

**UUA Board of Trustees**

**Orientation Manual**

**February 2006**

This publication was created by the  
UUA Board's Best Practices Committee.

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## UUA Board Orientation Manual

### Revision History:

#### February 2006:

- Incorporates revisions to the “Speaking with One Voice” policy, as adopted by Board motion in January 2006.

#### December 2005:

- Revisions to “speaking with one voice” practices. Clarifying use of the [board@uua.org](mailto:board@uua.org) email list; distinguishing board email conversations from board & staff conversations.
- Some miscellaneous tips from new trustees. See “Culture at Board Meetings” section.

#### July 2005:

- Updates for arrival of new Trustees. Speaking with one voice practices. Role of mentors. “Statement of Call” added. Open Meetings. Updated Acronyms list.

# UUA Board Orientation Manual

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# UUA Board Orientation Manual

## 1. Introduction

This UUA Board Orientation Manual is intended to give you, a new or prospective member of the UUA Board of Trustees, a general introduction to service on the Board. It will outline what to expect and what will be expected of you. This manual forms the basis of new Board member orientation, which is held each October, but you will find it helpful to review this manual before that orientation.

This manual will not answer every question you may have about service on the UUA Board, and there are many resources that are available to you. If you have other questions, you should start by consulting your Board mentor, your Working Group leader, the relevant Committee chair, or the Moderator.

Finally, this manual and the Board orientation itself are the responsibility of the UUA Board's Best Practices Committee. If you have questions, comments, or corrections to this manual, please consult the members of that committee:

John Blevins, Chair  
Pam Allen-Thompson  
Paul Rickter  
Joan Lund  
Sue Stukey  
Ed Wilde

February 10, 2006

## 2. Basic Information

### ***Getting Started as a New Trustee***

Serving on the UUA Board is a significant commitment and you are encouraged to exercise self-care when starting out in your role as UUA Trustee. Every new Board member takes time to get up to speed with the work of the Board and you are not expected to "hit the ground running" at the first meeting. Make sure to take the time to grow into your role as Trustee.

### ***Youth Trustee, Youth Observer***

The board currently has one Youth Trustee, with full voting rights and privileges equivalent to all other Trustees. The Youth Trustee is elected by the delegates of General Assembly to a two-year term in odd-numbered years. The Board also has one Youth Observer, who is elected annually to a one-year term by the Youth Caucus at General Assembly. The Observer cannot vote, but in all other respects serves as a Trustee. They must be 14 to 20 years of age at the time of their election. Both the Youth Trustee and Youth Observer have their expenses reimbursed just as the other Trustees do.

The Youth Trustee position is documented in the Association By-Laws. The Observer position is established by policy.

### ***Mentors***

Each new trustee will be assigned a mentor to help you with your introduction to your new role. This mentor will typically be a co-member of the board Working Group to which you are assigned. Feel free to ask them any question.

### ***Orientation In-Person***

Each new trustee will be invited to join an orientation session during their first full board meeting. Typically this will precede the actual board meeting, and may require your early arrival at the meeting. Topics such as these will be addressed:

- Review of contents of this manual
- Review of contents of Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- Meeting with Executive Vice President Kay Montgomery to review any board/staff relationship questions
- Introductions to key staff; staff organization overview; review of the Leadership Council
- Review of the board's anti-racist, anti-oppression, multi-cultural focus and approach. (AR/AO/MC)
- Update on current status of the governance project

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- Meeting with the Financial Advisor to review their role, and to review the purpose of the Audit Committee
- Ministry to and for Youth
- Status of Lifespan Faith Development work
- Engagement with staff during board, committee and Working Group meetings
- Engagement with District and congregational Presidents at GA
- Use of computers at Pickett & Elliott houses
- Computer facilities at GA, email tools at GA
- Getting photocopies and printing assistance
- Responding to your questions

### ***Policies and Procedures Manual***

As of Spring 2005, the Policies and Procedures Manual for the Board is undergoing a major update, and you will receive an updated copy as soon as it is available (summer 2005?). It should be posted on UUA.ORG at that same time.

### ***UUA Directory***

Every trustee will be provided a personal copy of the UUA Directory in the fall of the year, as soon as each new edition is printed.

### ***List of Acronyms and Terms***

A large number of acronyms come up during the course of UUA Board work (UUA, GA, BOT, etc.). The Board has a policy of spelling the full term for these acronyms the first time they are used. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with these acronyms -- a thorough, but by no means complete list follows:

#### **Terms Relating to the Board of Trustees**

BOT	Board of Trustees
UUA	Unitarian Universalist Association
WG	Working Group

#### **Districts (see list of districts in following pages)**

#### **Staff Groups and Offices at the UUA**

GA	General Assembly
IDBM	Identity-Based Ministries
Leadership Council	Staff members reporting directly to the Exec VP
LFD	Lifespan Faith Development
OBGLTC	Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns
WO	Washington Office, also UUAWO
YACM	Young Adult & Campus Ministry

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### Related/Associate Organizations

CLF	Church of the Larger Fellowship
CUC	Canadian Unitarian Council
CYF	Church of the Younger Fellowship (part of CLF)
CUUPS	Covenant of UU Pagans
C-UUYAN	Continental UU Young Adult Network
DRUUMM	Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries
IARF	International Association of Religious Freedom
ICUU	International Council of Unitarians and Universalists
LREDA	Liberal Religious Educators Association
LRCS	Liberal Religious Charitable Society
LUUNA	Latina/o UU Networking Association
PCC	Partner Church Council (Romania)
UUMA	UU Ministers Association
UUSC	UU Service Committee (a separately chartered organization)
UU-UNO	Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
UUWF	UU Women's Federation
WCRP	World Conference on Religion and Peace
YRUU	Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

### Other Terms

AO	Anti-Oppression(s)
APF	Annual Program Fund (Congregational financial support of UUA)
A/PIC	Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus (of DRUUM)
AR	Anti-Racism
AR/AO/MC	Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression/Multi-Cultural
Big Chunk Time	Blocks of time set aside during board meetings to focus together on special topics.
BOR	Board of Review (ministerial appeals and grievances)
BPC	Best Practices Committee of the Board
CBPC	Compensation, Benefits, and Pensions Committee
CBCO	Congregationally Based Community Organizing (used interchangeably with FBCO, q.v.)
Cmte	Committee
CoA	Commission on Appraisal or
CoA	Coming of Age
CoC	Committee on Committees (Board appointments)
ConCon	Continental Conference (of YRUU)
CPLC	Congregational Properties and Loan Commission
CSW	Commission on Social Witness
Ctte	Committee
CU2 C2	Council of UU Camps and Conference Centers
DPA	District Presidents Association
DRE	Director of Religious Education

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FBCO	Faith Based Community Organizing (also see CBCO q.v.)
FMTF	Family Matters Task Force
FTP	Fulfilling the Promise
Holdeen India Fund	Trust funds managed as specified by donor Holdeen
JTW	Journey Toward Wholeness (AR/AO/MC)
JTWTC	Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee
MC	Multi-cultural; multi-culturalism
MFC	Ministerial Fellowship Committee
MRE	Minister of Religious Education
MSR	Ministerial Settlement Representative
OBGLTC	UUA Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns
OWL	Our Whole Lives (sexuality curriculum)
PACKET, The	The Board Meeting Agenda. The “Late Packet” includes materials received too late for mailing or emailing with the primary Packet, and will be available for you on arrival at the meeting.
PC	Planning Committee, esp. GA Planning Committee, GAPC q.v.
PC	Partner Church (Romania)
PC	Politically Correct, colloquial
PC or PoC	People of Color
PCC	Partner Church Council (Romania)
PM	Parish Minister

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**Queer** This word appears to taking on new colloquial meaning, as distinct from “Gay”. Here is the definition as sent out by YRUU Steering Cmte July 2005: “An umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, transgendered folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. “Queer” originated as a derogatory word. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as queer to distance themselves from the rigid categorizations of “straight” and “gay.” Some transgendered, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.”

Who should use the word queer?  
UUA’s Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns (OBGLTC) believes that the word “queer” should only be used by those people who identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, and/or transgender and choose to use it. As with a derogatory term that has been reclaimed by a marginalized community, it is most appropriate for those identified as such to use the term. Since the term has historically been used as a form of oppression, great care should be taken when using the word.  
See <http://www.uua.org/obgltc/resource/queer102.html> where you will find an ongoing discussion of this evolution.

REACH	Religious Education Action Clearing House
RSCC	Regional Sub Committees on Candidacy (part of MFC)
SC	Steering Committee (of YRUU)
Shelter Rock	Wealthy congregation on Long Island; major funder
UUIFP	UU Funding Panel (grants from Shelter Rock congregation)
YA	Young Adults (18-35 years)
YAC	Youth/Adult Committee. Youth => under 18 years of age.
YATF	Youth Adult Task Force

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### ***List of Committees***

The following list of committees is divided into committees that are made up exclusively of UUA Board members, those that are elected by General Assembly and those that are appointed by the UUA Board. For these last two types of committees, the name of the officer or staff group that works with the committee is listed in parentheses. In addition, the names of committees and task forces that are appointed by the Moderator and by the Staff are also included here. These appointments are recommended by the CoC and approved by the Board of Trustees.

### **Board Working Groups**

- Our Congregations
- Growth
- Our Association
- Living Our Faith (formerly Justice)

### **Board-Only Committees (comprised only of Board members)**

- Administrative Organization and Personnel Committee (AOPC)
- Anti-Racism Assessment and Monitoring Team (ARAMT)
- Best Practices
- Committee for Annual Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism
- Committee on Committees (COC)
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee

### **Elected Committees (elected by GA delegates)**

- Board of Review (Executive Vice President)
- Commission on Appraisal (President)
- Commission on Social Witness (Advocacy & Witness) (includes two Board appointees)
- General Assembly Planning Committee (Conference Planning)
- Nominating Committee (Executive Vice President)

### **Board Appointed Committees (and the related staff group)**

These appointments are recommended by the Committee on Committees (CoC) and then reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

- Accessibilities Committee (Identity-Based Ministries)
- Annual Program Fund Committee (Financial Development)
- Audit Committee (Financial Advisor, VP Finance)
- Compensation, Benefits, and Pensions Committee (Church Staff Finance)
- Congregational Properties and Loan Commission (Congregational Services)
- Curriculum Advisory Committee (Lifespan Faith Development)

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- Election Campaign Practices Committee (Executive Vice President)
- Internet Technology and Electronic Communications Committee (Executive Vice President)
- Investment Committee (Treasurer)
- Journey Towards Wholeness Transformation Committee (President and Identity-Based Ministries)
- Melcher Book Award Committee (Executive Vice President)
- Ministerial Fellowship Committee (Ministry and Professional Leadership)
- Openness Implementation Committee (Board of Trustees)
- Panel on Theological Education (President & Ministry and Professional Leadership)
- Regional Subcommittees on Candidacy (RSCC)
- Socially Responsible Investing Committee (Advocacy & Witness)
- UU-UN Representatives (International Office)
- UUA Funding Panels

### **Moderator Appointed Task Forces**

- None at this time

### **Staff Appointed Committees and Task Forces**

- Ministerial Scholarship Committee
- Holdeen India Program Board
- Curriculum Advisory Committee
- Skinner House Board
- Family Matters Task Force (FMTF)
- Safe Congregations Team
- Pilot Project for New Ministers
- Borden Sermon Awards Committee
- Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT)
- Creating Safe Congregations-New Edition Team
- Public Witness Team
- Large Congregations Team
- UU Scholars
- Regional Subcommittees on Candidacy (RSCC) Evaluation Panel
- Beacon Preaching Award Committee
- Donor Advised Fund Advisory Panel

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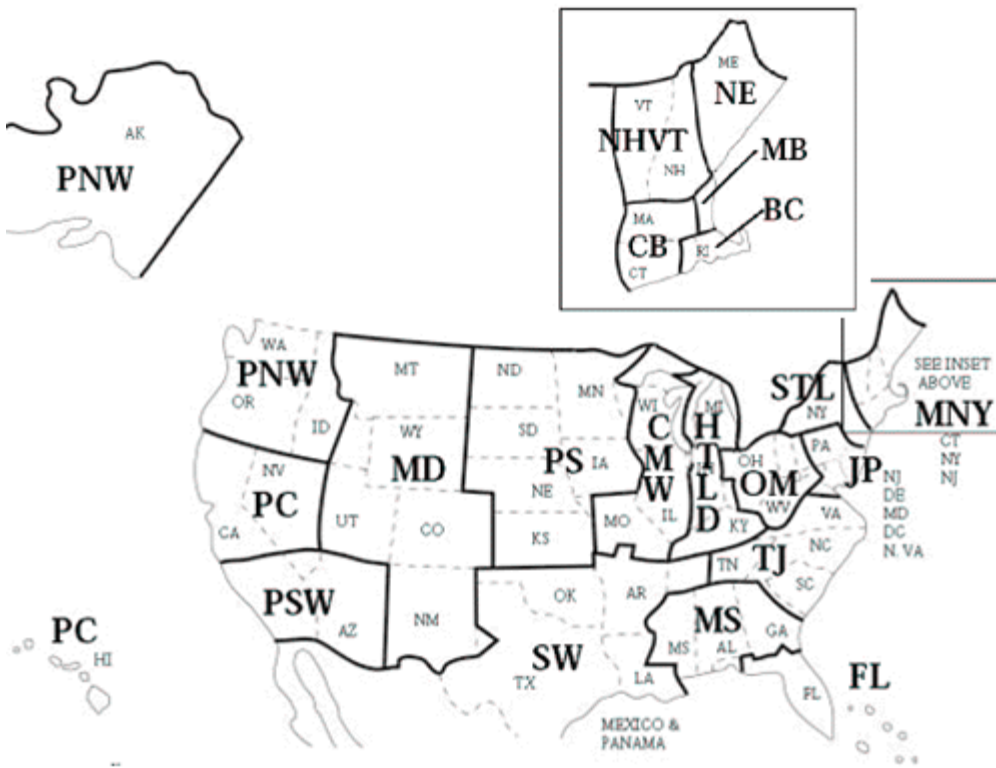
## List of UUA Districts

The map below shows the locations and general boundaries of the 20 districts that comprise the UUA. This map uses the following abbreviations to identify these districts:

BC - Ballou-Channing  
CMW - Central Midwest  
CB - Clara Barton  
FL - Florida  
HTLD - Heartland  
JP - Joseph Priestley  
MB - Massachusetts Bay

MNY - Metro New York  
MS - Mid-South  
MD - Mountain Desert  
NHVT - New Hampshire/Vermont  
NE - Northeast  
OM - Ohio Meadville  
PC - Pacific Central

PNW - Pacific Northwest  
PSW - Pacific Southwest  
PS - Prairie Star  
STL - St. Lawrence  
SW - Southwest  
TJ - Thomas Jefferson



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### 3. Expectations of Board Members

As Board members, we take seriously our responsibilities toward our association of congregations and toward our fellow Board members. The following is a list of expectations of Board members.

#### ***Standards of Ethical Conduct***

All Board members are expected to meet basic standards of ethical conduct. These include (but are not limited to):

- following through on commitments (or asking for help)
- abstaining from votes in which you might have a financial or other personal interest
- behaving at all times in a way that reflects positively on the reputation of the Board and the UUA.

#### ***Board “Statement of Call”***

In the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005, the UUA Board, under the leadership of Rev. Will Saunders, adopted the following “**Statement of Call**” at our April 2005 meeting.

We, the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association, are called to lead our Association of faith communities through a web of independence and interdependence to

- deeper spiritual awareness and nurture,
- ways and means for living our faith in the world
- the promise that the many might become and be one

We do this by:

- being a faith community
- telling our Unitarian and Universalist stories so that our tradition lives
- acknowledging the primacy of congregations and fostering their health
- developing professional and lay leadership
- being an agency of change through frequent re-examination and renewal of our vision, mission and ministry
- listening to, mirroring and helping make concrete hopes and dreams in the larger Unitarian Universalist movement
- aligning our patterns of organization and behavior with a vision of right relations based on trust, generosity and hospitality
- being prudent stewards of our human and financial resources
- collaboration with other Unitarian Universalist entities
- participating in diverse multicultural partnerships
- and in every respect, acting with humility.

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### **Board Mission and Covenant**

In the fall of 2003, the Board adopted the following Mission statement and Covenant describing how we will do our work together.

#### **Board of Trustees Mission and Covenant Unitarian Universalist Association Autumn, 2003**

##### **Mission:**

We come together as a spiritual community of religious leaders – committed to anti-oppression, antiracism and multiculturalism – to focus and direct the resources of the Unitarian Universalist Association toward the health, growth and transformation of our congregations, our movement and our world.

##### **Covenant:**

We covenant with one another to work together in faith, with hope and love, all the while upholding the spirit and promoting the values of our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes.

To these ends we agree to:

Presume good faith and stay in **relationship** even in disagreement or conflict by:

- Welcoming the diverse perspectives and styles each of us brings
- Being honest and direct with each other
- Being supportive of leadership
- Actively listening to each other
- Asking questions, rather than making assumptions, about suspicions or concerns
- Speaking out when something is of serious concern
- Working collaboratively with each other/moderator/president/staff
- Respecting each others' different places on the Journey Toward Wholeness
- Practicing confession and forgiveness

Maintain **accountability** by:

- Being prepared
- Following through on commitments
- Being responsible for self-care
- Being attentive to managing the energy level and spiritual tenor of BOT meeting
- Taking ownership of BOT decisions
- Renegotiating agreements when we think it will benefit the work
- Respecting boundaries around notes and confidentiality
- Exercising/encouraging individual/collective power to further the good for our  
Association and our Congregations
- Viewing BOT work through anti-oppression lenses

Practice **process** by:

- Being respectful of BOT time and mindfully present when doing BOT business
- Focusing on policy issues, not management

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Working toward balance between inclusive process/closure on substantial matters  
Minimizing side comments and making an effort not to interrupt  
Avoiding repeating established points  
Not redoing the work of working groups and committees  
Making our working group and committee processes transparent

### ***Role and Expectations of a UUA Trustee***

In April 2003, the Board adopted the following description of the role and expectations of a UUA Trustee.

Our central role as Trustees is to:

- Set policy for the UUA
- Work closely with the Administration
- Oversee financial affairs
- Do long-range planning and attend to the welfare of the institution
- Do our work through an anti-racist, anti-oppression lens

We hold ourselves to the expectations that we will:

- Speak with one voice to and for the Association
- Voice concerns in Board discussions respectfully
- Rise above disagreements and move on, not undermining the Board's position
- Model our Unitarian Universalist Purposes and Principles
- Relate with candor and trust, always striving to be in right relationship

In addition, District Trustees are expected to:

- Serve as a communication link between the UUA and their district and its congregations
- Communicate with their District congregations, board, and staff, via district newsletter, email, visits, etc.
- Be informed by their district but be accountable to all the congregations of the UUA
- In accordance with their District bylaws and rules, serve on or attend District board meetings
- Be an active presence in the District. (Districts are encouraged to determine reasonable district roles and expectations so that the Trustee is most effective and the job manageable for a broader spectrum of candidates.)

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### ***Speaking with One Voice*** (from Board Motion January, 2006)

You may have noted that the 2003 Roles and Expectations above calls on us to speak with one voice. This statement has been interpreted in many ways. Here is our attempt to bring more clarity to the intent of the statement.

Speaking with one voice implies that you have had reasonable opportunity to participate in the debate of the issues and opportunities before the committee or board. You may have disagreed with the Board's decision, and you may say so publicly. However, once the Board makes a policy decision, and even if you do not fully support the board's position, we are each asked to do our best to help implement that policy in the spirit of moving our organization ahead in accordance with our democratic principles.

If you find you cannot in good conscience do this, then you may consult with the Moderator or First Vice-Moderator.

### ***Attendance at Board Meetings***

The Board meets together just four times per year and our time together is precious. Please make sure to attend every Board meeting unless extraordinary circumstances prevent you from doing so. The dates of upcoming Board meetings for the next several years are included in each set of Board minutes and you're encouraged to reserve these dates on your personal calendar.

### ***Board Meeting Agendas***

All Board members should be familiar with all topics that will be under consideration at each Board meeting. Therefore, please study thoroughly your Board Agenda (colloquially known as "the packet"), which is mailed or emailed to you a few weeks before the Board meeting.

If you had your Agenda packet emailed to you, you may ask that a paper copy be awaiting you at Pickett-Eliot when you arrive.

Materials that became available after the regular packet was mailed or emailed are included in a special "late packet". Pick up your late packet by the front door at Pickett-Eliot when you arrive for the Board meeting, and read these materials as soon as possible.

### ***Being Recognized to Speak: Use of Orange Cards & Microphones***

Because Board meetings typically involve about thirty people sitting around a large table, and it is critical that we follow procedures that allow our deliberations to proceed as smoothly as possible. Board members are each given a 5x7 orange cardboard card, which you must raise if you wish to speak. The Secretary keeps track of requests to speak, and notifies the Moderator of those wishing to speak. The Moderator recognizes speakers in

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the order in which they raised their cards. Because of the limited time we have together, please exercise care when considering whether to speak -- if your view has been expressed by another Board member, indicate your agreement in an appropriate non-verbal manner.

To make it possible for everyone to hear and to maintain an audio record of Board meetings, please use the microphones, which are distributed around the Board table.

### ***Committee and Working Group Assignments***

Board members are typically asked to serve in various roles, including serving on Board-only committees (for example, Finance Committee, Anti-Racism Assessment and Monitoring Team) and/or as the Board liaison to one or more other committees (for example, GA Planning Committee, APF Continental Committee). In addition, every Board member serves on one of the four Board working groups. A new Board member may be asked to serve as Assistant Secretary.

These appointments are worked out by the **Committee on Committees**. They work to take advantage of your experience and acknowledge your interests, while they also try to bring new insights to committee work. In addition they work to help develop new Board leadership over time, so that we will always have experienced persons in key roles. You will typically receive some new assignments every two years, as new members join the board.

### ***Familiarity with UUA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures***

Members of the Board are asked to be familiar with the UUA bylaws, policies and procedures and consult them when appropriate. These documents guide many of the processes we follow. You are encouraged to have an up-to-date copy of the UUA bylaws, policies and rules and to bring them with you to Board meetings. By-laws are available on the UUA.ORG web site. There will also be a copy available at Pickett and Eliot for board use.

As of Spring 2005, the Policies and Procedures Manual for the Board is undergoing a major update, and you will receive an updated copy as soon as it is available. It should be posted on UUA.ORG at that same time.

### ***Access to Congregational Financial Support Records***

As a Trustee, you may request, from the Stewardship & Development staff group, records of congregational giving to the Annual Program Fund. They can provide you with reports showing giving levels, membership numbers, and congregational budgets for the prior decade. Many Trustees like to have this information in hand when they visit or are otherwise working with a congregation.

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### ***Open Meetings***

At General Assembly 2004, the delegates adopted a new “openness” rule, G 2.1, which calls for open meetings as the default arrangement for all our business.

This rule reads as follows (and can be found in our current By-Laws):

#### **Rule G-2.1. Democratic Process.**

Because the Association is committed to the use of the democratic process, because its governing institutions are accountable to our congregations, because accessibility is critical to countering systemic and institutional oppression and because openness and trust are characteristics of a healthy religious community, the UUA Board shall establish policies to allow for the maximum transparency of its proceedings and of the proceedings of all UUA committees, commissions and task forces, consistent with their effective functioning. These policies shall include:

- providing advance notice of dates and locations of regular business meetings, and making agendas, reports and minutes available promptly;
- providing avenues for comment on issues on the meetings’ agendas;
- accommodating observers at regular business meetings, with the exception of executive sessions.

Implementing this rule shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The Board shall designate a specific person or committee to whom comments about adherence to this rule may be addressed. The Board shall report to the General Assembly annually for the next three years on its implementation.

Please be familiar with this new rule, and help insure its appropriate application throughout our work.

An “Openness Implementation Committee” was formed in the fall of 2004 to oversee the implementation of this rule.

### ***Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression and Multi-Culturalism Training***

The Board has a long-standing commitment to make progress toward the Board becoming a more anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural institution. To maintain this progress, all Board members are expected to complete anti-racism training as quickly as possible after they join the Board. Talk with your mentor about how you might accomplish this. There will typically be a brief gathering on this subject at each Boston board meeting.

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Two additional resources which come highly recommended are:

“**Soul Work**”, edited by Marjorie Bowens-Wheatly and Nancy Palmer Jones, Skinner House Books, 2003. ISBN 1-55896-445-2

“**Uprooting Racism**”, Paul Kivel, copyright 2002 by Paul Kivel, New Society Publishers, PO Box 189, Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X0, Canada. Tel: 1-800-567-6772. ISBN 0-86571-459-2

### ***Verifying Minutes of Meetings***

The official minutes of each Board meeting are taken by Kay Montgomery, Executive Vice President of the UUA. Before these minutes can be released to the public, they must be approved at the following Board meeting. To expedite the process of approval of the minutes, Kay sends out a draft copy of the minutes to all Board members via email. Please check the minutes for accuracy and return comments to Kay.

In addition, to provide details about Board meetings before the official minutes are released to the public, we release informal meeting notes within a few weeks of a Board meeting. These informal meeting notes are created by a member of the Board (or other designate) and may be reviewed by the rest of the Board for accuracy before being released.

### ***Use of Acronyms***

The Unitarian Universalist (UU) movement is filled with acronyms for various UU organizations, committees, etc. Some of these acronyms are listed earlier in this manual.

Because many new people are often confused by the use of acronyms (GA? BOT?), the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Board of Trustees (BOT) has adopted a policy that all acronyms should be spelled out in full the first time they are used, either in written or verbal communication (as demonstrated in this manual).

### ***Executive Sessions***

The Board regularly meets in Executive Session to consider items of business such as personnel or legal issues and committee appointments. Discussions that take place in Executive Session are to be treated confidentially. However, motions may be made in regular session regarding actions taken in Executive Session. These motions are included in the minutes and may be reported to our constituents.

### ***Process Observation***

To ensure that the Board is working effectively and is viewing its work through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural lens, a Trustee is asked to serve as process observer

## UUA Board Orientation Manual

at each session of our Board meetings. This observer monitors the Board's process throughout its meeting. At the close of business, the process observer reports on notable moments when the process went well or not so well, attempting to help make this a learning process.

### ***Reporting on Board Actions***

As part of your role as Trustee, you will likely want or need to report on Board actions to your district or to other stakeholders. When you report on Board actions, make sure you are acting as an ambassador from the entire Board. If you disagreed with a Board action, it's important to report that action in a way that shows respect for the Board as a whole, even if you report your disagreement with that action. Also see “Speaking with One Voice” elsewhere in this manual.

### ***Use of Email***

As part of your service on the Board, you are expected to maintain an email account and will be given a **uua.org** email alias to your email account (for example, Juanita Smith might have an email alias of [jsmith@uua.org](mailto:jsmith@uua.org)). This process will result in all email sent to you at [jsmith@uua.org](mailto:jsmith@uua.org) being forwarded to your native or everyday email address, e.g. [JuanitaSmith@earthlink.net](mailto:JuanitaSmith@earthlink.net).

Because much Board work is carried out via email, it's important to take care in using email appropriately. Keep in mind that email may not be the appropriate method of communication in all cases. For example, some sensitive issues (for example, a personnel issue or a conflict) might be better handled with a phone call or face-to-face meeting.

Note that Trustee skill levels in using email varies widely, so please take care so that you reach everyone you wish with your email communications. Some Trustees are unable to receive email attachments, for example.

### ***Email Conversations within the Board and/or with Staff***

By practice, when the board wishes to explore an issue or topic in an informal discernment process, we will address the mail *only* to [board@uua.org](mailto:board@uua.org). This allows the board to do issue clarification and policy development, for example, without unnecessarily disturbing or interrupting staff, and it helps all of us to maintain greater clarity about board and staff roles and responsibilities.

Note that the [board@uua.org](mailto:board@uua.org) email list includes senior staff (President and Exec. Vice President, in particular), and is in no way a private or confidential list. By sending only to [board@uua.org](mailto:board@uua.org), we are informing staff that they do not need to respond. They are welcome at any time to provide clarifying information or to express an opinion, but this is not expected by the board.

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If on the other hand, we specifically address [kmontgomery@uua.org](mailto:kmontgomery@uua.org) or [bsinkford@uua.org](mailto:bsinkford@uua.org) we are intentionally including them in the conversation, with an expectation that they will participate as appropriate.

It would be helpful here to also read the paragraph titled “**Staff and Board Roles in Setting and Implementing Policy**” in the “**Trustee Relationships to Staff**” section later in this manual.

### ***Outside Mail or Email Addressed to Entire Board***

Occasionally, Trustees will receive mail from an outside party addressed to the entire board, or to another large group of recipients.

It is one of our practices to *avoid* having each individual Board member compose a reply to the sender of such correspondence. If a response seems necessary, it's the Secretary's role to write a response on behalf of the entire Board. Feel free to consult with the Secretary on the content of the response. There may be occasions when a reply by the Secretary is not called for --- for example, when a letter is merely copied to the Board and not specifically addressed to the board. If in doubt, please confer with the Secretary.

In addition to the Secretary replying, the Trustee from the district where the letter originated might feel it necessary to reply personally to the letter. For example, if the letter was sent by a prominent lay leader, minister, or other staff member in your district, you may feel that it would maintain good relations within your district to reply personally.

### ***Email Lists***

Many Trustees find it valuable to join selected UUA email lists as a way of staying in touch with current topics. You may do so via UUA.ORG. For example, joining lists related to your Working Group and Committee assignments is probably an obvious step to take.

Many Trustees also employ district email lists as tools to stay in touch with district leadership. If your district does not have a district leader's email list, you may wish to ask for help in establishing such a list. Your District Executive can probably help you with this, or you can find instructions on UUA.ORG.

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### 4. Getting to Board Meetings

An important part of attending meetings of the UUA Board is actually getting to the meetings! Though a few Board members live close enough to Boston that they can drive or take public transportation to the meetings, most Board members need to purchase plane tickets and need to get to Pickett Eliot from Boston's Logan Airport. As a Board member, you will be reimbursed for all your travel expenses to and from Boston.

#### ***Buying Transportation Tickets***

The UUA works regularly with a travel agent (Ron Rajewski of Great National Travel – 617-350-6770). You may find it most convenient to buy your tickets through them, since the purchase will be billed directly to the UUA, without requiring you to get reimbursed.

You also have the option of buying your tickets via other means and getting reimbursed. Note that you can get reimbursed in advance of the meeting for your travel expenses (that is, you don't need to wait until after the meeting, when you submit your full travel expense report). Also note that the Board has adopted a policy on travel, which is included in the Travel, Meal, and Expense Guidelines (see chapter 6).

You may find that you need a full day's travel to get to and/or from Boston. If your travel plans make it necessary, you are welcome to stay an extra night at Pickett Eliot before and/or after the Board meets.

#### ***How to get to Pickett-Eliot from the Airport***

On arrival at Boston's Logan Airport, you will need to get to Pickett Eliot House on Beacon Hill. The easiest (and most expensive) way to get there is to take a taxi – just tell the driver that you want to go to 6 Mt. Vernon Place (across from 4 Joy Street). Cost is typically around \$18-\$22 one way. You will be reimbursed for your cab ride.

Note that, because Board members often leave on Sunday at around the same times, you may want to share a taxi to the airport.

As an inexpensive alternative to taking a taxi, please consider taking the subway (the "T"), for which the fare is just one dollar. From the airport, you board a free shuttle bus to the Airport T station (on the Blue Line) and ride inbound to Government Center station. At Government Center, change to the Green Line and ride one stop to Park Street. Exit the station and walk uphill across Boston Common toward the golden dome of the Massachusetts State House. Cross Beacon Street and, when you get to the State House side of the street, turn left and walk down Beacon Street. UUA headquarters is the first building on the right next to the State House grounds, but you will likely want to continue to Pickett-Eliot House, which is directly behind the UUA. To get there, turn right on the next street (Joy Street) and take another right down the second alley (Mt. Vernon Place). Pickett-Eliot is the last door on the right.

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### ***Driving to Pickett-Eliot***

People who live close enough to Boston typically drive to Board meetings. There is no parking at the UUA, but you can park in the garage under the Boston Common. The entrance to the Boston Common garage is on Charles Street between Boylston and Beacon Streets. You will be reimbursed for your parking fee and mileage.

### ***What to Do if Something Goes Wrong in Transit***

There is always the chance that something will go wrong during your trip – late flight or missed connection. If a problem will delay your arrival in Boston, you should notify Nancy Lawrence (617-948-4303), so she can notify the rest of the Board.

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### 5. Culture at Board Meetings

Among the first questions people have about UUA Board meetings concern the culture of Board meetings: How am I supposed to dress? What are accommodations like? What do people do when the Board is not formally convened?

To begin addressing these questions, it's important to understand that there are two types of Board meetings: those that happen before and after General Assembly each June, and those that happen in October, January, and April at the UUA in Boston.

#### *Meetings at General Assembly*

In accordance with UUA bylaws and rules, the Board meets on three days at the time of General Assembly (GA). Much of the work of the Board is done on the two days before GA begins, but there is also a brief meeting on the morning after GA ends. At this meeting at the end of GA, the Board takes actions that could not be taken until a vote of the GA delegates as well as reacting to and evaluating aspects of GA.

As a new Board member, you are welcome to attend the Board meetings that are held the days before GA begins. However, you are considered an observer at that meeting and do not have the right to vote. At the meeting held the day after GA ends, you are an elected member of the Board and have full voting rights.

#### **GA Accommodations and Expenses**

Seated Board members (i.e. who are **not** newly elected) will be reimbursed for GA registration, hotel accommodations, meals, and travel for the entirety of GA. Because newly elected Board members do not take office until the Board meeting on the day after GA ends, these Board members will be reimbursed **only** for travel and hotel accommodations and meals on that one day, and **not** for GA registration.

You are allowed to share your room with a spouse or partner (you must pay the additional expense, if any, for the additional guest), but you are entitled to reimbursement for only your own food and travel expenses. In addition, you are encouraged to consider sharing a room with a fellow Board member, to reduce UUA expenses.

In addition, if you come early or stay late (for example, for Ministers' Days or for sightseeing), you will not be reimbursed for hotel and meal expenses on those additional days. However, because a full day's travel is sometimes necessary to get to and from GA, you can stay an extra day before and/or after the GA Board meetings if your travel schedule requires this.

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### **Computer and email facilities at GA**

In addition to the “Cyber Cafe” computer room, which is open to all registrants at GA, there is typically a room available for UUA staff use where you may be able to do your email, and might be able to arrange for some printing needs during GA. Most often it is the room used by UUA Web staff to oversee the live video feeds of GA activities, press releases, etc. so we must minimize our impact on their work by being quiet, and not ganging up in that room. Check with Nancy Lawrence for the availability and location at each GA.

If you can't get to the Cyber Cafe or the Web Staff room, try a local print/copy business (UPS, Kinko's, ...) or use the business center in your hotel. You may put these costs on your expense report.

### **Dress or Attire at GA**

Dress during Board meetings at GA, like much of GA, is typically fairly casual, with a wide diversity of formality/informality (suits and dresses to jeans and sneakers). However, there are other events at GA (for example, the Service of the Living Tradition and the Opening and Closing Ceremonies) where Board members tend to dress up. Also, some Board members tend to dress a bit more formally than usual during plenary sessions, especially at sessions where they are expecting to speak.

### ***Meetings in Boston***

The Board meets on three long weekends during the church year: in October, January, and April. These meetings are held at the UUA in Boston and Board members are provided accommodations at the Pickett-Eliot houses, which are adjacent to the UUA offices.

### **Accommodations**

Pickett-Eliot is an interconnected set of two brownstone buildings on Beacon Hill that are directly behind the UUA headquarters at 25 Beacon Street. In addition to kitchen, dining, living, and meeting spaces on the first floor, there are bed & breakfast-style rooms on the four floors above. Most rooms are doubles, but there are some single rooms. Most rooms have toilet and shower facilities inside the room.

You will be assigned a room and a roommate (if you are assigned to a double room) for each meeting. You can make special requests (for example, to be assigned a specific roommate, to have a single room, to have one of the two rooms on the first floor if you have mobility problems) and UUA staff will try to accommodate your request.

If your spouse or partner travels to Boston with you, she or he can share a room with you, provided that you pay the cost of the extra person's room and board. Several Board members have enjoyed bringing their spouses and the spouses have enjoyed the opportunity to sightsee while the Board meets.

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### Typical Boston Board meeting schedule

Most Board meetings in Boston follow this basic schedule:

- Friday morning – working groups meet
- Friday afternoon and evening – “big chunk” discussion on a major topic of Board interest
- Saturday morning and afternoon – full Board meeting, presentation of motions
- Saturday evening – free time for dinner
- Saturday after dinner: Finances and Budget Forum (Q&A)
- Sunday morning – worship (typically two board members team up to lead this)
- Sunday morning and afternoon – full Board meeting, voting on motions

However, there are many additions to this basic schedule:

- Some committees (for example, Finance) meet on Thursday (all day or just afternoon or evening).
- Some committees (for example, Finance and Committee on Committees) meet during breakfast or lunch on Saturday and/or Sunday.
- Many other committees and task forces arrange times to meet during meals or at any time when they can squeeze it into the schedule.

In addition, the October meeting includes (in odd-numbered years only) a full Board retreat all day on Thursday. Also, new Board member orientation takes place on the day before the start of the Board meeting or retreat (Wednesday in odd-numbered years and Thursday in even-numbered years).

Therefore, your arrival day/time will vary depending on the committees you are assigned to and the other events that are happening.

### Dress or Attire at regular Board meetings

Dress at Board meetings in Boston varies day-to-day. Dress during working group meetings and other committee meetings on Thursday and Friday tends to be fairly casual. For the full Board sessions on Saturday and Sunday, and especially for the worship service on Sunday morning, people tend to dress a little more formally. Most people have not felt out of place wearing suits or wearing jeans.

### Worship at Boston Board Meetings

It is our custom to conduct worship service on Sunday morning for the Trustees, staff and guests. You will all have the opportunity to lead a service if you wish to do so. People often dress up just a bit for this Sunday morning worship.

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### Formal, informal, and casual meetings at night

An important part of Board culture is the need to connect with others, to transact business, to discuss issues relating to the UU movement, or to simply socialize together. At night, you will find many different conversations going on in the rooms of Pickett Eliot— some are formal meetings, some are informal philosophical discussions, and some are just social conversations. In addition, some groups of Board members enjoy singing together or watching a movie or sporting event on TV. It's important to recognize that the Board is a community that enjoys its time together and tries to make the most of it. If you play a portable musical instrument, please consider bringing it! And it's OK to go to bed at a reasonable hour, as well.

### Open and closed committee meetings

During the Board weekends, many different committees and task forces arrange to meet to transact their business. A few of these meetings are closed to just the Board members and staff who are invited but most meetings are open to other Board members (and, in fact, additional attendees are welcomed). In keeping with the spirit of the Open UUA Resolution, the expectation is that the meetings are open unless there is a reason that the meeting should not be open. It is generally left to the digression of the convener to decide if a meeting or gathering is to be closed. If you are interested in sitting in on a meeting, you should check in with the chair or convener.

### Meals at Pickett Eliot

Most meals are provided at Pickett Eliot, starting at Thursday night dinner. Lunches and dinners are typically catered and breakfasts are self-serve, with a wide array of breakfast items available. At all meals, please remember to bring your dirty dishes and trash into the kitchen.

Please make sure to notify Nancy Lawrence of any dietary needs you may have. And please respect the dietary needs of others when filling your plate (that is, if you did not request a vegetarian dinner, please don't eat the vegetarian's entree!).

Some meals (typically dinner on Saturday) are **not** provided at Pickett Eliot. On these free evenings, you will be reimbursed for meal expenses. Typically, small groups of Board members use this occasion to visit various restaurants in the area.

### Computers and PCs in Pickett Eliot

Because computing needs during the Board meetings are so high, there are three PCs located in the basement of the Pickett side of Pickett Eliot (down the steps off the lower kitchen). These PCs are connected to a printer/copier/fax machine and all have Internet connections. If you need to compile working group or other meeting notes or check your

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home email, these PCs are a great resource. Of course, during busy times Board use should take precedence over personal use.

### **Printing and Copying**

While you are in Boston, you may use the basement computers (PC's) in Pickett & Eliot as you will. The printer there also has a COPY function.

If you need help, or have higher volume printing and copying needs, contact Nancy Lawrence for help. She can arrange for, or do, higher volume work on your behalf.

### **The “Closet” at Pickett Eliot**

The Board has set policy that money from the UUA budget cannot be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages at any time. Accordingly, individual Board members contribute money to stock a locked closet (near the Pickett Eliot living room) with wine and liquor, as well as snacks and attractive non-alcoholic alternatives. During the Sunday Board meeting, an envelope is passed around and Board members are asked to voluntarily contribute money based on their use of “closet” refreshments during the weekend.

### **Appreciation for Pickett Eliot Staff**

During the Sunday Board meeting, an envelope is passed around and Board members are given the opportunity to contribute monetary tips to thank the Pickett Eliot staff for their help during these intense weekends.

### **Trustee Tips**

This section is an accumulation of tips from experienced Trustees. Submissions for the list may be made to the Best Practices Committee.

1. Managing the large volume of paper and email you will receive will be an ongoing challenge. You and the Board will benefit if you will work out a system to allow you to find what you need, when you need it.
2. Keep agenda papers in the order distributed, to simply finding them during the meetings. We continue to seek a better method of keeping these papers organized, but we are still seeking.
3. Retain some free space in your luggage to allow you to carry home souvenirs from the Board meeting, usually in the form of paper and notebooks.

## 6. General Financial Issues

### ***Travel & Expense Reports***

After each General Assembly or Board or committee meeting you attend, you should submit a travel and expense report (**including all receipts**) as soon as possible to Nancy Lawrence. Please use the following Travel, Meal and Expense Guidelines when submitting your expense report.

#### **TRAVEL, MEAL AND EXPENSE GUIDELINES**

For Board, Committee and Taskforce Members

Adopted October 1999, Amended 1999, 2002, 2003

Review 2007 by Treasurer

#### **General Guidelines for Meeting-Related Expenses**

1. Board and committee expenditures, including travel, are not reimbursable when that committee has exceeded its budget, unless express permission is received in advance from the Vice President of Finance, the Moderator, or the Chair of the Finance Committee.
2. Only expenses related to volunteer service are reimbursable from the UUA Budget. If a board or committee member incurs expenses for non-meeting activities such as extra hotel nights related to non-committee related business prior to or following a meeting, these expenses should not be submitted for reimbursement. If these costs are directly billed to the UUA, (such as hotel nights prior to General Assembly), the individual should reimburse the UUA for these expenses.
3. An advance for meeting-related travel will be authorized by the Vice President of Finance in cases of economic necessity.

#### **Travel**

1. Project Equality airlines, auto rentals, and other vendors should be used when possible. The Project Equality Buyers' Guide may be found at [www.projectequality.org](http://www.projectequality.org).
2. Air travel must be reserved at least 14 days in advance at the lowest rates possible (coach, tourist or senior citizen rates). Reimbursement for airline travel purchased with less than 14 days advance booking must be approved by the Treasurer, Moderator, or Finance Chair of the UUA.

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3. Every effort should be made to use low cost transportation. Use of public transportation is encouraged.
4. Personal car usage is reimbursable at the current IRS (ed: business) rate. When a volunteer chooses to drive to a meeting, reimbursement will be made at the lower of the mileage reimbursement rate or airfare.
5. Parking tickets or fines for traffic violations are not reimbursable expenses.

### **Lodging and Meals**

1. Moderate or lower-priced hotels and motels should be used. When traveling with a spouse, volunteers are expected to pay the additional cost, if any, for a double room.
2. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to share rooms during meetings, particularly in hotels. Meals are reimbursable –up to \$40 per day, including tips, for higher-cost locations: up to \$8 for breakfast, up to \$12 for lunch, and up to \$24 for dinner. The total and per-meal amounts should be adjusted to as low as \$30 per day for the lowest-cost locations. The cost of alcoholic beverages is not reimbursable.
3. Tips for such things as housekeeping and baggage handling are reimbursable up to a total of \$3 per day.

### **Other**

1. Child care costs are reimbursable.
2. Purchase of a pre-paid phone card is reimbursable.
3. The Association's Board of Trustees' budget funds trustee liaison expenses in connection with Associate Member organizations. Participation in events sponsored by Independent Affiliate Member organizations, Districts, or other regional groups are not reimbursable from the Board of Trustees' budget except with prior approval of the Moderator.

### **Meeting Arrangements**

1. All meetings are to be held in UUA facilities. If no room is available, and the meeting is unable to be rescheduled, meetings may be held elsewhere but only after receiving approval from the Moderator, Vice President of Finance or Finance Committee Chair.
2. Meals that take place during meetings, where practical, should be catered at Eliot & Picket house rather than at local restaurants. Catering costs must be in line with UUA reimbursement levels.

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### **Reimbursement Requests**

1. Expenses may be submitted when incurred, even if this is in advance of the meeting.
2. Meals: The cost of each meal should be itemized separately, and the original receipt should be submitted.
3. All requests for reimbursement must be fully documented with receipts attached and submitted to the appropriate UUA staff member (Nancy Lawrence) within two weeks of the meeting. UUA staff should submit reimbursements to the Financial Services Department within five business days of receipt. The Finance Services Department should reimburse volunteer expenses within three weeks as prescribed by the Vice President of Finance. Payments from individuals for personal expenses directly billed to the UUA are to be made within two weeks and are to be directed to the Financial Services office.

=== end Travel & Expense Policy ===

### ***Books from Beacon Press and Skinner House***

It's important for Board members to be aware of the publications that the UUA releases through Beacon Press (for general public interest) and Skinner House (for UU interest). Therefore, you can request a single complimentary copy of new Beacon Press books. You will typically be provided an order form for these books when they become available. In addition to reading them for personal knowledge, some Trustees use a Beacon book as an acknowledgment of some special event or accomplishment within their district, so feel free to order any book which will be of use to you. In addition, new Skinner House publications are mailed to you automatically at no charge to you.

### ***Expectation of Contributing to UUA (Friends of the UUA and the Capital Campaign)***

Because of the high-profile role of the Board in financial matters, Board members are encouraged to model stewardship and generosity by contributing to Friends of the UUA and the current capital campaign. Each fall, you should expect to be canvassed by one of your fellow Board members for the Friends campaign. Giving generously (within your means, of course), is one of the special privileges of being a Board member!

In addition, in your role as "ambassador" for the UUA, you should keep in mind the importance of using a vocabulary of generosity (e.g. not dues, or requirements or responsibility) when communicating with congregations and congregational leaders on giving to the UUA.

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### 7. Budget Process

To provide for maximum financial oversight and planning, the Board, Finance Committee, and UUA Administration use a multi-year budget cycle. This means that during each fiscal year, we review budgets both for the current fiscal year as well as the next fiscal year. Each fiscal year's budgets include a Beacon Press budget, a capital expenditures budget, in addition to the operating budget. The UUA's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

At each Board meeting, the Finance Committee meets to review the budgets, both to analyze the status of the current fiscal year's budgets and to monitor the preparation of the next fiscal year's budgets. In April, the Finance Committee presents to the Board the budgets for the next fiscal year (which the Board votes to **approve**) and for the following fiscal year (which the Board votes to **receive**). The next fiscal year's budgets then must be approved by the General Assembly.

Typically, the following budget-related events happen at the quarterly Board meetings:

- **October:** Finance Committee conducts final analysis of the prior year's budgets and initial analysis of first quarter (July-September) of current year's budgets. Administration prepares and Finance Committee begins review of next fiscal year's budgets. Board votes to approve the revised current-year budgets.
- **January:** Finance Committee analyzes through second quarter (October-December) of current year's budgets. Board votes to approve next fiscal year's budgets and to receive the following fiscal year's budgets.
- **April:** Finance Committee analyzes through third quarter (January-March) of current year's budgets.
- **June (General Assembly):** Finance Committee analyzes through fourth quarter (April-June) of current year's budgets.

### ***Saturday Night Budget Forum***

The Finance Committee recognizes the importance of giving Board members as much opportunity to study the budget and ask questions before they are asked to approve it. Therefore, at meetings where the Board will be approving the budget, the Finance Committee typically distributes the budget at the Saturday session of the Board meeting and then hosts an open forum for questions, comments, and concerns on Saturday night. The budget is then approved by the Board at its Sunday session. To be as well-informed as you can be about budget issues, you're encouraged to attend this budget forum.

### 8. Trustee Relationships to Staff

#### ***Nancy Lawrence's Role***

Nancy Lawrence, Assistant to the Executive Vice President, coordinates many of the logistical details of each Board meeting and can be a very helpful resource to you, before, during, and after Board meetings. She helps with printing needs during meetings, arranging lodging and meals, and countless other tasks. Please make sure to respect the limits of Nancy's time. Nancy can be reached at [nlawrence@uua.org](mailto:nlawrence@uua.org) and (617) 948-4303.

#### ***Staff and Board Roles in Setting and Implementing Policy***

The Board understands that its role is to set policy for the UUA and that the staff's role is to implement those policies. It's important for Board members to recognize the boundaries in the Board/Staff relationship and to avoid unnecessarily micro-managing day-to-day UUA operations. Similarly, the staff should avoid making broad policy decisions that should be handled by the Board.

In the spring of 2003, the Board began a period of studying Policy Governance as a possible model for the Board/Staff relationship. Therefore, you should expect this relationship to be reviewed and possibly revised during the coming years.

#### ***How to Bring an Issue to a Staff Member***

Your service as a Board member will require you to interact with UUA staff members frequently. Sometimes, these interactions come up during committee work and, in these routine cases you typically would work with the staff member directly.

However, there may be more complex occasions that come up (for example, if you feel a need to deliver constructive criticism) that may put the staff member in an awkward position. In these cases (and in any case that seems border-line in any way), you are strongly encouraged to take the issue directly to Kay Montgomery, UUA Executive Vice President. She will handle the issue and report back to you.

=== end of Orientation Manual ===