

Self – Discernment Exercise

For projects and groups



There are some initial steps that proposing organizers should consider so you can evaluate your options before committing your time and that of others. A process of discernment can help a project achieve success, whether by learning something new during this discovery phase, by realizing you have more flexibility about what success looks like, or by learning there are other similar efforts that can be joined instead of begun again in parallel.

1. Consider if your idea is clearly tied to an outcome. Outcomes represent the purpose of the church organization by identifying the results we hope to achieve. We want to put our efforts and resources towards those activities that further the goals of the organization. These outcomes are based on the “purposes” found in the UUC Bylaws.

UUC awakens its members to the personal or spiritual growth they seek, and inspires them to return the gifts of their transformation to UUC and their communities.

- * People feel welcomed into a caring church community.
- * People feel at peace and hopeful, and share those feelings with their families and the world.
- * People feel inspired to see, hear, and think in ways that deepen our understanding and expand our vision.
- * People feel strong enough in heart and mind to face the challenges they may encounter in life, and look to others for strength when they need it most.
- * People feel helpful to others in our community and beyond, sharing their energies and resources freely and in love, in living witness to our shared values.
- * People feel grateful for the deep liberal religious legacy of Unitarian Universalism and the promise of its principles.

2. Think deeply about your idea and try to identify the core goal you are trying to achieve. Is it reaching young people, is it reaching new members, is it being together quietly or actively, is it about learning more or doing more, is it this community or the larger community?
3. Ask yourself if your idea has some flexibility – could you be successful if it happened in more than one way?
4. If your idea or project worked before at UUC, what were its conditions for success, and do those conditions exist today?
5. Determine if your project or idea will have an impact on another program area at UUC (for example: schedule/room/leadership/funding/attendance conflict). How will you broker this in the larger church system?
6. Examine if your idea meets a wide range of need in the church. You might consider a simple and short survey in the service bulletin, Gateway or website to determine if the support for participating is there.
7. Discern whether this project empowers, supports and lifts participants and the congregation in a positive way.
8. Have you thought about what happens if you project starts off strong and tapers off in energy, or if it starts out slowly and gains momentum? What would be your next steps? And how would you feel sharing the achievement or admitting that the timing or emphasis was not meeting a need?
9. Ask a committee chair or staff person who might know something about your idea to hear if there are other similar efforts.