

# PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE WEEKLY UPDATE

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## Week 1: Adopting Partnership Governance

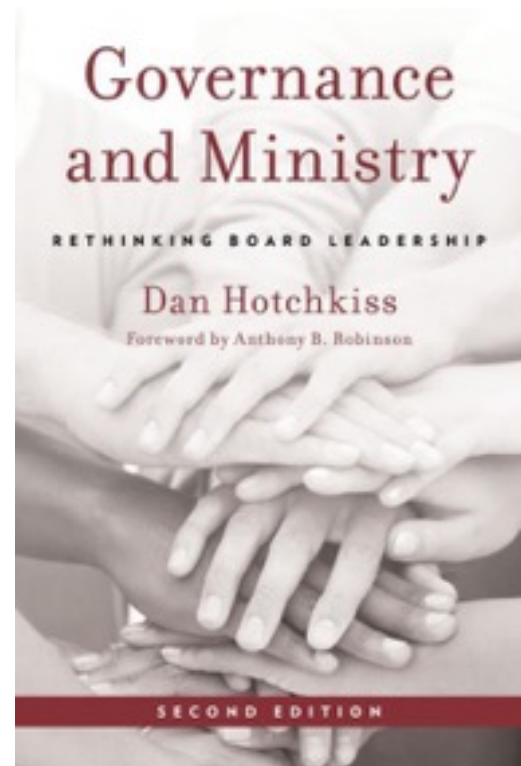
Hello members and friends of FUSIT! I'm Laura Free, President of the Board, and this is the first installment of the Partnership Governance Newsletter. (If you want the info here but don't want to read all of the text, go to the last page for a handy graphic that sums up this newsletter!)

For the next 6 weeks, I, or a member of the Partnership Governance Team will be sharing with you a different aspect of Partnership Governance — a system for structuring the operations of a mission-based non-profit organization like ours— that the Board and the Opportunities Initiative Organization Team have been working on adopting for the past few years. In these newsletters, I will explain in-depth what Partnership Governance is, why we have decided to implement it on a trial basis for the 2016-2017 church year at FUSIT, and give you all an update on the work that we've been doing (and are continuing to do) this summer as we prepare for this trial in the fall. In this issue, I'll address how we came to the decision to adopt Partnership Governance and tell you a bit about what's happening behind the scenes this summer.

### A Brief History of Our Evolution to Partnership Governance

Three years ago Mark Bernstein, a consultant from the UUA, came to visit FUSIT to help us think about where we were and where we wanted to be in the future as a Society. In response to the ideas raised in that weekend-long workshop, the Opportunities Initiative was formed, focusing on six separate aspects of our Society that we felt were chances for us to grow. One of the most critical of the six was the Organization group.

Over two years, this group of lay leaders evaluated the way things worked at FUSIT and sought a better way. Investigating other UU churches across the country, this group found that many of the most vibrant and growing congregations of our size had moved away from the standing-committee based model with a large governing board (as we have now) and instead adopted Policy-Based Governance (now called Partnership Governance) as a more effective, flexible, responsive, and dynamic governing structure. They recommended to the Board that we do so also. Last fall, the Board accepted this recommendation.



UU consultant Dan Hotchkiss's book, *Governance and Ministry*, has been indispensable as we evolve our structure.

## Beginning the Evolution

This summer, two groups are hard at work producing a **Board Policy Book**. The Board Policy Book is a short manual for the Board that lays out the boundaries for its work. These policies do things like: define a conflict of interest for Board members, determine when a Board member can be removed, lay out the relationships of the Board to the staff, and outline staff evaluation procedures, among many others. Essentially, policies define what the Board and Staff *can't do*, so that on the other side of those limits, there is greater freedom for Volunteers, the Board, and the Staff *to act*.

The Policy Development Group (PDG) consists of Fred Balfour, Dick Cogger, Oliver Habicht, Jim Skaley, Whitney Wiggins and occasionally Laura Free. This group has been working on the Staff Portion of the Board Policy Book. It is focusing on what relationships between the staff and volunteers should look like, and what tasks are delegated to the Staff, versus tasks delegated to the Board or volunteers. As of this week, they have drafted 3 of the 4 major sections of the policy book on Staff Relations.

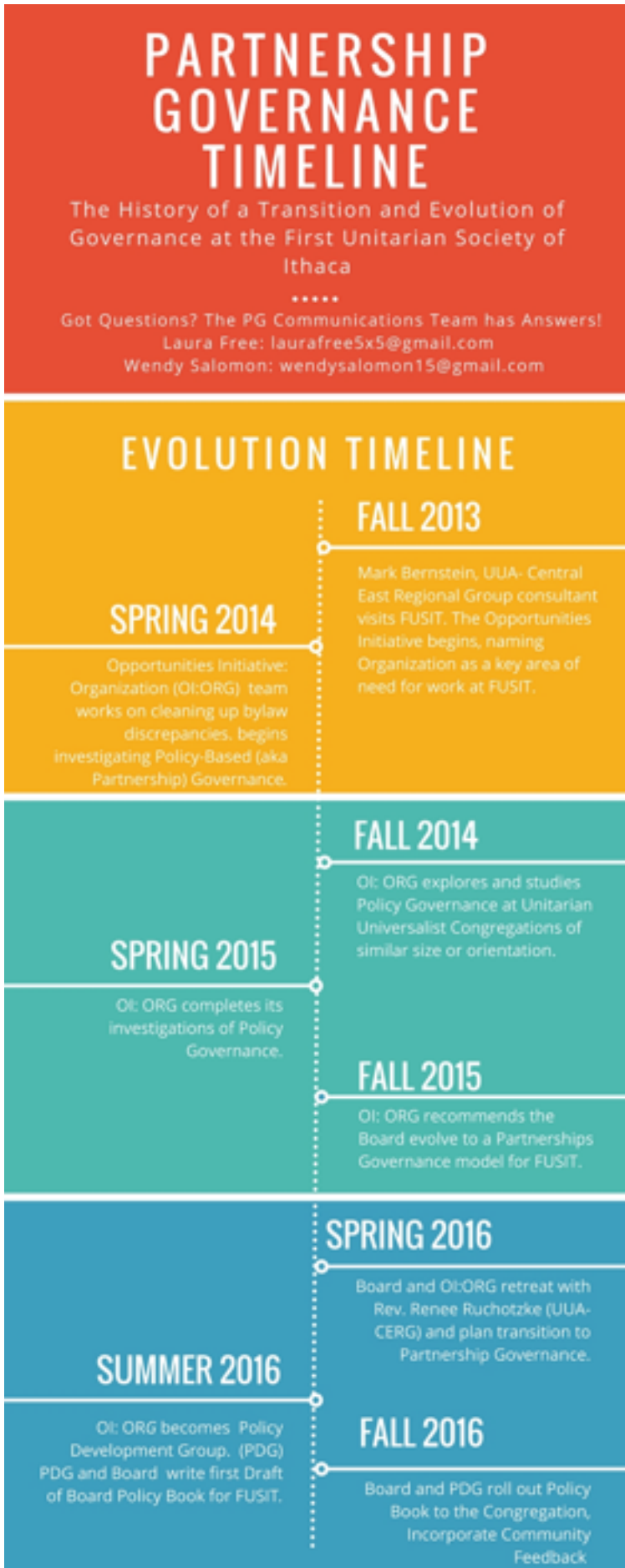
The Board of Trustees has been working on Board specific policies, adapting long-tested language provided by Hotchkiss to best fit the needs of FUSIT. All Board members have been participating in this work, so feel free to ask any one of us about it! As of this week, there are only 3 areas of Board Policy that remain to be addressed. We'll be working on those areas in the upcoming weeks.

Our timeline is tight. Given that we will be searching for a new settled minister this fall and spring, we will be implementing a DRAFT version of the Board Policy book starting in September. **In other words, we will begin Partnership Governance in the new church year.** This way, we can hammer out any kinks that appear in the process before the ministerial candidates begin to take a serious look at us early this winter.

To help us all work through the evolution to Partnership Governance, the Board and the Policy Development Group will present the results of their summer work and solicit feedback in two Forums after the services begin this fall. Forum #1 (**October 2**) will be a presentation of what has been done so far. Forum #2 (**October 9**) will be an open discussion session, where we will solicit feedback and comments on the policies that were presented in the first Forum. After the second forum, the groups will return to work and hold at least one more forum in the fall to bring everyone who wishes into the process. In the meanwhile, we will make the texts of the policy book available online in September for the congregation to review.

### Mark your calendars!

Sunday, October 2 @ 11:45 a.m. (Annex): Presenting Partnership Governance (PG)  
Sunday October 9 @ 11:45 am (Annex): Got Questions about PG?



Lots of people in the community have spent years of their limited time working on this process and this project. We are very excited about what it will bring for our Society, and believe that it will help us best envision and plan for our future community.

Looking forward to discussing this further with you all in the weeks and months to come!

Laura Free  
Board President

← For quick reference: here's a handy Infographic that outlines the timeline of this process for you!