

Ohio-Meadville District Youth Adult Committee (OMD YAC) Bylaws

Preamble

We are the Ohio Meadville District Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUUs). We have assembled these ideas to provide bylaws to be used while serving the youth of this district.

YAC Statement of Purpose

YAC exists for the purpose of encouraging youth empowerment and nurturing the self-esteem of youth. We exist to foster spiritual growth within the Unitarian Universalist faith. We exist to help youth gain a deeper understanding of the principles and purposes of Unitarian Universalism and also to help teach said youth how to apply said principles to their daily lives. We exist to not only serve youth already active in YAC but also to ensure that all youth in the OMD have the opportunity to become involved through individual, group, and cluster outreach. We are youth organizing youth!

YAC Membership

To claim YAC membership (i.e. on income tax returns) the individual in question must have attended two YAC meetings in the past (not including those directly following conferences) and the individual must sign the Membership Book in the presence of one youth co-chair and a YAC member. Attendees who are not yet members are welcome to participate in YAC discussions but cannot vote.

Role of YAC Member

YAC members are individuals that should exemplify responsibility and leadership. They are to be role models to their YRUU peers. This means that YAC members have a greater obligation than other youth to enforce and uphold the rules. They are to be models of appropriate behavior at meetings and conferences, and failure to do so may be grounds for the revocation of YAC membership.

YAC's Relationship to the Adults of the Ohio-Meadville District

YAC is a governing body committed to ensuring that conferences are a safe environment and, in turn, ensuring that conferences can continue to take place within this district. YAC will accept and welcome the advice of adults. Criticism, both positive and negative, should be brought to the attention of YAC co-chairs and respectfully dealt with according to policy. At conferences and meetings, adults are welcome and encouraged to stay. They are invited to participate fully. YAC is the present and future generation of UU leaders. We give adults respect and we ask that we receive the same respect in return.

YAC Officials

YAC officials can be elected as deemed necessary. YAC official positions must be created by consensus, but officials can be elected by majority. Age range for youth positions is open (within conference age range), but when the official is no longer a youth, they must resign regardless of how much of the two-year period has passed. All elected YAC officials are required to (a) have signed the YAC membership book before or during the YAC meeting of their election before the voting takes place and (b) have attended at least one con before running or being selected for a position. Elected YAC leaders should make a priority of completing UU or other training relative to their position. The following positions exist as of 08/18/13:

- Youth Co-Chairs (four positions)

Two co-chairs are elected each year. Youth co-chairs can only serve before they bridge (this is a tighter constraint than YAC Officials in general). The role of this co-chair is to send out conference and YAC meeting communication. These youth are the primary contacts for YAC. They must find the conference and YAC meeting sites, plan and facilitate YAC meetings and conferences, and also deal with any last minute problems at conferences. Co-chairs run conferences and deal with rule infractions. As both leaders and rule enforcers, co-chairs should be selected based on both their ability to connect with others in inspiring and listening as well as to apply rules fairly and firmly without them worrying about whether it will affect their popularity/self-esteem.

- Adult Co-Chairs (four positions)

Two co-chairs are elected each year. All Adult Co-Chair nominees shall be recommended by consensus of all current youth and adult co-chairs. According to District Board recommendation, an adult volunteer should serve only two consecutive years. At the end of the two year term, if no suitable replacement can be found, the adult co-chair may be re-elected by the YAC.

- Social Action Coordinator (two positions)

This position is a one-year term. The age range is open (within conference age range). The new SAC is elected by YAC and trained in the duties of the position by the out-going SAC. This position entails that the individual has an interest in expanding social action efforts within the YRUU community (and beyond). The primary responsibility of the social action coordinator is to plan for and execute the activities of the SAC; additional district-level social action efforts may be organized. Of course, the youth is not limited to just these things. They must have projects and conference activities approved by YAC.

- Youth Representative to the OMD Board of Trustees

This position is a one-year term, and is also elected by YAC. The Board Representative is not currently a voting member of the Board, but should go to all the Board meetings to represent the interests of YAC and youth in the district. The representative must also keep YAC updated about Board resolutions pertaining to youth. This position is elected during the Spring YAC meeting, as opposed to the rest of the positions which are elected at the Summer YAC meeting.

- Worship Coordinator (two positions)

This position is a two-year term, and is also elected by YAC. This person is responsible for running Saturday Night Worship Planning Workshop at every conference, and seeing that said worship goes smoothly. The youth should help the host church plan the Friday Night Worship if they need guidance, or be prepared to plan it themselves if necessary. The spirituality coordinator also serves as a resource for youth groups in the OMD, and can advise them on planning worships in their churches.

- Secretary

This position is a one-year term. This person is responsible for taking accurate and detailed minutes at all YAC meetings, including those held after a conference, and sending them to the webmaster to be stored on the YAC website.

-Touch Group Coordinator (two positions)

This position is a one-year term. They should provide training and supporting resources for discussion, games, and activities to touch group leaders. These youth are also responsible for assigning attendees to touch groups, as well as assigning cleanup jobs to each touch group at each youth conference. The touch group coordinator should find a liaison from the host church's youth group to help in the process if necessary.

- Junior High Liaison (multiple positions, number to be determined each year by YAC)

The YAC appoints Junior High Liaisons as a 'Welcoming Committee' of sorts to (a) help integrate new and less outgoing younger participants in the YAC/con community and giving them a place among friends and (b) reach out to junior high youth who have not attended cons previously. NOTE: Just as there is a 'Bridging Out' of the con community when one reaches a certain age, a ceremony similar to the "Bridging In" at Summer Institute could be instituted for newcomers and welcoming them into our community.

- Head Chaplain

The Head Chaplain is considered the senior youth chaplain for purposes of (a) mentoring newer/less experienced chaplains, (b) organizing several chaplain meetings throughout each conference, and (c) is the conduit for coordinating high-risk issues with UU home church leadership of the affected youth and the designated OMD staff member as required per Chaplain risk training. Nominations for Head Chaplain will be made by YAC members and limited to individuals who have completed UU Youth Chaplain Training and have served as a Chaplain at multiple cons. The youth and adult co-chairs will confidentially select the Head Chaplain from these nominees. This position is not selected by YAC majority vote, unlike the other elected positions, due to the need for a very high skill level and emotional maturity dealing with potential threats to physical and/or emotional safety up to and including threat to life.

- Webmaster

The webmaster develops and maintains the OMD YAC website per Ohio-Meadville District IT policies, including (but not limited to) approved software development application(s), content, confidentiality, and formatting. All OMD YAC webpage work will be performed in coordination with the District Administrator. The youth and adult co-chairs will appoint the Webmaster and may also appoint assistants as trainees who may provide backup to the Webmaster as needed and/or become future Webmasters.

- DJ

The DJ is nominated and voted on by the YAC to organize and play music for each Con, with their most important role being DJ of the Con dance. The DJ should actively solicit music requests from across the Con community. For the junior high con, the DJ shall show discretion with respect to lyrics which could potentially make junior high attendees and/or newer sponsors in the community uncomfortable. This is a one year position.

- Food Dude

Coordinates meal planning, scheduling, and buying as needed with the host church for YACs and Cons. This is a one year position. This position is appointed by consensus of the youth and adult co-chairs.

Age Range and Age-Specific Conferences

The age range is 7th grade through age 19. Junior High spans the years from the beginning of 7th grade until the end of 9th grade. Senior High spans the years from the beginning of 9th grade until a person's 20th birthday. The overlapping year is in place to aid in the transition between programs. Adult YAC members must be over the age of 25. Following is a list of currently defined conferences: One all-ages conference in the spring (both junior and senior high), one senior high conference in the fall, one junior high conference in the fall, and one all age social action conference in the early spring (avoiding winter and its unpredictable potential impacts on offsite outdoor activities).

Con attendance must fall into the appropriate age range.

Attendance conditions:

- The YAC decided to hold the senior high con before the junior high con in hopes that letting the older youth have a con to spend with their friends first will allow them to be more focused when it comes to the junior high con, where they need to be doing jobs and acting as leaders of the community.
- In order for 7th or 8th grade YRUUsers to attend an all ages conference, they are required to have previously either a district junior high conference, a junior high cluster conference run by the DREs, or a Summer Institute youth program.
- Anyone who wishes to attend SAC must fill out a short questionnaire to determine if the person is serious about the social action aspect.
- Junior high registrants have priority over senior high registrants for the junior high con. The number of senior high registrants/volunteers other than YAC officials should be limited so that attendance is mainly junior high students. This applies in reverse for the senior high con.

Rules and Infractions

YAC clearly prohibits the following at any meeting, conference, or YAC sponsored activity:

- Violence and Weapons

The act or attempt of battery, assaulting, or physically injuring another person with or without a weapon. Threats and aborted attempts will also be dealt with by YAC. Youth should not be in the possession of weapons at events.

- Use of Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Products

Use or possession of any illegal drug, alcohol product, or tobacco product. Adult sponsors are prohibited from using these products, including tobacco, as well.

- Vandalism

Willful altering or destruction of property.

- Sex

YAC conference rules have always prohibited overt and covert sex. Clearly this prohibition includes the acts of intercourse and oral sex. Just as clearly, this rule does not exclude most forms of kissing or hugging. However, the

inclusion of other forms of intimate contact are less clear and fall within a spectrum of acceptability.

- No Means No

YAC enforces the “No means No” rule, meaning any action can be stopped by the use of the word No. In the event that the action is not stopped, it is treated as a rule infraction.

- Site Specific Rules

Specific rules set forth by the host churches will be upheld in the same fashion as YAC rules, unless they conflict with YAC’s basic purposes, in which case a compromise will have to be reached between YAC and the host church prior to the conference.

In the event of a rule infraction at a conference or meeting, the perpetrator, his/her sponsor, and the youth and adult co-chairs will meet immediately. The allegations will be discussed and the co-chairs will determine the consequence(s). Depending on the severity of the rule infraction, the offender may be banned from one or more conferences, and/or sent home from a conference at his/her own expense. An employee of the host church (i.e. a minister, DRE, or MRE) will be notified immediately in the event of a rule infraction. In the event of a severe rule infraction, the Board of Trustees should be notified via the Youth Representative. YAC has set these standards for dealing with rule infractions to ensure that any action taken is fair and just. However, all rule infractions are different, and it is ultimately up to the youth and adult co-chairs to determine what, if any, consequence fits the circumstance. Also, all rule infractions are kept in confidentiality by the parties involved.

-The Red Feather Book

After any rule infraction, the perpetrator’s name, the details of the offense, and the action taken are recorded by one of the youth co-chairs in “The Red Feather Book”. The purpose of the book is to inform subsequent co-chairs of youth who are barred from coming to conferences or who have previously broken the rules. The book is kept by the youth co-chairs and is strictly confidential.

YAC Meeting-Specifics (not Cons)

Attendees are here to work, plan, and contribute to the inner workings of the YAC community, not to socialize and see friends.

YAC members make a commitment just by attending these meetings to be the role models of the OMD UU Youth community. They should act responsibly and intelligently during con activities, and even outside them, setting examples by respecting and upholding the rules and willfully helping everyone in the con community.

Due to the need for all attendees to be fully functional during the Saturday work meetings, a strict lights-out and quiet time will be observed on Friday night only during YAC meetings.

Funding and Budget

Admission price of conferences is determined during the conference planning meetings. Money from conferences goes from the registrar to the designated OMD staff member. Reimbursement forms can be obtained from one of the co-chairs and resubmitted to her/him.

Newsletter

The newsletter was designed to keep OMD YRUU members informed of YAC’s movements and decisions, as well as to provide information and forums district wide. It is edited by individuals designated by the co-chairs, and anyone, youth or adult, is encouraged to submit articles, creative works, artwork, etc.

These bylaws are effective as of 18 August 2013. They will be reviewed as necessary, but YAC will meet annually in the summer to examine bylaws, policies, and other vital issues. Amendments to the bylaws will be decided preferably by a consensus or, in the event of differences which cannot be resolved, by a 2/3rd’s majority vote.