

**Bylaws**  
**Union for Democratic Communication**  
**(Last Update: 10/16/2023)**

Preamble

The Union for Democratic Communications is an organization that seeks to promote progressive systems that advance the broadest collective participation in the decisions that affect our lives. It is only through such democratic communication structures that we can overcome cultural hegemony and contribute to building a world based on economic justice, equality, and peace. To do this, We must confront and challenge dominant power structures and the ideological systems that support class-controlled communication. The characteristic of our media today is that they are overwhelmingly owned or controlled by the capitalist class. Consequently, communication products and services have become commodities that are used for the accumulation of profit and for the ideological system based on private ownership and production for profit. Similarly, we reject a media system that functions for the benefit of bureaucratic elites. As an alternative, we seek a media system that is popularly owned and democratically operated, although we recognize that there are many specific options within that broad principle. Reform that leaves untouched, and perpetuates, the present structure of class ownership and cultural relations can be only a temporary expedient. As such, it in no way addresses itself to basic institutional and cultural problems. The goals and work of this Union are especially urgent because monopoly control over the means of communication promotes cultural hegemony and the concentration of wealth and power, while increasing the danger of global destruction by military means.

**1. Article I: Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Union for Democratic Communications

**2. Article II: Purposes**

The purposes of this-organization shall be:

2.1. To encourage the development of critical communication theory and to promote a political economic analysis of communication. its class basis, audits role in society.

2.2. To direct attention to the interrelation of politics. economics, science and communication technologies; including the apportionment and uses of the electromagnetic spectrum. This requires the study not only of ways by which communication systems strengthen the present structure of power. but also of how powerless peoples can confront and reverse this condition.

2.3. To support critical communication research activities' and to struggle for the creation and maintenance of alternative forms of popular communication and culture that are basic for political and economic democracy.

2.4. To bring together political communication theory and practice and to overcome artificial divisions among communication producers and researchers that have emerged from, and have been cultivated by class domination

2.5. To work with other progressive organizations toward action strategies in order to achieve collective participation in public forums.

2.6. To join others around the world in applying critical theory and research to the struggles of oppressed peoples for cultural autonomy and democratic control of communication and information resources.

### **3. Article III: Members**

3.1. Membership. Membership in the UDC is open to anyone who endorses the statement of purpose of the national organization, upon payment of dues to the national organization, and upon joining a local chapter.

#### **3.2. UDC Membership Meetings**

3.2.a. Time and Place. The UDC membership meeting will be held at the time and place fixed by the Steering Committee

3.2.b. Voting. Each membership shall entitle the holder thereof to one vote. Decisions at UDC membership meetings shall be carried by a majority of votes cast, except as noted elsewhere in these bylaws.

3.2.b.1. Electronic Voting and Ballots. An electronic ballot must: 1) Set forth each proposed action or candidate; and 2) Provide an opportunity to vote for or against each proposed action. Solicitations for votes by electronic ballot must: a) Indicate the number of responses needed to meet the requirement of a quorum; b) State the percentage of approvals necessary to approve each matter, and c) Specify the time by which a ballot must be received in order to be counted.

3.2.b.2. Electronic Ballots, Majorities, and Quorum. Approval by written ballot under this section is valid only when the number of votes cast by ballot equals or exceeds the quorum required to be present at a meeting authorizing the action, and the number of approvals equals or exceeds the number of votes that would be required to approve the matter at a meeting at which the total number of votes cast was the same as the number of votes cast by ballot.

3.2.c. Conduct of meetings. Meetings of the membership shall be presided over by a chair to be chosen by the members present.

3.2.d. Quorum. Twenty percent of the current UDC membership shall be present to constitute a quorum. Presence includes in-person attendance, synchronous online presence on a virtual meeting platform, or any combination thereof.

3.2.e. Proxy voting. Any member unable to attend a UDC membership meeting may authorize any other member attending the meeting to vote on his or her behalf. This authorization must be in writing.

3.2.f. Dues. Initial dues for the UDC organization are \$50 (US) for regular membership, \$75 for sustaining membership, \$20 for student/low-income membership, and \$60 for household membership. Changes in dues may be made by vote of Steering Committee.

3.2.g. Special UDC membership meeting. Special meetings can be called by 40% of the membership, upon notification of the UDC membership of the agenda, time and place of the meeting at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

#### **4. Article IV: Scope of UDC Organization Activities**

The activities of the UDC organization shall be to facilitate communication among regions, local chapters and individual members. Such facilitation shall include but not be limited to producing and circulating a newsletter and organizing UDC conferences. In addition, the UDC organization shall undertake such activities as are authorized at UDC membership meetings, or approved by mail referendum or electronic voting.

#### **5. Article V: Chapters**

5.1. Forming Chapters. Three or more paid members of the UDC organization may form a chapter.

5.2. Activities of Chapters. Local chapters shall be the basic organization units of the Union for Democratic Communications. The structure and activities of each chapter shall be determined by its members and may include but not be limited to involving itself with local grassroots organizations, cooperative research projects and the development of critical communications as an academic pursuit. No chapter may engage in activities that may endanger the safety of any member without that member's consent. nor of the UDC organization or its tax-exempt status without its consent.

5.3. Public Statements. A local chapter can make public statements on its own behalf as authorized by its membership. Copies of all public statements of a policy nature made by chapters shall be forwarded to the UDC organization upon their release. The UDC organization shall be responsible for transmitting any such statements to the UDC membership

5.4. Rights of Chapters. A local chapter may collect local dues; the amount of local dues shall be determined by the local chapter. Chapters may set up their own bylaws. but these may not conflict with the UDC bylaws.

**6. Article VI: Regional Organizations**

Two or more chapters may form a regional organization. The structure, activities and bylaws of the regional organizations shall be determined by their member chapters.

**7. Article VII: Steering Committee**

7.1. Function. The UDC organization shall be coordinated by a body herein referred to as the 'Steering Committee.' The Steering Committee is empowered to discharge these responsibilities directed to it by the UDC membership at its meetings, by mail referendum or electronic voting, or as necessary to carry out the UDC activities provided for in these bylaws. The Steering Committee shall make no public policy statements in the name of the UDC organization unless authorized to do so by a UDC membership meeting, by mail referendum, or electronic voting.

7.2. Qualification, Number and Term of Office.

7.2.a. Any member who is eligible to vote at a UDC membership meeting is eligible for election to the Steering Committee.

7.2.b. A Steering Committee of twelve members will be elected at each bi-annual membership meeting and will assume office at the conclusion of that meeting. Each member of the Steering Committee shall serve for two years and shall be eligible for reelection at the subsequent bi-annual UDC membership meeting.

7.3. Meetings of the Steering Committee

7.3.a. Meetings of the Steering Committee will be held at least once each year at times and places as shall be fixed by agreement of a majority of the Committee

7.3.b. Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be open to the membership, who will be notified of such meetings at least thirty days in advance.

7.3.c. A majority of the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum.

7.3.d. Action of the Steering Committee shall approach consensus, requiring the approval of three-fourths of the Steering Committee members present at the time of a vote.

7.4. Committees. The Steering Committee, by resolution adopted by a majority of the full Committee, may designate from their number three or more Steering Committee members to constitute standing committees, or other special committees which shall have such powers as the Steering Committee may lawfully designate. This in no way precludes participation on such committees by other members of the organization.

## **8. Article VIII: Officers**

8.1. Officers and Elections. The officers of the organization shall be Coordinator and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected by the UDC membership at the UDC membership meeting from among those elected to the Steering Committee.

8.2. Recall of Officers. An officer of the UDC organization may be recalled by a vote of three-fourths of the membership of the Steering Committee, or by two-thirds of the UDC membership at a UDC meeting, by mail referendum, or by electronic voting. In the event of such a recall, the Steering Committee shall appoint a temporary replacement. An election to replace a recalled officer shall be held at the earliest possible date.

8.3. Duties of Officers.

8.3.a. Duties of the Coordinator. The Coordinator shall be responsible for carrying out all duties ordinarily incident to the office, and shall keep the records of the organization in books or files belonging to the organization. The Coordinator shall maintain complete records of minutes which shall be open at reasonable times and places to inspection by any member of the organization.

8.3.b. Duties of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the organization. The Treasurer shall collect and disburse all monies under the direction of the Steering Committee. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records and shall make periodic financial reports to the Steering Committee. The Treasurer shall have the power to endorse for deposit only, and to deposit, all drafts obligations and evidence of indebtedness paid or payable to the Organization. The Treasurer and Coordinator may execute drafts and obligations of the organization upon such conditions and to such extent as may be determined by the Steering Committee. The Treasurer shall give a bond in such amount and with such security as may be required by the Steering Committee.

## **9. Article IX: Books and Records**

The organization shall keep at the office correct complete books and records of account and shall minutes of the proceedings of the UDC membership, of the Steering Committee, and/or any committee which the Steering Committee members may appoint, and a list or record containing the names and addresses of all members. Any of the foregoing books, minutes, or lists or records may be in written form or in any other form capable of being converted into written form within a reasonable time, and shall be supplied to any member of the organization upon request.

## **10. Article X: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the organization shall be fixed, and shall be subject to change by the Steering Committee.

**11. Article XI: Bylaws**

11.1. Amendment. Bylaws may be amended only by action of the UDC members. Amendments may be proposed in writing by any three members of the Steering Committee, or by any twenty members eligible to vote at a meeting. These proposed changes may be adopted upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership voting at a membership meeting, by mail referendum, or by electronic voting.

11.2. Ratification. In order to go into effect, these bylaws must be ratified by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Union for Democratic Communications membership voting in a written ballot. Union for Democratic Communications membership shall be defined as all those members in good standing. In the case where there is question as to the degree of participation and interest on the part of persons who have neither attended the General Membership Meeting where the vote to amend the bylaws occurred or paid dues, eligibility to vote in the ratification of the bylaws shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

**12. Article XII: Referenda**

12.1. Proposal of Referenda. Referenda for the purpose of determining the activities of the UDC organization or for other decision-making consistent with the vision of these bylaws may be proposed by a majority of the Steering Committee or by twenty members of the UDC organization.

12.2. Conduct of Referenda. The Steering Committee shall be required upon receipt of such to fix a date for the referendum, to notify the UDC membership of the content of the referendum at least forty-five days in advance of the date of the referendum, and to mail ballots, or otherwise distribute electronic ballots, to all members.

12.3. Approval of referenda. To pass, a vote by referendum must be approved by more than two-thirds of the UDC members voting, provided that at least 40% of the membership responds.

12.4. Notification or membership. After the date of the referendum, the Steering Committee shall tally the received ballots and communicate the results to the membership within thirty days.