

To: UUA Board
From: Governance Working Group, via John Blevins
Date: 10 June 2011
Subject: Recommendations on Monitoring Reports 2.2.3 & 2.9

Policy 2.2.3: First, the Policy

2.2 POLICY TITLE: 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.

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

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

Recommendation:

The Governance Working Group recommends accepting this report, under Option C.

Option C: Accept the report with acknowledgment that some elements may be missing from the operational definition or the report and that they will be addressed in the next rotation of monitoring reports. Examples of what might be missing include: does not address all elements, no rationale, no declaration of compliance / noncompliance etc.

Rationale for this recommendation:

There were very mixed feelings among trustees about whether or not the report was a reasonable interpretation and whether metrics to assess progress were identified.

It appears to us (GovWG) that the staff has in fact laid out a possible metric to judge progress toward desired outcomes in the survey they are planning, e.g. this sample question:

1. Do you believe that UUA staff members provide sufficient channels through which to receive information about the UUA and decisions made by staff or elected members of the UUA board of trustees to keep you apprised of decisions that affect your congregation?

We (GovWG) believe that this type of question gets at the actual info about how our congregations see our communications. It tells us about the desired outcomes, including levels of satisfaction, from the congregational perspective.

Therefore the results of survey itself could inform a restructuring of the Operational Definition over time, based on a congregation-level input.

The monitoring report as submitted relies on making information available to our congregations, rather than finding a way of assessing if the congregations are in fact getting what they desire, or getting information in a way that is easily useful to them.

We also request an operational definition that describes how the administration knows that communications have been open and transparent. The survey question is a good start at this. Describing the various types of communications

that are offered does not provide a demonstration that communications are open and transparent.

Possible Revision to Policy?

The primary issue that the trustees identified was that "open and transparent" is not really defined by the report, or our Policy. Several trustees recommended providing more detailed policy to define open and transparent. The Gov WG recommends we wait and see if we still feel that way after receiving a more outcomes-based operational definition.

Policy 2.9

2.9 POLICY TITLE: GRANTS, CONTRACTS OR PARTNERSHIPS

With respect to grants, contracts or partnerships, the President may not enter into any arrangement that is inconsistent with the Shared Vision (ENDS).

Recommendation:

The Governance Working Group recommends accepting this report, under Option C.

Option C: Accept the report with acknowledgment that some elements may be missing from the operational definition or the report and that they will be addressed in the next rotation of monitoring reports. Examples of what might be missing include: does not address all elements, no rationale, no declaration of compliance / noncompliance etc.

Rationale for this recommendation:

The President's Report reads "...accommodated in the annual budget of the Association which is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and which reflects the Ends of the Association."

The operational definition is largely devoted to a description of how the administration assures that grants and contracts comply with legal requirements, which is not part of this policy. Legal requirements are certainly part of our global policies, but not part of this policy. We request an operational definition that is focused on how the administration assures that grants, contracts and partnerships are supportive of the UUA ENDS.

Possible Policy Revisions

Financial Advisor Brody suggested a change to add language like: "...or permit Association funds to be used in ways that violate the laws of the country in which they are being spent, or to be diverted for purposes other than those intended." It appears to us that many Trustees felt this concern is already adequately addressed in the global Executive Limitations Policy. On the other hand, Trustee Phinney reminds us that some of our actions in Phoenix in 2010 (and perhaps upcoming in 2012), as well as some of our AIDS awareness and anti-

homophobia work in Africa, may have been “illegal”.

At some level, this policy interacts with our 2.0 Global Policy which reads: “Furthermore, and in all instances, the President shall not cause nor allow any practice, activity, decision, or operation which is in violation of the Bylaws of the Association, commonly accepted business practices, professional ethics or which is imprudent or unlawful, **except where Unitarian Universalist principles, as set forth in the Bylaws, are at risk.**”

We suggest that the Board seek greater clarity about their intent here.