

Summary Framework for UUA Property Policy

Jeanne Pupke and John Hawkins

Charge

At a meeting of the Coordinating Council of the Board on March 16, 2011, in which there was considerable discussion about the need to properly evaluate any future property and relocation decisions in a manner consistent with our governance, Board Members John Hawkins and Jeanne Pupke were given a charge:

[Create] a policy draft (and a draft process for deliberation) regarding possible real estate purchases for discussion and vote at the April 2011 UUA Board meeting.

Framing

The policy proposal should encourage a long term view of UUA facilities (owned properties or long term leases), over a 25-30 year timeline.

Basically, our policy should define the parameters of the case that needs to be made to the Board, and in communicating our decision to congregations.

It should provide a framework for evaluating both current and potential future facilities.

The framework should ask the essential governance questions: What benefits, for whom, at what costs or priorities?

We should evaluate broad categories of concerns against existing policies, asking ourselves which concerns are not addressed by existing policy (or not addressed in sufficient detail) and which are governance concerns.

New Policy Outline

The order of items in the policy should reflect our priorities.

In evaluating current and potential future facilities, the President shall not fail to provide a proposal for the UUA Board and a communications plan for congregations that includes the following elements:

- Explain how facilities support the Association's Shared Vision.
- Provide evidence of increased capacity for justice work that moves us toward Beloved Community.
- Evaluate facilities within a long term strategic plan.
- Provide sufficient support for staff operations and service delivery, both at the present level and with reasonable provision for growth and expansion.
- Identify the benefits and impacts of facilities on stakeholders.
- Analyze the financial impact of facilities, including any savings or costs associated with changes.
- Assess the symbolic value of facilities for our Association and the larger world.
- Ensure that facilities meet defined standards of accessibility, ease of logistics, and welcome.
- Consider the historic value of facilities in balance with future needs.
- Assess the environmental impact of facilities.

Broad Concerns

These need to be prioritized. The details within each broad category can be further expanded as needed.

- **Shared Vision and Ends:** How does our location promote our Shared Vision?
- **Justice, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Multiculturalism:** How do our facilities move us toward Beloved Community? How do they enable us to witness and do justice work?
- **Strategic Plan:** Is our choice of facilities part of a long term strategic plan?
- **Staff support and service delivery:** Facilities for communication, technological capabilities and capacity, encouragement of collaboration and engagement, potential disruptions in service, office space, meeting rooms, training facilities.
- **Capacity for growth:** How do our facilities support our present level of operations? How well do they provide the potential for growth? Flexibility?
- **Stakeholders:** Onsite and offsite Staff, Board, congregations, lay leaders, ministers, youth, young adults, partners (e.g., theological schools), Districts, historically marginalized voices (and more ...). What are the benefits and impacts for each of these?
- **Financial impact:** Short and long term, risks, debt, impact on other use of resources, costs of consultation, purchase, renovation, move, transition, ongoing operations, ongoing travel. Better than net present value neutral. Avoid conflict of interest.
- **Symbolic value:** What is the symbolism of the communities in which we are located?
- **Accessibility, logistics, and welcome:** Are facilities accessible, and against what standards? How well do they support travel and lodging? Are they in communities that are welcoming to all? Do they provide fair access to people from different geographical areas?
- **Historical value:** UU identity, Coming of Age, regional identity, archives.
- **Environmental impact:** Energy use, green space, ??? *more details needed here ???*

Questions

We may want to pose additional questions. Any suggestions?

- In aiming for a universal policy (ongoing) is it acceptable to place a long term view (say an implied 25-30 year time frame) as a reference point for discussion?
- For each of the broad concerns, is it covered in sufficient detail by existing policy?
- What policies need additional detail?
- Does the concern belong to governance?
- What would be a compelling reason for us to move?
- What aspects of a proposed change have the greatest emotional impact?
- What are our greatest fears?
- More questions?

Process

In response to the charge, we propose the following process, which we believe will allow us to arrive at the April 2011 UUA Board meeting prepared to deliberate on a draft policy for property decisions.

Saturday March 19

- Request agenda item “Process for UUA Property Policy Decision” for March 24 meeting.

Tuesday March 22

- Email distribution of “Summary Framework for UUA Property Policy” document to Board and Senior Staff and submission for April Board Packet

Thursday March 24

- Board March Meeting (telephone conference)
- Seeking affirmation of proposed schedule in “Summary Framework for UUA Property Policy”

Saturday March 26 – Saturday April 2

- Each Board member to complete Survey Monkey on values/sources necessary/informing decision on property policy

Sunday April 2 – Tuesday April 5

- Distribution of Survey Monkey summary comments
- Creation of Draft Policy *[in consultation with PG committee chairs (outgoing and incoming,) Moderator and V.Pres. OR the two of us???*]

Tuesday April 5 – Saturday April 8

- Distribution of Policy Draft
- Submission of any proposed modifications of policy draft from Board Members

Sunday April 9

- If needed - Evening conference call of Hawkins/Pupke, PG Chairs, VPres. and Moderator to evaluate suggested changes in developing final draft for Board deliberation and vote during April Board meeting 13-16
- Distribution of final draft for Board Deliberation by email *[Need to be sure this is also available for observers]*

Thursday April 13-16

- Deliberation and vote on final policy for property decisions
- In the case of failure to adopt policy, CoCo redefines process

Authority Sources for Policy Creation

- UUA Bylaws and Rules
- Sources of Authority and Accountability
- Existing UUA Policies
- **UUA Structure-Services-Report-Jan2002.pdf** (dist by K Montgomery via email)
[available separately- not included here]
- E-mails of the UUA Board on Property Decision criteria (October 2010-present)
[summarized under "Broad Concerns" heading - not included in full here]

UUA Bylaws and Rules

- **C-2.1. Principles.**
We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote
 - The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
 - Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
 - Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
 - A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
 - The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
 - The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
 - Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
- The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:
 - Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
 - Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
 - Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
 - Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
 - Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
 - Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.
 - Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

- **C-2.2. Purposes.** The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.
- **C-6.16.1. Responsibility.** The Board of Trustees shall conduct the affairs of the Association and, subject to these Bylaws, shall carry out the Association's policies and directives as provided by law.
- **Section 6.2. Powers.** The Board of Trustees shall act for the Association between General Assemblies.
- **C-8.2. Control by Board of Trustees.** All officers shall be subject to the direction and control of the Board of Trustees. All appointed officers shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall serve at its pleasure. *[not consistent with Policy Governance]*
- **10.2. Duties of Finance Committee.** The Finance Committee shall submit proposed annual budgets for the Association to the Board of Trustees and make recommendations to the Board with respect to major financial policies of the Association other than those pertaining to investments. It shall review the use made of specific funds held by the Association and shall also recommend long-range financial plans.
- **10.3. Duties of Financial Advisor.** The Financial Advisor shall advise the President and the Board of Trustees on financial policy and shall assist the Board in long- range planning by reviewing the sources of funds, the application of funds designated for specific purposes, the balance between foreseeable income and proposed expenditures, and the overall financial welfare of the Association. From time to time the Financial Advisor shall report to the President and the Board findings and recommendations respecting the current financial affairs of the Association and long-range planning.
- **C-10.7. Responsibility for Investments.**
 - (a) Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall have ultimate responsibility for investing the funds belonging to or held by the Association.
 - (b) Investment Committee. The Investment Committee shall supervise the investments of the Association subject to control by the Board of Trustees.
[??Not sure this is exactly applicable here??]
- **10.8. Contracts and Securities.** The President, Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer may sign and attest deeds, mortgages, contracts, and other documents to which the Association is a party. *[??Not sure this is exactly applicable here??]*
- **Rule 10.8.1. Contracts and Securities.** The Executive Vice President may sign and attest mortgages, contracts, and other documents to which the Association is a party. *[??Not sure this is exactly applicable here??]*

Sources of Authority and Accountability

Our Sources of Authority and Accountability are defined as:

1. Our member congregations
2. Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
3. The heritage, traditions, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
4. The vision of Beloved Community
5. The Spirit of life, love, and the holy

Existing UUA Policies

2.2 Treatment of Congregations: With respect to member congregations or those congregations seeking membership, the President shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, **decisions** or services that are untimely, disrespectful, **inequitable, discriminatory or not transparent.**

... the President shall not ...

3. **Fail to establish open and transparent communications related to decisions that affect congregations.**

2.3 Treatment of Staff: With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the President may not cause or allow conditions that are **inequitable**, undignified, disrespectful, **disorganized, unclear, or discriminatory.**

... the President shall not ...

4. **Fail to consider geographic diversity** in appointments to staff committees and task forces.

5. **Allow staff to work under unsafe conditions.**

2.4 Compensation and Benefits for UUA Staff: With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits for Association staff, the President shall not cause or allow:

- A. An unfair or inhumane benefit structure
- B. Conditions which jeopardize the **fiscal integrity** of the Association.

2.7 Financial Planning and Budgeting: Financial planning shall not:

- A. **Deviate materially from the Shared Vision (Ends),**
- B. **Compromise fiscal prudence or integrity,** or
- C. **Fail to reflect a multi-year plan that reflects both the financial and spiritual dimensions of our stewardship.**

... the President shall not ...

2. **Commit the Association to any initiative that lacks a clear and comprehensive funding plan.**

2.8 Financial Condition and Activities: The President **shall not cause or allow situations that would jeopardize the Association's fiscal health or alignment with the Shared Vision (ENDS).**

... the President shall not ...

5. **Incur secured debt over \$50,000 without prior Board approval.**

12. **Acquire, encumber, or dispose of real property without prior Board approval,** except that the President may accept and promptly dispose of real property donated to the Association.

2.9 Grants, Contracts or Partnerships: With respect to grants, **contracts** or partnerships, the President **may not enter into any arrangement which is inconsistent with the Shared Vision (ENDS).**

2.10 Asset Protection: The President **shall not allow the Association's tangible, intangible or intellectual assets to be unprotected from undue risk.**

2.14 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.

... the President shall not ...

12. **Fail to marshal for the Board as many staff and external points of view, issues and options as needed for fully informed Board choices.**

APPENDIX 2.J CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

All officers, employees, and trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association and all members of UUA committees (including committees of the Association, committees of the Board of Trustees, and committees advisory to the staff) **shall scrupulously avoid any conflict between their personal, professional, or business interests and the interests of the Association.**

... including but not limited to transactions involving:

a. the **sale, purchase, lease or rental of any property or other asset,**

3.1 Governing Style. The Board will govern with an emphasis on (a) **outward vision** rather than an internal preoccupation, (b) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (c) **strategic leadership** more than administrative detail, (d) clear distinction of Board and President roles, (e) collective rather than individual decisions, (f) **future rather than past or present,** (g) **pro-activity rather than reactivity,** and (h) an open and transparent process rather than a closed process.

2. The Board's major policy focus will be on the **intended long term impacts in the Unitarian Universalist Association** of Congregations and its external relations and partnerships, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.

3. The Board will govern with excellence. ... The Board will address an issue only if the Board determines that the following criteria have been met:

D. The **focus of the issue is at a systemic level**, and is not just a fix for a specific problem. If the issue is below the Board's broad policy threshold, the Board will seek to broaden the issue to include a class of related issues in a proactive style.

8. The work of the Board of Trustees on matters of public witness will be guided by the actions made by the General Assembly. This shall not preclude the Board from choosing to bear witness in a time of extraordinary circumstances. Accordingly, on matters of public witness regarding social concern, the Board will:

C. **Support the work of the UUA President and staff to bear witness publicly**, expressing the historic and theological grounding of UU positions on matters of public social concern.

D. Encourage the President of the UUA to provide prophetic leadership.

3.2 POLICY TITLE: *BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION*

...

Accordingly, the Board has responsibility to:

4. **Act as faithful stewards of the resources of the UUA.**

6. **Promote and actively engage in the work of building an anti-racist/antioppressive/multicultural institution.**