

Guidelines for US WILPF COMMITTEE Best Practices

Standing, ad hoc and Issue committees perform the core work of WILPF at our national level and are venues for leadership training and the practice of feminist process. In addition to our branches, they are the foundation of WILPF's organizational strength.

- 1) All national committees operate by consensus. The National Board adopted consensus decision-making in the 1990's; it provides a feminist process that requires listening, problem-solving and shared responsibility. There are variations on the consensus process, so please follow the guidelines used by the National Board.
- 2) Committee members must be current members of WILPF.
- 3) All committees must use their list serves, as this facilitates inclusiveness. Committee chair(s) may manage their committee's listserv; please contact the Director of Operations if you wish to do so.
- 4) All committees have a convener or chair that is responsible for convening meetings, collecting minutes, and may act as liaison to WILPF entities like the Board or other committees. National Board members chair their respective standing committees and may be appointed to chair an ad hoc committee; issue committees democratically select their chair or co-chairs.
- 5) Committee membership selection process and composition may vary by the type of committee. Board standing committees are defined in the US WILPF by-laws, and the Nominating Committee solicits and recommends members to the Chairs of the Standing and Ad hoc Committees. Others, such as the Program Committee and Issue Committees, are open beyond the by-law requirements, and they may decide their own membership selection process. **In all cases**, membership solicitation should be equitable, accessible, and advertised WILPF-wide. It is important that the selection process be clear and understood by all.
- 6) The Welcoming Statement, adopted by the National Board in Spring 2009, shall be read aloud at the beginning of committee meetings.
- 7) It is helpful for a committee to have a purpose or mission statement, and hold regularly scheduled meetings.
- 8) Minutes shall be recorded by a note taker, approved by the committee, saved by the convener and submitted when requested or at least annually to the Secretary of the Board. Especially important for the record are the decisions taken by the committee, with consensus recorded (e.g. "Affirmed, with one stand aside"). Minutes are a part of the public/member record, and will be sent to the Swarthmore Peace Collection archives.

9) In addition to note taking, an agenda, good facilitation, timekeeping and vibes watching are important components of a productive meeting. It is highly recommended that the tasks be rotated, which helps to spread responsibility and learning.

10) Any WILPF committee handling finances (e.g. WILPF funds or outside grants) must have a treasurer who will track the committee's account and receive semi-annual statements from the National office.

11) Committees wishing to post to the website should designate one liaison to WILPF's web weaver, in order to minimize emails and facilitate clear communications.

12) Committee policies, recommendations made to the Board, and expenditures must be approved by consensus involving a quorum (60%) of its members, or at least 5 members (depending on the committee). Requests for expenditure reimbursements should be formally made to the WILPF Director of Operations and accompanied by the record of approval. For information regarding reimbursements, please see WILPF's Reimbursement Policy.

13) Explicit agreements may vary in appropriateness according to committee, but the following are highly recommended. For example:

- a) "Job descriptions" can be written, which helps everyone understand the responsibilities entailed in being a committee member. A commitment can be asked of each potential member: e.g. responsiveness to emails, availability for conference calls, what tasks they might be willing to assume, etc.
- b) Confidentiality of listserv emails and adherence to WILPF email protocol.
- c) Not disseminating minutes beyond the committee **until** formally approved by the committee. It is recommended that draft minutes be sent out for comment/correction as soon as possible following a meeting, and that they be approved at the next meeting, if not before.
- d) Committees should decide on a process for removal of members, for reasons of non-productivity or violation of agreements, before the need to do so arises.

14) Other suggestions:

a) Committee size should be appropriate to the scope of their mandate. Smaller committees- especially with time-bound work- can often work more effectively. Issue Committees will want to encourage broad involvement, but may find having a "core leadership" group with an outer circle of interested members to be more productive, as long as the leadership group is at least five people and remains inclusive in process by using its listserv.

b) Committees are encouraged to invite “consultants” to a meeting. Invite them for a specific slot in the agenda if they’re not needed for the entire meeting, and if they are WILPF staff, they must be given a minimum of 5 days notice if the meeting/ conference call falls outside the usual workweek hours, per WILPF Personnel Policy.

c) Remember- A decision without an implementation plan is not a good decision!

We hope these guidelines will help our committees, and can be modified as experience teaches us.

Supporting Documents:

WILPF By-Laws: <http://www.wilpf.org/bylaws>

Welcoming Statement: <http://wilpf.org/files/WILPFWelcomingStatement-adopted2009.pdf>

Consensus Process Guidelines: <http://wilpf.org/files/ConsensusDecisionMakingForWILPFBoard.pdf>

Email Protocol: <http://wilpf.org/files/WILPF-E-mailPolicy-revisedAug2010.pdf>

Reimbursement Policy: <http://wilpf.org/files/ReimbursementPolicy2009-10-23.pdf>

2010 Directory of Contacts:

Director of Operations:

Laurie Belton lbelton@wilpf.org (617-266-0999)

Secretary of the National Board:

Deb Garretson library336@yahoo.com

Please send clearly titled committee minutes at least annually to the Secretary

Program Co-Chairs:

Carol Urner carol.disarm@gmail.com

Georgia Pinkel glpinkel@gmail.com

Nominating Committee Chair:

Pat O’Brien patob777@verizon.net (617-576-0649)