

UUCJ Town Hall Presentations

January 14, 2024

Evolution of Democracy in the UUA, 2007 to 2024

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The Fifth Principle Task Force, working from 2007-2009, determined that democracy was badly broken; that the way we were doing business was not working and didn't represent the wholeness of who we are. They said,

As we approach UUA's 50th anniversary, it would be appropriate to change the delegate body from passive receptors to active policy makers, giving power and the responsibility inherent in it to the people who are the member congregations.

Their recommendations brought to the 2009 General Assembly envisioned that ...

Elected delegates would work closely with their counterparts from neighboring UU congregations AND their [district's elected] trustee representative to the UUA Board, linking the goals and aspirations of each congregation, district, trustee, and the administration as a whole.

The 2009 General Assembly rejected the recommendations of the Fifth Principle Task Force. Nonetheless, there have been some changes.

We no longer directly elect our National Board. Some of you remember that we used to have our Florida district, and you could call our district representative and ask what is going on. Districts were eliminated and the rules were changed so that the national Nominating Committee could nominate only one person if they choose for each position. This year they nominated only one person for UUA President. Take it or leave it.

There had been a robust system for a grass roots candidate to get on the board or become President. For President, the host church would gather signatures from 25 churches over 15 months. Their name would be on the ballot. They could campaign at General Assembly including having a booth inside the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. For the 2023 election for UUA President, the rules were changed by the UUA Board. Petition candidates needed to gather signatures from 50 congregations from at least 3 Regions, based on a positive vote by each congregation's Board. This had to be accomplished in only eleven weeks. The announced penalty for starting early was disqualification from running. Additionally, for both Board candidates and Presidential candidates, petition candidates could not buy booth space to campaign at GA. The only place petition candidates were allowed to campaign at GA 2023 was by standing on the sidewalk on public property in front of the convention hall. In addition to providing booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall, the UUA Board paid for campaign advertisements for the single candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee for each open position.

That is the status of democracy in the UUA right now.

See Also: [Report of the Fifth Principle Task Force, 2007-2009](#) and <https://fifthprincipleproject.org>