



## REVISION HISTORY

New document adopted **11/12/14**.

## BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

Under the UUCWC Bylaws, the Board of Trustees has the authority to formulate and implement Church policy (Art. IV, Section 2), including the authority to create committees and write policies that define their functions, responsibilities, and operations (Art. IV, Section 9). The Board seeks to encourage shared ministry among the Board, the Minister, committees, and teams that carry out activities in support of UUCWC's mission through the creation of a governance structure that encourages volunteerism, autonomy, and accountability. To help facilitate shared ministry, committees and teams should define their roles within the context of UUCWC's mission and structure their operations in a manner that allows committee and team members to participate fully and take ownership of their responsibilities. This establishes a foundation for sustainability through leadership development and succession planning.

All church leaders are expected to practice transparent decision-making, healthy conflict management, and respect and support for each other in their roles. Because overlap in shared ministry may result in lack of clarity and the potential for unnecessary conflict, the Board adopts written policies that clarify responsibility and authority among the Board, Minister, other staff, committees, and teams. This policy defines these terms and establishes a process for consultative, collegial, and inclusive decision making.

## POLICY

### 1. Definitions.

- a. *Responsibility*. The term "responsibility" means the obligation to act in an area.
- b. *Authority*. The term "authority" means the power to decide in an area.
- c. *Accountability*. The term "accountability" means a relationship established by policy, contract, or covenant between individuals or groups with responsibility and authority. A person with authority is accountable to another who, acting as a "check-and-balance," verifies that the decision-maker followed an agreed-upon process and consulted appropriately when exercising decision-making authority.
- d. *Policy*. The term "policy" means a Board-approved policy that defines or clarifies responsibility, authority, and accountability in one or more areas.
- e. *Governance Committee*. For policy purposes, the term "governance committee" means a Bylaws-mandated group or a Board-established group having a primary role advisory to the Board. A governance committee is subject to Bylaws Article V requirements.
- f. *Task Force*. For policy purposes, the term "task force" means a group described in Bylaws Article V as an "ad hoc committee" and is subject to the Policy on Creation of a Task Force.
- g. *Ministry Team*. The term "ministry team" means a group (other than a Governance Committee or Task Force) that carries out mission-based ministry of UUCWC and



consequently either manages day-to-day church operations or advises, collaborates with, or is accountable to the Minister.

2. **Ministry Teams.** Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or in a policy —
  - a. A Ministry Team may be created by the Minister with the advice and consent of the Board, or may be an existing group that was designated a “committee” when established but that the Board and Minister agree is a ministry team.
  - b. The leader of a Ministry Team is proposed by the team and included on the slate for election at the congregation’s annual meeting.
  - c. The term of service of a leader of a Ministry Team is two years, renewable once.
  - d. Members of a Ministry Team may join and serve the team as long as they feel called to volunteer.
  - e. A Ministry Team may decide how best to organize its efforts, including how decisions are made and the manner of sharing leadership within the team. Unless this policy or the team expressly provides otherwise, the team leader has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the team.
  - f. A Ministry Team (or the team leader after consultation with team members) may decide to organize the team’s work so that the team need not meet regularly or so that only a few members meet regularly.
  - g. The Minister and Board may dissolve a Ministry Team or reassign its functions if the team’s purpose is not effectively being accomplished with its existing structure and responsibilities; if the team becomes inactive; or if the team is no longer relevant to the church’s mission priorities.
  - h. A Ministry Team carries out its activities within a ministry area and the team leader is required to consult with and periodically to meet with leaders of other teams active in that ministry area.
  - i. A Ministry Team leader represents the team at Council meetings.
  - j. The Minister may have either direct or consultative responsibility and authority to manage a Ministry Team’s activities, depending on definitions in Section 6 of the Policy on Minister’s Role.
3. **Consultation.** The assignment of responsibility and authority for an area to one person or a group must take into account the presence of other people or groups with a shared interest or “stake” in the area.
  - a. If a stakeholder has a strong, mission-based interest in an area, a policy governing that area may require the person with authority to obtain the “advice and consent” of that stakeholder.



- b. If it is clear that specific people or groups have a shared interest in an area, the person with authority is required to consult with those stakeholders before making a decision, whether or not there is a written policy governing the area.
- c. If there are (1) many people or groups with an interest in a particular proposal or, (2) if it is unclear who has an interest but likely that stakeholders will emerge if a decision is made without prior consultation, then a person with authority is required to consult with the Minister and Board President about the need for membership-wide consultation.
- d. Consultation methods include, but are not limited to: holding a discussion forum (publicized in advance); circulating a proposal via the website and the weekly news e-mail and inviting comments followed by a discussion forum or other meeting; inviting stakeholders to a facilitated stakeholder meeting; scheduling facilitated dialogue circles and encouraging wide participation.

**4. Accountability.**

- a. A person or group with authority is accountable for consultation in accordance with this policy. If there is inadequate consultation, the person or group may be required to suspend or postpone action until consultation occurs.
- b. A person or group with authority is not permitted to exercise authority beyond the limits of that authority.
- c. Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or in a Board policy, a governance committee or a task force is accountable to the Board and a ministry team is accountable to the Minister.

**GUIDELINES**

Suggestions and recommendations may be added to this policy as implementation proceeds.

Prepared by Michael Dalzell, Secretary