

I am Elizabeth Murphy, speaking on behalf of the Re-Visioning Team.

Before I begin, The GA Planners have asked that while you are listening, please keep two questions in mind. They will be the beginning point for discussions later in the small groups.

1. What have I learned that I did not know?
2. What else do I need to know?

**Welcome to the Re-Visioning Team's Presentation. We are an open group of self-selected Grail members.**

Our presentation will be an Outline of the key elements which we feel will make our Grail governance structure more effective.

There are a growing number of Grail Members who have shown positive interest in a plan to return much responsibility for planning and decision-making authority to the membership.

This issue was raised at the 2017 Grail General Assembly (GA). The Re-Visioning Team has been meeting for almost a year and a half to consider possible scenarios for member discussion.

The Foundational Premises which we affirm are:

- The Grail was founded as a spiritual community. Our Spiritual Core is at the heart of who we are. We are a spiritual group, not just a non-profit women's organization.
- We find our spiritual equilibrium when we are together making decisions and when members feel buy-in and own the decisions made.
- Every member's voice counts. Every member's voice must be heard.
- The Grail is in an existential crisis, as we know. We lack programming that can attract new members. Broadening decision-making in a two-way dialogue with a larger Council can serve to actively engage current members and strengthen programmatic work.
- The model proposed by the Re-Visioning Team envisions that representation through work groups and interest clusters, will strengthen and unify their work.
- This model invites these clusters to generate programmatic ideas as well as to identify where leadership and money will come from to carry them out.
- Centralization of decision-making in Council in recent years has meant less engagement of members. We need a governance structure that creates and necessitates more member participation.

### **First Things First – We have to open the door**

Our current management structure is set out in our Bylaws. To change and grow we will need to make some changes to the bylaws. In order to begin as we mean to go on, these changes must be able to come from the membership and be affirmed by membership.

As it is now, only Council can change the Bylaws. Therefore we, the Re-Visioning Team, in early 2021, requested of Council that they change that particular bylaw which controls changes to bylaws, to specify:

1. Members are allowed to propose bylaw changes.
2. Any bylaw changes must be affirmed by a majority of voting members

The specifics of this would follow the procedures recommended by Ohio State law. A minimum of 10% of voting members would be needed to propose a change, and after organized discussion with membership, a simple majority of members voting on the question must approve by voice or ballot vote for the change to go into effect.

Council declined to do this at that time, but said that they would make the change IF it was affirmed by the membership at the GA.

We feel it is absolutely crucial that this change is made if we want to move forward with other steps in a positive evolution. It returns ownership for the Grail in the US to the wider membership. With authority comes responsibility— the combination is empowering.

To encourage this acceptance and empowerment of responsibility we must re-learn the gift of dialogue. We must have the courage to really talk with each other. We must learn to work through our differences and/or disagreements together.

The Re-Visioning Team would strongly encourage everyone to support making this simple bylaw change. Other changes can then follow one by one, as needed. Occasions for these dialogues can be created at any time.

**After much study and discussion the Re-Visioning Team Recommends --  
some FAMILIAR STRUCTURES REVISED, some NEW STRUCTURES, and some TOOLS**

1. **The GENERAL ASSEMBLY, is a convening of the membership, which can happen at any time, length or frequency**, will be virtual or virtual and simultaneously face to face. The GA will become the primary decision-making body of the Grail and gives direction to Council. Some GA decisions may need to be followed up by ballot vote of membership. GA's require preparation among members, with education and FORUM discussions. The core purposes of the GA are that of a business meeting and community building.
2. **FORUMS are meetings called by any member or group of members to share, educate, discuss, and request feed back** on whatever topic they choose. Forums are to be held for member engagement prior to major decision-making and ballot-proposals. Forums may generate changes to ballot proposals to address member concerns prior to a vote.
3. An **ENLARGED COUNCIL** of 7-9 members. This allows for more diversity and greater distribution of work.
4. **Revise the current NLT function so that full Council will be making decisions.** Allow Council to designate its own internal leadership for managing meetings and agendas.

5. **Revise Council job description to lighten the load** and make it possible for younger women, working women, mothers, etc. to step into leadership.
6. **Create and empower task forces to work on specific issues** (such as Mission Fund and Centers planning), thus lightening the load on Council and broadening input.
7. **Members are invited to all Council meeting as observers**, except when personnel issues and other issues requiring confidentiality are addressed. Council notes will be archived and available for reference.
8. Create a **COUNCIL SUPPORT GROUP**, it will have a planning and sharing function, to work in coordination with Council's executive function.  
The Council Support Group will be made up of representatives from self-identified Grail Groups. In meeting together they will shape and raise awareness of the collective work of the Grail.  
These representatives are to be liaisons between Council and Grail interest groups for frequent two-way communication. They will keep Council informed about with the variety of activities going on throughout the U.S.Grail.  
This colloquy of diverse Grail Groups will bring a specific focus on planning and sharing Grail work. It will prevent silos of information.  
**And most importantly**, by sharing energy and excitement about what we are doing we generate new energy and new collaborations.  
The Council Support Group representatives will reach out to their Grail groups to share information about Grail wide issues raised by Council and will follow through by keeping Council apprised of current activities and needs.  
The Council Support Group will also be responsible for generating nominations, as needed, from their root groups for various elected roles.
9. An **ELECTION COMMITTEE** will be elected by membership to organize nominations and election procedures. They will serve for a term of three years, with the role of creating guidelines and criteria for elections including addressing diversity in all its forms (race, age, region, etc.). The committee will compile *all* incoming nominations for member vote. They will also handle the process of voting for Ballot Issues as needed.
10. We recommend that the U.S.Grail develop a set of **GUIDELINES to run in tandem with the bylaws**. Guidelines will describe best practices and include explanations of how things operate in order to expedite new work. This is the place for details and fuller explanations of Grail methods, culture and tradition which guide our daily function.
11. **CONSENT DECISION MAKING & VOTING**  
Currently some issues mandate a decision made by the whole membership, some require a vote according to our present bylaws.  
We feel that in an effort to allow all points of view to be shared prior to any decision, large and small, that we learn to use Consent Decision Making. This practice is a formal way to insure the participation of all those present in a discussion.
12. In order to practice what we preach, **we have been in communication with a number of Grail members and groups as we have been doing our own work**.

**We would like to offer MUTUAL SUPPORT for several issues being brought to the GA by other groups:**

- We have been in touch with the Anti-racism Committee and we support their goal of integrating an **Anti-racism commitment** into Grail bylaws.
- We have been in communication with the Membership and Development Committee and support the **modifications of member responsibilities** which we understand they will be presenting at some point during this GA.
- We also want to voice our support of the **Sustainable Communities Affinity Group's foundational premise that Earth itself needs human care**. That the Grail community cannot exist without the support of Earth communities (ecosystems). In turn, it may be that many Earth communities cannot long exist without intentional reciprocity of human communities such as the Grail.

I thank-you, on behalf of the Re-Visioning Team, for your attention, and may we all move forward in the spirit of hope and growth.