

Conference Rules and Structure

**These are the new rules adopted from the Document entitled
“Bound for Greater Things” and adopted at the Texas Annual Conference 2006**

TEXAS CONFERENCE STANDING RULES

SECTION 1: GENERAL

- I. The Texas Annual Conference (Conference) establishes Rules by which it operates (Rules) and its Model for Ministry under authority of paragraph 609 of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004 (BOD or Discipline).
- II. The Model for Ministry and Rules describe Conference ministries and the procedures by which they operate.
- III. Any conflict between the Model for Ministry and Rules and The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church shall be decided in favor of The Book of Discipline.

SECTION 2: OFFICERS

- I. The Officers of the Texas Annual Conference shall be the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, Secretary, Fiscal Officer, Statistician, and Lay Leader. (BOD 603.9)
- II. The Secretary and the Statistician shall be elected at the last session of each quadriennium to serve during the next quadriennium. (BOD 603.7) The minutes of each business session shall be kept on file at Conference headquarters.
- III. A Chancellor shall be nominated by the Bishop and elected by the Conference. (BOD 603.8)
- IV. The Treasurer/Director of Administration shall be elected by the Conference, on nomination of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, at the first session of the Conference after the quadrennial session of the General Conference. Upon vacancy, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall fill the position until the next session of the Texas Annual Conference. (BOD 618)

SECTION 3: MODEL FOR MINISTRY IN THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

I. CONFERENCE CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM

A. A Conference Core Leadership Team will be responsible for implementing decisions of the Annual Conference in accordance with Conference Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs. The Core Leadership Team will:

1. Hold Conference bodies and staff accountable for action.
2. Create a culture of accountability within the Conference by conducting an ongoing process of strategic planning, goal setting, and annual reporting to the Annual Conference.

B. The Conference Core Leadership Team will be comprised of:

1. Voting Members
 - a. One member from each of the nine Districts
 - b. Three At-Large Members
 - c. One Cabinet Member
 - d. The Conference Lay Leader(s)
2. Ex-Officio Membership (non-voting)
 - a. The Bishop or the Assistant to the Bishop who will chair the Conference Core Leadership Team
 - b. The Director of the Center for Congregational Excellence
 - c. The Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence
 - d. The Director of the Center for Missional Excellence
 - e. The Director of the Center for Connectional Resources
 - f. The Conference Director of Communications

II. CONFERENCE MINISTRY CENTERS

A. There will be four (4) Conference Ministry Centers

1. The Center for Congregational Excellence
2. The Center for Clergy Excellence
3. The Center for Missional Excellence
4. The Center for Connectional Resources

B. The Center for Congregational Excellence

The purpose of this center is to connect and equip local congregations and new church start leaders with tools and resources to engage in the practice of congregational revitalization, transformation, and vitality in communities they serve.

C. The Center for Clergy Excellence

The purpose of this center is to create an environment of support and accountability that continuously moves clergy of the Annual Conference toward excellence.

D. The Center for Missional Excellence

The purpose of this center is to provide and equip leaders who carry out ministries of mercy, justice, and wholeness to all persons inside and outside the church.

E. The Center for Connectional Resources

The purpose of this center is to provide fiscal oversight, property management, and

archives and records to under gird the mission and ministry of the Texas Annual Conference.

SECTION 4: NOMINATIONS

I. The Nomination Committee

The Nominations Committee for the Texas Annual Conference of the UMC shall consist of The Assistant to the Bishop, the Dean of the Cabinet, and one representative from each of the 9 Districts. The District Representatives shall consist of 3 clergy, 3 lay men, and 3 lay women. The Nominations Committee will reflect the diversity of the Texas Annual Conference with regard to ethnicity, age, gender, geography, and church size. The ex-officio members with voice and vote shall consist of the Directors of the Centers and the Conference Lay Leader. The chair of the Nominations Committee will be The Assistant to the Bishop.

II. Quadrennium Nominations

A. At the Annual Conference session one year prior to each new quadrennium, The Assistant to the Bishop will distribute a listing and description of all positions on teams, boards, agencies, committees, commissions and councils which are subject to election by the Annual Conference to all clergy and lay delegates to Annual Conference. The Nominations Committee will hold a workshop during Annual Conference to discuss the Nominations Process. The delegates shall take the listing and description back to their local churches and districts for discussion.

B. Persons interested in being considered for nomination to any TAC positions shall fill out a biographical profile including church, district, conference and spiritual gifts and turn these into their local church pastors and District Superintendents for comments and endorsement. Completed profiles with endorsements shall be sent into the office of The Assistant to the Bishop prior to December 1 of the year prior to the new quadrennium. District Superintendents, Center Directors, and the Core Leadership Team and District Leadership Teams may also make nominations.

C. The Assistant to the Bishop will prepare a profile book for the Nominations Committee by February 1. The Nominations Committee will meet prior to February 15. The Nominations Committee will make nominations from the pool of names in the Profile Book. The Nominations Committee will strive to make each Board, Agency, Commission, Committee, and Team as inclusive as possible with regard to ethnicity, age, gender, and church size. The report of the Nominations Committee will be reviewed by the Commission on Religion and Race for inclusivity as specified in the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. The Commission on Religion and Race will report any recommendations back to the Nominations Committee by March 1. All persons nominated by the Nominating Committee will be notified by email or letter and indicate whether they accept or decline the nomination. The Nominations Committee will continue to meet until nominations are finalized. Nominations from the pool in the Profile Book will be completed by March 15 and will be published in the Pre-Conference Journal. Some nominations may need to be made after the March 15 deadline and these will be presented at Annual Conference.

D. All Ministry Teams, Boards, Divisions, Commissions, Committees will consist of ½ clergy and ½ laity unless otherwise restricted by the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

E. Persons may be nominated from the floor of the Annual Conference. The nominator will indicate which person from the Nominating Committee's report is to be replaced by the nominee. Substitute nominations should be in the same category of inclusivity as the person in the Nomination Committee's report. Votes on substitute nominees will be made individually prior to the vote on the full report.

F. Persons shall not serve more than two consecutive quadrenniums on the same Ministry Team, Board, Division, Commission, and Committee except in the case of persons elected to complete a vacancy occurring during a quadrennium who will be allowed to serve two consecutive full quadrenniums. No persons shall be eligible to serve on more than one Ministry Team, Board, Division, Commission or Committee at the same time.

G. The Chairperson of any Ministry team, Board, Division Commission or Committee shall not serve more than one full quadrennium except in the case of person filling an unexpired term of not over two years.

H. During the quadrennium, annual assessments will be conducted of the leadership of all Ministry Teams, Board, Divisions, Commissions, and Committees for attendance, effectiveness, and evidences of fruitfulness. Based on these assessments, the Center Leaders may request the Core Leadership Team to recommend remedial action or replacement of leadership.

I. All Nomination Rules of the Texas Annual Conference are subject to any applicable provisions of the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*

J. The Board of Ordained Ministry of the Texas Annual Conference will be subject to Paragraph 634 of the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* with the exception of the term limit which will be two quadrenniums.

K. Persons elected will begin serving at the close of Annual Conference.

III. Nominations Between Quadrenniums

A. Vacancies in elected positions occurring between sessions of Annual Conference will be filled on a temporary basis by a vote of the Core Leadership Team. Nominations for the Core Leadership Team to consider for vacancies will be made by the Nominations Committee.

B. Vacancies will be permanently filled by the process listed in Section II.

IV. District Nominations

The Districts shall use a process similar to the Conference process subject to the current *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

[For 2007 the Core Leadership Team will nominate the 2007-2008 Nominating Committee from a pool of names submitted by the process outlined in Section II, C. After 2008 the Nominations Committee nominations will follow the same guidelines as the rest of the Committees being nominated.]

SECTION 5: PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

I. Pre-Conference Journal

A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall be responsible for producing a Pre-Conference Journal. Contents of the Pre-Conference Journal shall include those materials necessary for the business of the Annual Conference to be conducted. It shall be mailed at least 25 days before the Annual Conference begins.

B. Chairpersons are responsible for providing reports and materials to the Assistant to the Bishop on the schedule prescribed by the Assistant to the Bishop.

C. Resolutions and Proposals

1. Resolutions and proposals (Proposals are related to structures and rules; resolutions are related to issues.) for consideration by the Annual Conference and shall be sent to The Assistant to the Bishop at least 180 days prior to the Annual Conference Session. The Assistant to the Bishop will refer resolutions to the appropriate Center of Excellence (Center Leadership Team) of the Annual Conference for consideration. The Center will study the resolution/proposal and offer any changes to the resolution to the presenting entity. The final resolution will be distributed to the Districts with a list of speakers for and against the resolution/proposal for discussion. The discussion needs to be completed prior to February 15 of each year. Comments from the District discussions are to be forwarded to the Center responsible for the resolution/proposal. The Center will vote concurrence or non-concurrence and report its results back to the entity responsible for the resolution/proposal. The entity responsible for the resolution/proposal can withdraw the resolution/proposal from consideration by the Annual Conference or send the resolution/proposal on to The Assistant to the Bishop for inclusion in the Pre-Conference Journal.

2. Proposals (changes to the Conference Rules or the Model for Ministry) will be referred to the Core Leadership Team for consideration and action. The Core Leadership Team may also distribute the final proposal to the Districts for discussion as set forth for resolutions in Section 5, I.C.1. above.

3. All discussions regarding the resolutions/proposals, whether in the Center or the Districts, will be conducted in a spirit of Holy Conversations with all sides of the issues being presented and listened to in a spirit of Christian love and respect. Persons making presentations will be not be interrogated or cross-examined. Persons present will not participate in applause or partisan or disparaging sounds (boos or hurrahs). No personal attacks will be allowed.

4. Resolutions and proposals included in the Pre-Conference Journal can be discussed in District Delegate Meetings prior to Annual Conference. The Center and the entity responsible for the resolution/proposal can provide a speaker for and a speaker against the resolution/proposal. All discussions surrounding the resolutions/proposals will be made in the spirit of Holy Conversations as set forth in Section 5: I.C.3. above.

5. Resolutions and proposals included in the Pre-Conference Journal will be placed on the Agenda of the Annual Conference. All resolutions/proposals will be included in the Conference Workshops with scheduled speakers for and against the resolutions/proposals and questions and answers. All presentations, questions, and answers in the workshops will be made in the spirit of Holy Conversations as set forth in Section 5: I.C.3 above.

6. When the resolutions/proposals come to the floor of Annual Conference, there will be one predetermined speaker for and one predetermined speaker against the resolution/proposal. Each speaker is allowed a maximum of 5 minutes. An additional 6 minutes will be allowed for alternating comments, no longer than 60 seconds each, for and against the resolution/proposal. All comments will be made in the spirit of Holy Conversations as set forth in Section 5: I.C.3 above. A minute of silent prayer will precede the vote on each proposal/resolution.

D. Proposals and resolutions not in the Pre-Conference Journal, except for Resolutions of Thanks, may be brought up at Annual Conference provided that:

1. They have been turned into The Assistant to the Bishop at least 7 days prior to the Annual Conference session and have been reviewed by the appropriate Center or the Core Leadership Team with a recommendation of concurrence/non-concurrence and/or disposition; and, at the Monday afternoon session of Annual Conference, the Conference votes to suspend the rules; and, two speakers, one for the resolution/proposal and one against the resolution/proposal, are provided for the Tuesday afternoon Workshop.

II. Conference Session Procedures

A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall prepare an agenda of all reports and proposals for distribution on the opening day of each Annual Conference.

B. No report, paper, or proposal shall be considered until three (3) copies have been given to the Secretary.

C. The Conference Rules may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Annual Conference members present and voting. The Rules may be changed by three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Annual Conference members present and voting.

D. All items that do not require Annual Conference action will be placed on the consent calendar. If the consent calendar is not a part of the Pre-Conference Journal, it will be presented on the first day of Annual Conference and, after laying on the table for 24 hours, will be acted on by motion of the Assistant to the Bishop. Any one may make a motion that an item be removed from the consent calendar.

E. Speeches in favor of or in opposition to a motion will be limited to three (3) minutes each.

III. Conference Journal

A. The Assistant to the Bishop shall be editor of the Conference Journal.

B. The Conference Journal shall include at a minimum

1. Items required by BOD 606
2. Year-end statement of receipts and expenditures by all Conference bodies
3. List of appointments with and without annuity claim
4. Conference Rules document

SECTION 6: DISTRICTS

I. Each District will determine an organizational structure that is consistent with the Conference vision and mission, and responsive to specific needs and priorities of the District.

SECTION 7: CONFERENCE STAFF

- I. Conference staff positions will be determined by the Bishop, the Cabinet, and the Core Leadership Team.
- II. Compensation of the Conference staff positions shall not exceed that of a District Superintendent.
- III. Salaries of District Superintendents shall be adjusted annually by the percentage change in the average (mean) base salary of all full-time senior pastors serving in the Texas Annual Conference. This adjustment shall begin in 2005, using the 2004 compensation level as the initial base

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- I. Each year, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) shall prepare and recommend a budget for the next calendar year, under appropriate headings, for Conference action.
- II. At least 48 hours before presenting its recommended budget to the Annual Conference, the CF&A shall notify the Director of any Center of Excellence of any change in the recommended budget request for that body.
- III. CF&A shall recommend to the Annual Conference for its action and determination methods or formulae by which all approved budgets shall be apportioned to the churches. All Conference delegates must be informed in writing of the financial consequences of any proposed change in the apportionment method before a vote is taken.
- IV. The Treasurer of each church or charge shall remit to the Conference Fiscal Officer all receipts for Conference connective causes, the District Superintendents' Fund, the Episcopal Fund, the Conference Claimants Fund, and Health insurance at least monthly.
- V. The Conference Fiscal Officer shall distribute monthly or quarterly a report of budgeted funds available to the credit of agencies in proportion to receipts.
- VI. All proposals with financial implications shall be referred to the CF&A before any action is taken by the Annual Conference, including any disbursements from any Reserve Funds held on behalf of the Annual Conference.
- VII. At the end of each fiscal year, all unspent budgeted funds remaining in the Annual Conference budget shall be deposited in the Operating Reserve Fund, except: unspent budgeted funds for New Church Starts, Church Revitalization, the reserves for pensions and the reserves for health benefits, shall be deposited in separate reserve funds and made available for future expenditures for these designated purposes.
- VIII. Annually, the CF&A shall report for Conference approval a list of special days without offering and a list of special days with offering, including Conference Advance Specials. No appeal shall be made to churches of the Texas Annual Conference without CF&A approval except as provided in The Book of Discipline.
- IX. By November 1, District Superintendents shall supply District Auditors apportioned amounts for causes reported in statistical tables, including all salaries set for the current calendar year. These shall be the official figures for such tables. District Superintendents shall send a copy of these figures to the Conference Statistician.
- X. Copies of all financial records and minutes of all meetings related to Centers of Excellence shall be sent to the office of the Assistant to the Bishop in hard copy or suitable electronic form.
- XI. At the request of anyone receiving a salary from the Conference, the Conference Fiscal Officer is authorized to withhold a designated portion of salary annuities, allowances, and/or other benefits, pursuant to Internal Revenue Service regulations.

SECTION 9: PLAN OF EQUALIZATION

- I. The Plan of Equalization shall follow BOD 602.

SECTION 10: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

- I. Clergy and Laity Candidate Profile Booklet
Eligible clergy members and eligible laity willing to be considered for election as a delegate to General or Jurisdictional Conferences are requested to complete a candidate profile sheet for inclusion in a candidate profile booklet which shall be mailed with the Pre-Conference Journal. Eligible persons willing to be considered must agree to attend delegation meetings, to prepare themselves by studying all assigned materials, and to make the necessary preparations to be effective delegates. If any eligible person who is not included in the booklet receives a vote on any ballot, then the individual will be assigned a number to be included in the remainder of the balloting process.
- II. Rule For The Payment Of MPP And CPP Arrearages
Each month the Director of Center of Clergy Excellence shall send to each District and affected pastor notification of arrearages for MPP and CPP. Upon receipt of the report, the District Superintendent shall contact the minister and the treasurer of the reported charge to assure timely payment of the arrearage by the church. If a local church does not make payment of MPP and CPP arrearages within 60 days of notification, the District Superintendent shall meet with the local church to discuss the realignment of the charge. Districts may choose to establish a reserve fund to assist in timely payment of MPP and CPP. It remains the responsibility of the local church to reimburse funds to the District within the time established by the District. Until reimbursement is made by the church, realignment of the charge remains under consideration.
- III. Overview of Texas Annual Conference Assessment Process
Purpose: To *establish, review, and measure progress toward achievement of* Goals, Objectives, and Evidence of Fruitfulness. The Assessment Process ensures aligned planning and good stewardship at the Conference, Center of Excellence, District, ministry, church, and clergy levels, to achieve the Conference Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs. Results of reviews and measures contribute to subsequent plans as successes to be replicated, risks to be recognized, problems to be addressed, and challenges to be met. Assessment results allow us to celebrate victories and identify opportunities for improvement.

Process The Annual Conference and each Center, District, ministry, church, and clergy member-including the Bishop, Center Directors and District Superintendents – establishes Goals and Objectives consistent with and contributing to our Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs, and Measures of Fruitfulness.

The Core Leadership Team supports the Annual Conference in overseeing Assessment Process. Before Annual Conference, The Core Leadership Team reviews prior year's results and recommends Conference-level Goals, Objectives,

and Evidence of Fruitfulness measures for the coming year. At the beginning and end of the yearly planning cycle, the Core Leadership Team reviews Center and District Goals, Objectives and Evidence of Fruitfulness; and reviews progress quarterly.

Each Center and District develops annual Goals, Objectives, and Evidence of Fruitfulness, consulting with each other to optimize support to churches and clergy and avoid gaps and duplications between or across Centers and Districts. Ministry teams recommend Goals and Objectives based on input from programs and ministries within the team. Centers approve ministry goals and objectives and review progress. Ministry teams annually assess results of their programs and ministries.

Each clergy member develops annual Goals and Objectives for each charge and for herself/himself.

The Conference will provide more detailed information about the Assessment Process to all affected groups and persons.

IV. Policy Recommendations*

A Vacation Policy for pastors was unanimously approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and was adopted by Texas Annual Conference. This policy is recommended for all those serving full-time appointments within the bounds of the Texas Conference.

CONFERENCE RELATIONS	TIME OF SERVICE	VACATION TIME
Full Time Local Pastors in Process, Attending Four-Week Course of Study		2 weeks paid
Full Time Pastors (Associate Members, Probationary Members, Full Members)	5 years or less	2 weeks paid
Full Time Pastors (Associate Members, Probationary Members, Full Members)	10 years or less	3 weeks paid
Full Time Pastors (Associate Members, Probationary Members, Full Members)	Over 10 years	4 weeks paid

NOTES: Years of service refer to years of service in an Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, not to years of service in the local church to which the pastor is appointed. Time used for Continuing Education, as defined in ¶349 of The 2004 Book of Discipline, and according to the rules set by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, shall not be considered as vacation time or used in lieu of vacation time. This policy is to be printed each year in the Texas Conference Journal.

*This policy was not included in the 2006 and 2007 Texas Conference Journals. The original policy was voted into effect at the Texas Annual Conference 1991, as stated on pg. 143-144 of the Daily Proceedings in the 1991 Texas Conference Journal and was amended at the Texas Annual Conference 1992, as stated on pg. 145 of the Daily Proceedings in the 1992 Texas Conference Journal.

ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Entities Owned by the Texas Annual Conference

Organization	Center
Lakeview Methodist Conference Center	Congregation Excellence
Lon Morris College	Missional Excellence
Methodist Hospital	Missional Excellence

Affiliated Entities within the Texas Annual Conference

Organization	Center
Houston International Seafarer's Center	Missional Excellence
Methodist Retirement Communities	Missional Excellence
Shalom Mobile Health Ministry	Missional Excellence
UM Army	Missional Excellence
United Methodist Foundation	Missional Excellence
Wesley Community Center	Missional Excellence
Wiley College	Missional Excellence

Affiliated Entities within the State of Texas

Organization	Center
Methodist Children's Home	Missional Excellence
Methodist Mission Home	Missional Excellence
Texas Methodist Foundation	Missional Excellence
Texas United Methodist College Association	Missional Excellence

Affiliated Entities within the South Central Jurisdiction

Organization	Center
Lydia Patterson Institute	Missional Excellence
Mount Sequoyah	Missional Excellence
Perkins School of Theology	Missional Excellence
Saint Paul School of Theology	Missional Excellence

Entities Outside the South Central Jurisdiction

Organization	Center
Gulfside Assembly	Missional Excellence