

Article 2 and General Bylaws Process (includes GA 2018)

Bylaws Change Purpose Statement

The UUA's bylaws were first drafted in May 1961 and have been amended in piecemeal fashion over the past 57 years. Our bylaws necessarily carry the biases and limitations of the times when they were written. Historically, the UUA was organized as a nonprofit corporation modeled on the New England businesses that emphasized fiscal conservatism and "prudence". Our bylaws need to reflect the faith community we are and that we want to be: adaptive, creative, flexible, centered and grounded in relationships and linkage, while striving toward being an anti-oppressive, anti-racist and multicultural organization. Currently, our bylaws are not accessible, have dates and times that are no longer relevant, and are rooted in distrust of authority. As we reimagine what our faith could look and act like moving into the future, we should have a smaller set of bylaws that can liberate our leaders and members to do faithful, sustaining ministry. This year we are proposing bylaw changes that are necessary for our faith to reimagine what our leadership and governance model could become. Over the next year and a half leading into General Assembly 2019 we will be having conversations and dialogues about what a new set of bylaws should and could be.

Process during General Assembly 2018

1. Process is introduced during the board and moderator report
2. Process is shared along with the bylaw change purpose statement by the Moderator or member of the Board before Bylaw votes happen
3. There is time for discussion built into the schedule on both Saturday and Sunday during GA
4. The GA discussion time on Saturday will be done in concert with the Commission in Institutional Change that will be around how do our values, vision and practice of our faith help us be who we want to become. If our principles are a value document what values need to be expressed? If our vision is to move into being the Beloved Community that is rooted in our Unitarian Universalist theology what is our vision? How is the practice of our faith expressed through our bylaws, how we do governance, how congregations are represented and participate, who is in the room, etc.?
5. We will ask people to take notes on flip charts or computers and we will post the flip charts around the General Session hall or have them be running on a screen and available on the app. We will also people to type their notes or will assign a note taker to each group who will type the notes. We will use the notes to do a word cloud and we will share back what we have heard on Sunday morning. There will also be time for people to share from their conversations and thoughts with the entire assembly.
6. On Sunday we will again share with the attendees the process we are undergoing

Process from April 2018 to GA 2018

1. General process and timeline needs to be approved at April 2018 board meeting
2. Charge to the Bylaw review commission will be developed at the April 2018 Board Meeting
3. Conversation between the Commission on Institutional Change, Moderators and 1-2 board

members about the discussion time during GA

4. Congregational and covenanted community study guide development begun - maybe work with Fahs since they do this a lot now??

Process from GA 2018 to GA 2019

GA 2019 in Spokane will be 1/2 General Assembly and 1/2 General Conference. The workshops will be more like strategy sessions leading up to fundamental changes to be voted on first at GA 2019 and then again at GA 2020 if things pass.

- 1) The plan will be shared with people at GA 2018 and through the social media sites and also with an article in the UU World
- 2) A congregational and covenanted community study guide will be developed by the Board, Bylaw Study Commission, UUA Staff and the Commission on Institutional Change (hopefully) with staff support to help congregations have the necessary conversations after General Assembly
- 3) Regional/district and constituency gatherings will take place and conversations will happen there. There will also be an ask for UU groups, camps and conference centers to also host these conversations at their gatherings and share the information back with the Board, Bylaw Review Commission, UUA Staff and the Commission on Institutional Change
- 4) A gathering of people representing all these different assemblies will gather coming together to craft high level thoughts and language for a vision, value/principle statement, bylaw changes, and other key policy and practice changes.
- 5) The UUA Board, Bylaw Study Commission, UUA Staff with assistance by the Commission on Institutional Change (per their determination) will do more work to pull together the language with the word smithing supported by legal council and the compiled together bylaw and policy changes as well as any other recommendations will be brought to the 2019 General Assembly in Spokane.
- 6) GA/General Conference 2019 will be a place for reflection, contemplation and discernment about who we are as a faith and where we want to go and how our bylaws, policies, procedures and practices help us get there.
- 7) Whatever gets approved of at General Assembly in Spokane will move forward and if a second vote is required that vote will happen at GA 2020. The work after GA Spokane will be carried forward by the Bylaw Review Commission, the UUA Board, Staff and the Commission on Institutional Change (as necessary and wanted by them)