

**Article I: Name of Organization**

This organization shall be known as the "Unity Institute Student Association" (UISA).

**Article II: Who We are Called to Be**

**Vision:** We celebrate a thriving world that works for all.

**Mission:** Centered in God, we inspire, shape and nurture the community life of the Unity Institute student body.

**Core Values:** Spirit-Led, Joy, Inclusiveness, Love, Abundance

**Intentions:**

- We are a community in which each student can reach their full potential.
- We are a catalyst for evolving spiritual consciousness.
- We are a bold voice and creative force in Unity and beyond.

**Article III: Membership**

All students who are currently admitted to—but not yet graduated from—the Unity Institute Ministry and Religious Studies Program.

**Article IV: Organization**

UISA's organizational structure is based on a holarchy of interconnected circles as diagrammed in Appendix 1. UISA's system of governance is called Holacracy as defined in Appendix 2.

**Article V: General UISA Circle**

The aim of the General UISA Circle is the mission as described in Article II (above). The Executive Team, Circle Coordinators, Circle Representatives and Unity Institute Committee Representatives are members of the General UISA Circle. The circle will elect a facilitator who must attend the UISA facilitator training and is accountable for facilitating certain meetings as described in Appendix 2 and a secretary who is accountable for recording policies and decisions (including tracking the roles and accountabilities assigned to members of this circle).

**Section 1: Executive Team**

The Executive Team consists of four members elected by the student body: the First Lead Coordinator, the Second Lead Coordinator, the Finance Coordinator and the Communications Coordinator. The terms of office are for one year beginning February 1<sup>st</sup> and ending January 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Section 2: Circle Coordinators**

The Student Life Circle, the Evolving Consciousness Circle, and the Innovative Partnership Circle shall each have a Circle Coordinator elected by the student body whose term of office is the same as the Executive Team.

**Section 3: Unity Institute Committee Representatives**

These representatives are elected by the General UISA Circle using the Integrative Election Process as defined in Appendix 3. The terms of office are for one year beginning March 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on the last day of February.

**Section 4: Circle Representatives**

These representatives are elected for a one year period by the Circle Members using the Integrative Election Process as defined in Appendix 3.

**Article VI: Student Life Circle, Evolving Consciousness Circle, Innovative Partnership Circle**

Each of these circles will have a Circle Coordinator who is accountable for the achievement of the Circle's aim. A Circle Representative is elected by each circle and is accountable for ensuring a supportive environment to achieve the aim. Each circle will also elect a facilitator who must attend the UISA facilitator training and is accountable for facilitating certain meetings as described in Appendix 2 and a secretary who is accountable for recording circle policies and decisions (including tracking the roles and accountabilities assigned to members of the circle). These elections are conducted using the Integrative Election Process described in Appendix 3. Each circle will create teams as needed to fulfill the aim of the circle.

**Section 1: Student Life Circle**

The aim of this Circle is to support the UISA intention: We are a community in which each student can reach their full potential.

**Section 2: Evolving Consciousness Circle**

The aim of this Circle is to support the UISA intention: We are a catalyst for evolving spiritual consciousness.

**Section 3: Innovative Partnership Circle**

The aim of this Circle is to support the UISA intention: We are a bold voice and creative force in Unity and beyond.

**Article VII: Elections of Executive Team and Circle Coordinators**

UISA shall hold an annual election in January of each year, coordinated by the Communications Coordinator.

**Section 1: Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is formed by the General UISA Circle in October using the Integrative Election Process described in Appendix 3. It consists of three people not planning to run for office: one representative from the Executive Team, one representative from the General UISA Circle, and one student body representative. They are accountable for finding nominees whose skills are in alignment with the established roles and accountabilities.

No person can be nominated without their prior consent. More than one nominee for each position is recommended. Nominations shall be communicated to the Communications Coordinator no later than December 1.

**Section 2: Eligibility**

All nominees must have successfully completed at least one full term (10-weeks) of class work before the election. An individual may not be nominated for more than one office and may not succeed self in the same office.

**Section 3: Nominee Town Hall Meeting**

The Communications Coordinator will facilitate a meeting to introduce all nominees prior to the election.

**Section 4: Elections**

Elections are conducted by ballot and are facilitated by the Nominating Committee. To resolve a tie, the Communications Coordinator will call a special topic meeting of the General UISA Circle and the affected candidates. The tie will be resolved using the Integrative Election Process (as defined in Appendix 3).

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### **Section 5: Absentee Ballots**

Absentee ballots are accepted for any elected position. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for issuing the ballots and ensuring they are included in the final count.

### **Section 6: Removal**

Any person elected by the student body may be removed from office for cause by a 2/3 vote (excluding the person considered for removal) of the General UISA Circle at a mandatory special topic meeting, called with a minimum of 24 hours notice. Removal should be considered as a last resort of personnel management, after means of cooperative negotiation have been exhausted, or in cases of egregious conduct and/or dereliction of duties. The individual considered for removal is highly encouraged, but not required, to be present for removal to proceed.

The procedure for this meeting will include:

- The General UISA Circle member calling for removal will have up to five minutes to state his/her case.
- If present, the individual considered for removal will have up to 10 minutes to speak on his/her behalf. After which the individual will leave the room.
- Other General UISA Circle members are given an opportunity to speak for up to 2 minutes.
- A vote will be called and the results immediately communicated to the individual affected and the entire student body.

### **Section 7: Vacancies**

Should any elected person be unable to fulfill their term for any cause, by removal or resignation, the General UISA Circle will elect a replacement to fulfill the balance of the term using the Integrative Election Process as described in Appendix 3.

## **Article VIII: Executive Team**

All Executive Team Members are expected to model the vision, mission, intentions and core values of UISA. They must also adhere to these By-Laws, UISA established procedures, and ensure updates to By-Laws and procedures as needed. The role of each team member is as described below, and the General Circle Secretary will keep track of the current list of accountabilities assigned to each role.

### **Section 1: First Lead Coordinator**

The First Lead Coordinator is the chief executive officer of the organization. He/she serves as the voice of the organization, representing UISA to Unity Institute and the Association of Unity Churches International. This person is accountable for ongoing implementation of the UISA mission, vision and core values, as well as ongoing implementation of the holacratic governance structure and coordinating ongoing meeting cadence for the Executive Team and General Circle, and other accountabilities as assigned.

### **Section 2: Second Lead Coordinator**

The Second Lead Coordinator is the chief operating officer, accountable for coordinating the training of all facilitators and integrating the integrative decision making process (Appendix 2) into all student meetings and other accountabilities as assigned. In the absence of the First Lead Coordinator, the Second Lead Coordinator will facilitate the UISA General Circle. In the event of a vacancy in the position of First Lead Coordinator, the Second Lead Coordinator will temporarily assume the duties of that office until the position has been filled.

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### **Section 3: Communications Coordinator**

The Communications Coordinator is accountable for the development and maintenance of strong external and internal UISA organizational communications, working closely with the First Lead Coordinator to keep information current and relevant. This person is also accountable for working with the secretary of each circle to ensure accurate and current record keeping of policies and decisions (including tracking the roles and accountabilities assigned to members of their circle) and other accountabilities as assigned.

### **Section 4: Finance Coordinator**

The Finance Coordinator is accountable for leading the UISA budgeting process, managing UISA funds in accordance with its financial policies and procedures, and the preparation and distribution of monthly activity statements and other accountabilities as assigned.

### **Article IX: Circle Coordinator**

All Circle Coordinators are members of the General UISA Circle and are expected to model the vision, mission, intentions and core values of UISA. They must also adhere to these By-Laws. Accountabilities shall include but are not limited to:

- Leading their circle to achieve the Circle's aim.
- Conducting elections for circle representative, facilitator and secretary using the Integrative Election Process (as described in Appendix 3).
- Assigning roles and accountabilities, as required.

### **Article X: Circle Representative**

All Circle Representatives are the voice of their respective circles and attend General UISA Circle meetings as needed. They are accountable for ensuring a supportive environment to achieve their circle's aim and are expected to model the vision, mission, intentions and core values of UISA. They must also adhere to these By-Laws.

### **Article XI: Unity Institute Committee Representatives**

Unity Institute has standing ad hoc committees of the Academic Governance Council whose by-laws require student representation. These representatives are members of the General UISA Circle. Their roles and accountabilities shall be maintained in UISA policies.

### **Article XII: Meeting Structure**

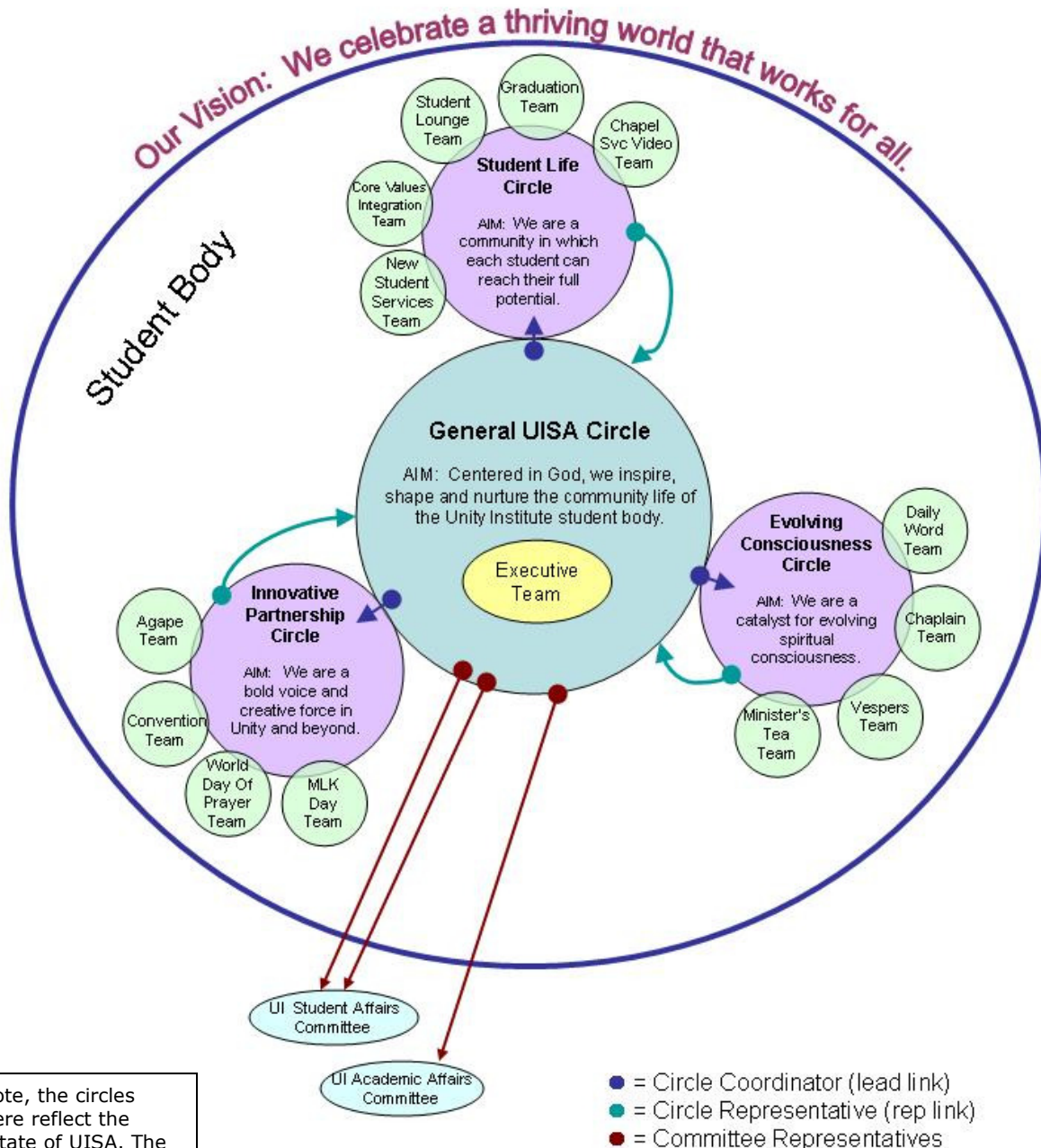
Meetings are held in alignment with the holacratic governance system as defined in Appendix 2.

### **Article XIII: Changes to the By-Laws**

Proposals to amend, revise, or change these By-Laws are considered during a Governance Meeting of the General UISA Circle. In order to take effect, any proposed changes must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the UISA membership participating in the vote. Notice of such vote, with detailed proposal, shall be issued and communicated to the student body at least fifteen (15) days prior to the vote. Any changes must be communicated to the student body in a timely fashion.

Appendices can be amended by the General UISA Circle and do not require a vote of the student body. Any changes must be communicated to the student body in a timely fashion.

**Appendix 1: Diagram of Organizational Structure**



Please note, the circles shown here reflect the current state of UISA. The number circles and their names are subject to change as new intentions, aims, and needs of UISA arise.

Each Circle will include a number of teams, each with a Team Leader (lead link) and some will also have a team representative (rep link). Each circle will also elect their own secretary and facilitator.

**Appendix 2: UISA Governance System**

UISA's system of governance is called Holacracy. Holacracy is a spiritual practice of governance that integrates all perspectives and ensures that the wisdom of the group comes through, in creating "workable" solutions for all concerns.

Holacracy represents a shift from hierarchical organizational structure to holarchy. The organizational structure is a holarchy of circles, rather than a top-down organization. Circles transcend and include other circles. Each circle has a breadth of focus or an explicit aim (purpose) that fulfills the aim of circle it supports (the meta-circle). Each circle self-organizes to: pursue its own aim; perform its own leading, doing, and measuring; and maintain its own memory system. This focus on circles ensures that within and between circles, everyone's voices are heard and concerns that are voiced are integrated.

Holacracy is based on the principle of dynamic steering, instead of predicting and controlling what is to happen. This takes present-moment awareness organizationally – leading to a much more conscious organization. With dynamic steering, organizations experiment and adapt, making them more agile. They hold their aims in mind and steer continuously to them. Organizations stay present, get real data, and adapt as they go. This means that the organization will come up with workable solutions as they go along, not the best possible solution which would have taken a lot more study and time to develop. In this way, the organization is constantly steering in the right direction as more experiences or data become available. Dynamic steering aligns the organization with what's "requisite" (what's needed now) and drives the organization to continually evolve into the future.

Dynamic steering involves an integrative decision making process in which present tensions are all that matter. All perspectives include some valuable information, and effective dynamic steering requires that organizations integrate it all...but only when it becomes present and paramount. Doing this allows the right path to emerge as needed.

Dynamic steering is not about seeking consensus; it is not about personal feelings - not about being for or against anything. It is about integrating the perspectives of the roles within the organization, not the individuals' perspectives. Each individual is accountable for certain roles, and they present the perspectives of those roles to the whole circle for decision making. No one is able to block decisions; they just add more perspectives to integrate. Decision making is not done in the conventional sense of the term; but emerge from those in the circle through a listening and integration process. Decisions involve the integration of all perspectives into workable solutions. Refer to the section, 'Integrative Decision Making' below.

One important point about integrative decision making is that any issue can be revisited at any time. Another is that, if needed, the organization can fall back to predict and control decision making, but only when necessary and only if there is not a way to steer dynamically in a certain situation. Finally, there is opportunity for individual action when needed, if there is no other way to handle a situation.

Holacracy also involves the development and operation of explicit roles and accountabilities within the organization, and it includes core practices for meetings.

**Integrative Decision Making Process**

Holacracy acknowledges the wisdom of everyone present and takes egos out of the decision making process as the circle works together to make the decision collaboratively. This happens through the following facilitated process: 1) when a proposal is presented to a circle, each person is given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. 2) After clarity has been achieved, each person has an opportunity to state their reaction to the proposal. 3) The proposal may then be amended by the person who brought it to the circle to clarify it further. 4) Each person is then given an opportunity to bring forth objections to the proposal (e.g., it is incomplete, etc). 5) Objections that

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are now-focused (not attempting to predict the future) are listed and then integrated into the proposal through an open discussion which results in an amended proposal. 6) Once all objections are integrated, each person has another opportunity to review the amended proposal and bring up any other objections to it. 7) The integration of objections is repeated and again opportunity is given for any more objections to be surfaced. 8) The decision to accept the amended proposal is made once there are no more objections from any of the circle members.

### **Circle Meetings**

#### **Governance**

Each of the four circles meets regularly for governance to create clarity around roles and accountabilities to break down the work of the circle; to refine policies and processes; and to clarify authorities or put limits around delegated control. Governance meetings provide a forum for the circle to continuously evolve its approach to getting work done operationally. For these meetings, a facilitator and a secretary are elected to serve the circle in these roles.

Governance seeks to clarify the circle's "roles and accountabilities" through the integrative decision making process. Circles define accountabilities in the governance process which are then grouped into "roles." Roles are filled and executed by circle members. Accountabilities focus on what the roles (filled by circle members) are accountable for. Clarity in roles and accountabilities leads to enhanced collaboration and communication. Also, in this way, the circle empowers its members to do the circle's work and make specific decisions in service of that work.

Governance is not accomplished only to address specific instances. Specifics of any situation (organizational "tension") are used to inform; they are feedback to create a structure that will support the organization in achieving its aim. This feedback drives improvement (circle learning).

#### **Strategic**

Circles will meet periodically to focus on big-picture issues and to discuss strategy for achieving their mission and intentions. These meetings are held on a quarterly or annual basis. Normally, the Lead Coordinator or Circle Coordinator will facilitate these meetings.

During strategic meetings, circles will develop plans for future action, including goals for achievement. These goals may lead to the creation of new teams within the circles. The creation of new teams will be implemented within the governance meetings of the circles through proposals that will be initiated from planning completed during strategic meetings.

#### **Operational**

Each of the circles will meet regularly to dynamically steer the organization, and to focus on operational projects and processes. There are two types of operational meetings: frequent stand up meeting (daily or as defined by the circle) and tactical meeting (weekly or as defined by the circle). Normally, the Circle Coordinator facilitates these meetings.

Stand up meetings are a shorter version of the tactical meeting, meant to ensure everyone is aware of what the others are doing or have accomplished and to cross-flow information. These meetings provide an opportunity for quick synchronization of all circle members and last only 15 minutes or less.

Tactical meetings are fast paced, efficient forums for weekly synchronization and operational management. They are grounded in what is happening in the current moment and next actions to help the circle complete the projects that will achieve its aim and enable circle members to adapt rapidly to an operational situation or environment. These meetings align circle members around the next actions each will take and remove any roadblocks to effective action.

### **Special Topic**

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Circles may hold special topic meetings to discuss a single topic that is important to achieving the circle's aim. All circle members and any others who have an input in the discussion of the special topic are invited to these meetings. Special topic meetings are only held when needed. Often, during tactical meetings, a topic is surfaced that will require additional time, over and above that which can be dedicated to it during a tactical meeting. These topics are the subject of special topic meetings. Normally, the circle member who is accountable for the special topic is the facilitator of such meetings.

**Appendix 3: Integrative Election Process**

The purpose of the Integrative Election Process is to select the person who is the “best fit” for a role through an open nomination process (not by secret ballot). It is not about who is most popular or who has been lobbying for the position. The election process occurs only after nominations have been made and open discussion of qualifications has been held. Just as with other decisions, these elections can be revisited at any time.

The circle’s facilitator will lead the process. The result is that all members of the circle will have a clear understanding of why each person was chosen and what will be expected of them. The following steps are provided to show the intention of the process, the actual steps used may vary:

1. The election process begins with a description of the role and accountabilities of the position.
2. Each circle member, including the facilitator of the circle, nominates the person they believe is the best fit for the role. Circle members may nominate themselves or someone else (the nominee must be present) or write “no nomination.” Nominations (person and reason why they are the best fit for the role, along with the name of the nominator) are written on slips of paper and then collected by the facilitator. The slips may be posted or transcribed on a flip chart for all to see.
3. The facilitator then reads the nominations: “(Name) you nominated ‘x’ because...”
4. After each person has had an opportunity to declare their nomination and reasoning, the facilitator asks if, based on all that has been heard so far, anyone wants to change their vote from one nominee to another. (At this point, the nominations are considered votes for the best fit.) Some people may change their support to another nominee based on ‘best fit’ and must state the reason for doing so. A person who did not initially make a nomination may want to do so, and again the facilitator will ask their reason.
5. The number of nominations received does not immediately determine the election results; the election is determined by the number and the reasons given for the nominee. Once each person has had an opportunity to adjust their votes, based on the reasons given, the facilitator will then determine the nominee with the most votes. The facilitator will state that there are some significant reasons why Nominee ‘x’ is the best fit and provide a summary of the reasoning. The facilitator will then propose that ‘x’ should fill the role and ask if there are any objections.
6. The facilitator then gives each person in the circle a chance to bring up any objections. Person ‘x’ may actually object to taking on the role. The facilitator will ask whether person “x” would be willing to try it, considering that any decision can be revisited at any time. If person ‘x’ says no, then the process as detailed here is repeated.
7. Based on the objections raised, the facilitator will ask if anyone wants to change their vote. As before, changes may include removing nominations or transferring their vote to another person based on what has been heard so far.
8. Based on any changes that have occurred, the facilitator, upon reevaluating the nominations and votes, will then again propose the person who is the best fit based on the inputs of the circle members. Another objection round is conducted. Once a nomination draws no objections, the facilitator then asks for a final round of support and the integrative election process is completed.

## Unity Institute Student Association By-Laws

These By-Laws (including the Appendices) were unanimously approved by the UISA membership participating in the vote held on December 2, 2009 and attested by:

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Becki Balok  
President

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Ray Nelson  
Vice President

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Linda Zupan  
Treasurer

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Janice Wuerfel  
Secretary

(A signed copy has been archived.)