

ENDS INTERPRETATION

Revised April 11, 2014

PART 1: MONITORING INFORMATION

Prologue to Interpretation:

The UUA Administration believes in the power of our liberal religious values to change lives and to change the world. We understand healthy Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities to be primary means and methods to create transformation, especially when they understand themselves as part of a larger movement of purpose focused outward. We see the role of UUA staff to empower and inspire those gathering with this intention (which includes both congregations and any other formal or informal gathering) to join together to increase the expression of those values in daily life, spiritual life and the world.

It is the congregations and communities themselves that actually do the work and make the changes this evolving world calls for and so we understand the UUA staff to be accountable for ensuring the communities have and know about the tools and practices that can make them more healthy and impactful, as well as creating the infrastructure for new kinds of communities to emerge. The UUA is also accountable for raising the general public recognition of the relevance of UU values in today's world.

We realize that, in so doing, the UUA as an institution, as well as the structure of our communities, may evolve in directions beyond our current institutional forms, and we believe it is our role to be open to and encourage that evolution.

ENDS MONITORING

Global End Policy

A healthy Unitarian Universalist community that is alive with transforming power, moving our communities and the world toward more love, justice, and peace in a manner that assures institutional sustainability.

Interpretation:

Everything that needs to be further interpreted in this policy is fully defined in the lower level policies with three exceptions below and so will be evidenced when the lower levels interpretations are found in compliance. The three exceptions

are “Unitarian Universalist community,” “transforming power” and “institutional sustainability.”

We understand “Unitarian Universalist community” to include those who identify as Unitarian Universalists. This may include active participants in Unitarian Universalist affiliated congregations and also those who declare their connection and adherence to our principles and values. We are aware that this community is influenced by others – past, present and future – with whom we are in relationship, and that in turn our actions and values have impact upon the larger world. We also understand “community” to be the larger web of connections between and among UU congregations and communities and the UUA institution and other UU institutions.

We believe that “transforming power” is that which inspires people to understand their capacity for change and strengthens them in taking responsibility for that change. We also understand it to be that which, conversely, helps them recognize the ways in which they may not be in control or self-sufficient and therefore in need of others in community and to be open to moments of grace. This will be evidenced by an increased number of UUs who attest to this experience through a self-assessment tool developed by the UUA and in focus group conversations re-corded as anecdotal evidence.

We interpret “institutional sustainability” to apply to the ongoing ability of the UUA to serve as an instrument, through the actions of our congregations and communities, of achieving the called for transformation which will be accomplished through the measurement of impact and the judicious use of resources. This will be evidenced when at least 80% of major strategic programs designed to accomplish our Ends interpretation are being assessed with a formal process for determining impact in order to make decisions about further efforts and when an annual analysis shows that of those, all were found successful or adjusted based the information. It does not mean that the UUA will above all focus on maintaining our present institutional forms, but that it will sustain its ability to make the community/communities healthier as measured by the lower level policies.

Thinking Behind Why THIS Interpretation of the Global End

This section describes how and why this specific Ends interpretation was chosen. This is not offered as a part of the formal monitoring report but is shared to help you understand the thinking behind our choices.

Assumptions and Reasoning

We believe the world needs the values of Unitarian Universalism. More than ever, there is a desire to live lives of meaning, purpose and justice. The values expressed by emerging generations are in alignment with the values of Unitarian Universalism.

An external assessment of changes in our broader culture and religious landscape demands that we recognize that we have to expand our efforts to actively engage people outside of traditional congregational constructs, and to help congregations focus their efforts externally as well as internally. In particular, the growth of the number of people, especially younger generations, who have no religious affiliation and no church-going practices requires that we provide a clear and differentiating signal of the difference we believe our Unitarian Universalist values can provide to individual lives and our collective culture. Simply maintaining and resourcing our existing institutions is not motivating to these emerging communities, nor is maintenance the end goal.

An internal assessment of our Association reveals that we already include individuals and communities with great capacity to fulfill our Ends. And we recognize that our current population is not increasing in numbers, is aging, mostly monocultural, class-bound, and increasingly less willing to provide financial support for institutional maintenance. In order to reverse this trend, we realize that we have to engage people in an ongoing enterprise of spiritual reflection and action that speaks to their everyday lives in an increasingly complex world. We believe our institution(s) will be sustainable when they fulfill these values.

We believe that the Association is obligated not just to serve its existing members, but to partner with our members and those in the broader community transform the world by application of our values.

End Policy 1.1

Policy 1.1: Congregations and communities are covenanted, accountable, healthy, and mission driven.

Interpretation:

We believe congregations and communities, as stated above, are primary means and methods to fulfillment of our ends.

“Covenanted” We understand covenant to mean that congregations and communities make explicit and ongoing promises of faithful relationship to one another. We also understand this means individuals, communities and congregations understand themselves as a part of a larger whole (both institutionally and spiritually) in which they both contribute and receive. We also understand covenant to include our promises to others outside of our faith.

“Accountable” We understand accountable to mean that congregations and communities understand that their purpose is not just to serve their members, but that they are also under obligation to serve their surrounding community and the wider world, with particular accountability to the vision of our ancestors, the emerging generations, and people historically marginalized in larger society.

“Healthy” We understand “healthy” to mean that a community exhibits radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking service and witness, and faithful generosity.¹

“Mission-driven” We understand “mission-driven” as related to our earlier statement that congregations and communities are the means of transformation, and therefore their understanding of transforming purpose must be clear, concise and explicable to anyone joining or observing from outside. Their mission must not just be expressed but their activities must demonstrate alignment with their expression.

This will be evidenced by a majority of congregations and communities showing increased capacity over time in above areas based on a self-assessment and reflection tool developed by the UUA measuring healthy congregational behaviors.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

As stated above, the values of Unitarian Universalism are those best expressed by our people from the inside out, from inside the persons, congregations and communities to outward action in the world.

We understand that “love, justice and peace” are ideal expressions of beloved community that are not achievable in this lifetime, but infinitely worthy of efforts in those directions. Healthy expressions of Unitarian Universalism, like healthy

¹ Adapted from *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Bishop Robert Schnase.

individual behaviors, are best encouraged through inspiration and example, rather than through prescription or dictates. Therefore encouraging congregational self-assessment of improvement over time gives us indications of progress which could be correlated to UUA efforts, but not caused by them.

The paradigm of learning that we are employing has shifted from “program” to “ethos” in which we communicate and encourage core values of approach, but do not proscribe the exact practice. We are finding that Unitarian Universalists learn best from one another, and increasingly understand our role as being to create structures of connection among UU communities.

We also believe that such states of health are not achievable by Unitarian Universalists alone, but require partnership with others who may not share our beliefs, and ask us to cross boundaries of comfort, and recognition, as well as class, race and creed.

Ends Policy 1.2

Congregations and communities are better able to achieve their missions and to spread awareness of Unitarian Universalist ideals and principles through their participation in covenanted networks of Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities.

Interpretation:

UUA staff will create and/or support programs and opportunities for congregations to learn together and gather together on a cluster, district / regional, and national levels. Success will be evidenced by at least 75% of congregations participating in such opportunities and at least 50% of individuals reporting (through feedback mechanisms of these events) that their work toward mission has been enhanced.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

Unitarian Universalists grow in their faith and their impact when they become inspired by one another. Leaders learn best from the example of one another and the ability to see themselves in a larger context. The role of the Association is to create accessible (physically and virtually) structures for such gatherings, and encourage this as well by offering programs to collections of congregations, rather than just one-on-one.

Ends Policy 1.3

Congregations and communities are intentionally inclusive, multigenerational and multicultural.

Interpretation:

1. UUA staff, volunteer structures, and policies will model inclusivity of age, identity and culture as evidenced by increased diversity in these areas.
2. Congregations and communities will have access to resources (see Policy 1.5 interpretation) that deepen their ability to grow in their inclusivity as evidenced by increased usage of relevant resources as well as participation in activities and partnerships that create border-crossing experiences.
3. Congregations and communities will engage in intentional self-reflection and cultural changes as evidenced by increased participation in learning arenas in these areas.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

We believe the most important word in this policy is “intentional.” Communities that are authentically inclusive of all - regardless of age, culture, class, race, creed, ability, and identity - are created by a theologically grounded, learned and encouraged willingness to cross borders in all these arenas.

The role of the Association is to model inclusion in staff and volunteer structures; to create educational and experiential opportunities that invite individuals and communities into this learning; to discover, highlight and partner with best practices in communities that achieve high levels of inclusion.

Ends Policy 1.4

Congregations and communities engage in partnerships to counter systems of power, privilege and oppression.

Interpretation:

1. The UUA administration will participate in partnerships at multiple levels of the organization and create a campaign structure (such as Standing on the Side of Love) which encourages congregations, communities and individuals to participate in such partnerships as well, as evidenced by increased numbers of collaborations at the administration level and increased participation in the campaign structure.

2. Congregations and communities will engage in their own communities in interfaith partnerships through other community organizational structures, as evidenced by an increased number reporting such collaborations.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

We understand that Unitarian Universalists have an obligation to learn about systems of power, privilege and oppression, both as systems we unintentionally participate in, as well as broader systems that are not entirely within our control. We believe partnerships with groups and individuals beyond Unitarian Universalism are vital to bringing the most power to change these systems. Such partnerships do not require complete alignment on everyone's part about every issue, but the development of connections and strategies relevant to our highest priority of justice issues.

The Association's role is to model these partnerships at an international, national and regional level through pursuit of our justice priorities and to help create a campaign infrastructure that allows local groups to participate in such partnerships.

Ends Policy 1.5

Congregations and communities have and use Unitarian Universalist Association resources to deepen the spiritual and religious exploration by people in their communities, to enhance the ministry of their members and to improve their operations.

Interpretation

1. Resources which are designed to help congregations and communities, regardless of economic circumstances, achieve the interpretation of 1.1 (including physical and virtual publications, trainings, and events to connect them with others) will be used increasingly each year as measured by:
 - a. Number of publications accessed
 - b. Number of persons attending training
 - c. Anecdotal evidence based on the number of joint efforts and their estimated attendance.
2. Resources provided will be deemed to deepen, enhance and improve congregations when they are referenced as a source of improvement in a self assessment tool provided by UUA.

3. The self assessment tool will be completed by an increasing number of congregations and communities each year.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

We hold that the Association's role is to curate, develop and promulgate resources that lead congregations and communities toward their abilities to be covenanted, healthy, accountable and mission-driven, as defined above in Ends Interpretation 1.1. We understand that many such resources already live within congregations and communities and external resources and that the Association is able to pursue this end by curating and promulgating best practices, creating learning communities among congregations and communities, as well as encouraging the use of local resources.

We have come to believe that the most sustainable learning does not always happen through the transmission of information but also through the development of relationships that strengthen capacity and resiliency. Therefore creating encouragement and opportunities for congregations and communities to gather with one another strengthens this End.

We recognize that we must balance this End with institutional capacity and sustainability as outlined above.

Ends Policy 1.6

There is an increase in the number of people served by Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities.

Interpretation:

There will be an increased number of people participating in UU congregations and communities and persons served by these communities (both existing and emerging) as evidenced by the self-reporting of communities on membership numbers and people served.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

The role of the Association regarding growth is to offer congregations and communities strategies and resources for their own expansion of numbers and impact. Membership numbers are not the only indicator of growth, however. We understand it to be our role to encourage congregations to serve the community beyond their walls, as well as to deepen in their spiritual engagement.

Ends Policy 1.7

There is an increase in the number of Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities.

Interpretation:

There will be an increase in the number of communities and congregations in relationship to the UUA each year.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

It is the role of the Association to encourage existing congregations to employ growth strategies which research shows to be effective in the larger religious context (such as multi-site development), to respond to self-organizing groups with resources, coaching and encouragement, as well as to train religious leaders in entrepreneurial methods.

Ends Policy 1.8

There is an increase in the number of inspired ordained and lay religious leaders equipped to effectively start and sustain new Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities.

Interpretation:

There is an increase in participation in and number of the structural opportunities (within the UUA and with other institutional partners) for both lay and professional leaders to train in methods of entrepreneurial leadership.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

The role of the Association is to partner with our theological schools and professional organizations to provide education about effective religious leadership (inclusive of ministers, religious educators, musicians and laity). We also understand it to be of great import to learn about and promulgate entrepreneurial methods and opportunities. We also understand our role to educate our entire Unitarian Universalist community about changing social and cultural contexts that create new challenges and opportunities for the creation of new communities. We believe existing healthy congregations are the best launching place for inspiration and our role is also to highlight and help others learn from effective multi-site ministries.

Ends Policy 1.9

Unitarian Universalist institutions are healthy, vital, collaborative partners invested in the future of Unitarian Universalism, its principles and theologies.

Interpretation:

We understand UUA institutions to include the congregations and communities, whose health, vitality and collaboration will be shown by compliance with the above lower level policies.

We also recognize our obligation to be in collaborative and supporting relationship to other UU institutions (such as the theological schools, UUSC, UUMA) that results in an increased number of people participating in cross-institutional programs that inspire deeper relationship to UU values.

Organizational Impact and Rationale:

We understand this policy to mean that the ends as articulated in all above policies are best achieved by empowering our congregations and communities to participate in a larger vision of Unitarian Universalism through their relationships to one another, their embodiment of our values within their own communities, and their willingness to give time, talent and treasure to the wider association. The UUA is not the only institution charged with serving this End, and we are most sustainable when we create partnerships and collaborative opportunities with other UU institutions that maximize resources and inspire other partnerships.