

This document was drafted by Mary Herman and reviewed by Karen Mack, Libby Walton-Stanforth and Lea Douville and include proposed changes to the membership section - Article V - of the UUSA Bylaws on 7/20/2022

It was reviewed and workshopped with Co-Presidents Anne Moore and John Gerber in collaboration with MWM & Lea on 7/27/2022 and also reviewed with Rev Rachael on 9/14/2022. Andrew Coate was asked for feedback.

It was presented to the Board during their regular Board meeting on Oct 20, 2022 and brought before the congregation on 11/13/2022

A little background:

The MWM looked at examples of bylaws from a variety of congregations and added language to expound and clarify our existing policies. In particular, we noticed that it was difficult to support and grow membership without a clear understanding of what UUSA membership is and what it asks of us. For example, currently our bylaws only allow for people to relinquish membership by contacting the clerk. In practice, this has almost never happened. We notice that people quietly 'go away' and we try to figure out how / when it is 'OK' to ask if they are still feeling a connection to the UUSA. As a result, we do not have clarity for who we officially 'count' among us, and therefore, who we serve.

This has ramifications on the resources of the congregation including the amount we are asked to contribute to the UUA, staff salary ranges as well as for the time and resources of our caring committees. Clearer bylaws will provide a framework that allows us to do the work of a

(EXISTING)

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

[EXISTING and recommend to KEEP]

This congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in all our activities and endeavors without regard to race, color, physical or mental challenge, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, class, or national origin, or any other distinction.

(PROPOSED NEW)

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

[ADD TWO PARAGRAPHS TO EXISTING]

This congregation affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in all our activities and endeavors without regard to race, color, physical or mental challenge, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, class, or national origin, or any other distinction.

No member is required to subscribe to a creed, or adhere to any particular interpretation of religion or any religious belief.

[EXISTING]

Membership in this Society is open without any other qualifications to any person 13 years of age or older who:

1. subscribes to the purposes of the Society,
2. indicates a desire to join and support the Society, and
3. signs the Membership Book in the presence of two or more Trustees of the Society.

Membership in this Society is open without any other qualifications to any person who:

1. subscribes to the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the mission and covenant of the UUSA
2. signs the Membership Book
3. supports our mission through regular participation, gifts and talents. While not a requirement of membership, we do rely on the consistent generosity of our members and friends who commit to an annual financial contribution to our Society, and we honor and appreciate their support. Because we do not receive funding from our national and regional bodies, pledged contributions provide the bulk of the UUSA budget. These financial contributions are essential to compensate our staff, maintain our building, fund our programs and make our UUSA vision a reality, pay our committed pledge to the UUA for their support of our congregation. Every member is encouraged to share in that stewardship.

A. Categories of Membership

Membership shall be of four categories, Active, Inactive, Voting Youth, and Nonvoting Youth Members.

1. Active Members are 18 years of age or older, and are expected to participate in one or more activities of the Society and/or make recorded financial contributions to the Society annually.
2. Inactive Members are former Active Members who have not participated in any activity nor made a recorded financial contribution for a period of a year or more, including the current year.
3. Voting Youth Members are from 16 to 18 years of age and are full time students. Such members may participate in all activities of the Society and may vote on all matters except those prohibited by law, may serve on the Board of Trustees, but are not expected to make a financial commitment to the Society.
4. Nonvoting Youth Members: Full time students ages 13-15 who may participate actively in the activities of the Society but who may not vote nor be elected to an office in the Society.

A. Categories of Membership

Membership shall be of three categories: Active, Voting Youth and Non-Voting Youth

1. Active Members are expected to participate in the life of the community, make an annual financial contribution or indicate a continued commitment.

The number of Active Members recorded in the church database will be used to establish quorums at congregational meetings, and for reports to the UUA.

2. Voting Youth Members are those 16-18 and may participate in all activities of the Society, and may vote on all matters except those prohibited by law.
3. Nonvoting Youth Members are members under the age of 16, who may participate actively in the activities of the Society but who may not vote nor be elected to an office in the Society.

B. Privileges of Membership

Active Members may vote, hold office in the Society, or be an agent of the Society. Active Members may vote in any congregational meeting of the Society provided that they have been a member of a Unitarian Universalist church, society, or fellowship for a total of 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the meeting including at least 30 days of membership in the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst.

C. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated by any of the following:

1. written request from the member or someone acting for the member to the Clerk
of the Society, or
2. approval of the Board of Trustees, after being designated as Inactive by the Clerk
for two or more consecutive years.
3. death or relocation of the member.

B. Privileges of Membership

Active Members may vote, hold office, chair a committee, or act on behalf of the UUSA at the request of the Board of Trustees. Active Members may vote in any congregational meeting of the Society provided that they have been a member of a Unitarian Universalist church, society, or fellowship for a total of 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the meeting, including at least 30 days of membership in the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst.

C. Termination of Membership

1. written request from the member or someone acting for the member to any Member of the Board, the Congregational Administrator or the Minister of the Society, who will in turn inform the Clerk of the UUSA or
2. members who have not made a recorded financial contribution or indicated a continued commitment to the Society for a period of 2 fiscal years including the current year will be notified and shall be deemed inactive and will relinquish their privileges of membership.
3. termination for cause – for conduct which endangers the health or safety of other Members or which contravenes the purpose of the Society. This decision will be taken by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Minister.