



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



[Name] Annual Conference
Laity and Clergy Sessions of 2022 Annual Conference
[date], 2022

Report of the Monitoring Team
The Commission on the Status and Role of Women

Dear Bishop [name] and leadership of the [name] Annual Conference,

Thank you for the opportunity to observe the laity and clergy sessions of the 2022 Annual Conference. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women requested that all annual conference sessions across the church be monitored by the annual conference COSROWs for inclusiveness and we appreciate the conference secretary [name] granting this request.

This report contains our reported observations and the data we gathered, together with recommendations and suggestions as we strive to challenge The UMC to full inclusion of women's role in the church's life, with attention to the inclusion of racial and ethnic women.

Note: These sessions were in the zoom webinar format which made identifying the speakers and persons raising questions in the chat difficult. Creativity needs to be used to determine ways to objectively monitor and gather data in future on-line or hybrid meetings.

Laity Session: Monitors were [name] and [name], lay members of the [conference]
What we observed....

First, there was a very nice gender balance with leadership in the Laity session. The lay leader is female and presented an informative outline of the annual conference agenda. Three women presented, with one presenter (as well as the annual conference facilitator) being a racially ethnic person. One white male presented. It would have been nice to have a young person in leadership, and perhaps that can be a goal for the next session. As discussed in the clergy session below, with not all persons on camera, it was difficult to document the gender, ethnicity, age, and ability status of all persons assisting in leadership.

Of special note was the annual conference information report given by [name] and [name] explaining accommodations being made for mobility issues, the equality of process, and encouragement to hear every voice. The report was simple, clear, and welcoming.

Although the gender and ethnicity of persons raising questions in the Q and A section of the zoom format and in the chat could not be determined, the monitors did observe conference staff responding to each inquiry. There was no selection of persons according to any category, modeling a neutral inclusive process to be celebrated.



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One of the presenters explained the physical voting process that will be used with smart phone technology, but leadership was careful to avoid instructing delegates on how they should vote on substantive issues coming before the annual conference. This is to be celebrated as this was not a format to allow all voices to be heard and all questions to be vetted. There is always the danger that the power dynamic of those in leadership voicing her or his opinions would have tainted the discussions and votes. Leadership is to be celebrated and affirmed for the manner in which matters coming before the annual conference were noted.

Data that we collected...

Speakers: Gender: 3 females (2 were laity/1 clergy), 1 male (lay)
 Ethnicity: 3 white/1 racially ethnic person
 Age: 1 older adult/no youth or young adults
 Person with Disability: none apparent

Suggestions/ideas for improvements

Intentionality should continue to be given for an inclusive panel in leadership. One improvement that would encourage the voices of young people would be to have created a way for a young person to be included in the presentations.

Our monitors also voiced concerns in the difficulty in observing and collecting data in the online meeting format. There were no votes taken at the Laity Session and care needs to be taken to establish guidelines and parameters for inclusion of all persons when online meetings call for voting to be performed.

Clergy Session: Monitors were [name] and [name], clergy members of the [conference]

What we observed....

The session was well organized with respectful language being used, especially with regards to the clergy for whom medical leave was considered. The three key presenters were white males. The monitoring team was advised that there were off-camera females in support leadership positions. Unfortunately, this was not visible to the attendees, and led to the perception of all white males presiding. Perhaps in the future when leadership teams/presenters are identified, there could be a “behind the scenes” self-analysis to check the optics and the fact of inclusivity which is shared with the leadership presenters to allow voluntary adjustments. Additionally, including those involved in the leadership team in the “camera” view could create a more team-based feel and show more equity and diversity to those in the “zoom” room.

Data that we collected...



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Speakers: Gender: 3 males
 Ethnicity: 3 white
 Age: 1 older adult/no youth or young adults
 Persons with Disability: none apparent

Suggestions/ideas for improvements

Intentionality should be the order of the day in having a diverse panel of presenters. There is a need to recruit and feature the voices (and faces) of young adults and to be intentional in examining the overall panel.

Our monitors observed the apparent difficulty in answering/responding to all questions that were raised. This could be the webinar format, and that should be examined for consideration of what is the best format for interactive meetings in the future, especially where votes are taken. (Votes were taken at the clergy session.) This could also call for recruitment of more persons to staff the Q and A and chat functions.

Concerns for future meetings...

Investigation and examination should be given to the type of online meeting platform to be used. If voting is to take place, there needs to be transparency of persons voting and assurances that those persons are free from “behind the camera” influence.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature

[name]

Chair of [conference] COSROW Leadership Committee

Please note Monitoring Ministry Forms prepared by GCSRW were used by the monitoring team for collection of the raw data used in preparation of this report.