

Board of Trustees

MEETING: September 11, 2023, 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: Sofia Betancourt (President), Chris Chepel (Co-Financial Advisor), Barbara de Leeuw, Suzanne Fast, Sherman Logan, John B. Newhall, Meg Riley (Co-Moderator), Adam Robersmith, Justine Sullivan, David Stewart (Co-Financial Advisor), Bill Young (Secretary)

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Charles Du Mond (Co-Moderator), Elizabeth Mount, JeKaren Olaoya, Sam Trumbore, Amanda Weatherspoon

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Carey McDonald (Recording Secretary & Executive Vice President), Stephanie Carey Maron, Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President and Board of Trustees

OBSERVERS: 10

Meeting Minutes

Bill Young began the meeting at 7:05 with an opening reading, and members and participants did a small group personal check-in.

There were no items on the consent agenda.

Statement on Fat Liberation

Trustees reviewed the draft of a statement in support of fat liberation, which had been drafted by sponsors of a proposed responsive resolution on the topic at GA this year and was discussed at the August meeting. Executive VP Carey McDonald said UUA staff will need to report back on certain items mentioned in the statement such as accessible chairs and clothing sizes.

Trustees agreed to add appreciation for the drafters' ministry in support of fat liberation.

Moved by Suzanne Fast moved, John Newhall seconded, and the Board unanimously adopted the statement (Attachment 1).

Investment Policy Statement

Co-Financial Advisor David Stewart presented the new draft of the UUA's Investment Policy Statement, the core guidelines for the investment approach and decision-making for the UU Common Endowment. He said this badly needed updates and captures current operation and investment philosophy, and that the rewrite has been in process for over two years.



It is grounded in the dual bottom-line approach of delivering consistent financial returns in alignment with UU values in the marketplace. The draft incorporates the previously separate socially responsible investing guidelines for investment screening, outside investment manager selection, community investments, and shareholder advocacy. He noted that the list of prohibited securities now includes Carbon Underground 200 fossil fuel companies.

David asked the Values & Resources Group to review the draft, with special attention to the introduction of values and framing, and to bring the IPS back to the Board for consideration.

New UU Communities Fund

Executive VP McDonald described the proposed New UU Communities Fund as a way to invest in the future of progressive faith. Following a key recommendation from the 2020 *Widening the Circle of Concern* report as an act of reparations, this fund would support the creation and development of new, innovative UU faith communities designed to serve those who have historically been at the margins of the faith – including Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+, and disabled UUs.

The Fund would be managed by a panel, and would be the container for programs authorized by the panel to provide multiple levels of support. Executive VP McDonald said that the fund would begin by supporting a new cohort program for leaders of new communities, which had been in development with an internal design team for over a year. Initial webinars about the cohort program last spring received positive reactions and excitement from UU religious professionals. He also noted this is a good use of surplus sharing funds received from Beacon Press in 2021 per the UUA's financial agreement with Beacon Press, much of which came from the sale of the book *White Fragility*.

Justine Sullivan moved, David Stewart seconded, the Board unanimously approved the creation of the New UU Communities Fund per the draft governance document (Attachment 2), with seed funding of \$500,000 drawing from surplus sharing funds previously received from the Beacon Press. UUA staff will report back in the future about the Fund's operation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved to Executive Session at 8:15 pm for the purpose of considering appointments and legal matters.

It was later reported that Amrita Sankar was appointed to the Investment Committee for a two-year term.

The meeting ended at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald

Recording Secretary



Attachment 1

Dear UUA Board,

We, the undersigned members of the UU Fat Liberation Steering Committee, ask you to make a statement supporting Fat Liberation and dismantling fat-phobia. Following upon our greater visibility at GA and the request signed by 125 clergy and lay members in June, we have included a sample statement for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum, minister, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA
Bridget Laffin, MDiv., DLRE, First UU San Antonio

Jamie Johnson, MDiv.

Rev. Diana K. McLean, minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato, MN
Camille Cassingham, Lay Minister, UU Congregation of Atlanta

Proposed UUA Board Statement:

We, the UUA Board, proclaim, and urge all UUs to embrace, the following:

We recognize that there have always been fat Unitarian Universalists. Fat UUs at GA 2023 proudly proclaimed and celebrated their presence and claimed their space among us, through presence at the exhibit hall with ribbons and buttons, meet-ups, and a panel discussion. We celebrate that within Unitarian Universalism there is a growing sense of fat community and a voice for fat liberation from discrimination and stigmatization.

Fat people experience discrimination through lack of access to healthcare, housing, employment, and more. Social stigmatization in our larger culture and UU congregations inhibits full inclusion and participation. Specifically within our denomination, fat people experience bias and prejudice in the ordination and hiring processes, insurance policies, lack of access in physical spaces and merchandise (i.e. accessible chairs, limited clothing sizing along with unfair pricing etc.), and more.

Historically, fat bias arises out of racism and specifically white supremacy, as well as classism, ableism, and sexism, as scholars such as Sabrina Strings have shown. Fat-phobia's intersectionality with these oppressions reinforces and normalizes the discrimination; this in turn increases exponentially the harm experienced.

A major component of fat bias is healthism, the equating of health with virtue and the equating of fat with ill-health and immorality, that has a long history in Protestantism and white supremacy. Healthism is prevalent in Unitarian Universalism, taking the forms of fat-shaming; the correlation of weight and health; promotion of weight-loss talk, diets, and surgeries; and food policing and shaming.

Fat bias is inconsistent with our UU principles and values and therefore has no place within Unitarian Universalism. Therefore, we will work to recognize and dismantle fat phobia and proclaim ourselves allies alongside UUs for fat liberation.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister

Attachment 2

Fund for New Unitarian Universalist Communities Governing Document

September 2023

Name and Purpose

With the goal of investing in widening the circle of Unitarian Universalism expanding the capacity of our faith to offer spiritual community, the Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) has created the Fund for New Unitarian Universalist Communities (the “Fund”). The Fund’s purpose is to support new spiritual communities which are covenanted with UU values and identity and dedicated to serving those who have been marginalized historically within our faith; this includes a broad understanding of networked virtual and physical communities and spaces (“communities”). It also supports the leaders who develop and guide these communities (“innovators”). This is in alignment with the recommendations from the 2020 Widening the Circle report from the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, which identified investment in new ways of serving the margins as a key aspect of reparations. The Fund shall be established as an account within the UU Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF).



The Fund will be used for programs that provide grants and support for UU innovators and communities in order to carry out its purpose. Its programs and expenditures will be established and directed by a New UU Communities Fund Panel (“the Panel”) appointed by the UUA President. The UUA President will also appoint a Responsible Officer as a member of the UUA staff, who will be the convener of the Panel.

The Responsible Officer will propose structures for the Panel’s operation and guidelines for the Fund’s programs, to be approved by the Panel. Program guidelines must include an equitable and transparent process for individuals and communities can apply or receive support; a clear statement of intended goals, impacts and outcomes; and be grounded in deep relationship with the communities the programs seek to serve.

The Fund was established with the proceeds of a surplus sharing agreement with Beacon Press. Additional gifts to the Fund are welcome, and may be solicited by the UUA through coordination between the Responsible Officer and Stewardship and Development staff.

Guidelines for Granting and Distribution

The Panel or its successor shall have discretion to use the funds for its programs that provide for support to UU Innovators and communities. Examples of what these programs could include (but are not limited to):

- Access to expert mentors
- Cultivation of communities of mutual support
- Networking and coaching opportunities with leaders in the field;
- Support for developing and testing prototypes

- Infrastructure and networking to broaden the UUA's spiritual innovation ecosystem.
- Direct investment in new communities or models of community that have the potential to spread and grow.

In addition to programs it creates, the Panel may make additional grants, distributions or funding agreements to or with individuals, groups or partners that advance the goal of the Fund.

Fund Management Guidelines

The Fund will be classified as a UUA Board-restricted fund. Some money contained in the Fund may be subject to additional restrictions (such as geographic restrictions) to honor donor intent. The UUA's Finance Department is responsible for tracking additional restrictions on all money contained within the Fund to ensure that the UUA meets its legal and ethical obligations.

The Fund is a spendable fund (not an endowment). It is intended to exist in perpetuity, or as long as needed to carry out its purpose, but will have the goal of fully utilizing its resources within a 5-7 year rolling window, when practicable. The Panel will annually approve a five-year spending plan based on projected expenses and income, and may make distributions in line with that plan.

The Panel will operate under the direction of the UUA President or their designee, and have full authority to determine the expenditures of the Fund in line with this policy and who would qualify to receive grants or funding. The Responsible Officer must also ensure the Fund is complying with donor restrictions.

The UUA's administrative leadership may from time to time update this governing document as needed to align with the purposes of the Fund, or to clarify administrative aspects of the document.

If in the judgment of the UUA's administrative leadership, it is deemed impossible or impracticable to carry out the above-stated purposes, the Board shall determine a purpose as near as possible to the Fund's original intent.

Reporting

An annual report about the Fund expenditures and programs, will be produced by the appointed Responsible Officer in collaboration with Stewardship and Development.

