



**CHARTER**  
**Approved July 2020**

**1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Following the highest standards of academic excellence and the call for public involvement according to the Wisconsin Idea, the Wisconsin Public Utility Institute (WPUI) serves the extended public utility and University communities through programs designed to achieve a better understanding of public policy issues. WPUI provides professional education services and advances research on public utility issues for those communities. WPUI supports and encourages connections between the energy industry and students enrolled in academic pursuits that may lead to a professional energy industry career. WPUI also provides a forum for the free exchange of ideas and encourages a broad and balanced appraisal of public utility issues. Through its programs and activities, WPUI endeavors to promote a better understanding of the concerns and perspectives of all members of the extended public utility community including electricity, natural gas, and water industries; municipally-owned and cooperative utilities; governmental and regulatory institutions; consumer and environmental organizations; law firms, professional organizations, and practitioners; and the University community.

**2. STRUCTURE**

WPUI is a professional education organization within the College of Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WPUI has a membership drawn from the public utility and University communities. WPUI activities are directed by a Board of Directors and conducted by WPUI staff. The Board of Directors is drawn from various categories of the public utility community and from the University community in accordance with Section 2.2C below.

**Membership**

**2.1A Definition and Eligibility.** WPUI's membership consists primarily of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and organizations having an involvement or interest in public utility matters in Wisconsin. These organizations include, among others, electricity and natural gas providers, municipally-owned and cooperative utilities, regional transmission organizations and transmission owners, consumer groups, environmental organizations, public interest groups, utility associations, utility practitioners, and governmental institutions. Any company, organization, or agency operating in Wisconsin or with an interest in energy-related issues common to Wisconsin is eligible for membership. The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Legislature, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison are permanent members of WPUI.

**2.1B WPUI Responsibilities and Membership Entitlements.** WPUI activities are conducted in accordance with its Statement of Purpose described in Section 1. Member organizations are entitled to nominate individuals for WPUI's Board of Directors according to the selection process detailed in Section 2.2C. Members are entitled to receive all WPUI publications. WPUI staff keep members informed of WPUI activities.

**2.1C Categories.** Members are classified according to one of the following categories:

- a. Private electricity and natural gas providers;
- b. Municipally-owned and cooperative utilities;
- c. Public Service Commission of Wisconsin;
- d. Government institutions (not including the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin);
- e. University-affiliated colleges or entities;
- f. Utility practitioners and other professional organizations such as consultants, law firms, suppliers, and marketers;
- g. Residential consumer organizations;
- h. Commercial/industrial consumer organizations;
- i. Environmental or other public interest organizations;
- j. Regional transmission organizations or transmission owner;
- k. Entity representing a non-utility energy provider;
- l. Water utility organization or representative entity;
- m. Other (Subject to 2.1A).

A member organization is associated with an above-referenced category based on that member organization's primary function. These categories will be used in the selection of Board of Directors members (as described in Section 2.2C).

**2.1D Member's Liaison.** Each member organization designates at least one person to serve as a liaison with WPUI. Liaisons serve as spokespersons for member organizations and are the primary contacts for WPUI communications.

**2.1E Membership Fees.** Each member organization pays an annual membership fee. Membership fees are established by the Board of Directors in accordance with Section 2.2A.

## **2.2 Board of Directors**

**2.2A Responsibilities.** A Board of Directors governs WPUI's activities. The Board of Directors is guided by WPUI's Statement of Purpose and by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's tenets and traditions. The Board of Directors' responsibilities are as follows:

- a. Set policies for WPUI activities.
- b. Provide direction in planning and implementing WPUI programs and activities.
- c. Monitor and evaluate WPUI and its programs and activities.
- d. Establish membership fees.

- e. Advise the Dean of the College of Engineering on the appointment and performance of WPUI's Director.
- f. Elect individuals to the Board of Directors as specified under Section 2.2C.

**2.2B Membership Structure.** Individuals serving on the Board of Directors are selected to provide a general balance consistent with WPUI membership categories as follows:

- a. Four from private electricity and natural gas providers;
- b. One from a municipally-owned and one from a cooperative utility;
- c. Chairperson of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin or Chairperson's designee;
- d. One from a Wisconsin state government agency (not including the PSCW) and two from the Wisconsin State Legislature with representation from two parties;
- e. Dean of the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Engineering or Dean's designee, and one additional from the University of Wisconsin-Madison;
- f. Two from utility practitioners and other professional organizations such as consultants, law firms, suppliers, and marketers;
- g. A residential consumer organization;
- h. A commercial/industrial consumer organization;
- i. An environmental or other public interest organization;
- j. A regional transmission organization or transmission owner;
- k. An entity representing a non-utility energy provider;
- l. A water utility organization or representative entity;
- m. At large.

The Board seats held by the Chair of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (or Chair's designee) and the Dean of the College of Engineering (or Dean's designee) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison are non-elected. The remaining Board members are elected for three-year terms (except as provided in Sections 2.2E and 2.2F). There is no limit to the number of terms an elected Board member may serve. The Board of Directors may add additional at-large positions. Any other revisions to the number or allotment of positions must be made in accordance with this charter. Failure to attend, without cause, three consecutive meetings will result in removal from the Board.

**2.2C Selection.** The individuals serving on the Board of Directors are chosen by the Board of Directors in accordance with the following:

- a. **Nominations:** Nominations for the Board of Directors may be made at any time by the Executive Committee or by any member of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee will consider all nominations, confirm the willingness of the nominees to serve, and provide its recommendations to the Board for as many people as there are openings on the Board.
- b. **Election:** The Board of Directors elects its members in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive Committee. The Board may vote on each nominee individually or on the entire slate. For a nominee to be elected to the Board, more than seventy-five percent of all current Board members must vote in concurrence with the Executive Committee's recommendations. If

a nominee (or slate of nominees) does not get the required number of votes, the Executive Committee will review the nominations again and make further recommendations to the Board. Election of new Board members will be completed by June 30 of each year.

Elections normally occur in the second quarter of the calendar year. Board of Directors terms begin on July 1. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors appoints replacement Board members to fill interim vacancies in elected positions on the Board. Interim appointees serve until the end of the term of the member they replaced.

A Board member may also be nominated by the Board of Directors for emeritus status.

**2.2D Meetings.** The Board of Directors meets at least three times per calendar year. Additional meetings may be called by the Board of Directors Chairperson. A quorum for a meeting is a simple majority of current Board members. A Board member may designate a representative to attend a Board meeting by notifying the Chairperson or WPUI Director before the start of the meeting.

**2.2E Chairperson.** The Board of Directors selects its Chairperson by a simple majority vote for a two-year term commencing with the expiration of the outgoing Chairperson's term. Terms begin on July 1 and end on June 30. The Chairperson is selected at the first Board meeting in the calendar year in which the outgoing Chairperson's term ends. The incoming Chairperson will serve the shorter of a two-year term or the remaining term as a Board member. The Chairperson may not serve more than two consecutive terms (except as provided below); however, there are no restrictions on the total number of terms a Chairperson may serve. In the event of an interim vacancy, the Board will elect a Chairperson to fill any uncompleted term, and the Vice-Chairperson will serve as Chairperson until the election regardless of that person's remaining tenure as a Board Member. If the incoming Chairperson has been elected to complete the term of the outgoing Chairperson whose remaining term is less than one year in length, then the incoming Chairperson is eligible to serve a total of three consecutive terms. The three-year Board membership term of the Chairperson extends to the date that the incoming Chairperson is elected.

The Chairperson approves meeting agendas and conducts the Board of Directors' meetings. When so directed by the Board, the Chairperson acts as spokesperson for the Board of Directors in matters relating to WPUI. The Chairperson oversees the election of new Board members (as described in Section 2.2C).

**2.2F Vice-Chairperson.** The Board of Directors elects a Vice-Chairperson by a simple majority vote. The election and term of the Vice-Chairperson shall be concurrent with the election and term of the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson may not serve more than two consecutive terms (except as provided otherwise in this section); however, there are no restrictions on the total number of terms a Vice-Chairperson may serve. The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson in fulfilling the Chairperson's responsibilities under Section 2.2E. Other responsibilities of the Vice-Chairperson will be as designated by the Board of Directors. In the event that the Vice-Chairperson is unable to complete a term as a Board officer for any reason, the Board will elect a new Vice-Chairperson. If the Vice-Chairperson has been elected to complete the term of the previous Vice-Chairperson whose remaining term is less than

one year in length, then the new Vice-Chairperson will be eligible to serve a total of three consecutive terms. The Vice-Chairperson will serve as Chairperson should the Chairperson position be unfilled.

**2.2G Committees of the Board of Directors.** The Board has the following standing committees: Executive, Program Advisory, Membership, and Compensation and Performance.

The Executive Committee shall, at a minimum, include the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the past Chairperson (if still on the Board of Directors), chairs of the standing committees, and the Director of WPUI.

Each standing committee shall have a written Statement of Purpose, Role, and Scope to be approved by the Board. Each committee shall review its Statement at least every two years, and proposals for changes shall be presented to the Board for review and approval. Board members volunteer for standing committees and serve for one-year terms. The Board may also appoint non-Board members to any committee. Committee members may be reappointed for an unlimited number of additional terms. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the WPUI Director are ex officio members of all standing committees.

The Executive Committee has authority to act for the Board of Directors on matters that cannot be deferred until the Board's next scheduled meeting, except for the following circumstances which shall be reserved for the full Board: officer elections; Board member elections; adjustments to membership fees; and changes to the charter. The Executive Committee may also decide on matters that cannot be delayed until the next meeting by contacting Board members to determine a simple majority vote. The Executive Committee shall report at the next scheduled Board of Directors meeting on all actions taken by the Executive Committee since the last Board meeting. The Board of Directors may authorize the use of electronic voting between sessions. This will be done using a survey instrument that includes a one-time-use key to assure one person, one vote.

The Board of Directors or the Board Chairperson may establish ad hoc committees as the need arises. The Chairperson in consultation with the Executive Committee shall determine ad hoc committee membership.

## **2.3 Management**

WPUI is managed by a Director who is a faculty member or faculty associate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The WPUI Director is appointed by the Dean of the College of Engineering with the advice of the Board of Directors. If the WPUI Director is not a tenured faculty member of the University, the Dean of the College of Engineering may appoint a senior faculty advisor or other College of Engineering designee to provide advice and guidance to the WPUI Director on WPUI matters such as research, program development, and University-WPUI relations. The WPUI Director is responsible for all WPUI activities and for ensuring that the programs of WPUI are compatible with the educational, public service, and research mission of the University.

The WPUI Director is responsible for program development including program planning, presentations at WPUI programs, advancement of research, fund-raising, and corporate governance. The WPUI Director has authority and responsibility for the development and implementation of WPUI's programs and activities, with guidance and involvement of the Board of Directors and the College of Engineering senior faculty advisor and oversight by the Dean of the College of Engineering. The WPUI Director is responsible for the management of WPUI staff, including full- and part-time permanent staff, and any temporary staff or students hired by WPUI. These responsibilities include hiring, supervising, disciplinary action, non-contractual salary adjustments, and dismissal. Staff funding must be consistent with projected revenue from dues, programs, grants, and any other special funding. The WPUI Director is responsible for the coordination of WPUI's programs with the University and for the development of appropriate institutional linkages with other University programs.

The Director is responsible for maintaining an overall balanced and objective position on public policy matters in its programs and activities. The Dean of the College of Engineering may replace the WPUI Director or College of Engineering senior faculty advisor with the advice of the Board of Directors, if necessary to assure adherence to WPUI's Statement of Purpose.

### **3. ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.1 Objectives**

WPUI's activities and programs are directed toward providing an objective and unbiased analysis of public utility issues. Through debate, discussions, or analysis, WPUI promotes improved understanding and knowledge of public utility issues, of industry and regulatory practices, and of positions taken by members of the public utility community on relevant issues. WPUI does not take positions on public policy issues.

#### **3.2 Educational Programs**

WPUI provides educational services in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. These services may include the provision of seminars, conferences, round table discussions, training programs, and member-only events conducted in accordance with this charter and WPUI policies. WPUI programs should provide an improved understanding of public policy issues and promote an open yet structured exchange of views and concerns among members of the extended public utility community. Diversity in format and speakers is used to foster understanding and communication on public policy issues. The programs are supported by program fees, membership fees, or other sources.

#### **3.3 Research**

WPUI encourages and facilitates communication on research matters for the public utility and University communities. Research activities are provided in accordance with the charter and Board of Directors policies.

#### **4. Fiscal Responsibility**

On an annual basis, the Board will revisit the following budget language:

WPUI is funded by program fees, membership fees, or other sources and does not receive any funding from the University. However, WPUI is an administrative unit within the Engineering Physics Department of the College of Engineering of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as such needs to work within parameters of University regulations. Because the University is not responsible for the funding of WPUI, it is WPUI's policy to earmark a sufficient fund balance to carry out WPUI's operations for a year and a half beyond the coming calendar year. This enables WPUI to continue to provide programming that its members expect WPUI to deliver regardless of potential shortfalls in revenues.

#### **5. CHARTER REVISIONS**

Any WPUI member may propose charter revisions. Proposed revisions are reviewed by the Executive Committee and submitted with a recommendation to the Board of Directors for a final vote. The proposed revisions are adopted upon approval by a simple majority of the Board of Directors.