

UCH Policy on Policies

Approved by the Board of Trustees: February 2, 2016

Purpose

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale adopted policy governance as its chosen form of governance (see related Policy on Policy Governance and Management Structure). The purpose of this policy is to ensure all policies approved by the UCH Board of Trustees are well-developed and understandable. Each policy approved by the Board must:

- Support the mission of UCH,
- Provide staff, lay leaders and all members clear and concise guidance, and
- Encourage an environment of accountability. When appropriate, policies will identify Board Committees, staff and/or lay leaders who are responsible for implementing the policy.

In addition, every Policy must be:

- Approved by the Board
- Maintained centrally and be accessible to all church members
- Linked to procedures that are established by staff or lay leaders
- Reviewed and updated regularly according to established timeframes for review

Definitions

Policy: a statement of UCH philosophy and direction, established to provide guidance and assistance to UCH staff and members in conducting church affairs. Policies are the domain of the Board of Trustees and must be formally approved by the Board. Each policy:

- Is a governing principle that mandates or constrains actions
- Changes infrequently and sets a course for the foreseeable future
- Is compliant with church bylaws as well as other established laws and regulations

Procedure: a guideline or series of interrelated steps taken to help implement a related policy. Procedures are the domain of staff or lay leaders. While the Board can be consulted on procedures, they do not need Board approval. UCH procedures should:

- Identify and link to the appropriate policy,

- Be reviewed and updated as necessary by the responsible parties (e.g., staff or lay leaders),
- Be maintained centrally and be accessible to interested church members

Board Committee on Policies – a permanent Board Committee made up of at least 2 Board Members, responsible for presentation of all policies to the Board for consideration and responsible for overseeing required policy reviews and updates. Committee members will serve for at least one year and will be selected at the start of each church year by the Board President with input from all Board members.

Policy Development Process

All policies presented to the Board for consideration and approval must come through the Board Committee on Policies. A request for a policy and/or initial drafts of policies can be submitted to the Board Committee on Policies for consideration and action by:

- Board of Trustees,
- Staff, or
- Lay leaders

If the Board Committee on Policies has multiple requests for policies, it will consult with the full Board to prioritize the requests and set a schedule for policy development and approval.

A policy can be approved by the Board after 2 readings at 2 Board meetings. After the first reading, the Board will identify the appropriate staff or lay leaders who should be consulted, when necessary, prior to the second reading of the policy.

If there are no significant comments or issues raised after the second reading of the policy, the Board can vote to approve the policy.

Format of Policies

A standard format can improve clarity and consistency across policies. The following format should be followed for all policies approved after the date of approval of this Policy on Policies. Policies approved prior to approval of this Policy on Policies may be revised/updated by the Board Committee on Policies.

- Title of Policy

- Date of original approval by the Board; date of revision and/or date of last review and reaffirmation of original policy
- Committee or program-area affiliation (if applicable)
- Purpose statement
- Definitions (as needed)
- Key policy elements
- Review/update schedule – Reviews should not be less frequent than every 5 years.
- List of related procedures (if applicable)

Location

All approved policies will be maintained on UCH’s website, accessible to all UCH members. A hard copy of all policies will be maintained in a policy binder located in the UCH workroom.

Review Schedule

This policy should be reviewed and updated, as necessary, every 5 years.

Related Procedures

None, as of February 2, 2016