

Policies

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EAST SHORE BOARD POLICY INTRODUCTION

Policy Based Governance, currently used at East Shore, is organized as follows:

The Congregation in Meeting has the responsibility and authority to elect the Board of Trustees, to call the Minister(s), and to approve the Bylaws.

The Board of Trustees creates policy congruent with the Bylaws for all aspects of the church, has ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the church, and also creates Goals and Strategic Plans that will guide Staff and move the church toward its Mission and Vision.

The Staff Leadership Team (SLT), comprised of the Minister(s), the Executive Director/Director of Finance and Operations, and the Director of Religious Education, has administrative authority and fiduciary responsibility and limitations as delegated by the Board of Trustees in its Policies. The SLT members, or their designated Staff, work with the Core Teams and Ministry Teams toward the Mission and Vision of East Shore.

Board Committees are **created and authorized by the Board of Trustees** to help the Board do its work. This may include standing (ongoing) committees, task forces, and ad hoc committees. Members of Board Committees must be East Shore members and approved by the Board. Current Board Committees are: Financial Stewardship, Endowment (sub-committee of Financial Stewardship), Policy and Governance, Personnel, Right Relations, and Nominating.

Core Teams are **created and authorized by SLT** to work together with them on essential church functions. Core teams include Coordinating Councils, such as the Earth and Social Justice Council, that work with various Core or Ministry teams.

Ministry Teams are **created by members with support and authorization from SLT** to work together with them toward the Principles, Mission, and Goals of the church.

Board Policy Introduction approved October 28, 2019)

The following are the current Board Policies guiding the Staff and governing East Shore:

1. GOALS

1. Create a more collaborative culture.
2. Honor our commitment to the Eight Principle.
3. Expand social outreach into the wider community and strike a higher profile in our broader community.
4. Integrate and encourage participation and consideration of Children and Youth in all that we do.
5. Review and support Policy Based Governance.
6. Study sustainability of finances, staffing, membership and endowment.

(Approved by the Board for the 2021-22 church year)

2. STAFF LEADERSHIP TEAM LIMITATIONS

These are limitations placed upon the Staff Leadership Team preventing certain actions. Beyond these limits, the Staff Leadership Team has great freedom to act.

2.1 Staff Leadership Team General Limitations

The Staff Leadership Team will not cause nor allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance which is either unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of the Church's Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Board policies and commonly accepted business and professional ethics.

(September 20, 2005)

2.2 Staff Leadership Team

The Staff Leadership Team will speak with alignment and mutual respect to all parties to whom the Staff Leadership Team is responsible or over whom it has authority. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team members shall:

1. Include and consult each other on all material issues with a spirit of mutual respect in an environment of confidentiality; attention should be paid accordingly to recommendations made within the area of a team member's professional expertise.
2. Active discussion is encouraged and an attempt should be made to reach agreement on means within the team. If this is not possible, the team will choose to request Board input either from the Board President, Board Executive Committee, or the Board as a whole. The Board, keeping in mind Church Goals, will attempt to help the SLT find resolution through further discussion. (February, 2016)

2.3 Treatment of Members, Friends, Visitors and Congregants

1. In interacting with congregants, the Staff Leadership Team will provide conditions, procedures, and decisions that are safe, respectful, non-intrusive, that maintain appropriate confidentiality or privacy, and that apply the standards of the Church's Mission, Vision, and Goals and Unitarian Universalist Principles. (May 16, 2006, revised December 19, 2017)
2. The Staff Leadership Team will work in a collegial and collaborative manner with Board committees, core teams, ministry teams, councils, task forces and other groups in their job-related areas. The Staff Leadership Team will work cooperatively and in partnership with these groups to achieve the church's Mission, Vision and Goals and Unitarian Universalist Principles by providing opportunities for meaningful input, communicating in a timely manner, and empowering lay leadership. (December 19, 2017)

2.4 Treatment of Staff

The Staff Leadership Team will work in alignment with Board approved personnel procedures, practices, and rules as recorded in the East Shore Unitarian Church Employee Handbook. (See 3.2.1.e) Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Operate with written personnel procedures, rules, and practices that comply with accepted employment practices, provide for effective and appropriate response to grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions;
2. Acquaint staff with their rights under this policy and related Employee Handbook;
3. Allow staff to follow grievance procedures as outlined in the Employee Handbook.
(May 16, 2006, Revised February 20, 2007)

2.5 Treatment of Unpaid Volunteer Staff

With respect to the treatment of unpaid and volunteer staff, the Staff Leadership Team will provide conditions that are safe, non-discriminatory, and respectful, with appropriate confidentiality or privacy.

(May 16, 2006)

2.6 Compensation and Benefits

Considering employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, the Staff Leadership Team may not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal or institutional integrity of the Church. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Continue individual Staff Leadership Team members' compensation or benefits as established by the Board;
2. Refrain from promising or implying permanent or guaranteed employment;
3. Establish current compensation and benefits that:
 - a. Align with the nonprofit or geographic market for the skills employed;
 - b. Create obligations only as far as revenues can be safely projected, because compensation and benefits are subject to adjustment based on budget shortfall;
 - c. Provide a reasonable wage to all employees and offer some basic level of benefits to all full-time employees. Differential benefits to encourage longevity in key employees are not prohibited.
4. Establish deferred or long-term compensation and benefits that avoid unfunded liabilities and that commit the Church only to benefits that incur predictable future costs.

(May 16, 2006)

2.7 Designated Fund Policy

The Board will consider the creation of designated funds as proposed by the Staff Leadership Team or the Board. In response, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Establish a mission statement specific to the purpose of the Fund;
2. Assure the mission statement is congruent with the Church's Vision and Mission;
3. Create a distinct and separate fund account for each Designated Fund;
4. Assure that all expenditures are consistent with the mission of the fund.

(September 20, 2005)

2.8 Goals Focus of Grants

The Staff Leadership Team will apply only for grants that support the Church's Mission, Vision, Ministry, and Goals. The Staff Leadership Team will only apply for grants that it has expectation of receiving. When granting money, the Staff Leadership Team will assess and consider an applicant's capability to produce appropriately targeted, efficient results.

(May 16, 2006)

2.9 Transparency of Financial Activity and Spending

The financial activity of staff and ministry teams will be transparent to the Board, the Staff Leadership Team, the staff, ministry teams, and the congregation. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Be the appropriate and primary authority that controls the allocation of funds and other resources to any staff or ministry team;
 2. Allocate funds and other resources to Departments at the beginning of each fiscal year from the annual Operating Budget;
 3. Execute disbursements from the annual Operating Budget authorized by teams within the limits of their charters;
 4. Inform the Board every quarter of how funds or other resources have actually been expended;
 5. Provide to the Board and congregation a yearly report of all the staff and ministry team funds spent, whether in the budget, or off the budget, or in any separate fund.
- (Sept 20, 2005) (Sept 20, 2016)

2.10 Financial Planning and Budgeting

The annual budget for each fiscal year shall be conceived through a collaborative and iterative process beginning no later than January of the fiscal year prior to presentation to the congregation for approval at the annual meeting in May or June with prior approval of the Financial Stewardship Committee and full Board of Trustees. The Budget team will be comprised of two members of the Staff Leadership Team, preferably the Director of Finance and Operations or Executive Director and Minister, two members of the Board, preferably the Treasurer and President, and two members from the Financial Stewardship Committee. The Budget team will gain input from the heads of each Department with details from individual Staff and Ministry teams. Financial planning for any fiscal year will align with ESUC's Bylaws or the Board's Goals priorities, will avoid fiscal jeopardy, and will be derived from a multi-year plan. The Staff Leadership Team may not jeopardize either programmatic or fiscal integrity of the Church organization. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team provide or allow budgeting or fiscal projections that:

1. Contain enough detail to enable credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions;
 2. Are conservatively projected to be received;
 3. Present a separate plan for capital expenditures and the means to pay for them;
 4. Align with Board-stated Goals Policies including the Mission and Vision of the church, and;
 5. Consider the Goals policies in allocating resources among competing fiscal needs.
- (September 20, 2005) (September 20, 2016)

2.11 Financial Condition and Activity

With respect to the church's actual ongoing financial condition and activities, the Staff Leadership Team will avoid the development of fiscal jeopardy or material deviation of actual expenditures from Board priorities. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Expend only funds that have been received in the fiscal year to date, including maintaining cash amounts needed to settle payroll and debts in a timely manner;
2. Inform the Board of any unexpected or undesignated income;
3. Settle payroll and debts in a timely manner;
4. Ensure tax payments or other government ordered payments or filings are filed accurately and on time;

5. Not acquire, encumber, or dispose of real property;
6. Appropriately pursue unpaid pledges after a reasonable amount of time;
7. Aggressively pursue unpaid non-pledge receivables after a reasonable amount of time;
8. Ensure that soliciting of donations and other fundraising by teams and committees are pre-approved by the Board; (2016)
9. Receive, process, or disperse funds under controls sufficient to meet generally accepted standards. These standards will minimally include the following:
 1. All disbursements must be within board approved budget levels.
 2. Up to \$10,000, checks will be signed by two authorized signatories.
 3. Over \$10,000, checks will be signed by (1) either board President, Vice President or Treasurer and (2) a Staff Leadership Team member.
 4. Emergency disbursements may be made by authorized signatories, with immediate notification to Board President and Treasurer.
 5. All contracts must be within Board approved budget levels.
 6. All contracts must be reviewed by the Financial Stewardship Committee before execution.
 7. Contracts up to \$10,000 may be signed by one Staff Leadership Team member.
 8. Contracts (including all mortgages or instruments of indebtedness) over \$10,000 must be signed by board President, Vice President or Treasurer.
 9. Board may establish separate contract and disbursement policies for capital projects to ensure timely, effective management of project.
 10. At the end of each fiscal year, the Staff Leadership Team will dissolve any team, committee (except Board committees), or fund (except Designated Funds) which they, in good faith, have deemed to be inactive. At their sole discretion, the Staff Leadership Team may distribute all associated fund balances to the Operating Fund of the current or subsequent fiscal year. (April, 2016)
(March 20, 2012) (September 20, 2005) (2016)(April 27, 2021)

2.12 Asset Protection and Management

To steward ESUC's assets, the Staff Leadership Team will ensure the assets are protected, maintained, and free from unnecessarily risk. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Protect the Church's public image or credibility, and avoid harm to its reputation that would hinder accomplishment of its Mission;
2. Insure against theft and casualty losses to at least eighty percent of replacement value, and against liability losses to Board executive members, staff, and the Church organization;
3. Protect the nonprofit status and keep the Church, its Board, and staff from exposure to claims of liability;
4. Receive, process, or distribute funds under controls sufficient to meet the Board appointed reviewer's standards or other government standards;
5. Arrange for regular conduct of outside reviews and professional investment advice;
6. Treat facilities and equipment properly and provide sufficient maintenance;
7. Protect intellectual property, information, and files from loss or significant damage, [excluding the work of called ministers of the Church, who are the sole owners of their intellectual property];

8. Invest operating capital in secure instruments.
(October, 2005)

2.13 Endowment Fund Limitations

The Staff Leadership Team will interact with the Board's Endowment Committee following the procedures of the Endowment Committee charter. Accordingly, for funds given for the endowment fund, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Assure gifted funds are received and deposited into the Endowment accounts;
2. Assure the Endowment and memorial gift funds are dispersed as directed by the Board approved procedures of the Endowment Committee charter.

(May 16, 2006)

2.14 Acceptance of Restricted Gifts

The Staff Leadership Team will not accept any gift with restrictions that are contrary to this Board policy, church's Vision, Mission, and Ministry, Goals, or the UU Principles. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Accept only Board pre-approved restricted funds;
2. Ensure all accepted gifts align with the church's Vision, Mission, Ministry and Policy Goals;
3. Explicitly state to donors of each restricted fund and each solicitation for a restricted fund that contributions received in excess of project needs, or after the project is completed or is otherwise inactive, may be used for the general operations of the church;
4. Report to the Board what fund receives the restricted gift.

(May 16, 2006) (Sept 20, 2016)

2.15 Authority to Create Ministry Teams

The mission and activity of any ministry team will be congruent with the Church's Vision and Mission, and will be apparent to the Staff Leadership Team, the staff, the Board, other ministry teams, and the congregation. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Have the authority to charter a ministry team, including those serving and advancing the Vision and Mission of the Church;
2. Ensure ministry teams which articulate a clear purpose and goals congruent with the Church's Mission and Vision;
3. Provide an annual review to the Board of each ministry team to assure congruence with their charter;
4. Disband or reorganize a ministry team that is incongruent with the Church's mission and vision.

(October, 2005)

2.16 Authority over Events and Sponsorship

1. The Staff Leadership Team will be responsible to coordinate and manage the use of church for events, programs, ministries or public witness to the benefit of ESUC and the communities the Church serves. Accordingly,

- a. The Staff Leadership Team will assure church sponsored events, programs, ministries, or public witness are in sympathy with the Church’s Vision and Mission and Ministry. (April, 2009)
 - b. The Staff Leadership Team will be judicious in their decisions or actions while exercising authority under this policy.
 - c. The Staff Leadership Team will be accountable to the Board for the decisions made and actions taken under this policy. (August, 2005)
2. The Staff Leadership Team will be responsible to coordinate and manage the formal relationship of “sponsorship” between ESUC and third-party non-profit organizations to the benefit of ESUC and the communities the Church serves. Accordingly,
- a. The Staff Leadership Team will assure a Sponsorship Agreement is in place for each relationship with an outside non-profit group that is in accordance with this policy. Such an Agreement shall be in writing and include terms, dissolution, limitations, mutual benefits and responsibilities, and other provisions as necessary.
 - b. The Staff Leadership Team will assure all Sponsorship Agreements are in sympathy with the Church’s Mission, Vision, and ministry. The Staff Leadership Team shall work with authorized church teams that request sponsorship of outside non-profit organizations which share their values and goals.
 - c. The Staff Leadership Team will not be capricious in their decisions or actions while exercising authority under this policy.
 - d. The Staff Leadership Team will be accountable to the Board for the decisions made and the actions taken under this policy. Board approval required for all Sponsorship Agreements.
 - e. The Staff Leadership Team will be especially mindful of all existing ESUC Policies and Bylaws, including financial campus use Policies when entering into Sponsorship Agreements. (January 23, 2018)

2.17 Conflict of Interest

The Staff Leadership Team will not cause or allow any conflict of interest in awarding purchases, contracts, or grants.

(May 16, 2006)

2.18 Communication and Counsel to the Board

In providing information and counsel to the Board, the Staff Leadership Team will ensure that the Board is correctly informed and supported in its work. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

- 1. Provide data required by the Board in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of Board policies.
- 2. Inform the Board in a timely manner of relevant needs, public policy initiatives, public events of the Church, and material changes that conflict with Board policy.
- 3. Advise the Board if, in the Staff Leadership Team’s opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies.

4. Gather for the Board as many staff and external perspectives, and options for fully informed Board decisions.
5. Report in a timely manner an actual or anticipated non-compliance with any policy of the Board.
6. Bring to the Board items delegated to the Staff Leadership Team that are required by law, church Bylaws, or contract to be Board-approved, along with the means to monitor the item.

(May 16, 2006)

2.19 Communication Outside the Congregation

In making public statements and in media relations, the Staff Leadership Team will cause or allow only conditions, procedures, or decisions that align with the Church's Mission and Goals and Unitarian Universalist Principles. Accordingly, the Staff Leadership Team will:

1. Accurately reflect the official position of the congregation or Board when the congregation or Board has formally and explicitly adopted positions of record.
2. Respect the fundamental principle of freedom of the pulpit.

(May 16, 2006)

2.20 Communication and Technology

The Staff Leadership Team will use all available and reasonable communication technologies, guided by prudence in the costs, administrative time, and maintenance of such technologies, to make available East Shore's Mission and Vision so that it may be accessed at any time.

(December 15, 2009)

2.21 Safety

The Staff Leadership Team will develop and publish operational procedures for safety and keep them updated as needed. The operational procedures for safety will include current recommendations from our insurance company Church Mutual and from the UUA. The procedures will be approved by the Board. The appropriate staff and volunteers will know how to apply these procedures. Areas in the Safety Procedures will include but are not limited to:

1. Covenant;
2. Disruptive Behavior;
3. Security Self-Inspections for buildings/grounds (includes hazardous waste);
4. Preparedness for natural disasters and emergencies;
5. Violence Prevention;
6. Financial Safety (Fraud, Embezzlement)
7. Children and Youth (RE);
8. Sexual Harassment and Abuse;
9. Medical and Health
10. High Tech and Social Media

(January 21, 2020)

3. GOVERNING PROCESS

The Board of East Shore Unitarian Church will act to promote the accomplishment of the

Church's vision, mission, and ministry, and strive to prevent unacceptable activities and conditions within the Church. (April 18, 2006)

3.1 Governing Style

The Board will govern with an emphasis on outward vision, encouragement of diverse viewpoints, strategic leadership more than administrative detail, clear distinction of Board roles and called Ministers' and staff roles, collective rather than individual decisions, the Church's future rather than its past or present, and forward-looking action rather than reaction. In this spirit:

1. The Board will focus chiefly on intended long-term effects or Goals, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining the Goals.
 2. The Board will cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Board will expect a standard of excellence in governing. The Board will be the initiator of policy, not just a reactor to staff initiatives. The Board will use the expertise of individual trustees to enhance the ability of the Board as a body rather than to substitute individual judgments for the Board's values.
 3. The Board will direct, control, and inspire the Church organization through the careful establishment of Board-written policies reflecting the Board's values and perspectives about Goals to be achieved and appropriate means to reach the Goals.
 4. The Board will enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence. Discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation, policy-making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring continuance of governance capability.
 5. The continuity of the Board's institutional memory will be ensured by continued Board development. One element will include orientation of new Trustees to the Board's governance process, as well as periodic discussion of process improvements.
 6. The Board will be accountable to the congregation and other stakeholders for competent, conscientious, and effective accomplishment of its obligations as a body. The Board will allow no Officer, Trustee-at-Large, or committee of the Board to hinder the fulfillment of Board commitments and responsibilities.
 7. Only the Board President or the President's designee may speak for the Board when interacting with the public, press, or other entities.
 8. The Board will monitor and regularly discuss the Board's own processes and performance.
- (April 18, 2006)

3.2 Board Contributions and Responsibilities

The work of the Board is to represent the congregants' interests in determining and expecting appropriate Church organization performance consistent with the Church's mission, vision, ministry. Accordingly:

1. The Board writes governing policies that provide direction and guidance for organizational decision:
 - a. Goals: Church organizational products, impacts, benefits, outcomes (what good for whom at what cost);
 - b. Staff Leadership Team Limitations: constraints on the Staff Leadership Team's authority that establish the boundaries within which all Staff Leadership Team activity and decision making must take place;

- c. Governance Process: specification of how the Board conceives, carries out, and monitors its own work;
 - d. Board–Staff Leadership Team Relationship: how power is delegated and its proper use assured; the Staff Leadership Team’s role, responsibility, authority, and accountability, and the Board’s support of the Staff Leadership Team;
 - e. Review and approve personnel practices, procedures, and rules in the East Shore Unitarian Church Employee Handbook.
2. The Board assures Staff Leadership Team performance accountability in accordance with policies in Section 2.
(April 18, 2006) revised February 20, 2007

3.3 Board President’s Role

The President assures the integrity of the Board’s process and typically represents the Board to congregants and outside parties. Bylaw definition of presidential responsibility and authority always supersedes these policies, if there is a conflict.

- 1. The President’s responsibility is to assure the Board conducts its business consistently with regard to its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the Church community:
 - a. Meeting discussion content will only include those issues that, in accordance with policy, belong to the Board to decide, unless specifically requested by the Staff Leadership Team;
 - b. Deliberation will be fair, focused, orderly, thorough, timely, and also efficient.
- 2. The authority of the President consists of making any decision on behalf of the Board that falls within or is consistent with Board policies on governance and Board-Staff Leadership Team relationship. The President is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in these policies:
 - a. The President is empowered to chair Board meetings, with all the commonly accepted authority and responsibility of that position;
 - b. The President’s authority does not extend to making decisions within Goals and Staff Leadership Team Limitations policy areas;
 - c. The President’s authority does not extend to supervising, interpreting Board policies for, or otherwise directing, the Staff Leadership Team;
 - d. The President may represent the Board to outside parties in announcing Board-stated positions and in stating presidential decisions and interpretations within the area(s) delegated to her or him;
 - e. The President may delegate this authority but remains accountable for its use.

(April 18, 2006)

3.4 Board of Trustees Code of Conduct

The Board of Trustees commits itself and its members to ethical, church–like, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and demonstration of appropriate decorum when acting in the role of Board member. Accordingly:

- 1. Trustees must represent unconflicted loyalty to the interests of the congregation. This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups

and membership on other Boards or staffs. This accountability supersedes the personal interest of any Trustee acting as an individual congregant.

2. Trustees must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility:
 - a. There shall be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Trustee and the Church staff except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to inside information;
 - b. When the Board is to decide an issue about which a Trustee has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that Trustee shall absent him/herself, without comment, from the deliberation and the vote;
 - c. Trustees may not use their positions to obtain employment for themselves, family members, or close associates. Should a Trustee desire employment, he/she must first resign from the Board;
 - d. Trustees will disclose their involvement: with organizations, vendors, or associations that might produce a conflict of interest.
3. Written policies in the four areas of governance—ends, limitations, governing style, Board-Staff Leadership Team relationship—adopted by majority vote of the Board, shall guide the exercise of authority over the Church organization. Individual trustees may not attempt to exercise authority over the Church organization. The Board will speak with one voice, solely through its adopted policies:
 - a. In interacting with the Staff Leadership Team or with staff, the Board member must recognize the lack of authority vested in individual members or subgroups of trustees, including committee, task force, or ministry teams, except when explicitly authorized by the Board of Trustees;
 - b. In interacting with the public, press, or other entities, Trustees, with the exception of the President, must recognize their lack of authority to speak for the Board of Trustees;
 - c. Trustees will make no judgments of the Staff Leadership Team or staff performance or give voice to such assessment, except as that performance is assessed against explicit Board policies by a formal Board evaluation process;
 - d. Trustees are encouraged to continually self-monitor their personal performance as trustees based on policies, qualifications listed in the Trustee position description and any other Board evaluation tools.
4. Trustees will respect confidentiality appropriate to issues of any sensitive nature.
5. Trustees will be properly prepared for Board deliberation.
(April 18, 2006)

3.5 Board Committees

The Board shall create such standing committees as are required by the By-Laws. It may create additional Board committees as it deems necessary for the effective operation of the Board.

1. The Board appoints all committee members and chairs.
2. All board committees shall have charters approved by the Board
3. The purpose of all Board standing committees is to assist the Board in the fulfillment of its responsibilities and obligations.
4. Board committees, while accountable to the Board, shall communicate freely with each other, the Staff Leadership Team and the congregation.

5. The Board shall meet at least annually with each Board Committee.
6. The Board will speak with one voice.
(November 16, 2010)

3.6 Cost of Governance

The Board of Trustees will prudently invest in its governance capacity. (September 3, 2010)

3.7 Executive Committee Role

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Officers of the Board and the Staff Leadership Team, who are non-voting ex officio members.

1. The committee is responsible for setting the agenda for monthly Board meetings, as well as coordinating congregational and special meetings.
2. The committee shall perform other duties delegated by the Board.
3. The committee may choose to meet in executive session as deemed necessary.
(April 18, 2006)

3.9 Communication with the membership and the congregation

Between the Board and the congregation dialog, discussion, conversation, communication, and hearing is paramount to the role of Governance as practiced by the Board.

1. The Board will actively seek feedback from congregants during the church year. The purpose of the feedback and dialog is to review the progress towards the ends and goals and review alignment with the vision and mission of the church.
2. The Board will share information regarding the mission, administration, and finances of the church with the congregation in an ongoing and timely manner.
3. The Board will not discuss confidential or executive session conversations with the congregation unless otherwise authorized by the Board.

Board members will always stand ready to hear the thoughts of congregants, and attempt to provide context, reflection, answers, guidance, or commentary, if response is appropriate. In all cases, Board members are asked to return to the Board with the congregational comments.
(November 16, 2010)

3.10 Charters Required

All Committees, Task Forces, Core Teams, Ministry Teams and other groups (ex. ESJCC) must have a charter and revisit it annually to ensure that it is up to date and in alignment with ESUC policies and by-laws. (May 16, 2017)

4. BOARD-STAFF LEADERSHIP TEAM RELATIONSHIP:

The Board's sole official connection to the operational organization, its achievements, and conduct will be through the Staff Leadership Team.

4.1 Definition of the Staff Leadership Team

1. The Staff Leadership Team shall be defined by the Board, and currently consists of the Lead Minister, the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Finance and Operations, and the Director of Membership Development.

2. The Staff Leadership Team is responsible for program development, delivery, and operational procedures and practices.
 1. The Lead Minister oversees worship, social justice, pastoral care, denominational affairs of the church, and others.
 2. The Director of Religious Education oversees the faith development, the UU formation, of children and youth.
 3. The Director of Finance and Operations manages all administrative, financial, and facility operations.
 4. The Director of Membership Development oversees membership, communication, and fundraising matters.
3. In the event a member of the Staff Leadership Team is unable to serve, the Staff Leadership Team will continue operating without that member unless the Board has designated a temporary replacement.
(March 21, 2006) (April 17, 2007) (April 27, 2021)(June 2021)

4.2 Delegation to the Staff Leadership Team

1. The congregation-in-meeting holds the polity of East Shore Unitarian Church. Those called or elected by the congregation-in-meeting to serve the church have equal access to that final authority. Called ministers and the Board, falling into that group, carry a simultaneous responsibility to deliver the church's program, to support the development of the church, to facilitate the operations of the church, and to achieve the church's vision, mission, and ministry. The Board generally delegates its responsibility for these purposes to the Staff Leadership Team while maintaining its trusteeship role. Called ministers, and others as the Board sees fit, serve on a Staff Leadership Team to explicitly accomplish these purposes and they are held accountable for their accomplishments. The Board strives to forge a linkage with the Staff Leadership Team that is deeply empowering and profoundly safe. This linkage is founded on Board policy, maintained by vigorous communication, and embodies Unitarian Universalist heritage and principles.
2. The Board generally confines itself to establish the topmost policies, leaving implementation and subsidiary procedure development to the Staff Leadership Team. Goals policies direct the Staff Leadership Team to achieve certain results; Staff Leadership Team limitations policies constrain the Staff Leadership Team to act within acceptable boundaries of prudence and ethics. All Board authority delegated to staff is delegated through the Staff Leadership Team; all responsibility, authority, and accountability of staff is to be phrased as the Staff Leadership Team's proper responsibility, authority, and accountability.
3. The Staff Leadership Team is authorized to establish all further procedures, make all decisions, take all actions, and develop all activities that are consistent with the Board's policies. The Board may, by extending or amending its policies, change areas of the Staff Leadership Team's authority, but will respect the Staff Leadership Team's choices so long as the delegation continues. While always respecting privacy, the Board may obtain information about activities in the delegated areas in order to assure the policies are as effective as intended.

4. The Board may change its policies and thereby change the boundaries of limitations given to the Staff Leadership Team. But as long as any particular delegation of authority is in place, the Board will respect and support the Staff Leadership Team's choices.
5. The Staff Leadership Team reports to the Board for overall achievement of East Shore Unitarian Church's mission, ends, and ministry, perhaps through the medium of their individual reports. Oral discussion of policy and governance should be a routine topic in Board meetings.
6. The Staff Leadership Team may not perform, allow, or cause to be performed any act that is contrary to explicit Board constraints (refer to Staff Leadership Team Limitations policies, section 2) on Staff Leadership Team authority.
7. Should a Staff Leadership Team member deem it necessary to violate Board policy, he or she shall inform the Board President, or another officer if the President is unavailable in a timely manner. Informing is simply to assure that no violation is intentionally kept from the Board; it is not to request approval. Board of Trustee response, either approving or disapproving, does not exempt the Staff Leadership Team member from subsequent Board judgment, nor does it impede any Staff Leadership Team member decision.
8. Staff Leadership Team authority does not extend to interpreting Board policies, or otherwise directing the officers, Trustees at Large, or Board committees or task forces according to Board policies. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with mutual interaction about individual understanding of policies.
9. The Staff Leadership Team performance is monitored rigorously, but only in comparison to criteria stated in policy.
(March 21, 2006)

4.3 Unity of Control

Only decisions of the Board acting as a whole body in Board meetings are binding on the Staff Leadership Team.

1. Decisions or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or committees are not binding on the Staff Leadership Team except in instances when the Board has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.
2. In the case of Board members or committees requesting information or assistance without Board authorization, the Staff Leadership Team can refuse these requests that require a material amount of staff time or are disruptive, as held and explained by the Staff Leadership Team.
(March 21, 2006)

4.4 Accountability of the Staff Leadership Team (SLT) and Transparency of SLT Actions

1. As the Board's official links to the operating Church organization, the SLT members are accountable for all organizational performance and exercise all authority transmitted into the Church organization by the Board via the Board's governing policies. Accordingly, the Board will hold the SLT accountable for:
 - a. accomplishment of Church Goals as stated in Board policies; (March, 2006)
 - b. keeping the Board apprised of ongoing progress on implementing church strategic goals.
(April, 2014)

- c. appropriate use and delegation of authority. (March, 2006)
 - d. engaging in policy review and dialogue with the Board, and acting according to Church policy, Employee Handbook, and Bylaws; to the extent that a substantive issue related to institutional integrity or long-run viability or vitality of the Church cannot seem to be resolved through these means, the Staff member is expected to raise the issue with the Board President for appropriate next steps. (April, 2014)
2. A member of the congregation, a ministry team, or a standing committee may ask the Board to review a decision made by the SLT in order to clarify the Board's intent with respect to the applicable policy or to extend or change an existing policy. (April, 2009)
 3. With these responsibilities in mind, the SLT will engage in a review process with the Board on at least a yearly basis to assess both progress of SLT work and areas of that work and/or individual Staff development where new or additional Board support is needed. (April, 2014) The Board, in consultation with staff, will develop and publish procedures for regular review of SLT performance. (December 2020)

4.5 Staff Leadership Team (SLT) – Board Relationship

1. Goals: The sound covenantal relationship between Board and Staff Leadership Team (SLT) is defined by and is the focus of this section. The content of the SLT – Board relationship and discussions is grounded in effective governance, communication, operations, policy, actions by the SLT and Board, and leadership and serves the church community and work to accomplish the church vision, mission, ends, ministries, and Church Strategic Goals.

The Church's Strategic Goals will be set on a yearly basis, decided upon through dialogue between the SLT and the Board, and adopted by the Board as Policy 1. Each year, staff will, in consultation with Board, develop and publish an action plan to address these Church Goals. Staff will invite the congregation into this work. (January 21, 2020)

Accordingly, when in engaged in action, review, and dialogue, all participants will: (April, 2014)

- a. assure that the work requested is worthy of the time it will take to accomplish;
 - b. empower the SLT to make management decisions, as described in policy section 2;
 - c. engage in full, clear, honest, and open 2-way communication;
 - d. develop a deep understanding of the Board-SLT relationship in the context of the church's current dynamics;
 - e. create and nurture substantive dialogue to deepen the Board—SLT bonds of trust and to improve the relationship.
2. Areas of focus: The participants will be mindful of the intended areas of focus for action, review, and dialogue activities, which include:
 - a. a focus that keeps clearly in mind the church's means and ends;
 - b. promotion of congregational dialogue that leads to whole-community consciousness of the well-governed, well-operated church;
 - c. using all reasonable means consistent with the covenantal relationship between Board and SLT to:
 - i. attend to the Board—SLT relationship,

- ii. understand Board—SLT communications,
 - iii. understand SLT—Board interactions through the use of Board standing committees,
 - iv. resolve challenging issues.
3. Metrics: Indications of success in the relationship-building, review, and dialogue process may necessarily be qualitative; in addition, numbers-based measures should be used when available. Measures of success may include:
- a. Are communication channels open and in use? Are the communications full, clear, and honest?
 - b. Is church governance holistic, yet attentive to specific issues, themes, and human concerns?
 - c. Is the church operated well, leading to a church environment conducive for excellent programming, without excessive churn and inefficiency?
 - d. Generally speaking, is everything and everyone working well together?
4. Review of and dialogue about SLT-Board relationship: The goals of the relationship review process are to discover, establish, and strengthen common understandings and alignments. Dialogue, followed by open and thoughtful discussion, is recommended.

Much of the review and dialogue about this relationship will center on the covenant relationship fullness and health and should be guided by the following questions: are we appealing to our best selves; are we working in ways that use our best gifts; are we communicating fully, honestly, and transparently; are we filled with good will; are we assuming best intentions on the part of all involved?

(April, 2014)

5. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD EACH OTHER AND STAFF

5.1 Covenant of Right Relations

East Shore Unitarian Church will have a Covenant of Right Relations approved by the Congregation that pertains to members, friends and staff equally.

5.2 Right Relations Guidelines

All East Shore Unitarian Church Board of Trustees, and Committees, Task-Forces, Ministry Teams, Affinity Groups, and other groups will embrace and adhere to the East Shore Covenant of Right Relations and have the opportunity to establish Right Relations Guidelines to guide participants in maintaining respectful and productive interactions specific to their work.

5.3 Right Relations Committee

A Right Relations Committee will be a standing committee of the Board of Trustees. This committee's tasks will include the following:

1. Ensure that the East Shore Unitarian Church Covenant of Right Relations is updated as needed and disseminated within the congregation.
2. Ensure that East Shore Unitarian Church works toward addressing conflict in a positive and creative manner and that tenets of right relationship are embedded in church life. This may include individual coaching, all-congregation training, and meeting process

observation/support, and may require training and assistance from professionals within the wider community.

3. Oversee a Right Relations Facilitation Team (RRFT).

5.4 Right Relations Facilitation Team

East Shore Unitarian Church will have a Right Relations Facilitation Team, under the guidance of the Right Relations Committee, for coaching individual members, friends or staff who request help in handling a conflict.

1. The Right Relations Committee will recruit and vet prospective Right Relations Facilitation Team (RRFT) members and ensure that members of the RRFT are trained in conflict coaching, meeting observation/support, and restorative facilitation. Training will be ongoing.
2. An individual seeking help will request assistance from any member of the Right Relations Facilitation Team (RRFT). That RRFT member will either agree to assist the individual or, with the individual's permission, refer the individual to another RRFT member depending on the issue, a conflict of interest, availability, or for another reason.
3. The RRFT member and individual will meet privately to discuss the issue and determine next steps.
4. Confidentiality of all parties involved in the conflict will be maintained. Data on the type of conflict and number of RRFT coaching sessions will be kept by the Right Relations Committee and be available to the Board upon request. Coaching challenges and successes may be shared within the RRFT to promote learning given that specifics identifying participants are not included.
5. Teams seeking meeting observation/support may request assistance from any member of the Right Relations Facilitation Team (RRFT). That RRFT member will either agree to assist the Team or refer the Team's request to another RRFT member depending on the issue, a conflict of interest, availability, or for another reason.
6. The RRFT member and requesting team members will meet to discuss the issue and determine next steps. As appropriate, confidentiality will be maintained. Data will be kept by the Right Relations Committee and be available to the Board upon request.
7. Members of the RRFT may hold restorative circles to support embedding RR and restorative practices into the culture of East Shore Unitarian Church. As appropriate, confidentiality will be maintained. Data will be kept by the Right Relations Committee and be available to the Board upon request.

(March 2019)

5.5 Disruptive Behavior

While openness to a wide variety of individual perspectives and beliefs is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and Principles, we affirm the believe that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere for safely expressing beliefs and opinions. When someone threatens the physical or emotional well-being of an individual or of the community as a whole, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly. Any consequences for disruptive behavior, including the

extremely rare loss of membership and exclusion from the premises and church activities will follow the Bylaws and Board Policies.

Disruptive behavior explicitly does not include respectful criticism of the Board of Trustees or of the staff by ESUC members.

The following shall be the restorative justice procedures and processes of East Shore Unitarian Church (ESUC) in dealing with disruptive behavior as referenced in Bylaw Article V, Section E (5):

1. When identifying, evaluating, and responding to disruptive behavior, staff, lay leaders, restorative justice groups, and members will consider these points in a reasonable manner:
 - a. SAFETY – What is the actual or perceived threat to the safety of any adult or child?
 - b. DANGEROUSNESS – How much of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property is occurring or has occurred?
 - c. CAUSES -- Why is the disruption occurring? Might there be a conflict between an individual and others in the church? Might it be due to personal issues or cultural misunderstandings?
 - d. FUNCTION – How is this behavior causing an impairment to church activities?
 - e. DISRUPTIVENESS - How much interference is occurring or has occurred to church functions?
 - f. HISTORY – What is the extent, if any, of disruption caused in the past? Is there a pattern of disruptive behavior?
 - g. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY – How likely is it that this behavior will result in serious damage to the reputation of the church, congregation, and staff?
 - h. OFFENSIVENESS - How likely is it that prospective or existing members or staff will be driven away or take legal action?
 - i. PROBABILITY OF CHANGE – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
2. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by a member of the Staff Leadership Team (SLT). If an SLT leader is not available, then a lay leader, such as a Board Member, Committee or Ministry Team Chair or other responsible member, will take action. This action may include asking the person or persons exhibiting disruptive behavior to leave the area or suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be resumed without disruption. If further assistance is required, the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions is undertaken without the SLT, a member of the SLT, must be notified; a follow-up letter detailing the disruption and the action taken should be distributed to the SLT, the Board President, and the appropriate restorative justice group.
3. Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to the Board as per Bylaw Article V Section E (5), which will ask the people involved to engage in a restorative justice framework. The restorative justice group will respond in terms of their own judgment observing the following:
 - a. Use agreed upon Church Covenant as acceptable behavior.

- b. Treat all people involved in a disruptive incident with respect, avoiding stereotypes and maintaining confidentiality.
- c. Use a restorative justice model or similar framework to evaluate and facilitate resolution of concerns.
- d. Meet with people involved in the disruptive incident in order to collect necessary information, determine the LEVEL of RESPONSE, and decide to whom the case should be referred.
 - i. LEVEL ONE. Identify ways that the issue can be addressed and damage to relationship can be repaired for the good of the community as a whole. Referrals might be made to the Minister, the Lay Pastoral Care Team, the Right Relations Facilitation Team, or similar resources.
 - ii. LEVEL TWO regarding NON-MEMBERS. Exclude the individual from specified church activities for a limited period of time. Provide them with reasons for exclusion and conditions of return.
 - iii. LEVEL TWO regarding MEMBERS. Refer the issue to the Board requesting revocation of membership so that the person can be excluded from specified church activities for a limited period of time. Provide the Board with reasons for exclusion and recommend conditions for return. Copy the individual prior to any Board hearing.
 - iv. LEVEL THREE regarding NON-MEMBERSs: Exclude the individual from the premises and all church activities permanently. Provide the person with reasons for exclusion, the parameters of the exclusion, and consequences for violation, and any recourse.
 - v. LEVEL THREE regarding MEMBERS: Refer the issue to the Board, recommending revocation of membership, so that the person may be excluded from church premises and all church activities permanently. If the Board decides to accept the recommendation, the individual shall be informed of the exclusion, consequences of violation, their rights, and any possible recourse. See Bylaw Article V Section E (5).
 - vi. LEVEL TWO and LEVEL THREE action may be appealed by a non-member to the Board by making a request in writing explaining why reinstatement is appropriate.

(June 19, 2018)

6. REVIEW OF POLICIES & GOVERNANCE CYCLE

1. The Board shall consider a review of church policies and of the governance cycle, including operating, governing, systematic interactions, all policies, procedures, and practices.
2. A schedule of review of the church policies, and a means to accomplish that review in limited time, needs to be considered by the Board each year. Given the large number of church policies, the yearly review should be greatly influenced by the dynamics of the current church.
3. For the consideration of the governance cycle, policies must be reviewed and then discussed. Dialogue may include consideration of:

- a. Are the policies in alignment with the Church's mission, vision, and Ends?
- b. In the perception of the church members, are the policies generally achieving a desired result?
- c. Are the policies intended to be long-term?
- d. Is the SLT able to use the policies? Are they usefully guided by the limitations, ends, and relationships expressed in policy?
- e. Is a policy serving its intended purpose effectively and efficiently? What is missing from the policy, and why? Does policy need to be drawn to become more or less finely controlling, invented, or deleted?
- f. Does policy enhance or enable communication between the Board, the standing committees, the SLT, and the congregation?

(April, 2014)

7. AMENDING BOARD POLICY

1. Policy revisions may be initiated by the Board of Trustees (BOT), Staff, Committees (Board Standing, Nominating, Search, Task Forces), Core Teams, Ministry Teams and members, by completing a Board Policy Recommendation Proposal (see instructions below) and submitting it to the BOT. The proposal document will address questions about background information related to the proposed policy (such as history, relationship to other policies, or etc.), evidence for the need for the new or changed policy, proposed language for the policy and a suggested placement within the current policies. If a group is submitting the Board Policy Recommendation Proposal, its members must have approved the recommendation using the process described in its charter.
2. The BOT will review the recommendation and determine next steps, which may include delegation to the Policy and Governance (P & G) Committee.
3. The BOT and the P & G Committee will consult regarding priorities for the Committee's work and issues related to the policy that the BOT wants to have addressed. The P & G Committee will create a work plan and progress chart based on this consultation to aid the Board liaison with their monthly report.
4. The P & G Committee will do any additional needed research and get input from relevant staff, committees, teams or members before drafting the recommendations.
5. The P & G Committee will send the recommended policy to the BOT, which may return the policy to the Committee for further work or determine if/when it will vote.
6. The BOT or their designee will give the congregation notice of policy revisions with comment options, via appropriate church communications ten days before the meeting in which they plan to vote on it. The BOT may in emergency situations or crucial time-sensitive situations vote on a policy with less time or without pre-communication to the congregation.
7. Within a month of Board approval, policies will be communicated to the congregation and included on the East Shore website and in the Administrative Handbook, by the Board secretary or their designee, working with appropriate staff.

Instructions for Developing Board Policy Recommendation Proposal

Policies are developed by the Board of Trustees to help them govern within federal/state laws, and within the ESUC by-laws, which are approved by the congregation. The policies provide guidance and limitations to the paid and non-paid (volunteer) staff members who carry out the ministry of the church. Policies are not to be confused with procedures which the staff or lay leaders develop to maintain efficient day to day operations within board policies.

Policy revisions may be initiated by the Board of Trustees (BOT), Staff, Committees (Board Standing, Nominating, Search, Task Forces), Core Teams, Ministry Teams and members. Only the Board may approve a new policy or a revision to an existing policy.

If you wish to propose a policy, please prepare a document that addresses the elements outlined below (A-H) and submit it to any member of the Board directly or through an appropriate member of the Staff Leadership Team (Minister, Executive Director, Director of Lifelong Learning). The proposal will then be reviewed by the Board and any relevant committees to determine its potential for approval. The Board and Committees meet once a month, so the expected time frame for response or action may be several months.

- A. Is your proposal for a new policy or a revision of a current policy? (Policies can be found on the church website esuc.org, About Us, Governance.) If for a new policy, please write a succinct draft of it and suggest a placement within the sections of the current policies. If for a revision, please list the current policy and the proposed language change(s).
- B. What evidence is there that ESUC needs the new or revised policy? Please be specific and use data as much as possible. Provide additional context or sources used, as needed to clarify your proposal.
- C. Does the proposed policy comply with state/federal laws and ESUC by-laws?
- D. Are you submitting this proposal as an individual or as a member of a Board Committee, Core, or Ministry Team, or other group within the church? If as a member of any group, please confirm that the group has approved this proposal according to its charter by attaching a copy of the minutes where it was approved.
- E. Your name and contact information:
- F. Group's name (if any):
- G. Submitted to:
- H. Date:

(Approved November 19, 2019)

RECORD OF CHANGES

February 20, 2007, by unanimous vote of the Board

Section 2.4, lines 30, 31, and 33 and 36

changed references to policies to procedures, practices and rules, and referenced the related Personnel Manual

Section 3.2, lines 17 and 18

converted references to policy to references to practices, procedures, and rules

April/May 2007

Senior Administrative Team to Senior Staff

New section 3.8, communication

Modified section 4.1, more about Senior Staff

[PROPOSED] section 4.5, review and dialog, rather than sterile monitoring

Additions of new graphics show partnerships and dialog, and governance.

November 16, 2010

Replaced Section 3.5 with Section 3.6

Replaced Section 3.8 with Section 3.9

March 20, 2012

Replaced Section 2.11 (a) – (i)

February, 2014

Changed references to Senior Staff to Staff Leadership Team

April 15, 2014

Replace Section 4.4 – 4.5

Added Section 5.0

May, 2016 (approved June 5 at annual meeting)

Revised (list all the revised sections)

Deleted addendum on the Sanctuary Improvement Project

All changes were administrative maintenance to bring all policies up to date to reflect current practice.

May, 2017

Addition Charters Required Policy 3.10.

December 19, 2017

Policy 2.3 revised to add new part 2.3.2

January 23, 2018

Policy 2.16 Revised to add paragraph 2.16.2 regarding Sponsorship of Outside Groups

July 26, 2018

New Section 5. Member Responsibilities Toward Each Other and Staff added with new Disruptive Behavior Policy. Old Section 5 Review of Policies and Governance Cycle changed to become Section 6.

March 19, 2019

New Right Relations Policies 5.1-5.4 added to Section 5. Policy on Disruptive Behavior changed from 5.1 to 5.5.

October 28, 2019

Introduction to Policies added to precede Policy 1 Goals

November 19, 2019

Amending the Policies added as a new Section 7

January 21, 2020

Safety Policy 2.21 added

Revision to 4.5 SLT-Board Relationship second paragraph

Written Strategic Plan to Address Annual Goals, Policy 4.5.1 paragraph 2, last sentence

May 19, 2020

Language but no Content modifications, primarily in Policy 2 Section.

December, 2020

Written procedures for Staff Performance Review Policy 4.4.3 last sentence

April 27, 2021

Definition and Responsibilities of Staff Leadership Team, Policy 4.1.1 and 4.1.2

Financial Stewardship Committee review contracts 2.11.9f