

DHARMA COUNCIL MEETING

November 14, 2024

The Dharma Council provides oversight and stewardship of Dharma presentation and practice at DRZC to support its core mission and values.

In Attendance: Myo'i, Jiko, Daikō, Christina, Jyōshin, Sanin, Ko'in, Gabe

Absent:

Facilitator: Daiko

Location: Uji

Recorder: Gabe

Agenda

1. Tiny Meditation
2. 60-Second Check-in
3. [Approved Minutes](#) from prior meeting
4. Next Meeting Date: January 9, 2025
5. Member Concerns, if any: At the Sangha Forum, a member shared their view that having Zoom-only offerings would be beneficial for remote participants. **Noted. No specific action proposed. For now, it will be left to individual teachers to offer Zoom-only programming if they choose.**
6. Updates on action Items from previous meeting(s):
 - a. Jiko will talk with the Kanin about whether or not we can go ahead and print a smaller number of books, and ask the abbot and fix universal gateway. **There is agreement to move forward with a new printing, and a plan to do a trial of larger print chantbooks. It will likely take ~6 months to implement.**
7. Questions/Topics for Today's Meeting:
 - a. Dharma Council membership
 - i. *Background:* Gabe, Christina, and Sanin are transitioning off of the Dharma Council, leaving three vacant positions.
 - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* Brian Howard and Sarah Clark have agreed to join the council. Another member who was asked is interested, but would not be able to start until Spring of 2025.
 - iii. *Decided:* The council is in favor of inviting the third member to join the DC in Spring 2025.
 - iv. **Action Item(s): Daiko will invite the third member interested in joining the DC to join when available in Spring 2025.**
 - b. Interface between Dharma Council and Dharma Garden Council

- i. *Background:* Kakumyo suggested that the Dharma Garden Council inform the Dharma Council of their scheduled programming and seek Dharma Council approval if they want to open programs up to the whole sangha. Daiko met with Shin'yu and Jen Bass to discuss our interface. Dharma Garden Council will inform the DC of their upcoming events. Daiko shared our questions for consideration for newly proposed programming for them to have as a frame of reference for when their programming ideas include the whole sangha. They would like to find ways for the children and families to be more integrated with the larger sangha. Thoughts?
 - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* It might be a good focus for the coming year to have some DC members meet with some Dharma Garden Council members to discuss ideas for further integration of youth programs and the rest of the sangha. Questions and discussion about why children's Sejiki was held separately this year.
 - iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
 - iv. **Action Item(s): Daiko will add the topic of integrating children and families with the larger sangha to a future DC meeting agenda**
- c. Review of Seminary Class evaluations.
- i. *Background:* Please review these most recent class [evals](#)
 - 1. [History Through Texts](#)
 - 2. [Precepts](#)
 - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* History through Texts: Participants voiced that there was a lot of material that was difficult to bring together into a coherent whole. Similar feedback has been given in the past. In the past, more experiential activities were incorporated into the class and this was beneficial. Jiko is encouraging instructors to review past class evaluations before leading a class in order to incorporate participant feedback into class planning.
 - iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
- d. Question/Topic: Transition of working roles.
- i. *Background:* We will be reassigning working roles starting in January and need a plan for orienting people to their new roles.
 - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* Ko'in will consider taking on the Seminary Registrar role. New members will be asked to consider filling the Secretary role, the Affiliated Groups role, and possibly the role of monitoring overall sangha temperature and tone, sangha activities and events such as annual picnic
 - iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)

- iv. **Action Item(s): Daiko will invite one of the incoming DC members to fill the secretary role so they can be oriented to the role by Gabe prior to the January meeting.**

- e. Question/Topic: Class evaluation process
 - i. *Background:* Let's review our [outline of the class evaluation process](#)
 - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* Some difficulty getting evals from instructors noted recently. The current eval process does not define a timeline for instructors to review evals and pass them on. Question: Should the registrar collect the evals? Answer: Yes.
 - iii. **Action Item(s): Koin will work on updating the Steps to Conduct Class Evaluations process document.**

- f. Health of the Sangha - any observations? (standing agenda item)
 - i. *Summary of main discussion points:* Noting more general anxiety. Sense of circling the wagons around more vulnerable folks. Changes and reductions in resident staff recently may be adding some stress. Overall, sangha feels unified/together. It's valuable when Dharma Talk content can be informed by the current mood and needs of the sangha.
 - ii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)

- g. Spring Term Wednesday night classes:
 - i. *Background:* Fish is going to organize 6 or 7 classes on sutra studies. We still need a topic for another 4 or 5 classes. Ideas so far include ox herding pictures, bodhisattva vows, factors of enlightenment. Other ideas??? Spring Term Student will include a class on \$.

- 8. Recurring Monitoring Reports and Announcements
 - a. Temple Officers: Last meeting was 10/22: Large Sutra Books - Decided to gradually move in that direction. Genko is going to do a couple of mock ups.
 - b. Dharma Rain Active Transmitted Teachers: Mainly discussed staffing of classes - in process of filling numerous unassigned teaching slots.
 - c. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: No meeting since last DC meeting.
 - d. Affiliated Groups: We will start planning for 2025 Dharma Cloud Day in January.