

Openness Guidelines for UUA Committees, Task Forces, Working Groups and the UUA Board

Rule G-2.1 of the bylaws of the UUA requires openness in the functioning of the UUA elected and appointed committees and task forces and the UUA Board, including its committees and working groups. These guidelines are intended to assist in fulfilling this requirement. They are prepared by the Openness Implementation Committee, which was created by the UUA Board to clarify and implement the Rule (see **Charge** below).

The Rule requires that all the UUA Board and all UUA committees and task forces:

- (a) provide advance notice of dates and locations of regular business meetings and make agendas, reports, and minutes available promptly;
- (b) provide avenues for comment on issues on the meetings' agendas;
- (c) accommodate observers at regular business meetings with the exception of executive sessions. [www.uua.org > About Us > Bylaws > Rule II > Rule G-2.1]

Committees appointed by the administration composed of non-staff members are to report through the board working groups on the significant (and non-confidential) work of those committees, with the understanding that those reports would be posted in the working group notes that appear on the web.

The first step in providing advance notice is to make sure that your meeting or activity is listed on the UUA's online calendar. To include your event, please go to www.uua.org/events/ and click on "Submit an Event." Then use the web form to provide the basic information about your event.

Agendas, notices, minutes and documents can most easily be provided through the UUA web pages. Just send the information to your committee's staff liaison. They have been trained in how to update the web site. If your committee has no staff liaison, you can send your information directly to the Office of Electronic Communication (oecc@uua.org). *Do not take action on items not on your agenda, except in an emergency.* The agenda gives notice to people who may wish to comment on potential actions.

It is important to have the charge to your committee on your web page, so that people can know what you do. You should also have an email address where your committee can be reached. It is best to use an address like openness@uua.org that is forwarded to a member of your committee. Just submit the name of your committee and the email address where you want messages sent. This will fulfill (b) above.

If you meet in person, you should accommodate observers. This means that there should be space in the meeting room for observers where they can see and hear. Some opportunity to speak must be given on request. The extent of guest participation in the meeting shall be at the discretion of the chair. Executive sessions should be noted in the agenda. You may ask for observers to make reservations so that you know how many need to be accommodated. There is no requirement for meetings by phone or email to

make provision for observers. However, it is easy to set up an email list which anyone can join, but where posting is restricted to members of the committee. You can request such a list at oc@uua.org. We can provide the settings needed to permit only members to post.

The important thing to remember is the motivation for the openness rule. It is to keep our members informed and to engage them in the work of the Association. The Openness Implementation Committee will monitor progress in implementing the Rule, and will report to the UUA Board. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us at openness@uua.org. You can also find information at our web page: on www.uua.org at the top click About Us > Governance > Board-Appointed Committees > Openness Implementation Committee

Carol Agate, Evelyn Spurgin, Arthur Ungar, Chair
John Blevins (Board Liaison)

OPENNESS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Charge adopted October 17, 2004

"The Openness Implementation Committee is charged to clarify and implement the functional application of Rule G-2.1 to the UUA Board and all UUA committees, commissions and task forces. The Committee will:

- a. In collaboration with committee, commission or task force leadership, create a clear, detailed process for each group to establish effective openness practices and policies
- b. Provide a mechanism for congregations and individuals to submit comments about adherence to this policy
- c. Report no less than annually to the Board of Trustees

Oversight: will be provided by the Board of Trustees

Timeline: On-going, subject to oversight and re-evaluation after three years

Sue Stukey, UUA Trustee
Chair, Committee on Committees
sastukey@aol.com