

IN COLLABORATION WITH URANTIA FOUNDATION, THE URANTIA BOOK  
FELLOWSHIP, AND URANTIA ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

# The Urantia Book Study Group Directory (UBSGD)

## Governance Principles and Procedures

*Version 1.3 Summer 2015*

**Authored by the UBSGD Committee**

This document describes the principles that guide the use and governance oversight of the Urantia Book Study Group Directory (UBSGD).

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Document History (most current information at the top of the following chart)

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>
1.3	3/11/15	Further wording tweaks (in 1.c.i and 1.c.ii) to address the now Annual Database Review Process.
1.2	11/17/14	Changed the directory review process from semi-annual to annual.
1.1	11/14/13	Addition of the Delisting Procedure.
1.0	10/1/13	Minor corrections.
0.9	9/1/13	Initial draft sent to UF, the Fellowship, and UAI presidents for review/feedback.

## 1. Governance Model Principles

The Urantia Study Group Directory (UBSGD) website is provided as a free and open service<sup>1</sup> to readers of *The Urantia Book* to facilitate their connection with other readers for the purposes of collaborative study and spiritual fraternity and to study group hosts to publicize their meetings towards this purpose.

Management of this open directory is guided by the following governance principles:

### a. Study Group Definition—a study group is defined by the following:

- i. It focuses on the study of *The Urantia Book*.
- ii. It is open to all readers.
- iii. It is free from any activities that may distract students from the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

### b. Initial Study Group Registration—Requirements

- i. Registrants must specifically confirm that their study group conforms to the study group definition (see above).
- ii. Registrants must specifically confirm that their personal contact information is accurate and can be used within the context of the UBSGD Privacy Policy (see below).
- iii. Refer to the UBSGD Study Group Registration Process for details.
- iv. Registrants must acknowledge that failure to comply with website policy can result in the delisting of their study group from the directory. See Section 4 for further information.

### c. Study Group Registration Renewal

- i. Once a year study group registrants will be contacted to validate that their study group's registration information is current.
- ii. Registrants will be required to respond to these annual data-quality surveys. Study groups whose registrant fails to confirm/update their study group information during such reviews will be subject to removal from the directory. Refer to the UBSGD Annual Review Process for further detail.

### d. Study Group Delisting

Upon notice of any listed study group in non-compliance with the study group definition (above), the UBSGD Committee will investigate the claim, make a determination regarding its authenticity, and take appropriate action. Refer to the UBSGD Delisting Process for details.

**e. Study Group Contact Information Sharing**

Study group registrant (primary and secondary) information, per the UBSGD Privacy Policy, is considered privileged and confidential; it will only be used as described in said policy and will not be shared.

**f. The UBSGD Oversight Committee**

This committee is not formally a part of any of its sponsoring organizations and will be solely responsible for all aspects of the governance of the UBSGD directory and its related processes. Nevertheless, it is clearly the intention of the UBSGD Committee to serve the needs and interests of our sponsoring organizations, as well as, the Urantia Book readership at-large.

This committee will be comprised of, at least: (a) a chairperson, (b) an equal number of representatives from each of our major organizational partners (Urantia Foundation, The Urantia Book Fellowship, and Urantia Association International), and (c) the UBSGD website administrator. Refer to the UBSGD Committee Composition Process for details regarding membership nomination, selection, and chairperson designation.

**g. Advisory Notice**

The following advisory [usage] notice will be posted on the website in plain view:

*Thank you for visiting the Urantia Book Study Group Directory. We hope this online resource will help you find, contact, and study with readers of The Urantia Book.*

*In our efforts to maintain an accurate and credible database of Urantia Book study groups, we request that all personal information be used only for the purpose intended: to help establish study groups within the Urantia Book community.*

*The sponsors of the directory cannot guarantee that the individuals and groups in the database are necessarily people with whom you would be compatible. Such decisions are personal, and we leave them up to you. If you attend a listed group and observe that it does not meet the study group definition, please let us know.*

*As with any database, accuracy depends on up-to-date information. Please help keep the contact information current by notifying us of any changes or inaccuracies you may find.*

**h. Privacy Policy**

The following Privacy Policy will be featured prominently on the website and during the study group registration process.

*The Urantia Book Study Group Directory is a community resource designed to help readers of The Urantia Book find existing study groups and to facilitate the formation of new study groups.*

*Personal information collected and stored in the directory shall only be shared for the above stated purposes.*

<sup>1</sup> Open service. The UBSGD online registration process is open/available to any/all study groups for the purposes of promoting/publicizing their group's existence subject to the UBSGD registration guidelines.

## **2. Governance Procedures**

### **a. Online Registration**

- i. All new users will be required to register online at [urantiastudygroup.org](http://urantiastudygroup.org).
- ii. The registration form will include, at the top of the page, the official UBSGD definition of a Urantia Book study group and the Terms of Agreement.
- iii. The registrant must check a box agreeing to the Terms of Agreement, thereby attesting to the following:
  - their study group complies with the study group definition
  - they understand and agree to the privacy policy and
  - they understand that non-compliance with established policies may result in expulsion from the directory.
- iv. The registrant then supplies some basic information (email address, username, and password) and submits the application form.
- v. A verification email is sent to the registrant's email, thereby verifying the email address. The registrant clicks on the supplied link in the verification email and returns to the site, logs on, and finishes the registration by supplying information about his or her study group, thereby creating a study group profile for his group.

### **b. The Study Group Profile**

- i. The study group profile contains the public information about a study group.
- ii. Required information includes at least one contact name and either a contact phone number or email address associated with the contact name.
- iii. If the study group is a virtual study group, the connection details are listed in the profile.

If the study group meets face-to-face, the geographic information is listed. However, the actual street address is not part of the study group profile. For security, this information may be given by the study group contact when he or she is contacted by a potential member.

- iv. Secondary contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses are allowed and encouraged, but they are optional.
- v. General descriptions of the meeting are allowed and encouraged, but they are optional.

### **c. Annual Directory Review Process**

It is important that the information in the directory is up-to-date and as accurate as possible. To that end, the UBSGD team will conduct annual reviews of the subscribed members. This process will utilize an email generated by the system requesting that all contacts return to the site to review their profiles and update them as needed. The process is described below.

- i. A UBSGD administrator generates a message to all primary contacts requesting that they click on the link in their email, return to the site and, at a minimum, check the box indicating that there are no changes needed to their profiles.
- ii. When a study group contact person makes any change to the profile, including checking the “No Change at This Time” box, a “last updated” note is appended to their profile showing the date it occurred.
- iii. After two weeks, a follow-up email is sent to those who have not responded alerting them that if they do not return to the site as requested, their account may/will become inactive.
- iv. After two more weeks, the UBSGD team reviews study group accounts that have not responded to either email. Each unresponsive account is reviewed by the UBSGD team who may then take action, including attempting to contact the primary and secondary contacts by phone and/or email.
- v. If all efforts to contact the study group fail, the unresponsive study group is made inactive. Inactive groups will not be publicly listed in the directory.

### **d. Governing Committee Composition**

The UBSGD Oversight Committee will be responsible for all aspects of the governance of the UBSGD and its related processes. This committee will be comprised of three voting members, three ex-officio members, and two non-voting members.

- i. The three voting members will each be appointed by a sponsoring organization: Urantia Foundation, The Urantia Book Fellowship, and Urantia Association International.
- ii. The three ex-officio members are the presidents of the sponsoring organizations.

- iii. Two non-voting members, a chairperson and a website administrator, shall be appointed by a majority vote of the three voting members.
- iv. Voting members will serve two-year terms. The terms of non-voting members are unlimited.
- v. The chairperson and website administrator will serve until they voluntarily resign or are dismissed by a vote of the committee.

**e. UBSGD Governance**

- i. In general, all policies and day-to-day decisions will be administered by consensus by the five committee members.
- ii. When consensus cannot be achieved on any issue, a majority vote of the three voting members shall determine the outcome.
- iii. If a majority vote is not possible, for any reason, the decision will be made by a majority vote of the ex-officio members.

**f. Study Group Delisting**

The Governing Committee of the UBSGD has agreed to the following process for delisting a study group.

**i. Preliminary Determination**

- If the committee receives a report that a study group is not adhering to the UBSGD Terms of Agreement, a committee member will contact the host directly to inquire about the nature of the complaint.
- The committee member will initiate this contact within seven business days.
- The study group host will have an opportunity to rebut the report.
- The committee member will report his or her findings back to the committee.

**ii. Consideration of Report**

- The committee will then discuss and determine whether or not the reported study group is adhering to the Terms of Agreement.
- The delisting decision will be made by the committee.

**iii. Communication of Decision**

- The committee's decision whether or not to delist the study group will be communicated directly to the host of the study group by one of the committee

members.

**iv. Confidentiality**

- During the consideration of report process, the matter of delisting a study group will only be discussed among members of the committee.
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