

USH Strategic Planning Governance Task Force Report

This year's Strategic Planning Task Force took a different approach from recent years at USH, deciding to focus on the governance structure.

Key areas of concern for continued vigor at USH are stewardship and membership.

The Governance Task Force made these recommendations after meeting December through June 2021-22:

1. Modify the role of the past-president. The expertise of the outgoing president would be very helpful on the new board. Chairing the nominating committee is not the best use of this expertise.
2. Add two new councils to the governance structure, the Stewardship & Finance Council and the Membership Council.
3. Create two additional Council Chairs, modifying the current Board structure to add 2 Council Chairs, one for Membership and one for Stewardship, so that there will be a total of 6 Council Chairs, a President, President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer.

One new Council would be formed by dividing the Administration Council into Administration Council and new Stewardship & Finance Council. Both are important areas and stewardship is a year-round responsibility deserving of a seat on the board.

The second new council would be formed by dividing the Council on Community Within in two, the Council on Community Within and the new Membership Council.

The Board voted to support this new structure at the July meeting. The next steps are to meet with the congregation for Q&A and then to use the suggestions to amend the USH constitution, adding the two new councils and changing the past-president's duties.

Other changes to the constitution could include things like changing the number of board members needed for a quorum since there will be two more board members. The current Board structure is set out in the Constitution, which is why we would need to change it. The plan is to have an additional congregational meeting to approve the amendment and approve two nominations for the new Board positions.

The resolution presented to the Board in July 2022 was:

Modify the current Board structure to add 2 Council Chairs, one for Membership and one for Stewardship, so that there will be a total of 6 Council Chairs, a President, President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. The Stewardship Council Chair will cover the sub-councils of Finance, Endowment and Stewardship. The Membership Chair will cover Membership and the Nominating Committee. The thought was that Membership covers an enormous amount of responsibilities and activities so that it was not necessary to group other sub-councils under

Membership. This would leave largely intact the current Councils of Community Within, Administration, Spiritual Life and Social Justice (after removing Membership, Nominating, Finance, Endowment, and Stewardship from them). The other change that we will suggest is to add a NONVOTING Board position for the outgoing President.

The USH Governance Task Force will hold a Question & Answer congregation meeting on September 18, 2022 after the Sunday service to discuss the proposal. We will use your ideas moving forward.

Q&A

Q What is the USH Governance Task Force?

A In November 2021 seven USH members answered the call to serve on the USH Governance Task Force. Our charge was to review and analyze the governance structure as it is practiced and as outlined in our Constitution and make recommendations to move forward.

Q Who are they?

A Rob Spector, Eve Pech, Gloria Francesca Mengual, Sue Tenorio, Brian Harvey, Beverly Spence, and Laura Cipriano started by looking at organizational charts of the councils and by identifying areas of concern for the future of USH.

Q When did they meet?

A December through June 2021-22

Q What happened with the recommendations the previous task force made?

A Well-thought-out suggestions from the previous task force were partly implemented before covid but the initiatives have not been thoroughly implemented or evaluated yet. Detailed plans of action for each of the general goals below were included in the 2018 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Goals January 2018

- Goal 1 (Nourishing Spirit): USH will offer a comprehensive, lifespan religious learning and growth program in order to support the spiritual needs of the USH community
- Goal 2 (Building Community): USH will be a congregation that maintains relationships based on respect, understanding and safety
- Goal 3: USH will commit to an innovative and sustainable financial model
- Goal 4: USH will attract and integrate a healthy stream of visitors
- Goal 5 (Working for Justice): USH will be committed and spiritually grounded partners in building social, racial and environmental justice in Greater Hartford and beyond

We on the USH 2022 Governance Task Force agree that these are important goals for USH. We decided the suggestions in the strategic plan need a fair chance before changing them, so we decided our focus would be to identify the biggest concerns to USH that could impede progress on the strategic plan.
