

GA Update after June 11, 2022, Mini-Assembly Business Meeting where amendments to business items were discussed and modified and then voted on after the meeting on whether to accept the amendment or not. Found out Tuesday 6/14 the outcome of the voting. This will be shown at the end of this article. Wording that is underlined is what was the amended recommendation.

Business Resolution 1: Renewing UUA Bylaws for Theologically Grounded and Mission-Focused Governance

Proposed Amendment #1 - Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board of Trustees to appoint a task group composed of both UUA board members, UUA staff, and UUs who are non-board or staff members to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws.

Rationale: The board has many responsibilities and this is a huge task. There are other UUs with the experience and ability who could help with this task. Such people would bring different perspectives and insights into the process."

Board Response: *already have a task force of stakeholders, both board, non-board, staff, and others who are in touch with outside stakeholders, so why this amendment.*

Observation: Lots of discussion back and forth, was choice of words important or was that a sign of white supremacy, should the board be trusted to do what the intent was or did clarity of language needed. Board not very open to feedback.

Result: There appeared to be more pro comments than con comments.

Proposed Amendment #2 - These values and goals should guide the new bylaws framework:

- a. Reflect our theological commitment to liberation and inclusion;
- b. Reflect our long-established institutional experience with a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, religious pluralism, congregational polity and other aspects of the democratic process.

Rationale: Was spoken by author, not written, basically to not forget our original purpose and principles especially concerning freedom of conscious.

Board Response: Was much more open to this one, wanted a little tweaking of wording which was accepted and wanted the Principle language to be included, which was accepted by author.

Observation: Lots of pro comments about this, comments about how freedom of conscious in particular seems to be attacked lately and we don't want to lose this, ok with addition of *search for truth and meaning*.

Result: This appeared to be an easy win, so will be surprised if the amendment does not pass.

Proposed Amendment #3 - Therefore the 2022 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls on the UUA Board of Trustees to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. This review should involve stakeholders in collaborative discernment and conversation about considered changes. A progress report of the UUA Bylaw review detailing which changes are being considered will be issued by the Board of Trustees at least annually beginning in 2023 prior to the annual General Assembly. This report should include the rationale for each change.

Rationale: This resolution states a replacement of the UUA Bylaws is expected and not just a major rewrite. The members and congregations of UUA will need time to review and understand what changes are being considered. Having been involved in bylaws revisions in my home congregation and in a number of other organizations, I understand the time it takes to properly update bylaws. We need to give all the stakeholders time to understand the considered changes. It will smooth the process of adoption."

Board Response: A lot of word changes to this amendment and what you see above is the final result. Board members very defensive, wanting to know why, and how much detail, trying to make it sound like the author wanted all UUs to vote on every little comma or period change. They said it felt, "controlling" and like a "mandate" as opposed to a request. Finally, Rev. Susan Gray stepped up and essentially said, Hey, what is being asked for is a simple progress report of where you all are in the process, it could be as simple, we haven't gotten very far this year. The author agreed to this interpretation of Rev. Gray and the rest of the board calmed down.

Observations: A lot of discussion with this one too. It was interesting to note that many of the cons were from delegates on the East Coast or Florida and the further West you got across the nation, the more accountability from the board was wanted and the more pros you got.

Result: Fairly positive. Once Rev. Gray stepped and said, this isn't unreasonable, the board simmered down and then it seemed all was ok.

No Proposed Amendments to Business Resolution #2: General Assembly Planning Committee

UUA Bylaw Rule Change G-9.13.10 - Election Campaign Practices Committee

Proposed Amendment #4 – *this was in two parts, and appeared a little confusing as there were removals and additions, but here it is clear as can be made out:*

This: Candidates adjudicated to be in serious violation of **Bylaw rules under Section 9.13** ~~[Rule G9.13.6(c)]~~ may have their names removed from the ballot. Any such ~~[action pursuant to rule G-9.13.10(c)]~~ **removal** shall be reported to the Board and to the General Assembly. Such ~~[adjudication]~~ **removal** by the ECPC would be subject to automatic review by the Board Executive Committee according to the provisions of Rule G-9.13.10(d).

Recommended to change to this: **ECPC sanctions shall not apply to exploratory or petition gathering activities prior to campaign organizational meetings or fundraising.** **Subsequently, however, any** candidates adjudicated to be in serious violation of **applicable Bylaw rules under Section 9.13** ~~[Rule G9.13.6(c)]~~ may **be recommended for removal** ~~[have their names removed]~~ from the ballot. ~~[Any such-action pursuant to rule G-9.13.10(c) shall be reported to the Board and to the General Assembly.]~~ Such ~~[adjudication]~~ **a recommendation** by the ECPC **shall** ~~[would]~~ be **received as an** ~~[subject to]~~ automatic **appeal** ~~[review]~~ by the Board Executive Committee according to the provisions of Rule G-9.13.10(d).

Rationale: (1) This wording clarifies the confusion as to who is deemed to be a candidate for an office, hence subject to ECPC rules and sanctions, and who is not. These trigger events – campaign organizational meetings and fundraising – are common in jurisdictions across the United States. Most potential candidates conduct exploratory activities (usually personal consultations, or signature gathering in certain cases), before deciding to initiate an actual campaign.

(2) Since the appeal of a candidate’s removal is automatic, it should not take effect or be publicized until after the appeal. This is a simple matter of fairness to the candidate in case the Board Executive Committee should reverse the removal or recommend some alternative measure.

Board Response: “Picking a President of the Board is not a political issue but a spiritual one. So therefore this amendment makes it more political, instead of trusting the Presidential Search Committee and harder for us to enforce our rules and takes power out of the hands of the experts – The Presidential Search Committee”.

Observations: Those pro were saying, yes it is an election that makes it political and should be run as such. Those con were saying, no, you have to trust UUA board and they know what is best and we as the laypeople don't need to.

Result: This will be a tough one, because if the amendment does not pass, then should the measure itself pass or not?

Proposed Amendment #5 - RULE 10: ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS (AIWs)

An Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) is, per Bylaw 4.16(b), a statement about a significant action, event, or development in the world that needs immediate engagement and action from UU member congregations and groups. The process for submitting an AIW, including criteria for eligibility, is set by the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) and published online <https://www.uua.org/action/process/planning-aiw-ga>.

Per the UUA Bylaws, up to three AIWs can be considered by the General Assembly. **[If more than three proposed AIWs are eligible, the CSW will select which three to put forward for consideration by the Assembly.] If more than three AIW's are eligible for consideration under the CSW's criteria, delegates vote to prioritize proposed Actions of Immediate Witness in a poll accessed through the delegate platform. Delegates can vote for up to three Proposed Actions of Immediate Witness, and can vote at any time while the poll is open. If such a poll is required and the CSW has not already conducted it prior to the start of General Assembly, the poll will be conducted during General Assembly. In that case, the poll opens during General Assembly and closes at 7:00 AM PT on Friday, June 24, 2022. The three proposed Actions of Immediate Witness that receive the most votes through the poll will be eligible to be added to the Final Agenda in General Session.**

Rationale: The delegates have for many years been the ones to choose which AIWs to admit to the final agenda. This rules change would change our rules back to the rules used in 2021 (with adjusted dates and language for the delegate platform), and are consistent with the last several years before this, as well.

Board Response: Asking the delegates to trust the Commission on Social Witness, and don't have to waste your time or energy on these issues.

Observations: Don't totally understand what AIWs are, however based on comments from other delegates, it would also eliminate the purpose of a delegate. Certainly would curtail what the delegate is responsible for during GA and would decrease the experience or reason to be a delegate.

Result: Appeared mixed between those who think the Commission on Social Witness should be the gatekeeper and those who think the Delegates should remain the gatekeeper.

And that, as the moment is all she wrote. A very interesting and enlightening experience being a delegate and makes one want to be more involved and supportive of our own congregation and community.

As of June 14th:

Following the mini-assembly, the board met and incorporated the following amendments:

- Proposed Amendment #1 - Add text “to appoint a task group composed...”
- Proposed Amendment #2 - Add text “and our long-established institutional experience...”
- Proposed Amendment #5 - Add text “If more than three AIWs are eligible...”

Additionally, Proposed Amendment #3 - Add text “A progress report of the UUA Bylaw Review...” will be discussed and voted on during Thursday's General Session during General Assembly.

Proposed Amendment #4 - Add text “ECPC sanctions shall not apply...” did not receive sufficient support so will not advance.

Until next time – Sara, Barbara, Bob, Joel and Ben.