

MONITORING REPORT

2.14 POLICY TITLE: COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT TO THE BOARD

February 2013

(re-submission including 2.14, 2.14.3, 2.14.8, 2.14.10, 2.14.10(a))

2.14. 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: 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.

The Administration will be in compliance when the Strategic Plan and the Youth Leadership Report have been sent.

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

2.14.3. 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: 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.

We report compliance.

2.14.5 [new]. 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.

We report compliance.

2.14.8. Fail to report to the Board in a timely manner an 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.

We report that the Administration will be in compliance by April when the report referred to above is submitted.

2.14.10. 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.

The administration declares itself currently non-compliant because we have no analytics of youth involvement before now.

2.14.10(a) [new]: 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.

Operational Definition: The Administration considers itself to be in compliance when, in regard to their members who are in high school (or the equivalent) or under the age of 18, all UUA boards, committees and taskforces are following the [Youth Involvement and Safety Guidelines](#) that were instituted for UUA staff, including expectations around housing, travel, and release/permission forms. The UUA staff liaison to the board or committee will ensure these guidelines are followed, and will be the adults responsible for youth while they are in attendance to offsite meetings. Youth will agree to a modified [participant covenant](#), and adults on the board or committee will agree to the code of ethics for adults working with youth.

Additionally, the Administration considers youth involvement best practice to include positive steps that each adult board or committee member can take to be welcoming to youth. These steps relate to issues such as timing of meetings, methods of communication, consumption of alcohol and regular presence of multiple adults. The Administration will offer webinar presentations to each board or committee to clarify these steps, and consulting on an as-needed basis. The Administration will also work with boards and committees which have youth members serving terms of six months or more to establish designated a designated adult ally, who is a member of the group, and a younger mentor, who is a non-member, to form an adult support system for participating youth.

Rationalization: With this definition, the Board will model the “intentionally multigenerational” approach that is set forth for congregations in the Global ENDS. Clear and well-considered guidelines provide for positive and safe experiences for youth in their participation with UUA boards and committees.

The Youth Involvement and Safety Guidelines reflect best practices for including youth in multigenerational situations, and were developed by the UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to codify years of hands-on expertise. They were developed with consultation from the UUA Human Resource Office, legal counsel and field staff. These practices reflect the recommendation of the 2009 [Youth Ministry Working Group](#) to make boards and committees accessible to youth, and the expertise of external organizations such as [Youth On Board](#). It is also critical for UUA boards and committees to adopt uniform safety practices to protect the UUA from potential liability related to the youth under their supervision.

- The Administration, including the staff liaison and the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, will work with each board or committee that has a youth member, at the beginning of the youth’s term, to ensure a plan is in place for meeting this definition.
- The Administration, through the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, will keep records of the release/permission forms, lodging/travel arrangements, adult mentors and allies, and any other necessary documentation to demonstrate that guidelines have been followed.

The Administration, working with the board or committee’s leadership, as well as adult allies and mentors as appropriate, will communicate at least once per year about the board or committee’s practices related to youth safety and involvement, and work to remedy any deviations from these expectations.

We believe it is not yet possible to consider us to be in compliance and therefore report non-compliance.