

UUCD Personnel Policy

Appendix A

SUBJECT: Staff who are also Members of the Congregation

Staff who are members of the congregation face a unique set of challenges. Because a member of a congregation has a different role, a distinct set of responsibilities and enjoys a different set of privileges than an employee in the same congregation, it is not surprising that on occasion an individual who wears both hats will experience a conflict between their responsibilities as a member of the staff and their privileges as a member of the congregation.

When a member of the congregation joins the paid staff of the church their relationship to the congregation and to the minister changes. The congregation becomes their work place, the other members become volunteers to be managed or members to be served, or leaders whose instructions need to be followed. Whenever a staff member is in the building, congregation members will come to them with needs or concerns – making it difficult to be “off-duty” and simply to enjoy the fellowship and spiritual support that had been theirs earlier. The minister – who one hopes had been an inspiration and pastoral support to the member, may serve as supervisor to the staff member. (Do you confide as deeply in your supervisor as you do in your pastor?) Because of these circumstances it is not uncommon for a member of the congregation who joins the paid staff of the church to, in a sense, lose both their church and their minister.

Congregations are typically in agreement about the privileges and responsibilities of membership, although we don't discuss these things often. Members are expected to think for themselves, participate in the democratic life of the congregation, speak their minds advocate for their points of view and vote their conscience. They are to have direct access to their elected representatives on the Board of Trustees and other church leadership, they may expect pastoral care and support from the minister. In addition members are expected to attend church, volunteer time to the congregation and its projects, and support the church financially. It is assumed that members are broadly in alignment with the congregation's UU values, principles and theologies ... and have a primary allegiance to the congregation or the association.

Congregations have a very different set of expectations for their employees. Members of the staff are paid to accomplish particular sets of tasks at the direction of the minister, the Board of trustees and various committees or supervisors. While their expertise, training, and accumulated experience frequently means that staff members actually train and equip the volunteers with whom they work and who may in fact supervise them, staff members need to understand that they have been hired to serve the congregation in implementing its vision and programs. It is rare that staff members are hired to implement their own vision. Their loyalty needs to be to the organization as a whole and to the staff leadership. Staff members, whether congregational members or not, have the right to be treated with

dignity, to be granted appropriate privacy/confidentiality, to be compensated fairly, and to have recourse to appropriate representation.

In addition members of the staff have access to privileged information, some of it pastoral, some of it financial, some of it political and because of this and their training may have considerable role authority and power in the congregation. For this reason it is often inappropriate for members of the congregation who are on staff to exercise their full rights of membership – speaking in congregational meetings, advocating for a personal point of view, etc. For that reason some congregations do not hire members or ask members to resign their membership for the duration of their employment.

One other boundary to note: When a member of the congregation joins the paid staff, the family members of that staff person typically become ineligible to serve on certain committees of the congregation that might have connection with the staff member – the Board of Trustees, personnel, finance and the relevant supervisory committees.

When a member of the congregation joins the paid staff of the congregation all of these things need to be discussed and explained.

Every effort has been made to insure that our UU principles and values are embodied in this personnel policy and that all employees are treated with utmost respect and dignity. That said, when a member of the congregation accepts a position as a member of the paid staff, all the requirements of the personnel policy will pertain and should conflict arise between the responsibilities of the staff role and the rights of role of a member, the responsibilities of the staff role supersede the rights of the member role.

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Minister, Personnel Committee & Officers	1/27/09		A1

Distributed to staff on _____

Signatures: