

Survey Results Regarding UUCA's Mission, End Statements, and ARAOMC Resolution

Report to the Board of Trustees

By The Board Subcommittee on ARAOMC Survey

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In autumn of 2021, the UUCA Board decided to conduct an assessment of how well the congregation was progressing in its commitment to the [ARAOMC Resolution](#) that had been adopted on May 15, 2016.

The Board was also interested in determining how well the congregation was doing in making progress towards the Mission Statement and Ends Statements that the congregation adopted in May 2021.

UUCA mission statement:

Inspired by our diverse faith community, we affirm these values: Wonder and Awe, Love and Compassion, and Courageous Engagement.

At UUCA, we are transforming lives through courageous action and soulful connection.

End Statements:

UUCA is a vibrant, innovative hub of engagement for Atlanta and beyond, where together we:

1. Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously in the world.
2. Ground ourselves in creative, innovative worship and spiritual practice to nourish and heal our souls.
3. Advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it.
4. Advance the goals of our Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Multiculturalism resolution.
5. Create connected community that ministers to one another's physical, spiritual, and relational needs.
6. Grow leaders rooted in and committed to our Unitarian Universalist values.
7. Cultivate and embrace an increasingly diverse community of faith that will transform and enrich our congregation.
8. Connect with resilience across differences, honoring our Covenant of Healthy Relationships in all the work we do.

The Survey

A survey was developed and sent to leaders of as many UUCA groups as the Task Force was able to identify the leader and contact information. Follow up was done to obtain responses from as many groups as possible. A total of 29 unique responses were received. If more than one response was received from a group, their responses were combined.

The survey ([Click here to see the survey](#)) was based on the ARAOMC Resolution and the mission and Ends Statements. Some Ends Statements and ARAOMC Resolution statements were shortened for the survey to make them easier to understand. Respondents were first asked to check those items that their group was engaged with (we refer to these responses as “check the box” responses). The respondents were then given the opportunity to describe how they were doing that.

For purposes of analysis, groups were categorized into 6 focus groups.

Administration

Board
Healthy Relations Com.
Nominating Com.
Project Phoenix
Stewardship
Endowment Fund
COVID Task Force
Multimedia AV Team
Kitchen Oversight
Finance Committee

Fellowship

Whitney Young Jr. Society
Women Empowered
Parent Support Group
Forever Young
NexGen

Ministry

Lay Ministers
Small Group Ministry
L'Chaim
Committee on
Ministry

Arts

Choirs
Movement Choir
PACT

Religious Education

Adult RE
Inquirers

Social Justice

Climate Action
Social Justice
Homeless Advocacy
Immigrant Action
Partners in Education

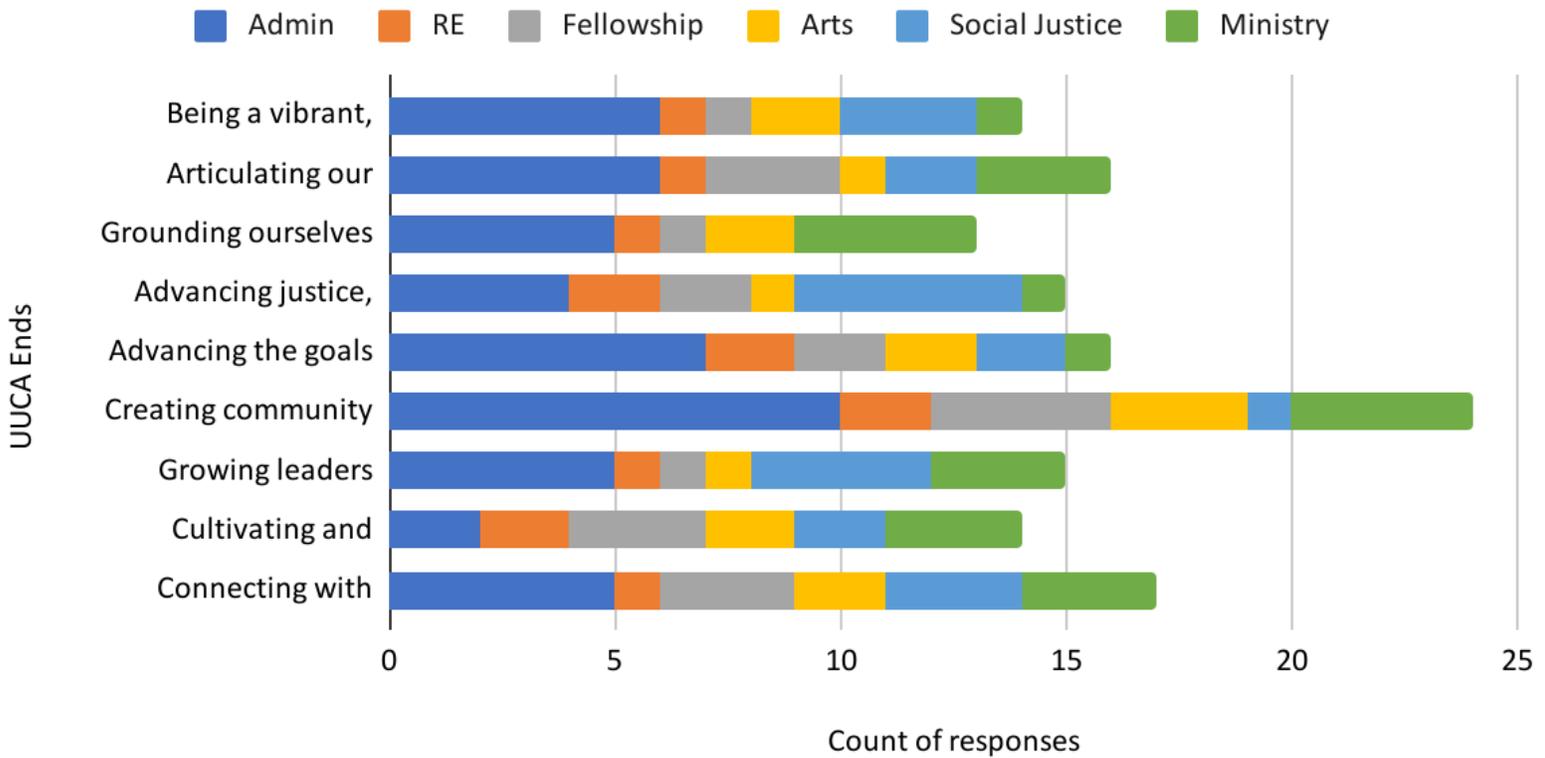
Check the Box Responses

We first summarize the “check the box” responses. The first bar chart below shows the responses to the Ends Statements and the second bar chart shows the responses to the ARAOMC statements.

The length of each bar reflects the number of respondents that checked each statement. The number of times someone representing one of the groups in a particular category checked a statement is reflected in the length of the respective colored bar segment. Note that the number of respondents differs across groups and thus one should not compare the lengths of the colored bars segments.

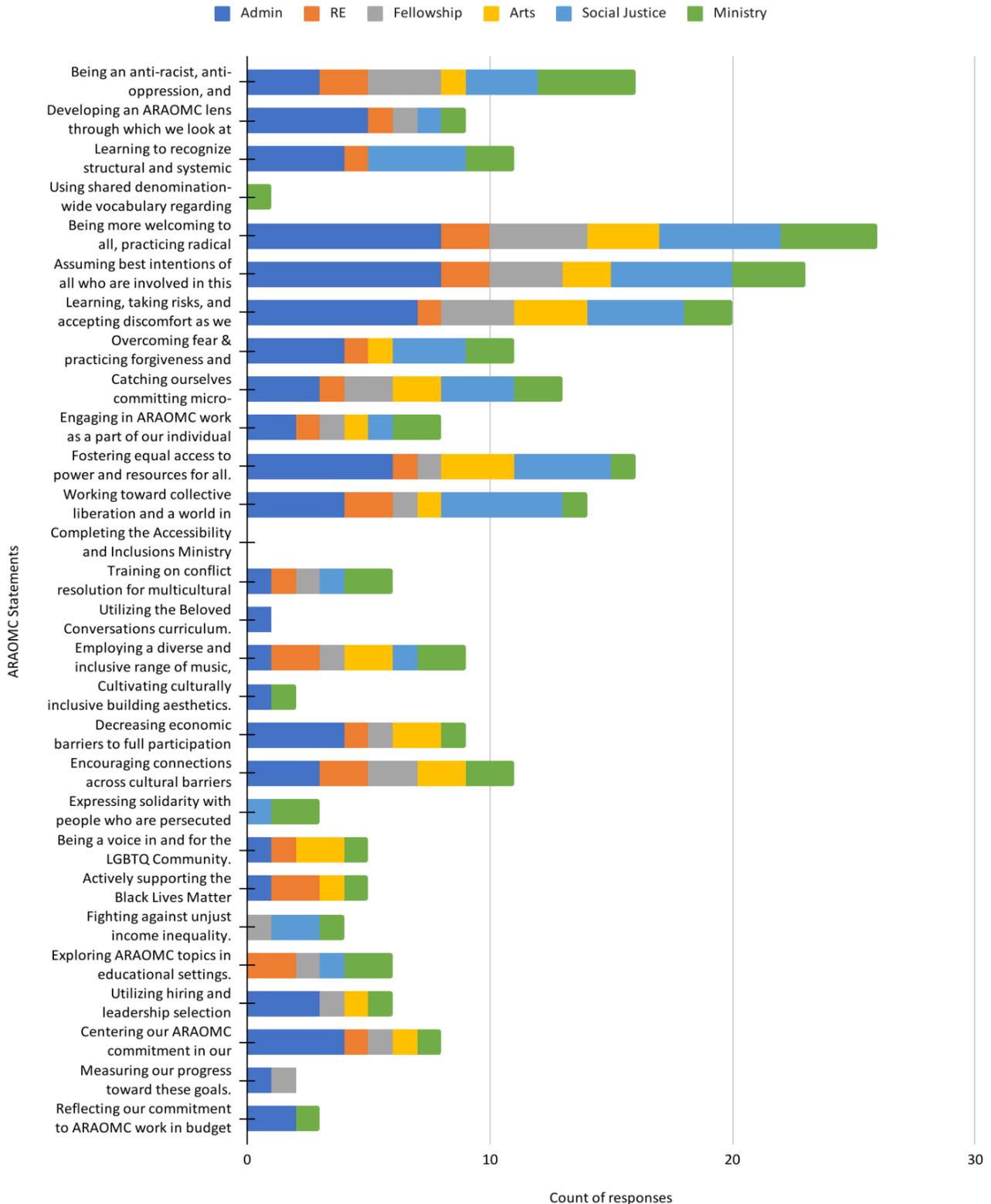
UUCA Work on Ends by Category

Total of 29 groups responded



ARAOMC Statements by Category

Total of 29 groups responded



Responses to Four Questions

The respondents were also asked the respondents to address four questions:

- In your opinion, how does your group/committee align with the UUCA mission statement?
- Please add any additional information about how your group embodies the UUCA End Statements.
- Please add any additional thoughts about how your group/committee embodies the spirit of the ARAOMC resolution.
- The Board is challenging all groups to go further and deeper in their ARAMOC commitments. With the ARAOMC resolution in mind, how can your group go further / deeper this year?

Given the number of responses, we selected a few to include in this report (The complete set of responses are available upon request.) The responses were lightly edited for length and readability.

QUESTION 1: In your opinion, how does your group/committee align with the UUCA mission statement?
Ministry Teams
The mission of Small Group Ministry is to guide and facilitate deep sharing in order to develop deep relationships and prepare participants for practicing deep listening in other parts of their lives.
Arts Teams
The UUCA music program actively presents diverse music from many cultural and religious sources. We also experience deep engagement and wonder as a congregation through our artistic performances.
Board Committees
Healthy Relations Committee supports healthy interactions between UUCA congregants.
Religious Education
Every Adult Religious Education course offering is presented and cultivated with intent to nurture love and compassion within our UUCA congregation and the greater

community at large. And provide opportunity for transforming lives and soulful connection by offering actionable next.
Social Justice Teams
Immigrant Action Team is attempting to establish deep and meaningful connections with organizations who support asylum seekers and refugees and with asylum seekers and refugees to show we see them and we care.
Social Justice Steering Team aligns closely with the mission statement in our relationship with each other, relationship with the congregation, and expanding relationships in the wider Atlanta community.
Partners in Education are in relationship with vulnerable members of our community, including children and youth, and learn together in solidarity with others that may be very different from us.
Fellowship Groups
Next Gen hopes to create soulful connection between our members through regular social interactions.
Through its subgroups, Women Empowered expands each person's wholeness, builds a community of women in a meaningful way, and reaches out to the larger community to be helpful.
Parent Support Group is dedicated to active listening, deep and authentic sharing, and cheering one another on on our journeys as caregivers to children.

QUESTION 2: Please add any additional information about how your group embodies the UUCA Ends statements.
Ministry Teams
Small Group Ministry creates community by building our groups with careful attention to the needs of individuals and of their groups and of the whole congregation. Identifying and developing leaders is an important function of the program.
Board Committees
The Board of Trustees has mainly been focused on advancing ARAOMC and completing the renovation project, and honoring our covenant of healthy relationships.
Religious Education

As an educational program, Adult Religious Education has the opportunity and guided intent to embody each of these ends statements by design. Our team is focused on providing relevant, requested, topical and timely resources for education and engagement through our program course curriculum, community classes and book clubs. Through these offerings and the Inquirers series, we hope to be a solid part of the foundation that lines the path from visitor to member to leader.

QUESTION 3: Please add any additional thoughts about how your group/committee embodies the spirit of the ARAOMC resolution.

Ministry Teams

Small Group Ministry creates monthly orders of service from source material developed by Soul Matters. The packets they provide often focus on or include issues related to racism, oppression, justice and equity. We use the materials judiciously and carefully consider how various elements will be experienced by people of different backgrounds. We have also adopted the practice of providing closed captioning of all of our meetings on Zoom by default.

The Committee on Ministry's conversations on healthy relations, inclusivity, equity, and diversity are frequent and complex and productive, and have been borne out in hiring decisions, worship topics, ARE curriculum, changes to the scope and definition of other committees and teams, etc.

Arts Teams

Since the music the choir presents is so central to UUCA it is an excellent and very visible avenue to present diverse music that serves our diverse worship services.

Religious Education

Inquirers introduces ARAOMC to new members, and include and discuss it during Lesson 6 (Social Justice)

Adult Religious Education is specifically committed to making sure we consistently offer course topics focused on ARAOMC objectives. ARE also nurtures the development of a whole community through courses on our relationships, our congregation, our faith movement, and our wider world.

Social Justice Teams

The Immigrant Action Team is attempting to support newly released Stewart detainees, the five asylum seekers housed in Columbia Presbyterian Church, Afghan refugees and those from other parts of the world who are being resettled in Atlanta.

Fellowship Groups

Women Empowerment has been active in women's issues: postcards to representatives, speakers, monthly food drives, clothing drives, personal hygiene, school supplies, working with Immigration Action Team, marching against gun rights expansion.

QUESTION 4: The Board is challenging all groups to go further and deeper in their ARAMOC commitments. With the ARAOMC resolution in mind, how can your group go further / deeper this year?

Ministry Teams

Small Group Ministry plans to focus on looking for diverse sources when pulling material for Orders of Service. If the materials provided by Soul Matters do not include enough diverse voices, we will seek them out in other sources. We'll continue to offer at least one zoom-based group for those who are unable to travel to in-person meetings. Finally, we plan to issue a survey for interest in a small group ministry specifically for people of color.

As the Lay Ministers become a larger presence in the UUCA Community, we could participate and lead workshops with some ARAOMC topics in mind. We could have a collective presence in BLM, LGBTQ events

Arts Teams

UUMoves plans on getting the AIM certification; receive training on conflict resolution in a multicultural setting; use the Beloved Conversations curriculum; centering ARAOMC in our presentation to the greater community; measure our progress towards these goals.

Religious Education

Adult Religious Education can keep the ARAOMC commitments and Ends statements in mind as a source for program year curriculum planning to ensure we're addressing the full range of ARAOMC objectives, whether as specific topics for course offerings or as the lens through which we present ARE classes. We can work to grow our community class programming to further enhance our ARAOMC commitments.

Social Justice Teams
The Immigrant Action Team can articulate these goals and seek out ARAOMC training as a team.
The Social Justice Steering Team can certainly share some of the material with our group and ask them for their ideas on how we can more deeply engage.
Homeless Advocacy would like to provide more advocacy opportunities and educational opportunities by hosting speakers for members of the UUCA to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons why people suffer from homelessness and how they can work to advocate for the changes to the system. Would also like to add the communities we support to the UUCA's giving fund.
Climate Action Team would like to increase participation in/with CAT within the congregation, especially those of varied religious background and cultures and people of color. Their voices are very under-represented in the environmental movement.
Fellowship Groups
Women Empowered can use personal story sharing to explore issues like "white privileges", being a secondary citizen as women, other world topics to encourage personal growth.
Parent Support Group I has few UUCA members of color in our group and would love to make sure that ours is a welcoming space to anyone who may want a little extra support as a parent.
Service Teams
PACT can provide more diverse programming as we ramp up for new building. More courageous and inclusive programming.
Multimedia team could each commit to keeping an eye out for aspects of our service presentation or content that seem to exclude rather than include (or that deny other ARAOMC goals), and speak up when such issues are noticed. We could also try to foster Multimedia team involvement from a broader diversity of volunteers (diversity in color, gender identity, age & more).

Discussion of Results

Regarding Ends Statements, there is general agreement across groups about the importance of Ends Statements, although not every group checked every Ends Statement.

The ARAOMC statements/commitments can be separated into two categories: the 9 statements that were checked by 10 or more respondents and the rest of the statements. The statements in the first category are:

1. Being an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and multiculturally competent congregation.
2. Being more welcoming to all, practicing radical hospitality.
3. Assuming best intentions of all who are involved in this work.
4. Learning, taking risks, and accepting discomfort as we work toward our goals.
5. Overcoming fear & practicing forgiveness and support of one another in the ARAOMC journey.
6. Catching ourselves committing micro-aggressions and change our ways.
7. Fostering equal access to power and resources for all.
8. Working toward collective liberation and a world in which everyone's needs are met.
9. Encouraging connections across cultural barriers within the congregation.

These are generally in the first 12 rows of the *ARAOMC Statements by Category* chart. These statements are either actions or commitments that would be taken even in the absence of the ARAOMC resolution (such as being anti-racist, welcoming, assuming best intentions, and being forgiving) and that do not require significant modifications in behavior.

The second set of statements/commitments in the *ARAOMC Statements by Category* chart were less frequently checked. These are more specific actions that either do not apply to a group or that require a conscious decision to implement the commitment. For example, there were 5 statements that were checked by zero, one or two groups

1. Using shared denomination-wide vocabulary regarding ARAOMC work, to foster communication.
2. Completing the Accessibility and Inclusions Ministry (AIM) certification.
3. Utilizing the Beloved Conversations curriculum.
4. Cultivating culturally inclusive building aesthetics.
5. Reflecting our commitment to ARAOMC work in budget & personal financial contributions.

These statements are not relevant to most of the groups. Most of the groups would not be expected to check the statement: "Employing a diverse and inclusive range of music, readings, and speakers" or "Fighting against unjust income inequality." However, groups for which such statements are relevant did check them. Other statements such as "Expressing solidarity with people who are persecuted because of their faith tradition" are commitments that require a dedicated effort to advance.

We believe that the results from the check the box statements suggest that the groups have demonstrated a commitment to the ARAOMC resolution.

The written responses are supportive of this conclusion. The comments imply that the groups take the Ends Statements and the ARAOMC resolution seriously. The fourth question, which asks how the groups might further advance the ARAOMC resolution, elicited some very thoughtful suggestions regarding what the groups will consider in advancing the ARAOMC resolution.

Next Steps

The first 11 statements in the ARAOMC resolution (i.e., what we “resolve” to do) are very broad statements and apply generally to all members and all groups. To advance these resolutions, we recommend that the Board appoint a committee to advance these 11 statements.

The objective of the committee would be to implement actions that could advance the resolution statements within the congregation and in the personal lives of congregants. (The function of this committee would be very different from the role of the original ARAOMC Council.)

The committee might do that by

- making the ARAOMC resolution more visible to the congregation, for example by including short clips about the resolution in the Weekly Update;
- organizing workshops, talks/lectures, and Adult Religious Education sessions;
- identifying recommended readings/references that help members and groups to implement the behaviors implied by the 11 statements.

The other 16 “commitment” statements are more specific and the responsibility for advancing the actions implied by the statement can be assumed by specific groups and individuals, including staff. The Board and Senior Minister should identify the appropriate individuals and groups to carry out this work and seek their involvement.