

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES for the yac (Youth Adult Committee)

Draft established by founding YAC members, 2003-2004 Youth programming year and presented to the UUC Board May 2004.

Final revision completed by YAC members, 2004-2005 Youth programming year and presented to the UUC Board May 2005

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg, Virginia

Next Review Date: May 2007

Article 4 of the YAC BY-LAWS states the following:

“YAC ‘Policies and Procedures’ is a separate, working document that evolves with the YAC as legal, liable, financial, and communication issues arise within YRUU, UUC, and TJ District. It was designed to contain YAC and YRUU working covenants and norms and to hold particulars that would be cumbersome to include in the By-Laws. The document is reviewed every 2 years by the YAC in an effort to keep the document fresh and current. The YAC will seek feedback from the UUC Board on this document during review. This document will be made available to YRUU youth and their families and the UUC Board. Items and standards in this document were researched and, in many cases, are reflective of either TJ District, YRUU CONFERENCE, or UUA standards and recommendations concerning varied aspects of youth programming.

The youth and adults working within YRUU feel good about this document and especially proud of the intergenerational time and effort that went into producing it; it is a concrete guidepost and structure for the YAC/YRUU present and future.”

1. YAC INTERNAL POLICIES--

The YAC maintains internal policies so that it can have continuity from year to year and grow in standard practices.

A. Member selection:

1. YAC members will be selected one month prior to their induction.
2. When choosing new YAC members, those who desire a position on the YAC will be considered first.
3. If no one volunteers, the YAC will turn to the YRUU for membership nominations, both youth and adult. The YAC can also invite into service youth and adults you have not had the chance to serve on the YAC to date.
4. YAC adult candidates must go through the UUC Child Protection Policy process for adults wanting to work with youth (See Appendix B).
5. When new YAC members are selected, those chosen will attend 2 meetings with the existing YAC before their official induction.
6. If a YAC member is unable to serve beyond mid-term, then another selection will take place.
7. Co-chairs will be chosen when the new YAC is established each year.

B. Member rotation:

1. YAC members must serve a 1 year term (but no more than two years).
1. YAC members (adults and youth) can serve up to two consecutive terms (a “term” is 1 year).
2. Members are encouraged to rotate either in August or January.
3. Adult rotation will try to be similar to the youth rotation—the goal of overlapping newer and older members is always kept in mind.
4. YAC Youth co-chair and YAC Adult co-chair will serve 1 year terms at a minimum and can serve two consecutive terms.
5. If the quality of the YAC is impinged upon by the rotation schedule OR the term structures, the YAC can move to override them and work toward the best interest of the YAC for that specific time in the life of the YAC. The YAC will always seek advice of others in the TJ District and from other sources when making such a decision.

C. YAC Meetings and attendance:

1. Regular attendance of YAC meetings is encouraged and expected.
2. If any member misses 2 meetings without notifying the YAC, the YAC will talk with the person and decide the next course of action.

2. YRUU PROGRAM PLANNING PROCEDURE—

The YAC and YRUU configured a **RED T.A.P.E Form** for YRUU Trip, activity, project, or event planning to stimulate successful and creative youth programming. ***The RED T.A.P.E form*** (found in *Appendix A*) ***states:***

DOING FUN STUFF TOGETHER is important to YRUU. When everyone is on board and invested in a plan, YRUU is empowered! Please use this form at the first *INKLING* of a trip.activity.project.event! Brainstorm with it. Iron out ideas. Question the need for things. Define goals, purpose and values with it. Write on it. Draw on it! Ask for help from others with it (like using it for board proposal or approaching a congregant/committee). Whatever you do, *SHARE it with the YAC or YRUU* so all can help support the YRUU vision. Here’s when to share it with the other group:

2 weeks prior to a smaller event (for example: 25 miles or less from church, an overnight at the UUC, minimal costs incurred—no budget needed, a half-day long retreat)

3-4 weeks prior to a larger event (eg: further then 25 miles away, greater costs being incurred that require a budget, involving another group of youth, extended overnights off site, full day retreat).

Since liability, safety, and financial issues always come with activity planning, it is very important that the YRUU use the RED T.A.P.E form and submit it to the YAC for feedback PRIOR to an event.

3. AGE RESTRICTIONS/GUIDELINES for YRUU PROGRAM—

Age guidelines for the YRUU Program are as follows: YRUUers must be at least

a freshman in High School or 14 years of age to participate in YRUU. Consequently, they will be bridged out of YRUU or asked to leave no later than the end of their senior year of high school or the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 years of age, whichever is the later.

4. FINANCIAL GUIDELINES for YAC/YRUU—

The YAC is charged with supervising YRUU finances in conjunction with the YRUU. The YRUU has two accounts they operate from: the one budgeted from UUC funds and a separate checking/savings account that serves to hold fundraising monies, etc. *By FEBRUARY of each year* the YAC submits a YRUU budget to the UUC for the following year. The YAC gets feedback from YRUU on what that budget request should include and the amount of the request.

Funds for YAC adult and youth leadership training as well as Advisor training can be requested out of the UUC training budget.

A. Guidelines for maintenance of YRUU account:

1. YAC approves all issues of a financial matter
2. YRUU is encouraged to have co-treasurers (one adult, one youth) to provide reports, keep books, and make recommendations
3. Signature card and check cards designees established at the beginning of the year (co-treasurers are designees and one YAC member)
4. Current checking and savings account at *Freedom First Federal Credit Union* maintained by co-treasurers and YAC
5. YRUU pledges to NOT go into debt, except for working expenses
6. Inappropriate use of funds are defined as follows and have consequences also defined below:
 - a. *Inappropriate use of funds* is the extortion of funds for personal use, criminal use, or any other use that does not support YRUU programming.
 - b. *Consequences for using funds inappropriately* are offender makes immediate replacement of funds taken, offender is relieved of their official position if applies and/or asked to leave the program, Police may be involved, and notification to the UUC is made.

B. Procedure for YRUU to access funds:

1. Under \$25 does not require YAC approval
 - a. These will always come from working budget.
 - b. Give receipts for reimbursement to Lisa Evanylo, UUC Administrative Assistant.
1. Over \$25 should be requested via RED TAPE process or formally via one of the co-treasurers.
 - a. YAC can request a detailed budget.
2. YRUU treasurers or the YAC make recommendations for funds release.
 - a. Use working UUC budget until exhausted, then accounts.
 - i. Exceptions can be made for certain purchases.
 - ii. If liability issues occur, they are dealt with by the UUC.

C. YAC budget within the UUC:

1. The YAC will submit a budget to the UUC, separate from YRUU, to help fund workshops, retreats/trainings, binder materials, and other needed items.
2. Decisions to spend YAC budgeted funds will be made within the YAC over \$25 and by YAC individuals under \$25.
3. Reimbursements from UUC funds will come after receipts are given to the UUC Administrative Assistant.
4. The YAC co-chairs should always be notified of expenditures.

5. BEHAVIOR ETHICS for YRUU and YAC—

Guidelines for Expression (see Appendix B) and will be the framework for YRUU and YAC behavior. Youth and adults connected to the YRUU program will become familiar with these guidelines and have multiple discussions regarding them throughout the year. The guidelines are meant to enhance the interaction, safety, and enjoyment of all who participate in YRUU programs.

The YRUU and YAC insist that *mediation* occur when a behavior causes difficulty within the group. Both sides of an issue should be heard and treated in the privacy of the group. It is important to YRUU adults and youth that offenders be supported in their efforts to improve their behaviors and in fact to integrate themselves back into the group.

An *ETHICS SQUAD* will be created through YRUU for each event and act immediately when a problem occurs. The *Ethics Squad* actions will be informed by knowledge of a continuum of sanctions/consequences for the behavior targeted (See *Ethics Squad Policy & Consequences*, Appendix B). The sanctions will be in line with current TJ District recommendations, the UUC Child Protection Policy, and be a legal base for *Ethics Squad* recommendations and actions.

YRUU will adopt an *Ethics Covenant* for all youth and adults involved with YRUU to sign at the beginning of the year, to be upheld at events and gatherings all year (see Appendix A).

6. YRUU VISITATION POLICY—

Former YRUUsers can return to visit YRUU meetings once bridged, but not regularly attend meetings.

Adults can visit the YRUU with advanced notice to the advisors; visiting adults are **not** encouraged to be present for YRUU check-in due to confidentiality, which is usually the first half hour of the YRUU meeting (See “*YRUU Confidentiality Statement*” in Appendix B). YRUU members **can** ask that the visitor sit out of check-in.

Youth and friends of youth can visit YRUU meetings. When doing so, YRUU members can ask that the visitor sit out of check-in, due-to confidentiality, or re-explain confidentiality and the supportive group norm that already exists in YRUU so that the visitor can respect the space (See “*YRUU Confidentiality Statement*” in Appendix B). Youth visitors or YRUU members bringing friends/visitors should alert the advisors prior to the meeting they are visiting. If a youth visits the YRUU three times, they must get a permission slip signed by a parent to attend any

additional meetings. In effect, they have become a member of YRUU and will be treated as such.

7. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES for YAC, UUC, and families—

A. Bringing up a concern or topic:

IF a YRUU youth or advisor, a youth's family member, or UUC congregant has a concern or issue regarding YRUU programming, the YRUU advising team is a natural first contact. The advising team is comprised of supportive and compassionate adults who take their volunteering with the UUC youth seriously. The concern or topic will be brought to the YAC by the advisor liaison.

B. Contacting the YAC with a concern or topic:

IF a party wishes to bring to the YAC a concern/issue/problem, here are suggested steps to follow that will ensure all people are heard:

1. Contact the two YAC co-chairs (as listed in the UUC directory) with a concern or topic.
2. YAC co-chairs will notify YAC members of the issue immediately and decide the next step--call a special YAC meeting, place item on next YAC meeting agenda, invite the party to the YAC meeting or to mediation, or have discussion on YAC e-list.
3. YAC co-chairs share the "next step" with the party by inviting them to the next YAC meeting, sending YAC response in writing over email, calling the member on the phone, setting up a mediation session, or suggesting that the YAC Board liaison address the board.

C. Mediation with YAC:

IF a YRUU youth or advisor, a youth's family member, a UUC congregant or other person feels the need for mediation with the YAC (or individual [s] on the YAC), the following mediation process is suggested for the benefit of everyone involved (The YAC knows of several UUC members who have offered to be neutral advocates/facilitators of a mediation process):

1. Request a mediation session with the YAC or through the YAC
2. Agree on Neutral Advocates for each position/person (no more than two for each) OR invite the acting Ethics Squad members to work within the process.
3. Use active and reflective listening during "talk" time (each person gets to explain why they are there and what is bothering them; then, the other party reflects back on what was said and that is repeated until all are heard [see "*Listening Skills*" in Appendix B]).
4. Parties work with advocates to come up with a solution that is a win/win approach for everyone.

8. ADVISOR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, GUIDELINES & INCIDENT REPORTING—

A. Advisor recruitment and selection guidelines:

1. **YRUU selects**--The best-case scenario in advisor recruiting is for YRUU to select the adults they would like to work with for the following year no later than April of the current year. There are a number of ways this can take place. It is suggested that the YAC and current advisors be a part of the conversation—that the discussion be intergenerational and open. If one youth or adult in the process has a reservation regarding a potential advisor, that opinion is respected. The YAC agrees to consult with the Minister regarding potential adults working with youth (see Appendix B for *UUC Child Protection Policy*, section title “Selection and Screening of Volunteers”) realizing the Minister may not recommend (may veto) a potential advisor or YAC adult based on information she/he has obtained.
1. Advisors **must be at least 21 years of age and active in the life of the UUC** for at least 6 months, in keeping with the UUC Child Protection Policy.
2. If an advisor is less than 24 years old, he or she must have a prior 2 years junior advisor experience within a YRUU program.
3. **Junior Advisors**—YRUU and YAC acknowledge that great advisors come from all walks of life and ages. A “junior advisor” must be 19 years of age, have past experience with a YRUU program as a member, and advise the UUC YRUU program only when at least one other advisor is present. Junior advisors are required to submit a background check and must *sign* a Code of Ethics (see “*Code of Ethics for Adults Working with Youth*” in Appendix A).
4. **Back-Up Advisors**—generally former advisors that would like to still be available to YRUU on an “on call” or “as-needed” basis. They will have a copy of policies and comply with them when filling in for a regular advisor. They will have a background check on file and be processed like regular advisors.
5. **Gender Balance** among advisors is a primary concern and must be respected/considered during the advisor selection process.
6. The YRUU and YAC encourage advisors to create a *team approach to advising*. All advisors, regardless of age, should consult with other advisors when making decisions. Advisors should have monthly meetings thus encouraging self-monitoring and problem solving from within the advising team.
7. Advisors should be mindful of *age differences* with the advising team. Generational concerns and their affect on YRUU should be addressed periodically. In other words, there should be occasional open forums (to include youth, advisors, and YAC) for discussion of how multiple generations can work together.
8. While the YAC understands that each year of advising may be different, it suggests that the program **strive for continuity and community with YRUU youth, other advisors, and the YAC**. No less than 2 advisors can work in the YRUU program per year.
9. Advisors should serve a minimum of 1 year but not exceed 4 years; they are encouraged to take a break and return when revitalized. An

overlap of some returning advisors is appreciated for continuity of the YRUU.

B. Advisor background checks, code of ethics, and training:

1. Once the YRUU, YAC, and Minister field potential advisors, those persons selected can **visit several meetings** (following the visitation policy) before the end of the current year to see what advising is like and to talk with current advisors and youth about the experience. This is the time for all involved to see if a “good fit” is apparent and to speak in truth to that end.
2. Potential advisors must fill out a *Youth Advisor Volunteer Application* (see Appendix A), be willing to *submit* to a standard **reference/background check form** that is supplied by the minister of the UUC and *sign* a Code of Ethics (see “*Code of Ethics for Adults Working with Youth*” in Appendix A)...all documents are kept on file with the UUC (the YAC maintains a copy of the application and ethics form). References listed on the application should be people who have known the potential advisor for two years, preferably in relation to previous work or involvement with youth
3. Once cleared by the YAC and UUC minister, advisors **must attend at least one T.J District training for YRUU Advisors** over the summer or in the first 6 months of the new YRUU year (money is set aside in YRUU budget to help with a percentage of the cost of this training).
4. When at all possible, new Advisors will be supplied with **training materials** such as UUA YRUU web information, UUA advisor manuals, and in-house, intergenerational training regarding YRUU advising for the UUC YRUU Program.
5. Advisors will be given a **copy of all relevant documents** regarding the YRUU and the YAC, including files from previous years and contact information of previous advisors.

C. What Advisors Need to Know (!):

1. **Secure the UUC building** upon entering and leaving by:
 - a. Maintaining a key to the UUC church and respecting church property (see the church Administrative Assistant for key copy and policies)
 - b. Arriving on time to open the church for YRUU events; ending YRUU events on time
 - c. Requesting youth help in leaving the facility cleaned; TRASH must be removed from the building and floors swept or vacuumed if needed
 - d. Checking lights, locks, temp settings, etc.
2. Support **fundamental advisor rules**:
 - a. A minimum of two adult advisors (full advisors) should be scheduled to supervise ALL Official YRUU events, on or off-site. Exceptions for exigent circumstances only may be made by the primary full advisor for the event.

- b. **Official YRUU events** require a RED TAPE Form submitted to the YAC at least 2 weeks prior to the event.
 - c. ANY YRUU gathering at the UUC is considered an *official* YRUU event.
 - d. Strive for mixed-gender advising teams when possible.
 - e. **Unofficial YRUU events** are deemed as such in advance so that parents KNOW there will not be the standard adult advisor presence. Unofficial YRUU events are generally youth initiated and not sanctioned by the YAC (no RED TAPE forms filled out for them).
 - f. On-site, if an adult other than a parent or guardian (an advisor) has a private one-to one meeting with a youth during an official YRUU event, another adult advisor/worker in the program shall be notified about the meeting, either before the meeting or promptly afterward. **NO ADVISOR SHOULD BE ALONE WITH A YOUTH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.**
 - g. No adult, other than a parent, guardian, or sponsor is to be alone with a youth off-site
3. **Follow transportation guidelines** as follows:
- a. All drivers available to transport youth **MUST** be 21 years of age, hold a valid driver’s license, must provide proof of insurance, and submit a *YRUU/YAC Driver Date Form* (see Appendix A) **EXCEPT** for Junior Advisors who **cannot** transport youth.
 - b. The vehicle used to transport youth **MUST** have seatbelts for all youth passengers and they are to be used without exception
 - c. Written permission of the parent/guardian of all minor passengers will be obtained prior to being transported. This permission will include all relevant details pertaining to the event, such as date and location, name of driver (s), time of departure and time of return. (Initial YRUU parent permission form has advisor transportation clause and parents can add names of other youth their child is allowed to ride with.)
 - d. **NO** driver may consume alcohol or use any form of drug that can affect physical or mental performance during or before carrying out her/his duty as a driver.
 - e. A minimum of two advisors must accompany a group off-site.
4. **Provide leadership** that empowers the youth to make their own decisions regarding the meeting structure, curriculum, events, projects, and fundraising (See “*Empowerment Model*” in Appendix B).
5. Advisors should be aware of their dress, and whether or not it is appropriate for a YRUU event. For example, men should avoid wearing muscle shirts, open necklines and/ or short shorts. Women should avoid bare midriffs, shorts shorts, mini-skirts and/or low necklines.
6. Understand that **corporal punishment may not be used under any circumstances.**
7. **Ask for help** when help is needed by youth or other adults.

8. **Support Ethics Squad** recommendations at YRUU events or in mediation sessions (See “*Ethics Squad Policy & Consequences*,” Appendix B).
9. Be **willing to serve** as an advisor to the youth first and a friend to the youth second.
10. **Attend** as many **training sessions** as possible that are offered by the youth, YAC, or district.
11. Be **available on line** for discussions and information gathering.
12. Be willing to **serve on the YAC** as the YRUU Advisor liaison at least one term if advising for more than one year.
13. **Support youth and advisor confidentiality**, particularly within the UUC (See “*YRUU Confidentiality Statement*” in Appendix B).
14. Support and understand **mandatory reporting** as outlined in TJ District document (See *Appendix B*).
15. **Offer** or let youth and YAC know of any **expertise or resources** willing to be shared in areas that may serve the YRUU program well (such as financial, technical...etc).
16. Look for interesting ways to **involve parents** in YRUU that are comfortable and enhance relationship with all youth in program.
17. Advisors should receive mid-year and end of the year feedback on their performance. Any feedback, both verbal and written, will be reviewed by the YAC.

D. Reporting of Incidents, Response, and Removal of an Advisor:

1. All persons affiliated with the YRUU program at the UUC who acquire knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that one or more of the youth at a YRUU event or gathering has been sexually molested or exploited, injured or been the victim of significant objectionable conduct shall *immediately report* the incident to the person in charge of the event. At this point, the UUC “Child Protection Policy” will be followed. The policy is supplied by the UUC Board and outlined in *Appendix B*. All advisors and Junior Advisors will be required to go to a UUC training on the policy.
2. If an advisor receives negative feedback and his or her behavior has not improved by the end of the program year, the YAC will review the problematic behavior and make the final decision regarding the invitation to continue as an advisor. YAC will both verbally and in writing contact the advisor with the final decision.

