

Shared Governance

We aim to be a congregation governed by consistent, considered policies. We call it "shared" governance because leadership and ministry are shared in significant ways. The Board of Directors and the Senior Minister work with their respective committees, teams and staff to further the work of the congregation. The congregation elects both its senior minister and its board.

This sharing of functions is unusual in the non-profit world, where it is more common for the Board to have responsibility for all governance and leadership matters, while the Executive Director, is responsible to the board for the management of the programs and services in accord with their leadership.

We believe that shared governance is truer to church life, and that it is useful for the senior minister to be a leader and for Board members to be involved in program areas.



"We know good governance when we see it: a unified structure for making governance decisions, a unified structure for making operational decisions, and an open creative, and accountable atmosphere for ministry."

Dan Hotchkiss
Governance & Ministry

Want More Details?

Review the Policy Manual

Located online at uuabq.org (from "About Us", go to "Governance/Organization"; then click on "Congregation and Board Policy Manual")

Review First U By-Laws

Located online at uuabq.org (from "About Us", go to "Governance/Organization"; then "Resources and Documents")

Talk with an expert:

Rev. Angela Herrera
Senior Minister
Phone: 505-884-1801
E-mail: aherrera@uuabq.org

Paul Browne
Director of Finance & Operations
Phone: 505-884-1801
E-mail: doo@uuabq.org

Policy Governance Task Force Members:

Geri Knoebel, Chair, gknoebel@unm.edu
Pat Diem, patdiem@comcast.net
Gwen Sawyer, gandg10@comcast.net

Church Governance

A guide to how we govern ourselves at First Unitarian Church



First Unitarian Church

3701 Carlisle NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 884-1801
www.uuabq.org

Our Mission

We, the members of First Unitarian, agree to:

- Promote the spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth of each member.
- Minister to each other in an atmosphere of welcome, acceptance, and caring.
- Be a positive force for social, environmental, and economic action.
- Promote the wider understanding of our purposes and principles in the larger community.
- Provide a dynamic religious education program for all ages.

To these ends, we declare our commitment to the health and vitality of this liberal religious community.

Church Governance

To fulfill the Church's mission, the congregation calls (elects) a senior minister, employs a staff, elects leaders to four committees (one of which is the Board) and funds programs, which are mostly run by volunteers who are coordinated by the staff.

Governance is how we manage our affairs, set goals, identify priorities, keep our tangible and intangible assets safe, and oversee the day-to-day activities of the congregation.

Congregation-adopted bylaws define our governance and operational structures. Our Church Policy Manual defines who gets to make what kinds of decisions and who is accountable to whom within our system.

Our Policy Manual

The *Policy Manual* is divided into seven categories (highlighted below). The categories provide a framework for understanding how our large church governs itself. This framework is periodically reviewed for completeness and relevance.

Each policy in the Manual has an "owner" - the entity or group that has the authority to make changes and create new policies. Policies are hierarchal in nature. Five entities or groups hold specific policy responsibilities:

- **Congregation** – Adopts bylaws and may make or change any Church policy;
- **Standing Committees** – Defined in bylaws includes Board, Endowment, Leadership Succession, and Financial Review. Responsible for developing own policies.

- **Board** – Adopts policies establishing lines of authority as well as set roles and responsibilities for Board, Senior Minister, and lay leaders.
- **Board Committees and Teams** – Adopts policies relevant to their work.
- **Staff** – Adopts policies within established areas of authority.

POLICY MANUAL CATEGORIES:

Governance policies establish a framework of roles and responsibilities.

Finance policies govern how we manage our financial resources.

Affiliation and Participation policies establish membership as well as behavioral expectations of all persons participating in our activities or using our property.

Program policies establish frameworks for committees, councils, teams/ task forces, and programs.

Employee policies set expectations for the management of paid staff.

Safety policies guide us in maintaining a physically and emotionally safe campus.

Facility policies guide us in managing our physical property.