

**CANADIAN  
UNITARIAN COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTIONS STUDY GROUP**

**Report to the CUC Board of Trustees  
and the Annual General Meeting**

**Toronto, ON  
Approved May 2011**

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# CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL

## RESOLUTIONS STUDY GROUP REPORT

May 2011

### **Background**

The CUC's current resolutions process was designed to bring social justice issues to the floor of the annual business meetings. This process has been used to approve motions ranging from the environment and economy to human rights and peace. The process, however, does not include motions outside of social responsibility issues; other Council matters do not fall within the parameters of the current process.

These challenges, and others, within the process led to conversations about what might be done to address them. Those conversations resulted in a proposal to examine the issue and an exposure draft of a proposed resolutions procedure crafted by our past and current parliamentarians.

### **Mandate of the Resolutions Study Group**

At the CUC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Victoria, May 2010, a resolution was passed directing the CUC Board to establish a Resolutions Study Group (RSG) to:

- examine the current resolutions process;
- circulate a draft of a proposed process;
- gain input from members and congregations; and
- make recommendations to the 2011 AGM.

### **The Consultation Process**

In 2007, to gain input about the current resolutions process, conversations began with UUs familiar with that procedure. The discussion involved members of the Board, the current and former CUC Parliamentarians, members of the Social Responsibility Task Force, and Social Responsibility Monitoring Group chairs and members. These discussions formed the foundation for the work of the Resolutions Study Group when it was formed in the fall of 2010.

After its formation, the RSG continued the process of consultation, and had conversations with the Social Responsibility Monitoring Group chairs and members of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ). To keep Canadian UUs informed of the Study Group process, articles were featured in editions of the Canadian Unitarian, with contact information for the RSG.

## **The Survey**

To gain input from the wider UU community, the RSG designed a survey based on a number of key propositions relevant to any resolutions process. The survey aimed to obtain information about UUs' involvement with the resolution process, previous experience with resolutions and at AGMs, and opinions about the propositions tabled by the RSG. Prior to its public debut, the survey was previewed by a group of testers consisting of the Chairs of Social Responsibility Monitoring Groups and some past CUC board presidents.

In February 2011, invitations to participate in the Resolutions Process survey were sent to Canadian UUs, both individually and through notices in the Canadian Unitarian eNews.

The survey questions and a summary of responses can be found in the full report.

## **Survey Responses**

The survey asked specifically about respondents' experience with the resolutions process presently in use and their opinions of some propositions. Responses were received from each of the 4 CUC regions, and indicated a wide range of experience, knowledge and interest in the resolutions process. 97.7% of those who responded did so as individuals rather than as representatives of communities or congregations. 74.4% had never submitted a resolution to an AGM, and 65% had attended 1 or more AGMs.

The majority of the responses (average of 72.6%) showed that people agreed with the proposals, and over 20% left comments for each of the issues the RSG posed. Some had suggestions for clarifying or improving processes.

23.9% of respondents had some reservations about the proposed recommendations; 3.45% disagreed with the proposals.

## **Recommendations**

Based on consultations and the survey responses to the propositions suggested by the RSG, the RSG submits the following recommendations:

- 1. The establishment of the single comprehensive procedure for proposing resolutions, regardless of its subject matter or its proponents, as proposed by the Resolutions Study Group.**
- 2. A resolution that is proposed in the normal course of events must be submitted to the Executive Director by December 15 prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented, so that it can be distributed to member congregations for discussion and feedback.**
- 3. To be considered for amendment, all feedback about resolutions must be provided to the proposers by February 28.**

4. A resolution concerning any subject matter may be proposed by any of the following:
  - a) A Study Group established by an AGM resolution;
  - b) The CUC Board;
  - c) A member congregation;
  - d) An existing Social Responsibility Monitoring Group with at least 3 active members;
  - e) 25 individuals who are members of at least 3 member congregations from at least 3 of the 4 CUC regions.
5. Each proposed resolution must include an explicit statement of what action is desired to be taken, by whom, and by when.
6. A resolution that has been distributed in the usual course of this procedure may not be substantively amended at the Annual General Meeting.
7. To make it possible for the AGM to take note of an emergent situation that has arisen after Dec 15, there will be a category termed Urgent Resolutions.
8. The establishment of a Resolutions Advisory Committee to provide support and assistance to drafters of a motion with wording and process. This committee will include the CUC's Parliamentarian and the Social Responsibility Liaison.
9. In all cases, proposers of resolutions are encouraged to consult with the Resolutions Advisory Committee.
10. A report to be made to the 2012 AGM on the status of these recommendations.

In the body of the full report, each recommendation is presented as a set with sub-recommendations pertinent to the main recommendation. The RSG proposes that all recommendations be accepted and adopted by delegates.

## **CONCLUSION**

The survey responses highlighted some notable areas for further consideration. Although the questions addressed the resolutions process, participants were clear in stating that there are broader areas that need attention.

### **Congregational Engagement and Democratic Participation**

- 25.4% of respondents said that their congregation's delegates did not have enough information to make sound voting decisions; 34.1% said they did not know if this was the case.
- 38.2% thought their congregations were not knowledgeable about upcoming resolutions at an AGM, and 27.6% did not know if their congregations were knowledgeable.
- 53.1% did not know who to submit a resolution to.
- 21% said their congregations had a clear process for selecting delegates.

These responses indicate that there is room for exploration of how congregations want to be participants in the CUC's democratic processes, and the need for further conversations about delegate selection, congregational action, and the development of CUC resources in these areas. These matters have been referred to the Active Democracy Study Group.

## **Communications**

Responses showed that there is a desire for improved communications among CUC staff, board and congregations, and opportunities to build communications among congregations. A number of respondents suggested making increased use of electronic mediums to enhance communications and engagement.

The RSG used the consultation process, responses from the survey, and opinions from individual conversations with UUs to seed debate and discussion. The Study Group is confident that the recommendations put forward in this report have been enhanced through the survey process, and have been seriously considered by our diverse perspectives and by those most interested in and knowledgeable about the resolutions process.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report and set of recommendations builds upon previous work done by the Social Responsibility Task Force and the Social Responsibility Handbook for congregations. The RSG would like to thank the following for their work on the SR Task Force and the SR Handbook, and for assistance to the RSG through conversations and feedback: Elaine Harvey, Christine Johnston, Scott Keeler, Don McDiarmid, Marnie Girvan, Ellen Campbell, Rev. Frances Deverell, Forrest Smith, Rev. Jessica Purple Rodela, Rev. Brian Kiely, Elizabeth Bowen, Art Brewer, Rev. J. MacRee Elrod, Philip Symons, and Richard Kirsch.

The Resolutions Study Group also thanks Jennifer Dickson, Executive Director, and Ben Wolfe, Communications Director, for support in communicating information about the study process and the survey.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Kemp  
Cameron Linton  
Bruce Partridge  
Jaime Dunton, CUC Parliamentarian (Consultant)  
Vyda Ng (Chair)

## DETAILED REPORT

### Format of the Report

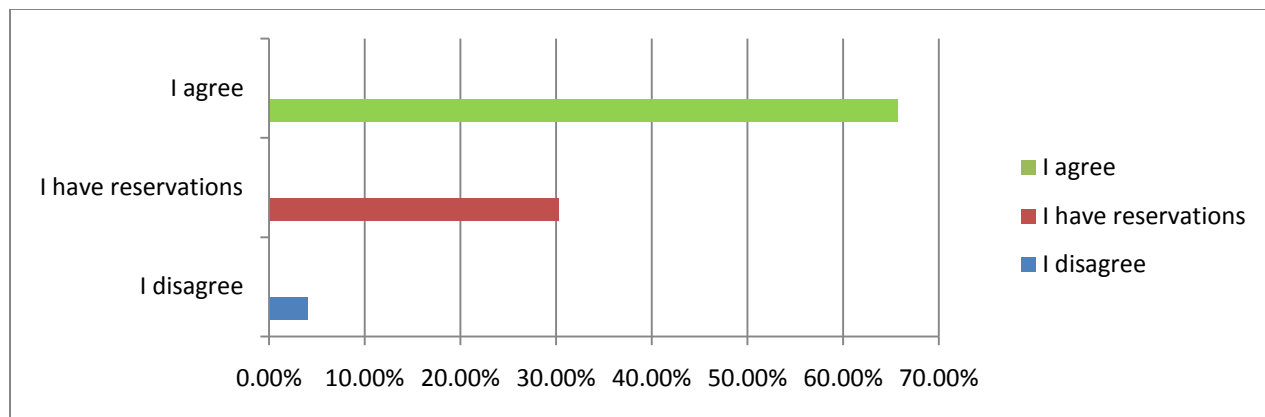
For ease of readability, this report is sectioned into:

- The recommendation of a specific issue;
- The survey responses to that issue;
- Observations that were culled from participant comments on each issue; and
- Recommendations for every issue, with attendant areas of responsibility and suggested timelines.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #1

**That the CUC establish one comprehensive and easily understood procedure for proposing resolutions, irrespective of its subject matter or its proponents.**

### Survey Responses:



### Observations:

- Many responses reflect the lack of a process within congregations for delegate selection and congregational discussion about upcoming resolutions.
- Some question the relevance of a resolutions process and the role of congregations in proposing change.
- Some propose that different types of resolutions need different timelines.
- While most respondents agree that one process is desirable, responses point to the need for congregational engagement in social change processes.
- Many responses speak to the relationship between CUC board and staff, and congregations, and the need for more communication.
- This is a governance issue that needs clarity, both from the CUC and within congregations

Recommendations: Set #1	Responsibility	Timeline
a. <b>The establishment of one comprehensive and easily understood procedure for proposing resolutions, regardless of its subject matter or its proponents, as recommended by the RSG. This will provide consistency and minimize confusion.</b>	Delegates at 2011 AGMs. RSG has proposed a new resolutions process, to be voted on at the AGM	May 20, 2011
b. That suggestions and options be provided to congregations to help optimize processes for congregational engagement in social change processes, discussion of upcoming	Resolutions Study Group.	

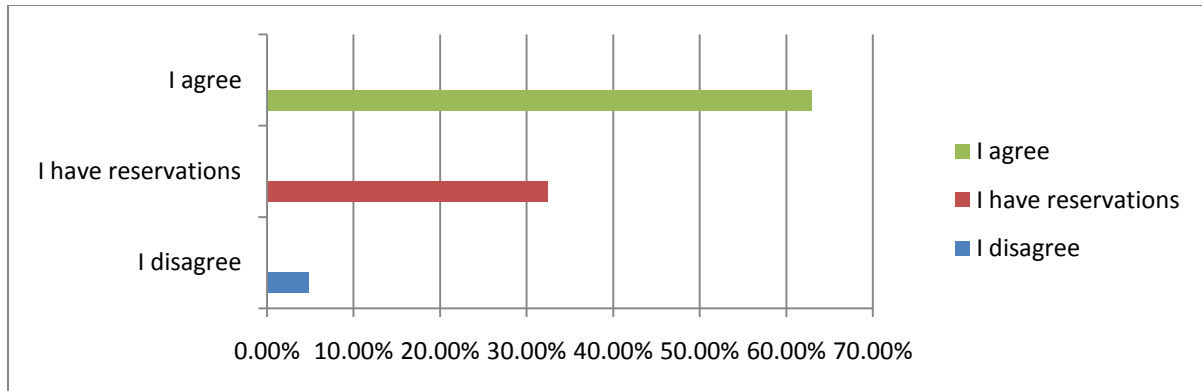


Recommendations: Set #1	Responsibility	Timeline
resolutions, and deeper involvement in issues affecting the CUC's member congregations.		
c. That the Resolutions Information Package prepared by the Resolutions Study Group (Appendix B) be provided to congregations as a resource	CUC staff	Sep 1/11
d. The establishment of a delegate e-list to inform, educate and link delegates	CUC Board	In process
e. That the matters of delegate selection, funding and congregational engagement be referred to the CUC Active Democracy study Group	CUC Active Democracy Study Group	Apr 15/11
f. Information about the CUC's Resolutions Process should be located on the "governance" section of the website	CUC staff	May 30/11
g. All other relevant sources of information on the CUC website be updated and maintained to reflect current recommendations and processes (e.g. The Social Responsibility Handbook, etc)	CUC staff with Board's Social Responsibility Liaison	Sep 1/11

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #2

All resolutions proposed in the normal course of events must be submitted by December 15 to the Executive Director for distribution to member congregations.

### Survey Responses:



### Observations:

- Most respondents agreed with a definite deadline for submission of resolutions.
- Some observed that some types of resolutions may require less time than others.
- There were varying opinions about what this deadline should be. Some pointed out that electronic means can be used to expedite the process; thus, timelines can be shortened.
- Others agree that December 15 is an appropriate amount of time for congregations to discuss and provide feedback to the proposers. Some thought that this is too early.
- There were concerns expressed that the timeline is not the issue – whether congregations are interested and engaged is the crux of the matter.
- Suggestions were made about having a more flexible and responsive process for matters that may arise after December 15.

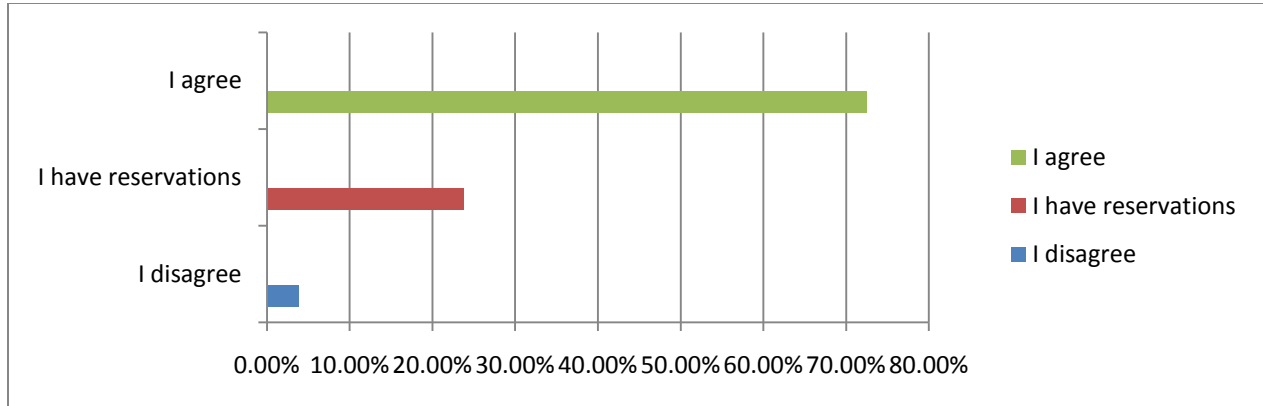
Recommendations: Set #2	Responsibility	Timeline
a. <b>A resolution that is proposed in the normal course of events must be submitted to the Executive Director by December 15 prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented, so that it can be distributed to member congregations for discussion and feedback.</b>	All proponents of resolutions CUC Board	Dec 15 annually
b. Proposed resolutions must be circulated to member congregations by the first week in	CUC staff	1 <sup>st</sup> week in January

Recommendations: Set #2	Responsibility	Timeline
January.		annually
c. The CUC office posts an annual calendar in August that clearly lists all the timelines and events for the congregational year.	CUC staff	Aug 30 annually

### RECOMMENDATIONS: #3

Amended resolutions must be provided by the proposers to the Executive Director for distribution to the congregations no later than March 15.

Survey Responses:



Observations:

- There was general agreement that the amended resolution should be circulated back to the congregations before the AGM; there were varying opinions about what the timeline should be.
- Some suggested that the CUC make more use of electronic means for circulation and communication.

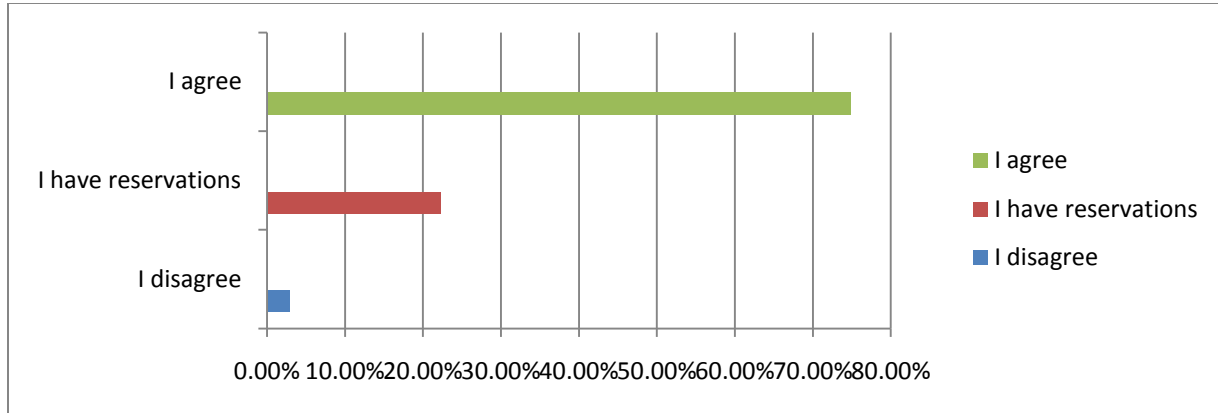
Recommendations: Set #3	Responsibility	Timeline
a. <b>To be considered for amendment, all feedback about resolutions must be provided to the proposers by February 28.</b>	Member congregations	February 28 annually
b. A resolution that has been amended to reflect received feedback must be provided to the Executive Director, in newly-amended format, for distribution not later than March 15 prior to the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented. To ensure democratic involvement, it is essential for congregations and communities to have sufficient time to consider the exact proposal, its purpose and possible impact, and to instruct their delegates.	Proponents of resolutions to amend and send to Executive Director for re-distribution; CUC staff to send to member congregations.	

<b>Recommendations: Set #3</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
c. A feedback template will be made available to congregations to help guide feedback to proponents.	Resolutions Study Group – a template is provided in Resolutions Information Package, Appendix _	Completed

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #4

Resolutions may be proposed by five broadest possible methods for initiating a resolution.

### Survey Responses



### Observations:

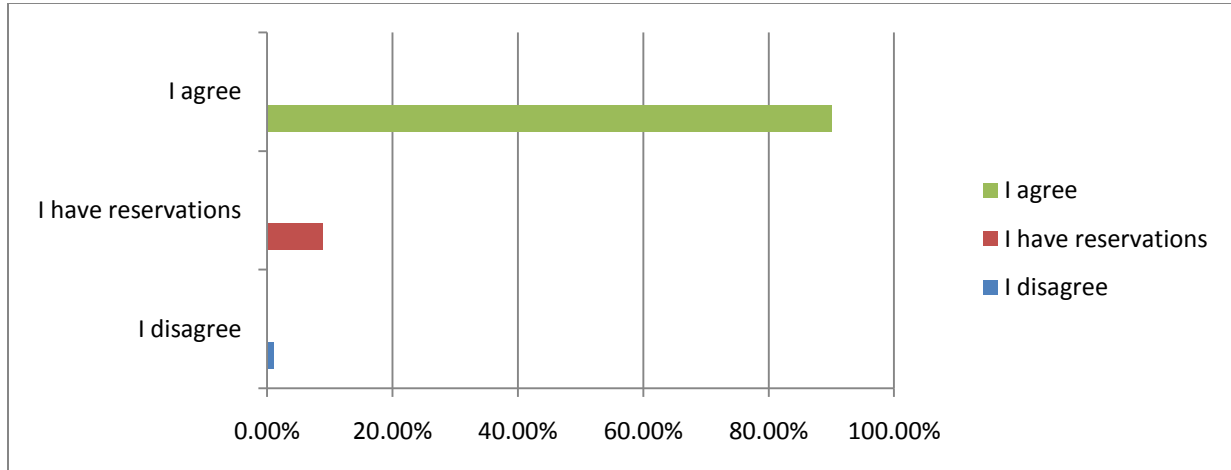
- There was broad agreement for the need to include representative groups.
- There were suggestions that other UU communities, like a youth group or Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, should be able to submit resolutions.

Recommendations: Set #4	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>a. A resolution concerning any subject matter may be proposed by any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Study Group established by an AGM resolution;</li> <li>• The CUC Board;</li> <li>• A member congregation;</li> <li>• An existing Social Responsibility Monitoring Group with at least 3 active members;</li> <li>• 25 individuals who are members of at least 3 member congregations from at least 3 of the 4 CUC regions.</li> </ul>	All proponents	Dec 15
<p>b. Associate Members and other groups that are part of the Canadian UU community, e.g. young adults and lay chaplains, may access the resolutions process through one of the 5 methods described above.</p>		

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #5

**Each proposed resolution must include an explicit statement of what action is desired to be taken, by whom, and by when.**

### Survey Responses



### Observations:

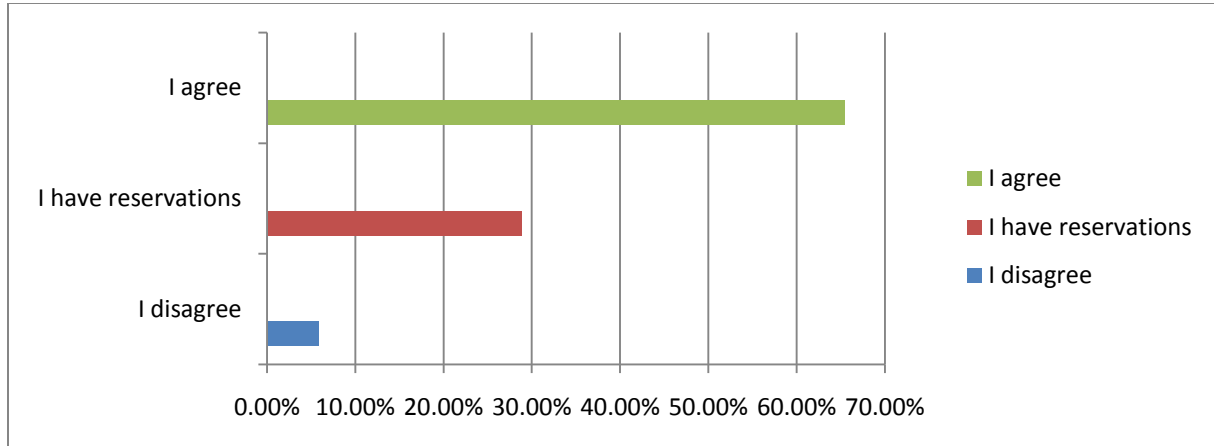
- There were suggestions for congregations to take action themselves, without the need to wait for a resolution or action plan.

Recommendations: Set #5	Responsibility	Timeline
a. <b>Each proposed resolution must include an explicit statement of what action is desired to be taken, by whom, and by when. It is desirable for a clear-cut action plan to be proposed, with designated areas of accountability.</b> The CUC's resolution process is a way for members to facilitate action, and to view it as the start of a process for effecting change.	Proponents of resolutions	Dec 15
b. The CUC encourage congregations to develop their own action plans, in order to empower local action and change. The Resolutions Study Group has prepared a template which is available to congregations.	CUC board and staff	

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #6

**No substantive amendments to resolutions can occur at the AGM.**

Survey Responses:



Observations:

- Most respondents agreed that there should be no substantive amendments at the AGM, as congregations would not have been consulted on these changes.
- Those with reservations argued that delegates should be able to make changes and vote on them, as delegates are those who are interested in the issues and congregations have given them the right to vote on their behalf.
- There were suggestions that “substantive changes” be clearly defined.

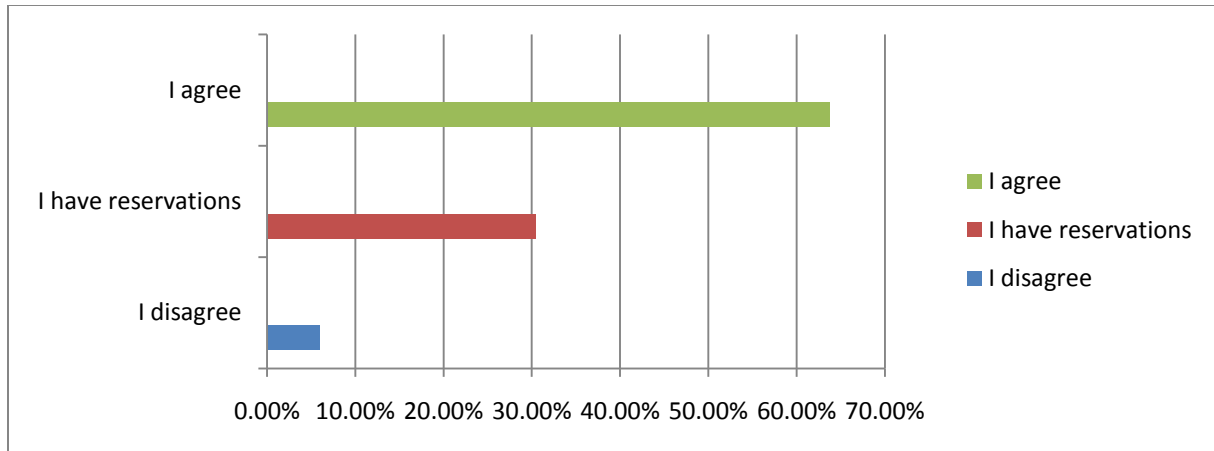
Recommendations: Set #6	Responsibility	Timeline
a. <b>A resolution that has been distributed in the usual course of this procedure may not be substantively amended at the Annual General Meeting.</b> A substantive amendment is one that would change the meaning of the original resolution that had been distributed to the congregations for consideration.		
b. Those wishing to propose amendments prior to the AGM should provide feedback to the proponents of the resolution by February 28.	Member congregations	February 28
c. Those wishing to discuss the resolutions at the AGM are encouraged to attend the mini-plenary session, which is designed for discussion about resolutions.		



## RECOMMENDATIONS: #7

**The AGM needs a process for considering matters that arise after the normal deadline of December 15 for submitting resolutions.**

Survey Responses:



Observations:

- Most respondents agreed that such a mechanism is needed.
- With the CUC’s current “Special Resolution without Notice” process, this kind of resolution is publicized as representing only the opinions of the delegates at the meeting, and not the CUC as a whole. While this distinction might be understood within CUC circles, others would not make such a distinction and would assume that the resolution does represent the CUC and its member congregations.
- There were reservations around whether or not an urgent resolution approved by delegates should become CUC policy; some pointed out that the delegates should have the authority to make that decision. Others stated that urgent resolutions were not discussed by congregations ahead of time, and therefore should not become policy. Still others said that it is pointless to pass a resolution that does not become policy.

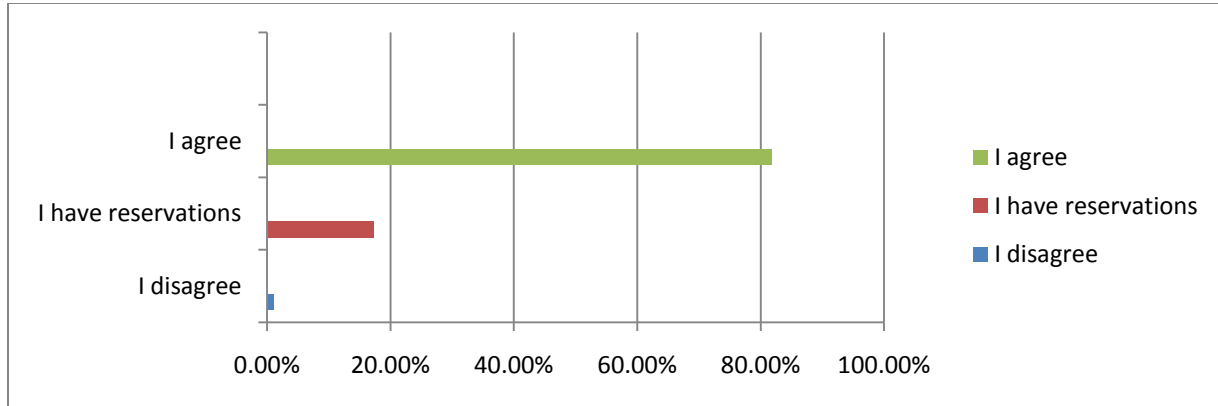
Recommendations: Set #7	Responsibility	Timelines
a. <b>To make it possible for the AGM to take note of an emergent situation that has arisen after Dec 15, there will be a category termed Urgent Resolutions which can be proposed by the groups established in Recommendation #4.</b>		
b. The action proposed in the resolution must be limited to advising the member congregations and recommending that if they concur, they take appropriate action individually.		

Recommendations: Set #7	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>c. Proposers of an Urgent Resolution must submit their motion to the Executive Director as soon as possible, but no later than 6 p.m. seven days before the AGM is to occur. Consent (from 25 individuals as specified in Recommendation #4) may be gathered through electronic means.</p>		
<p>d. To avoid redrafting at the AGM and save time there, the draft resolution must be reviewed by the Resolutions Advisory Committee. If there is time, copies must be distributed in advance to the delegates, or if time does not permit, it must be made available at the time of registration.</p>		
<p>e. The Urgent Resolution will be debated and voted on in the usual manner, and can be substantively amended during debate, as it has not been distributed to member congregations in the normal process.</p>		
<p>f. If it is approved by a majority vote of the delegates voting on it, the CUC Board shall promptly communicate to the member congregations the recommendations contained in the resolution. Those member congregations and communities that endorse the positions proposed in the Urgent Resolution will take appropriate action; those that do not will have the option of not taking action.</p>	CUC Board	As soon as possible after AGM
<p>g. Matters of governance are not within the purview of this Study Group. We acknowledge, however, that at times the CUC President may take action or make a public statement in the name of CUC on a matter of important current interest. By proposing a method for the delegates to approve an Urgent Resolution we do not mean it to suggest any limitation on the President's authority.</p>		

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #8

**A Resolutions Committee will be established to provide support and assistance to drafters of a motion with wording and process.**

Survey Responses:



Observations:

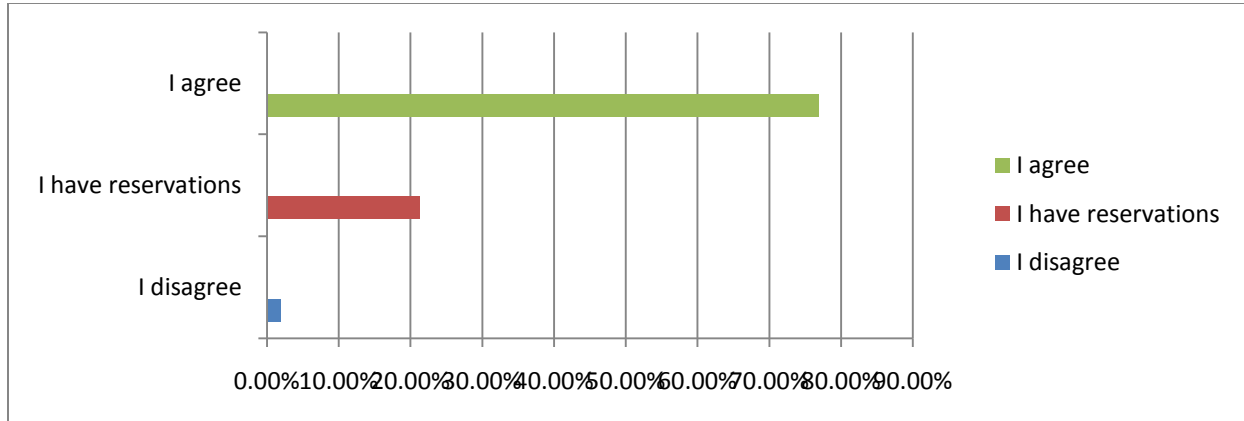
- A high proportion of respondents agreed with the establishment of a Resolutions Committee.
- Some expressed concern that the process would be embroiled in too much formality.
- There were questions about the function of such a committee – concern was expressed that its role should not be to approve or support resolutions.

Recommendations: Set #8	Responsibility	Timelines
a. <b>The establishment of a Resolutions Advisory Committee, which will include the CUC's Parliamentarian and the Social Responsibility Liaison. The function of this committee will be to provide support and assistance to drafters of a motion with wording and process.</b> The existence of a Resolutions Committee will help ensure consistency in terms of the resolutions being presented. Its role is not to veto or approve the passage of a resolution.	CUC board	Jun 30/11
b. The existence of, and contacts for, such a committee will be made known to member congregations.	CUC staff	Annually

## RECOMMENDATIONS: #9

The proposers of a resolution should consult with the Resolutions Committee, the Board’s Social Responsibility Liaison, the CUC Parliamentarian, or with others as appropriate.

Survey Responses:



Observations:

- c. There was general agreement, with the proviso that proponents would receive information with process and wording, and not a veto or approval of the motion.
- d. There were suggestions to establish an electronic forum, and to ensure that the resources are clearly and consistently provided to CUC member congregations.

Recommendations: Set #8	Responsibility	Timelines
a. In all cases, for advice on procedure, all proponents are encouraged to consult with the Resolutions Advisory Committee, which includes the CUC Parliamentarian and the board’s SR Liaison. In order to ensure an efficient journey for a motion on its way to the AGM, it is practical to consult with those who are versed in the procedures.	All proposers	Prior to Dec 15
b. An electronic forum should be established for proponents of resolutions, in order to have a common space for discussion and feedback.	CUC board	Aug 30/11
c. The resolutions support mechanisms should be made clearly known to member congregations.	CUC staff	Annually

## APPENDIX A

### RESOLUTIONS PROCESS SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES February 2011

1. **Please tell us your name** (optional but preferred.)  
109 respondents provided their names.

2. **Please tell us if you are responding as:**

a. A Congregation	1.5%
b. A Community	0.8%
c. An Individual	97.7%

3. **Have you or a group you are part of previously submitted a resolution to the AGM?**

a. Yes	25.6%
b. No	74.4%

4. **Have you attended a CUC AGM (the business sessions of the Annual Conference and Meeting)?**

a. No	35.6%
b. 1-3 AGMs	43.9%
c. 3 or more AGMs	20.5%

5. **Please tell us your experience with the resolutions process currently in use:**

	Not at all	Some-what	Very much	Don't know N/A
1. I understand the role of a delegate at the AGM	7.9%	4.9%	43.3%	3.9%
2. I know where to find information about the resolution process	22.4%	47.2%	24.0%	6.4%
3. I understand how the voting process works	22.0%	35.8%	36.6%	5.7%
4. The current process for making amendments is effective	12.0%	32.8%	9.6%	45.6%
5. Our congregation's delegates have enough information to make sound voting decisions	25.4%	27.8%	12.7%	34.1%
6. I know how to write a resolution	31.5%	35.4%	19.7%	13.4%

	Not at all	Some-what	Very much	Don't know N/A
7. I am clear about how a resolution is employed after it is approved	38.6%	31.5%	14.2%	15.7%
8. My congregation has a process for selecting delegates	15.3%	37.9%	21.0%	25.8%
9. The timelines for submission are practical for my congregation	6.6%	24.6%	12.3%	56.6%
10. My congregation is knowledgeable about upcoming resolutions at the AGM	38.2%	25.2%	8.9%	27.6%
11. I know who to submit a resolution to	31.7%	27.0%	19.8%	21.4%

**6. It is important to establish one comprehensive and easily understood procedure for proposing resolutions, irrespective of its subject matter or its proponents.**

*Rationale:* The CUC has an existing procedure for the introduction of social responsibility resolutions or those that arise from a Study Group. However, this procedure does not include a process for introducing resolutions concerning other matters not related to social responsibility. For example, a motion to change the rules of order would fall outside of the current process and adhere to different timelines. Having a single protocol for all types of resolutions would provide consistency and minimize confusion.

I agree	65.7%
I have some reservations	30.3%
I do not agree	4.0%

**7. A resolution that is proposed in the normal course of events must be submitted to the Board by December 15 prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented, so that it can be distributed to member congregations.**

*Rationale:* Congregations need sufficient time for their members to consider the resolution, suggest amendments, and discuss possible impacts of the proposal if approved at the Annual General Meeting.

I agree	62.9%
I have some reservations	32.4%
I do not agree	4.8%

8. **If the proponents of a resolution decide to amend their proposal to reflect received feedback, they must provide the amended version to the Board for distribution no later than March 15 prior to the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented.**

*Rationale:* To ensure democratic involvement, it is essential for congregations and communities to have sufficient time to consider the exact proposal, its purpose and possible impact, and to instruct their delegates.

I agree	72.4%
I have some reservations	23.8%
I do not agree	3.8%

9. **A resolution concerning any subject matter may be proposed by any of the following:**

- a. **A Study Group established by an AGM resolution**
- b. **The CUC Board**
- c. **A member congregation**
- d. **An existing Social Responsibility Monitoring Group**
- e. **25 active members of 3 member congregations from at least 3 of the 4 CUC regions**

*Rationale:* These seem the broadest reasonable methods for initiating a resolution.

I agree	74.8%
I have some reservations	22.3%
I do not agree	2.9%

10. **Each proposed resolution must include an explicit statement of what action is desired to be taken, by whom, and by when.**

*Rationale:* It is desirable for a clear-cut action plan to be proposed, with designated areas of accountability. The CUC's resolution process is a way for members to facilitate action, and to view it as the start of a process for effecting change.

I agree	90.1%
I have some reservations	8.9%
I do not agree	1.0%

11. **A resolution that has been distributed in the usual course of this procedure may not be substantively amended at the Annual General Meeting.**

*Rationale:* A substantive amendment is one that would change the meaning of the original resolution that had been distributed to the congregations for consideration. The CUC's commitment to the democratic process requires that member congregations have the final say in out movement.

I agree	65.4%
I have some reservations	28.8%
I do not agree	5.8%

12. **To make it possible for the AGM to take note of an emergent situation that has arisen after December 15, there will be a category termed “urgent” motions which can be proposed by the previously stated groups. This category of “urgent motions” is designed to facilitate actions by member congregations and individual members of the CUC. These motions can incite the CUC to facilitate action by its members but cannot direct the CUC to take a position on the matter.**

*Rationale:* At times, important matters on which action would be desirable may arise too late to be addressed through the usual resolutions procedure. This exceptional procedure would make some action possible in this unusual circumstance. This proposal encourages action by member congregations and individuals, and enables the CUC to use its resources to facilitate action by others. Thus, this does not undermine the democratic principles of ensuring proper consultation by member congregations in the resolutions process. An “urgent” motion, if passed, reflects the opinion of the delegates present at the meeting, but does not constitute CUC policy and is not to be disseminated as such.

I agree	63.7%
I have some reservations	30.4%
I do not agree	5.9%

13. **A Resolutions Committee should be established, which will include the CUC’s Parliamentarian. The function of this committee will be to provide support and assistance to drafters of a motion with wording and process.**

*Rationale:* The existence of a Resolutions Committee will help ensure consistency in terms of the resolutions being presented, and support for those seeking to propose a resolution.

I agree	81.7%
I have some reservations	17.3%
I do not agree	1.0%

14. **In preparing a resolution concerning a matter of social responsibility, the proponents should consult with the Board’s Social Responsibility Liaison and the relevant Social Responsibility Monitoring Group, or if there is no relevant Monitoring Group, with the combined chairs of the SR Monitoring Groups. In all cases, for advice on procedure, all proponents should consult with the Resolutions Committee (if established) or the CUC Parliamentarian.**

*Rationale:* In order to ensure an efficient journey for a motion on its way to the AGM, it is practical to consult with those who are versed in the procedures.

I agree	76.9%
I have some reservations	21.2%
I do not agree	1.9%



## **APPENDIX B**

### **RESOLUTIONS INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR CONGREGATIONS**

1. Resolutions Process and Timelines
2. Guideline for Preparing Resolutions
3. Sample Resolutions
4. Action Plan for Proposers
5. Feedback Template for Congregations
6. Endorsement Form for Urgent Resolutions

## APPENDIX B-1

### CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL Resolutions Process

#### APPLICABILITY OF THIS POLICY

This procedure is applicable to all resolutions and motions that are intended to be discussed and approved at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Canadian Unitarian Council, except motions relating to parliamentary and statutory procedures at such a meeting.

#### WHO MAY PROPOSE A RESOLUTION?

A resolution may be proposed by any one of the following (“the Proposers”):

- a) The CUC Board;
- b) A Study Group established by resolution approved at a CUC General Meeting for the express purpose of recommending such a resolution covering the topic in question;
- c) An existing Social Responsibility Monitoring Group that is responsible for the topic in question, with at least 3 active members;
- d) A member congregation; or
- e) Twenty-five individuals who are members at least three different member congregations located in at least three of the four CUC Regions.

In the cases of a) through d), the Proposers must submit to the Executive Director a statement signed by the presiding officer of the group(s) involved, certifying that the resolution has been approved by a majority of the members of the Proposers’ group in a duly called meeting (held in person or by electronic means). In the case of e,) the Proposers must submit to the Executive Director a statement of support from each of the individual members, and a statement from the relevant member congregations, stating that the individual supporters are members of that member congregation. This information can be gathered electronically.

#### HOW MUST A RESOLUTION BE SUBMITTED?

1. In considering a resolution, the Proposers are encouraged to consult with the Resolutions Advisory Committee ([resolutions@cuc.ca](mailto:resolutions@cuc.ca)) for assistance with process and wording.
2. The Proposers must cause to be delivered to the Executive Director one copy of the proposed resolution, not later than **December 15** prior to the Annual General Meeting at which it will be presented, so that it can be distributed to member congregations. A sample resolution is appended.

## RESOLUTIONS PROCESS TIMELINES

### Prior to Dec 15

Consideration of issues for resolutions at AGM  
Proponents consult with Resolutions Advisory Group & draft resolution

### December 15

Resolutions submitted to CUC’s Executive Director

### January 15

Resolutions are distributed to congregations

### January 15 - February 28

Congregations discuss resolutions, delegate selection & voting decisions

### February 28

All proposed amendments must be submitted to Proposers to be eligible for consideration

### February 28 - March 10

Proposers consider feedback

### March 10

Proposers send resolution in final form to Executive Director

### March 15

Amended resolutions are distributed to congregations

### March 15 – AGM

Congregations discuss amended resolutions & revise voting decisions if necessary

### Urgent Resolutions

For matters arising after December 15: submit to Executive Director as soon as possible but no later than 6 p.m. seven days before the AGM is to occur

3. The Proposers must submit an explicit action plan appended to the Resolution, stating what action is desired to be taken, by whom, and by when.

#### WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN?

Not later than **the first week in January** of that year, the Executive Director will arrange for the resolution and the action plan to be distributed to all member congregations and to the Board, soliciting consideration and feedback.

Not later than **February 28** of that year, member congregations and the Board must submit to the Proposers written comments, suggestions, and other feedback concerning the proposed resolution, in order for the amendments to be eligible for consideration.

Not later than **March 10** of that year, the Proposers must advise the Executive Director in writing whether, in consideration of the feedback that has been received, they wish to amend the wording of the resolution, continue to propose it unchanged, or withdraw it entirely (in which latter case no further action will be taken concerning it.) If the Proposers wish to amend the resolution, it must be submitted in final form on this date.

Not later than **March 15** of that year, the Executive Director must distribute to the member congregations copies of the amended resolutions, if any.

N.B.: If an Annual General Meeting is scheduled at any time other than the month of May, the dates in this procedure must be adjusted accordingly, and timely notice of the change provided to the member congregations. This draft policy applies only to proposals made at an Annual General Meeting. When calling any Special General Meeting, the Board will announce relevant dates and timelines for resolutions to be considered.

#### **URGENT RESOLUTIONS**

##### **Procedure:**

Occasionally a matter arises too late for a resolution concerning it to follow the normal procedure, but is important enough to warrant attention and action by the delegates at the Annual General Meeting. For this situation an extraordinary procedure is provided for what will be termed an Urgent Resolution.

An Urgent Resolution may be proposed by any of the same five groups that may propose an ordinary resolution. The action proposed in the resolution must be limited to advising the member congregations and recommending that if they concur, they take appropriate action individually.

Proposers of an Urgent Resolution shall submit their motion to the Executive Director **as soon as possible, but no later than 6 p.m. seven days before the AGM is to occur.** Consent (from 25 individuals as specified under “Proposers”) may be gathered through electronic means.

The motion shall be accompanied by a statement as to why it is urgent, why it was not known of before the closing date for regular motions, and what immediate action steps are recommended for congregations.

To avoid redrafting at the AGM and save time there, the proposers are strongly encouraged to have the draft reviewed by the Resolutions Advisory Committee. If there is time, copies must be distributed in advance to the delegates, or if time does not permit, it must be made available at the time of registration.

When the Urgent Resolution is moved at the AGM, the presiding officer must make a ruling as to whether the matter arose too late to follow the normal procedure. Of course, like all rulings, this ruling is subject to appeal of the delegates.

The Urgent Resolution is debated and voted on in the usual manner, except that because it has not been distributed to the member congregations, it can be substantively amended during debate. If it is approved by a majority vote of the delegates voting on it, the CUC Board promptly communicates to the member congregations the recommendations contained in the resolution.

At times the CUC President may take action or make a public statement in the name of CUC on a matter of important current interest.

## **STUDY GROUP PROCEDURE**

Whenever a resolution provides for referring a question to a Study Group for a one or two-year study process, the following guidelines apply:

- a. The resolution shall name either the initial members of the Study Group or, in the case where the reference is to an existing committee or monitoring group designated to act as a Study Group, its chair.
- b. The resolution shall specify whether the Study Group is to furnish its final report at the first or second next succeeding Annual General Meeting.
- c. In the latter case, the Study Group shall, at the first next succeeding Annual General Meeting, submit an interim report and organize a workshop on the subject of the motion.
- d. In the case where the members of the Study Group are named in the motion, a member wishing to resign shall furnish a written resignation to the Study Group Chair; and a further member or members may be added from time to time with the consent of at least two thirds of the existing members. The Study Group Chair shall keep the CUC Board's Social Responsibility Liaison and the Executive Director informed of such changes.
- e. If the Chair of the Study Group resigns, s/he shall furnish a written resignation to the CUC Board's Social Responsibility Liaison and the Executive Director. A succeeding chair shall be approved by the CUC Board.
- f. In the case where the members of the Study Group are not named in the motion, the named chair shall keep the Executive Director informed of the composition of the Study Group.
- g. The Study Group shall, in the conduct of its activities, adhere to the principles set out in the CUC document entitled *The Principles and Sources of Our Religious Faith*.
- h. The Study Group shall study the question referred to it, provide educational and discussion materials to the member congregations of the CUC, encourage feedback from them, and compile results.
- i. A Study Group shall not be obliged to return with a resolution if, after study, it does not believe one is appropriate. In the event that a resolution will not be forthcoming, the Study Group shall report this conclusion and the reasons for it to the Board through the CUC

Board's Social Responsibility Liaison and the Executive Director and later to the Annual General Meeting. Subsequently, a report shall also be distributed to the congregations.

j. Any motions that the Study Group proposes to submit with its final report (not exceeding four in number, unless the president of the CUC agrees otherwise) shall be furnished to the CUC Board's Social Responsibility Liaison and the Executive Director not later than the December 15 preceding the Annual General Meeting at which the report is to be considered, for circulation to the member congregations of the CUC.

k. The Study Group shall revise its resolution(s) based on the feedback it receives from the congregations and shall then provide the revised text to the Executive Director for dissemination by March 15.

l. The Study Group is encouraged, in the drafting of its motions, to consult the Resolutions Advisory Committee.

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## APPENDIX B-1

### RESOLUTIONS NOTES

#### HOW WILL A RESOLUTION THAT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS BE HANDLED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING?

The resolution must be listed in the agenda as an item of business after conclusion of the Reports prescribed for an AGM. The presiding officer will grant the floor to a representative of the Proposers, who will move adoption of the resolution. That individual will have precedence to speak first to the motion.

The wording of the resolution may not be amended substantively, although procedural motions (classified as Incidental, Privileged, and Supplementary), will be in order in regard to it. For this purpose, a substantive amendment would be one that would materially change the meaning or effect of the resolution, or that would materially enlarge or diminish its scope.

If the resolution would have the effect of amending By Laws, or of rescinding something that has been previously approved at a General Meeting, approval of the resolution will require affirmative votes of not less than two-thirds of the votes cast by the delegates on the matter. For all other resolutions, approval will require affirmative votes of a majority of the votes cast by the delegates on the matter.

#### CALCULATING A MAJORITY OF A TWO-THIRDS VOTE

A majority is some number greater than one-half. (It is not “50%-plus-one”, which is actually one more than a majority if the total number of votes cast is an odd number.) There is a simple way for a Chair to ascertain whether there has been a majority in a vote that is not taken by ballot. If there are more votes in the affirmative than in the negative, it was a majority vote.

A two-thirds vote (not a “two-thirds majority”, which is a contradiction of terms) has occurred when the affirmative votes are at least twice the number of negative votes.

#### CALCULATING A MAJORITY OR A TWO-THIRDS VOTE BY BALLOT

When a vote is taken by ballot, blank ballots are sometimes deposited in the ballot boxes. They are disregarded for all purposes. If the ballot has been marked improperly, for example being marked for more nominees than positions to be filled, it is a “spoiled” or “illegal” ballot. These spoiled/illegal ballots must be counted in the total of votes cast.

If there are spoiled/illegal ballots, to be a majority vote there must be more affirmative votes than the total of the negative plus spoiled/illegal ballots.

To constitute a two-thirds vote, the affirmative ballots must equal at least twice the combined total of negative ballots plus spoiled/illegal ballots.

#### ABSTENTIONS

In taking a vote, the Chair does not call for abstentions, and they are not reflected in any counts. The only reason for there to be any abstentions, is when someone entitled to vote has a conflict of interest and for that reason the Minutes should show not having participated in debate or vote.

## THE MEANING OF “SUBSTANTIVE” WHEN APPLIED TO A MOTION OR AN AMENDMENT

A *substantive motion* is one that has a significant meaning outside of procedural matters. It usually expresses an opinion, directs or suggests an action, or establishes policy, or creates a subordinate body or appoints individuals to one. When a substantive motion has been distributed in advance of the meeting to delegates, the extent to which it can be amended at the meeting is limited. An amendment that would be substantive would not be in order, and should be formally ruled “Out of Order” by the Chair. After the proposed wording has been distributed in advance, it cannot be amended in such a way as to introduce an unrelated material question that was not part of the conceptual thrust that had been distributed. To do so would vitiate the effect of distributing the proposed wording in advance - alerting the delegates that the particular issue would be discussed, allowing them to consider the details of the proposal deliberately and, if desired, to consulting with their congregations or with other individuals.

There is no precise line between a substantive and a non-substantive amendment. The decision falls to the Chair in each instance, subject, of course, to appeal and decision by the assembly.

## APPENDIX B-2

### GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#### **The first step**

The reason you may be thinking of preparing a resolution is that you wish to accomplish something. It is important, therefore, to focus clearly on what that “something” is. Experience has shown that one of the best ways of ensuring clarity is to decide on one, two, or at most three, key points and to put them in writing, probably in point form.

If you will be working with others in formulating the resolution, before you start to draft it, you should make sure all of those who will be involved have agreed explicitly on what those points are, and how they are worded.

#### **Format of a resolution**

A resolution is a type of motion, set in a more formal shape. In a meeting it is handled exactly as any other motion, usually being moved and seconded, debated, and then voted on.

The operative words of a resolution commence with a clause headed by “RESOLVED that”, (which means to determine or decide).

Sometimes it is desirable to include information to explain the background of the resolution and to set it in a context. If so, an explanation may be placed before the resolution. Traditionally, each clause of such an explanation was headed by “WHEREAS.” Unfortunately, this format sometimes led people mistakenly to think that words in this form affected the meaning and effect of the resolution. In part to avoid this misunderstanding, a more modern form of resolution dispenses with all WHEREAS clauses, and if necessary for understanding, replaces it with a section entitled “Background,” as is illustrated in Example Two that follows.

#### **Body of the resolution**

- Every resolution should clearly distinguish between facts and opinion.  
*Example:* “*This Act is the first to....*”  
*NOT:* “*This ideologically driven Act...*”
- Each concept or separate idea should form a separate clause.
- For clarity and ease of reference, it is best to number the clauses.
- Each clause should end with a semicolon, and the next-to-the-last should end with the word “and”.
- There should be no period except at the end, so the whole resolution constitutes one extended sentence.
- For clarity, you should ensure that all wording is in active, not passive voice; (that is, the active person or thing should be the subject that acts, not the object that is acted upon), and the person or group that is to act is identified.  
*Example:* “*...when the member congregations have authorized the change ....*”



*NOT: "when the change has been authorized...."*

- If you intend to require something to be done, and are not just making a suggestion, avoid the use of "should" (which is advisory only).

*Example: "...The Board must distribute ...."*

*NOT: "The Board should distribute...."*

- Avoid the use of acronyms unless the correct name is first included with the acronym in brackets following it, so the acronym can then be used in subsequent parts of the resolution.

*Example: "RESOLVED that the Canadian Unitarian Council ("CUC") issue a press release in each jurisdiction in which there is a CUC member congregation...."*

- Numbers can be written out, or stated in digits. There is no reason to employ the archaic form of "two (2)".
- Every resolution must include one or more specific actions that will be directed if the resolution is adopted. Each action must state who will do what and when. If a committee or other body is to be created, the method of its appointment, and if desired its composition, should be included.

*Example: [See the second clause of the first Sample Resolution]*

## **Background**

- If it is desirable to provide background information for context, it should be brief, factual, and restricted to matters that are not generally known by those who will be considering the resolution.
- The Background statement does not offer arguments to support the resolution.  
*Example: [See the second of the Sample Resolutions]*
- Matters appearing in the Background segment do not affect the interpretation or the effect of the resolution; it has no more effect than if it were in a separate document from the resolution.
- As in the resolution, it is important to differentiate unequivocally between fact and opinion.
- Punctuation is the same as in the resolution proper.
- When the resolution is proposed to the Annual General Meeting, the body of the resolution will be discussed and ultimately voted on; only then if there is time and the delegates wish it, will the Background be placed on the floor for discussion and vote.

## APPENDIX B-3

### SAMPLE RESOLUTION ONE

RESOLVED that Board of the Canadian Unitarian Council (“CUC”)—

- 1) establish a permanent office in Brussels, Belgium, to monitor and to the extent feasible to influence the European Parliament;
- 2) select and employ, at competitive salaries, three full-time individuals to staff the office;
- 3) open this office not later than the December 1 immediately subsequent to the Annual General Meeting at which this resolution is adopted; and
- 4) develop and monitor a five-year budget for this purpose, applying not more than 20% annually from the grant that the CUC has received from the Unitarian Universalist congregation located on Ross Inlet, Antarctica.

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### SAMPLE RESOLUTION TWO

Background:

- A) At its Annual General Meeting (“AGM” in 1964 the Canadian Unitarian Council (“CUC”) authorized the creation of a Study Group to consider the effect of clear cutting on adjacent water courses; and
- B) The survivors of the Study Group have been diligently engaged in reading all of the relevant literature, preparatory to making this proposal to the CUC AGM.

RESOLVED that in view of the widely reported deleterious effects of clear cutting of timber adjacent to water courses, the Canadian Unitarian Council (“CUC”)—

- 1) adopts as policy its opposition to all present and future legislation and regulation that permits the harvesting or other removal of trees within 100 meters of any standing body of water or flowing water course;
- 2) directs the CUC President to write in the name of CUC to all cabinet ministers and Opposition critics informing them of this policy; and
- 3) suggests to all CUC member congregations that in view of the urgency of this matter they take steps to inform their members of this policy, and to suggest that they consider writing individually to their respective Members of Parliament urging the enactment of relevant protective legislation.

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APPENDIX B-4

ACTION PLAN FOR PROPOSERS OF RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Action Plan on Resolution

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We propose the following actions to support our resolution:

Proposed Action		Details	Who Responsible	Suggested Completion Date
For Sponsor of Resolution				
For CUC				
For _____ Monitoring Group				
For Member Congregations				

## APPENDIX B-5

### FEEDBACK TEMPLATE FOR CONGREGATIONS

#### Resolution Feedback Form

This form is designed for congregations to easily provide structured feedback to proponents of a resolution for a general meeting of the Canadian Unitarian Council. We invite you to respond to the following questions. Your responses, along with those from other congregations, will assist the proponent of the resolution in preparing a final version of the resolution for a vote at the upcoming annual general meeting (AGM).

The final version of the resolution will be circulated to all congregations by mid-March of each year so that your congregation can engage in further discussion about the resolution and decide how you may wish to instruct your delegates to vote on the resolution at the AGM.

<b>Your Congregation</b>	
<b>Congregational Contacts</b>	<i>Name of contact person(s):</i> <i>Email address(es):</i> <i>Phone number(s):</i>
<b>Resolution</b>	
Is the proposed resolution relevant and timely?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Comments:</i>
Does it address an issue that is important or significant?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Comments:</i>
Does the resolution address or connect to one or more of the CUC principles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Comments:</i>
Do you support the principles underlying the resolution?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Comments:</i>
Does the resolution propose appropriate, reasonable and realistic actions for the CUC, member congregations and others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>What actions to you believe it proposes for your Congregation?</i> <i>Is your Congregation interested or willing to get involved?</i>

Your Congregation	
Is the wording clear and concise?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Comments:</i>
Do you have any specific suggestions to improve or amend the resolution?	<i>Please elaborate:</i>
Other comments?	

APPENDIX B-6

ENDORSEMENT FORM FOR URGENT RESOLUTIONS

Urgent Resolution Endorsement

I \_\_\_\_\_, member of  
(name)

\_\_\_\_\_ support the resolution on \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of congregation)

\_\_\_\_\_.  
(name of resolution)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that \_\_\_\_\_ is a  
(minister/president) (name)

member of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(name of congregation)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_