

# **Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice**

## **Roles, Responsibilities and Opportunities of Member Congregations and Board Members**

### **UUSJ Committee List**

(Minor Revision: 09/08/2017)

#### **Unique Opportunities for our Congregations**

UUSJ is a non-profit organization that works to mobilize and amplify the voice of UUs. In addition to our strategic location, we have one of the largest concentrations of UU congregations in the Nation. This gives us an opportunity to work together in the pursuit of greater justice for our communities, our nation, and the world. UUSJ was established to provide leadership in organizing a wide range of such opportunities.

#### **Responsibilities of UUSJ's Member Congregations**

- Designate two lay members, one regular and one alternate, to serve on the UUSJ Board of Trustees.
- Encourage participation of their chosen representatives and other members of the congregation to participate in UUSJ programs and serve on UUSJ committees and issue groups.
- Build interest in UUSJ among congregation members and encourage their participation in UUSJ programs and supporting the efforts of UUSJ.
- Fulfill its financial responsibilities to the UUSJ by meeting or exceeding its fair-share each fiscal year.
- Maintain close connection with UUSJ by keeping informed about UUSJ and informing UUSJ about the congregation's social justice activities and interests.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and Alternates**

- The **regular member** shall serve as the official Board member, having the right to vote on Board decisions, and shall make a significant attempt to attend all Board meetings.
- The **alternate member** shall represent the Congregation at any meetings the designated member cannot attend, but shall not have the right to vote except in the member's absence. Proxy can be given to another Board member if the representative and alternate cannot attend.
- **Volunteer in UUSJ programs, events, and activities:** serve on one committee, or task group, or offer talent and time as appropriate.
- **Serve as an ambassador of UUSJ:** Keep their congregation, minister(s) and staff informed about UUSJ activities through various communication and program venues, and keep UUSJ informed about their congregation's priorities and programs that are related to the goals and objectives of UUSJ.
- **Give Advice:** assist in evaluating programs; offering financial or legal advice; supporting communications and information technology.
- **Advocate for UUSJ, its mission and cause:** be a strong and vocal advocate in the congregation and community; use personal contacts - ensure that stakeholders, congregational members and community leaders are familiar with UUSJ, its accomplishments and needs.
- **Assist in securing financial resources:** contribute financially to the best of their ability; recruit new individual UUSJ members and volunteers; and take responsibility for fundraising on behalf of UUSJ within their congregation to meet or exceed fair-share goals as early in the fiscal year as possible.
- **Prepare for meetings:** read materials in advance and ask questions where necessary. Adhere to our Board Covenant.

#### **Powers and Legally Required Duties of Responsibilities of UUSJ Board of Trustees** **(in accordance with Article V, Section 5.2 of the UUSJ By-Laws)**

The UUSJ Board of Trustees is comprised of the representatives and alternates from the congregations, the elected officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) and at-large members. The Board of Trustees shall have all of the powers ordinarily and legally required or permitted by non-profit governing boards, including, without limitation, the following powers to:

- Determine and review periodically the purposes and the mission of UUSJ. (Provide strategic guidance to help achieve UUSJ's purpose and mission, and carry out its scope of work.)

- Appoint the Executive Director, who shall supervise the staff of UUSJ. (Hire, manage and review.)
- Oversee and approve the budget (and finances) of UUSJ.
- Give final approval for membership to organizations proposed by the Executive Committee, and terminate membership for cause.
- Appoint such committees or subcommittees, as deemed necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of UUSJ.

Attachments:

Standard Non-profit “Legal Duties of Board Members” by MMP Associates  
UUSJ Standing Committees and Other Committees and Task Groups

## UUSJ Standing Committees, Other Committees and Task Groups

### Standing Committees in accordance with the UUSJ Bylaws Article VII, Section 7.1 - Establishment of Committees



### LEGAL DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

The board as a unit is responsible and liable for what happens internally *in* an organization, and what happens externally *to* an organization. Boards are held to three legal standards: the duty of care, duty of loyalty and duty of obedience. Board members who faithfully carry out these duties are generally, but not always, clear of personally liability.

#### **The Duty of Care**

The Duty of Care requires that board members remain fully informed about the organization's activities, participate in decisions with diligence, care and skill, and do so in good faith. Board members must use the care and judgment of an ordinarily prudent person in similar circumstances.

The duty of care is carried out through:

- Attendance at board and committee meetings
- Advance preparation for meetings
- Use of independent and best judgment

#### **The Duty of Loyalty**

The Duty of Loyalty requires board members to exercise their power in the interest of the organization and not in their own interest or the interest of another entity, particularly one in which they have a formal relationship. When acting on behalf of the organization, board members must put the interest of the organization before their personal and professional interests. The Duty of Loyalty requires board members to give undivided allegiance to the organization when making decision affecting the organization.

The Duty of Loyalty is carried out through:

- Disclosure of any conflict of interest
- Adherence to the organization's conflict of interest policy
- Avoidance of the use of organizational information or opportunities for the individuals' personal gain or benefit

#### **The Duty of Obedience**

The Duty of Obedience requires board members to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, adhere to the organization's by-laws and remain the guardians of the mission. Although board members may exercise their own reasonable judgment concerning how the organization should best meet its mission, they are not permitted to act or speak publicly in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization.

The Duty of Obedience is carried out through:

- Thorough examination of the organization's compliance with regulatory and reporting requirements, and other documents governing the organization and its operations (such as by-laws and policies)
- Involvement in ensuring that board decisions are within the organization's mission
- Speaking "with one voice" after a decision has been made, even if the individual board member voted against it.

3 of 5

## **and 7.2 - Standing Committees; Article VIII - Executive Committee**

### **Executive Committee** (active)

- a. Act for the Board and carry on the business of UUSJ in the interval between Board meetings promptly.
- b. Present the proceedings of the committee to the Board for approval.

### **Finance** (currently inactive)

- a. Oversee all financial activities.
- b. Submit a budget of anticipated revenues and expenses for approval at the Board of trustee meetings.
- c. Review requests for funds for new UUSJ-related endeavors.
- d. Annually prepare financial information for use by the UUSJ and member congregations in determining their financial needs.

### **Nominating Committee** (active)

- a. Nominate those persons who have agreed to have their names put forward for election.
- b. Prepare a slate of nominees for officers to be announced at the annual Board meeting and voted upon.
- c. Nominate candidates for officers and at-large members on the Executive Committee and members of the standing committees.
- d. Regularly prepare a report detailing all standing and special committees. Identify needs in the committees and work with the Executive Director to fill all committee positions with both Board members and volunteers
- e. Recommend for election persons who meet the criteria for At Large Representative.

### **Development Committee** (currently inactive)

- a. Recommend to the Board fundraising policies and programs in support of objectives established by the Board to carry out the work of UUSJ.
- b. Work with the appropriate committees to ensure a successful Social Justice Awards Gala.
- c. Implement fundraising programs.
- d. Implement donor development programs including membership renewal efforts.
- e. Maintain contact with and encourage inactive member congregations to participate in UUSJ activities.
- f. Develop orientation materials for new representatives and member congregations.
- g. Actively seek additional members among National Capital area UU congregations.
- h. Actively pursue reactivation of a member congregation that has consistently not fulfilled its responsibilities to the UUSJ. If after one year, this congregation has not responded to these attempts, recommend in writing to the Board of Trustees, that UUSJ membership of this congregation be severed.

**Special Committees and Task Groups of the UUSJ in accordance with Article VII, Section 7.1 of the UUSJ Bylaws and Ad-Hoc Committees: Appointed by the Chair as needed**

**Advocacy Oversight Group** (as called for in the June 2013 Strategic Plan; operational as of Fall 2015)

**Audit Committee** (as deemed needed, about every four years)

- a. Selects own committee members.
- b. Conduct audit by members according to DC non-profit regulations.

**Core Group** (a temporary task group that includes the Executive Committee; established June 22, 2014)

**Communication Committee** (active)

The committee is responsible for the oversight of the following:

- a. Responsible for the oversight of the publication and distribution of the UUSJ eNews newsletter.
- b. Ensure that the Directory of member congregations, representatives and liaison persons is current.
- c. Furnish publicity materials about UUSJ activities to member congregations and to the community as needed.
- d. Maintain a file of notices about the UUSJ found in the news media.
- e. Gather information, pictures, news, etc. from various sources for use in our newsletter and website.
- f. Maintain contacts with congregations to publicize their activities.
- g. Publish information on upcoming meetings and events of interest to UUSJ members.
- h. Oversee the information technology needs of UUSJ
- i. Oversee social media, development and maintenance of the website.

**Gala Committee** (in years that we hold the Gala; active in Fall 2017 for the Social Justice Awards)

**Governance Task Group** (established March 2015, inactive; to be re-established in Fall 2016)

**Issues Groups**

- Immigration Grant Advisory Group (for implementation of the UU Fund Grant; retired in July 2013)
- Immigration Steering Committee (established 2014; active; reorganizing to start a Task Group in Fall 2016)
- Economic Justice Steering Task Group (established September 2014; retired March 2015)
- Escalating Inequality Task Group (active; in process of starting up August 2016)
- Environmental and Climate Change Green Leaders Group (active)

**Program Committee** (active)

**Social Justice Awards Committee** (in years that we hold the Gala; active in Fall 2017 for Social Justice Awards)

**Strategic Plan Implementation Group** (as called for in the June 2013 Strategic Plan; not established; duties carried out by Core Group)