

# Board of Trustees

**MEETING: May 23, 2022, 7:00 pm Eastern Time**

Pursuant to notice duly given, this meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association was held via Zoom conferencing.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kathy Burek, Barbara de Leeuw, Charles Du Mond (Co-Moderator), Suzanne Fast, Susan Frederick-Gray (President), Sherman Logan, Elizabeth Mount, John Newhall, JeKaren Olaoya, Meg Riley (Co-Moderator), Tom Schade, Bill Young (Secretary)

**ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS:** Carey McDonald (Recording Secretary & Executive Vice President), Andrew McGeorge (Treasurer), Stephanie Carey Maron, Danielle Di Bona and Chris Buice (chaplains), Adam Robersmith, David Jackoway, Wendy Bartel, Meg Richardson, Kiki Giatis, Dick Burkart, Karen Gold, Virginia Slater, Rebecca Mattis, Cynthia Landrum, Lannie Macandrea

## Meeting Minutes

Co-Moderator Meg Riley opened the meeting at 7:05 pm and invited Board members and participants into break-out groups for an opening check-in, Board met with Chaplains.

There was no consent agenda.

The Board sent their gratitude to the UU Congregation in Queens, NY on the occasion of their dissolution, recognizing the congregation's contributions to Unitarian Universalism, and pledging invested the assets received from the congregation into building vitality with the larger faith movement.

### Statement on UUA Elections

Board members reviewed the previously drafted statement on the contested Trustee elections, and expressed support for the nominated slate of candidates (Appendix A).

Kathy Burek moved, John Newhall seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the statement (Bill Young abstained, and Suzanne Fast and Sherman Logan recused themselves).

### GA Final Agenda

Discussion confirmed there were no additional changes to the versions of the Rules of Procedure or the Business Resolution on the GA Planning Committee which were previously adopted by the Board.

Board members noted that extensive conversations from webinars and online discussions had been available on the business resolution on Renewing UUA Bylaws. Some edits were made to rephrase the opening paragraph and avoid



ableist language. Sherman Logan moved, JeKaren Olaoya seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the amended version (Appendix B).

The Co-Moderators briefly reviewed the planned order of business for the final agenda. Elizabeth Mount moved, Barbara de Leeuw seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the order of business (Appendix C), empowering the co-moderators to make any other changes to the order as needed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board moved to executive session at 8:00 pm to discuss personnel and appointments issues.

The meeting ended at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald

Recording Secretary



## **Appendix A**

### **UUA Board Statement Responding to 2022 Contested Elections**

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Board of Trustees supports and affirms this year’s nominees for the Board put forth by the Nominating Committee. We appreciate the time and effort of the Nominating Committee, in their vetting and selection of nominees for the many positions that they work to fill. We are also deeply grateful to those who have, year after year, volunteered to be considered for nomination by the Committee.

The Nominating Committee is independent of the Board. The Board does not select the members of the Nominating Committee; those members are elected by the General Assembly. The Board does have high-level discussions with the Nominating Committee so that they understand the Board’s goals and what skills and capacities are needed. Any name brought forward by the Nominating Committee is someone who has provided references, who has been vetted for past leadership experience, and conflicts of interest. They are the candidates determined to be most capable of doing the work that needs to be done.

This year, two candidates are running by petition for the UUA Board against nominees put forth by the Nominating Committee. Both of these candidates chose not to apply through the Nominating Committee for consideration. Running by petition entails gathering 50 signatures of individual members, with no more than ten individuals coming from any one congregation. There is no formal vetting of these candidates.

The Board enthusiastically endorses the Nominating Committee’s nominated candidates for the Board of Trustees. This includes the Rev. Suzanne Fast and the Rev. Justine Sullivan who are being challenged by petitioning candidates. The UUA Board is especially supportive of the re-election of current Board member Suzanne Fast, who brings tremendous skills, experience, and diligence including with her background as a CPA to the current Board. Additionally, Rev. Fast’s wisdom and expertise related to disability justice and accessibility is critically important as we move into this new age of multi-platform gatherings.

Additionally, the Board recognizes that the two petitioning candidates are running in direct opposition to the UUA Administration and Board’s approach to anti-racism and anti-oppression. We believe in this work. It is especially necessary in this time of devastating acts of racial violence and insidious political attacks on people because of their identity. Our faith, grounded in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and committed to liberatory practices of the Beloved Community, is essential.

As UUA leaders, we root our commitments in the democratic process of our Association. Two votes at General Assembly 2021 demonstrated the animating power and broad support for anti-racism and anti-oppression across our congregations: the delegates gave their overwhelming support for the Statement of Conscience *“Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action,”* and for the Board candidate who endorsed this approach in last year’s contested election. This follows decades of resolutions and calls from the General Assembly for strengthening our anti-racism work within and beyond our own communities. It builds on the faithful leadership of so many who have gone before. Across our UU landscape, from our professional associations to our partner UU identity organizations, this work is embraced. We are proud of what we are witnessing



**DRAFT – NOT YET APPROVED BY THE BOARD**

across our movement, proud to be Unitarian Universalists and proud of the work our Association to meet this moment with love, courage and unwavering commitment.

We hope you will join us in this work and support the leaders, including Rev. Suzanne Fast and Rev. Justine Sullivan, who are committed to this calling and ready to move forward.



## **Appendix B**

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

Unitarian Universalism is called to create spirit-filled, liberating, inclusive, and holistic communities that foreshadow the world of our dreams. Against the backdrop of a looming ecological catastrophe, a multiracial, multicultural democracy struggles to emerge and survive in the face of ferocious resistance. Our faith can be a wellspring to dismantle white supremacy culture, and all forms of oppression. We need more effective and impactful systems and leadership to bring about communities where everyone can thrive.

To meet this moment, the UUA needs to be mission-focused, unified, innovative, and bold. But we are hampered by our overly complicated and inefficient governance, enshrined in our bylaws which date from our founding more than 60 years ago and have been patched and mended piecemeal ever since. This creates obstacles for meaningful participation in the UUA's governance. It diverts precious resources (including volunteers) toward maintaining the structure that has been, rather than freeing our energies to live our mission in ways that meet today's need.

Our bylaws were built for a very different time and for a different purpose. In June 2020, the Commission on Institutional Change issued its report, Widening the Circle of Concern. The report identifies significant challenges in our governance structure that prevent us from living faithfully into a liberatory expression of Unitarian Universalism where all can thrive. The 1993 Commission on Governance and 2014 Strengthening Governance reports included calls to make significant changes to governance, including the leadership structure, the role of covenant in governance, and meaningful engagement in decision making by congregational delegates.

We need bylaws that provide role clarity, accountability to our values, and flexibility that allows 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. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the reality that many of our bylaw-codified volunteer positions require unreasonable time expectations. Our structure is rooted in outdated models of volunteer labor that don't represent the reality of many people's lives today, nor the diversity in leadership we need for our Association.

During 2020 and 2021, thousands of UUs along with over one hundred core leaders volunteered for UU the Vote making it one of the most successful Association-wide justice efforts. During this same period, many of our bylaw standing committees went unfilled. People want to offer their gifts to the Association. However, our structures serve the institution as it was, rather than what it needs to be. We are following the lead of many congregations who have updated their bylaws to remove many standing committees recognizing changing models of volunteerism and the need for flexibility and innovation.



The pandemic also created the opportunity to hold the General Assembly virtually. This has allowed even more innovative ways to gather and engage our congregations and delegates in governance. It also reveals how the current bylaws fundamentally constrain our ability to reimagine General Assembly in ways that have long been called for by delegates. The UUA bylaws contain significant inconsistencies and outdated sections because the mechanism to amend them is costly in terms of leaders' and delegates' time and attention. This is why a wholesale re-write rather than piecemeal changes is needed.

In conclusion, the time to reimagine our bylaws to create a dynamic, accountable, flexible and responsive governance system is now.

**Therefore** the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board of Trustees to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. These new bylaws should create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission and aspirations consistent with our core values.

This process will be mindful of the specific work of the Article 2 Study Commission charged to renew Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. There should be communication across these efforts so that they are supportive of each other and so all of our bylaws reflect our Association's purpose and core values.

These values and goals should guide the new bylaws framework:

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

**Finally**, the hope of the 2022 General Assembly is that substantial bylaw replacement will be brought to the General Assembly for consideration at the 2023 and/or 2024 General Assembly.



## **Appendix C**

### **UUA General Assembly 2022 Order of Business**

Opening Celebration / Banner Parade / General Session I (2.5 Hours)

Wednesday, June 22, 2022 / 6:30 pm ET / 5:30 pm CT / 4:30 pm MT / 3:30 pm PT

- Opening Celebration
- Break
- Banner Parade
- Call to Order
- Welcome
- Business Review and Voting Process Video
- Presenting the Rules of Procedure
- Introduction: Youth & Young Adult Leadership
- Introduction: Systemic Justice Team
- Introduction: Safety Team
- Introduction: Chaplains
- Introduction: Conflict & Covenant Team
- Introduction: Accessibility & Inclusion Team
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Report
- Theological Reflection
- Closing Words
- Announcements and Recess

General Session II (3 Hours)

Thursday, June 23, 2022 / 12:30 pm ET / 11:30 am CT / 10:30 am MT / 9:30 am PT

- Call to Order
- Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
- Update from the GA Care Teams (Systemic Justice, Safety, Conflict & Covenant, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Chaplain Teams)
- Preliminary Credentials Report
- Theological Framing
- Article II Study Commission: General Introduction and Purpose
- Break
- President's Report
- Side With Love Collection
- Music
- Rules Review and Voting Process Video
- Discussion of Thursday's Ballot of Amendments
- Energy Break
- Commission on Social Witness Report and Admitting AIWs to the Final Agenda
- Closing Words
- Announcements and Recess

General Session III (3 Hours)

Friday, June 24, 2022 / 12:30 pm ET / 11:30 am CT / 10:30 am MT / 9:30 am PT

- Call to Order
- Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
- Update from the GA Care Teams (Systemic Justice, Safety, Conflict & Covenant, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Chaplain Teams)
- Article II Study Commission: Values and Sources of Inspiration
- Break



- Theological Framing
- Co-Moderator and Board Report
- Discussion: Business Resolution 1 – Renewing UUA Bylaws for Theologically Ground and Mission-Focused Governance
- Energy Break
- Discussion: Business Resolution 2 – General Assembly Planning Committee
- Discussion: Proposed Bylaw Amendment to G-9.13.10 – Election Campaign Practices Committee
- Closing Words
- Announcements and Recess

General Session IV (3 Hours)

Saturday, June 25, 2022 / 12:30 pm ET / 11:30 am CT / 10:30 am MT / 9:30 am PT

- Call to Order
- Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
- Update from the GA Care Teams (Systemic Justice, Safety, Conflict & Covenant, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Chaplain Teams)
- Article II Study Commission: Covenant
- Break
- Theological Framing
- Announcement of Election Results
- Discussion of Actions of Immediate Witness
- Energy Break
- Responsive Resolutions
- Theological Reflection
- Closing Words
- Announcements and Recess

General Session V (2 Hours)

Sunday, June 26, 2022 / 3:30 pm ET / 4:30 pm CT / 5:30 pm MT / 6:30 am PT

- Call to Order
- Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
- Final Report from GA Care Teams (Systemic Justice, Safety, Conflict & Covenant, Accessibility & Inclusion, and Chaplain Teams)
- Music
- Theological Reflection
- Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education 2020 and 2021
- Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism
- President's Award for Volunteer Service
- Beacon Press Report
- Installation of Newly-Elected Leaders
- Invitation to GA 2023
- Recognition of All Who Made GA Possible
- Final Credentials Report
- Closing Words and Extinguishing of Chalice
- Adjournment
- Music

