

## DEPARTMENT POLICY STATEMENT PROCESS, CHECKLIST, AND LANGUAGE

There are many important procedures in academic units that are not relevant to the relationship between WMU and the WMU-AAUP. We strongly suggest these be referred to as “Departmental Procedures” and be clearly separated from the Departmental Policy Statement (DPS). Departmental Procedures are often “faculty reviewed and approved”, such as admissions criteria, yet are not reviewed by the WMU-AAUP or the administration as part of the contractual relationship between faculty and administrators. Article 23 of the WMU-AAUP Agreement is brief and states what may be included in the DPS.

The DPS governs the means by which faculty make recommendations to the administration (chair/dean/provost) on a variety of issues. Per Article 23 each department must have an approved DPS on file with both Academic Collective Bargaining (ACB) and the WMU Chapter of the AAUP. When a majority of the faculty in your unit has approved the DPS, it is then forwarded to the chair/director for review. When changes are made based on feedback from the chair/director, these will also need to be approved by the faculty before forwarding the “departmental approved” DPS to the WMU-AAUP and ACB. Important notes:

- ✓ It is best practice to provide the proposed DPS to all faculty members at least one week before it will be discussed and voted upon, and to have this listed clearly on the agenda for your upcoming meeting, because important details are not always easy to digest during a meeting.
- ✓ The cover page should reflect the academic unit, the liaison for DPS purposes and that faculty member’s preferred contact information, and the date on which a majority of the faculty approved it.
- ✓ The submitted version should be identical to what was faculty approved (possibly after review by the chair/director).
- ✓ The WMU-AAUP and/or ACB may agree to review changes to an existing DPS in isolation or may elect to review the entire DPS. This is because changes are often interrelated.
- ✓ The preferred format is a WORD file so that potential concerns can be communicated via track changes.
- ✓ The DPS is not official until after the WMU-AAUP Contract Administrator and the Director of ACB approve it. Per Article 23.6 it shall stand automatically approved for a one-year period of time if “not responded to by Western” within 30 business days. This language assumes the unit isn’t already working on changes requested by the WMU-AAUP.

When you believe your policy statement is complete, and your faculty have received and considered comments from your chair/director, please submit it and the chair/director feedback for review to the AAUP at [staff@wmuaaup.net](mailto:staff@wmuaaup.net) and to Dr. Nancy Mansberger at [nancy.mansberger@wmich.edu](mailto:nancy.mansberger@wmich.edu).

<b>MANDATORY POLICIES: The following items are required parts of the department policy statement (Article 23.2.1-2.2).</b>
Required first paragraph (see Article 23.2.1)**
Tenure process, particularly criteria and methods (see Article 17)
Promotion process, particularly criteria and methods (see Article 18)
Appointment and reappointment of faculty and faculty specialists (see Article 14)
Equitable summer teaching and EUP teaching distribution (see Articles 31 and 41)
Evaluation of faculty, including response rates (see Article 16)
Sabbatical leave (see Article 26)
<b>PERMISSIVE POLICIES: The following items are optional for the department policy statements (Article 23.2.3).</b>
Alternate academic-year appointments
Class schedules
Class sizes
Appointment and removal of department chair/director
Measuring workload in terms of credit hours (see Article 42)
<b>CURRICULAR AND BUDGETARY POLICIES: The following items are extra-contractual but may be desired by department faculty (Article 23.2.4).</b>
Department degree requirements
Department curricular offerings
Department program development and discontinuance
Department budget allocations
<b>PROCESS &amp; STRUCTURE (see Article 23.3.1)</b>
Process and structure for making faculty recommendations (within the faculty prerogative as specified in the Agreement)

\*\* Language throughout the DPS should be written as recommendations to the chair/director or to the administration in general.

## **ARTICLE 23: FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENT GOVERNANCE**

23.§1 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE. By virtue of their command of their disciplines, University faculty have as a unique resource, the abilities to assist in the governance of the departments in which they will exercise their respective disciplines. Faculty, therefore, should participate in the governance of their departments in order to create and maintain harmonious relationships among colleagues, and to fashion and maintain the departments in such a way as to make them maximally

appropriate for instruction, research, service, and other professional activities of the disciplines. Fundamentally, what is desirable and what is intended by the sections that follow is to ensure

meaningful participation by department faculties, with the ultimate power of decision-making by Western, but with an assurance of procedural regularity and fair play.

23.§2 CONTRACTUAL GOVERNANCE. Department faculty shall develop Department Policy Statements, which shall govern the means by which the faculty make recommendations to Western on a variety of matters. Both Western and the Chapter recognize the importance of department policy statements as a means of assisting faculty in the governance of their departments. Department Policy Statements shall contain two mandatory components (a mandatory first paragraph and mandatory policy procedures) and an optional component (permissive policies). Department Policy Statements shall not conflict with provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, or with established University policies.

23.§2.1 *Mandatory First Paragraph for Every Department Policy Statement.* Each Department Policy Statement will contain the following first paragraph: It is the right, the responsibility, and the privilege of University faculty to participate in the governance of their departments. Fundamentally, what is desirable and intended by the Department Policy Statement is to ensure meaningful participation by department faculty and procedural regularity within departments. It is understood that the ultimate power of decision-making resides with the administration. This Policy Statement is one means by which the faculty of this department make recommendations to Western.

23.§2.2 *Mandatory Policies.* Department faculty must have procedures and develop policies for making recommendations to Western concerning tenure, promotion, appointment and reappointment of faculty (including faculty specialists), equitable distribution of opportunities to teach in summer sessions and Extended University Programs, evaluation of faculty, and sabbatical leave proposals.

23.§2.3 *Permissive Policies.* Department faculty may have procedures for making recommendations to Western concerning alternate academic-year appointments, class schedules, class sizes, and appointment and removal of the department chair/director. Department faculty may also have procedures for measuring workload in terms of credit hours as stipulated in Article 42. Department faculty may have procedures for making recommendations to Western concerning department degree requirements and curricular offerings, department program development and discontinuance, and department budget allocations. These recommendations, when approved, become part of the Department Policy Statement.

23.§3 POLICY REVIEW. Department policies shall conform to the stipulations of relevant articles in the Agreement, and faculty are advised to refer to relevant articles while developing department policies to make certain such conformity exists.

23.§3.1 Department Policy Statements describe the process and structure by which faculty make recommendations to Western and may include standing recommendations about a variety of matters, but shall not extend faculty prerogative beyond the stipulations of the Agreement.

23.§3.2 The review of Department Policy Statements by the Chapter and Western is to ensure compliance with the Agreement. Specific contract language shall be cited when policy statement language is considered to be in conflict with the Agreement.

23.§4 APPROVAL OF DEPARTMENT POLICY STATEMENTS. Each department shall appoint a committee that shall develop a written Department Policy Statement. Each committee shall also designate a faculty contact person.

23.§4.1 Following ratification of the policy by majority vote of the department faculty, the ratified policy statement is given to the department chair, who shall then review it. Following review, the chair shall provide written feedback to the committee within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the policy statement. The committee may choose to alter the Policy Statement based on this feedback. The committee shall inform the department chair of the Committee's response to the feedback. One (1) copy of the Statement or additions or amendments thereto, together with the comments of the department chair, shall be forwarded to the Chapter, the department chair, the dean, and Western's Director of Academic Collective Bargaining and Contract Administration.

23.§4.2 Western's Director of Academic Collective Bargaining and Contract Administration and the WMU-AAUP Contract Administrator shall review Department Policy Statements simultaneously for compliance with the Agreement and University policy. Each response will be made in writing, stating specific violations or conflicts with either the Agreement or University policy. Western and the Chapter may make written recommendations for policy revisions that are not based on contractual violations or violations of University policies, but may not delay or withhold approval contingent upon such recommendations. These responses shall be forwarded to the department faculty contact person within thirty (30) business days.

23.§4.2.1 Western and the Chapter shall have the right to an extension of ten (10) business days for review of a policy document upon written notification to the department.

23.§5 MODIFICATION. It is important that department policy statements remain relevant and functional as programs evolve and circumstances change. Department faculty have the right to review Department Policy Statements periodically and to modify them. Once each academic year, the department chair may request in writing a faculty review of some or all sections of the Department Policy Statement. That request should identify which sections of the policy statement in particular, department faculty should review, and whether those sections may be in violation of the Agreement or University policy. Department faculty shall, within one calendar year of the chair's request, inform the chair of any changes made or to be made (subject to the approval process in section 23.§4) in the Department Policy Statement as a result of his/her request.

23.§6 CONSIDERATION. Western shall give serious and timely consideration to recommendations made by the faculty in accordance with this article. Any policy that is not responded to by Western within thirty (30) business days shall automatically stand approved for one (1) year.