

UUC 2023 Article II & General Assembly Survey Results

Summary: The survey was available April 15-May 14. There were 5 questions on the sections of Article II of the UUA Bylaws and one on the proposed Article II revision that asked for the preference of the participant: keep the current version or adopt the proposed changes. There were additional questions on General Assembly topics of interest and relationship to our Congregation. Congregational participation was 10.3% (12.2% of Members), so the data collected is not truly representative of the congregation as a whole.

Question 1: Current or Proposed UUA Purpose statement

Response	Number	Survey %	Member %
Current Article II Purpose	8	21.6%	2.6%
Proposed Article II Purpose	29	78.4%	9.5%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II Purpose:

- Don't like the language "transform the world through our liberating love."
- I am not comfortable with the new proposed language in total. I think there is room for compromise in any new amendment.
- I prefer that the UUA serves the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, rather than to serve as a activist social institution that guides the local congregations. The new emphasis on community and activism is not something I wish to be involved in. I am more concerned about a spiritual search for meaning than in political action.
- Correct communication
- The UUA has not handled their current charter well. Expanding the charter would be a mistake.
- The ending of the new one is just too silly
- The term "liberating love" is ambiguous and requires development.
- The new statement included both "primary purposes," which expand the role of the UUA and its "purpose" to "engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating Love." Too many purposes, the organization is losing focus and muddling the purposes of the central organizational body and UUism. The phrase "liberating Love" is arrogant and ripe for abuse and manipulation.

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II Purpose:

- I like the more outward focused emphasis on justice and advancing UU values in the world, as well as leadership development and faith formation
- It sounds like we will be more active in sharing UU values outside our congregations
- Doesn't use the word corporate and more specific. Don't like Transforming the world sentence
- The words Action and Love
- The revision anticipates the future; while the current language does not.

- The language is more modern/updated and more closely captures what the UUA should be doing.
- I like its clarity
- It clarifies the role of the UUA as being mission driven. The current version makes it sound like a handmaiden of the congregations. The current version feels safer and less challenging but that's not necessarily a good thing in a religious charge; it's more appropriate for a corporate charge. Religions generally call people to do hard things.
- Organizational is better than "corporate," as it sounds less legalistic and more about all levels of the structure of the UUA. The new purposes are broader and more inclusive, and I like that they include "healing historic injustices" - I assume both within the UUA and in the world.
- I like the fact that they say they want to actively work to include us in transforming the world through liberating love. I hope that our re materials and worship materials start to show that
- Reads as more energetic and purposeful
- I think it encompasses what the UUA should strive for better than the old one.
- The first paragraph is more specific and more focused on justice and values. I'm not thrilled with the " transformation of the world through liberating Love" statement seems overreaching and maybe even chauvinistic
- Having been part of 5 UU congregations, I have a strong identity as a UU, beyond any individual congregation. I see the proposed wording as offering a more active and inclusive role for the UUA. I see this as a way to strengthen our work toward wholeness, particularly in the areas of antiracism and LGBT issues.
- It's a bit stronger in meaning and action.
- It feels more mission driven
- I like organizational powers better than corporate powers. I also prefer assist, support and foster.
- I am not pleased with all the language but it contains a more modern and complete description of what UU is trying to do I think
- It has deeper meaning and gets to the heart of our purpose.
- More thoughtful and detailed answers
- More detailed and specific, reference to transformation is valuable.
- Reflects the needs of todays world more specifically .
- It encompasses a spectrum of purposes that sound more lofty, weighty and noble and less mechanical. I especially dislike the use of the words "corporate powers" in the current statement, although I would prefer "organizational structure" or "organizational framework" to "organizational power" in the proposed statement. The word "power" has a bad taste to it. We are not about power since we are not forcing beliefs on people.

Question 2: Current Principles or proposed Values for the UUA

Question	Number	Survey %	Member %
Current Article II Principles	12	32.4%	3.9%
Proposed Article II Values	25	67.6%	8.2%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II Principles:

- It is a "hook" that prospective members can readily identify with. For the most part, don't have a particular problem with the newer language in the mix, but keep the Principles foremost.
- They suit me better and I don't think the foundation of love speaks to all of us the way the current principles do.
- I think that the principles describe and help organize my behavior. While the values of the new revision are so vague and do not call to me .
- The current one is simple & straightforward. The new seems like an excuse for seeing how fancy you can get.
- The values statements are overly wordy and vapid.
- Because the language is elegant and historic and concise and important. There are verbs. It invokes action. I would change Principles to Values and leave this beautiful language alone.
- The new stuff is not too silly, but too long
- The proposed replacement is excessively wordy.
- The current 7 Principles (8 for UUCC) are succinct and the the content, if not the specific words, are memorable and allow for interpretation, inspiration, and growth. There was one covenant: "We covenant to affirm and promote...." The 8th Principle was much longer and more directive in its content and tone. The new Values are full of definitions, action statements, and covenants. The full contents of the Values is NOT memorable and the Commission recognized that in presenting a graphic with just the 7 words and Love. The content has already been minimized before even being approved. And yet its covenants and verbs are being promoted as vital to UUism. We've been shown that words from the 7 Principles are in the new Article II (Values and elsewhere), but the meaning has been changed. For example "compassion in human relationships" has become "compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources." That's not at all equivalent. And "Love" and "compassion" are not the same thing. One last point: people have pointed to "values" as being so much better than "principles" and yet the words, along with ethics and morals, are synonyms. Do UUs really not currently have values? That's just not true.
- Way too much blah blah blah in the proposed version

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II Values:

- I think its time for a change and feel that the values are a short way of expressing what we're about while the explanations give meaning and context to them

- I trust that the process that has created this document reflects current priorities and sensibilities. It seems more community rather than individual based. I don't agree with every way that it is written. I like centering "love" but wish that it was defined in the document.
- Mostly because they are Values but too wordy and some seem duplicative
- We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression.
- I like the updated version and think it more closely aligns with our mission as UUs.
- Clearer and more robust, centered in love
- I think it's time for a revision and want to move forward with the process. I like the emphasis on covenanting congregation to congregation. I do find them very wordy and perhaps overly complex. While I'm not sure how to improve the stated values, I definitely think they could use more work.
- I like the current principles very much, too, but the proposed values feel stronger, and are more inclusive.
- Overall, I like the new language. I especially like that we include generosity - it is such a powerful word.
- There's a lot in the principles that speaks to me, but the parts that I most care about have been carried over to the new text.
- Progress
- I love the diagram. And I like the values.
- I really appreciate love at the center!
- Seems more directed
- The proposed wording incorporates everything from our current principles, but the wording is more dynamic and immediate. I think it brings a greater sense of empowerment to actively work together.
- I feel it will be easier for people to remember the one word values, and then those can serve as the links to remembering content that mostly covers the 8 principles. These feel more grounded in the importance of community as central to our faith, rather than an individual seeker of ethical living. I like how there are three levels - the word, a bit more explanation about what the word means, and then more content, so people can decide how much to read based on their time availability.
- It's not enough to agree on our values; we must also put them into action. I think stating our commitment as a community to act on those values is an improvement on the 7 principles. Pledging to embody the values encourages us to aspire to live out those values. Love should be at the center of our values and inform every thought we think, every word we speak, and all our actions. I love the diagram with Love at its center, like a hub from which all the spokes radiate outward to bring love and goodness into the world. It succinctly shows the world what we are about.
- Emphasis on the power of LOVE
- More detailed and articulated better
- Love as the centerpiece of our organization speaks volumes about what we are about. The drawing is amazing and comes as close to summing up the heart and soul of what we do and why we do it. If we live loving lives, we sow the seeds of harmony in our community.

Question 3: Current Sources or proposed Inspirations for the UUA

Question	Number	Survey %	Member %
Current Article II Sources	17	45.9%	5.6%
Proposed Article II Inspirations	20	54.1%	6.6%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II Sources:

- I understand the problem of being specific about sources when there are so many, but feel that the new statement shortchanges the depth of our sources.
- I feel the current sources will help newcomers understand the breadth of our influences more completely. The proposed one feels pretty dry. I understand that there is the issue of not wanting to leave anything out of a long list, and it is simpler to make a general statement.
- Current Sources are inclusive and specific. The new almost seems like a throwaway in comparison.
- The proposed sources are okay, too, but I like the current Sources for their richness and depth.
- I would prefer to see text that's somewhere between the two options. There's a lot of good stuff in the list of sources, but I also like the simplicity of the inspirations. But I can't pick both.
- I like the specificity, even though there are sources that don't speak to me.
- I like the expansive list that show the breadth of our "inspiration". I am glad that the revision added this statement "We respect the histories, contexts and cultures in which they were created and are currently practiced." but it doesn't go far enough. The urge to purge the words of "dead white men" without regard to the actual wisdom is appalling. The spirit behind the revision is a form of cancel culture.
- The proposed version seems vague, over general and does not reflect our history.
- This gives a good background description of UUism that is missing in the proposed changes.
- Now, you went the other way. The current is strong & straightforward. New new is written like an afterthought.
- It is not done better here because it is shorter. It reads like the revision doesn't care about the history of UU.
- More detailed and articulates better
- We need more detail to explain why we have chosen the sources that we have
- Clarifies that we are open to being informed and inspired by a variety of source.
- The updated language lacks any historical or other context or guidance.
- The proposed sources really doesn't say much of anything.
- I found the current version compelling up to a point, but the language seems a bit outdated or too narrow in places. The proposed version is too vague. There is more to like in the current version than in the proposed version. But the current version still needs some tweaking to make it work well.

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II

Inspirations:

- Concise
- simpler
- Succinct and to the point. The old language will not speak to newer generations.
- More inclusive
- It is concise and accurately describes my experience of Unitarian Universalism.
- I like the broader language in the proposed amendment.
- I like that we are no longer singling out specific traditions, but are now drawing from all traditions
- Not limited to Jewish, Christian, Humanist, and earth centered. (But also overly terse)
- Simplifies and directs
- My adult children liked the new language better. We are trying to bring in new young adults and need to be mindful of what appeals to them.
- I don't think there is a need to list the sources that inspire us, because inevitably some may be left out. Stating that we are inspired by sacred and secular understandings that help us to live into our values is clear and concise.
- More concise
- More succinct

Question 4: Current or proposed UUA Inclusion statement

Question	Number	Survey %	Member %
Current Article II Inclusion Statement	12	32.4%	4.0%
Proposed Article II Inclusion Statement	25	67.6%	8.3%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II Inclusion statement:

- New one has a sense of colonialism. The overweening "WE" deigns to accept others.
- Dont like that we welcome only those who share our values. Many we welcome dont know our values and may not share all the values
- Concerned about welcoming only those who share our values - goes against the worth and dignity of every person.
- "I am truly troubled by this statement "We strive to be an association of congregations that truly welcome all persons who share our values. We commit to being an association of congregations that empowers and enhances everyone's participation, especially those with historically marginalized identities."
- because what follows later is that we can not be in covenant with those who do not share our values. A creedal test is being developed.. and it is not clear "who get to decide if we share values" I prefer the original more inclusive sense of belonging. "
- I don't agree with the restated principles
- The new one strikes me as an exercise in wordsmithing. Does it really need changed?
- Everyone means everyone. It is said. All are recognized.
- It says the same thing as the proposed with fewer words
- The addition of welcoming "all persons who share our values" turns the "Inclusion" statement into a statement of exclusivity. Choosing to be a UU has always been about personal discernment and many people find that UU is not for them. Are we going to start sitting in judgement on who "shares our values?"
- Everyone' means 'everyone'. We shouldn't have to explain it. We should just do it.

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II Inclusion statement:

- I think that we need some common ground for people who claim to be UU's and sharing the values seems to be a low but meaningful bar. Also like supporting marginalized communities
- I was trained in the "null hypothesis" theory that if you are not actively working against the status quo, the status quo wins, so I support the addition of the sentence about historically oppressed groups. I also understand there are financial and legal reasons for having to specify "within our values" as a boundary for our faith.
- More specific and more inclusive.

- Inclusion of "shared values" is important though I can also see how the term could be used in problematic ways such as an attempt to enforce political orthodoxy. Still, most churches have some sort of confession of faith. Perhaps there are spiritual communities without such I am unaware of but I imagine they would be embedded in a shared culture or have some other unifying thread.
- The addition of "who share our values" is critically important. Also instead of merely "striving" for inclusivity, the new version has us committing to it.
- I like the fact that we're saying we are welcoming those who share our values, not everyone. I also like the fact that we are saying we are empowering and enhancing everyone's participation, especially those with historically marginalized identities. It will be up to us to figure out how to do this, but I think it is important, whether it be people of color, LGBTQ+ women, abused people, etc.
- It's more inclusive and I like that it talks about shared values.
- It is a stronger statement.
- The proposed change centers marginalized people, which we, in our sense of privilege, have failed to do in the past.
- It is important for our faith to define our boundaries and that would be by our values.
- I don't have any strong preference for either, but I have no problem with the additions in the proposed version. Overall I support the proposed version. It has more depth and clarity, and calls us to act on our values from a place of love.
- I think that making clear our preference for people who share our values is more honest.
- Details better
- They are both fine
- Like the share our values part.
- Brings attention to the work undone.

Question 5: Current or proposed UUA Freedom of Belief Statement

Question	Number	Survey %	Member %
Current Article II Freedom of Belief statement	3	8.1%	1.0%
Proposed Article II Freedom of Belief statement	34	91.9%	11.2%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II Freedom of Belief Statement:

- the original is a simple statement of freedom of belief. this new statement "Congregations may establish statements of purpose, covenants, and bonds of union so long as they do not require that members adhere to a particular creed." is a late revision because the original revision was clear that if you don't share our values you can not be in covenant. The writers of the revision got a lot of feed back . I am worried that this a just a band aide to cover up the intolerance felt by the writers of the revision for the Old Guard Unitarian universalist. There is a lot a discomfort with old traditional liberals that is at the heart of these revision. I am not in alignment with the new order.
- I'm sorry, but the advantage of the new is escaping me.
- The new one is too wordy

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II Freedom of Belief Statement:

- I like that freedom of belief is stated and that congregational parity is upheld
- It is easier to understand
- New is more specific.
- Clearer and direct
- More positively stated.
- Clearer and more to the point.
- Seems to be a more positive and clearer statement of the same thing.
- The proposed version is more clear.
- I think being able to have a covenant in a congregation is very important. People may have their individual beliefs, but in order to live in a community, sometimes you have to give up something in terms of behavior.
- The proposed version uses simpler language, so it's easier to understand. It doesn't feel like a lawyer wrote it.
- More consistent with my understanding of universalism
- It's more clear
- Not much difference.
- I think this update of the wording makes it clearer.
- The new language is clearer, but I am not sure that a lot of people know what a "creed" is.
- Language is more easily understood.
- More straightforward
- Better and more clearly said here
- clearer

- Better wording
- Put more plainly
- Parts of both are preferable to either as presented.
- Ironically the one thing this updated Article II gets right is clarifying the Freedom of Belief statement AFTER limiting welcoming to "all persons who share our values." So no "particular creed" except for the "values" thing?
- It's clearer, more direct, and has fewer words than the original.
- creedal test has to go

Question 6: Current or Proposed Article II

Question	Number	Survey %	Member %
Keep the current Article II	12	32.4%	3.9%
Adopt the proposed Article II	25	67.6%	8.2%
Did not participate	267	0.0%	89.0%

Comments from people who support keeping the current Article II:

- While I find some of the new language agreeable, I am not ready to adopt sweeping change without further discussion.
- It works for me
- For all the reason I have stated in this document. I prefer the old language. But like the old language I am old. I am a traditional white female liberal, who has been doing social good all my life both as a paid professional and because of my personal belief. But the "new generation" coming out of minister schools dismiss and quite frankly judge the past as not enough. Across the country the term "white privilege" has been replaced with "white supremacy culture" . Race division is being reinforce as race essentialism... the roles of class and culture is not being considered. I suspect that the revision will pass. In part because most people don't care what the UUA does. They join a congregation for community with that congregation. most young people do not do church. they are busy, their kids have sports practice on sunday. most young people do not volunteer like their parents and grandparents did... so who is going to run these churches,, we run by volunteers. My congregation has had few public discussion about these changes. There has been no congregational vote.
- I just don't see a real advantage. I may be speaking from a position of privilege -(59M), but I just don't see it.
- Too many problems with the revision
- Change for change sake is not helpful and can be harmful and confusing. I am in favor of adopting the 8th "value" and calling the Principles Values. The language of the existing "principles" is powerful and poetic and is so much better than what is proposed.
- It's better than the alternative. There was no reason to change the other one in the first place
- For reasons already stated.
- No one has yet articulated why this drastic change is needed. Yes, Article II is overdue for a "review," but that does not mandate taking a sledge hammer to our foundations. Is UU an inherently racist faith with its racism baked into the 7 Principles? Will adopting the new Article II fix our racism problem? I've heard people say that the proposed language has improved over the course of its revisions. Is "it's better than it was" a good enough reason to adopt it? Is "It's new" a good enough reason? Is a colorful graphic a good enough reason? UUs have been doing good work under the existing Article II and would continue to do so. Changing for the sake of change will not supercharge our faith or congregation.
- All the reasons I said in my previous answers

Comments from people who support adopting the proposed Article II Values:

- It's time for change if UUism is to be relevant for the next decades. The changes may not be perfect but I believe they help clarify our commitment to justice and community by using conventional language to remind us of our accountability to each other
- Overall, the new values structure may be more inviting to younger generations, which we need to attract to not die out. It also centers love and justice more actively.
- With some changes it is an improvement
- For all the previous reasons given.
- For all the reasons I mentioned in the responses above! We need to move our faith forward for the next generation of UUs or we risk being left behind because of archaic, outdated, and not meaningful (for the next generation) language.
- Removes what I perceive as a proscription that governments worldwide should adopt a form of governance modeled on the U.S. Clarifies the role of the UUA. The centrality of covenant to our faith is affirmed. The shared values go beyond affirming a belief to covenants about how we as a community will act as a result of shared values. The principles are beautiful and inspirational once you get used to them.
- The proposed version highlights the need to fight injustice, and it recognizes structural and organizational hierarchies (including racism) that have plagued the UUA and some congregations. Beyond that, rote repetition leads to stasis. Although I like the current principles very much, I think that having a new set of values to reflect on will help us see more clearly our values and principles, and help us focus on our movement toward equitable goals. Seeing even familiar things (such as our principles for equity and inclusion, environmental justice, etc.) in new ways can help people re-commit to those goals, or see them with fresh eyes, and that in turn can lead to reinvigoration.
- I think from my previous answers you've seen that I've read the background and the changes and I think they've made progress since the 1985 Article 2. I think that focusing love at the center of the Values is a very positive place to be. Thanks for doing the survey
- I think my view of UUism is more aligned to the "values" than to the principles. But in the final analysis, the words have changed, but not much else. Both versions are adequate I expect to live to see Article II revised another time and I can't get too excited about word changes. My personal values will not be affected either way.
- More directed
- We, as a religious body, have failed so far in efforts to undo historic patriarchal systems. The new wording and emphasis gives us a chance to get to the heart of who we are and who we aspire to be.
- I have witnessed a lot of effort go into taking in feedback for how these should look, seen that feedback be implemented, and I believe overall these changes will help us with recruitment. I am concerned about the cost of having to reprint things!
- It has more depth and clarity, and calls us to act on our values from a place of love. I am happy that love is at the center of our values and actions.
- Better articulates our principles and values
- The strengths of the proposed article outweigh the weaknesses and the statements of purpose and values are strong and impressive.

GA Topic Preferences:

Congregation Engagement	21
Religious Education	17
Membership Growth	14
Leadership Training	13
Justice	11
Stewardship	9
Worship	8
Celebrations	6
Governance	6
[blank]	5
Environmental activism	1
Tending Covenant Teams and managing conflict	1