment of BGM members
- Review and adopt a set of best practices for nonprofit boards
- Clarify expectations for BGM members and incorporate those expectations into ABCUSA Nominating Committee documents.

Symbolic Actions

- Host an open house for all national staff in the new Roblee building {Completed}
- Seek agreement from the NEC:
 - To sponsor a call to prayer for critical issues {Achieved}
 - To host a picnic for all national staff {Agreed. Will take place when pandemic allows}
 - To produce NEC videos that provide encouragement to the ABC family {Achieved}
 - Regarding each respective organization placing a “peace pole” on their grounds or in their office
- Broaden the planning for the National Leadership Council meeting and the Biennial Mission Summit to include REMC officers and members of the NEC {Achieved}
- Host an ABCUSA Christmas Show {In process}

Data Gathering to Provide Input to the Above Activities

- Survey constituent views regarding:
 - ABCUSA priorities
 - Role of the General Secretary
 - Needs of ABC congregations
 - Needs of the global society

Ongoing ABCUSA Missional Priorities

While these intentional interim activities take place, the Office of the General Secretary will continue to engage in the ongoing mission priorities as listed below.

Support and Nurture the ABC Family

- Assist our partner organizations with planning for their Orientation to ABC Life sessions
- Guide the work of the
 - Burma Refugee Commission as it assesses needs of the people of Myanmar and the Burma Diaspora affected by the military coup that occurred on Feb. 1, 2021 and engage in advocacy efforts to respond to these needs
 - Anti-racism task force as it develops resources to combat racism
 - Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relationships
 - World Relief Committee
 - Professional Ministries Team
- Offer press releases on the mission and ministry of the whole of ABC
- Provide mission resource development for receiving of AB Mission Support

- Provide accounting for AB Mission Support
- Offer congregational transition assistance through the work of Transition Ministries
- Advocate for Women in Ministry
- Provide accounting and Administration Services for Associated Ministry Organizations and non-collection agency regions
- Manage American Baptist Churches Group Extension
- Maintain the American Baptist Churches Information System (ABCIS)
- Provide governance for the AB Historical Society
- Attend and support events such as the World Mission Conference, ABHMS Space for Grace, MMBB Colloquium, AB Women's Ministries events, Women in Ministry, and other conferences.

Strengthen ABC Regions

- Offer resources and discussions
- Provide search committee assistance for regional executive minister searches
- Provide orientation for new executive ministers
- Encourage the sharing of resources among the regions
- Respond to requests from executive ministers for congregational resourcing
- Assist with problem solving and crisis management
- Provide staff and board consultation as requested

Bring Together American Baptists

- Provide planning for the following events:
 - Biennial Mission Summit
 - Mission Summit Conversations and Mission Table
 - National Leadership Council
 - American Baptist Committees and Commissions
- Design and host the following conferences:
 - Radical, Redeemed and Ready Conference for American Baptist Women in Ministry
 - Baptist Muslim Dialogue

Special Strategies in Response to the Global Pandemic

- Resource
 - Plan the first ever virtual Biennial Mission Summit in 2021 and plan for the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit
 - Host regular conversations with the Regional Executive Ministers
 - Provide comprehensive web pages as well as strategic information on COVID-19 and the vaccination process as a member of the White House Community Corps
- Track
 - Conduct surveys to track the impact of the pandemic on ABC congregations
 - Participate in EPIC (Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations) project hosted by Faith Communities Today and funded by the Lilly Endowment
- Explore
 - Create a climate of and promote innovation throughout the ABC family
 - Host "Everyday ABC Conversations"
 - Map innovations among ABC congregations

Special Strategies in Response to declining Mainline Denominations

- Move from a centralizing hub to a distributive system of organizing
- Emphasize the following
 - ABC identity
 - Empowerment of leaders
 - Relationship building
 - Customization of resources
- While de-emphasizing
 - Control of information
 - Credentialing
 - Mass programming
 - Generic solutions