

BYLAWS for the Disability Affinity Resource Group

Article 1 – Name

The name of this Affinity Resource Group (ARG) shall be the Disability Affinity Resource Group, a group for disabled and chronically ill employees and their allies.

Article 2 – Mission and Objectives

Section 1. Mission

The mission of the Disability Affinity Resource Group is to provide support and advocacy for disabled and chronically ill employees at Wake Forest University and to ensure that disability and related identities are fully included in Wake Forest University's community. This is to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment at Wake Forest University for individuals navigating issues of disability and chronic illness, in all aspects of their thriving in the WFU community. The group will serve as a resource to Wake Forest University to positively influence the environment and assist the University in achieving its diversity, inclusion, and equity vision by creating awareness of current and potential employee needs. The ARG will engage in events and networking opportunities and act as a bridge between WFU's disabled and chronically ill employees and Wake's functional areas and leadership to advocate for improvements to Wake in ways that can bolster disabled and chronically ill employee inclusion, success, and retention.

Section 2. Primary Objectives

There are 4 primary objectives of the Disability Affinity Resource Group. These objectives include:

1. Create an internal support system for disabled and chronically ill employees within the University
 - a. To foster community
 - b. To raise unresolved issues and concerns
 - c. To destigmatize disability
 - d. And to reduce isolation
2. Act as liaisons to provide information and resources to community members about available supports and processes at Wake Forest related to disability.
3. Conduct outreach to internal units whose activities intersect with or impact disabled and chronically ill employees.
 - a. Utilize feedback from members to prioritize outreach and advocate for improvements.
4. Assist in driving organizational initiatives that maximize the inclusion of disabled people in Wake's diverse campus, to allow us to become a model of disability inclusion and access.
 - a. Provide insight and guidance on accessible and inclusive work standards that invite disability inclusion

- b. Support WFU hiring guidelines and practices that build our disability diversity
- c. Promote transparent and inclusive practices of performance evaluation and promotion that are supportive of individuals with disabilities and those with chronic illness.
- d. Encourage Universal Design and Accessibility practices in instructional and administrative areas
 - i. Advocate for proactive Universal Design and Accessibility
 - ii. Educate campus on the benefits of inclusion and help alleviate concerns that UD, Access, or accommodations may weaken instructional rigor or create unequal treatment.
- e. Coordinate with and mentor student disability efforts on campus, encouraging all spaces on campus to be more accessible and welcoming for those with disabilities.

Article 3 – Participation

Employees who take part in any leadership role of the Disability Affinity Resource Group (such as Co-Chair) must have supervisor approval to hold a leadership role since there is a commitment expectation to deliver WFU ARG goals during the duration of service. Similarly, employees who take part in WFU ARGs as a participant (non-leadership role) during their normally scheduled working time must have supervisor approval. Employees do not need supervisor approval to take part in WFU ARG activities on their own personal time (not normally scheduled working hours).

Membership is open to all faculty, staff, and administrators of the University. Members must meet and maintain the following eligibility requirements:

Section 1. Criteria

- Members must be employed by Wake Forest University.
- Membership is open to all University employees interested in supporting and learning more about disability and chronic illness.
- Membership is voluntary.
- Attend at least 2 of the 4 annual business meetings. Attendance at support group or other gatherings is optional.
- Support the core values of the University.
- Be an advocate for the University's diversity, inclusion and equity goals.
- Confidentiality where indicated

Section 2. Leadership

- The leadership of the Disability Affinity Resource Group will include 2 institutional liaisons, one faculty member and one staff member, who serve as Co-Chairs of the ARG.

- During the group's initial phase, the Co-Chairs will be the only officers. As the group grows, additional leadership roles will be added as necessary to ensure group function.
- New and replacement leadership will be determined by members and will serve a 12-month term (unless there is voluntary attrition or the majority of the membership petitions to make a change).

Section 3. Confidentiality

Opinions, experiences, and ideas shared by members of the ARG during meetings or related activities and any records thereof, shall be held in confidence unless participants in the event consent otherwise. Disability Affinity Resource Group records, which include information about group membership, meeting agendas, and use of funds, shall remain the sole and exclusive property of the University.

Article 4 – Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting

The Disability Affinity Resource Group will hold an annual meeting to conduct elections of officers. The meeting will be announced at least two weeks in advance.

Section 2. Regular Meetings

The Disability Affinity Resource Group must meet twice a semester at a time and date that is set in advance by the association's leadership. Meetings will occur at times that increase the likelihood that all faculty and staff members can attend. All official meetings should be announced at least seven days in advance. The body must have at least 4 members present to have a quorum for meetings.

Section 3. Meeting Minutes

The secretary of the Disability Affinity Resource Group will document all formal business that occurs at the meeting. Meeting minutes must be sent to all members within 2 weeks.

All Affinity meetings (remote or in-person) will be managed in the following manner:

- Attendance
- Old business
- Items discussed
- Decisions made
- Action items
- New business
- Next meeting date and agenda

Section 4: Protocol

All ARG meetings (remote or in-person) shall be conducted in accordance with the following inclusive behaviors:

- Share freely of member's experiences
- Encourage others to share freely
- Allow one conversation at a time
- Respect unique/different points of view
- Agree to disagree
- Confine comments to the issue at hand
- Be sensitive to everyone's time
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Provide a timekeeper as needed
- Maintain the confidentiality of internal issues
- Be creative and encourage creativity in others
- Be an active communicator and listener
- Think about the greater good of the organization as a whole

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1. Leadership

The Disability Affinity Resource Group will include 2 institutional liaisons, one faculty member and one staff member, who serve as Co-Chairs of the ARG. Each Officer must be a member of the ARG. No individual can serve more than four consecutive one-year terms in the Office of Co-Chair. All Officers must be in good standing at the time of election. Good standing requires that there are no current complaints or investigations into their conduct with regard to the ARG.

Section 2. Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall preside over ARG meetings and serve as the official liaisons between the ARG and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The Co-Chairs shall appoint all leaders of special committees with the approval of the membership. The Co-Chairs also represent the Disability Affinity Resource Group at public meetings and events, university programs, and other authorized occasions. The Co-Chairship should include both a faculty and a staff member.

Section 3. Treasurer and Secretarial functions

Treasurer and Secretarial functions will be handled by the Co-Chairs in the initial phase of the ARG. These functions include: handling budgets and spend for the ARG, recording, maintaining, and distributing minutes for each meeting with the membership; and handling, receiving and retaining any administrative paperwork between the ARG and the University (including both formal and informal correspondence).

Section 4. Participation

Officers are responsible for attending ARG meetings. All Officers are members of the executive board. The executive board has the authority to carry out the provisions of these bylaws and to expend funds in line with the wishes of the membership. Officers may be removed by a ¾ vote of the active membership.

Article 6 –Membership and Elections

Section 1. Membership

Membership in the ARG is open to all individuals of any identity who have a commitment to issues facing disabled and chronically ill faculty, staff, and students.

Section 2. Elections

Votes are effected by a simple majority vote of active members present at the election meeting. The bylaws can only be changed with a vote from at least two-thirds of the active membership. Votes will be conducted through anonymous means, such as digital anonymous polls (e.g. Zoom polls) or in-person anonymous paper ballots.

Article 7 – Adoption and Amendments

This charter shall take effect immediately upon being put in final format and approved by the ARG, executive committee, ODI or other appropriate body.

Any member of the ARG, the executive committee and/or the ODI may propose amendments. Adoption of amendments shall be subject to the same approval process as the founding charter. Approved amendments will be incorporated into the charter and shall take effect immediately, or as described in the amendment.

This charter is created as a framework around which the ARG will carry out its mission. It is not intended to be a contract and may change, as business needs change.

Article 8 – ARG Image

ARG members must model leadership in all aspects of the diversity and inclusion process and must represent a positive image for the University in all its dealings.