

TOWSON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

POLICIES MANUAL



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## INTRODUCTION

This Policy Manual is a supplement to the Bylaws of the church. Its purpose is to describe the roles of the Congregation, the Board of Trustees, the Operations Team, and related entities, and to outline the policies that govern their actions.

The Manual is intended to be a current document. Accordingly, it is to be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees and revised appropriately. It is the President's responsibility to see that this review take place.

The policies are divided into five sections:

### 1. Congregational Policies & Goals

The first section contains Vision, Mission and Covenant statements that deal with the goals of the Church. They describe our current priorities, defining what needs are to be met and for whom. The Vision, Mission and Covenant statements drive all church work. It also contains all-church policies.

### 2. Board of Trustees Duties & Governance

The second section presents policies that describe how the Board itself will operate. They establish, in policy, the Board's agreed-upon culture of Board performance.

### 3. Description of Paid Staff Positions

The third section describes the paid staff positions and policies related to them, and includes information on two committees that play important roles with respect to paid staff: the Personnel Committee and the Committee on Ministry.

### 4. Description of Operations Team

The fourth section provides a description of the Operations Team and its responsibilities. It also includes policies that define how the Board will monitor the accountability and performance of the Operations Team.

### 5. Operations Team Limitations

The last section outlines "Operations Team Limitations" to establish the limits and boundaries within which all council and staff activity and decisions must take place.

## **Part I –CONGREGATION**

The Congregation is the ultimate authority in the Church. It calls and, when necessary, dismisses the Minister, elects members to the Board of Trustees and other offices in the Church, and establishes an annual budget for the operation of the Church each year.

The Congregation meets at least annually in the last quarter of each Church year. At a minimum, at this Annual Meeting it conducts elections for open offices in the Church and adopts a budget for the next Church year. The Congregation may also meet at other times during the Church year to consider special matters facing the Church. All meetings of the Congregation must be announced and operated in accordance with the rules set down in the Bylaws.

### **VISION STATEMENT OF TUUC (adopted 10/4/2003)**

Towson Unitarian Universalist Church is a beacon for freethinking religion fostering spiritual and intellectual growth for all ages while promoting an active commitment to the wider world.

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF TUUC (adopted 10/4/2003)**

TUUC celebrates a caring and diverse congregation while growing and changing to meet the needs of our members. Each day we are....

- dedicating ourselves to the free and responsible search for religious truth and meaning,
- celebrating the UU Principles,
- attracting and welcoming all to our church home,
- governing through involvement of the entire church community,
- sharing our talents and resources with the church and greater community,
- coordinating activities and programs toward clear goals.

### **COVENANT STATEMENT OF TUUC (adopted 10/4/2003)**

As we endeavor to achieve our vision and mission we do so in a spirit of mutual acceptance, openness and friendship. We make these promises as we carry out our work.

To respect one another

To learn from one another

To nurture an environment of direct and positive communication

To appreciate that we can accomplish together what we cannot accomplish alone

To serve the free church tradition

To maintain a strong commitment to community outreach

To build hope through understanding

To practice the principles that transform individual lives and realize beloved community

## **Congregational Policies**

### **POLICY ON MAKING ENDORSEMENTS AND/OR MAKING POSITION STATEMENTS**

The position of the Church in matters of public concern may be established either by a majority vote of the congregation at a regular or special congregational meeting or by a majority vote of the Board at a regular or special Board meeting subject to the following restrictions:

- The meeting at which such position is taken must be called by proper procedure with the call stipulating the substance (but not necessarily the final wording) of the position to be considered.
- If the position is decided at a congregational meeting, it is immediately effective. If it is proposed at a meeting of the Board, it becomes effective only after the following steps have been followed:
  - Either by regular newsletter or by special mailing, the Membership will be informed of the action of the Board including the exact wording of the position either adopted or rejected and of the right of Members to protest.

- Members who wish to protest shall immediately so inform the President of the Board, or a person designated by her/him, by telephone and will then confirm this protest in writing.
- The President of the Board will assume that the Membership has been informed of the action of the Board when the President receives her/his copy of the announcement through the mails. Thereafter if she/he does not receive ten or more written protests within ten (10) days, the Board decision will become effective.
- If ten (10) protests are received the position of the Board must be presented for vote at a regular or special meeting of the congregation within thirty (30) days of such protest, unless in the opinion of the President the timeliness of the issue makes it impractical to call such a meeting, in which case the protests will nullify the proposed decision of the Board.
- Once an issue is approved by the congregation or by the Board thru the process outlined, a designated church committee will be responsible for tracking the issue and making decisions on the behalf of the congregation to take a position or represent TUUC in forums on the issue in a manner consistent with the approved position. If the committee would like to take a position that is significantly different from that approved by the congregation or Board, they must bring the issue back to the congregation or Board for authorization before taking action.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY (adopted 7/20/94)**

### **Purpose Statement:**

We believe that:

- The Towson Unitarian Universalist Church should be a safe and welcoming environment that respects the human dignity of all who attend.
- All who attend or are employed by TUUC have a right to participate in an environment that is free of discrimination, which includes freedom from sexual harassment.
- The adoption of a sexual harassment policy provides a means for dealing with harassment experienced within the church community.
- The best resolution of any situation will both stop the unwanted behavior and allow all parties to still feel comfortable within the church.
- We understand that harassment is not always intentional, but may in fact arise through miscommunication or lack of awareness. Regardless, we believe this is a serious issue that our congregation can best face by adoption of the following policies.

### **Underlying Principles and Assumptions**

- Sexual harassment is unacceptable within the Towson Unitarian Universalist Church.
- Sexual harassment is not the fault of the victim.
- People who have been harassed need support, empowerment, and a structure within which to respond effectively and safely.

### **Definitions of Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome conduct that has sexual overtones. This includes but is not limited to:

- physical conduct: such as touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse.
- verbal conduct: such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions.
- written conduct: such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations.
- visual conduct: such as gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines.

Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of the various relationships that exist within the church community (for example: minister/congregant, adult/child, amongst peers) rather than as an exclusively sexual issue.

Sexual harassment has both males and females as its victims and perpetrators. All who attend or are employed by TUUC should be free from harassment by members of the opposite sex or of the same sex.

Procedures for addressing all incidents (or suspected incidents) of sexual harassment are outlined in the Procedures Manual.

## **Other Policies that Affect the Congregation**

### **Policy on Background Checks**

All TUUC Religious Education teachers and other adult members of the congregation who plan to take TUUC children on field trips, hold "lock-ins," or have overnight activities at which their parents will not be present must agree to a criminal background check prior to the activity. Adults whose background checks suggest that they might present a threat to the safety of the children involved will not be allowed to participate in the activity.

The Operations Team is responsible for developing procedures by which background checks will be conducted and evaluated, and by which appropriate actions will be taken.

### **Fundraising Policy (adopted 11/2003, revised 2004)**

This policy applies to all collections, including designated money or goods. There are two types of fundraising: external and internal. External fundraising is defined as any collection of money or goods for organizations outside TUUC. Internal fundraising is defined as any collection of money or goods for TUUC programs or individuals. Internal fundraising shall be kept to a minimum and shall not compete in any way with the annual stewardship campaign or the annual service auction.

All church fundraising activities must be sponsored by a committee, council, or the Board of Trustees. If any group within the church wishes to hold a fundraising or collection activity of any type, it must obtain the sponsorship of an already existing committee of the Church.

All who wish to conduct fundraisers must obtain approval of the Operations Team in advance of the event. Interested parties will seek approval by submitting a completed TUUC Fundraising Even request form to the appropriate council head and to the office. This ensures that: 1: Fundraisers do not compete with each other for time (church calendar) or resources (committee/staff time), 2: Fundraisers and the committees that run them don't miss an opportunity to work with another entity in the church.

The Operations Team shall have the power to stop any proposed fundraising project by a simple majority vote if they feel the project is undesirable or inconsistent with the mission, vision, and covenant of the church. Upon its choosing the Operations Team may refer any request to the Board of Trustees for a final decision.

Any announcements of fundraising activities in church publications (Order of Service, newsletter, Email and Web) must be submitted to the office, and any announcements about the fundraiser made during a Sunday service must take place at the appointed announcement time or at a time coordinated with the Minister or the Worship Program committee (see proposal form). Announcements may not be made during the Lighting Candles of Care and Concern.

## **Spending of Auction Funds (approved June, 2005)**

The Operations Team recommends to the Board ways to use funds raised through the TUUC Auction, taking into account the following guidelines. Auction funds may be spent for church purposes or for charitable causes outside the church. Although the church strongly prefers that Auction funds be spent for purposes that fall outside the church operating budget, there are no specific restrictions against their being allocated toward church operating expenses in exceptional circumstances, such as in years when the church may be experiencing a severe budget shortfall. Final approval of the use of Auction Funds rests with the Board.

## **Spending of Funds from Other Special Fundraising Events**

Other (non-Auction) Special Fundraisers tend to fall into two categories. The categories and policies follow below.

- 1. Fundraisers on behalf of (and whose proceeds are earmarked toward) a specific cause inside or outside the church (such as Youth RE, or Habitat For Humanity).** The net of all funds raised through this kind of fundraiser are to be spent on the intended cause or purpose.
- 2. Fundraisers whose proceeds are not earmarked toward a specific purpose.** The Operations Team recommends to the Board ways to use the funds raised, taking into account the following guidelines. The funds may be spent for church purposes or for charitable causes outside the church. Although the church strongly prefers that funds raised through special fundraisers be spent for purposes that fall outside the church operating budget, there are no specific restrictions against their being allocated toward church operating expenses in exceptional circumstances, such as in years when the church may be experiencing a severe budget shortfall. Final approval of the use of funds raised through special fundraisers rests with the Board.

## **Special Gifts Policies (adopted 12/9/85)**

### **Definition of a Special Gift**

A special gift is one made to the church for a special purpose - it is a restricted gift. Such gifts are not to be made in lieu of a pledge to the regular and debt retirement budgets. There are, however, contributing members and friends who wish to make a special gift, often as a memorial, in addition to their regular contributions. Such gifts, if they fill needs not otherwise provided for and deemed appropriate, will be gratefully received. Such gifts will be properly acknowledged and will be recorded in the Special Gifts Register.

### **Rules for Special Gifts and Memorials**

- Gifts exceeding \$5,000.00 in value may be marked by a suitable plaque not to exceed 2 by 5 inches.
- All other gifts will be recorded in this Special Gifts Register.
- Gifts shall be selected from a list established by the Special Gifts Committee.
- Any gift must be approved by the Esthetics Committee and reviewed by the Operations Team.
- Any other gift must be approved by the Special Gifts Committee and by the Operations Team.

Undesignated gifts up to \$500.00 go to the Special Gifts Fund and any over \$500.00 go to the Endowment Fund.

## **Part II – Board of Trustees Duties and Governance**

**Board Global Governance Commitment** – Working on behalf of the congregation, the Board of Trustees will ensure that TUUC will make the best use of its resources to accomplish its Vision, Mission and Covenant and to further the Church's ministry.

We place particular importance on ensuring that:

1. Congregationally approved long-term goals and policy drive TUUC's ministry, and
2. There is cooperation among all parts of the Church toward meeting its long-term goals.

The Board's goals and policies will always be a "work in progress." Ongoing dialogue among the Board, the Congregation, Council Heads, and paid staff will help shape the Board's thinking and may lead to revisions of goals or policies.

Twice each year the Board will report to the congregation on the Church's progress toward meeting its goals.

### **Governing Style**

The TUUC Board of Trustees will approach its task with a style which emphasizes a focus on the well-being of the church, responsiveness to its congregation, organizational vision, strategic leadership, clear distinction with respect to the roles of the Board, the Operations Team, and the two committees that operate independent of the Operations Team: the Personnel Committee and the Committee on Ministry. *In this spirit, the Board will:*

1. Focus chiefly on the long-term goals for the congregation's future, not on the administrative or programmatic means of achieving these goals. Implementation of policies to meet those goals is the responsibility of the Operations Team and/or the Personnel Committee or Committee on Ministry, not the Board.
2. Direct, control and inspire the church through the careful establishment of the broadest organizational values and policies. Policies will address: a) Our current priorities or goals, b) Operations Team limitations: boundaries of prudence and ethics to be observed by the Operations Team, c) Governance Process: Board roles and responsibilities, and d) Board/ Operations Team Relationship: linkage between the Board and Operations Team.
3. Enforce upon itself whatever rules and disciplines are needed to govern with excellence. After subjects have been discussed and voted upon as official motions, both the majority and minority will support the action. The principle of supporting Board actions ensures that the Board's decision is clear and unambiguous. This principal requires all Board members, even those in the minority on a vote, to respect the decision made.
4. Be accountable to the congregation (including members, friends, and children of TUUC) for competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of its obligations as a body. For example, on a semi-annual basis, the Board will monitor and regularly discuss its own process and performance, and the Board will establish a procedure for disclosing and addressing Board violations of church bylaws and other governance policies.
5. Encourage the elected Nominating Committee to recruit candidates from the congregation who reflect the diversity of our congregation and who are committed to serving the goals of the Church.
6. Ensure the continuity of Board improvements through systematic treatment of its own institutional memory, including orientation of new Board members.
7. Cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Board, not the staff, will be responsible for excellence in governing. The Board will be the initiator of policy, not merely a reactor to council and staff initiatives. The Board will use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Board as a body rather than to substitute individual judgments for the Board's values. The Board will allow no officer, individual, or committee of the Board to hinder or be an excuse for not fulfilling Board commitments.
8. Contribute financially to the church.

### **Board Job Description**

The job of the Board is to represent the congregation in determining and demanding appropriate organization performance. *Accordingly,*

1. The Board is the most formal governance-related link between the Operations Team and the congregation.
  - (a) Based on substantial consultation with the Congregation, the Board will produce and update, as appropriate, written governing policies that, at the broadest levels, address each category of organizational decision.
2. Through regular monitoring, the Board will assess Operations Team performance against policies.
3. After the Operations Team presents the annual budget to the Board, the Board will review it, make amendments if necessary, and recommend a budget to the TUUC congregation.

4. The Board will play a leadership role in supporting the Church's fundraising program.
5. The Board will be formally involved with decisions or actions involving the hiring or dismissal of any church employee other than the Minister.

As part of its work, the Board will conduct an annual review of Board policies; conduct an annual assessment of the policies' relationship to the Vision, Mission, and Covenant; and will work to improve its own performance through Board education and enriched input and deliberation.

### **Agenda Planning**

Agendas and related documents for Board meetings will be sent to all Board members in advance of the meeting and will be posted at the Church and on the TUUC website prior to the meetings.

### **Board Officers & Their Responsibilities**

The following Board officers are part of the shared ministry of the church. As such, each officer has a special leadership role to play.

#### **President**

- Is promoted each year from the position of President-Elect, upon confirmation by the congregation.
- Sets the agenda and presides at all meetings of the Board of Trustees.
- Sees that the policies and decisions of the Board and the Congregation are implemented.
- Appoints, with Board approval, the chairs of all Board ad hoc committees
- At the direction of the Board or the Congregation, enters contracts that he or she has been specifically empowered to enter or that have not been specifically delegated by the Board to the Operations Team.
- At the direction of the Board or the Congregation, has the authority to spend up to 50% of funds budgeted for contingencies, subject to the approval of the Finance Council Head.
- Makes an annual report to the Congregation on the state of the Church.
- Consults regularly with the President-Elect on policy issues and on operations problems or opportunities of church.
- Maintains communication with the Congregation by calling Congregational or Town Meetings not less than three times a year, and sets the agenda for these meetings with the advice of the Board.
- Assures that the Board behaves consistently with its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization:
- Meetings will focus on issues that clearly belong to the Board to decide, and not on matters that would be more appropriately handled by the Operations Team or other entities.
- Deliberation will be fair, open, and thorough, but also timely, orderly, and to the point.
- Work may be delegated, as appropriate, to different Board members and/or working groups.
- May choose to use email and/or telephone or fax communication to vote and make decisions on issues where he or she believes the decision involved: 1) is virtually pro forma and non-controversial, but of a time-sensitive nature, or 2) must be made before the Board can next convene.
- May delegate this authority but remains accountable for its use.

#### **President-Elect**

- Is elected on a yearly basis upon nomination by the Nominating Committee and by congregational vote.
- May preside over the Board or perform any other duties of the President in the absence, or at the request, of the President.
- Serves as chair of the Operations Team and assures that the responsibilities of the Operations Team are accomplished.
- Consults closely with the President.
- Sees that major calendar events are determined and posted.

### **Treasurer**

- Is elected for a two-year term by the congregation and is a voting member of the Board of Trustees.
- Is responsible for advising the Board of Trustees about any emerging financial needs, concerns or policy issues meriting the Board's attention or action.
- Reports at Board meetings on whether the church is spending within the limits set forth in the annual budget and receiving income at the levels expected, and alerts the Board to any noteworthy changes in fund balances and investments.
- Leads the Board's efforts to monitor the church's implementation of policies whenever financial resources are involved.
- Consults with and reviews financial procedures and processes of the Finance Council.
- Processes the bonding of appropriate members of the Church, specifically the Bookkeeper, Finance Council Head, and or any others deemed necessary by the Treasurer and/or Board.
- May assist in developing an annual budget, providing advice on the financial aspects and implications of the proposed budget.

### **Board Secretary**

- Shall be a church member who is elected by the congregation for a two-year term as an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Board of Trustees.
- Shall take minutes at Board meetings and Congregational meetings, distribute them within two weeks for review by the trustees, and shall assure that minutes and agendas are properly posted on the bulletin board in the church lobby and on the TUUC website.

### **Members at Large (Four)**

- Four members-at-large are elected by the congregation to serve two-year terms. Two are elected in odd years and two are elected in even years.
- Represent the interests of the Church as a whole in Board deliberations.
- Serve on ad hoc committees appointed by the Board. Every ad hoc committee must have at least one member-at-large.

### **Minister**

- Serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board.
- Offers guidance and counsel on the general welfare of the congregation in keeping with the vision and mission of the Church and the covenant of the Board.

### **Trustees' Code of Conduct**

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. *Accordingly,*

1. Trustees must show unbiased loyalty to the interests of the membership. This accountability supersedes any potentially conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other Boards or staffs. It also supersedes the personal interest of any Board member acting as a consumer of the church's services.
2. Trustees must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.
  - a) There must be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any trustee and paid staff except where procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to inside information.
  - b) When the Board is to decide upon an issue about which a trustee has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that trustee shall absent herself or himself without comment from the vote and from the deliberation by leaving the meeting.
  - c) Trustees must not use their positions to obtain church employment for themselves, family members, or close associates. Should a member desire employment, he/she must first resign from the Board.
  - d) Trustees will annually disclose their involvement with other organizations, with vendors, or any other associations that might produce a conflict.

3. Trustees may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization except as explicitly set forth in Board policies.
  - a) Trustees' interaction with the Operations Team must recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly Board-authorized.
  - b) Trustees' interactions with public, press, or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Board member to speak for the Board except to repeat explicitly stated Board decisions.
  - c) Trustees will make no judgments of the Operations Team's performance except as their performance is assessed against explicit Board policies by a formal evaluation process.
4. Trustees will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
5. Trustees will make every effort to attend monthly meetings and other meetings where all Board members are expected to attend. In the event that a member misses three consecutive meetings for reasons that a Board majority feels are not justifiable, the member will be asked to resign from the Board. A member will be promptly notified any time the Board has deemed an absence unjustified.
6. Trustees will take the initiative to ensure that they are adequately briefed and informed, particularly by use of electronic mail and attentiveness to the church mailbox system.

### **Board Covenant**

*In working together to serve TUUC, the Board of Trustees covenants to:*

- Greet one another whenever we meet and work to build personal bonds to enrich ourselves and the Board process.
- Set aside personal agendas for the best interests of the church, expressing our views fully and honestly. Although our decisions may not be unanimous, we will support all decisions of the Board, moving on in spite of our differences.
- Follow an intentional process of decision-making that includes preparation, engagement and discussion, resulting in a meaningful vote.
- Communicate decisions to the congregation in a way that reflects the process and considerations that went into the decision.
- Accept our responsibility to seek and provide information necessary to make well-informed decisions, finding ways to discuss issues between meetings in order to be prepared.
- Treat unfolding discussions with confidentiality while committing to regular and open communication with the congregation.
- Respect our differences and recognize that disagreement is a part of Board life.
- Listen deeply to each other and assume that others have the best interests of the church at heart.
- Handle complaints brought to the Board with respect, but handle them at the appropriate level, gathering accurate and complete information as necessary.
- Engage in direct, face-to-face conversation with one another and with our minister, giving constructive feedback.
- Respond to emails and other communications in a timely manner.
- Be clear about the assignments and responsibilities of each Board member.
- Encourage and support each other in "self care" and support a "family comes first" approach.
- Focus on the big picture!

## **Complaints to the Board**

It is the intent of the Board to be accessible and responsible to the congregation and other stakeholders, but it is not a function of the Board to resolve complaints or grievances that are not directly related to the Board's policy making and policy monitoring functions. The Board will only get involved in resolving a complaint about an issue if there is a violation of church policy, or there is no relevant policy, or there is reason to question the appropriateness or adequacy of existing policy. In such situations, the Board will analyze and then resolve the problem, including making or adjusting whatever the deficiency is in existing policy. Complaints or grievances that are not the responsibility of the Board will be referred, as appropriate, to the Operations Team, the Committee on Ministry, the Personnel Committee, or to some other relevant committee, group, or forum.

## **Board Committee Principles**

Board Committees, when used, will reinforce the wholeness of the Board's job and never alter or interfere with communication and delegation from the Board to the Operations Team. They will be used solely to assist the Board in carrying out its responsibilities. *Accordingly,*

1. Board committees are to help the Board do its job, never to help or advise the staff. Committees ordinarily will assist the Board by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Board deliberation. In keeping with the Board's broader focus, Board committees will normally not have dealings with current staff operations.
2. Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority by Board action or controlling documents of the church for specific and time-limited purposes. Expectations and authority will be carefully stated in terms of reference in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Operations Team as well as to ensure clarity in the Board's expectations.
3. Board committees cannot exercise authority over staff.
4. Board committees are to avoid over-identification with organizational parts rather than the whole. Therefore a Board committee that has helped the Board create policy on some topic will not be used to monitor organizational performance on that same topic
5. Board committees will be used sparingly and in an ad hoc capacity.
6. Board members assigned to Board committees can participate fully in the work of the committee.
7. The Board and its committees will meet periodically to discuss progress based on established timelines.

## **Board Committee Structure**

A committee is a Board committee only if its existence and charge come from the Board, regardless of whether Board members sit on the committee.

## **Board Responsibilities With Respect to the Committee on Ministry**

Due to the particular nature of the Committee on Ministry, the Board will approve the terms of reference of the Committee on Ministry, their membership will be selected by the Board in consultation with the Minister, and their reports will be made available to the Board for information.

## **Investing in Effective Governance**

Because poor governance costs more in the long run than learning to govern well, the Board will invest in its governance capacity so that members can attend training sessions and tap other necessary expertise relevant to the Board's responsibilities. *Accordingly,*

1. Training and retraining will orient new members and candidates for membership, and will help maintain and increase existing member skills and understandings.
2. Outside monitoring assistance will be arranged so that the Board can exercise confident control over organizational performance. This includes, but is not limited to, a fiscal audit.
3. Costs will be prudently incurred for such things as training, conferences, surveys, audits and other third-party expertise, and costs for governance expenses will be outlined in the annual budget.

## **PART II – Description of Paid Staff, Personnel Committee, and Committee on Ministry**

### **Minister**

- The Minister is an important key to the ministry of the church.
- The Minister shall have freedom of the pulpit and freedom to express his or her views and speak the truth as he or she understands it.
- The Minister will provide leadership in worship, pastoral care, education, and service in keeping with the UU Ministers Association Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice.
- These duties are outlined in detail in the letter of agreement extended to the Minister by the Board on behalf of the Congregation.

### **Other Paid Staff**

Job descriptions for paid staff shall be included in the Procedures Manual. The positions currently include:

- **Director Of Religious Education Ministry**
- **Music Director**
- **Church Administrator**
- **Administrative Assistant**
- **Pianist**
- **Custodian**

### **Lines of Authority**

The minister has authority over all other paid staff. All other paid staff answer to the minister or to those he or she assigns supervisory responsibility.

### **Creation of New Staff Positions**

The Operations Team may recommend to the Board the creation of new paid staff positions or significant changes to the existing positions. The Board must approve all new positions or changes to existing positions.

### **Compensation**

The Operations Team will recommend annually to the Board compensation levels for all paid personnel. The recommendations must be in compliance with congregationally approved budget restrictions. Final approval of compensation is the Board's responsibility.

It is the policy of TUUC to pay fair and equitable salaries to employees, comparable to similar positions within the community, following UUA guidelines where such guidelines exist, and consistent with the financial resources of the church.

### **Searches for Personnel**

All personnel searches except searches for a new Minister shall be conducted by ad hoc search committees expressly created for this purpose by the Board. The minister or his/her designee shall be a member of the search committee. The search committee shall be authorized to offer the position to the candidate of their choice. The search committee must comply with Church equal employment opportunity policies.

Ministerial searches shall follow the established bylaws. Ministerial search committees report directly to the Congregation.

## **Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee advocates for fair and equitable salaries, benefits, and employment practices for Church staff and advises the Church on personnel matters.

### **Purpose and Function**

It is the policy of Towson Unitarian Universalist Church that the personnel committee will:

- Assure that TUUC has a uniform and consistent method for recruitment, hiring, and compensation of church employees.
- Assist search committees in recruiting candidates for position openings.
- Facilitate and ensure proper handling of unresolved complaints by employees.
- Develop and propose changes to personnel policies.
- Assure that proper performance evaluation procedures are followed.
- Assure compliance with State and Federal employment laws.
- Advise staff to help ensure adherence to work and disciplinary procedure guidelines.
- Assist with compensation administration, including conducting salary and benefit surveys, making compensation recommendations for positions, and helping draft position descriptions.
- Ensure that timely updates are made of job descriptions and compensation packages for church employees other than the minister(s).
- Assure that personnel records are properly maintained.
- Conduct exit interviews when employees leave the church.

**Encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to seek employment and advance professionally at TUUC.**

## **Committee on Ministry (COM)**

**Purpose:** To foster communication among the congregation, the Board of Trustees, and the minister, and to provide counsel and support to the minister.

- Assists minister with planning for professional development and sabbaticals
- Focuses on various aspects of Minister/Congregational relationship.
- Serves as sounding board for feedback from congregation about any items relating to the minister
- Assesses the ongoing performance of the minister in specific areas using both feedback and formal survey methods.
- Recommends to the Operations Team appropriate compensation for the Minister.

**Structure:** Six members, with two members appointed annually by the Board, in consultation with the Minister, to serve for three years.

## **Part III: Description of Operations Team**

### **Global Operations Team Charge**

The Board will hold the Operations Team accountable for the church's operations, its achievements, and conduct.

### **The Operations Team**

The Operations Team consists of the Minister, Church Administrator, Director of Religious Education, and the six Council Heads (Finance, House and Grounds, Inner Life, Outreach, Religious Education, and Sunday Services). The Operations Team may call the Treasurer as needed to resolve financial issues and needs. The Operations Team works collaboratively with one another and the rest of the paid staff, with the Board, and with committees, volunteers and the congregation in the spirit of shared ministry. While each member of the Operations Team focuses on a particular area of responsibility, the team as a whole is responsible for making day-to-day decisions at the operations (program) level, and for ensuring adequate coordination of all

implementation of the church's policies and programs with regard to worship, membership, pastoral care, religious education, community outreach and social justice, as well as financial, administrative, and building programs.

Should a member of the Operations Team be unable to serve due to an emergency, the team will continue to operate. The President-Elect will name a replacement member. If s/he is the one unable to serve, the Board will appoint an Acting President-Elect in consultation with the Nominating Committee.

### **Operations Team Covenant**

(Developed by the Operations Team)

1. To respect one another and respect differences of opinion.
2. Engage in direct communication with one another and give constructive feedback in working on the issues that confront the team.
3. To prepare for discussion of ideas and engage in meaningful discussion to reach decisions that will serve the best interests of the Operations Team and the congregation.
4. Handle complaints brought to the team by committees, staff members, and the congregation with respect.
5. Protect confidentiality on matters when appropriate while having an open dialogue with staff, committees, and congregation members on issues important to the congregation.
6. To provide proper direction and leadership in working with our committees.
7. To involve staff in all decision making.
8. To be fiscally responsible in working with our committees and councils by staying within our budgets and abiding by budget guidelines.
9. Provide high quality programs that inspire our members to develop their spiritual and intellectual journeys.
10. To build community both within our church and the outside world.

### **Unity of Control**

Only decisions of the Board acting as a body are binding on the Operations Team. *Accordingly,*

1. Decisions or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or committee members are not binding on the Operations Team, except in rare instances when the Board has specifically authorized such an exercise of authority.
2. Unless directed by the full Board, the Operations Team can decline requests for information from individual Board members or committees that require, in the Operations Team's opinion, a material amount of staff time or resources.
3. Informal meetings may occur between Board members, the Minister, Council Heads and the staff for the purpose of exchanging information and seeking advice but not for Board members to give instruction or direction.

### **Accountability of and within the Operations Team**

The Operations Team is the Board's link to operational achievement and conduct. It reports to the Board through the President-Elect and Minister in their capacity as the Chair of the Operation Team and chief supervisor of the staff. Although other members of the Operations Team make reports to and communicate with the Board, for formal direction and guidance the Board deals directly and only with the President-Elect and the Minister. *Accordingly,*

1. The Board will not give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the President-Elect or Minister.
2. The Board will evaluate the performance of the Operations Team based on the performance of the church. The Operations Team is charged with making progress toward the goals set by the Congregation and the Board.

### **Delegation to the Operations Team**

The Board sets top level policies that reflect the priorities of the congregation and leave the work of implementing the goals to the Operations Team - which is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church. The Board will communicate its policies and the long-term goals to be achieved to the Operations Team in writing and will establish boundaries within which the Operations Team may operate.

1. The Board will develop policies instructing the Operations Team to meet its goals within its budget.
2. The Operations Team will operate within a set of guidelines called "Operations Limitations." These are policies that define the boundaries within which the OT can carry out its responsibilities of managing and leading the church. The limitations policies state the degree of flexibility and freedom in operational decision-making that the Board wishes to give the Operations Team. These policies will give the Operations Team sufficient leeway to implement the Board's policies. The Board will not micromanage the Operations Team. In assigning tasks to committees, staff and other "implementer" volunteers, the Operations Team will ensure that the Board's policies are followed.
3. As long as it uses a reasonable interpretation of the Board's guidelines, the Operations Team is authorized to establish additional policies, make decisions, take actions, and develop activities. In the event that the Operations Team chooses not to follow Board-established policy, it must notify the Board in writing at least by the next Board meeting. In such instances, the Board will assume that the Operations Team's decisions deserve the Board's respect and consideration, even when the decisions do not follow Board policy.
4. These policies are intended to be useful and dynamic. The Board may change its goals and Operations Limitations at any time, in writing. However, as long as any Board-specified delegation of authority is in place, the Board will respect and support any reasonable interpretation of its policies, even though Operations Team choices may not be the choices the Board or its members might have made.

## **Part IV: Operations Team Limitations**

Neither the Operations Team nor any other committee, staff member, or volunteer shall cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics. Overall, the Operations Team must demonstrate leadership that is caring and nurturing, open and responsive, and visionary and empowering.

### **Operations Teamwork**

The Operations Team shall be in a covenantal relationship with one another and shall speak as one to parties to whom the Operations Team is responsible or over whom it has authority. *Accordingly, Team members shall:*

- Make decisions on material issues by majority vote.
- Support the recommendation of the Operations Team once a majority decision has been reached.
- Honor and respect each other's views and positions

### **Treatment of Members, Friends & Visitors**

Based on the guiding principle of welcoming all – with respect to interactions with members, friends and visitors of the church (the Congregation) – the Operations Team shall:

- Treat all people with courtesy and respect, welcoming those who are seeking to find a spiritual home in this church and participate in its goals.
- Maintain facilities that provide a reasonable level of safety, sanitation, comfort, access, welcome and functionality.
- Adhere to appropriate standards of confidentiality and privacy and use methods of collecting or handling personal information that protect against improper access to the material elicited.

### **Treatment of Staff**

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Operations Team must operate in ways that fulfill the UU principles and the Church's vision, mission, values, and goals. *Accordingly, the Operations Team shall:*

- Ensure that conditions are fair, safe, healthy, professional, dignified, and humane.

- Provide an environment where staff feel safe in expressing concerns in a professional manner, and where no repercussions take place for such expressions.
- Consider a contractor's past performance and facts and information relevant to a contractor's treatment of employees when making decisions for current or future work at the Church.
- Make every effort to ensure that TUUC employees enjoy salaries and benefits competitive with other churches and local nonprofit organizations of similar size.

### **Treatment of Unpaid Staff (Volunteers)**

Much of the substantive work of TUUC is accomplished through church committees or more informal groupings of volunteers, working in a "shared ministry," collaborative relationship with staff. The Operations Team shall use the Vision, Mission and Covenant statements in monitoring and making decisions about committee growth, committee leadership and committee activities. Therefore the Operations Team is responsible for encouraging and often establishing such committees and other groupings, ensuring that they understand their roles and responsibilities, have access to information by which to make their decisions, and get prompt responses to their requests for information or financial support. Shared ministry must be TUUC's watchword. *To this end, the Operations Team shall:*

- See that committee activities and staff responsibilities do not overlap in ways that are disadvantageous to either.
- Ensure that committees understand the process by which conflicts with the staff, Operations Team, or Board should be addressed.
- Interact with volunteers in ways that respect and encourage their work on behalf of committees
- Assure that the work done by volunteers is covered by insurance, as necessary and appropriate.

### **Financial Management**

The Operations Team shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Church's assets and financial resources in accordance with the approved annual budget. However, the Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the Church's assets and financial resources. These responsibilities shall be carried out in a professional and prudent manner and in ways consistent with the achievement of our goals. The Board of Trustees and Operations Team will work to safeguard the principal assets, operations, and fiscal integrity of the church.

### **Financial Planning & Budgeting**

The Operations Team, in collaboration with the Treasurer, shall not allow budgeting that:

1. Reaches the Board less than a week before its budgeting meeting or contains insufficient information to permit reasonable Board evaluation.
2. Fails to consider contingencies such as legal fees or long-range planning, including reserves for such items as sabbaticals and building needs.

### **Financial Condition & Activities**

In administering the budgeted funds, the Operations Team shall:

1. Expend funds in a manner consistent with the broad expenditure categories in the approved budget, except to the extent the Bylaws, the membership, or the Board authorize transfers between categories.
2. Refrain from authorizing a line of credit or any loan contract without Board approval.
3. Refrain from using long-term reserve or expending any endowment or designated funds other than for the purposes determined at time of receipt or designation, unless the Board of Trustees approves an exception.
4. In consultation with the Treasurer, provide reports concerning actual revenues and expenditures and appropriate comparisons and projections. The Treasurer will report on these matters to the Board at its monthly meeting.
5. Facilitate reasonable access to financial records by an Audit Committee and authorized outside auditors.
6. Handle funds with sufficient and prudent controls. (Procedures for handling funds are to be outlined in a financial procedures and protections manual, which is to be written during FY 2004).
7. Aggressively pursue receivables after a reasonable grace period.

## **Asset Protection**

The Operations Team shall protect, maintain, and appropriately use assets of the church -- including cash, investment and endowment funds, the church building and furnishings. The Operations Team shall develop policies and procedures regarding the use of the church building and facilities.

*Accordingly, the Operations Team shall:*

1. Provide reasonable and prudent insurance coverage for the church, its staff, officers, directors, and volunteers.
2. Prevent unnecessary exposure of the church, its Board, and staff to claims of liability or risk the nonprofit status.
3. Prevent the use of church facilities by any individual, group or organization that discriminates based upon race, color, religious background, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, political persuasion, or disability.
4. Prevent use of church facilities by individuals, groups or organizations that would use the facilities solely for monetary gain or profit.
5. Refrain from renting church facilities at times that conflict with regularly scheduled events of the church.
6. Obtain advance authorization from the Board before purchasing, encumbering, or disposing of titled or real church property.
7. Take reasonable steps to protect historic assets, intellectual property, information, or files of the church from loss or significant damage.
8. Develop policies on the use of TUUC's facilities, as well as policies regarding the use of TUUC's name and banner, that are consistent with the Church's Mission, Vision and Covenant statements.

## **Execution of Contracts**

The Operations Team and its express designees shall not enter into any contractual arrangements that fail to serve the church's policies or that involve unacceptable means. *Accordingly, the Operations Team or its express designees shall:*

1. For any contract of \$10,000 or more, other than regular personnel contracts:
  - Enter such a contract only with the authorization of the Treasurer or Board President, who may, at their discretion, submit the matter to the Board of Trustees.
  - Terminate or breach such a contract only with the approval of the Board.
  - Enter into such a contract only if it includes a mediation clause.
2. Seek legal advice, when necessary, to interpret and assess contractual terms.

## **Endowment and Memorial Gifts - Delegation to Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall develop appropriate policies and procedures for the Endowment Fund for seeking, accepting, and managing gifts of cash, securities, and other tangible resources for the church. Such gifts must support the mission of the church and UU principles while not unreasonably constraining TUUC's flexibility in managing the gift.

Specifically for the management of endowments, the policy will include at least the following:

1. The need for professional management of the church's endowments.
2. The primacy of following the donor's written wishes.
3. The circumstances under which the church can spend from or borrow from the principal of these endowments; and the terms of reference for the Endowment Committee.

In no case may the Operations Team spend Endowment funds in violation of the directives and restrictions set forth in the Bylaws or in Board policy, or without consultation with the Endowment Committee.

### **Applying for Grants from Outside Funding Agencies**

No one other than the Operations Team or their express designees shall apply for any grant on behalf of the church from outside funding agencies. The Operations Team and their express designees shall only apply for grants that serve the church's mission and are in line with UU principles.

### **Communications to the Board of Trustees and Congregation**

The Operations Team shall ensure that the Board, and in some cases the congregation, is fully informed concerning relevant implementation issues, and that the Board is – to the degree possible - supported in its work. Accordingly, the Operations Team shall:

1. Submit monitoring information required by the Board in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of Board policies being monitored.
2. Report in a timely manner an actual or anticipated non-compliance with any policy of the church (assuming the Operations Team is aware of the non-compliance), and recommend changes in such policies whenever the need for changes comes to the Operations Team's attention.
3. Advise the Board if, in the Operations Team's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with the church's bylaws or its own policies.
4. Refrain from making public statements about the official position of the Congregation or Board on controversial social, political, and/or congregational issues beyond what the Congregation or Board has formally and explicitly adopted as positions of record. (Nothing in this policy shall be construed to infringe upon the fundamental principle of freedom of the pulpit.)
5. Present an Annual Report to the Board.
6. Develop and maintain a calendar for the church year.
7. Supply for the Board-meeting agendas all items delegated to the Operations Team that are to be Board-approved, along with the minimum amount of supporting data necessary to keep the Board informed.
8. Advise the Board of significant transfers of money within budget categories or endowment funds, or other changes substantially affecting the Church's financial condition.
9. Ensure that a complete and current set of all Church policies, including all those formulated by the Board, Operations Team, or Congregation, are readily accessible to all Church members at all times.
10. Assure that the congregation receives semi-annual reports about the status of major revenue and expense elements in the church budget. Such reports will include sufficient information to describe where the Church stands.
11. Communicate with the full congregation about other implementation issues of likely interest to the congregation as a whole.