

Congregational Input Meeting: ERUUF Bylaws Task Force – September 20, 2009

A key principle of Policy-Based Governance (P-BG) is accountability. The Congregation delegates authority to the Board and the Congregation holds the Board accountable through the election process. The Board delegates almost all of the responsibility for day-to-day management of the Fellowship to an executive authority (although there are clear limits set on the authority, referred to as “Executive Limitations”).

The nature of the “Executive” is one of the most flexible components of P-BG, and there are many models available within Unitarian Universalist congregations.

Today’s discussion will focus on two key areas: What sort of executive structure would we like, and how fixed do we want it to be? (i.e. how much should we codify in bylaws, how much in policies?) We’ll also discuss two questions left unresolved at previous group meetings.

We plan to prepare a draft set of bylaws for discussion in the next month, and will have another congregational input meeting to discuss them on October 25.

The Executive Team –

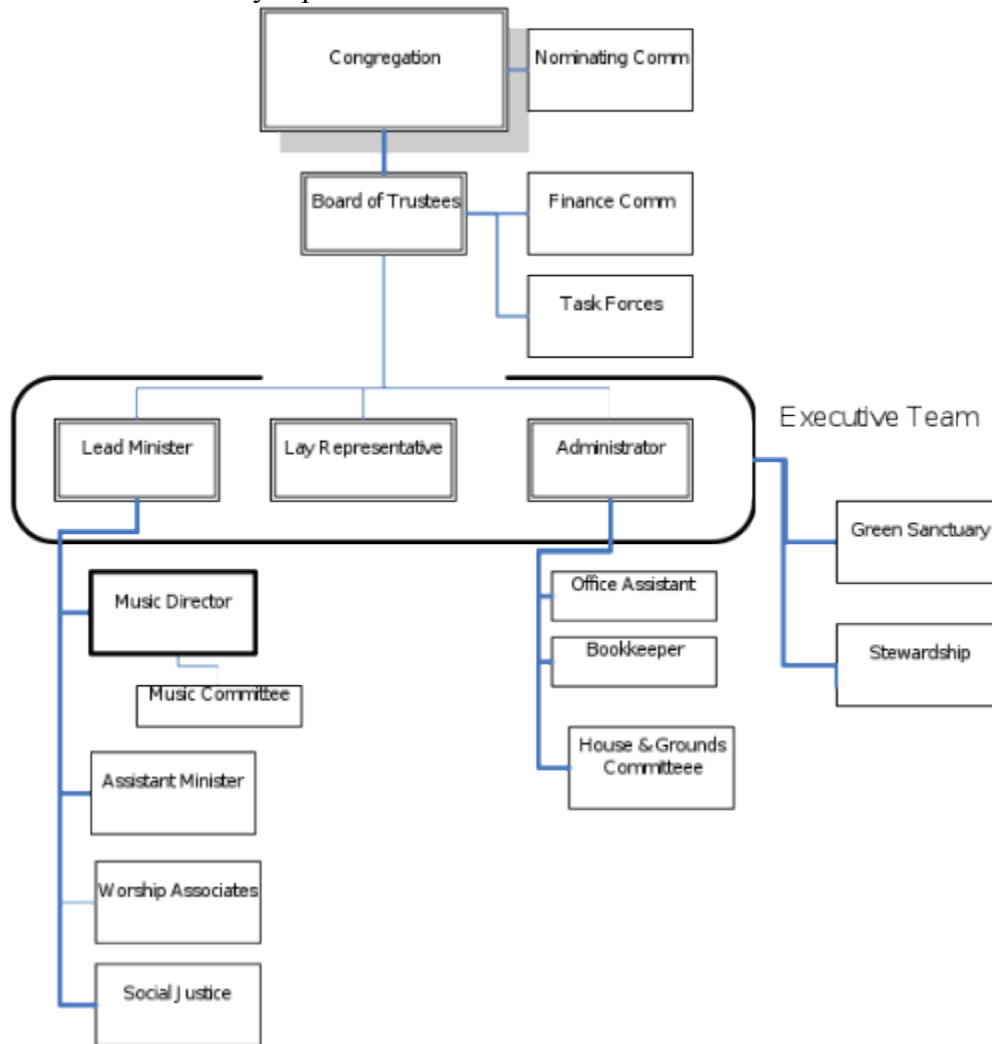
Most UU Congregations with some form of P-B G have an Executive Team. The variation comes in its composition and position in the organizational structure. A typical Executive Team would include the lead minister, the administrator, and a lay person (appointed by the Board, the Lead Minister, or both). ERUUF has used a model like this for several years. The team could be larger, and include other important constituencies (other called ministers, lay leaders filling specific positions such as the Stewardship Committee chair, Planning Committee chair, etc). Members on the Executive Team can be spelled out in the Bylaws or governance policies or be selected by the Board or the Lead Minister. If the position, eg. administrator, is dictated in the Bylaws or policies, the Lead Minister may still hire or choose the person to fill that position. Members of the Executive Team may report to the Lead Minister (the “Minister as CEO” model) or can report directly to the Board of Trustees about their area of responsibility (the “Executive Committee of Equals” model). In the latter case, policies need to clearly state the areas of responsibility for each member. Here are four example models:

I. “Executive Team of Equals” Model

In this model, each member of the Executive Team has areas of responsibility. For example, the Lead Minister could be responsible for worship and worship support (music, worship associates), pastoral care, etc. The Administrator might be responsible for facilities, office operations, rental arrangements, and the like. The Executive Team itself would meet regularly and resolve operational questions and issues. It would have the authority to create policies for operations (a key allocation policy for example, or a general rental policy), although limitations on its authority would be formalized in an “Executive Limitations Policy”. The Board would assess the performance of various aspects of the organization, and might hold the Executive Team as a whole responsible, or the individual for whom the responsibility is assigned. Committees could report to individual members of the Executive Team or their designee (for example, the RE Committee might be assigned under the Lead Minister, but actually report to the Director of RE). Some committees might report to the Executive Team as a whole (for example, a committee like Green Sanctuary with broad implications)

Strengths: Shared responsibility creates a true team, although there are still areas of responsibility.

Weakness: No one person to hold accountable. Good internal communications are critical or gaps might occur where no one takes responsibility. Final decision-making authority does not rest with one person, requiring consensus in meetings to get things done. It's unclear who hires and supervises the administrator. Many lead ministers might not like the diminished authority. Asks much of its lay representative.

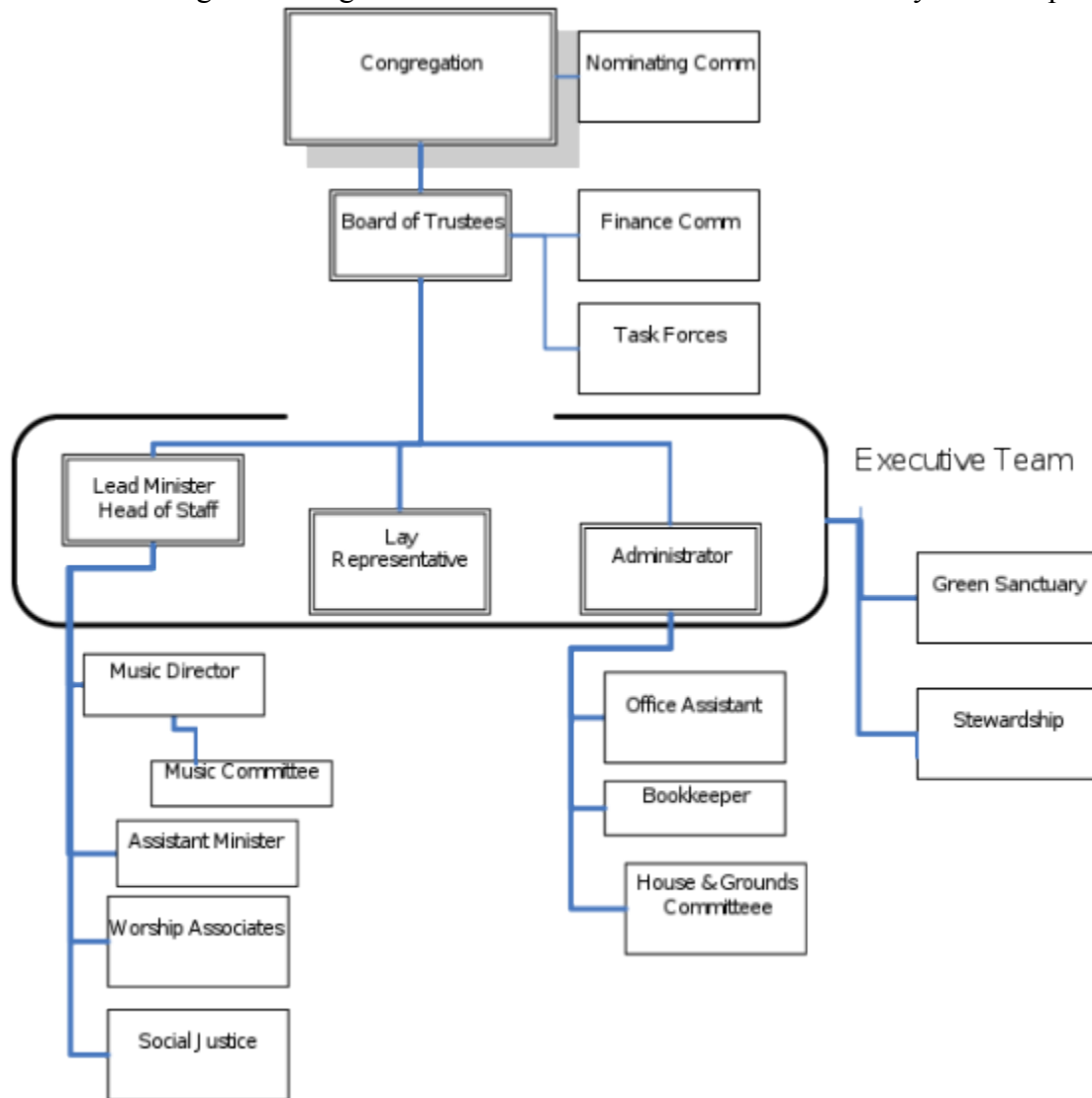


II. Lead Minister as Chair of the Executive Team

This is a hybrid model, similar to the Executive Team as equals but with certain additional responsibilities assigned to the Lead Minister. The Lead Minister might, for example, be head of staff, so that all employees would ultimately be held accountable to the Lead Minister, even though their immediate supervisor might be someone lower in the organizational chart. The Board would continue to relate to all members of the Executive Team for their areas of specific authority.

Strengths: Gives more authority to the Lead Minister to solve problems, to lead. This arrangement increases the accountability of the Lead Minister. Gives LM the authority to hire and lead an effective staff.

Weakness: Might be thought to distract the Lead Minister from ministry toward operations.

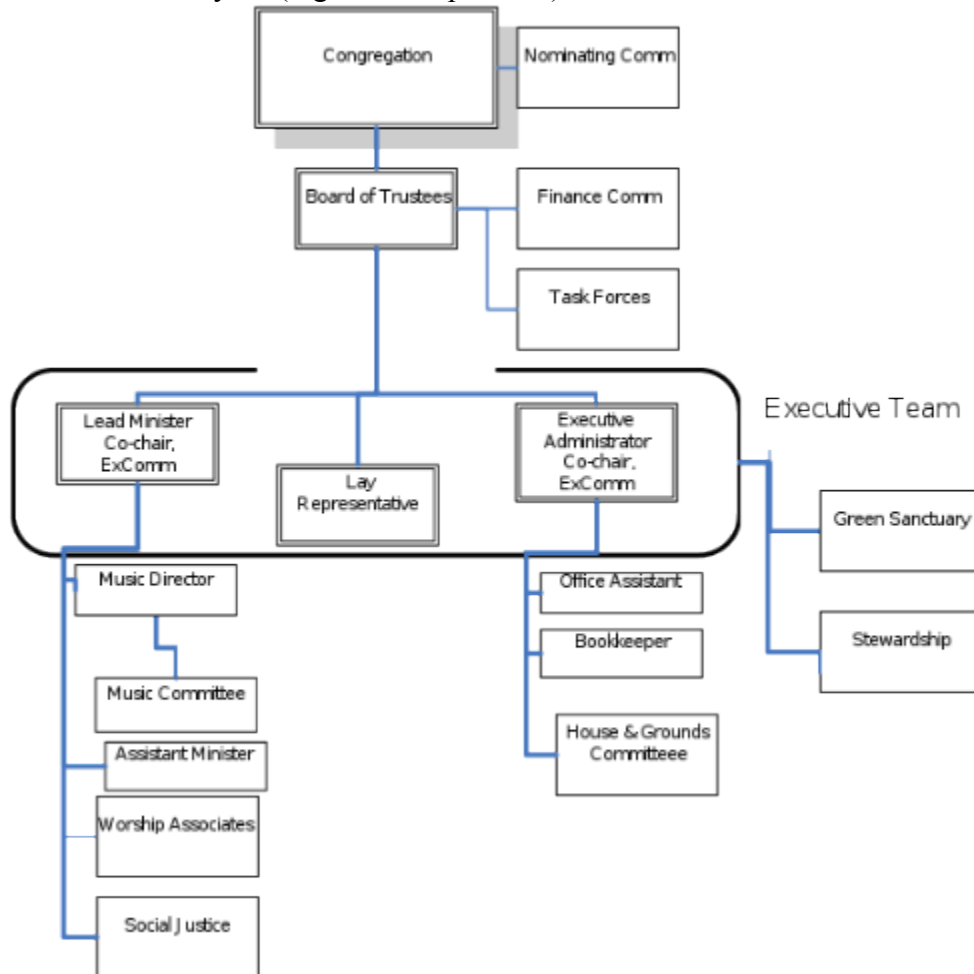


III. Lead Minister and an Executive Administrator as Co-Chairs of the Executive Team

This is another hybrid model, where the minister and the administrator are given equal authority but in defined areas. The Lead Minister would handle ministry and outreach, while the administrator would be charged with operations. Minister would be chief of staff for ministry staff (associate, assistant, and consulting ministers, RE and Music directors), while the administrator would be in charge of operational staff (office manager, bookkeeper, probably membership coordinator).

Strength: Lead Minister and Executive Administrator can focus on their areas of concern. Good opportunity for Teamwork.

Weakness: Many opportunities for conflict if Lead Minister and Executive Administrator disagree about who is responsible for what domain. Only works if LM and EA can remain a respectful, smooth operating team, with clear boundaries of day-to-day authority. Too easy to set up he-said-she-said situations. We would have to pay more for an executive administrator than we currently do (higher level position).

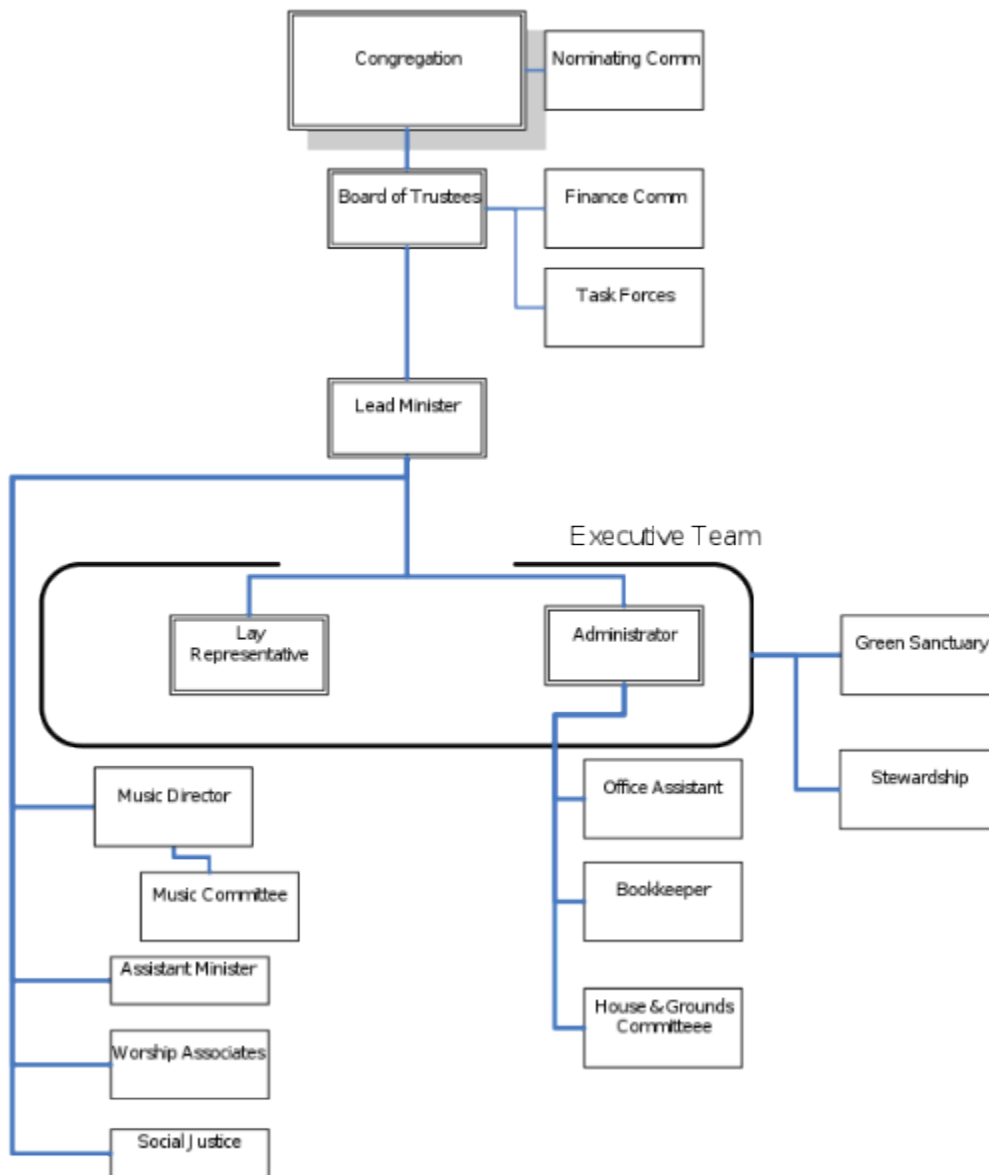


IV. Lead Minister as CEO

This model produces a clear line of authority and allows the Board to hold one person accountable for meeting the goals of the congregation. Under this model, the Lead Minister may still create an Executive Team that assists him/her in performing the administrative tasks of the Fellowship, but the minister is the individual who relates directly to the Board.

Strength: Very clear lines of accountability and authority

Weakness: May divert the lead minister from the business of ministry. Not all ministers are strong administrators. Many ministers may not want the authority or the responsibility. Might limit the type of people ERUUF would choose as a minister.



Other issues for discussion

Officers vs. Board of Equals

At a previous meeting, there was not a small group consensus regarding the issue of whether the ERUUF Board of Trustees should have 3 trustees elected each year (for 3 year terms) who would be elected as equals, and who would then choose someone to be Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary of the Board, and Liaison member of the Finance Committee (or Treasurer), or whether there should be elected officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer). Historically, officers have served two year terms, but there seemed to be consensus that all trustee positions should be three year terms, so the officer model would probably mean Vice-President, President, and Past President. The two-year vs. three-year commitments could still be open to discussion. It's also possible a restriction could be placed so the Board could not name a chair who was serving on

their first year on the Board. If we have a Board of equals who elect a chair (and other positions), there is a better opportunity to provide ongoing leadership development within the Board so people are ready to accept the responsibilities.

Who Nominates the Nominating Committee Candidates?

At a previous meeting there was a consensus that it was desirable the Nominating Committee be created so it represents the congregation, and no situations are created where the Board and the Nominating Committee evolve into an in-group clique. However, groups did not achieve a consensus whether the most independent Nominating Committee would come from the Nominating Committee choosing its successors, or whether the Board should nominate members for the NomComm. Currently, our bylaws require that the Board nominated the NomComm candidates; however, in practice the NomComm suggests names to the Board, which then formally nominates the NomComm candidates.

In favor of the NomComm doing the nomination – 1) The NomComm is supposed to be doing leadership development and nurturing; 2) the NomComm is supposed to be identifying people who could fill positions within the fellowship; 3) the NomComm itself has no real authority, since there can still be nominations from the Congregation for Board and NomComm positions, and the Congregation ultimately makes the selections. In either case there is a defined process for additional nominations to ensure congregational input in the nominations process.

In favor of the Board doing the nomination – 1) The Board is independent of the NomComm (although the NomComm does select the Board candidates); 2) A different and larger set of eyes looking at the Congregation