

Associational Governance Linkage in the Southern Region
UUA Board of Trustees
Linkage Working Group

As the Districts of the Southern Region move forward with regionalization under their Covenant of Understanding with the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (“UUA”), the UUA Board’s linkage efforts will affirm and support the Southern Region’s vision of leadership by a Council of Elders who “hold in their hearts the deepest meaning of the faith” and build strong relationships throughout the Region.

After the initial Council of Elders is formed (after the Districts’ 2015 Assemblies), the Linkage Working Group and Moderator will invite Elders to join a phone conference, to introduce ourselves and to provide an overview of the Board’s linkage with sources of authority and accountability. Elders, in their engagement with clusters and congregations, will likely bring unique knowledge of congregations in the Southern Region. The UUA Board will consider, in conversation with Elders as their role evolves in their first years, how Elders may most meaningfully contribute to connection with those sources. We suggest the conversation with Elders continue, in the first two years of the Council of Elders, on a semi-annual basis. Also, as Elders strengthen their relationships with congregational and cluster leadership, they may invite members of those stakeholder groups into our conversations.

The Linkage Working Group will ensure, in all of its linkage efforts that include outreach to congregations and congregational leaders, that it informs the Council of Elders of those efforts, so Elders may participate or encourage congregations and congregational leaders to participate.

- To the extent linkage is in the form of online surveys and webinars, the Council of Elders will receive announcements of those surveys and webinars, both to participate and encourage the participation of others.
- Should linkage be in the form of congregational dialogues, members of the Elder Council will be invited to lead dialogues. Such participation by Elders will be of particular value in dialogues involving review of the Ends of the UUA.
- The Linkage Working Group envisions, as the UUA Board begins utilizing features of the new UUA website platform, that more sophisticated online opportunities for connection with congregational leaders on topics before the Board will be available. Our intent is to have, rather than 1 or 2 survey efforts in a year, more consistent opportunities for congregational leaders to provide feedback to the Board, on issues before the Board, throughout the

year. Just as we apprise congregations and congregational leaders of those new opportunities, so will we reach out to the Elders.

We also recognize Elders may be a rich resource for alerting the UUA Board of issues of concern in Southern congregations that may also be of national concern, that affect Board policy, and merit linkage dialogue. Elders should not hesitate to contact the convener of the Linkage Working Group to discuss those observations.