

On the Topic of Co-Presidents of the UUA

During the UUA Board meeting on March 26, 2022, the Board discussed the possibility of Co-Presidents campaigning and subsequently leading the UUA. The process of selecting candidates for the election belongs to the Presidential Search Committee, and members of the committee were present during the discussion. While the selection of the candidates is not a UUA Board responsibility, the leadership, support, oversight, and administration of a co-presidency has a significant impact on the UUA Board and UUA Staff.

The following items were noted during the discussion and are documented here for the benefit of potential candidates and the Presidential Search Committee:

- The UUA Bylaws do not provide an option for Co-Presidents of the UUA.
- The UUA Bylaws specifically allow multiple individuals serving as Moderator.
 - See Section 8.8. (b): *As used in these Bylaws, the term “Moderator” may refer to a single individual, or to multiple individuals serving in the position, even though the word “Moderator” may appear in the singular form of the word.*
- In April 2017, the UUA Board appointed interim Co-Presidents to serve until the end of General Assembly in June 2017.
 - Among the three Co-Presidents in April 2017, Rev. William G. Sinkford was appointed Interim Co-President for the Role of President as outlined in the UUA Bylaws.
 - Rev. Sofia Betancourt was appointed interim Co-President of the UUA for the Commission on Institutional Change.
 - Dr. Leon Spencer was appointed interim Co-President of Constituent Outreach.
 - Care should be used in attempting to extrapolate the limited experience of this short co-presidency to a full 6-year term of potential Co-Presidents.
- The principle of collaborative leadership is important.
 - The Board supports the concept of collaborative leadership and the potential for Co-Presidents.
 - Our religious movement provides many examples of both successful and unsuccessful shared leadership, from congregations to the larger association.
 - The Board heard many examples of how shared leadership was an important tool in our anti-oppression work, as it provides opportunities for people who could not or would not take the job alone.
- Items to consider when developing a shared leadership model:
 - Prior experience of the co-leaders working together.
 - Coaching and other structures to prevent and manage conflict.
 - Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities.
 - Impact on existing UUA staff.
- Changing the presidential role will affect staff, budget, and leadership structures.
 - Candidates considering a co-presidency are encouraged to meet with the UUA Board and UUA staff.
 - Due to the current UUA bylaws, it appears that a single individual will need to be nominated and campaign for the role of President, with the appointment of co-presidents occurring after the election as an action of the UUA Board.
 - Since the appointment of Co-Presidents would be a Board action, rather than an election, it is very important that campaigns are transparent about their intentions, and delegates are informed before voting.
 - UUA budget includes funds for one full-time President