

Memo: Establishing a *Fund for UU Identity-Based Ministries*

Submitted by: Susan Frederick-Gray, President, and Carey McDonald, Executive Vice President

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**Request:** We request the Board approve the creation of the “Fund for Unitarian Universalist Identity-Based Ministries.”

**Recommended Motion:** The Board approves the creation of a Board-restricted endowed fund named “Fund for Unitarian Universalist Identity-Based Ministries” according to the governance document presented by the President and Executive Vice President. The fund will be allocated one million dollars from the UUA’s FY2021 dividend from Beacon Press. The Fund will support the UUA’s commitments to UU Identity-based ministries external to the UUA that serve communities that have been historically marginalized in the UUA and in society at large.

**Purpose, Background Context:**

The Fund’s purpose is to provide a foundation of support for the UUA’s annual grants and financial commitments to UU organizations external to the UUA which are focused on creating space and ministry for UUs with marginalized identities. This includes UUs who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Nonbinary and Queer (LGBTQ+), disabled, and more.

The 2020 Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) report *Widening the Circle of Concern* recommended actions in the chapter Restoration and Reparations specifically calling on the UUA to ensure “continued funding for spaces that allow marginalized people to survive” within UUism.

Recognizing the importance of identity-specific community to support Unitarian Universalists who have identities that have been historically marginalized or divested from in Unitarian Universalism, the UUA has spent the last several years building stronger relationships with our UU identity-based ministries. This includes the historic Memorandums of Understanding the UUA created with DRUUMM in 2019, and with EqUUal Access in 2022. Additionally, the UUA has provided funds to support annual gatherings of Transgender Religious Professional UUs Together (TRUUsT) members.

Historically, the UUA’s support for UU identity-based ministries has been inconsistent, largely due to difficult financial decisions. With the foundation of the Memorandums of Understanding, the UUA is embarking on longer term, steady financial commitments to UU identity-based ministries. It is important that there is a foundation of funding to support these long-term commitments.

In fiscal year 2021, the UUA’s Beacon Press had historic books sales, in significant part due to the incredible success of *White Fragility* by Robin D’Angelo. The success of this

book also increased sales for many other Beacon books. As part of the UUA – Beacon Press financial agreement established in 2022, the UUA received a portion of these record surpluses. The restrictions of the financial agreement stipulate that these funds cannot be used generally to fund basic UUA operating costs. This restriction was established to discourage undue UUA reliance on Beacon’s financial success and to avoid pressure on Beacon to create surpluses. As with our mission overall – Beacon serves the UUA’s mission, specifically to advance our values in the world, and that is its highest value.

We are grateful for the success of D’Angelo’s *White Fragility*, and we recognize that what she describes also appears in UU communities and is one reason that bias, microaggressions, inequity, and harm persist in our faith community to the detriment of the full participation, leadership, and retention of people of color in our congregations, among our religious professionals and in our tradition. Therefore, it feels important that the surplus received from Beacon Press be dedicated to reparative efforts and supporting our ongoing anti-racist, anti-oppression, multicultural commitments.

We propose the creation of this Fund for UU Identity-Based Ministries to provide a foundation of support for the UUA’s long-term commitment to external UU organizations focused on creating support, community, and ministry for UUs with marginalized identities. With an allocation of one million dollars to this fund the annual distribution will provide less than half of the UUA’s current annual commitment to identity-based organizations. Therefore, it is not expected that the Fund would provide 100% of the UUA’s financial commitment to identity-based ministry organizations; however, it would provide a foundation for the fulfillment of these commitments.

The distribution of the funds would be managed by the UUA staff in accordance with UUA commitments and MOUs with UU identity-based organizations and according to the new Fund’s Governance Document (attached).

Below we have excerpted the relevant portions of the UUA Gift Administration Policies and Guidelines that relate to the receipt of gifts for Permanent Named Funds. The establishment of a permanent named “Fund for Unitarian Universalist Identity-Based Ministries” is in alignment with existing projects and priorities of the Association, including directly related to the recommendations of the COIC’s report, *Widening the Circle of Concern*.

We are excited and grateful to be able to propose this Fund to the UUA Board of Trustees. Ensuring ongoing support for our UU identity-based ministry organizations is a critical piece of living into our aspirations as an anti-racist, anti-oppressive multicultural community and for implementing the recommendations of the 2020 COIC report.

# UUA Gift Administration Policies and Guidelines

The gift administration policies and guidelines set forth in this document are meant for internal administrative purposes only. Any proposed gift of \$10,000 or more that lies outside these guidelines or that is restricted to programs or projects that are not a part of existing Board-approved programs and projects for the Association will be brought to the UUA Board of Trustees for its approval and acceptance. The UUA Board of Trustees must give its approval before the UUA may accept any proposed gift that appears to subject the Association to litigation or to legal or financial liability. The UUA President or Executive Vice President, acting with the Treasurer may accept any gifts that fall within the guidelines included in this document and restricted gifts of less than \$10,000.

## PERMANENT NAMED FUNDS

1. The UUA welcomes gifts that establish permanent funds for the benefit of the Association and UU entities.
2. The suggested minimum contribution for a permanent named fund is \$50,000.\*
3. Gifts establishing permanent funds for Board-approved initiatives, such as for the training of lay and professional religious leaders, will be reviewed by the Gift Council and appropriate UUA staff on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure that the institution can fulfill the donors' wishes.
4. Permanent funds restricted to purposes not already approved by the Board (i.e., for undergraduate education or for specialized studies in fields such as law or art) will be accepted only if the Board of Trustees is satisfied that the administration of such gifts will not place an undue burden on UUA staff and volunteer energies.
5. In accordance with the Internal Revenue Code, the UUA cannot accept gifts that provide a scholarship for a particular person.
6. Contributions will be invested and managed according to the Investment Policies and Guidelines of the Association, as adopted by the UUA Board of Trustees from time to time.
7. The UUA will make full disclosure of its Investment Policies and Guidelines and Fund performance to prospective donors upon request. Annual reports of performance and use of the funds will be made to donors of named funds.

*\*Note: There is confusion about this amount. The policy from 2005 lists this as \$50,000, but an updated policy from 2015 lists it at \$500,000, but that was not brought to the Board for approval. We recognize that the threshold for creating permanent named funds needs to be higher than \$50,000 and is one of the pieces needing update in the policy.*