

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY RULES OF PROCEDURE (Draft May 12, 2021) – NFE and TB edits

PURPOSE: The goals the Rules of Procedure are -

- Decisions are based on the will of the majority in accordance with UU values and principles. Delegates have the chance to express a range of opinions as part of the decision-making process.
- Delegates know how they can participate in business discussions and voting at General Assembly in a respectful, transparent and inclusive way.
- Business discussions are predictable in order to be accessible, and they move smoothly make the best use of everyone's time.

These Rules of Procedure apply to every item on the Final Agenda. They include separate rules for items that get added to the Final Agenda during GA.

RULE 1: ADOPTING AND AMENDING THESE RULES OF PROCEDURE

The first thing the General Assembly must do is adopt these Rules of Procedure. The Assembly will do this at the first General Session. Delegates may not debate or amend the Rules of Procedure before they are adopted. The Rules of Procedure require a 2/3 majority vote to pass.

After adopting Rules, any delegate may make a motion to change, repeal, or suspend the Rules of Procedure at any point during the General Assembly. Delegates must submit any proposed changes or suspensions to the Rules of Procedure in writing to the Moderator. Delegates must submit any proposed amendments to the rules twelve hours before the General Session where they want the amendment to be considered. A motion to change, repeal, or suspend the rules requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass.

RULE 2: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Assembly will consider the items on the Final Agenda in the order listed in that agenda.

The first item of business is a group of items called the “Consent Agenda” that the Moderator thinks no delegates object to or will want to change. The Moderator may add items or remove items from the Consent Agenda at any time. The items on the Consent Agenda are voted on as a group.

An item cannot be on the Consent Agenda if someone proposed amending it in a Mini-Assembly.

The Assembly will consider the whole Consent Agenda in three phases:

1. A Trustee moves to admit the Consent Agenda to the Final Agenda.
2. Any delegate can ask to remove an item from the Consent Agenda, by a motion from the Amendment/Procedure Line. The request to remove an item may be explained but cannot be changed or discussed. If 99 delegates vote to remove the item, the item will be removed. The removed item then goes back to its original place on the Final Agenda.
3. The Consent Agenda must be supported by a simple majority vote (50% + 1) to be added to the Final Agenda. No changes or debate on the items in the Consent Agenda are allowed after the Assembly adds the Consent Agenda to the Final Agenda.
4. The Consent Agenda requires a 2/3 majority vote for it to pass.

If the Consent Agenda does not pass, all items on the Consent Agenda go back to their original place on the Final Agenda.

RULE 3: HOW TO VOTE

At least 300 accredited delegates representing at least 100 congregations located in at least 10 states or provinces must be present for discussion and voting to continue. When this is true, the Assembly has a “quorum.”

Delegates vote online through the GA Participation Portal. The Bylaws or these Rules of Procedure will specify the percentage of affirmative votes needed for an item of business to pass.

The Moderator may ask for a straw poll on any question. Straw polls are not official votes, they are a tool to help the Moderator understand how delegates are currently feeling or thinking.

RULE 4: MINUTES

The Recording Secretary and UUA lawyers write the minutes of the General Assembly General Sessions, which are the official record of the decisions made. The Board of Trustees will approve the minutes at a future Board meeting.

RULE 5: FINAL AGENDA

The Board of Trustees or the Commission on Social Witness will move each item of business. Either group can also choose to present an amended version of the item. Amended versions include amendments that received a majority of support at the Mini-Assembly through a straw poll. The items of business on the Final Agenda may include:

- Proposed business resolutions

- Proposed changes to a Bylaw or Bylaw G-Rule
- Proposed Statements of Conscience
- Budget motions, Actions of Immediate Witness and Responsive Resolutions added during General Assembly.

RULE 6: AMENDMENTS

Delegates who want to change an item on the business agenda must first submit their suggestion as an amendment at the Mini-Assembly on that item. This ensures there is time for discussion, consideration and review before changes are considered by the full delegate body. Delegates may suggest an amendment in writing at a Mini-Assembly when they would like to change any business item. Amendments only qualify for consideration in a General Session if they were proposed during a Mini-Assembly.

When an amendment is discussed at a Mini-Assembly, the delegate who proposes the amendment may accept friendly or technical changes during discussion of their amendment. The Mini-Assembly may hold a straw poll to see if other delegates support the amendment. The Board of Trustees or the Commission on Social Witness may include amendments in the versions of items that they introduce in the General Session for discussion and voting if they receive a majority of support in the Mini-Assembly straw poll.

A delegate may make a motion to amend a business item if the amendment was proposed at a Mini-Assembly, and it was not included in the version introduced for discussion and voting. Delegates must suggest amendments in writing during the discussion of the item they want to amend. If an amendment to the Bylaws is on the Final Agenda, delegates may only suggest a change to that section of the Bylaws.

Example: If the Assembly is considering an amendment to Section 5, delegates may not offer an amendment to Section 6.

The Final Agenda will be updated prior to each General Session with a list of amendments which were proposed at the Mini-Assembly to items which are scheduled for consideration. Amendments must be considered in the order they are listed in the agenda. Delegates may propose amendments to other proposed amendments only with permission from the Moderator.

Delegates may discuss each item of business for up to 8 minutes. After 8 minutes, or if no one is in the Pro and Con Lines, delegates may suggest or discuss qualifying amendments to the item.

The Moderator may also make exceptions to the rules about the ways amendments can be considered for technical amendments (make things clearer or more consistent but don't change the meaning) or "friendly" amendments (supported by the sponsor).

RULE 7: ORDER OF SPEAKERS (LINES)

Delegates speak during the General Session through three lines of speakers called. Tellers from the Board of Trustees will monitor each line. Delegates speak from the line in the order they enter the line.

1. The first line is called the **Pro Line**. If a delegate wants to speak in favor of the item being discussed, they can join the Pro Line.
2. The second line is called the **Con Line**. If a delegate wants to raise a concern about the item being discussed, they can join the Con Line. Only concerns that would keep the delegate from voting in favor of the item being discussed are allowed in the Con Line.
3. The third line is the **Amendment and Procedure Line**.
 - Delegates may use this line if they want to:
 - Amend the item being discussed if the amendment was proposed in the Mini-Assembly for that item;
 - End discussion on an item of business;
 - Vote immediately on an item of business;
 - Ensure the Assembly is following these Rules of Procedure.
 - The Board uses the Amendment or Procedure Line to state its position on items on the Final Agenda.
 - The Moderator will decide if a request or comment from this line is appropriate, or “in order.” The Moderator may allow other miscellaneous comments from this line if the Moderator decides they would be helpful to the Assembly.

Each delegate may speak only once in the Pro or Con Line on an item of business until everyone else who wants to speak has had the chance.

Information Room

Delegates may ask questions about what is going on during General Session in the Information Room. Tellers in the Information Room will seek to answer any question about what is going on. If a number of people ask the same question, the Tellers will let the Moderator know. The Moderator will decide how to answer frequently posed questions.

RULE 8: TIME LIMITS FOR GENERAL SESSION DISCUSSION

There will be up to 12 minutes of Pro and Con Discussion time on any item on the regular Final Agenda, unless that time is extended as provided below.

- The only time that counts against the 12 minutes is when someone is speaking from the Pro or Con Line.
- Time spent playing back Pro or Con video or audio recordings counts toward the 12 minutes.
- Time spent discussing amendments to the item being discussed counts toward the 12 minutes.
- Time spent speaking at the Procedural/Amendment Line does not count toward the minutes.
- Time spent by the Board of Trustees to explain the business being discussed does not count against the 12 minutes.
- The Moderator will try to divide the time between Pro and Con speakers equally.
- The Moderator will alternate speaking between Pro and Con speakers.

The Moderator can extend these time limits for a short period of time to help the discussion move smoothly.

Delegates may change or extend these time limits by a 2/3 majority vote. For example, to end discussion on an item when there are delegates waiting to speak in the Pro or Con lines requires a 2/3 majority vote.

Types of Delegate Participation

I want to...	Time Limit	Maximum Number of Words	When it is in Order	Special Notes
Write a statement.	No limit	200 words	During discussion on an item of business	
Record a statement.	2 minutes	N/A	2 hours before the beginning of the General Session at during which that item of business will be discussed	Recorded statements can be audio or video. The Moderator will decide the order of recorded statements.

Speak live from a line.	2 minutes	No limit	During discussion of an item of business	The Moderator will decide if speaking from a line is in order.
Amend an item of business.	2 minutes	No limit	After up to 8 minutes of discussion on the item of business	The Moderator can make an exception to the time limit. Making amendments stops the discussion time clock. Discussing amendments starts the discussion time clock again.
Extend discussion.	Brief motion	N/A	Before 12 minutes of discussion	
End discussion.	Brief motion	N/A	After at most 8 minutes of discussion	Discussion automatically ends when there are no speakers in the Pro and Con Lines and there are no more recorded statements.
Vote.			After at most 12 minutes of discussion	Voting on an item of business automatically happens when discussion ends. The vote may be to adopt/affirm or reject; to table/postpone; or refer to another group to consider.

RULE 9: BUDGET MOTIONS

A **Budget Motion** is a motion to request a change the amount of money in an area of the UUA operating budget. Any motion to spend more money in one area must also say which area(s) of the budget will receive less money equal to the amount of the requested increase.

A discussion about the budget for 2021–2022 will take place at 12 PM ET on Friday, June 25, 2021.

To make a Budget Motion, email the Moderator at moderator@uua.org. Budget motions must be made in writing.

The deadline for 2021–2022 Budget Motions is 5 PM ET on Friday, June 25, 2021.

RULE 10: RESPONSIVE RESOLUTIONS

A **Responsive Resolution** is a statement that responds to something raised in a report that a UUA officer or a committee gives to the General Assembly. Such reports can happen live during General Session, in writing, or in an audio or video recording.

Any delegate can ask to add a Responsive Resolution to the Final Agenda.

All Responsive Resolutions must include a title and body text.

To propose adding a Responsive Resolution to the Final Agenda, email the Moderator at moderator@uua.org.

The deadline for Responsive Resolutions is 5 PM ET on Friday, June 25, 2021.

Responsive resolutions may be affirmed with a 2/3 majority vote.

RULE 11: ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS (AIWs)

An **Action of Immediate Witness** (AIW) is statement about a significant action, event, or development in the world that requires a response faster than the UUA Statement of Conscience (SOC) process. AIW's cannot be primarily focused on issues within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

1. Proposing an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW)

- Any delegate may propose an Action of Immediate Witness.
- Actions of Immediate Witness must meet the standards of the Commission on Social Witness (CSW). Those standards are available at uua.org/planning-aiw.
- To propose an Action of Immediate Witness, email your statement to the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) at socialwitness@uua.org on or before 10 PM ET on Wednesday, June 23, 2021.
- The Commission on Social Witness (CSW) reviews proposed Actions of Immediate Witness to ensure they meet the standards and will accept all that do meet the standards. The CSW can **require changes** to Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness to meet the standards. Additionally, the CSW or UUA Legal Counsel may suggest or request changes to Proposed AIWs to make them easier to read, or to align with UUA bylaws or past actions of the General Assembly.

- The Commission on Social Witness (CSW) will post all accepted Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness on the General Assembly Participation Portal at 12:00 PM ET, Thursday, June 24, 2021.

2. Poll to Prioritize Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs)

- A maximum of three Actions of Immediate Witness may be discussed and voted on in the General Session. If more than three AIWs are proposed, delegates vote through a poll to prioritize which AIWs they would like to discuss.
- Delegates vote to prioritize proposed Actions of Immediate Witness in a poll accessed through the General Assembly Participation Portal. Delegates can vote for up to three Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness, and can vote at any time while the poll is open
- The poll to prioritize Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness opens when the CSW posts them. The poll closes at 12:00 PM ET on Friday, June 25, 2021.

The three proposed Actions of Immediate Witness that receive the most votes through the poll will be eligible to be considered on the Final Agenda in General Session.

2. Time Limits for Discussing Proposed Actions of Immediate (AIWs)

- The sponsor of each Proposed Action of Immediate Witness has 2 minutes to speak in favor of it before the Assembly votes to admit it to the Final Agenda.
- Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness may not be amended.
- Delegates must vote whether to add each proposed Action of Immediate Witness to the Final Agenda in order to discuss and consider it. The motion to add a Proposed Action of Immediate Witness to the Final Agenda is not debatable and requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass. If the motion fails, the AIW cannot be considered.
- Once on the Final Agenda, delegates will vote on whether to affirm each Proposed Action of Immediate Witness separately.
- There will be up to 7 minutes of Pro and Con discussion on each Proposed Action of Immediate Witness once it is added to the agenda.

4. Affirming Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs)

- After 7 minutes of Pro and Con discussion on a Proposed Action of Immediate Witness, if that much time is necessary, there will be a vote.
 - The Moderator may decrease the amount of time for discussion when there are no speakers in line and there are no more recorded statements.
- Voting on each Proposed Action of Immediate Witness will occur in General Session at 1:30 PM on Saturday, June 26, 2021.

Affirming an Action of Immediate Witness requires a 2/3 majority vote.

RULE 12: PRECEDENCE OF THE BYLAWS AND RULES

If these Rules of Procedure and the Bylaws or Rules of the UUA are in conflict, the Bylaw and Rules of the UUA take precedence.

RULE 13: END OF BUSINESS

The final business session of General Assembly 2021 ends at 6 PM ET on Sunday June 27, 2021.