

The Florida Beacon Handbook

Article I: FLB Level Officers

1. **FLB Youth Co-Chair:** The elected youth leader of Beacon.
 - a. Partners with other FLB officers, especially the Advisor Co-Chair, to ensure that Beacon business flows smoothly.
 - b. Where possible, the Youth Co-Chair takes the lead on Beacon matters with the support of the Advisor Co-Chair and other elected officers.
 - c. Chairs the Youth Council.
 - d. Acts as the youth representative of Beacon with regard to all Unitarian Universalist Association communications and other issues relating to outside organizations.
2. **FLB Advisor Co-Chair:** The elected advisor leader of Beacon.
 - a. Has a special obligation to mentor the youth co-chair in developing his/her leadership skills.
 - b. Coordinates with advisors and other adults while ensuring smooth communication among advisors regarding Beacon business.
 - c. Assists Youth Co-Chair in chairing the Youth Council in the absence of the Youth Co-Chair.
 - d. Acts as the advisor representative of Beacon with regard to all Unitarian Universalist Association communications and other issues relating to outside organizations.
3. **Steering Council:** The Steering Council considers big-picture issues and long term goals to make recommendations to Beacon and its leadership in order to strengthen youth empowerment and the Beacon community.
 - a. The Steering Council is made up of five youth and four advisors. In order to represent a connected, diverse group, there can be no more than two youth per church and no more than one advisor per church on the committee. Co-Chairs of the current term cannot run for positions on the Steering Council.
 - b. Holds open meetings at CONs throughout the CON season.
 - i. May hold other meetings outside of CONs.
 - c. Communicates with Beacon as a whole and advises Florida Beacon leadership.
 - d. Elects a youth as Chair to communicate with Beacon and leadership as a representative.
 - i. Serves as back-up to co-chair when needed.
 - ii. Maintains Steering Council cohesion and coordinates communication.
 - e. Elects an outreach chair, responsible for keeping an open line of communication with current Beacon chapters and for contacting churches that do not yet have Beacon chapters that might be interested.
 - i. Communicate information to other groups in FLB where necessary. The Outreach Co-Chair must have some way to communicate with the leadership of each group in FLB.
4. **Social Action Coordinator:** A youth who leads the planning/organizing of at least one Florida-wide social action event per year, especially in the form of a social action CON.

- a. Helps plan at least one Florida social action event a year, typically in the form of a CON that is based around a social action event.
 - b. Coordinates with interested youth and advisors as requested.
- 5. **Web Coordinator:** The Web Coordinator is responsible for maintaining, upgrading, and updating the Florida Beacon website and other forms of electronic communication.
 - a. Maintains and updates all forms of electronic communication.
 - i. Includes maintaining membership of electronic groups, posting CON Forms, and maintaining calendar.
 - b. Upgrades the website, when necessary. Such tasks include:
 - i. Finding new and better ways for the website to function.
 - ii. Adding new pages with content when necessary.
- 6. **Welcome Ambassador:** The Welcome Ambassador is responsible for helping new members become integrated into the Beacon community.
 - a. May form a committee to help welcome and mentor new members.
 - b. They must contact the youth leadership of each chapter or their communications contact to find out before each CON if the group has a new member.
 - i. “New member” is defined as someone who has never been to a CON
 - c. CON Deans are strongly encouraged to work with the Welcome Ambassador to develop touch groups that will pair new members with experienced members to serve as mentors.
 - d. Works with new members to teach them unspoken rules/guidelines for the CON, such as how Sunday clean-up goes, and how CONs usually work.
 - e. Serves as a resource for chapters with less experience in hosting cons.
- 7. **Outreach Co-Chairs:** The Outreach Co-Chairs are responsible for keeping an open line of communication with current Beacon groups and for contacting churches that do not yet have Beacon groups that might be interested. There are two Outreach Co-chairs: a youth and an advisor. The Youth Outreach Co-Chair should take the lead on Beacon matters with the support of the Advisor Outreach Co-Chair.
 - a. Co-chairs will work closely together.
 - b. Communicate information to other groups in FLB where necessary
 - i. Outreach Co-Chairs must have some way to communicate with the leadership of each group in FLB.
 - c. Maintain an open line of communications with current Beacon groups.
 - d. Contact churches that do not yet have a Beacon group.
 - e. Communicate information about what Beacon is to churches that are interested.
 - f. The Adult Outreach Co-Chair should work with the Youth Outreach Co-Chair to mentor him/her in this area.
- 8. **Trans-In Coordinator:** They are responsible for helping to plan and lead a CON that is designed to help new members.
 - a. Responsible for planning and coordinating the Trans-In CON (See description of this special CON under the previous description of CONS).

- b. Serves as one of the CON Deans at the Trans-In Con.
 - c. Converses with the committee of interested youth with at least one advisor to plan and staff each Trans-In CON.
9. **Secretary:** The Secretary records minutes of Florida-level Beacon meetings, including Youth Council and Youth Caucus.
- a. Records minutes of meetings
 - b. Ensures that minutes are posted on Florida Beacon websites.
 - c. Where possible, posts draft minutes of a meeting for review prior to the next regular meeting.
 - d. When unable to attend a meeting/event, chooses and coordinates with an appropriate substitute and notifies Florida Beacon Co-Chairs of this arrangement.

Article II: Council, Caucus, and Voting

1. **Membership:** All Beacon members present shall have a vote and voice in Youth Council. Neither Youth nor Advisor's vote or voice shall carry more weight than the other.
 - a. At Youth Council and at Youth Caucus all members that are at the event must be present in the room where Youth Council or Youth Caucus is being held.
2. **Order of Business:** Before proceeding to business, each youth group present shall provide a 'check-in' of how the organization is doing and share any news pertinent to Beacon. After each youth group has checked-in, the Youth Council shall take up agenda items.
3. **Youth Council Chair:** The Beacon Youth Co-Chair, when present, shall preside over Youth Council business as the Youth Council Chair (aka "Chair"). If the Youth Co-Chair is not present, then he/she shall choose someone else to chair over the meeting. The Chair is responsible in consultation with the Advisor Co-Chair for creating and setting the agenda of Youth Council.
 - a. The Chair may participate in all voting (both consensus and majority). However, if the Youth Co-Chair feels like he/she is unable to fairly fulfill their role due to personal feelings or bias, he/she shall temporarily step down from the Chair position, and the Advisor Co-Chair shall choose someone else to fill the role of Chair.
4. **Minutes:** Minutes of the proceedings of Youth Council shall be taken, with an exception regarding elections, of which discussion of candidates will not be recorded in the minutes.
 - a. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining the minutes of past Youth Councils. He or she will ensure the minutes are posted online in an accessible format.
5. **Process Observer:** At Youth Council and at Youth Caucus, Process Observers will be appointed by the Council Chair or elected prior to proceedings. The roles of the Process Observer are to 1) make sure everyone is given equal opportunity to speak and 2) keep the meeting moving efficiently.

- a. The Process Observer calls on people to talk in the order that they raise their hands
 - b. If the Process Observer wishes to speak, then the Council Chair or other Process Observer will call on them (this is so that no one is able to speak at will).
 - i. If the Process Observer(s) needs to speak to address a process issue or draw attention to a person who is being talked over, then he/she may interrupt proceedings.
 - ii. If the Process Observer(s) wishes to speak on their personal views, then he/she will raise their hand to be called on as any other member of Youth Council.
 - c. If the Process Observer(s) feel(s) like they are unable to fairly fulfill their role due to personal feelings or bias, they shall notify the Council Chair of the issue. They will then step out of the Process Observer role and the Council Chair shall appoint another Process Observer.
6. **Voting Procedures:** Motions or amendments that would affect Beacon on the Florida Beacon level require a 75% majority of a council to approve the motion or amendment and additional policies. The Council Chair decides whether voting is by hand or by voice
- a. A member may vote in favor or in opposition of a motion. A member may also abstain, which counts as a null vote (neither for nor against the motion).
 - i. A motion shall be adopted upon if a 75% majority of present members at an established meeting vote in favor of a motion. Abstentions do not count towards establishing a majority. Votes may only be cast by members present at the Youth Council proceedings.
 - b. FLB level officers shall be elected by consensus.
 - i. Consensus shall be a vote in which no opposition is raised. Consensus is when there is no objection to the current motion or nominee
7. **Special Committees:** For the purpose of meeting efficiency, business that would come before the Youth Council may be discussed, developed, and/or vetted through a committee of Youth Council members. Special Committees shall not take binding action, but, rather, present recommendations to the Youth Council.
- a. Any such committee meetings shall be open to all members and any member may speak on or participate in the development of a recommendation to come before Youth Council.

Article III: FLB Events

- 1. "Florida Beacon Event" is defined in the Policies and Procedures.
- 2. FLB events are listed on the official calendar, found on the website.
- 3. CONs
 - a. All-age CONs: A CON where youth 12 years of age to 20 years of age (inclusive) can attend. Its workshops are generally geared to a specific theme.
 - b. Trans-in CONs: A CON intended for the new members of Beacon. This is a more structured CON, intended to help involve new youth, and acclimate them

to the idea and environment of Beacon. Youth that are between the ages of 12 and 14 (inclusive) or have attended 3 or fewer CONs may attend Trans-In CONs.

- i. Tran-In committee members may attend to facilitate the activities even if they are not in the age range for trans-in CON.
 - c. Social Action CONs: At a social-action CON, there will be a planned activity to better the greater community. Projects ranging from cleaning rivers, to helping at homeless shelters – these are a great way to be involved and help the greater community
4. Youth Caucus: Youth Caucus is where major decisions and elections are made. Any member of Beacon can be elected to any of the several available positions. This CON is business-related and very important for all of Beacon.
5. Youth Advisor Training
 - a. The purpose of the training is for the current advisors to meet the new advisors and for new advisors to learn about the rules of Beacon and to learn how youth empowerment traditions and culture functions in beacon.
 - b. Typically held once a year.
 - c. Topics covered include:
 - i. Keeping the youth group safe physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually.
 - ii. Mandatory reporting responsibilities concerning self-harm and harm to others.
 - iii. Maintaining appropriate boundaries especially between youth and adults
 - iv. Building community within the group using the five steps of community building.
 - v. Confidentiality.
 - vi. Advisors' role as members of Beacon; they are neither above nor below the youth.
 - d. Advisors sent to training should have the approval of their group's youth.
6. Procedure for assigning or changing dates for CONs or other FLB Events.
 - a. CON dates are assigned at Youth Caucus.
 - i. Groups should bring three different CON dates to Caucus, with documentation from the leadership of their own congregation that these dates are available and approved.
 - ii. CON dates must be at least three weeks removed from each other.
 - iii. Groups that have gotten their dates pre-approved get first preference.
 - iv. Groups that have never hosted a CON get preference, followed by groups that only hosted one CON in the previous season, followed by groups that have hosted two, and so on.
 1. Youth Caucus and Trans-in CONs do not count.
 2. Groups should choose two possible dates per month requested.
 - v. Each group may only choose one date in the first round.

- vi. An active Beacon youth group is defined as a youth group that has participated at three or more Beacon events in the past CON season (September-May).
 - b. Changing the date for a CON is never optimal. If at all possible, a group should stay with the date it has been assigned.
 - i. As soon as a group knows it has to change its CON date, the group must notify the Florida Beacon Co-Chairs.
 - ii. Groups that have to change their dates should communicate with other groups and explore other dates, and figure out which ones work for the most groups.
 - iii. The new CON date must be approved at a Youth Council.
 - iv. CON Deans or Florida Beacon Co-Chairs will notify all other groups in FLB of the change as soon as it is confirmed.
7. **Forms:** Forms are required for all Florida Beacon events.
- a. The template linked on <http://www.beaconyouth.org/con-center> should be used to make CON forms.
 - i. Hosting groups shall make sure they are starting with the latest revision of the template.
 - b. Must have notarized attendance permission page.
 - c. Hosting groups may add to the template, but may not remove any part of the template without explicit permission from the FLB Co-Chairs.
 - d. CON Deans may change the CON shirt price but not the attendance prices for the CON.
 - i. CON attendance fees will be set at Youth Caucus, which will be decided by consensus. Additional fees, such as for shirts, will be set by the host church.
 - ii. In recognition of the hardship on both the host and visiting groups, groups hosting a CON should not change the advertised shirt prices after sending out the CON form.

Article IV: FLB CON Support Positions

- 1. The officers outlined in this section shall be elected or otherwise chosen at every CON.
 - a. The hosting group may decide to elect these positions at other FLB Events that are not CONs.
- 2. **CON Deans:** A CON Dean is a youth who manages a CON and makes sure everything goes smoothly
 - a. Hosting groups shall elect or appoint CON Deans
 - i. There are usually two CON Deans, who must work together effectively.
 - b. Oversees the setup and cleanup
 - c. Manages the CON, and are the go-to person is something goes wrong.
 - d. They will need to be able to communicate often with your other deans and be able to do their fair share of duties before and during the CON.

- e. The CON Deans should set up a plan together for the duties that need to be accomplished.
 - i. Includes deciding who will be in charge of managing t-shirts, food, touch groups, arrival, departure, who will pick up items if needed, wake up.
 - f. When possible, CON Deans should work with the Welcome Ambassador to develop touch groups that will pair new members with experienced members to serve as mentors.
 - g. CON Deans are responsible for getting the completed CON form to the Web Coordinator at least one month before the CON takes place.
3. **Chaplain:** A chaplain is a youth that anyone can go to for emotional support
- a. There are two positions: a female-identified chaplain and a male-identified chaplain.
 - b. Chaplains are available to all CON participants for to for emotional support should the need arise.
 - c. A chaplain is not a therapist nor a legal advisor.
 - d. A chaplain should do their best to ensure that everyone in our community is being included and treated well.
 - e. It is important for a Chaplain to open minded.
 - f. People may come to the chaplain simply in need of a hug or in need of emotional support on subjects such as relationships, mental illness, social stigma, or grief.
 - g. A chaplain must keep everything a member tells them absolutely confidential.
 - i. The only exception is if there is an intention or possibility of harm to oneself or another person. Advisors shall become involved if such a situation arises.
 - h. Chaplains should be available at any hour of the CON, and may be woken up.
4. **Trespass Committee:** The Trespass Committee is called to resolve issues where CON rules are broken.
- a. Trespass is made up of one youth and one advisor from the hosting group and one youth and one advisor from away groups (four total).
 - b. The Trespass Committee is called upon to decide what to do with youth who breaks the rules of the CON.
 - c. The hosting church should know who their Trespass youth and advisor are before visiting Beacon members arrive at the CON event site.
 - d. Decides whether the youth should be punished or restricted, and if so what that consequence will be.
 - i. This generally involves making amends or repairing any damage, physical or emotional, that has been done).
 - ii. May also choose to send the the youth in question to the *safehouse* (see next section) for the remainder of the CON.
 - e. The Trespass Committee shall make their decisions by consensus.
 - f. May gather information or ask questions of anyone who may have relevant knowledge.

- g. May choose to confer with CON Deans and/or FLB Co-Chairs, but the Trespass Committee is responsible for the final decision.
 - h. Members with a significant conflict of interest are expected to recuse themselves from a decision.
5. **Safehouse:** The safehouse is a location that the Trespass Committee can send a participant (youth or advisor) if she/he breaks community or CON rules to the degree that she/he must be removed from the CON. Participants are sent to the safehouse as to avoid sending their entire group home, and punishing a group for an individual's actions.
- a. Participants sent to the Safehouse will be accompanied by at least two advisors or one advisor and a youth.
 - b. Before going to the Safehouse, the CON's leadership will attempt to notify youth's parents/guardian(s).
 - i. The youth will still be sent to the Safehouse even if the parents can't be contacted.
 - c. It is recommended that the Trespass committee accompanies the youth to the safehouse, if needed.

Article V: Traditions

1. The Beacon: The Beacon is awarded to the Beacon group that brings the most members to a CON.
 - a. At a CON whichever group brings the most members will be awarded the Beacon and must bring it to the next CON.
 - b. If the largest group will not be able to make it to the CON, the Beacon is given to the group that is hosting the next CON.
2. CON String: (Aka CON Bands) In closing circle of each CON, participants are asked to wrap yarn around their wrist, recall their favorite part of the CON, and pass the yarn on. Once everyone has done so, the yarn will stretch in a complete circle, signifying the community between the participants, and then will be broken such that each person has a piece, signifying that each of us carries a piece of the greater community. Many Beacon members wear many or all of their CON strings around their wrists all the time as a reminder of the community formed at CONs.
 - a. Tip: It is wise to use strong string that won't easily snap when being wrapped around wrists but not too strong so that it can be snapped when pulled apart.

Last revised April 2015