

Accountability Launch Group

In fall 2020, the UUA Board appointed a Design Team to develop a process for implementing the Commission on Institutional Change recommendations related to accountability. (See *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change*, June 2020, p. 131). Reporting back a year later in October 2021, the Design Team advised not adopting the structure recommended by the COIC report, which highlighted assembling members of identity groups within the UUA. Instead, the Design Team recommended splitting the accountability function into two separate groups.

This proposal addresses the need for in-depth, real-time feedback to ensure the work of the UUA continues to be aligned with our goals and values. One group would provide a place for where the UUA Board and Administration can convene, receive feedback and build relationships to support accountability with identity-based UUA groups.

The Design Team recommended another team, with these responsibilities:

1. The team will be expected to offer an independent review of the Association's work to the UUA Board and staff on a regular basis. The team should retain a professional consultant or firm to advise on its process and provide expertise. The team will receive administrative support from UUA staff.
2. The team needs a designated convenor and regular meeting times.
3. The team needs to include UU and UU adjacent people with specific skills and perspectives to serve as members and consultants. People need to be financially compensated for this significant commitment of time.
4. Team members need to be included in generative conversations while decisions are being made, not called in to critique decisions after the fact. UUA Administration and Board members must provide access to existing meeting spaces, or create new ones, to ensure that the team can impact the ongoing work of dismantling and transforming white supremacy culture in an intersectional way.

Understanding that the needs and activities of the Accountability group will shift over time, this is a charge to launch such a group.

The Board has adopted a values statement about our commitment to the goals set out in the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report and mandated by the overwhelming majority vote for the 2021 General Assembly Statement of Conscience, "Undoing White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action."

The UUA Board of Trustees is commissioned by the General Assembly and committed to learning and practices that will transform Unitarian Universalism into a liberating place of belonging for the interdependent communities present, with particular commitment to removing barriers created by systemic oppression.

There are many goals set out in the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report. The highest priority should be given to those practices which relate to UUA culture, including UUA governance and policies, and decisions of the UUA Board and Administration. The group is further charged with creating generative, evolving processes of decision-making which reflect UU values and theology, and to communicate with Unitarian Universalists about the work of creating liberating communities.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

1. The Board will appoint four to six people to begin this work, who hold a variety of skill sets, perspectives, and identities. That group may then consider adding additional people to bring in necessary perspectives and skills, either as temporary consultants or as team members. A leader of the team will be identified.
2. Board and Administration members will meet with the new team immediately to generate a covenant and agreements for the work, a timeline, and practices. Values including humility, compassion, collaboration, direct and frequent communications, and adaptive leadership will be central to the covenant.
3. The Board and the Administration will generate a list of key places where decisions and discussions are taking place, as starting places for the team to attend. If appropriate places do not already exist where the team can readily participate, these places will be created cooperatively. The Board and Administration will meet with the team as they launch, however, the team will prioritize their ongoing work and stay in regular conversation with the Board and Administration about it.
4. The team is welcome to spend time with Board committees, the Board, the Administration, and other groups to develop specific goals and strategies, prioritizing the importance of various groups' activities. The team may identify resources that are needed and suggest other staff or consultants to develop them.
5. The team will meet with identity groups regularly and hear their concerns.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITMENTS TO THE TEAM:

1. The Board and Administration will make it a top priority to be responsive and easily available to the team.
2. The Board and Administration will ensure that the team is able to access the information and gatherings needed to work effectively.
3. The Board and Administration will adequately fund the work.
4. The Board and Administration will do the work necessary to implement the COIC report which is in their respective portfolios as it evolves over time.
5. The Board and Administration will tend to the changing needs of implementing the report and support the team in modifying its workplan as the work unfolds.