

MEETING AGENDA - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Meeting Date	Tuesday, May 21, 2024
Start Time	6:30 PM
End Time	8:30 PM (CST)
Location	Zoom - https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin (password = 512452) Zoom ID: 940 671 9275 Dial in number: (346) 248-7799 or (669) 900-6833
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting

RSVP

Accepted:	Chris Jimmerson, Pam Knight, Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Evan Mahony they/them, Shannon Posern, Kelly Raley, Dave Riehl, Gretchen Riehl, Nathan Walther
No response:	Donna Carpenter, Suzette Emberton, Russell Holley-Hurt, Sasha Lorenzo, Tomas Rodriguez, Kelly Stokes
Invited guests:	Margaret Borden, Carrie Holley-Hurt, James Houchins, Karen Neeley, Rob Rough, Charles Smith

Agenda

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words Dave Riehl / 2 min. (6:30 PM - 6:32 PM)

David Riehl will bring the readings

1.2. Reading of Board Covenant Gretchen Riehl / 2 min. (6:32 PM - 6:34 PM)

With the Values, Mission and Ends of First UU Austin foremost in mind, we the leadership do covenant to:

- Treat our time together and board commitments as spiritual practice
 - Work collaboratively to clarify, assess and further our mission.
 - Respect our time together by being focused, prepared and timely.
 - Keep confidentiality when it is requested.
 - Listen actively, address concerns directly with each other in a timely manner, and encourage others to do the same.
 - Presume good faith in all our interactions acknowledging the importance of both intention and impact.
 - Conduct ourselves openly, show compassion, respect boundaries, and enjoy each other's good humor in times of agreement and disagreement.
 - Publicly support one another's decisions and leadership by speaking with one voice at the end of our deliberations.
 - Agree to be called back into covenant.
-

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator Gretchen Riehl / 2 min. (6:34 PM - 6:36 PM)

Nathan agreed to be the timekeeper

Russell agreed to be the process evaluator

1.4. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda Gretchen Riehl / 2 min. (6:36 PM - 6:38 PM)

Documents Minutes, Pages 4-8

- March 2024 Board Financial Report.pdf 9-14

2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (6:38 PM - 6:48 PM)

I have invited the incoming board members to attend tonight as observers.

I have also invited Carrie Holley-Hurt, recently graduated from seminary. She has requested that we ordain her in conjunction with Live Oak church on August 31. We will need to vote on this, as will the Live Oak Board of Trustees.

2.2. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff Evan Mahony they/them / 5 min. (6:48 PM - 6:53 PM)

2.3. Moment with Rev. Chris Chris Jimmerson / 10 min. (6:53 PM - 7:03 PM)

2.4. Moment with Rev. Michelle Rev. Michelle LaGrave / 10 min. (7:03 PM - 7:13 PM)

2.5. Update from the President Gretchen Riehl / 5 min. (7:13 PM - 7:18 PM)

3. Monitoring our Progress

3.1. Monitoring Reports (Ends and/or Executive Limitations) Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (7:18 PM - 7:28 PM)

1.4.6 and 1.4.7

3.2. Committee Reports Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (7:28 PM - 7:38 PM)

Transitions Committee

Monitoring Committee

Linkage Committee

Policy Committee

3.3. Executive Session Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (7:38 PM - 7:48 PM)

To discuss personnel items.

3.4. Review Congregational Meeting Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (7:48 PM - 7:58 PM)

3.5. Ministerial Search Committee Charge Gretchen Riehl / 10 min. (7:58 PM - 8:08 PM)

[Review draft charge](#)

Charge draft 15, draft with suggestions/comments, 16

4. Learning & Creating the Future

4.1. Board Book Discussion Russell Holley-Hurt / 15 min. (8:08 PM - 8:23 PM)

This month we will discuss the chapter on [Accountability and Resources](#) from Widening the Circle of Concern. 17-20



5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Gretchen Riehl / 2 min. (8:23 PM - 8:25 PM)

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Gretchen Riehl / 2 min. (8:25 PM - 8:27 PM)

Assign roles for:

- Readings
 - Timekeeper
 - Process Evaluator
 - Reading
-

5.3. Process Evaluation 21

Russell Holley-Hurt / 2 min. (8:27 PM - 8:29 PM)

5.4. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Dave Riehl / 2 min. (8:29 PM - 8:31 PM)

MEETING MINUTES - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Date	Tuesday, April 16, 2024
Started	6:30 PM
Ended	8:30 PM (CST)
Location	Zoom - https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin (password = 512452) Zoom ID: 940 671 9275 Dial in number: (346) 248-7799 or (669) 900-6833
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting
Chaired by	Gretchen Riehl
Recorder	Dave Riehl

Attendance

Present:	Donna Carpenter, Suzette Emberton, Russell Holley-Hurt, Chris Jimmerson, Pam Knight, Mateo Kresha, Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Shannon Posern, Dave Riehl, Gretchen Riehl, Tomas Rodriguez, Nathan Walther
Regrets:	Sasha Lorenzo, Evan Mahony they/them, Kelly Raley, Kelly Stokes
Invited guests:	Margaret Borden, Tomas Medina, Karen Neeley, Julie Paasche

Minutes

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

Suzette agreed to bring readings for this meeting

Status: Completed

1.2. Reading of Board Covenant

With the Values, Mission and Ends of First UU Austin foremost in mind, we the leadership do covenant to:

- Treat our time together and board commitments as spiritual practice
- Work collaboratively to clarify, assess and further our mission.
- Respect our time together by being focused, prepared and timely.
- Keep confidentiality when it is requested.
- Listen actively, address concerns directly with each other in a timely manner, and encourage others to do the same.
- Presume good faith in all our interactions acknowledging the importance of both intention and impact.
- Conduct ourselves openly, show compassion, respect boundaries, and enjoy each other's good humor in times of agreement and disagreement.
- Publicly support one another's decisions and leadership by speaking with one voice at the end of our deliberations.
- Agree to be called back into covenant.

Status: Completed

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator

Nathan agreed to be timekeeper and Donna agreed to be the process evaluator.

Status: Completed

1.4. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

Approve agenda and consent agenda items.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Minutes-2024-03-19-v1.pdf
 - February Financial Report 2024.pdf
-

2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum

Tomas Medina will be present to discuss the nominations for the board and nominating committee to be voted on at the congregational meeting.

Tomas Medina presented the current status of nominations to the Board. Four candidates have been identified (Karen Neeley, president-elect, Rob Rough, Margaret Borden, and Angela Smith). He will keep nominations open for a time yet.

Status: Completed

2.2. General Assembly delegate and Article II discussion

Members of the healthy relations team may be present to discuss the upcoming General Assembly, and how we may want to engage the congregation on the Article II discussion. In addition we may want to discuss the selection of delegates to GA.

Margaret Borden presented for the Healthy Relations team on the upcoming General Assembly vote on Article II (replacing the 8 Principles with 6 Values and Covenant. The Team expects to have conversations with the Ministers and the Congregation prior to GA.

There is no time to do a formal process for GA delegate selection. Several people have volunteered, and Gretchen's main concern is that the delegates be "representative" of our Congregation. Since the Board has been elected by the Congregation, it follows that Board members should have priority in this selection. Any other volunteers will be screened by the Ministers.

Note: Since this meeting, both online and in-person sessions with the Congregation have been scheduled.

Status: Completed

2.3. Vote on investing capital campaign funds

Karen Neeley will join us as we discuss and vote on opening CDs to invest the capital campaign funds until we are ready to renegotiate the loan. We will also need to appoint signatories. Chris and I propose the signatories be Chris, Karen and me.

The current interest rate on the Construction Loan is 4.5%. It is felt that collecting the pledge funds and investing them in CD's can save us money in the meantime and preserve our flexibility in negotiating the refinance or payoff.

After discussion, Russell moved and Donna seconded the motion for the Continuing Capital Campaign to invest collected funds in CD's, with Rev Chris, Gretchen, and Karen Neeley as signatories. The motion carried with a unanimous vote in favor.

Status: Completed

2.4. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff

Evan will not be at the meeting. We will need to make suggestions for May.

Status: Completed

2.5. Moment with Rev. Michelle

Rev Michelle's efforts for the past month have been focused on keeping things going while Rev Chris is out. She has also been working on care and support of the seminarians, and meeting with the BIPOC group. She will out for one week for a meeting with the UU Transitions Ministers. She will also check in with the UUMA disabilities team.

Status: Completed

2.6. Moment with Rev. Chris

Rev Chris reports that he's held the initial meeting of the Pastoral Care associates, and training is underway now. They are currently addressing 10 cases in the Congregation. They are working at improving memorial care and follow-up. Chris may need to be in Chicago during the upcoming Congregational Meeting, but much depends on Wayne's condition.

The Continuing Capital Campaign has generated \$913K in pledges! We will likely have \$590K cash in hand before 2025, putting us in a good position to renegotiate the loan.

Status: Completed

2.7. President's Update

Gretchen's major concerns were GA delegate selection and Article II discussions with the Congregation. Both are covered above.

Status: Completed

3. Monitoring our Progress

3.1. Monitoring Reports (Ends and/or Executive Limitations)

Status: Completed

Documents

- 1.4.1 monitoring Report 04 - 2024 (1).docx
 - 2.2 Treatment of Staff rev 04-11-2024.docx
-

3.2. Committee Reports

Evan and Kelly were out, so the Survey Report will be taken up at the next meeting.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Transitions Committee Report April 2024.docx
 - Report on the 2023-24 Congregational Survey.pdf
-

3.3. Finalize Ministerial Search Committee

We need to finalize the ballot for the MSC and discuss processes.



Donna Carpenter reported that 10 candidates have been selected for the Search team. Of them, the Congregation will choose 5 and the Board will choose 2. Donna will be out for the actual Congregational Meeting, so Kelly will cover her.

Status: Completed

3.4. Congregational Meeting

The current agenda for the congregational meeting is as follows:

- Ministers' reports
- MSC election
- Board election
- Nominating committee elections
- Need moderator for pre-congregational meeting. Gretchen will be out of town
- Anything else?

In addition, the Meeting Notice (for the Pre-Meeting) will need to be out by April 29. Note: this deadline was made.

With Gretchen out for the pre-Congregational meeting, Russell will preside in her absence.

Status: Completed

4. Learning & Creating the Future

4.1. Board Book Discussion

Discussion on reading from Widening the Circle of Concern. We'll skip to the [chapter on Education for Liberation](#).

Our assignment for the next meeting is the section on "Accountability". Russell will lead the discussion.

Status: Completed

5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

Action items include:

- Donna to produce headshots and bios for Chris
- Congregational Meeting notice
- Dave will find the final version of the last Bylaws Change
- Russell to speak to Evan and the Ministers on Article II

Status: Completed

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Assign roles for:

- Readings
- Timekeeper
- Process Evaluator
- Book discussion

Readings - Dave



Timekeeper - Nathan

Process Evaluator - Russell

Book Discussion - Russel

Status: Completed

5.3. Process Evaluation

Status: Completed

Documents

- Board process review form.docx
-

5.4. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Status: Completed

March 2024 Financial Reviews

March revenue continues to be significantly over budget. This is likely because of large payments by members to cover all or the majority of their 2024 pledge.

Total expenses were under budget for March and are under budget for the year.

Our cash reserves are at about 4.5 months.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN
Budget vs. Actuals: 2024 by Class
March, 2024

	Mar 2024			Total			Notes
	Actual	Budget	over Budget	Actual	Budget	over Budget	
Income							
4100 Earned Revenue			0	0	0	0	
4110 Event Revenue	500	1,250	-750	2,630	3,750	-1,120	
4120 Admissions/Ticket Revenue		0	0	0	0	0	
4130 Rentals Revenue	10,418	11,667	-1,249	31,679	35,000	-3,321	
Total 4100 Earned Revenue	\$ 10,918	\$ 12,917	-\$ 1,999	\$ 34,310	\$ 38,750	-\$ 4,440	
4200 Contributed Revenue			0	0	0	0	
4210 Unrestricted Contributions			0	0	0	0	
4211 Pledge	57,390	65,083	-7,693	265,147	195,250	69,897	1
4212 Sunday Plate	843	2,500	-1,657	3,673	7,500	-3,827	
4213 Other Gifts	3,288	10,000	-6,712	20,760	30,000	-9,240	
7210 Transfer from Education Fund		0	0	20,000	20,000	0	
Total 4210 Unrestricted Contributions	\$ 61,520	\$ 77,583	-\$ 16,063	\$ 309,581	\$252,750	\$ 56,831	
4220 Restricted Contributions		0	0	0	0	0	
4221 Special Plate	3,353	1,500	1,853	8,234	4,500	3,734	
Total 4220 Restricted Contributions	\$ 3,353	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,853	\$ 8,234	\$ 4,500	\$ 3,734	
4290 Other Contributed Revenue		0	0	0	0	0	
Total 4200 Contributed Revenue	\$ 64,873	\$ 79,083	-\$ 14,210	\$ 317,815	\$257,250	\$ 60,565	
Total Income	\$ 75,791	\$ 92,000	-\$ 16,209	\$ 352,124	\$296,000	\$ 56,124	
Gross Profit	\$ 75,791	\$ 92,000	-\$ 16,209	\$ 352,124	\$296,000	\$ 56,124	
Expenses							
Total 6100 Payroll Expenses	\$ 63,133	\$ 72,478	-\$ 9,345	\$ 202,355	\$217,430	-\$ 15,074	
Total 6210 Charitable Giving	\$ 1,268	\$ 3,096	-\$ 1,828	\$ 24,978	\$ 29,433	-\$ 4,454	
Total 6220 Program Expenses	\$ 5,032	\$ 7,691	-\$ 2,658	\$ 19,682	\$ 23,055	-\$ 3,373	
Total 6300 Outreach Costs	\$ 4,148	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,148	\$ 12,594	\$ 3,799	\$ 8,795	2
Total 6400 Occupancy Costs	\$ 19,049	\$ 17,470	\$ 1,579	\$ 53,711	\$ 52,411	\$ 1,300	3
Total 6600 Subscription's and Fees	\$ 3,307	\$ 1,417	\$ 1,891	\$ 5,376	\$ 4,250	\$ 1,126	
Total 6700 Business Expenses	\$ 6,292	\$ 4,805	\$ 1,487	\$ 17,529	\$ 14,419	\$ 3,111	4
Total Expenses	\$102,230	\$107,957	-\$ 5,727	\$ 336,227	\$344,796	-\$ 8,569	
Net Operating Income	-\$ 26,439	-\$ 15,957	-\$ 10,482	\$ 15,898	-\$ 48,796	\$ 64,694	
Total Other Income	\$ 235	\$ 0	\$ 235	\$ 523	\$ 0	\$ 523	
Total Other Expenses	\$ 3,567	\$ 0	\$ 3,567	\$ 11,233	\$ 0	\$ 11,233	
Net Other Income	-\$ 3,332	\$ 0	-\$ 3,332	-\$ 10,710	\$ 0	-\$ 10,710	
Net Income	-\$ 29,771	-\$ 15,957	-\$ 13,814	\$ 5,188	-\$ 48,796	\$ 53,984	
Non-Operational Expenses	14,560	0	14,560	44,213	0	44,213	
Net Operational income	-15,210.66	-15,956.99	746.33	49,400.96	-48,795.97	98,196.93	

Notes to March 2024 to Budget

1. Pledge income was significantly over budget due to large gifts and stock distributions from members.
2. Outreach costs were high due to an error with the accountant. We are working to get it corrected.
3. Occupancy costs were higher than budgeted due to the February cleaning bill did not clear until March.
4. Business expenses are high due to increased insurance fees.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN

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Balance Sheet As of March 31, 2024

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1072 Bill.com Money Out Clearing	0.00
1110 8009-THCU Checking	464,331.60
1120 RBank Debt Service 676	59,219.78
1130 RBank Construction 668	479,624.42
1140 THCU Money Market	0.00
1150 THCU Savings	37.67
1160 UFCU Savings	0.00
1170 THCU CDs	0.00
1189 Petty Cash	200.00
1710 UUCEF Permanent Endowment Acct.	302,832.61
1720 UUCEF Mixed Investment Account	214,996.12
1730 UUCEF Murr Music Account	85,395.99
1740 UUCEF Education	732,499.33
Total Bank Accounts	\$2,339,137.52
Accounts Receivable	
1210 Accounts Receivable	0.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$0.00
Other Current Assets	
1199 Undeposited Funds	0.00
1220 VANCO - Payment Reconciliation	0.00
1240 VANCO - ACH/MS	0.00
1250 VANCO - ACH	0.00
Total 1220 VANCO - Payment Reconciliation	0.00
1230 Cash/Checks	0.00
1260 Stripe	1,934.54
1310 Prepaid Expenses	2,735.09
1490 Other Current Assets	12,019.43
Total Other Current Assets	\$16,689.06
Total Current Assets	\$2,355,826.58

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN

Balance Sheet As of March 31, 2024

	TOTAL
Fixed Assets	
1500 Fixed Assets	
1510 Building	3,810,161.57
1520 Land	3,772,325.00
1530 Furniture & Equipment	132,994.25
1540 Exterior Structures & Improvements	19,350.00
1590 Accumulated Depreciation	-902,868.36
Total 1500 Fixed Assets	6,831,962.46
Total Fixed Assets	\$6,831,962.46
TOTAL ASSETS	\$9,187,789.04
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2110 Accounts Payable	1,598.00
Total Accounts Payable	\$1,598.00
Credit Cards	
2120 Credit card (3081)	959.65
2121 Credit Card (8872)	994.54
2122 Credit card (1319)	717.65
2123 Credit card (2900)	3,389.29
2124 Credit card (3030)	3,965.09
2125 Credit card (3081)	-161,683.07
2126 Credit card (3115)	72.16
2127 Credit card (3123)	1,108.79
2129 Credit card (4070)	95,158.60
2130 Credit card (8572)	34,801.48
2131 Credit card (9450)	22,505.62
2132 Credit card (1263)	6,773.16
Total 2120 Credit card (3081)	8,762.96
Total Credit Cards	\$8,762.96
Other Current Liabilities	
2210 Accrued Expenses	0.00
2320 Security Deposits	0.00
2410 Payroll Liabilities	24,056.97
2450 Sales Tax Payable	0.00
2500 Accrued Interest	0.00
2610 PPP Loan	0.00
Sales Tax Agency Payable	0.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$24,056.97
Total Current Liabilities	\$34,417.93

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF AUSTIN

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Balance Sheet As of March 31, 2024

	TOTAL
Long-Term Liabilities	
2620 Construction Loan	979,306.18
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$979,306.18
Total Liabilities	\$1,013,724.11
Equity	
3110 Unrestricted Net Assets	394,147.96
3120 Restricted Funds	7,429,514.13
3130 Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	-802.96
Opening Balance Equity	0.00
Net Income	351,205.80
Total Equity	\$8,174,064.93
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$9,187,789.04

Charge to the FUUCA MSC2

To the Ministerial Search Committee:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the second Ministerial Search Committee (MSC2) for the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin (FUUCA). Calling a minister is one of the most important and sacred things we do as a congregation. So your service on this committee is essential to our success as a church. We appreciate the time and effort you will put into this venture. In order to fulfill your duties as MSC2 committee member, we ask that you do the following as you carry out these duties:

1. Adhere to the UUA guidelines and timelines.
2. Consult and collaborate with Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Rev. Chris Jimmerson and each other.
3. Make decisions collectively and collaboratively and limit all discussions to times when all members are present.
4. Listen deeply and fully to each other and to congregants, seeking first to understand.
5. Represent the whole church.
6. Assure that all constituencies within our congregation are heard and represented in the gatherings and surveys you conduct.
7. Abide by the [covenant of healthy relations](#) adopted by FUUCA.

In the course of your work, you will be responsible for the following deliverables:

1. Congregational record submitted to the UUA
2. Congregational surveys and search parties
3. Reviewing ministerial records of applicants
4. Preliminary interviews
5. Offsite interviews
6. Presenting the final candidate to the Board of Trustees

Again, we thank you for your work and wish blessings upon it.

Sincerely,

FUUCA Board of Trustees

Charge to the FUUCA MSC2

To the Ministerial Search Committee:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the second Ministerial Search Committee (MSC2) for the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin (FUUCA). Calling a minister is one of the most important and sacred things we do as a congregation. So your service on this committee is essential to our success as a church. We appreciate the time and effort you will put into this venture. In order to fulfill your duties as MSC2 committee member, we ask that you do the following as you carry out these duties:

1. Adhere to the UUA guidelines and timelines.
2. Consult and collaborate with Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Rev. Chris Jimmerson and each other. Maybe include UUA Transitions Office representative here.
3. Make decisions collectively and collaboratively and limit all discussions to times when all members are present.
4. Listen deeply and fully to each other and to congregants, seeking first to understand.
5. Represent the whole church.
6. Assure that all constituencies within our congregation are heard and represented in the gatherings and surveys you conduct.
7. Abide by the covenant of healthy relations adopted by FUUCA.

In the course of your work, you will be responsible for the following deliverables:

1. Prepare and submit congregational record submitted to the UUA
 2. Conduct congregational surveys and search parties
 3. Review ministerial records of applicants
 4. Conduct preliminary interviews with candidates (anything about input from Rev. Chris?)
 5. Observe the Offsite candidate's sermon and service leadership at an offsite UU congregation interviews
 - 5.6. Present the final candidate to the congregation for a vote to accept or reject the MSC2's recommendation to call the proposed candidate as a co-lead settled minister
 7. Present the final candidate to the Board of Trustees Don't think they have to present to the board???
 8. If the candidate is called, work with the Board of Trustees to negotiate the candidate's contract.
6. If the search is unsuccessful, the duties of the MSC2 are complete, and the church re-enters the search process the following year.

Commented [1]: We might want to add that we want the search committee to be present to support their candidate at the congregational meeting where we vote on the candidate.

Again, we thank you for your work and wish blessings upon it.

Sincerely,

Part of Widening the Circle of Concern (<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/uuaorg/2023-02/016_Accountability_and_Resources_Widening_the_Circle.mp3

“Racism is particularly alive and well in America. It is America’s original sin and, as it is institutionalized at all levels of society, its most persistent and intractable evil. Though racism inflicts massive suffering, few American theologians have even bothered to address white supremacy as a moral evil and as a radical contradiction of our humanity and religious identities.”

—James Cone, “Theology’s Great Sin”

“A theology of liberation is part of the work for a certain type of community, one in which freedom is possible, one always aware of the historical and material threats to the human sociality and existence that it values. Liberation theologians are not concerned with the essence of human being per se, but with the creation or maintenance of a specific form of human existence. In our work for communities of justice and peace, it is crucial that we remember how easily structures of [kinship] are obliterated.”

—Sharon D. Welch, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity*

Background and Trends

As noted earlier in this report, many people of color did not wish to share their individual experiences with the Commission because their stories had been told and retold to no avail. Many told of having not seen any change in the systems that had injured them, and of their frustration in and unwillingness to continue to support such systems.

To restate: our concern here has been with systemic change and so our interest in individual stories was to look for patterns that revealed where our systems held or reinforced bias. Continuing to do so and to develop systemic capacity to do so is important.

A growing awareness of the inequities based in disparities created by bias has led to calls for accountability, especially by members of newer generations. Without any outlet for the reporting and analysis of such incidents, ugly divisions will continue to arise.

Ongoing monitoring is needed to continue to track progress toward equity, inclusion, and diversity. Continued assessment should be rooted in dialogue with groups representing Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and other people marginalized within Unitarian Universalism.

The abandonment of anti-oppression work and investment in younger leaders that occurred after 2005 left us ill-equipped to meet the rapid-fire changes of today. We need to have mechanisms that sustainably ensure inclusion and innovation despite efforts to resist change.

Active attention and deep commitment to long-term progressive structural change address the *satisfaction* and *guarantees of non-repetition* requirements of reparations as defined by the United Nations.

Structures critical to the development and promotion of Unitarian Universalism, including the UU Ministers Association, Liberal Religious Educators Association, Association for UU Music Ministries, Association of UU Administrators, and the UU Association of Membership Professionals should all be explicit about their need to be accountable and active in promoting system changes to combat oppression, racism, and white supremacy culture.

When we consider that full reparations require both cessation and guarantee, we understand that we need mechanisms to ensure that cessation is ongoing, and restitution is continued until satisfaction.

“Bible Defense of Slavery,” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

This poem was written on the eve of the Civil War. The author was both African Methodist Episcopal and Unitarian.

Take sackcloth of the darkest dye,
 And shroud the pulpits round!
 Servants of Him that cannot lie,
 Sit mourning on the ground.

Let holy horror blanch each cheek,
 Pale every brow with fears;
 And rocks and stones, if ye could speak,
 Ye well might melt to tears!

Let sorrow breathe in every tone,
 In every strain ye raise;
 Insult not God's majestic throne
 With th' mockery of praise.

A "reverend" man, whose light should be
 The guide of age and youth,
 Brings to the shrine of Slavery
 The sacrifice of truth!

For the direst wrong by man imposed,
 Since Sodom's fearful cry,
 The word of life has been unclos'd,
 To give your God the lie.

Oh! When ye pray for heathen lands,
 And plead for their dark shores,
 Remember Slavery's cruel hands
 Make heathens at your doors.

Recommendation

Accountability should be embedded in the structure of the Boards of the Association and other key organizations, including all affiliated and professional organizations.

For equity, inclusiveness, and diversity to flourish in our Association, a united commitment must be reflected in the identity documents of the Association and all affiliate organizations. The differing practices and levels of commitment from structural entity to structural entity within our Association is one of the ways

Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and members of other historically marginalized groups are injured over and over again.

Differences in commitments, structures, and practices among affiliate groups dilute and endanger these critical commitments. Professional groups are wrestling with these at differing levels and, when engaged in anti-oppressive work, can be critical levers for change. Other groups, such as camps and conference centers, when failing to adopt contemporary standards, impede our progress as an Association. The scope of our work did not allow for the full review of all these structures; however, the issue of discrepancies was well documented in the testimonies and conversations collected.

- **Action:** Include in the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association **an explicit commitment to become anti-oppressive and equitable and to serve the full diversity of those who resonate with our theological tradition.**
- **Action:** Initiate a Board-driven process to develop such a statement and present it to the General Assembly of Congregations for inclusion in the bylaws of the UUA no later than 2022.
- **Action:** Request that all Unitarian Universalist–related organizations examine their commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity work and include such a commitment in their bylaws.
- **Action:** Using the example of congregations who have already adopted such statements, develop a sample statement for inclusion in congregational bylaws.

Recommendation

In the focus groups and other conversations as well as within the meetings of the Commission, sorrow was expressed about the time that has been lost because we did not maintain a continual commitment to anti-oppression practice. Had this been adapted and continued rather than stopped and disregarded during the last decade and a half, the explosive incidents and deep divisions that have affected our Association at a time when religious life itself is challenged in US society would not have occurred. Whether we will survive this leadership malfeasance is yet to be determined; what is clear is that we cannot afford to engage in it again. The following are actions we recommend for the UUA Board of Trustees and president.

- **Action:** Adopt goals by 2021, report progress on these goals at GA each year, and codify this requirement in the bylaws.
- **Action:** Provide annual report to the General Assembly of Congregations by the UUA president on goals and progress toward those goals of equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Recommendation

The UUA should establish an ongoing independent body to identify systemic changes and monitor accountability on work toward equity, inclusion, and diversity. This body should be based on representatives of groups of oppressed people and should have direct representation on the Association Board.

One of the issues that we have had in Unitarian Universalism is that we have set up structures that are accountable to individuals rather than to representative groups, which undermines our democratic process. It also creates tremendous amounts of stress on those representatives, especially when they are from marginalized populations. A model that we should look at is the accountability group that was used for the Justice General Assembly in 2010. That group had representatives from a variety of identity-based groups, and those representatives met together to discuss issues of accountability.

Using identity-based groups is a good method because our larger Unitarian Universalist culture cannot support certain groups of individuals. People come together in these groups because of the marginalization they experience in our larger culture, and this is a good way to make sure that we are accountable to communities rather than to individuals.

- **Action:** Establish an independent body through a vote at General Assembly to consist of one representative and one alternate from identity-based groups, including DRUUMM, BLUU, TRUUsT, and EqUUal Access if they are willing to participate. Membership for this panel should be reviewed every two years to include all relevant groups and to make sure the groups that are included have membership lists and at least one membership meeting a year. In addition, the Nominating Committee should appoint two at-large members and the UUA Board of Trustees should appoint one member who will represent the group on the Board. This representative should be confirmed by a vote of the new body focused on accountability and systemic change.
- **Action:** Recognize accountable congregational partnerships for purposes of equity, inclusion, and diversity at the local congregational and community levels. Amplify practices that include long-term investments in relationships with and regular donations of financial resources to partners serving in communities that are under-resourced.
- **Action:** Provide a report to the Association annually at GA on a set of metrics to be submitted no later than the 2021 GA. Metrics could include the percentage of UUA employees who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, or who hold other marginalized identities, the percentage of the budget that is devoted to our work on an annual basis, the number of complaints received around racial concerns, and the number of new intentional communities that have been created to support the values of new generations.

Recommendation

Those responsible for managing and negotiating in times of change and conflict should have training in anti-oppression work.

At certain times in the life cycle of religious organizations, including times of conflict, biases, racism, and other -isms intensify. When tensions are high, people may not monitor themselves as carefully and systems that are inadequate to meet today's needs may show their flaws. For this reason, leaders who facilitate discussions at

such times must have particular training in anti-oppressive practices. Professional associations have “good officers” trained to assist in times of conflict between religious professionals and congregations or among religious professionals. This training has not historically included training in anti-oppression work. Since a growing number of these incidents revolve around issues of demographic difference, this can no longer be optional.

Similarly, agreement on a common set of standards among all the professional organizations is also needed. These officers exist to maintain the highest standards of ethics and values during times of conflict, and such cannot be maintained without proficiency in anti-oppression work.

- **Action:** Identify best practices for inclusion, equity, and diversity for congregational nominating committees and make them available through all communications means and through leadership events.
- **Action:** Include training in anti-oppression practices as a standard part of interim minister training because of the opportunity to address issues of systemic bias during interim times.
- **Action:** Develop capacity within all good officer (and UUA regional staff) teams to lead and facilitate conversations around harm, injury, and conflict in anti-oppression practices.
- **Action:** Curate models of how to audit for oppressive practices at the congregational level.

Take-Aways

- Accountability structures should be built into the bylaws and have direct representation on the Board of Trustees and should include accountability to representative groups.
- We may not survive the past decades’ disruption of our commitment to anti-oppression work. We know we cannot afford to abandon it again because of its larger societal significance.
- Work to counter oppressive practice in our systems should be embedded in all levels of the UUA, including at the congregational and community levels.
- Regular reporting on our progress can keep us focused and on-track.
- All who facilitate conversations during times of conflict should be trained in anti-oppression and how to address systemic bias.

PREVIOUS: Restoration and Reparations

(<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/restoration-reparations>)

UP: Widening the Circle of Concern

(<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>)

NEXT: Final Thoughts

(<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/commthoughts>)

Get a print-friendly version of Accountability and Resources (<https://www.uua.org/book/export/html/43821>) , including all sub-pages.

For more information contact administration@uua.org.

**First UU Austin Board of Trustees
Meeting Process Review**

Date: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____

Ratings: S indicates Satisfactory; NI indicates Needs Improvement; UNS indicates Unsatisfactory

1. Preparation

The board was prepared for this meeting. S NI UNS

2. Action Items - Previous

Last month's action items were completed. S NI UNS

3. Timing

Appropriate time was allocated and spent on agenda items. S NI UNA

4. Policy Governance

Policy governance was observed. S NI UNS

5. Covenant

The board covenant was observed. S NI UNS

6. Participation

All board members had the opportunity to participate in discussions and decision-making. S NI UNS

7. Action Items - Current

Clear action items were identified from this meeting. S NI UNS

8. Overall

S NI UNS

Comments: