

## **2.13 POLICY TITLE: COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT TO THE BOARD**

**The President shall not permit the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work, nor perform tasks or take responsibility for areas that are the Board's responsibility.**

**Operational Definition:** Operational Definition: We understand “uninformed” to mean the board desires to receive periodic reports from the administration that summarize the major means by which the Association’s ENDS are being achieved. In addition to a strategic plan, periodic reports will be submitted as new initiatives are undertaken and, in any case, incidental reports from each program area will be submitted at least once each year or upon request of the board. The incidental report that will be submitted to the board on February 28, 2013 is the 11-page report titled, “An Update on Unitarian Universalist Youth Leadership”.

We understand "unsupported" to mean the board desires to have board requests to the administration responded to in a way that enables the board to do its work with sufficient information. It would include such things as requests for information the board has made, having the board packet prepared and posted online within two working days of receipt and having Eliot Chapel and Pickett and Eliot Houses properly prepared for board meetings with electronic access, administrative support, chairs, tables, sound system, meals, snacks, and beverages.

We understand that the means by which programs and initiatives are developed and implemented by the Administration will be informed and inspired by the UUA Ends.

It should be noted that we understand this policy to be explicitly about communication with the board as opposed to being an opportunity to review compliance with the ENDS of the Association. Further, once a year (or on another schedule if the board prefers) a survey will be taken of all board members designed to measure compliance with the entirety of this policy.

**Rationale:** Compliance will be achieved by the administration informing the board that the strategic plan and incidental reports have been submitted as promised. Additionally, the administration will outline annually the efforts it has made to provide support to the board generally and specifically before, during, and after Board meetings. Furthermore, the strategic plan and incidental reports will make reference to the Ends to which they are related.

Additionally, compliance will be achieved through direct inspection by the board voting annually on whether the board believes it has been supported in its work.

***This revised operational definition has not been acted upon and will be discussed at the April 2013 Board meeting.***

**Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, the President shall not:**

**1. Fail to submit monitoring data requested by the Board (see policy on Monitoring Presidential Performance in policy “Section 4 Board-President Linkage”) in a timely, accurate and understandable fashion, directly addressing the Board policies being monitored.**

**Operational Definition:** We understand "timely, accurate and understandable" to mean that the administration will follow the monitoring schedule approved by the Board of Trustees, submitting each monitoring report by the due date or giving advance notice of tardiness and reasonable reasons for late submission.. Further, we understand accurate to mean the information contained in the monitoring reports will be carefully gathered so as to avoid errors or misrepresentations. We understand "understandable" to mean monitoring reports will be prepared with a minimum of acronyms and clear language so that new members of the board and persons not on the board can easily understand what is meant.

Compliance will be achieved by annual administration review of board policies with dates by which reports were due, submitted, and reviewed by the board. "Accurate and understandable" will be determined by direct inspection, with the board voting annually on whether the monitoring reports submitted during the year were accurate and understandable". If the majority of board members vote affirmatively the administration will be deemed as in compliance.

***Action taken January, 2013: Accept as written. However, there should be a rationale included the next time this is monitored***

**2. Allow the Board to be surprised by circumstances that the Board should reasonably be expected to know, including (but not limited to) anticipated high-profile or adverse media coverage or media presence (including advertising), threatened or pending lawsuits, material external and internal changes including staff structure and size, conflicts of interest, clergy or staff misconduct, the hiring of salaried officers, and changes in the conditions or circumstances upon which any Board policy had previously been established.**

**A. Reporting on misconduct is to include metrics, trends over time, and financial impact, while maintaining confidentiality around individual persons.**

**Operational Definition:** We understand this to mean the board is to be notified immediately if a significant media event has occurred which reflects upon the reputation of the association, a major lawsuit had been filed against the Association, that a UUA religious professional or staff member has been arrested for a major crime, or that financial malfeasance has been claimed by some federal, state, or local authority. The president will take care to inform the board immediately of these or any other significant event.

Furthermore, the administration will provide an annual report beginning in January 2013 that will show the number of complaints made against professional religious leaders, the number of complaints deemed worthy of further investigation, and the number of complaints forwarded to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for adjudication.

Compliance with this policy will be determined by direct inspection and by the board voting annually whether the information provided appears clear, complete, and accurate. If the majority of the board responds affirmatively, the administration will be deemed as in compliance.

*Action taken January 2013: No action taken; was accepted in October, 2012.*

**3. Fail to apprise the Board of current staff practice regarding how UUA justice work efforts are chosen and how this practice has guided the Administration since the last report.**

**Operational Definition:** Operational Definition: We understand this to mean that the board wishes to be informed of how social justice efforts are chosen and how they relate to the long-standing practice of reviewing justice work on the basis of grounding, fit, opportunity and now accountability (GAFO).

We consider an issue to have Grounding if it has been identified in a Resolution or Action of Immediate Witness adopted at an annual General Assembly. For example, we have grounding to oppose AZ SB 1070 and similar legislation in other states because a 2010 Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) calls on the UUA and its member congregations to oppose such laws. When we are asked if the UUA can endorse a statement on an issue, i.e. "sign on," we examine our resolutions to see if the issue in question has been addressed.

The second GAFO criteria is Accountability. If we are seeking to address an injustice, e.g. AZ SB 1070, we consider whether we have a relationship, a partnership, with the people most directly affected? If so, can our partners direct our efforts? In other words, if they ask us to not take a particular course of action or to change our goals or tactics, will we comply with their request? If so, we consider it to be an accountable relationship.

The third GAFO criteria is Fit. Do we, Unitarian Universalist leaders, congregations, and staff, have any particular expertise or strength on this issue? Do we have a long history of engagement? Have a significant percentage of our congregations, leaders, and staff demonstrated a high degree of interest and/or commitment? If so, we consider the issue to be a good fit. We have a particularly good fit, for instance, based on these criteria, on reproductive justice as we have a long history of valuing reproductive choice and justice.

The fourth GAFO criteria is Opportunity. Is this an issue that is currently receiving a lot of attention, either in the media or in the political arena? Are regulations, policies, practices, and/or legislation in the process of being created or revised? Hydrofracking is a relatively new form of extracting natural gas and oil. Because it is new, regulations are in the process of being created and implanted. The opportunity to influence the nature of those new policies and practices will likely diminish over time.

Public Witness Priorities are chosen by considering which issues best satisfy all of these criteria. Applying the criteria of GAFO in light of the capacity of UU congregations, leaders, and staff gives us a method and rationale to prioritize and choose which issues we should best address. Those priorities will inevitably change over time and will need to be periodically reassessed.

**Rationale:** Compliance with this policy will be determined by the board voting annually on whether the information provided is useful in keeping the board apprised. If 90% of the board responds affirmatively, the administration will be deemed to be in compliance.

*This revised operational definition has not been acted upon and will be discussed at the April 2013 Board meeting.*

*Action taken January 2013 on the previously proposed operational definition: Reject the proposed operational definition as it is non-responsive to the policy. The policy does not require the Board to be informed if practice changes, it requires that the Board be informed of how current practice operates. It is also unclear what the Board would be voting on in the votes called for in the operational definition: The operational definition refers to information provided, but does not describe any information that will be provided. Require a revised operational definition to be submitted by February 20, 2013*

**4. Fail to advise the Board if, in the President's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies in Section 3: Governance Process or Section 4: Board-President Linkage, particularly in the case of Board behavior that is detrimental to the relationship between the Board and the President.**

**Operational Definition:** We understand this to mean the board wishes the administration to take a role in ensuring the board is living up to its commitments in policy governance, specifically as it relates to compliance with its own policies. Furthermore we understand the board to want an annual report which states whether or not the administration believes the board is in compliance with its own policies.

Compliance with this policy will be determined by direct inspection by the board voting at annually whether such a statement has been submitted in the last year and whether it fulfills the responsibility of the administration as required in this policy. If the majority of the board responds affirmatively, the administration will be deemed as in compliance.

*Action taken in January 2013: Accept the operational definition as written, noting that there was no rationale provided. The rationale should be provided the next time this policy is monitored.*

**5. Fail to provide a mechanism and staff support for official Board, officer or committee communications, including need to communicate within the Board or committee and with congregations and other Sources of Authority and Accountability**

**Operational Definition:** We understand this to mean that the board has a priority to communicate among itself and with those to whom it is accountable including congregations, congregational leaders, and other Sources of Authority and Accountability.

The administration will provide access either directly or indirectly through staff all of the means the Administration uses to communicate to others including but not limited to email distribution lists, the UU World magazine, individual email addresses (when Terms of Use policies are adhered to), the UUA website, and other methods and means of communication. Additionally, UUA staff will be available to assist with such communications

**Rationale:** The Administration can only provide to the Board those channels for which it has access itself.

*This is a new policy adopted in January 2013, replacing the previous 2.13.5 and 2.13.6 with a single policy. The new proposed operational definition will be reviewed in April 2013.*

**6. Fail to communicate with the Board as a whole except when fulfilling individual requests for information or responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.**

**Operational Definition:** We interpret this policy to require most communications affecting all board members – incidental reports, monitoring reports, emails, survey results, etc.)--be shared with the entire board using the board@uua.org email address unless specifically responding to a request for information from an individual board member or group of board members and for which common sense would suggest it is reasonable to respond just to that person or group of people.

Compliance with this policy will occur through direct inspection involving the staff asking the board annually whether anyone is aware of any communication from the administration to individual board members or committees that ought to have been sent to the entire board. If the majority of the board responds affirmatively, the administration will be deemed as in compliance.

*Action taken in January 2013: Accept the report as written, noting that no rationale was provided and this should be corrected the next time this policy is monitored. The GWG notes that the vote required by this operational definition will be run by the Board as part of the direct inspection process.*

**7. Fail to report to the Board in a timely manner any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy of the Board.**

**Operational Definition:** We interpret this policy to require that the board be advised of any not-already-reported instance of non-compliance with board policies. We understand “in a timely manner” to mean by email within three days of becoming aware of apparent non-compliance.

**Rationale:** Compliance with this policy will be determined by the Administration creating a list annually in April, as part of this monitoring report, of all instances of alleged non-compliance on the part of the Board. The Board will review the list and vote on whether any board member is aware of any instance of non-compliance that has not been reported. If the majority of the board responds affirmatively, the administration will be deemed as in compliance.

*This revised operational definition has not been acted upon and will be discussed at the April 2013 Board meeting.*

*Action taken in January 2013 on the previously proposed operational definition: Reject the proposed operational definition as it the revision did not address the issue raised in October of Board members being unable to report on they do not know. The GWG suggests that Board members probably could vote on whether reporting on non-compliance had been timely. There should also be a rationale provided. We require the revised report to be submitted by February 20, 2013*

## **8. Operate without ensuring that youth leadership is integrated within our Association at all levels.**

**Operational Definition:** We understand this to mean that the board wishes to ensure that the interests of youth (high school aged) are considered in the major programs and initiatives of the Association, and that pathways for leadership development are open to current and future youth leaders.

The administration will provide the board with an annual report beginning in March January 2013 of ways in which UUA staff members have sought to make major programs and initiatives more accessible to youth. It will include a list of Youth Leadership Events and Opportunities for a one-year period of time with calculations of youth participation.

**Rationale:** Compliance with this policy will be determined by increases in participation of youth of at least 5% over the previous year. The first year of analytics will be Summer, 2011 to Fall, 2012 with future estimates from the same time frame.

*This revised operational definition has not been acted upon and will be discussed at the April 2013 Board meeting.*

*Action taken January 2013 on the previously proposed operational definition: Reject the report as no specific metrics were provided to assess compliance. Is there a level of youth leadership that is required? Would one more youth participating this year than last be deemed compliance? A revised operational definition, including the rationale, should be submitted by February 20, 2013*

**8.1 The President shall not ] Allow situations where youth serve in leadership positions in the UUA (including the Board, committee and task force appointments) and where youth safety and protection policies have not been followed.**

*This is new policy, adopted in January 2013. The proposed operational definition will be considered at the April 2013 Board meeting.*

## **9. Fail to provide adequate staff support and information technology systems for the Appointments Committee and the Nominating Committee.**

**Operational Definition:** We understand this to mean the administration will create, in partnership with the nominating committee, appointments committee, and staff appointments committee, a process by which information about volunteer opportunities are clear, the application process is straightforward, the management of the information submitted is secure yet easily accessible by authorized individuals, and that there will be an understandable process for decision-making and communication of decisions to applicants.

Compliance with this policy will be determined direct inspection. In a meeting to be held shortly before the April, 2013 board meeting a carefully selected group of approximately 6 people, all of whom are or have been involved in the nomination process, will be gathered to discuss the newly created procedures and to assess whether they meet the requirements of this policy. The participants will report to the board their assessment. Positive affirmation by this group and approval of the board to their assessment

will be deemed as the administration being in compliance. It should be understood that the administration considers this an ongoing process as new ideas and technologies emerge.

***Action taken January 2013: No action taken; was accepted in October, 2012.***