
WPIRG POLICY MANUAL

Waterloo Public Interest Research Group

www.wpirg.org



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Policy Section	1. Policy Manual
Policy Name	a.) Policy Guidelines
Approval Date	October 14, 2014
Replaces	August 10, 1992
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist the administration of WPIRG policies.

Policies will provide continuing direction for the decisions of the Board. This will in turn provide the staff and members with stable direction from the Board, and address Board turnover.

POLICIES

Nothing in policy should be interpreted in any way as limiting the powers of the Board as conferred under the Constitution of the Waterloo Public Interest Research Group.

WPIRG policies are principles and procedures pertaining to the affairs of the organization. As such, they shall be binding on all employees and members, including Directors, of the organization. These policies are created under the by-laws of the Corporation as well as the current OPIRG Collective Agreement. Where there is a conflict between the policies and the by-laws and/or the Collective Agreement, the by-laws and the Collective Agreement shall prevail.

It is the responsibility of Directors and Employees of the organization to ensure that volunteers are provided training on the policies of the organization.

Any policy of the organization may be created, changed, suspended, removed or replaced with and only with the approval of the Board.

MAINTENANCE OF POLICIES

Any policy approved by the Board shall be kept in a manual strictly designated for that purpose. All policies shall be labelled as follows:

- Policy Number: Number
- Policy Title: Name
- Approval Date: Date
- Replaces: Date
- Reviewed: Date

Responsibility for maintaining the Policy Manual shall reside with the Secretary of the organization. Should the secretary be unable to fulfill these responsibilities, the Board shall designate another individual to assume these responsibilities.

A digital copy of all policies of the organization must be made available on the organization’s website. A Director on the policy committee shall be responsible for ensuring that any changes to the policies are reflected online within one month of the date of approval of the change.

CHANGES TO THE POLICY MANUAL

The responsibility for reviewing and updating policies to ensure that they are in keeping with current practices of the organization resides with the Board of Directors.

The Board may create a policy committee responsible for updating, replacing, and/or creating policies for the organization. The Policy Committee shall be made up of Directors, employees, and/or members of the

organization. The Secretary shall be a member on the Policy Committee as the representative of the organization. Should the Secretary be unable to sit on the committee, at least one other Director shall be on the Committee.

The Policy Committee shall present any recommended policy changes to the Board. Final approval of policy changes lies with the Board of Directors.

Each policy contained within the policy manual of the organization shall be reviewed by the Board, at least, annually. If a policy is determined to require no changes, the Secretary (or another designated Director) shall update the 'Reviewed' date of the Policy to indicate that it has been reviewed within the year.



Policy Section	2. Board of Directors
Policy Name	a.) Appointment of Interim Directors
Approval Date	September 16, 2014
Replaces	May 15, 1996
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

To provide the Board with a process to fill Director vacancies between elections. ‘Vacancy’ is defined in By-law #1 and refers to an empty seat on the Board due to a Director’s leave or resignation.

PROCEDURE

1. The Board will attempt to find qualified candidates from the existing pool of active WPIRG volunteers.
2. A notice of Director vacancies should be posted on the organization’s website and in other appropriate locations. Director vacancies shall also be announced at the regular Members Meetings of the organization until they are filled.
3. Applicants will be given the option to attend a Members meeting to make an informal presentation on why they would like to join the Board.
4. When making a decision, Members may consider:
 - a) The qualifications of each candidate in the following areas:
 - experience with WPIRG/OPIRG
 - experience with other campus/community organization(s)
 - knowledge of the structure and activities of WPIRG
 - knowledge of, experience with, and commitment to consensus decision-making
 - time commitment to Board activities
 - skills or experiences that would be especially beneficial to WPIRG
 - b) Increasing the range and diversity of perspectives, skills, and experiences presently existing within WPIRG by seeking representation on the Board of women, people of colour, First Nations people, individuals identifying as LGBTQ, and applicants with disabilities.
 - c) Achieving gender parity.
5. The decision of the Members Meeting shall serve as a recommendation to the Board of Directors and shall be ratified at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors.
6. No person who stood for election at the most recent AGM and received more no votes than yes votes shall be appointed to the Board of Directors.

TIMELINE FOR APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM DIRECTORS

The Board is expected to make a reasonable attempt to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors within 2 months of becoming aware of the vacancy.

Where possible, Interim Directors shall be appointed for a minimum of 4 months or one academic term.

The term of an Interim Director cannot exceed beyond of the date of the next Annual General Meeting of the organization.

FINANCIAL

Policy Section	2. Board of Directors
Policy Name	b.) Conflict of Interest
Approval Date	June 17, 2015
Replaces	New
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the procedure for identifying and dealing with any conflicts of interest which may arise during the performance of duties and completion of work for the Board of Directors. The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of WPIRG decision-making.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy ‘conflict of interest’ shall refer to: an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, when the opportunity exists for a Director to use the authority, knowledge, or influence of the Board, or a committee or body thereof, for individual benefit or to preferentially benefit any individual or organization with whom the Director has a familial, personal, or financial relationship.

A personal relationship refers to a relationship which falls beyond the scope of regular interpersonal relationships which exist between Directors, Volunteers, Members and Employees of the Organization.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The ultimate responsibility for identifying and disclosing any conflict of interest to the Board of Directors lies with the Director who holds said conflict.

Any Director who holds a conflict of interest on any matter which is under consideration by the Board shall disclose the nature and extent of said conflict of interest to the Board immediately upon the matter being raised by the Board.

A Director shall remove themselves from any discussion regarding the matter for which they have a conflict of interest and shall not participate in any decision relating to or regarding said matter.

If a Director is not aware of or does not hold a conflict of interest when a matter is first raised by the Board, but later becomes aware of, or comes into a conflict of interest regarding said matter, the Director shall notify the Board immediately upon becoming aware, of the nature and extent of said conflict and shall remove themselves from any further discussions or decisions relating to or regarding the matter.

The existence of a conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of any meeting at which the relevant matter is discussed.

If the removal of a Director due to the existence of conflict of interest results in the loss of quorum, the remaining number of Directors shall be considered quorum for the purposes of any decisions relating to or regarding any matter for which the conflict of interest exists.

If a majority of Directors has identified an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest on the same matter(s), any decisions relating to or regarding said matter(s) shall be made by the Members only.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If the Board of Directors believes there exists a conflict of interest which has not been disclosed, the Board may declare through a resolution reached by consensus that a conflict of interest exists. The Director(s) believed to hold a conflict of interest shall not participate in the voting of such a resolution. If such a resolution passes, the

Director(s) declared to hold the conflict of interest shall remove themselves from any further discussions or decisions relating to or regarding the matter for which they are believed to be in conflict.

If the Board becomes aware or is made aware that a Director participated in discussions or decisions regarding a matter for which they held a conflict of interest of which they were aware, or should reasonably have been aware, the Board shall reserve the right to censure said Director(s) and/or to recommend that the membership remove said Director(s) from their office.

The Board also reserves the right to reverse any decisions made on a matter if such decisions were made with the participation of a Director who held an undisclosed conflict of interest regarding said matter.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEMBERSHIP REGARDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If the membership becomes aware or is made aware that a Director(s) participated in discussions or decisions regarding a matter for which they held a conflict of interest of which they were aware or should reasonably have been aware, and did not disclose said conflict of interest, the membership may move to censure said Director(s) and/or remove them from the office of Director.

If the membership becomes aware or is made aware that the Board of Directors discussed and or made decisions with the knowledge that one or more Director(s) participating held a conflict of interest regarding the matter being discussed or decided upon the membership may move to censure the Board of Directors and/or remove them from their office.

The membership also reserves the right to reverse any decisions made on a matter if such decisions were made with the participation of a Director who held an undisclosed conflict of interest regarding said matter.

EMPLOYEE DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In acknowledgement that employees may have influence over board discussions and decisions, all full-time paid Employees of the Organization, and any other employees who participate in meetings of the Board of Directors, are expected to follow the same process as Directors for disclosing conflict of interest.

If an Employee becomes aware of a matter under consideration by the Board for which they hold an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest the Employee shall disclose the nature and extent of said conflict immediately to the Board of Directors and remove themselves from any further discussions regarding said matter.

The Board of Directors may also request that an Employee remove themselves from any discussions for which the Board believes the Employee holds an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Policy Section	2. Board of Directors
Policy Name	c.) Confidentiality
Approval Date	October 28, 2015
Replaces	New
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

This policy defines and describes the management of confidentiality of information among the members of Board of Directors and committees of the organization, hereinafter equally referred to as Directors.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Any information concerning the Organization's affairs, including but not limited to finances; hiring and other HR processes; strategic planning; action groups and projects, received in the capacity as a Director, unless approved by the Board of Directors for public disclosure. This includes all electronic communication.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSIONS

When meeting, upon request by a Director, the Board of Directors may decide to go into a confidential session. This shall be explicitly recorded in the meeting minutes. Any business discussed during a confidential session is considered confidential unless otherwise approved by the board. The accounts of a confidential session may be recorded for the exclusive reference of the Directors.

All committee meetings are by default confidential. Upon recommendation by the committee members, the Board of Directors may open a committee meeting to the public.

DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Directors shall not disclose or discuss with another person, or to use for their personal purposes, any confidential information. Examples of breach of confidentiality include but are not restricted to:

In a case where a Director is uncertain whether an issue is confidential, the director shall consult the Board of Directors for direction.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to make sure all confidential material is removed from meeting minutes before final approval by the Board and publication.

It is the responsibility of the President to oversee the practice of confidentiality in the Organization and by all Directors and bring any breach of confidentiality to the Board's attention.

Directors who breach the duty of confidentiality may be subject to consequences such as removal from their position as Directors and are potentially subject to legal action by the Board of Directors.

Policy Section	3. Volunteers
Policy Name	a.) Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities
Approval Date	December 2, 2014
Replaces	August 9, 1995
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

To define the position of a volunteer within the organization and to provide an outline of the rights and responsibilities of volunteers.

A designated employee shall be responsible for maintaining WPIRG’s volunteer programs as well as the organization’s relationships with its volunteers hereinafter referred to as the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator.

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER

A WPIRG volunteer is defined as any individual who holds a membership within the organization and who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Is a member of an Action Group of the organization
- Holds a formal volunteer position within the organization that is supervised by an employee of the organization
- Is completing a community placement with one of WPIRG’s Community Partners
- Is a member of a committee created by the Board of Directors and/or by the membership at a Members Meeting

Any individual who does not meet any of the above criteria, but contributes time and effort to the benefit of the organization or towards the organization’s mandate without financial compensation (excepting honoraria) may also be considered a volunteer on the discretion of the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator.

All Volunteers must agree to and sign the *WPIRG Volunteer Statement of Commitment* (attached) before they are entitled to the title of ‘Volunteer.’

The Volunteer and Programming Coordinator maintains the right to withhold or withdraw volunteer status at any time, from any individual, if the they deem the individual's behaviour to be contrary to WPIRG policy, or otherwise detrimental to the organization. An individual may submit a written appeal of such decision to the Board of Directors.

RIGHTS OF VOLUNTEERS

As volunteers hold membership within the organization they are entitled to all member rights within By-law #1. Volunteers are entitled to a harassment and discrimination free workplace as defined in WPIRG’s Harassment policy.

Holding volunteer status within the Organization does not preclude a member from applying for employment within the Organization, running for and/or holding a seat as a Director for the Organization, requesting funding from the organization, and/or receiving awards and bursaries from the Organization.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Within one month of the initiation of their term as a volunteer with the organization all volunteers shall receive the following trainings:

- Anti-oppression training
- Consensus training
- Any additional training specific to their role or which may be necessary for the completion of their work

as well as information regarding the organization's by-laws and policies

The responsibility for ensuring volunteers are provided with the appropriate training lies primarily with the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator. The Volunteer and Programming Coordinator may request that the Board appoint a Director to work with the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator to arrange training for volunteers.

All Volunteers will be supervised by an Employee of the Organization.

At the completion of their term with WPIRG, all volunteers are entitled to request an evaluation of their work as well as a reference. The responsibility of evaluating volunteers shall lie with the Employee responsible for supervision of the volunteer.

The Volunteer and Programming Coordinator shall be responsible for determining and providing volunteers with appropriate appreciation for their contribution to the organization.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are responsible for meeting the expectations set for them by supervising staff and the Board of Directors and are accountable for their work.

Volunteers shall be provided with an outline of the work that is expected of their role. Volunteers are responsible for putting forth a reasonable effort to complete the assigned work.

Volunteers are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the policies and by-laws and of the organization. Volunteers are responsible for upholding WPIRG's anti-oppression and consensus decision-making principles and practice.

Volunteers are responsible for contributing to a harassment and discrimination free work environment as outlined in WPIRG's Harassment Policy.

REPRESENTING WPIRG

Volunteers are considered representatives of WPIRG and as such have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner which does not reflect negatively upon the organization.

Volunteers have the responsibility of maintaining the credibility of the organization, at least to the extent of ensuring that all factual claims made in public, in advance of being made in public, are supported by research which could withstand reasonable scrutiny.

ATTACHMENTS

1. WPIRG's Volunteer Statement of Commitment

Policy Section	3. Volunteers
Policy Name	b.) Action Groups
Approval Date	
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

This policy is currently under revision.

REMOVED

Policy Section	4. Membership
Policy Name	a.) Defining Membership
Approval Date	July 28, 2015
Replaces	September 26, 2003
Reviewed	N/A

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the types of membership which individuals may hold in WPIRG. It also defines fee requirements, membership limitations, and membership privileges, as provided for in By-Law #1.

Membership rights are not addressed in this policy. The "corporate" rights held by members in WPIRG are specified in By-Law #1. In addition, all members of WPIRG have the right to participate in any and all WPIRG related activities and events without fear of any form of discrimination or harassment as outlined in the Harassment Policy.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

All individuals enrolled for full-time studies at the undergraduate level at the University of Waterloo are eligible for student membership in WPIRG. Student members are those eligible individuals who have paid student membership fees for their most recent academic term.

Full-time undergraduate students who are not enrolled for the current academic term but paid a membership fee for which they did not receive a refund for the previous academic term in which they were enrolled and intend to return to school full-time are eligible student members.

Student member fees are \$4.75 (effective September 1, 1996) per academic term.

Individuals who receive membership refunds are no longer student members. No individual may hold more than one student membership, and no student member may also hold a community or associate membership.

Student membership fees are periodically revised by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership. Fees are payable on the first day of each term.

COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

All individuals who are not eligible for student membership are eligible for community membership in WPIRG. Community members are those eligible individuals who have paid community membership fees for the current fee period. No individual may hold more than one community membership, and no community member may also hold a student or associate membership. Community memberships may be purchased at the Annual General Meeting of the Organization.

Community member fees are:

- \$15.00 (effective September 1, 1996) per year and membership is valid for one year from date of payment, or

Community membership fees will be established by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership and considered current until revised.

Policy Section	4. Membership
Policy Name	b.) Members Meetings
Approval Date	
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

This policy is currently in progress.

MEMORANDUM

Policy Section	5. Financial Policies
Policy Name	a.) Financial Procedures
Approval Date	October 14, 2015
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

- The responsibility to administer the financial affairs of WPIRG ultimately lies with the Treasurer and other Directors of the Organization.
- The Board of Directors may designate one other Director or a committee of Directors to fulfill the responsibilities of the Treasurer, which are described in this policy.
- The Board may designate an employee to be the employee primarily responsible for finances. In this policy that employee shall be referred to as the 'Employee for Finances'.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Within 45 days after the start of a new fiscal year, the Treasurer shall present an operating budget to the Board for amendment and approval.
2. At least once per month the Treasurer shall present a financial report to the Board. This report shall include a year-to-date statement of income and expenditure. The Treasurer may choose to not present a monthly financial report upon approval from the Board.
3. The Treasurer shall ensure that audited financial statements of WPIRG are completed minimum one week prior to the Annual General Meeting of WPIRG.
4. The Treasurer or Auditor shall present the most recent audited financial statements at the Annual General Meeting of WPIRG.
5. The audited Financial Statements shall be approved at the Annual General Meeting of WPIRG.

EXPENDITURES

- Expenditures within WPIRG shall conform to the approved operating budget.
- It shall be the joint responsibility of the Treasurer and the Employee for Finances to inform the Board when they feel expenditures cannot conform to the approved operating budget. Any expenditure that does not fall within the approved budget will require approval from the Board.
- The Employee for Finances may approve any single expenditure of less than \$500 which occurs at regular intervals in the year and is part of the regular operations of WPIRG.
- The Treasurer may approve any single expenditure that is \$750 or less and within the approved budget.
- The Employee for Finances may approve any single expenditure that is \$750 or less and within the approved budget.
- The Treasurer and the Employee for Finances may jointly approve any single expenditures of \$2,000 and within the approved budget.

CHEQUE SIGNING

1. The Treasurer and the Employee for Finances shall be designated signing authorities.
2. The President and Secretary of the Board shall be designated signing authorities by the Board as needed.
3. For cheques of wages or salary the following applies:
 - a. The Treasurer and the other designated Directors shall sign the cheques, unless

- b. If it is anticipated that the Treasurer or other designated Director will be unable to sign the cheque before it comes due, the Employee for Finances may sign a cheque for wages or salary only on the day employees are entitled to receive them.
4. For all other cheques:
 - a. The Treasurer and the Employee for Finances shall sign the cheque, unless:
 - b. one or both of them is unavailable to sign, another designated signing authority may sign in their place.
5. Cheques of \$2,000 or more must be signed by the Treasurer and another board designated signing authority.

PETTY CASH

- The Treasurer and the Employee for Finances shall complete and sign off on a float reconciliation at the end of each academic term stating the date, amount and account relating to all cash expenses.
- The Petty Cash float will be maintained at no more than \$500 at a given time in each academic term.

VISA

- The Employee for Finances shall ensure VISA payments are made monthly.
- A VISA reconciliation complete with receipts will be provided to the treasurer for sign off on a monthly basis and filed for the audit.

CONTINGENCY FUND

- WPIRG will maintain a reserve of \$75,000.00 CAD in the GIC account and a reserve of \$25,000 CAD in the Savings account when in good financial health for use only in case of lack of income, or a year without revenue.

ONLINE TRANSFERS

- Credit Card may be paid online through a transfer between accounts pending sign off approval on the VISA statement by the Treasurer.
- Transfers may be made between WPIRG USD & CAD and between CAD chequing and savings accounts by finance staff ensuring the reserve policy is maintained.
- The Employee for Finances may pay WSIB & Receiver General amounts through a transfer payment pending sign off approval on forms by the treasurer.

Policy Section	5. Financial Policies
Policy Name	b.) Funding Decisions
Approval Date	
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

This policy is currently under revision.

FINANCIAL

Policy Section	6. Employment Policies
Policy Name	a.) Staff Evaluations
Approval Date	
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

This policy is currently in progress.

DRAFT

Policy Section	6. Employment Policies
Policy Name	b.) Board and Staff Relations
Approval Date	
Replaces	
Reviewed	N/A

This policy is currently in progress.

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