Director’s Best Practices

Preface:

The purpose of this document is to provide some guidance to Regional Directors (RD), particularly those who are new, on how to effectively coordinate and conduct business within the Region to enhance the goals, mission and vision of UBE. Also, to provide a clear cut understanding of the role and function of the Regional Director in order to provide and maintain a healthy region.

This guide is intended for use by all RD’s with the hope that it will be helpful while at the same time, creating a framework for all RD’s to work from. In short, we hope to create some uniformity within our structure whereby succession planning for RD’s can have some uniformity.

We are cognizant of the fact that many RD’s, particularly those who have been in office for some time have created their own unique working process over the course of the years which may have proven useful in running their region, however, we ask that you review this document in hope that perhaps you may find additional tools which can be helpful to you as you embark on this new journey. If by chance you should find something in this document that you deem helpful kindly try it out and piece it together with the rest of your procedures to enhance the quality and lifespan of your region. If that is the case, then the time and effort spent to compile this document would have been worthwhile.

Your Board of Directors wishes you much joy and success as you embark on a new ministry to help move our organization forward in a collaborative manner and pledges to work with you every step of the way.

Warm Regards,

Bert Jones, First Vice President
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Leadership and its Challenges:

Congratulations!

You have been elected to serve and lead a region of the Union of Black Episcopalians, an organization with a rich history that goes back more than forty-five years in serving the Black Church and its members. Your election or appointment to this new position should not be taken lightly but instead with humility, in the recognition that you were thought highly of, and a sacred trust is now entrusted to your abilities and commitment. Leadership is extremely difficult and not every decision made will be widely embraced, but your guiding rod should always be whether the decision or action you have taken is a moral one; and whether it meets the criteria of the organization.

Primary Roles of a Regional Director:

The primary role of a Director is:

1. To be the voice of the National Board of Directors with all chapters and special interest group within a given geographical area.
2. To nurture and provide guidance and assistance to all chapter Presidents and officers.
3. To promote chapter wellness by providing chapter development training.
4. To be an advocate for all chapters and special interest group within your region to the Board.

Eligibility for a Regional Director’s Position:

The candidate for becoming a RD must meet the following prerequisites:

1. Be a member of UBE for a period of at least three (3) years and shall have attended two National Business Meetings and Conferences within the last five (5) years.
2. Served as member of the Executive Committee of a local chapter or held an office in the Chapter.

Other Guidelines for Regional Directors:

1. Directors are elected by the membership of the region at the Regional Meeting.
2. During the term of office the Regional Director shall not hold an office in the local Chapter nor chair a committee of the local Chapter.
3. Nominations shall be from the floor with prior consent of the nominee. The Regional Director shall be elected by a majority vote of two (2) representatives from each Chapter. (****)
4. Regional Directors shall be elected for a term of two (2) years
5. Regional Directors may serve for two consecutive terms in the same office.
The Approach:

Communications:
A Regional Director should live by three key words: communication, communication and communication! The more you communicate with each of your chapter leadership as well as its general membership, the more you will be informed, hence, the quicker you will be able to correct problems. Communications can be done via the following ways:

1. **Chapter visits** – If possible, schedule periodic visits with each of your chapters to hear their issues and concerns as well as their success stories. You should be in “listening mode” to be most effective. While doing this you can get a quick overview of how the meeting is conducted. If this is done properly, by the time the meeting has ended you would have gotten a quick analysis of whether or not the leadership of the chapter has good facilitating skills to run a meeting effectively. Depending on your skill set level as a facilitator, you should be able to pick up on body language as well as small things such as participation of members, and the overall meeting process whereby you can have a private meeting with the President and try to encourage some correction.

2. **Conference Calls** – It is advisable to schedule bimonthly conference calls with your chapter Presidents and Vice Presidents to ensure continuity as well as being proactive. You may acquire a free account at [www.freeconference.com](http://www.freeconference.com) – these calls can be taped and downloaded to your computer as minutes and they are free. While on the call you may gather information on status of chapter events as well as deliverable that you have set previously or any other type of information pertaining to the chapter.

3. **Name and Address List** – it is highly recommended that once you are familiar with your chapter leaders – particularly the Presidents, that you compile a listing with the names of all Presidents, their address, phone numbers as well as email for communications purposes. This should be circulated to each President to encourage networking. This could enhance the communications within your region by a substantial degree.

Setting Goals and Objectives for Chapters:

It is extremely important to recognize that chapters are seeking directions from the Board of Directors and as the primary leadership team it is up to us to provide that direction. When you are setting goals and objectives try to use the corporate model of S.M.A.R.T goals. (Specific, Measurable, Realistic and Timely). It serves no purpose to set goals that are so far out of reach that they would never be accomplished. This tends to discourage people from working harder. We recommend chapters to focus on three major
initiatives: (1) **education**, (2) **advocacy** and (3) **service**. We believe those three initiatives should be the core principles by which a UBE chapter should be guided. Below are some examples for all three initiatives.

### Education:

1. Members of each chapter are encouraged to know the history of the founding of UBE. This information can be obtained from Canon Rodman’s book “*Let there be Peace among us*”. The book chronicles the first 20 years of UBE. Another source of history is located on our website which can be located at [www.ube.org](http://www.ube.org)

2. Chapters should be exposed to the video developed by the Office of Black Ministry entitled “*Mine Eyes Have Seen the Savior*”. This video was compiled under the leadership of the Rev. Canon Dr. Lynn Collins and speaks to the role of Black Clergy in America as well as the significant contributions of Afro Caribbean Clergy. Another book that could provide some insight on UBE and its purpose is “*To Heal the Sin-Sick Soul*”.

3. Plan speaker’s forum within your diocese to bring awareness of various issues. Expose members of your chapters to diocesan events and various platforms. Encourage diocesan participation. The forum can also be issues affecting a community. It would be of tremendous value to invite members of the surrounding community to all forums events though they are not Episcopalians.

4. Invite your diocesan Bishop to a UBE meeting at least once a year. Engage in a candid conversation about the role of Blacks in the diocese and how this can be improved. In anticipation of the Bishop’s visit, the leadership of the chapter should plan and map out carefully an agenda of specifics topics.

5. Each chapter should hold two membership drives toward their objectives.

6. Fundraising should be design in such a way that it benefits both the chapter as well as the National organization.

7. Ministry as a vocation for Youth. It would be great for chapters to arrange a field trip to various seminaries for an open discussion with our Youth. Invite the Office of Black Ministry to come and speak to our young people.

### Advocacy:

The core value of UBE has always been advocacy and empowerment of our people. To be clear, when we say our people we are speaking of everyone who is of African descent. This is not to say that we do not wish the empowerment of others as well, however, history has taught us that our people have been drastically marginalized within the system as well as the church. Advocacy can be done in many ways: some are simple and others are a bit more complex. Some examples:

1. Joining the antiracism team / becoming an antiracism trainer. Bringing antiracism dialogues to the forefront of your diocese.

2. Surveying your diocese for things such as: number of Black Clergy in the diocese, Blacks on diocesan staff, Blacks on diocesan infrastructure committees such as – Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Trustees, Provincial representatives, General Convention Deputies. Where possible, help prepare candidates for diocesan office.
3. If by chance there is a diocesan transition (bishop) team, the chapter within the diocese should position itself to nominate, promote and support a Black candidate. This needs to be coordinated extremely well.
4. Increase the number of Black Seminarians.

**Service:**
The service part for all chapters should be something that brings excitement and joy to everyone. If done correctly, it could generate new members. Most people want to belong to an organization that is doing something. They do not want to come to meetings just because we are friends. The chapter needs to provide some value.

1. Diocesan wide Absalom Jones service / education. The Absalom Jones service is not a service just for Blacks but for everyone. As we celebrate the Life, Work and Ministry of the first African American Priest in the United States we need to speak about that rich history to all – Black and Whites. The service should be an inclusive service in memory of what was not – but what should be.
2. Service honoring the life, work and ministry of Thurgood Marshall. This could be a great educational tool.
3. Service honoring the life, work and ministry of Alexander Crummell.
4. Literacy program / mentoring youth and adults.
5. Battered women program.
7. Food program (only if we are moving from charity to justice)
8. Date rape prevention – boys & girls

**Regional Conference:**

By virtue of the National Bylaws each region is required to hold a Regional Conference once a year. Pursuant to Article 6, Section 2 of the National Bylaws, the dates of the Regional Conference can be February 15 through April 30. That’s the timeframe.

**Purpose of Regional Conference:**

The regional conference is important to our members because it is a local event and it is easily accessible, while for many, especially those on fixed income, attending the National conference could prove a bit costly. The regional conference serves several purposes which include:

1. Provides the local chapters to caucus for National elections as well as prepare resolutions to be presented at the National Business Meeting and Conference.
2. In an election year for the region, it allows local members to choose their next Regional Director by a plurality vote.
3. It brings local membership together to fellowship and camaraderie.
4. Provides a foretaste to the National Conference by putting forth items to be covered at the National Conference.

**Conference Preparation:**

There are many items to consider when preparing for a regional conference: geographical distance, number of chapters, total participating membership as well as what site is most equidistant among the chapters. What is most productive - a 1 day conference or a 2 day conference? Which is most cost effective a 1 day conference or a 2 day conference? These questions can certainly present complexities when putting together the regional conference. Depending on what part of the country your region is located (Northeast, Mid Atlantic, Western, Midwest or Southern) your dates might be different because of weather conditions. A Director in the Northeast might be ill advised to host a conference on February 15 due to inclement weather while a Director in the Western Region might not have the same problem using that date. Below are some suggestions for planning a regional conference that might prove helpful:

1. It would be extremely helpful to your members to begin the initial preparation for your conference two years in advance. By starting this early you could at the very least select your venue as well as the hosting chapter.
2. Depending on the number of chapters within your region, it might be feasible to rotate the hosting site each year. Of course travel distance needs to be considered.
3. It is highly recommended that a conversation should take place between the RD and the regional Executive Committee some protocols for your conference. The Executive Committee is comprised of all Presidents within your region.
4. Once you have selected a site and hosting chapter, it is time to make the determination on the number of days for your conference and select a date. Be careful when doing this. Five chapters within a given region could be located in different parts of the country and cost could be very different. Ex. In the Northeast, a two day conference could cost much less in Hartford than in Manhattan even though both chapters are in the same region. Be advised that the more days you allocate for this conference, the more costly it becomes. Overnight conferences incur hotels, meals and potential travel. Please make every effort to keep cost to a minimum.
5. Conference Theme is usually provided by the National Board of Directors. A simple phone call or email to the Executive Members should get you the desired information.
6. It is the host chapter’s responsibility to spearhead the conference. The Director should meet with the host chapter at least three times: initial meeting will be to lay the foundation for the conference as well as set up timelines, the second meeting (which could be done via conference call) would be to track the timeline to ensure the chapter is on schedule for delivering the information in a timely manner.
7. The host chapter will make the determination for the number of workshops, speakers, honorarium and all logistics setup. The RD should be kept in the loop of all planning stages.
8. Once the date has been fixed, four or five months prior to the conference, it might be a good practice to send out a Save the Date notice to all chapters within the region. Please remember that our members need time to plan.
9. Once everything is ready, 3 months before the conference, a full registration packet should be sent out to every member in the region. This registration packet should include: theme, venue, dates, keynote speaker, cost, accommodations [if needed], workshops, facilitators and return mailing for the registration as well as cutoff date.

10. Though the chapter has a complete freehand for the conference, the Business meeting is run entirely by the Director. It is the Director’s privilege to put the business meeting agenda together.

Sample Conference Agenda:
- Opening Prayer
- Call to order
- Introduction of Chapter Presidents
- Minutes of last year’s conference
- State of the Region – your assessment following conversations and site visits
- Important issues for region
- Resolutions for National
- Appointments by the RD
- Closing Prayer

11. It is highly recommended that the RD canvas for new chapters. The Director can engage in conversation with various clergy and congregations to lay the groundwork for new special interest groups and full chapters.

12. If by chance your region is fortunate to have at least six chapters and you choose to rotate the venue, you might want to consider having each chapter pay a support fee to help defray the cost of the conference. This could be a minimal cost of $100 and since the conference is rotate each year everyone will get the $100.00 back.

Your Responsibility to the Board:

As an RD, you are a member of the Board of Directors and are required to participate in the monthly Board meetings. The full board has a conference call once a month which occurs each 4th Sunday of the month beginning at 8:00 PM EST. An agenda, financial report as well as other reports are provided. It might be helpful if you could do the following prior to the conference call:

1. Provide a bimonthly written report on the status of your region. This should be sent to the National Secretary prior to the Sunday Board meeting for her to disseminate.
2. All reports will be distributed in a timely manner and it would be helpful if you read them prior to the meeting to avoid delay.
3. Hold yourself and other board members accountable for the work of UBE.

Succession Planning:

In accordance to the National Bylaws, an RD’s tenure is two years with the possibility of running two consecutive terms. It is a good practice to begin grooming a successor for the post early in your tenure to prevent stagnation and last minute candidates who are not up to speed. This should also be encouraged of all chapter Presidents. Shadowing is permitted. Take your mentee with you to visit other chapters to listen as well as to get to know the members.