

Linkage and the Non-Congregational Sources



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Sources of Authority and Accountability

- Our member congregations
- Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
- Heritage, traditions and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
- Vision of Beloved Community
- Spirit of life, love, and the holy

What linkage is...

and isn't...





Linkage is dialogue

- Purpose is
 - to learn and evoke insight
 - to reach new understanding, and/or
 - to create a context from which agreements might come
- One of the 4 primary roles of all Board Trustees under Policy Governance®
- Informs “living document” Governance Manual



Linkage is a fundamental part of our covenantal faith

Linkage is the living embodiment and the practice
of our covenant.

For us as servant leaders, linkage is genuine
communication. It is the free flow of information that
builds a deeper understanding.



What Linkage is (and is not)

- Linkage is constructive dialogue, not information sharing or advocacy
- “Linkage” depends on WHOM you are talking WITH and WHAT you are talking ABOUT:
 - You are talking with the persons or groups you are accountable to
 - You are talking about values and outcomes, not services
- Linkage is NOT just any conversation with any congregation leader and/or member



Source vs. Beneficiary

Source

- Invests so that services are available

Beneficiary

- User of services

Congregations – and other Sources – play both roles!



Source vs. Beneficiary

Source

- Long term view:
believes and is invested
in THIS mission and its
longer term health

Beneficiary

- Shorter term view:
concerned with
getting quality
services that meet
their needs and can
go elsewhere if
needs not met



Source vs. Beneficiary

Source

- Talks with board

Beneficiary

- Talks with Staff

Congregations – and other
Sources – play both roles!



Linkage is

Linkage is

- Proactively creating opportunities rather than just responding to the “usual suspects.”

Linkage is not

- Answering information requests from individual UUs, or giving a report to a District Board



Linkage is

Linkage is

- Asking congregations “what impact would you like the UUA to make in the area of [XXX]?”

Linkage is not

- Asking congregations “what would you like the Association to do for you?”



Linkage is

Linkage is

- Asking Sources what challenges we face or what our priorities should be.

Linkage is not

- Attending a worship service or social event with Young Adults (though it could be in the right circumstances)



Linkage is ...

Linkage is

- Asking “for whose benefit do we exist?”

Linkage is not

- Advocating a board position



Linkage is

Linkage is

- About building understanding and accountability

Linkage is not

- About building relationships (though many kinds of linkage do)



Linkage is

- Typically more effective if it is focused on something the board needs to know and can take action on (a “Powerful Question”)
- For example:
 - Priorities around where to put resources
 - Who speaks for your congregations
 - Feedback on current draft of Ends



Your Reactions and Reflections

- How is linkage, for governing boards in our faith tradition, the living embodiment and the practice of our covenant?
- What other reactions and reflections would you offer?



Linkage with the Non-Congregational Sources

- Shared Narrative work
- In January 2012, eight current and sixteen former trustees participated



Non-Congregational Sources: Interpretation

Five questions for each Source:

1. What are the voices for this Source?
2. How do they speak?
3. What are their perspectives?
4. What type of power do they have?
5. What are the theological and theoretical underpinnings of this Source?



Non-Congregational Sources: Interpretation

- How would the working definitions influence your linkage work?
- How would the working definitions influence how you'd connect with these Sources around the questions of “Who are we singular and plural?”



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Apply Working Definitions

20 minutes: how might you link with your Source around the question “Who are we singular and plural?”

- Who would you choose as voices for this Source?
- What process would you choose to link with them?
- What would make this process achievable?
- Spokesperson presents key elements of process and one or two insights.



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