

Proposed Motion:

The Special Committee on Advocacy Oversight and Program Sustainability proposes slight updates/amendments to the oversight structure approved by the Board of Directors during the June 2020 meeting. The motion concerns the composition of the Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team and the establishment of a 6-month Policy & Advocacy Review Committee (PARC) as part of the Board of Directors.

The proposed changes from the June 2020 Advocacy Oversight Plan approval include the following:

- Continue to establish an oversight committee within the Board of Directors (known as the Policy & Advocacy Committee, or the PARC), but make the PARC time-limited for a period of six months or until such time as the new governance policies regarding the restructure and composition of the Board of Directors is implemented.
- It is also recommended that the responsibility for proposing developing proposals regarding future staffing and budgetary resources be removed from the list of duties/responsibilities of the PARC and transitioned to the Executive Director and the Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team, who would make such recommendations and then bring through to the Board through review first by the Finance Committee and Executive Committee.
- Regarding the Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team, preliminary results of advocacy activities in September and October have revealed that the AIM membership often will fluctuate from month-to-month depending on the topic of focus and type of advocacy activities to be completed. Thus, the proposed changes include a change in language re: anticipated changes and fluidity in the composition of the AIM Team on a monthly basis.
- The final proposed change is to allow for some overlap *on occasion* between the PARC and AIM membership, given that (a) the PARC is a time-limited oversight committee; and (b) the Advocacy Program is still evolving in terms of capacity and resources.

The detailed summation of the Advocacy Oversight proposal is attached.

I. Advocacy Program Oversight

The Board will continue to provide oversight of the Advocacy Program in the following areas:

- Establishing UUSJ's Policy Priorities and Positions
- Determining and Allocating the Resources required to support the Advocacy Program Infrastructure
- Monitoring and Evaluating Program Effectiveness

Per the June 2020 approval of the Board of Directors, an ad-hoc member was added to the Executive Committee that possesses a strong background in advocacy and understanding of the UUSJ Advocacy Program. This retains part of the current model of seeking Board Chair approval and allows decisions to be made quickly to balance the need for transparency, accountability, and efficiency in program implementation.

Section II outlines the updated recommendation surrounding this committee, referred to as the Policy & Advocacy Review Committee (PARC). Section III describes the composition, role and responsibilities of the Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team, which is the group of staff and volunteer leaders responsible for the daily operations pertaining to the implementation of UUSJ's Advocacy Program. Section IV reaffirms the assumptions that will be made regarding the development and monitoring of the UUSJ policy and advocacy agenda. Section V updates the next steps for assessing capacity for 2021 activities.

II. Policy & Advocacy Review Committee (PARC)

The primary role of PARC will be to provide oversight of the advocacy and policy programs, with specific objectives in 2021 to complete the following:

- support the development of and provide provisional approval (which would lead to consideration by the full Board) of the UUSJ annual policy priorities & advocacy agenda, and assuring that the agenda was informed by the UUSJ policy teams, and that discussions were conducted with moral owners and stakeholders to provide feedback on the agenda;
- elevate issues and make recommendations to the Board and/or Exec Comm Designated Rep when issues arise that are outside or beyond the scope of the organization's annual advocacy agenda or are deemed to potentially be in conflict with the advice of a UUSJ policy working group or the position of one or more categories of moral owners; and

- create and implement an evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of the advocacy program activities in meeting the organization's advocacy goals and objectives. This will assure strong engagement and accountability of the Board and streamline high-level decisions to be made across policy and advocacy.

In order to align with the anticipated timeline and roll-out of the new governance policies regarding board restructuring and composition, the PARC will be established in January of 2021 and will end the latter of June 30, 2021 or the date upon which the new structure for the Board of Directors is enacted.

III. Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team

As the Board provides ongoing guidance and general oversight of the Advocacy Program, a team of volunteers, members, and paid/contract staff will continue to be responsible for implementing the daily programmatic and operational activities of the Advocacy Program. The goal of the Board is to balance the need for strong oversight and accountability of the Advocacy Program with the need for a streamlined, efficient decision-making process that affords some degree of autonomy and authority over daily activities to those individuals charged with the program's implementation.

The Advocacy Implementation & Management (AIM) Team will serve in an advisory capacity to the PARC & Board of Directors, will be responsible for implementing the programmatic and daily operations of the Advocacy Program, and will be provided a substantial degree of autonomy in carrying out the daily actions required of the advocacy program. The AIM Team's membership should remain nimble and fluid, as it is expected that the composition of volunteers and policy experts will fluctuate regularly depending on the policy topic(s) of focus and the types of activities being organized. Membership will be comprised of:

- Key program staff, including, at a minimum, the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant/Project Coordinator;
- Relevant contractors (when resources allow); and
- Volunteer leaders, which may include policy team leaders and members, as well as specific volunteers who are interested in helping with the organization of one or more advocacy activities (such as advocacy training/briefings, Advocacy Corps meetings & follow-up, Write Here, Write Now campaigns, action alerts, etc.). **NOTE: The individual volunteers/volunteer leaders participating in the AIM will fluctuate from month-to-month depending on the advocacy topics being prioritized for that month.**

The responsibilities of the Advocacy Implementation Team would include:

- proposing the AC/WHWN policy topics and legislative requests;
- working with the Advocacy Corps and WHWN participants to plan, prepare for, and complete all activities related to the Advocacy Program;
- collaborating with the UUSJ internal policy working groups and strategic partners to assure alignment in strategic tactics and messaging related to the UUSJ annual advocacy agenda, making decisions on external partner requests (i.e. signing onto coalition letters, etc.); and
- developing proposals for consideration by the Finance Committee regarding future staffing and budgetary resources as well as potential programming reductions/expansions relative to sustaining the advocacy program.

The AIM Team will maintain the following minimal reporting requirements to the Board of Directors:

- prepare written and/or verbal report to a newly established oversight committee of the Board (see recommendation later in this document) on specific topics related to the advocacy program *when requested*.
- complete quarterly written and verbal reports in preparation of and during Board of Directors meetings.
- submit updates into the UUSJ email newsletter so that the full membership, moral owners, and other stakeholders can continue to stay abreast of UUSJ's advocacy activities.

It is imperative that there be clear lines of distinction between the role of the PARC (oversight) and the role of the AIM Team (implementation). While the goal is to have completely separate membership between the PARC and the AIM, given the PARC is a time-limited Committee and the structure and capacity of the Advocacy Program is still evolving, there may be some overlap on occasion in which a PARC member is engaged in advocacy activities during a particular month. This does not technically mean the PARC member would be part of the AIM during that time, but could mean the individual is crafting draft language for UUSJ advocacy materials, helping solidify meetings, or helping provide the training/educational briefing to UUSJ's network. Regardless, the PARC must retain objective authority over the monitoring and oversight of the Advocacy Program while the AIM Team remain focused on the daily management of the program and its activities. Additionally, the Board's PARC will serve in an advisory role to the Board and provide insight to any issues that may arise and require a Board-level decision regarding whether the program is staying on track and in alignment with the previously agreed upon advocacy agenda.

IV. Establishing UUSJ's Policy & Advocacy Priorities:

Guidelines regarding the UUSJ Policy & Advocacy Agenda

Advocacy Program Oversight includes the following assumptions –

- UUSJ, through internal paid staff and volunteer support, will continue to conduct a policy issues survey every 2 years, allowing members to vote on preferences related to policy priorities to guide UUSJ's proposed platform of advocacy priorities/sub-issues.
- Based on the results of the biennial policy issues survey and meaningful engagement of and input from all categories of UUSJ's moral owners by UUSJ's executive and advocacy program leadership, UUSJ will annually develop and approve a more detailed agenda of national policy priorities and advocacy. The agenda will be drafted by internal paid staff and volunteers providing programmatic coordination/management of UUSJ's activities, with feedback and guidance from UUSJ's policy task groups, allied organizations, and subject matter experts from our UU network that are engaged in UUSJ's advocacy efforts. The agenda will be approved by the full Board of Directors.
- The UUSJ National Policy Priorities & Advocacy Agenda will serve as UUSJ's compass in driving all policy and advocacy resources, with a structure in place to operationalize the agenda and manage day-to-day decisions relative to strategic tactics, messaging and external partner requests (i.e. signing onto coalition letters, engaging in group advocacy efforts, etc.) connected to executing the agenda. An internal team of paid staff and volunteer leaders implementing the advocacy program on behalf of UUSJ (referred to later in this document as the Advocacy Implementation & Management Team, or AIM Team) will be responsible for getting the work of the Advocacy Program implemented. Engagement of UUSJ's internal policy task groups, subject matter experts identified from UUSJ's network, and as needed specific external partners with more resources to support research/content development activities, will be engaged by the AIM Team as needed given its discretion.
- The UUSJ National Policy Priorities & Advocacy Agenda will be reviewed at least annually in between the years the biennial issues survey is conducted and modified as deemed appropriate given changing national events. This will allow for an annual assessment of the capacity of UUSJ to continue to focus on each identified policy priority and advocacy goal, as well as determine whether existing resources need to be deployed differently or whether additional financial resources focused on specific advocacy activities need to be solicited.

- It is critical that UUSJ's advocacy efforts retain a non-partisan approach and prioritize policy options and strategies reflective of UU's principles. In terms of non-partisanship, UUSJ needs to continue to make sure our policy positions are reflective of evidence-based information, and the organization should not hesitate to question and disagree with inaccurate information that might be used to mislead or misinform policy decisions.
- Additionally, UUSJ should consider whether legislative actions offer feasible policy actions that advance UUSJ's vision and mission, and refrain from spending political capital on supporting legislative proposals that are being introduced solely to advance a political party.
- The oversight of the program should include discussions and decision points related to policy issues/positions that go beyond the scope of UUSJ's agenda, as well as times when the organization may have to push messaging that may be more adversarial in nature in order to align with UUSJ's mission and support the positions of our moral owners and/or strategic partners. Examples of previous issues where UUSJ was asked to engage or take a position even though the policy issue did not fall into one of the organization's key priority areas include gun safety, engagement in armed conflict, etc.
- The Board of Directors will review the advocacy program structure and operational processes annually to ensure the program remains effective in meeting UUSJ's mission. Additionally, any oversight committee that is established based on the recommendations outlined in this document will be responsible for proposing and reviewing budgetary and staffing issues; program scope; assuring organizational compliance with federal tax and lobbying disclosure laws; and monitoring/evaluating the Advocacy Program.

V. Program Capacity & Sustainability: Next Steps

UUSJ Executive Director Pablo DeJesus presented a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Special Committee for Advocacy Program Oversight and Sustainability in early December 2020 regarding proposed scope of advocacy activities, approach to utilization of staff/volunteer resources, and timeline of activities. Initial feedback from the Special Committee was overall favorable/positive. Next steps include a subsequent conversation to provide more detailed feedback to the proposed recommendations. Then, it is recommended that the Executive Director present his recommendations to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors in early 2021.