

Article II, Executive Limitations—Policy H: Communication and Counsel to the Board

Adopted Aug. 9, 2018; Amended June 27, 2019, Amended November 21, 2019

With respect to providing information and counsel to the board, the Executive Team may not cause or allow the board to be uninformed or misinformed. Accordingly, the Executive Team may not:

1. Fail to inform the board in a timely manner of relevant trends, public policy initiatives, public events of the organization, and material external and internal changes, particularly changes in the assumptions upon which any board policy has previously been established.

Interpretation. The Executive Team must keep the Board informed of material changes, internally or externally, that may alter the assumptions upon which policy and budgeting are based.

Definitions.

- **Relevant trends** mean but not limited to a pattern of discernable change over time in membership, Sunday attendance (adult and children/youth), and pledge or other revenues.
- **Public policy initiatives, public events of the organization, and material external and internal changes** means major events or demographic shifts in church activities, Unitarian Universalism, or the wider community that may be interpreted as potentially having physical, psychosocial, or economic impact on First Unitarian.
- **Internal changes** means changes in the state of the building, grounds, or human resources (both staff and membership) that may affect the ability of the church to fulfill its mission or comply with Board policies.

Monitoring. The Executive Team must track the identified variables and report to the Board both the emergence or status of trends in membership, Sunday attendance, and/or pledge receipts. The currently specified monitoring frequency for these variables is quarterly (although, as a practical matter, dashboards are reported monthly). In the event the Board identifies and incorporates in its minutes that it found itself uninformed or misinformed by at least 2 members, the Executive Team must report at least quarterly the corrective actions that followed each recorded issue or incident and/or changes that arose therefrom. The absence of minuted instances is indicative of compliance, and if this is the case the Executive Team will report quarterly “no issues or incidents” to confirm compliance.

We report **COMPLIANCE**

EVIDENCE: No issues or incidents

2. Fail to submit the monitoring data required by the board policy IV.C. (“Monitoring Senior Minister Performance”) in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of the board policies.

Interpretation. The Executive Team is responsible for submitting reports according to the Board monitoring schedule in Policy IV.C. In making these reports, the Executive Team must follow the submitted interpretations, address thoroughly and directly each provision in the policy, and seek always to provide reports that are comprehensible to the average person. The Executive Team must base monitoring data on the best assessment, qualitative or quantitative, that is reasonably possible.

Monitoring. The Board’s monitoring schedule is the measure for validating the timely submission of reports. At the frequency specified by the Board monitoring schedule, the Executive Team may ask Board members to confirm that they found all reports (a) thorough (based on the Interpretations) and (b) comprehensible, and to incorporate that response in the minutes. A 7/9 positive response is considered compliance.

We report **NON-COMPLIANCE**

We will be asking the Board whether they have reports from the Executive to be thorough and comprehensible at the May meeting. If at least 7 members reply to the affirmative, then we will be in COMPLIANCE.

3. Fail to gather staff, members, and external points of view, issues, and options as needed for fully informed board choices.

Interpretation. The information provided for Board decision making will be based upon or include opinions and points of view of staff and members, along with outside-the-church perspectives in formulating recommendations for Board action. Particularly when views differing from the Executive Team’s recommendation are relevant to the Board decision being made, the Executive will offer justification in support of the appropriateness of the Executive’s preferred point of view. The Executive Team will seek to develop a culture of consultation within the church so that both Executive and Board decisions benefit from a broad base of information and perspectives.

Monitoring. At the frequency required by the Board’s monitoring schedule, the Executive Team must summarize those instances when the Board noted in its minutes that at least two members found themselves to be inadequately informed prior to making particular decisions. The Executive Team must report the corrective actions that followed each incident and/or changes that arose therefrom. If no complaints were recorded by the Board, a “no issues” report is considered compliance.

We report **COMPLIANCE**

EVIDENCE: No issues

4. Fail to recommend changes in board policies which they believe are needed.

Interpretation. If the Executive Team is in agreement that an aspect of the Governing Policies should be revised, the Executive Team must recommend a change in the Policies once they have reached agreement. If the members of the Executive Team agree on the need for change, but cannot agree on a specific recommendation, they must convey that information to the Board. It is understood that the Board has the responsibility and authority to monitor and revise the Governing Policies, but in recommending revisions that come to the Executive Team’s notice, the Executive Team is fulfilling its role as partner to the Board.

Monitoring. At the frequency required by the Board’s monitoring schedule, the Executive Team must document any policy changes recommended to the Board since the last such report. If no policy changes have been recommended, a “no issues” report shall constitute compliance.

We report **COMPLIANCE**

EVIDENCE: No issues

5. Fail to limit public statements about the official position of the congregation or board on controversial social, political, and/or congregational issues to what the congregation or board has formally and explicitly adopted as positions of record. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to infringe upon the fundamental principle of freedom of the pulpit.

Interpretation. This policy seeks to clarify the role of the Senior Minister (in particular) in ministry in the public square. On controversial public policy issues, when making statements on behalf of the church, this policy restricts the Senior Minister to positions the congregation or the Board has formally adopted as positions of record. In making statements not adopted by the congregation or Board, the Senior Minister must do everything possible to make it clear that they speak as an individual rather than as Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Church. This policy does not restrict the Senior Minister from taking positions on controversial issues, most especially when speaking from the pulpit but also in other settings. According to the UU Ministers Association ethical guidelines (Section II.C):

“The history and expectation of the Unitarian Universalist movement is that ministers are free to speak the truth as they understand it. The longstanding tradition of freedom of the pulpit extends to ministers in all professional settings. This freedom applies to both spoken and written public statements. The minister does not, however, necessarily speak for either the institution or its members.

Monitoring. There is not a scheduled monitoring report for this policy. The Senior Minister is expected to self-report if aware that a public statement oversteps the limits of this policy. Assuming goodwill and professional integrity on the part of the Senior Minister, as a practical matter monitoring is complaint-based—if someone complains about the Senior Minister’s public statement, it will become an issue covered by another policy (see Article III, Governance Process, Policy F, Board and Executive Team Complaint and Inquiry Process). Separately the Executive will provide annual documentation stating our policies of record.

We report **COMPLIANCE**

EVIDENCE: No such positions of record have been taken.

6. Fail to prepare, implement, and share with the board, within three months of individual senior minister evaluation, an annual professional development plan that responds to the evaluation in its entirety.

Interpretation. This policy is clearly stated and does not warrant interpretation.

Monitoring. The Senior Minister must submit annually, within three months of the Board’s evaluation of the Senior Minister, a professional development plan responsive to that evaluation.

We report that this is not yet relevant.