



# Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

The Professional Organization for Unitarian Universalist Ministers  
Robert Eller-Isaacs, President

## *UUMA Guidelines Study Motions for 2007-08*

All documents have been line numbered to assist in discussion. Proposed changes have been bolded. ~~Strikeouts~~ indicate removal of former text and *Italics* indicate proposed addition or change.

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1 **III. Two Motions from the Guideline Revisions Committee approved at the 2007**  
2 **Annual Meeting:**

3 **GRC Motion #1:** Moved that the UUMA annual meeting endorses the recommendation of the Executive  
4 Committee and the Guidelines Revision Committee that the current. UUMA Guidelines be separated into two  
5 documents: A Code of Professional Practice and Guidelines.

6 The Code of Professional Practice would be divided into three parts – our Covenant, our Ethical Standards, and  
7 our Expectations of Conduct. UUMA members would hold ourselves accountable to this Code of Professional  
8 Practice as the basis for actionable grievances that have the potential to result in sanctions or removal from  
9 membership by the UUMA Executive Committee.

10 The Guidelines would document our “best practices”; describing our wisdom, aspirations and desirable  
11 performance of ministry as currently understood. These Guidelines would inform admonition by colleagues,  
12 Good Offices, and by congregations or our association of congregations, but would not be the basis for ethical  
13 investigation or actions by the Executive Committee of the UUMA.

14 The Guidelines Revision Committee is requested to complete a process of revision of the current Guidelines  
15 document, which would result in this division into two documents with differing roles, by the 2010 Annual  
16 Meeting.

17 **GRC Motion #2:** Moved, that the 2007 UUMA Annual Meeting endorses the following timetable for the work of  
18 the current Guidelines Revision Committee:

19 Annual Meeting 2007: Consider two Process Motions and a new Professional Rights Procedure. The GRC  
20 requests input from colleagues, stakeholder groups, and UUMA chapters.

21 2007-08: GRC drafts a new Code of Professional Practice, containing sections on Covenant, Ethical Standards,  
22 and Expectations of Conduct. The goal of the year is to bring a discussion draft to the 08 Annual Meeting, to be  
23 presented to Chapters during 08-09. UUMA Annual Meeting 2008 : Workshops and discussions are held on this  
24 draft Code. The Annual Meeting formally asks chapters to dedicate time at a chapter meeting in the year ahead to  
25 discussion of the Code in order to give feedback to the GRC.

26 2008-09: GRC receives comments from the chapters on the Code, and creates a proposed final draft to be  
27 presented to the Executive Committee and potentially the 2009 Annual Meeting. Drawing on input received on  
28 the Guidelines, the GRC creates a first draft to be received by the 2009 Annual meeting.

29 UUMA Annual Meeting 2009: If the Executive Committee so decides, the penultimate draft of the new Code is  
30 received and discussed by the annual meeting, and the first draft of Guidelines is received and discussed in the  
31 workshops. The UUMA Annual Meeting formally asks Chapters to dedicate time at a chapter meeting to  
32 discussing and giving feedback to the GRC on the Guidelines.

33 UUMA Convocation November 09: Workshops are held on the proposed final draft of the Code and Guidelines,  
34 and a “rehearsal business session” on the Code is held.

35 2009-10: Chapters discuss the Guidelines and give the GRC feedback. The UUMA Executive Committee reviews  
36 the final drafts of each document at their April 2010 meeting, and decides whether to recommend them as their  
37 proposals to the 2010 Annual Meeting.

38 UUMA Annual Meeting 2010: If recommended by the Executive Committee the proposed new Code and the  
39 Guidelines are enacted. For each document, the first vote is whether to pass the document by a single up or down  
40 vote or whether to work on the document by sections. The meeting proceeds accordingly.



1 **IVa. Proposed Guidelines Amendments Related To Professional Rights**

2 from the Guidelines Revision Committee

3 C. THE UUMA CHAPTER GOOD OFFICES AND UUA STAFF

4 Two independent resources exist within our Association to support the personal and professional life of our  
5 ministers. Each is of great and proven value. Their effectiveness in any particular situation depends upon many  
6 factors, principal of which is timing. It is imperative that assistance be sought at the earliest possible moment  
7 when such help can be of greatest use.

8 1. Each UUMA Chapter ~~should elect at least two Good Offices Persons.~~ *shall nominate one or more persons*  
9 *to serve as Good Offices Persons (GOP's). Such appointments shall be for three years and shall be ratified by*  
10 *the Executive Committee.* Experience has shown it advisable for these GOP to have had several years of  
11 experience in the ministry. Each District GOP is a "minister to ministers" within the Chapter. His/her primary  
12 function is to be a listener and a counselor and, when requested by a UUMA member, a mediator or advocate. If  
13 the members of a congregation initiate communication, the GOP will inform the minister involved of the  
14 communication, and will refer the inquiring individuals to the appropriate resources.

15 A Continental Good Offices Person is appointed to this volunteer position by the UUMA Executive Committee,  
16 and asked to serve as a "minister to ministers." The UUMA, *whether through the Chapter or Continental level,*  
17 *reimburses all GOP's for their documented and reasonable expenses which have not been reimbursed in*  
18 *another way. Expenses over \$100 must be approved in advance by the Continental Good Offices Person.*

19 2. In the event of a disagreement between parts of a congregation, minister and congregation, staff and  
20 congregation, minister and other staff, or of any issue which may affect the health and future stability of a  
21 congregation, a District's field staff representative (FSR) may be asked by the minister and/or Board president to  
22 enter a congregation for the purpose of trouble shooting. Ideally, the initiation should be agreed upon by minister  
23 and president, but the FSR may enter at the request of one and with the informed knowledge of the other.

24 It is important for the FSR to be called as early as possible before a problem becomes entrenched. The earlier an  
25 issue is dealt with, the more likely the resolution will be positive. *UUMA Good Offices Persons are encouraged*  
26 *to communicate as early as possible with the FSR to reach mutual understandings about their differing roles*  
27 *and their common interests. In any grievance conflict where the UUA staff members seek consultation with the*  
28 *UUMA Good Offices Person, it is up to the best judgment of the Chapter GOP in consultation with the*  
29 *colleague concerned to decide on the boundaries of confidentiality appropriate to the situation.*

30 ~~The FSR is expected to be neutral and, as mediator, to give positive and negative feedback to the~~  
31 ~~disagreeing parties. The total health and well being of the congregation should always be his/her goal.~~



1 D. PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS PROCEDURE

2 Members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association carefully and conscientiously guard the professional  
3 rights and standards of behavior defined in the Code of Professional Practice and elsewhere in *Guidelines*. To this  
4 end, members are encouraged to enlarge and clarify their understanding of such rights and standards of behavior by  
5 discussing them at Chapter meetings and by making inquiries and suggestions to the UUMA Executive Committee.  
6 ***When ministers feel that their personal rights or our standards of behavior have been violated by a colleague,***  
7 ***support is available through the Professional Rights Procedure. Awareness of a violation of our standards of***  
8 ***behavior that involves a parishioner, or a congregation, or that involves an alleged or potential criminal action***  
9 ***requires consultation with the local and/or Continental Good Offices Person and a field staff representative to***  
10 ***clarify appropriate procedures. The following Professional Rights Procedures are intended to apply to conflicts***  
11 ***between colleagues.***

12 ~~Members whose behavior seems inconsistent with the rights and standards in *Guidelines* should first be~~  
13 ~~cautioned by their colleagues through friendly remonstrance and/or referral to a Chapter Good Offices~~  
14 ~~Person in accordance with UUMA procedures for Good Offices Persons. In most instances, a member who~~  
15 ~~believes a colleague's behavior to be inconsistent with the Code or *Guidelines* should express their concern~~  
16 ~~directly. As an alternative, or should the direct approach not achieve the desired result, a Chapter Good Offices~~  
17 ~~Person should be consulted. A Good Offices person is initially a neutral mediator seeking informal resolution of~~  
18 ~~the concern.~~

19 In the event that a Chapter GOP cannot settle a concern between ministers, the minister or the Chapter GOP will  
20 communicate with the Continental GOP. If the concern is still unresolved, the concerned minister should write a  
21 letter of complaint to the Committee on Ethics and Collegiality (CEC), fully specifying his/her complaint. The  
22 CEC, working in Consultation with the UUMA Executive Committee's Good Offices Person will investigate ***and***  
23 ***assess*** the complaint, inviting communications from all parties involved, ***make recommendations toward the***  
24 ***resolution of the complaint*** and will report to all the parties involved and to the UUMA Executive Committee 1)  
25 that the complaint has been resolved at this stage , or 2) that the complaint relates to disagreements about guidelines  
26 that are not actionable or 3) that the complaint is without foundation, or 4) that the complaint should become a  
27 formal grievance, and referred to the UUMA Executive Committee. ***Chapter Good Offices people may continue to***  
28 ***be involved in a consulting or pastoral role.***

29 ***Complaints against a UUMA member serving on the UUA staff that is related to actions undertaken in the line***  
30 ***of their duties requires an additional procedure, as follows:***

- 31 ***1. The complainant talks directly with the person concerned.***
- 32 ***2. If unsatisfied, the complainant should consult with a Good Offices Person in preparation for a talk with that***  
33 ***person's UUA supervisor.***
- 34 ***3. If still unsatisfied, and only after forbearance has been exercised, the complainant may bring the matter to***  
35 ***the CEC. The CEC will make its decision on the grievance cognizant of the supervisor's position on the***  
36 ***grievance and mindful of the complex roles and responsibilities with congregations carried by UUMA members***  
37 ***who are UUA staff members.***

38 In accordance with the UUMA Bylaws, Article X, Professional Rights, complaints that have been referred as  
39 grievances by the CEC to the UUMA Executive Committee will be responded to ***according to procedures***  
40 ***established and published by the Executive Committee. Prompt attention is expected.***

41 In their fact-finding, discussion and actions in response to grievances, the president and members of the Executive  
42 Committee will be guided by four fundamental principles: Confidentiality; Caring for the persons involved;  
43 Fairness; and Concern for the severity of the issues. Consistent with these principles, members of the UUMA  
44 bringing complaints and grievances, or against whom complaints and grievances may be brought, are assured that



1 collegial confidences will not be disclosed by anyone, except: (1) as mandated by law; (2) to prevent a clear and  
2 immediate danger to a person or persons; (3) where disclosure of a confidence may be required for defense in a  
3 legal action between colleagues; or (4) if, and only to the extent that, there is a waiver previously obtained in  
4 writing. Concerning persons against whom the findings are adverse, public notice will be given only when the  
5 action taken **by the UUMA Executive Committee or the Annual Meeting** is in the form of probation, suspension, or  
6 removal from membership (see No. 5 below).

7 Formal ***grievances*** will be made in accordance with the following procedures:

- 8 1. A grievance will be ***referred*** in writing **by the CEC** to the president of the UUMA .
- 9 2. UUMA members shall have full access and full freedom and right to respond to all evidence cited against  
10 them. In addition, they always have the right and option of advisement by counsel at their own expense, but  
11 at no time can they be represented by counsel in these proceedings.
- 12 3. The UUMA Executive Committee's action in response to a grievance shall be in writing and may be in the  
13 form of one the following actions:

14 a. Advice that the grievance is unfounded, *or undeserving of action.*

15 b. Caution, admonition or reprimand.

16 c. Probation, suspension or removal from membership in the UUMA.

17 4. In accordance with the provisions of the UUMA Constitution and Bylaws, Article X, Professional Rights,  
18 Section 4, members ***against whom actions have been taken*** who consider that ***they*** have been treated adversely  
19 by the proceedings of the UUMA Executive Committee may appeal, ~~within thirty days by May 1,~~ to a meeting  
20 of the membership.

21 5. When an action consisting of probation, suspension or ~~dismissal~~ ***removal*** has been taken, and no appeal has  
22 been made within thirty days, notice of the action **by the Executive Committee** shall be given immediately  
23 thereafter to the member's congregation or other employer and to the Ministry and Professional Leadership  
24 ***Staff Group*** of the Unitarian Universalist Association, ***the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and the***  
25 ***membership of the UUMA.***



1 **IVb. Update Amendments to the UUMA Guidelines**

2 Since the proposed timetable for the major revisions of the Code of Professional Practice and Guidelines of the  
3 UUMA is suggested to extend until 2010, the Executive Committee in consultation with the Guidelines Revision  
4 Committee proposes the following package of updating amendments to bring our existing Guidelines document up  
5 to date with existing terminology and practice. The phrase “and practice” means that the amendments include  
6 substantive changes that go beyond language, but that reflect established practice among us or reflect policies of the  
7 MFC that have or are being implemented and that the UUMA has not challenged. The Executive Committee hopes  
8 that these amendments can be accepted as a single document for study by our chapters this year, to be brought back  
9 for approval by the 08 Annual Meeting. If passed, the Guidelines we are living with until the major revision is  
10 completed in 2010 will be less antiquated than is currently the case. In the numbered changes recommended as a  
11 package below, the strikeouts represent language proposed for deletion and the Italics represent proposed  
12 replacement or additional language.

- 13 1. Wherever the Words “Department of Ministry” appear in the Guidelines document, they be replaced by the  
14 words “Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group” or by the abbreviation “MPL” where appropriate.
- 15 2. In the first paragraph of Introduction to the Guidelines:

16 *Guidelines* is a publication of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. It is revised occasionally, and  
17 the present edition includes the revisions current through June ~~1998~~ *2008*.

18 (Note: The salary chart ~~is revised yearly to index inflationary changes. The basis for the figures comes~~  
19 ~~from~~ *follows the UUA Compensation Guidelines found on the UUA web site uua.org*

20 ~~Following publication in 1998, one copy of Guidelines was mailed at no charge to each current member of~~  
21 ~~the UUMA. Additional copies are available for congregations, search committees, Committees on~~  
22 ~~Ministry, etc. from the office of the UUMA (25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108-2800) for \$4.00 per copy.~~  
23

24 The Guidelines are available on line at [www.uuma.org](http://www.uuma.org)

- 25 3. In “A HISTORY OF GUIDELINES AND ITS REVISIONS”, third paragraph:

26 ~~We~~ *The UUMA* wants *Guidelines* to be a living document

27 And, above the final paragraph:

28 *In 2007-08 changes to the Professional Rights Procedure were passed. A timetable and process for a major*  
29 *Guidelines Revision was approved.*

30 In all of this the UUMA has tried carefully to respond to the needs and concerns of its members in order to  
31 reflect in *Guidelines* the best insights and wisdom for an effective and successful ministry.

- 32 4. In the PREFACE, Section 1:

33 1. Congregational polity is central in the life of Unitarian Universalist churches and fellowships. In our practice  
34 each society - in deeply honored principle - is both autonomous and pledged to counsel and cooperation with  
35 other congregations of our Association of Churches and Fellowships. The relationship of a congregation with its  
36 minister, *and with any endorsed or affiliated community ministers* can only be understood with reference to  
37 both facets of congregational polity.



1 5. In THE MINISTRY: AN INTRODUCTION, paragraph 2:

2 To seek and to accept ordination to our ministry is to dedicate one's life to the work needful for fulfillment of  
3 these high aims. The minister is one who has made a life commitment to the religious community as an  
4 institution, *and to the redemptive power of religious community in the world.*

5 And in Paragraph 4:

6 The minister ~~is to~~ *is empowered to* lead ~~the a~~ congregation in worship, ~~and~~ nurture spiritual growth, *and create*  
7 *a stronger community.*

8 6. In V. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE MINISTRY, delete section A 4 below:

9 ~~4. At times some help may be obtained from the Association. Application should be made to the~~  
10 ~~Department of Ministry.~~

11 In B3.a Increases:

12 In order that a minister's salary be consistent and economically realistic, annual salary increases should be  
13 considered in two categories.

14 a. An increase may be necessary to provide a cost of living adjustment (COLA). COLAs ought to be  
15 automatic for the minister and all other employees. Specific COLA figures for any area may be obtained  
16 from budget officials of the local or federal government, *or refer to The UUA Compensation Guidelines*  
17 *Chart available through uua.org.*

18 In F Other Benefits:

19 1. Each society should provide the minister with full and consistent benefits. These should include at least  
20 health, life and disability insurance and pension. They should be paid directly by the society. *For ministries*  
21 *beginning Jan 1, 2005 and later, the UUA recommends that congregations pay 80% of the health premium*  
22 *for ministers and 50% for spouses/partners, and dependents. In the event of disability, payments for salary*  
23 *and housing, contribution in lieu of FICA, insurance premiums, and pension contributions ought to be*  
24 *continued for six months or until disability insurance begins, if sooner.* ~~the minister's FULL package should~~  
25 ~~be made for six months or until disability insurance begins.~~

26 7. In 'IX. OTHER MINISTRIES':

27 A. ~~NON-PARISH MINISTRIES~~ *Community Ministries*

28 1. The UUMA ~~recognizes and~~ supports the ~~non-parish~~ *community* ministries of our members, *and our*  
29 *chapters are encouraged to reach out to and include community-based ministers in chapter life.*

30 2. Ministers not presently serving in the parish ministry may desire to engage as laypersons in the  
31 religious life of a church or fellowship. Should they do so, they must take care to observe the UUMA's  
32 Code of Professional Practice. ~~(See Page 10.)~~