

Proposed changes to the UUCR Bylaws

The UUCR Board is proposing changes to the By-laws that bring them into line with our Policy Manual, current practices, and UUA best-practice recommendations.

Some history: In 2016, the UUCR Board adopted a written Policy Manual. There was no centralized written record of the policies of the church at that time. The board committee consulted with committees and groups from all over the church, and the resultant Policy Manual reflected current practices. At that point, it became clear that some of these practices did not match up with parts of the standing by-laws. As the discussion developed, some further changes were also identified: the reduction of the board size, and restoring direct supervision of the church's Program Staff by the Minister. Last May, an attempt was made to present these proposed changes for a vote, but it became clear that they were inadequately explained to the congregation and there were many misconceptions. The proposal was therefore withdrawn. The current Board has reviewed all of the previous work, and recommends passage of the proposed changes as we now present them. **We welcome input from the congregation as we present this proposal.**

After two information sessions on after church on Sunday 3 February and Sunday 24 February, we plan to bring the proposal for a vote at a special congregational meeting in the second half of the church service on March 17.

The current proposal is a continuation of the Board's on-going effort since 2016 to articulate and regularize church practices and policies so that they are clear to all. This is especially important in an organization like ours in which there is constant turnover in leadership and most positions are volunteer. Below, we group the changes under 3 headings, with a rationale for each group.

BOARD SIZE CHANGE

- The UUCR Board size is being changed from ten people to seven people. This change is being proposed because
 1. The UUCR Coordinating Council has been eliminated since this organization has not been operating effectively for a number of years. The Council was headed by "VP Council" which was a UUCR Board position
 2. There has been a general consensus that obtaining candidates for UUCR president is difficult due to the three year commitment. By eliminating the UUCR Board position "Past President", this commitment is reduced to two years and it is hoped that it should be correspondingly easier to obtain candidates for our presidency.
 3. One member-at-large position is being eliminated from the UUCR Board to keep the Board size small and intimate, and to ensure that the UUCR Board has an odd number of members to make tie votes less likely.

LEGAL AND CONSISTENCY CHANGES

- Certain changes to the UUCR Bylaws are being proposed to make the document more consistent, understandable, grammatically proper, and legally proper. These changes are **not** being proposed to change the general understanding or interpretation of the UUCR Bylaws. Changes proposed include:
 - Capitalization corrections
 - Deletion of unnecessary words
 - Correction of punctuation
 - Font and italic changes
 - Clearer presentation of the revision status of the UUCR Bylaws
 - Rewording where necessary to make the Bylaws more understandable
 - Adding cross reference information to other parts of the UUCR Bylaws
 - Gender corrections: “s/he” becomes “he or she”
 - Deletion of duplication when Bylaw requirements are listed more than once. For example, Article IV, Section B, 5 was duplicated in Article VII, Section D.
 - To clarify understanding, some text relating to the Minister has been moved from Article VII (Board) to Article X (Minister)
 - The Committee on Harmonious Relations has been eliminated since it presented legal problems when licensed counselors participated. This Committee has not been active in recent years.

PERSONNEL SUPERVISION CHANGES

- The Minister will now directly supervise the Program Staff (DRLD, Music Director, and Congregational Administrator/Assistant), including the power to hire and fire in consultation with the Personnel Committee *and with Board approval*. See section X.C. A slight change in the wording of IX.C. is also included to reflect this change.

This change is being proposed because:

1. The Board and Personnel Committee have found it difficult to supervise staff with whom they are not in daily contact.
2. We are aware of past history in the church that has led to some distrust in placing too much power in the hands of the Minister. We feel that emphasis on clear and proper Personnel Committee consultation and Board supervision will enable us to avoid such problems in the future. Approval of the form and terms of staff contracts remains firmly in control of the Board.
3. This change brings us more in line with UUA-recommended best practices and with our colleague UU congregations. We feel this change is in line with our ambition to attract and retain top-notch ministerial talent in the future.