

Accountability Launch Team (ALT) Report to the Board

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Board Liaison: Bill Young; Staff Liaison: Shige Sakurai; Staff Support: Gianni Fogliano.

Executive Summary: We are ready to move from being a “Launch” team to be the Accountability Team, initially focusing on four areas: governance, widening the pathways to ministry, general assembly, and congregational-associational relationships. We need affirmation on terms of service and selection processes.

History: Born from a [responsive resolution](#) at General Assembly (GA) 2020 to the Commission on Institutional Change (CoIC) report, the ALT was formed to help the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) stick to its promises about justice and inclusion. We do this by working closely with UUA leaders to ensure a focus on fixing relationships and preventing harm, rather than blaming or punishing people. We continue to explore and strengthen our relationships with the Board, Administration, and the Equity, Belonging, and Change (EBC) team.

The ALT began gathering in fall 2023 and held a retreat in January 2024 in DC. There have been several transitions in our membership, but we are now ready to “launch” the Accountability Team as our current lead facilitator departs. We need 2-3 more members and a new Chair/lead facilitator.

Definitions: We continue the work of defining accountability, informed by the central commitments of our Universalist theological heritage of love, restoration, and forgiveness, and our Unitarian heritage that rejects a view of humanity as inherently evil.

Scope of Work: There are many recommendations made by the CoIC. In order to make the work of accountability cohesive, manageable, and effective, the team would like to focus on four areas of work, keeping in mind questions such as:

- a. How are we defining accountability in each area? What processes or practices must be engaged to further accountability and what is this team’s role in that? For example, what is accountability when considering the pathways to ministry?
- b. Which people or groups have the highest needs, and where is or has harm been most unchecked? What is most needed for preventing/stopping and healing past or ongoing harms?

The following four areas were selected when answering the question: where do we notice harm occurring currently, and how can it be mitigated?

General Assembly

- How are marginalized communities being considered and supported in the planning process of GA to reduce ongoing harm?
- Every year there seems to be a pattern of harm occurring, harm being named, and insufficient follow up. What are alternatives to this pattern? What can be done in advance to reduce harm?

Widening the Pathways to Ministry

- Consult on the design of the already-started process.
- How do we make things more equitable?
- How do we hold the fiduciary responsibility to protect our congregations?
- How do we not create a second class of ministers?
- How do we not negatively impact our UU heritage seminaries?

Congregational-Associational Relationships (amidst regionalization)

- The Accountability Team will assist in the analysis of the current state of regionalization and the connections/relationships between congregations and the Association.
- Clarify congregation-Association communication channels:
 - How can Congregations be better connected with Congregational Life staff and the Communications staff?
 - How can Congregations provide feedback into the system?

Governance

- What is the power balance between the Board, Administration, UUA Staff and Volunteers? How will accountability to our most marginalized communities be integrated into our structures and through the Bylaws review process?
- How do we get feedback from congregations and how do we measure progress in governance with the CoIC report in mind?

Accountability Team Membership & Function

We suggest the team include 5-6 members, including a Chair/lead facilitator, as the ideal size. We suggest staggered 2-year terms, with a maximum of 6 years of service.

We suggest that the Chair be selected through a consensus process of the Accountability Team; the term of service should be 2 years. Chair responsibilities include setting agendas for meetings and being the point person with UUA and Board liaisons. None of the current members are able to serve in the role of Chair, so we need the board to appoint new members who have the interest and capacity to do so.

What we need from the Board:

1. Affirmation that the team is launched.
2. Support for the four focus areas.
3. Affirmation on the number of members, term lengths, and selection process.
4. Affirmation on how a Chair is selected.