

Dear UUA Board,

We, the undersigned members of the UU Fat Liberation Steering Committee, ask you to make a statement supporting Fat Liberation and dismantling fat-phobia. Following upon our greater visibility at GA and the request signed by 125 clergy and lay members in June, we have included a sample statement for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum, minister, First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

Bridget Laflin, MDiv., DLRE, First UU San Antonio

Jamie Johnson, MDiv.

Rev. Diana K. McLean, minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato, MN

Camille Cassingham, Lay Minister, UU Congregation of Atlanta

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Proposed UUA Board Statement:

We, the UUA Board, proclaim, and urge all UUs to embrace, the following:

We recognize that there have always been fat Unitarian Universalists. Fat UUs at GA 2023 proudly proclaimed and celebrated their presence and claimed their space among us, through presence at the exhibit hall with ribbons and buttons, meet-ups, and a panel discussion. We celebrate that within Unitarian Universalism there is a growing sense of fat community and a voice for fat liberation from discrimination and stigmatization.

Fat people experience discrimination through lack of access to healthcare, housing, employment, and more. Social stigmatization in our larger culture and UU congregations inhibits full inclusion and participation. Specifically within our denomination, fat people experience bias and prejudice in the ordination and hiring processes, insurance policies, lack of access in physical spaces and merchandise (i.e. accessible chairs, limited clothing sizing along with unfair pricing etc.), and more.

Historically, fat bias arises out of racism and specifically white supremacy, as well as classism, ableism, and sexism, as scholars such as Sabrina Strings have shown. Fat-phobia's intersectionality with these oppressions reinforces and normalizes the discrimination; this in turn increases exponentially the harm experienced.

A major component of fat bias is healthism, the equating of health with virtue and the equating of fat with ill-health and immorality, that has a long history in Protestantism and white supremacy. Healthism is prevalent in Unitarian Universalism, taking the forms of fat-shaming; the correlation of weight and health; promotion of weight-loss talk, diets, and surgeries; and food policing and shaming.

Fat bias is inconsistent with our UU principles and values and therefore has no place within Unitarian Universalism. Therefore, we will work to recognize and dismantle fat phobia and proclaim ourselves allies alongside UUs for fat liberation.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister