



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
ASSOCIATION

# **Board of Trustees Proposed Business Resolutions Preview**

Saturday, April 9, 2022 &  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022

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# Pre-GA Business Process

- **April 9th & 13th Preview of proposed Business Resolutions Webinars**
- Mid-April through Mid-May Online chat discussion forums
- May 25th Finalized Business Resolutions Posted
- June 1st & 4th Finalized Business Resolutions Webinars
- June 11th Mini-Assembly to Consider any Potential Amendments.
- The Business Resolutions, and any qualifying amendments, will be considered during the General Session of the General Assembly. The agenda and schedule will be published on May 25, 2022. Voting will be by electronic ballot.



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# **Business Resolution: Renewing UUA Bylaws for Theologically Grounded and Mission-Focused Governance**

Unitarian Universalist Association  
Board of Trustees 2022

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# Meeting the Moment



Ecological degradation and social strife in the world call Unitarian Universalism to be more effective; providing holistic communities that foreshadow the world of our dreams. This moment needs a UUA that is nimble, unified, innovative, and bold.



# The State of The UUA Bylaws

Since 1961, the UUA Bylaws have been continually added to and amended piecemeal, creating an overly complicated and inefficient governance system. One that:

- Creates obstacles for meaningful participation
- Diverts precious resources to maintain outdated structures;
- Lacks role clarity and accountability to our values; and
- Detracts from mission and theological work of our faith.



# Clear Need For Renewal

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the reality that our bylaws codify outdated structures and models of volunteer labor which served the institution as it was.

The pandemic created the opportunity to reimagine how to gather and engage our congregations and delegates in governance in new ways. It also revealed the constraints and rigidity of the current bylaws.

We need bylaws that provide role clarity, accountability to our values, and flexibility that allow for innovation and meaningful participation so we can unleash the leadership gifts of our people and the impact and values of our Association in the wider world.





# Historical Calls for Governance Reforms

## Governance Reports

- 1993 Commission on Governance Report
- 2009 Fifth Principle Task Force Report
- 2014 Strengthening Governance Board Working Group recommendations
- 2016 UUA Task Force on Covenanting
- 2020 Commission on Institutional Change *Widening the Circle of Concern*

## Previous Recommendations

- Restructure roles of the President and Moderator
- Dedicated Presidential Search Committee
- Evaluate number and kinds of UUA & BOT committees and work groups
- Smaller Board of Trustees
- UUA Membership requirements
- Alternate cycles of GA



# New Bylaws Framework

- Reflect our theological commitment to liberation and inclusion
- Provide accountability to our long-standing anti-racist and anti-oppressive commitments
- Create flexibility, allowing for innovation and experimentation
- Provide clarity of role and authority among leaders and groups that support diverse leadership
- Enhance meaningful participation in governance by UU congregations, delegates, stakeholders.
- Address foundational areas of governance required in bylaws, leaving details of policy and procedures to documents that can be revised between General Assemblies.
- Written in plain language to be understandable and clear.





# Mindful of Our Purpose



Article II Study Commissioners

The renewed bylaws of our association will create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission consistent with our core values.

The **Article II Study Commission** engages in the work of clarifying the purpose and values of our UUA. To ensure we are moving in alignment, the Bylaws Renewal Working Group will maintain open channels of communication and collaboration with the Study Commission.



# Bylaws Renewal Timeline

- **GA 2022 Business Resolutions:**
  - Bylaw Renewal
  - General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) Suspension
- **Winter & Spring 2023:** Constituency Engagement
- **General Assembly 2023:** Initial review and potential first vote
- **General Assembly 2024:** Adoption







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# **Business Resolution: General Assembly Planning Committee**

Unitarian Universalist Association

Board of Trustees 2022

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# The Nature of General Assembly Planning

- General Assembly requires technical specialist professional staffing.
  - During the height of the COVID Pandemic General Assembly and Conference Services Director negotiated contract changes.
- General Assembly Planning Committee has focused its work on implementation rather than governance questions.
- Multi-platform General Assembly requires a flexible committee structure, with needs for volunteers with specific skills.





# The Future of General Assembly Planning

- The Renewal of the Bylaws will separate governance responsibilities of the Board of Trustees from implementation responsibility of UUA Staff and Volunteers. This means the General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC) will not fit into the bylaws.
- The GAPC membership and activities will be suspended to allow flexibility to explore more inclusive and innovative GA planning structure.