

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos
Committee on Ministry Policies
Approved February 12, 2009

POLICIES

I. PURPOSE: The Committee on Ministry (COM) becomes the Board of Trustee's agent upon which the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos (UUFLG) relies to attain the highest possible fulfillment of its congregational and professional ministry as stated in its mission/covenant and strategic plan. It has no authority except the stature behind its own composite being.

II. SCOPE: The COM shall:

- A. Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of every facet of the congregation's ministry. (Assessment)
- B. Promote awareness and commitment by UUFLG members to the congregational mission/covenant and strategic plan. (Communication)
- C. Maintain active, open and effective communications within the committee, with the congregation, with the Board of Trustees and with those who seek conflict management. (Communication)
- D. Educate the congregation about its function and purpose. (Education)
- E. Give honest and pertinent feedback, advice and recommendations to the UUFLG ordained settled or interim minister(s) regarding the effectiveness of her/his ministry. (Consultation)
- F. Makes recommendations, if requested, regarding ministerial compensation packages to the Board. (Consultation)
- G. Develop and maintain policies for itself that govern every contingency of its work and concerns. (Policies).
- H. Operate with a covenant of confidentiality and mutual honesty. (Confidentiality)
- I. Respond in a timely manner to conflicts. (Conflict Management)
- J. Be ultimately accountable to the congregation, and report to the Board of Trustees in between congregational meetings with specific, positive recommendations, if needed, for the various agents of the congregation's ministry to elevate their effectiveness. (Accountability)

III. STRUCTURE: There shall be a total of three (3) members serving staggered terms of no longer than three (3) years each.

- A. The UUFLG Board President, Minister, and Nominating Committee shall nominate and recruit members to be appointed by the UUFLG Board of Trustees and/or the Congregation.
- B. For the Committee's formation, the Board shall determine the COM membership criteria and which one (1) member shall serve for one (1) year; which one (1) member shall serve for two (2) years; and which one (1) member shall serve for three (3) years. In subsequent years, one (1) member shall be replaced each year.
- C. The COM shall appoint its own Chair.

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- D. The COM shall, with Board approval, replace COM members who:
1. Resign membership in the congregation.
 2. Assume another significant leadership position within the congregation.
 3. Are unable to share workload and responsibilities of COM.
 4. By consensus of other COM members, no longer meet membership criteria. (The Conflict Management Policy's Grievance Procedure is available to COM members who have been asked to leave the COM.)

IV. MINISTERIAL INCLUSION: All meetings of the COM shall be open to all settled or interim ministerial leadership and the voice of this leadership shall be requested and valued in committee deliberations. In the event that issues regarding the effectiveness of a minister's leadership are to be brought before the COM, the COM and the minister shall deliberate the wisdom and appropriateness of the minister's and/or the minister's designee's presence at this meeting. In the event that there is no agreement among COM members and minister with respect to such attendance, the minister shall make the final decision.

V. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

- A. A minister, member, staff, or friend of UUFLG may bring a conflict management issue to the Committee on Ministry (COM) concerning a member or friend, a staff person, or a minister of the congregation.
- B. The COM shall:
1. Have no authority in conflict management other than that of recommending processes designed to lead to redemptive results including right relations, individual healing, and a return to wholeness.
 2. Avoid triangulation: as in providing a solution or advocating for one party involved in conflict.
 3. Ask those posing complaints to offer a solution.
 4. Gain as full a picture as reasonably possible of what lies behind whatever conflict issue is brought before them.
 5. Present materials that lead to a resolution, but shall not announce a resolution.
- C. The COM shall respond in a consistent manner to any member or friend of the congregation who requests COM help with a conflict management issue, concern, or suggestion for change as set out in this policy.

F. TERMINATION OF A CONGREGATION MEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP: The Committee on Ministry (COM) shall consider and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding the possible termination of an individual's membership in UUFLG, or a recommendation suggesting that a person be asked to cease attendance at congregational activities, when it determines such action is in the best interest of the congregation and staff. (The COM may waive its formal conflict management process in its recommendation that a person cease attendance. The COM shall include specific reasons for such a waiver in its recommendation.)

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PROCEDURES

A. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (GRIEVANCE) PROCESS:

Step 1. The issue shall be submitted in writing and signed with a signature in the grieving persons' own hand.

- a. To prevent the expectation that the COM shall be responsible for resolving the issue, the COM shall require that the matter be stated in a manner that potentially yields a positive resolution.
- b. The COM shall confirm its understanding of the issue.
- c. The COM shall respond to the concerned individual in a timely manner.

Step 2. The COM accepts or rejects the issue by official action during an official meeting, and records same in its official minutes.

Step 3. The COM shall follow through on any issue it officially accepts in Step 2 above. This includes from initial contact through the process until either resolution is achieved or until it has been processed through the limits of the COM responsibility.

Step 4. The individual with the issue shall be directed to first approach the person or group in question with a clear presentation of the issue, an understanding of how it might be addressed, with intent toward its resolution.

- a. If said individual is unable to do Step 4, a member of the COM may accompany the individual in making this approach; not speaking for, but being present with, the individual.
- b. If said individual is unwilling to do Steps 4 or 4a, the COM shall, depending on the issue, creatively devise a substitute for said steps, ask the individual to cease pursuing the issue, or proceed to Step 5 of the conflict management process.

Step 5. The COM shall deliberate, arrive at, and state a majority decision for each grievance it accepts for review and/or resolution; and shall record same in its official minutes.

Step 6. If any steps are not successful, the COM, may take the grievance to the President of the congregation for placement on the agenda of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the final authority in grievance matters in accordance with UUFLG Bylaws.

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GUIDELINES

A. COM MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA:

- 1) Minimum of one (1) year of membership in UUFLG
- 2) Minimum of two (2) years of evidenced, committed membership as a Unitarian Universalist
- 3) Not a member of the Board, another committee, or professional staff
- 4) Overarching commitment to the congregation's mission
- 5) Seeks outcomes for the greater good of the congregation and its ministry
- 6) Willingness to sign the Confidentiality Agreement
- 7) Known for personal integrity
- 8) Practices active listening
- 9) Willingness to make tough decisions

B. DUTIES OF COM MEMBERS:

1. Each member shall be committed to the success of the church's total ministry. The role of a COM member is to participate fully and actively in the activities of the committee in ways that foster the mission-covenant of UUFLG.
2. Each member is to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other COM members and all shall speak with One Voice following official action in carrying out its responsibilities of assessment, education, consultation, recommendations, and conflict management according to policies.
3. COM members formally and informally connect with members and friends of the congregation, applying COM policies in their decision-making, continually seeking the pulse of the congregation, and being thoroughly prepared for COM discussions and decisions.

C. DUTIES OF COM CHAIR:

- 1) Call meetings of the Committee on a regular schedule and additional meetings as needed.
- 2) Create an agenda for its meetings and facilitate those meetings efficiently and effectively, including but not limited to recording all decisions in official minutes.
- 3) Generate, or assign COM members to generate, reports for submission to the Board of Trustees and annually to the congregation.
- 4) Assure that the COM fulfills its mandate to evaluate the congregation's ministry, to educate the congregation, to manage conflicts that arise within the congregation and to maintain open and effective communication.

D. MINISTRY ASSESSMENT:

1. The Committee on Ministry (COM) shall, with the input of and cooperation with the Board of Trustees, participate in the designated means for assessing the effectiveness of professional ministerial leadership and the congregation's ministry as a whole.

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The plan for assessing every facet of the congregation's ministry shall annually alternate assessing the total congregation's ministry and the professional minister's ministry, unless the Board of Trustees requests otherwise.

During a minister's preliminary fellowshiping process with the UUA/MFC, annual evaluations will be conducted by the COM, as well as the Board, to comply with the denominational review and renewal process.

2. Although the COM shall make a concerted evaluation every other year of the congregation's ministry, it shall undertake informal assessment as a year-round activity.
3. COM assessments will be coordinated with existing UUFLG surveys and assessments conducted by the Board of Trustees and/or the Long Range Planning Committee. These tools and methods may have brevity and a specific focus that encourages responses from the congregation, and represent ways of assessment that elevate both interest and response. Compilation and reporting of results shall be accomplished using best practices.
4. Regardless of the frequency, tool, or method used, a pertinent report shall be made to the Board of Trustees, and the result shall serve as the basis for recommendations to specific agents of the congregation's ministry.

E. EDUCATION:

The COM shall educate the congregation with respect to its mission and ministry, and shall develop the method(s) it determines will best accomplish this. The COM shall maintain a high level of congregational visibility. Examples of this effort include but are not limited to:

1. Raising congregational awareness of the mission/covenant and strategic plan of the UUFLG at services jointly led by the minister(s) and COM members.
2. Creating and a periodically updating one or more brochures explaining the COM's purpose and functions. Writing periodic UUFLG newsletter columns.
3. Calling congregational forums it decides are needed to process COM assessments of the ministry or engage educational issues.
4. Wearing name tags that include identification as a "Committee on Ministry" member.