

## Saturday July 27th YF Business Meeting

- ESC Policy follow up and update
  - Clerks summarized what has been happening with the ESC policy for the sake of Friends who weren't present in our Thursday business meeting.
  - Since our Thursday business meeting there have been updates! There was a meeting on Thursday afternoon about the policy, and people expressed many feelings of anger, hurt, shock, and dehumanization. A minute of exercise (included below) (which some Young Friends participated in writing) came out of that gathering.
  - The minute was read during PYM Annual Sessions Friday morning.
  - Following this, YF Clerks met with PYM Clerk Jada Jackson.
    - She isn't clear that we need a policy
    - Think the ESC needs to be shifted, may not be ready or safe for Young Friends, but is getting worked on. No new members on the committee until the current situation is sorted out.
    - Discussed an ad-hoc committee to oversee the healing process, Jada thinks we aren't ready for the ad-hoc reconciliation committee for the same above reasons – the committee needs to get sorted out.
    - She wants to know what Young Friends need and want from the Yearly Meeting over the next few months.
    - Clerk Samara rephrased this question – what do we want to see from the YM? What response do we want to see?
    - Clerk Tenaja asked if YFs think we should have a policy?
      - One Friend expressed that no, we don't need one.
      - If we have a Trans policy do we need to have a handicap policy, a policy for all LGBTQ (etc.)
        - One Friend raised that these are not big issues in the community currently, and are therefore not relevant
      - A policy would protect YFs in the future in this regard, when Hannah and Kody aren't leading any longer
      - We shouldn't have a policy per se, but have an agreement / guideline that comes from the Young Friends community.
      - Could it be helpful to ask the YM to have people hold it in the Light and be in Spirit about it, rather than in head about it – imagine YF community as something to hold in the Light and love rather than something to judge and control.
      - What's happening here has the capacity to bring change to Quakerism. If we back up and don't have a policy we pass up that chance, and that would be sad.
      - Having a policy would feel more safe for trans\* people.

- There's more open-ness in the Yearly Meeting right now for having Young Friends involved in making their own policy or being central in that process, and setting this policy in Young Friends would set a good precedent on that front. We have our foot in the door.
- We could do without it, but it would help a lot
- Hannah asked how strongly people feel about their positions – can we find unity?
- One Friend expressed strong preference for having a policy, for the above-mentioned reasons (safety, permanency, YF decision-making power).
- One Friend expressed that we could go either way, with ESC it will take a long time.
- Clerks did a blind thumb check on if we want a policy for information – friends were largely neutral or positive. Clerks asked if we were in unity on having a policy
  - Friends approved.
- Next steps
  - Clerk Samara offered a proposal: create an ad hoc committee of Young Friends to draft a policy to bring to Onas and refine / get approval and then bring to ESC (with at least two YF liaisons).
  - One Friend wondered whether YFs feel excited enough about this to do the work outside of a gathering to make a policy
    - Samara and Ananda both expressed interest in being on that committee. Names of other Young Friends likely to feel excited about working on the policy arose: Emi would appreciate being on the committee. Sebastian may be interested. Emma Leibman may be interested as well.
  - The ad-hoc committee should have LGBTQC Young Friends and allies.
  - Young Friends approved the idea of this committee
  - One YF felt that this should be an open group.
  - Samara and Ananda will be Clerks for the ad-hoc committee and the contact people for others interested in joining. The Friends listed above as potentials who might be interested will be contacted and particularly invited to join. Hannah is happy and excited to support the committee in its needs to whatever degree they feel helpful.
  - Friends took a break to play sharks and menos ninja-style.

- Epistle Committee
  - Every year at Annual Sessions we write an epistle to be shared with the floor of the Yearly Meeting and other Quakers. Who wants to serve on this committee?
  - Interested Friends: (Ananda Ganbari isn't ready to say so)
  - Nominated Friends: Jane Bryer, Henry Mohr, Aaron Haber, Ananda Ganbari, Cleo Cardona
    - Jane Bryer, Henry Mohr, Ananda Ganbari, and Cleo Cardona all accepted their nominations. Ananda will convene the group.
    - The group approved these members
  - Brainstorm of what to include in the epistle: Apples to apples, sharks and menos, swimming and entertaining the kids, discussed policy at length, did our own worship sharing as well as writing worship sharing questions for the whole group of Annual Sessions and doing worship sharing with the whole of Annual Sessions, hike to the waterfall with MSFs and a few YAFs, we saw Jesus Christ Superstar and then sang the songs for the rest of the week, Hannah and Kody snuck up on everyone (well some people) twerking as YFs sang Jesus Christ Superstar, doing All Together Now with the whole of Annual Sessions (playing multigenerational games that help us pay attention to God, singing the song). The deathstar disco ball.
- Gathering themes brainstorm for future discernment
  - Sustainability
  - Spiritual exploration / welcome / philosophy / safety
  - What makes us feel most alive?
- We closed with a moment of worship.

### Minute of Exercise on Trans Youth Policy Meeting at PYM Annual Sessions, 2013

On 7/25/2013, approximately 60 people met to respond to the Transgender Youth Policy, which was finalized by the Education Standing Committee (ESC) about a month earlier. The policy was published by the Yearly Meeting a week earlier and was suspended by the PYM Clerk 7/24/2013. The group included one member of the ESC who was active in creating the policy, and one who was not active in creating the policy.

Many feelings were strongly expressed including: shock, hurt, anger, confusion, pain, rejection, and feeling degraded and devalued.

Many Friends were confused by the policy. Much of the policy used strong trans-inclusive language. And yet the requirement to segregate bathrooms and sleeping rooms by "biological sex" was understood by those gathered to be unwelcoming to trans Friends and harmful to them and others.

We heard many concerns about the process that generated this policy. Prior to finalizing the policy, the Education Standing Committee heard from staff, Young Friends, and about 15 parents and other adults interested in youth programs. The resulting policy did not reflect the wisdom or desires of these groups.

We kept asking, “Why?” Why was a policy created for a group of Friends who did not unite with it? Why did Education Standing Committee think it necessary to change the long-standing practice of designating bathrooms and sleeping arrangements by gender identity? One member of the ESC suggested that the Committee experienced both a generational barrier and inexperience with transgender issues, and that the Committee failed to overcome these challenges.

We learned that PYM youth staff communicated to the ECS their conscientious objection to the new policy almost three weeks before it was made public. The Committee did not respond to these objections before the policy was published. Why was the Committee unable to engage with these concerns before the policy was made public?

### **What is needed now?**

Friends called for apology, reconciliation, and healing. One ECS committee member apologized personally. There will be more work for the committee to do in this area.

We need to examine and understand the roots of this problem. What were the structures and institutional habits that allowed this to happen? How could we change our institutional practices to avoid similar problems in the future?

We need to involve Young Friends in any policy changes that impact them. This means that the Young Friends Liaison with the ESC should be a Young Friend. Also, ESC will be stronger if it includes young adult Friends who were in the Young Friends program previously and other adults with connections to the Young Friends program. [This type of “fix” is applicable to all committees: let’s follow the principle of “no decisions about us without us.”]

Young Friends policies should be developed collaboratively with Young Friends and ESC, and approved by both bodies.

Many Friends suggested that the next version of the policy be drafted by a group of Young Friends who would then send their draft to the ESC. Ideally, the two groups would communicate with each other until unity is found.

Written by a self-selected group present at the conversation:

Samara Rockwood, co-clerk, Young Friends

Sebastian DiMino, participant, Young Friends

Peter Lane, member, Education Standing Committee

Carrie Sandler, mother of Young Friends participant

Grayfred Gray  
Traci Hjelt Sullivan  
Walter Hjelt Sullivan  
Tesla DuBois  
Juliette Lane