

# 2022 Revised Business Items for General Assembly

Published Tuesday Jun 14, 2022

Updated Thursday Jun 16, 2022

+Incorporated Amendment #3

+Added Board Proposed Amendment for Business Resolution 2: GAPC

Updated Thursday Jun 23, 2022

+Incorporated Board Proposed Amendment for Business Resolution 2: GAPC

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## Business Resolution 1

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

1. Against the backdrop of a looming ecological catastrophe a multiracial, multicultural democracy
2. struggles to emerge and survive, in the face of ferocious resistance. Unitarian Universalism is called
3. to more effective and powerful leadership to create spirit-filled, liberating, inclusive, and holistic
4. communities that foreshadow the world of our dreams: communities that have dismantled white
5. supremacy culture, and all forms of oppression, and communities where everyone can thrive.
  
6. To meet this moment, the UUA needs to be nimble, unified, innovative, and bold. But we are hampered
7. by our overly complicated and inefficient governance, enshrined in our bylaws which date from our
8. founding more than 60 years ago and have been patched and mended piecemeal ever since. This
9. creates obstacles for meaningful participation in the UUA's governance. It diverts precious resources
10. (including volunteers) toward maintaining the structure that has been, rather than freeing our energies
11. to live our mission in ways that meet today's need.
  
12. Our bylaws were built for a very different time and for a different purpose. In June 2020, the
13. Commission on Institutional Change issued its report, *Widening the Circle of Concern*. The report
14. identifies significant challenges in our governance structure that prevent us from living faithfully into
15. a liberatory expression of Unitarian Universalism where all can thrive. The 1993 Commission on
16. Governance and 2014 Strengthening Governance reports included calls to make significant changes
17. to governance, including the leadership structure, the role of covenant in governance, and meaningful
18. engagement in decision making by congregational delegates.
  
19. We need bylaws that provide role clarity, accountability to our values, and flexibility that allows for
20. innovation and meaningful participation so we can unleash the leadership gifts of our people and the
21. impact and values of our Association in the wider world. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the
22. reality that many of our bylaw-codified volunteer positions require unreasonable time expectations.
23. Our structure is rooted in outdated models of volunteer labor that don't represent the reality of many
24. people's lives today, nor the diversity in leadership we need for our Association.
  
25. During 2020 and 2021, thousands of UUs along with over one hundred core leaders volunteered for UU
26. the Vote making it one of the most successful Association-wide justice efforts. During this same period,
27. many of our bylaw standing committees went unfilled. People want to offer their gifts to the Association.
28. However, our structures serve the institution as it was, rather than what it needs to be. We are following
29. the lead of many congregations who have updated their bylaws to remove many standing committees
30. recognizing changing models of volunteerism and the need for flexibility and innovation.
  
31. The pandemic also created the opportunity to hold the General Assembly virtually. This has allowed
32. even more innovative ways to gather and engage our congregations and delegates in governance.
33. It also reveals how the current bylaws fundamentally constrain our ability to reimagine General
34. Assembly in ways that have long been called for by delegates. The UUA bylaws contain significant
35. inconsistencies and outdated sections because the mechanism to amend them is costly in terms of
36. leaders' and delegates' time and attention. This is why a wholesale re-write rather than piecemeal
37. changes is needed.
  
38. In conclusion, the time to reimagine our bylaws to create a dynamic, accountable, flexible and
39. responsive governance system is now.
  
40. Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board

41. of Trustees to appoint a task group composed of both UUA board members, UUA staff, and UUs who are non-board or staff members to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve
42. stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. A progress report of the UUA Bylaw review detailing which changes are being considered will be issued by the Board of Trustees at least annually beginning in 2023 prior to the annual General Assembly. This report should include the rationale for each change. These new
43. bylaws should create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission
44. and aspirations consistent with our core values.
  
45. This process will be mindful of the specific work of the Article 2 Study Commission charged to renew
46. Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. There should be communication across these efforts so that they are
47. supportive of each other and so all of our bylaws reflect our Association's purpose and core values.
  
48. These values and goals should guide the new bylaws framework:
  
49. a. Reflect our theological commitment to liberation and inclusion
- b. Reflect our long-established institutional experience with a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, religious pluralism, congregational polity and other aspects of the democratic process.
50. c. Provide accountability to our long-standing anti-racist and anti-oppressive commitments
51. d. Create flexibility, allowing for innovation and experimentation
52. e. Provide clarity of role and authority among leaders and groups that support diverse leadership
53. f. Enhance meaningful participation in governance by UU congregations, delegates, stakeholders.
54. g. Address foundational areas of governance required in bylaws, leaving details of policy and
55. procedures to documents that can be revised between General Assemblies.
56. h. Written in plain language to be understandable and clear.
  
57. Finally, the hope of the 2022 General Assembly is that substantial bylaw replacement will be brought to
58. the General Assembly for consideration at the 2023 and/or 2024 General Assembly.

**Underlining indicates insertion;**

## **Proposed Amendments from the Mini-Assembly**

### **Proposed Amendment #1 - INCORPORATED**

Proposer: Mac Goekler, UUs of Southern Delaware, Lewes DE

40. Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board
41. of Trustees to appoint a task group composed of both UUA board members, UUA staff, and UUs who are non-board or staff members to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve
42. stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. These new
43. bylaws should create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission
44. and aspirations consistent with our core values.

**Rationale:** The board has many responsibilities and this is a huge task. There are other UUs with the experience and ability who could help with this task. Such people would bring different perspectives and insights into the process."

### **Proposed Amendment #2 - INCORPORATED**

Proposer: Roger Brewin, First Unitarian Church of Hobart, IN

48. These values and goals should guide the new bylaws framework:
  49. a. Reflect our theological commitment to liberation and inclusion;
  50. b. Reflect our long-established institutional experience with a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, religious pluralism, congregational polity and other aspects of the democratic process.
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### **Proposed Amendment #3 - INCORPORATED**

Proposer: David Michel, East Shore UU Church, Kirtland, OH

40. Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board
41. of Trustees to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve
42. stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. A progress report of the UUA Bylaw review detailing which changes are being considered will be issued by the Board of Trustees at least annually beginning in 2023 prior to the annual General Assembly. This report should include the rationale for each change. These new
43. bylaws should create a governance system that supports the UUA in accountably achieving its mission
44. and aspirations consistent with our core values.

**Rationale:** This resolution states a replacement of the UUA Bylaws is expected and not just a major rewrite. The members and congregations of UUA will need time to review and understand what changes are being considered.

Having been involved in bylaws revisions in my home congregation and in a number of other organizations, I understand the time it takes to properly update bylaws. We need to give all the stakeholders time to understand the considered changes. It will smooth the process of adoption."

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## **Business Resolution 2**

### **General Assembly Planning Committee**

59. The Commission on Institutional Change, in their report, "Widening the Circle of Concern,"
60. recommended that the Board of Trustees examine the bylaws of the Association with the purpose of
61. streamlining and clarifying the Association's governance structure.
62. The Board of Trustees has proposed a multi-year process to rewrite the Association's bylaws.
63. One of the guiding principles of the proposed bylaw revision is to separate the governance
64. responsibilities of the elected Board of Trustees (and their committees) from the implementation
65. responsibilities of the Association staff and staff volunteers.
66. Over the decades, the planning and implementation of General Assembly has required professionalized
67. staf. For example, the General Assembly and Conference service director negotiated contract changes
68. with hotels and conference centers throughout the pandemic.
69. The General Assembly Planning Committee has not held a governance role in many years.
70. Increasingly, the General Assembly Planning Committee has focused on questions of implementation
71. rather than governance. As such, the GAPC no longer appropriately belongs in the bylaws.
72. Additionally, having to shift first to completely virtual General Assemblies due to the pandemic, and now
73. to multi-platform modalities, requires a committee structure that is flexible and able to recruit volunteers

74. with the skills needed for events as they change.
75. The Board of Trustees extends sincere gratitude to the many General Assembly Planning Committee  
76. volunteers who, over the years, worked to provide meaningful opportunities for Unitarian Universalists  
77. to gather and build community. Their efforts grew and expanded the General Assembly in wonderful  
78. ways. Many thanks to each of you for your ministry.
79. BASED ON THE FOREGOING, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,
80. The GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022 hereby suspends the membership and activities required by the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee, for a period of up to three years, while new GA planning structures are tested, revised, and adopted. This action empowers the current leadership and collaborative efforts of the UUA volunteers and staff who are responsible for GA activities, events, and programs to fulfill these functions. It creates the opportunity to explore and develop more inclusive and innovative GA planning structures for the future.

Underlining indicates insertion; [brackets indicate deletion.]

## **Board Proposed Amendment to Business Resolution #2: General Assembly Planning Committee - INCORPORATED**

The UUA Board of Trustees puts forward the following amendment to Business Resolution 2 on the General Assembly Planning Committee for delegates to consider.

Since the final agenda was released on May 25, delegates have raised important comments and questions about this resolution and its impact. This included asking what it means to seek to suspend the bylaws, what happens to the functions of the General Assembly Planning Committee if they are suspended, what the timing of future bylaws changes might be, and how the GA planning process is currently operating. However, as no amendment was put forward by any delegate based on these questions for consideration at the Mini-Assembly, there has not been a way to address these questions so far through the redesigned business process.

The overall intent of the resolution is to give enough space within the requirements of the bylaws to allow the current group of volunteers and UUA staff who are leading General Assembly planning to continue in their roles for the next few years, while an updated GA planning structure is developed to be presented as part of reimagining General Assembly. In order to be responsive to these concerns and clarify this intent, the Board offers this amendment for the delegates to discuss and vote on. If it is accepted, the amendment will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Resolution which delegates will discuss and vote on later in the week

79. BASED ON THE FOREGOING, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022 hereby suspends the membership and activities required by the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee, for a period of up to three years, while new GA planning structures are tested, revised, and adopted. This action empowers the current leadership and collaborative efforts of the UUA volunteers and staff who are responsible for GA activities, events, and programs to fulfill these functions. It creates the opportunity to explore and develop more inclusive and innovative GA planning structures for the future.

80. [GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022 hereby suspends until further notice the membership and activities  
81. required by the bylaws of the General Assembly Planning Committee. This action creates flexibility to  
82. explore more inclusive and innovative GA planning structures.]

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Underlining indicates insertion; [brackets indicate deletion.]

# UUA Bylaw Rule Change G-9.13.10 - Election Campaign Practices Committee

Rationale: The Election Campaign Practices Committee oversees the conduct of UUA campaigns, enforces campaign rules and receives campaign finance reports, and sets additional standards for campaigns and candidates. The ECPC is created under Rule G-9.13.10, which defines its responsibilities and authority. There is currently an error in Rule G-9.13.10 (c), which references a non-existent section “9.13.6(c)” as the standard that ECPC the uses for determining “serious violations” which can lead to a candidate’s removal from the ballot. The error dates from the changes to the UUA elections process made in 2010, when sections 9.12 and 9.13 were rewritten and renumbered.

The following change is proposed to clarify the basis of the ECPC exercising this authority. It establishes that serious violations of any GA-approved UUA elections rule can lead to removal from the ballot. It also clarifies which decisions are automatically reviewed by the Board of Trustees Executive Committee, regardless of whether this is requested by a candidate.

## 83. Rule G-9.13.10 Election Campaign Practices Committee.

84. (a) An Election Campaign Practices Committee is hereby established and shall consist of three  
85. persons to be appointed by the Board of Trustees for a term of two years each, and the Secretary,  
86. ex-ocfio, without vote. The Board shall designate one of the appointed members to chair the  
87. Committee. The appointed members’ terms shall begin at the close of General Assembly in odd-  
88. numbered years. The Board may appoint an individual to fill a vacancy in membership of the  
89. Committee; persons appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the balance of the vacating member’s  
90. term. Persons appointed to the Committee shall remain neutral in elections held while they  
91. are serving and shall not engage in electioneering. Persons who seek nomination pursuant to  
92. Bylaw Sections 9.4, 9.5, or 9.6 are ineligible to serve on the Committee once they begin seeking  
93. nomination, and shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee effective upon seeking  
94. nomination if they are then serving.
95. (b) The duties of the Election Campaign Practices Committee shall be:
96. (1) to distribute the campaign practices guidelines and financial disclosure rules to candidates  
97. for at-large elective positions not later than thirty days after nomination by the nominating  
98. committee or receipt of petition;
99. (2) to receive and consider written complaints of alleged violations of such guidelines or rules; if  
100. the committee finds probable cause to establish that a violation exists, to notify a candidate  
101. or a number of candidates how they may voluntarily comply with guidelines or rules and how  
102. long they have to do so; to attempt to mediate disputes arising from such complaints; and, if  
103. no satisfactory resolution of a complaint is achieved, to adjudicate the dispute and report the  
104. adjudication in writing to the candidates affected;
105. (3) to hold such hearings as may, at the Committee’s discretion, be necessary or desirable to carry  
106. out the intent of subsection 2 above; and
107. (4) to report on its activities and any recommendations it may have to the Board of Trustees at its  
108. October meeting following the elections.
109. (c) If compliance to an adjudicated decision is not implemented by the stated deadline, the Committee  
110. is authorized to block or remove Association-subsidized privileges from the candidate’s campaign.
111. Candidates adjudicated to be in serious violation of **Bylaw rules under Section 9.13** ~~[Rule~~  
112. ~~G9.13.6(e)]~~ may have their names removed from the ballot. Any such ~~action pursuant to~~  
113. ~~rule G-9.13.10(e)]~~ **removal** shall be reported to the Board and to the General Assembly. Such  
114. ~~[adjudication]~~ **removal** by the ECPC would be subject to automatic review by the Board Executive

115. Committee according to the provisions of Rule G-9.13.10(d).

116. (d) Any candidate aggrieved by the Committee's adjudication may, within ten days of the mailing of  
117. the adjudication, appeal in writing to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, which shall  
118. have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine such an appeal. The Executive Committee shall  
119. report its decision on the appeal in writing to the affected candidates as expeditiously as feasible.  
120. The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees is authorized to issue any order or ruling it  
121. deems appropriate in connection with such a decision. (e) Any member of the Executive Committee  
122. of the Board of Trustees who is a candidate for UUA elective office shall not participate in any  
123. manner in the determination of any appeal from an adjudication of the Election Campaign Practices  
124. Committee.

**No Proposed Amendments to Business Resolution #2: General Assembly Planning Committee received sufficient support to advance.**

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## Rules of Procedure

[See Final Agenda for complete rules of procedure](#)

### 1 Proposed Amendment to the Rules of Procedure

#### Proposed Amendment #5 to Rule 10: AIWs - INCORPORATED

Proposer: Cynthia Landrum, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, Stow, MA

#### Rule 10: Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) of the Rules of Procedure now read as:

An Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) is, per Bylaw 4.16(b), a statement about a significant action, event, or development in the world that needs immediate engagement and action from UU member congregations and groups. The process for submitting an AIW, including criteria for eligibility, is set by the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) and published online:  
<https://www.uua.org/action/process/planning-aiw-ga>.

Per the UUA Bylaws, up to three AIWs can be considered by the General Assembly. If more than three AIW's are eligible for consideration under the CSW's criteria, delegates vote to prioritize proposed Actions of Immediate Witness in a poll accessed through the delegate platform. Delegates can vote for up to three Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness, and can vote at any time while the poll is open. If such a poll is required and the CSW has not already conducted it prior to the start of General Assembly, the poll will be conducted during General Assembly. In that case, the poll opens during General Assembly and closes at 7:00 AM PT on Friday, June 24, 2022. The three proposed Actions of Immediate Witness that receive the most votes through the poll will be eligible to be added to the Final Agenda in General Session.

Rationale: The delegates have for many years been the ones to choose which AIWs to admit to the final agenda. This rules change would change our rules back to the rules used in 2021 (with adjusted dates and language for the delegate platform), and are consistent with the last several years before this, as well.