

UUSJ MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

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Submitted by:
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UUSJ Membership Committee Mission Statement:

To promote and enhance the sustainability and well-being of Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, by maintaining and increasing the membership of the organization.

UUSJ Membership Committee Responsibilities:

- Develop plans and initiatives to recruit and retain UUSJ congregational and individual memberships.
- Oversee and engage all new memberships.
- Coordinate with UUSJ Development Committee.
- Report on UUSJ membership roll and materials.
- Provide UUSJ membership reports at UUSJ Board of Trustees meetings.
- Propose UUSJ membership goals and strategies, including the enhancement of member diversity and activism.

The UUSJ Membership Committee is comprised of at least three persons, who are either Members or Alternate Members of the UUSJ Board of Trustees (Board). Committee members will meet on a regular basis and provide reports to the UUSJ Board at all quarterly meetings. The reports shall include the current number of UUSJ congregational, affiliated, and individual members, status and trends of UUSJ membership, and plans and activities for UUSJ member recruitment and retention.

UUSJ Membership:

UUSJ Membership is open to all. For purposes of organization there are three categories for UUSJ Membership:

- Unitarian Universalist congregations;
- Unitarian Universalist affiliated non-profit entities and other organizations that support its purpose and programs; and,
- Individuals that support its purpose and programs.

- **Congregational Members**

Member congregations are those UU congregations, recognized by the UUA, in and outside the Washington D.C. metropolitan region, who choose to be members, and contribute a “fair share” donation to UUSJ (see Article XVI Section 16-3 of the UUSJ bylaws). The fair share donation amount is based on a Board agreed upon funding formula. Member congregations are to meet other criteria, as the Board may set from time to time for such membership. Each member congregation shall be entitled to a voting seat on the Board.

- **Affiliated Members:**

Affiliate members are those organizations that contribute an annual membership fee and meet such other criteria as the Board may set from time to time for such affiliated organization membership. An affiliated organization member shall not be entitled to a voting seat on the Board, but may designate a representative to attend Board meetings and to be heard on issues before the Board.

- **Individual Members:**

An individual may become a UUSJ member in five ways. These five individual memberships vary in cost and benefits. The five individual memberships are:

- **Regular Membership:** A UUSJ Regular Individual Membership costs \$40 a year. This membership entitles the individual to receive all UUSJ news and notices, and website recommended links. The individual may also attend all UUSJ Board meetings as an Ex-officio member having no voting authority. However, they shall be given an opportunity to be heard on issues before the Board.

- **Activist Membership:** A UUSJ Activist Membership costs \$100 a year. This membership receives all the benefits of a Regular Membership plus receipt of all UUSJ Advocacy Corps notices and materials, and may participate in all UUSJ Advocacy Corps activities.

Special dispensation shall be made available to those who may not be able to afford the UUSJ Activist Membership, but desire to participate at that level. Members need not provide proof of inability to pay UUSJ Activist Membership fee.

- **Special Stewards Membership:** A Special Steward Membership requires a contribution of \$500 or more to the UUSJ. This Special Stewards Membership is entitled to the benefits of both Regular and Activist UUSJ Memberships. In addition, this membership will be part of a Special Advisory Council to the UUSJ Executive Director, to provide direct advice and recommendations to the UUSJ.
- **Activist Sponsor Membership:** For a contribution of \$2,500 or more, based on the cost of the Advocacy Corps making a visit to Capitol Hill, this Activist Sponsor Membership receives all the benefits of both Regular and Activist memberships. Also, the individual may suggest which of the UUSJ priority issues will be the focus

of the Corps' Capitol Hill visit, and submit ideas in writing regarding the development of and the plans for the visit and request of Congress. The issue and plans for the visit will be at the discretion of UUSJ leadership.

- **Issue Sponsor Membership:** For a contribution of \$1,250 or more, based on the costs of producing a UUSJ issue paper (e.g. Write Here/Write Now Appeal), the Individual Sponsor Membership receives all the benefits of both the UUSJ Regular and UUSJ Activist Memberships. This qualified individual may also suggest the UUSJ priority issue that will be the subject of the issue paper, and submit ideas in writing about the research, development, and drafting of the document. The timing of the issue paper and final content will be at the discretion of UUSJ leadership.

Retaining Membership:

To retain UUSJ memberships, it is important that members be valued and thanked for their participation and financial support for the UUSJ.

“The activity most strongly associated with meeting fundraising goals was sending communications that explain the impact of an individual’s gift without asking that person for more financial support. Fundraising experts like Penelope Burk of Cygnus Applied Research have advocated exactly that approach for many years, but even sophisticated charities have been slow to take her advice, choosing instead to remain in constant solicitation mode and turning donors off.” Quote from *Inside Philanthropy*—

Membership Committee members should send letters twice a year to major donors thanking them and explaining the activities their donations enabled, without asking for additional contributions.

Rationale for Membership Committee Report and Proposals

- **UUSJ Membership Equality**

UUSJ membership is open to all UU congregations and individuals. If UUSJ is to go national, all UUSJ members no matter their state or location are to be equal. There is no reason to give MD-DC-VA area UUSJ members preferential treatment. With an increase in Board membership, the size of the Board may become an issue, but that can be dealt with in various ways. However, those ways are not within the purview and proposed mission of the Membership Committee.

- **Types of UUSJ Members**

The description of the three types of membership categories is simply taken from the UUSJ bylaws. To revise these categories will require changes to the existing UUSJ bylaws.

- **Membership Tiers**

The five tiers of individual UUSJ memberships are new. Tiers implies a hierarchy, but as proposed the five tiers only differ in roles, (i.e., activist) than hierarchy. For example, one can be an activist member without paying extra dues.

- **Sponsor Memberships**

Sponsor memberships allow UUSJ to do something that other organizations do on a regular basis—ask members to fund particular activities or capabilities rather than just give an arbitrary amount of money. For example, Doctors Without Borders provides that a contribution of \$100 purchases a set of protective gear to allow a doctor to treat Ebola patients, while \$500 buys equipment to resuscitate newborn babies. These specific appeals are more effective than just asking for general purpose financial support.

Currently, UUSJ Capitol Hill visits and issue papers are done mostly by volunteers, but that is not sustainable long-term, as the demands for these tasks are expected to increase. The proposed cost for the Sponsor Memberships reflect what these activities currently cost with the help of volunteers. Hopefully, the Sponsor Memberships will attract a significant number of members and allow UUSJ to hire additional support staff to assist with UUSJ Capitol Hill visits and issue papers.

The privileges of the Sponsor Memberships allow the funder to have direct input into the visit or issue. This is reasonable and may help bring out new ideas to UUSJ. However, this does not cede control. The visit or issue must fit into one of the four UUSJ priority areas, and the timing of the visit or issue paper is also up to UUSJ leadership. If, for example, other priorities dictate a different short-term approach, the funded visit or issue may be delayed until a more appropriate time. Also, UUSJ still has full control of the actual Congressional asks and final version of the issue paper.