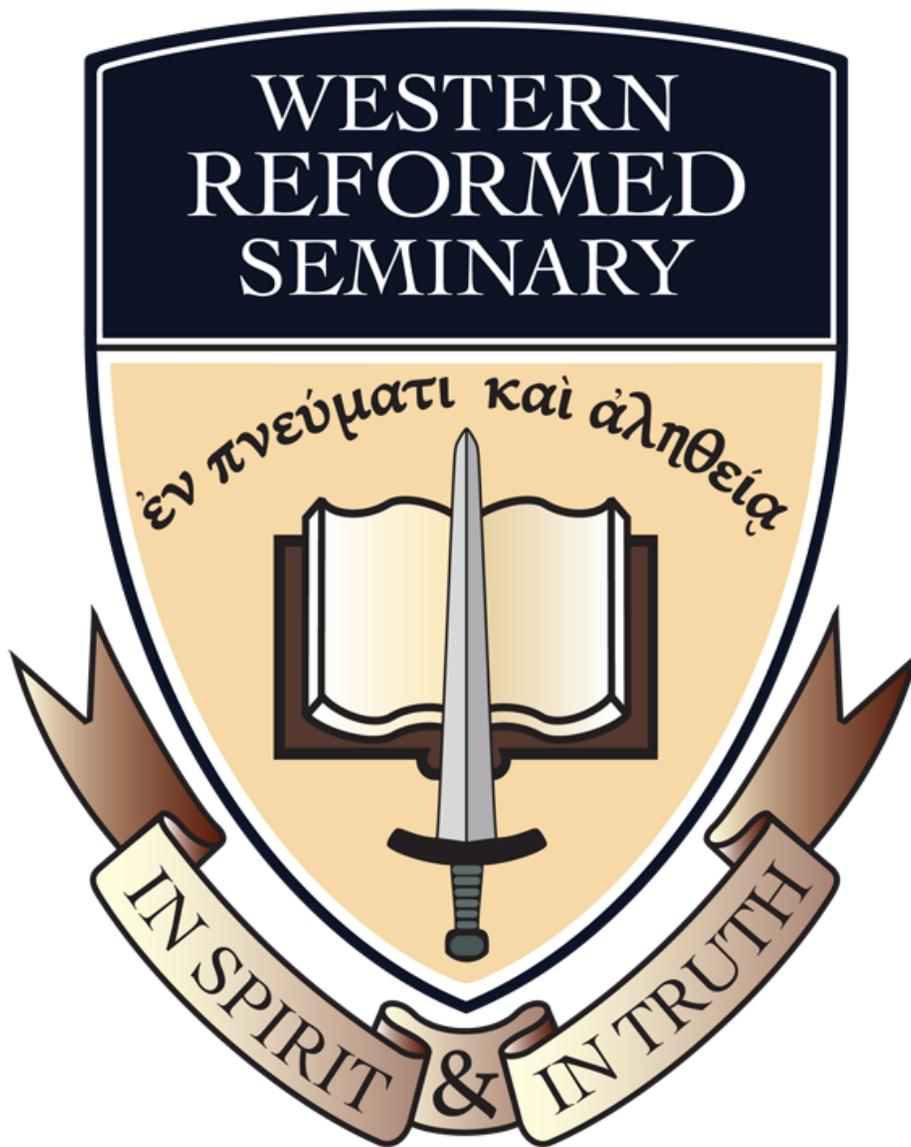


# FACULTY HANDBOOK



Western Reformed Seminary  
9152 Gravelly Lake Dr SW  
Lakewood, Washington 98499  
(253) 272-0417  
[www.WRS.edu](http://www.WRS.edu)

# WESTERN REFORMED SEMINARY

## FACULTY HANDBOOK

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## History and Mission of WRS

### Historical context

Western Reformed Seminary was founded in 1983. This year marked the anniversaries of many significant events on the religious calendar.

Foremost is the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth. WRS inherits and communicates the Reformation spirit of *sola fidei* and *sola scriptura*. Thorough training and submission to God's inerrant Word in precept and practice were ingredients in the ministries of reformers like Luther and Calvin, and reformation today requires no less of its leaders.

Three hundred years earlier than the founding of the Seminary, organized Presbyterianism came to America. Francis Makemie arrived from Ireland in 1683 to plant churches based on the biblical pattern of the church as refined by the reformers in Scotland. American Presbyterianism, evangelical and reformed, is the heritage emphasized at WRS.

One other significant date in church history should be noted. 1983 was the golden anniversary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. It was founded in 1933 by J. Gresham Machen due to the growing and controlling unbelief within mainline Northern Presbyterianism. Dr. Machen's action to preserve true biblical missions was the rallying point for separation from apostasy in carrying on the spiritual succession of American Presbyterianism.

In the same era, Dr. Machen and other conservative scholars were active in defending historic Christianity against the modernistic onslaught. They did not rely upon empty rhetoric or carnal weapons. Quite the contrary, these godly men wielded the truth in a scholarly manner that was irrefutable.

Desiring to promote in the northwestern United States the full-orbed Reformed theology which Dr. Machen and other Princeton scholars had bequeathed to Presbyterians standing on the Fundamentals, several Bible Presbyterian men took steps to establish an independently controlled Reformed seminary in Tacoma, Washington. The plan was approved by the Northwest Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church in 1982, and in 1983 the school was incorporated in the state of Washington. In 1985 the Bible Presbyterian General Synod recognized WRS by unanimous vote as an approved independent agency meriting its support and confidence.

Western Reformed Seminary has grown from a part-time evening school to a full-time graduate institution offering a full slate of courses in several degree programs. Not only have Bible Presbyterian students profited from training at the Seminary, but those from other evangelical denominations have also joined our student body because of our bond of fellowship in the inerrant Scriptures and the common salvation once delivered to the saints.

## **Mission**

The mission of Western Reformed Seminary is to assist the church of Jesus Christ and in particular the Bible Presbyterian Church and other conservative Presbyterian and Reformed churches:

- By providing graduate education and training for their ministers, missionaries, lay leaders, and other Christian workers, to produce spiritually grounded, knowledgeable, capable, and dedicated servants of Christ.
- By providing leadership in these churches and among the public in understanding, declaring, and defending Reformed theology and its current application in the church and the world.

Board members are elected who share this mission for Western Reformed Seminary. The board selects faculty who are in agreement with the seminary's mission and who are willing to serve to forward it. Students are accepted and scholarships awarded with this mission in view. The seminary reports annually to the Bible Presbyterian General Synod and maintains approval from that denomination.

## **Doctrinal position of WRS**

All newly-elected or re-elected members of the board of directors are required to answer affirmatively the following two questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

Regular faculty members are chosen who sincerely answer positively to these two questions. In addition to their academic and professional qualifications, they are to be active in a Reformed church.

Furthermore, the seminary holds to the doctrine of biblical ecclesiastical separation—that is, Christians are to be associated in churches that are loyal to the Bible and the historic Christian faith. Churches that have departed from that standard into various forms of unbelief of vital doctrines are considered apostate. Other churches that cooperate with those apostate churches or spiritually fellowship with them are guilty of compromise and disobedience to God. The board of the seminary has made it a policy that every board member and the regular faculty member shall be separate from such apostate or compromising bodies. It is also the board's policy that the faculty is to make clear to our students in the various appropriate classes and at other times this position and the reasons for it.

While the seminary strongly holds to a Reformed and separatist position, it practices academic freedom for its students. Students from other churches or traditions are not discriminated against, nor are they required to adopt the theological distinctives of Western Reformed Seminary. The board seeks to maintain a proper atmosphere of academic freedom within the sphere of Christian love and to be a blessing to all the churches in our region.

## **Historical survey of Western Reformed Seminary**

### **In the Beginning**

The need for a reformed Presbyterian seminary in the Pacific Northwest had been in the minds of many individuals before the formation of the board of Western Reformed Seminary in 1982.

At the root of this desire for such an institution was the recognition of the critical need to carry on the work of the early reformers such as Luther, Calvin, Knox, and later in the United States, leaders like J. Gresham Machen and other reformed and conservative scholars. It was firmly believed that there was a real need to prepare individuals to preserve and promote the fundamentals of historic Biblical Christianity against the onslaught of modernism and neo-orthodoxy. Dr. John Battle was the “organization” man who came to Tacoma to put some substance to what, up to his arrival, had been ideas and generalizations. A seminary board was selected: Ross Bentson (president), Cliff Robinson (treasurer), Bob Mullen (secretary), Dr. John Battle, Ron Shane, and David Sinding. Within the next year, professors Dr. Ron Bergey and the Rev. Christopher Lensch moved to Tacoma and were added to the board. Dr. Battle was appointed seminary president, and Dr. Ron Bergey was appointed academic dean, to assist in the planning of the instructional program. Rev. Christopher Lensch came aboard in 1983 to act as registrar and dean of students.

### **A Work in Progress**

As ideas began to jell into needs, unused space on the upper floors of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church was surveyed for possible conversion into seminary classrooms, library, and office space. Plans were drawn and with the approval and encouragement of the Northwest Presbytery of the General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Western Reformed Seminary came into being—on paper at least.

### **Getting at It**

With basic ideas about what would be needed, the physical work of converting the third and fourth floors of the Tacoma church building began. Most of the actual construction work was done by volunteers from the Tacoma church. Those having a major role in the renovation and conversion project were semi-retired craftsmen from the Tacoma church. Taking the lead were Harvey Kvale, Harold Leaman, William Smith, Warden Isenberger, and Wilber Olsen. Others from Tacoma and nearby churches assisted as the work progressed. The work was difficult and many hours were spent just correcting flaws and the wear and tear caused by age and disuse. After months of intensive labor three classrooms (about 400 square feet each), together with some library space (about 1350 square feet), two offices, and a student lounge and restroom were roughed in or refurbished. Storage space was created and new windows were cut in the existing foot thick reinforced concrete walls. new electrical service and modern heating were also installed. Concurrent with the physical work being done to prepare facilities, much work was done designing course offerings and the necessary administrative requirements by seminary personnel—often in partially completed facilities.

## A Seminary Is Born and Matures

An appropriate logo for Western Reformed Seminary was selected that would express the basic intent and premise of the institution. The logo continues to express the purpose of the early Reformers that religious thought and study must above all else be set forth “In Spirit and in Truth,” expressed in the logo in Greek. Incorporated in the logo are a shield and the Scottish double-edged claymore, the visual idea that maintaining a truly Reformed testimony involves warfare against error and false religion. The scriptural theme verse for the seminary is John 4:24, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth.”



The first classes—Old Testament Prophetical Books, Greek Exegesis, and New Testament Survey—were offered to begin on October 24, 1983, with eleven evening students enrolled. A formal convocation service for the seminary was held on Sunday evening, October 30, 1983, Reformation Sunday, with several Bible Presbyterian ministers participating. During the years 1984 and 1985 several adjunct faculty were added, and both day and evening course offerings expanded accordingly.

The first commencement exercises were held on May 27, 1986, with two graduates—one being awarded the Master of Religious Studies and the other a Master of Biblical Studies.

During this time a ladies auxiliary was formed, made up of faculty and board members' wives and interested ladies from other local Bible Presbyterian churches. The auxiliary has done much work in promoting Western Reformed Seminary and carrying out collateral work that has been instrumental in the progress and growth of the seminary. One of the highlights of the work of the auxiliary is an annual public relations function identified as “Spaghetti in the Spring,” with a program put on by WRS students and staff. This event has proved to be an ongoing success, drawing many from the Tacoma church and other Reformed churches in the Puget Sound area.

Initially, a 500-volume theological library was formed through donations and loans of books and materials from faculty members and interested local pastors. Study space and computer area were developed, and the library itself had grown to about 10,000 volumes plus 10,000 volumes on loan, along with about 40 journal subscriptions, which are available to students. Since that time microfiche files and many works stored on electronic disks have been added. Western Reformed Seminary has entered a cooperative agreement with two other local evangelical seminaries under the title PSALT—Puget Sound Area Libraries of Theology. This gives students a wider choice of library materials. Linking the resources of the PSALT libraries electronically is a work in progress.

In 1998 the need for a larger classroom emerged, and once again Tacoma church members, under the direction of seminary board member David Sinding, went to work. A seldom-used area adjacent to the seminary library was converted into a 1,300-square foot classroom. Because of its size, this room could also be used for large gatherings related to seminary activities. Also, about this time a separate faculty library was established and an upper room above the existing library was converted to a library annex. With the completion of these facilities, WRS's library occupied just over 5,000 square feet for research and study.

One of the most important additions to WRS's outreach has been the development of the semi-annual publication, the *WRS Journal*. The *Journal* contains timely articles written by WRS professors, other Bible Presbyterian pastors, and occasionally includes articles from other appropriate writers. It is printed locally and assembled and prepared for mailing by seminary personnel and volunteers. The *Journal* has proved to be helpful to recipients and a valuable public relations tool for WRS itself.

The growing need on the part of pastors and other Christian workers for training in Christian counseling led to the introduction of the Biblical counseling department in 1995. This valuable and necessary program continues to be offered under the auspices of The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), formerly known as the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC)<sup>1</sup> and is taught by Dr. Kevin Backus, professor of Biblical counseling<sup>2</sup> and a fellow of ACBC. A branch campus under Dr. Backus's direction was authorized by the WRS board in 1998. The primary emphasis of study at the branch campus has been Biblical counseling with other related course offerings available under the oversight of the WRS faculty and board.

Also, in 1998 a Pastoral Mentorship Program was developed which combines distance learning and intensive classroom training. Students in this program register and complete assignments at home during the year under the mentorship of a pastor approved by WRS. For two terms, totaling three weeks, in January and the spring, students come to WRS for concentrated course work, reviewing and reinforcing what they have studied during the year. The Pastoral Mentorship Program offers the complete Master of Divinity curriculum over six years.

In 2014, beta versions of web-based connections to a live classroom broadened the capability of students to learn from distant and remote locations. The goal of the seminary leadership is to afford this option to any distant student for all of our regularly scheduled classes in the spring of 2018. A small electrical fire sent smoke pouring through the walls of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church and WRS facilities in the spring of 2016. Although the fire itself caused little damage, the smoke damage proved to be devastating. After hundreds of thousands of dollars of insurance-money had been spent to mitigate the damage the building was to be considered a total loss. The 2016-17 classes would be held at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Olympia. On June 16, 2017, the seminary was able to move into a small stand-alone commercial office, barely larger than 1300 square feet. The majority of the library would have to remain in storage, but the facilities offered three offices and a classroom, as well as a nice reception area convenient for chapel and other informal socializing.

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<sup>1</sup> In October of 2013 NANC's membership voted overwhelmingly to change their name to ACBC in order to communicate more clearly that they are an organization certifying competency in biblical counseling.

<sup>2</sup> November 2017 WRS board meeting approved the title of "professor" to both Dr.'s Kevin Backus and Len Pine.

## **Harvest in the Lord's Service**

Since 1982 Western Reformed Seminary has grown from a part-time evening program to a full-time graduate institution offering a full slate of courses in several program areas. Courses leading to the Master of Divinity, Bachelor of Divinity, Master in Biblical Studies, Master in Theological Studies, and Master in Christian Ministry are presently in place. Also available are necessary courses leading to a Master of Religious Studies and special non-degree programs designed to assist missionaries, Christian educators, and other Christian workers in their fields of endeavor. Graduates and attendees are presently involved in a variety of assignments in the Lord's service, as pastors, missionaries, Christian educators, employees in para-church ministries, and other forms of Christian service.

## **Faculty Qualifications**

### **Spiritual qualifications**

Every faculty member is to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and his Savior and Lord. It is expected that the faculty member will be exemplary in his faith and conduct. This includes a consistent testimony personally, in his family, in his church, in his work, and society at large. His life is to be marked by daily Bible reading and prayer, and active attendance and service in the church. He is to cultivate the Christian virtues, as God enables. He is to be free from practices or habits which are harmful or damaging to his Christian testimony. Since he will be training future ministers of the gospel, his life is to be such that students can observe him as an example of a useful Christian minister.

### **Doctrinal qualifications**

All faculty members must sincerely believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith which are common to all evangelical churches. Among other equally biblical truths, we believe and maintain the following:

1. The plenary divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and, as the Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life;
2. The Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
3. The essential, absolute, eternal deity, and the real and proper, but sinless, humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ;
4. His birth of the Virgin Mary;
5. His substitutionary, expiatory death, in that He gave His life "a ransom for many";
6. His resurrection from among the dead in the same body in which He was crucified, and the second coming of this same Jesus in power and great glory;
7. The total depravity of man through the Fall;
8. Salvation, the effect of regeneration by the Spirit and the Word, not by works, but by grace through faith;
9. The everlasting bliss of the saved, and the everlasting suffering of the lost;
10. The real spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood;

11. The necessity of maintaining, according to the Word of God, the purity of the Church in doctrine and life.

Furthermore, regular faculty members are to whole-heartedly agree with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in Scripture. They also are to agree with the separatist ecclesiastical position, that Christians are commanded to be separate from churches that deny or compromise fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Since WRS teaches from the perspective of the Westminster Standards as adopted by the Bible Presbyterian Synod in 1938, which teaches the premillennial return of Jesus Christ to the earth, all faculty members will be expected to work harmoniously within that system of teaching.

While adjunct faculty members are not required to believe all the distinctive doctrines of the seminary, they are expected to present the seminary's position when required by the various courses. As much as possible, adjunct faculty will be chosen who share the seminary's doctrinal position, or else to have the adjunct faculty member teach classes in areas of mutual agreement.

### **Ecclesiastical qualifications**

Every faculty member is to be actively engaged in the work of the visible church. He is to be a member and under the discipline of a church or presbytery. He is to regularly attend the stated services of worship. His church is to be in full accord with the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Regular faculty members are to belong to a Reformed church, preferably the Bible Presbyterian Church or a church in fraternal relations with the Bible Presbyterian Church.

In order to protect and promote the separatist mission of the seminary, the board of directors in 1988 adopted the following policy:

1. That all board members and regular faculty members shall be members in good standing of churches that are separate from apostate organizations, such as the National Council of Churches of Christ, and from compromising associations, such as the National Association of Evangelicals.
2. That, under ordinary circumstances and where possible, adjunct faculty members shall meet the requirement of paragraph 1.
3. That the board of directors of WRS urges the faculty of WRS to make clear to students (in the appropriate classes) the announced separatist principles which distinguish WRS from many other institutions. These principles are those held by the Bible Presbyterian Church, of which we are an approved agency.
4. That the board of directors wishes to assure all Bible-believing students and churches that we wish in no way in our seminary courses or programs to exclude them or discriminate against them, regardless of their denominational affiliation. We will maintain a proper atmosphere of academic freedom within the sphere of Christian love. We desire to serve and be a blessing to all the churches in our region.

## **Academic qualifications**

It is expected that every faculty member will possess an academic degree in his primary field of teaching that is at least one degree higher than the courses he is teaching. Occasionally, adjunct faculty may be retained who do not meet this standard, but who possess uncommon ability and accomplishment in that area. Every regular faculty member should either hold a doctorate in his field or should be progressing toward that degree.

## **Professional qualifications**

Faculty members shall demonstrate their ability to teach effectively at the graduate level. They will show evidence of their ability to do theological research and writing and to interact with scholarly work in their field. They should be able to communicate effectively with the general Christian and non-Christian population, through both speaking and writing.

Faculty members shall be able to guide and counsel students in their personal and academic lives.

Faculty members must be able to work together with the board, administration, other faculty, and students, contributing to common goals and working within the guidelines and structure of the seminary. Ordained members of the faculty shall demonstrate that they minister effectively and harmoniously in their churches.

## **Academic titles**

Titles for faculty positions are assigned by the board at the recommendation of the seminary administration. These titles reflect the faculty member's educational training, experience, and accomplishments, as well as his degree of association with the seminary.

***Instructor.*** —A full-time or part-time teacher who holds a degree at least equal to the level he is teaching and who possesses extra qualifications that enable him to teach.

***Assistant professor.*** —A teacher who displays potential for teaching and research and who has earned a degree at least one degree beyond the level he is teaching. This rank is understood to be temporary, to be upgraded upon successful experience in teaching and research.

***Associate professor.*** —A teacher who has demonstrated successful teaching and research over a period of years. Normally an associate professor will possess a doctorate in his field of teaching or an academic equivalent. This is a high rank and may be permanently held.

***Professor.*** —A teacher who has demonstrated successful teaching and research over a longer period, and who demonstrates leadership in his field of teaching. In addition to holding a doctorate in his field of study, he should be making significant contributions to that field.

**Adjunct professor.** — A part-time teacher who is academically qualified to serve on the regular faculty but who does not teach regularly.<sup>3</sup> Normally an adjunct professor will possess a doctorate in his field of instruction.

**Adjunct instructor.** —A part-time teacher who is academically qualified to teach a particular course or courses but who does not meet the qualifications of an adjunct professor.

**Professor emeritus.** —This title may be granted to a retired member of the regular faculty in recognition of distinguished service to the seminary.

## **Faculty Responsibilities**

### **Teaching**

Faculty members will instruct in the classroom according to the schedule prepared by the administration. Special requests for the timing of classes must be made early in the previous semester so that class schedules can be published for the following semester in a timely manner. Each semester credit hour requires 15 classes of 50 minutes each. On average, students should be assigned about two hours of course work outside of class for each hour in class.

Faculty members are to dress appropriately for class. This normally means slacks, dress shirt, and tie. In warm weather and during concentrated courses a sport shirt or polo shirt may be substituted. Chapel speakers are expected to wear a tie. Friday is a casual dress day.

Courses and lectures are to be carefully prepared and class time used effectively. Faculty members should pace their lectures and discussions so that all the areas of the course are covered in class. Questions and discussion from students should be encouraged but should be kept under control so that there is sufficient time to present the course material.

The Pastoral Mentorship Program (PMP) requires both concentrated classroom instruction and distance instruction, using the Internet. To help make the program effective and successful the faculty member teaching a PMP class will maintain continuous contact with each student and pastoral mentor. The teacher is expected to make at least one such contact per month with each student and mentor. This contact will encourage the student to be diligent in fulfilling his distance learning requirements, will help keep the pastoral mentor actively involved, and will enable the teacher to more accurately track and evaluate the student's work.

Since WRS allows academic freedom for students, the instructor is not to require students to agree with him to get a better grade. However, students are expected to be familiar with the seminary's position on doctrinal and related matters and to be able to clearly express the reasons for that position. Instructors are encouraged to consider opposing views fairly and charitably. By providing the best possible arguments for opposing views and dealing fairly with them, the

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<sup>3</sup> Revised by the WRS board, November 2017, from the original definition, "A part-time teacher who is academically qualified to serve on the regular faculty but whose principal employment is elsewhere."

instructor will provide students with a firmer certainty of the correctness of the Reformed faith as taught at WRS.

Course instructors are to keep accurate attendance and grade records. These records are either to be kept permanently by the instructor or to be stored at the seminary by the registrar.

At the end of each semester, the seminary provides students with evaluation forms to use to evaluate each course they are taking. These forms are reviewed by the president of the seminary and are made available to the instructor. Their purpose is to discover ways in which both the instructor and the seminary can improve our teaching methods and content. These evaluations also confirm what is being done well. These evaluations are to be kept confidential, and there are to be no positive or negative repercussions for the students who submit them.

### **Syllabuses and books**

Each course is to have a printed syllabus. This syllabus must include the course objectives and outcomes,<sup>4</sup> a list of the required and recommended books or other printed material, the assignment schedule, and grading standards. It is expected that the instructor of a class with a primarily lecture format will prepare a printable set of class notes which the students can use in class. These class notes are to be updated and improved regularly over the years that the instructor teaches the class.

Electronic copies of all class syllabuses and notes are to be turned in to the office at least two weeks before the semester begins so that copies will be available to students at the time of registration. These class materials are posted on the seminary's website.

A list of required and recommended books for each course is to be given by the instructor to the registrar at least one month before registration. This will enable the students to have the books purchased and available at the beginning of classes.

### **Research and writing**

Each regular member of the faculty is expected to be engaged in research in his field of study and is to contribute to its ongoing progress and discussion in writing as well as in teaching and speaking. By keeping up in his field the faculty member will be able to keep his teaching more fresh, relevant, and useful for the students.

Faculty members are encouraged to contribute articles and book reviews to the seminary's online journal regularly. They are also expected to interact online with any comments or questions posted after the article has been published.

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<sup>4</sup> This supports the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS) reporting requirement of "Learning effectiveness assessments highlighting the institution's student learning outcomes and faculty assessments."

The seminary library contains books and subscribes to publications not only for students' use, but also to enable faculty members to research in their fields. The administration and library staff will be happy to assist a faculty member to find or obtain needed materials for his research.

### **Professional development**

In addition to doing academic research and writing in his field, each faculty member is encouraged to develop professionally. The seminary encourages membership in academic societies, such as the Evangelical Theological Society, including attendance at their meetings and the presentation of papers. Often, when a significant professional meeting takes place in our region, the seminary will pay for transportation to the meeting for interested faculty and students.

The seminary also encourages faculty attendance at conferences and seminars which promote particular aspects of the Reformed faith and biblical/theological study. Such conferences or seminars have included those conducted by The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, Ligonier Ministries, and special presentations featuring experts in the Dead Sea Scrolls. If the faculty member can set up the WRS display and promote the seminary at the event, the seminary will pay the conference fee and other expenses.

### **Other responsibilities outside of class**

All regular faculty members are to attend stated faculty meetings, which normally are held at the beginning of each semester and then periodically as called by the president. The faculty have authority in their meetings to decide several issues involving students, including both academic and disciplinary matters. At these meetings, plans are made for future course offerings at the seminary and other seminary activities. The faculty also can make suggestions and recommendations to the board of directors regarding seminary goals and policies.

Much of the routine business often conducted at such meetings can be accomplished over the internet. The seminary supplies each faculty member with an electronic mailbox with the Faculty extension @wrs.edu. Because much faculty business is conducted this way, it is not necessary to have frequent on-campus meetings.

Faculty members who are on campus during the day of chapel are expected to attend chapel, and faculty members also are scheduled to speak in chapel regularly.

All faculty members are expected to attend special seminary functions, such as the orientation faculty-student picnic, the Spaghetti in the Spring dinner, and commencement exercises. If a faculty member does not already own his academic regalia, the seminary will rent regalia for him to wear at commencement. If a current faculty member chooses to buy his academic regalia, the seminary will reimburse him the normal rental cost each year he teaches at WRS until the regalia is paid for.

Faculty members may be appointed to one or more committees by the president. These committees serve in various capacities in the life and development of the seminary. They also include committees to review and evaluate students' theses and projects.

Faculty members are expected to help counsel students. Faculty members should be interested in each student's academic, spiritual, family, and social life, and available to help students. Faculty are to be available on campus at stated times to confer with students and are to provide an email address for questions and a home telephone number for emergency use. Sometimes the dean of students may refer a particular student to a suitable faculty member for special counsel.

### **Seminary promotion**

Since WRS is a small institution with only a few regular employees, it is expected that each faculty member will be an "ambassador" for the seminary at all times. Faculty members may be asked to speak in a church to promote the seminary, or to represent the seminary at a special meeting or conference. Faculty members assist in seminary functions in various ways, from speaking to singing to taking part in skits. As the Lord gives opportunity, faculty members should encourage people to support the seminary with their prayers and gifts and should encourage prospective students to come to WRS.

## **Financial Terms of Employment**

### **Payment for adjunct faculty**

Adjunct faculty are paid an hourly rate per class hour taught (one class hour = 50 minutes of class time). The hourly rate is set by the board of directors and consists of a base rate with higher rates for instructors holding a master's or a doctor's degree. Payment is made each month on or before the 25th of the month. Adjunct faculty members who teach a modular class are paid two-thirds of the total amount due upon completion of the course, and the remaining one-third after the final grades are submitted.

### **Payment for regular faculty**

The payment package for each regular faculty member is set each year by the board of directors at its spring meeting. For faculty members teaching the full academic year, salaries are paid in 12 equal monthly payments on or before the 25th of each month, normally from July through June. In determining the salary of a faculty member, the board considers the seminary's existing resources and anticipated revenue, the faculty member's educational background, experience, responsibilities, and seniority at WRS.

When the payment package is approved, the board of directors may also designate part of that amount for housing allowance (if the faculty member is a qualifying member of the clergy) and part of that amount for health insurance (to be paid by the seminary to an insurance company of the faculty member's choice). Also, the faculty member may designate a part of that package to be withheld and placed in a 401(k)-retirement account. These payment arrangements may result in tax advantages to the faculty member. The balance of the payment package will be designated as regular salary.

In addition to any deposits made by the employee to his 401(k)-retirement account, the seminary will contribute directly to that account an additional amount. This amount is figured as

a certain percentage of the faculty member's salary, depending on the number of years he has served on the faculty and the amount of funds available in the seminary's pension dispersal account. These additional pension contributions are made annually after the faculty member has taught a minimum of ten years at WRS. The contribution schedule is established by the board of directors. In addition to 401(k) contributions deducted from the employee's salary, the seminary matches the employee's withholding for Social Security and Medicare taxes, unless the employee has opted out of the Social Security system.

### **Payment of expenses**

For faculty living outside the Tacoma area, the seminary will pay a mileage expense rate to the faculty member. The seminary also pays for the travel expenses of adjunct or regular faculty who must use air travel to teach courses for WRS. Seminary personnel who represent the seminary at church meetings or travel for other promotional purposes have their travel and lodging expenses covered by the seminary and receive a per diem amount for on-the-road expenses. Amounts and procedures for handling these expenses must be worked out by the faculty member and the business manager before contracting the expenses.

It is expected that any church offerings received during these trips sponsored by the seminary will be turned over to the seminary. For tax purposes, it is best that, whenever possible, checks be made out to WRS and not to the individual faculty member. Since WRS is a very small institution with a small budget, faculty are urged to be careful in spending expense money, to make it go as far as possible, and to be used where it is most effective.

### **Vacations and excused absences**

The Seminary President will set the office hours of faculty members. This time is to be used for teaching, counseling, administrative duties, class preparation and grading, research, and writing. Additionally, faculty members should commit to responding to student emails within 24 hours upon receipt of an inquiry. Members of the administration are to see that someone is available in the office during all regular business hours. Evening classes or activities do not replace daytime hours in the office but are expected in addition to the regular schedule.

No classes are held and the office is closed for the following holidays:

- Christmas Eve through New Year's Day: December 24 – January 1. Messages and emails should be monitored and responded to as necessary.
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day: July 4
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving: Thursday and Friday

Furthermore, full-time faculty are entitled to 15 days of vacation time per year. Vacation times are to be planned ahead of time in cooperation with the president to assure that the staffing levels at the seminary will be adequate all through the year.

Participation at presbytery and synod meetings is encouraged. Time spent at these meetings, or representing the seminary at various meetings and conferences, does not count against vacation time.

In addition to normal vacation days, faculty are permitted 10 sick or emergency days. Please inform the office as soon as possible in such cases. If a teacher will miss one or more classes because of illness or emergency, it is his responsibility to be sure that all the affected students are notified ahead of time. This may be done through the seminary office if that is more convenient. A seminary directory is distributed each semester, which he may use to call the students. If for any reason he is unable to reach an affected student, he must notify the office as soon as possible. Sick leave may not be accumulated or paid in addition to regular salary. Comp time is limited to days off that are occupied with work when traveling for development or other official purposes.

### **Continuing education**

A faculty member who is seeking to further his education in his field, or in another field that will benefit the seminary, may apply to the board of directors for financial assistance toward his continuing education. If funds are available, the board will make the appropriate arrangements with the faculty member for such assistance to help with that program. In return, it is expected that the faculty member will continue to teach at WRS for at least an agreed-upon minimum time after receiving the education.

### **Suggestions and Grievances**

If any faculty member has a suggestion to help the seminary, he should first bring it to the attention of the appropriate member of the administration. If no action is taken on that suggestion, the faculty member may, if he wishes, present his suggestion to the board of directors directly by writing to the secretary of the board.

Complaints and grievances are to be handled in a Scriptural manner. In the case of personal grievances, the offended person should seek to work directly with the person or persons involved to solve the problem. If the problem continues, the faculty member is to meet with the president of the seminary, who may also bring in other people to help. If there still is no solution, the faculty member may present his grievance to the executive committee of the board of directors, which will render its decision. The decision of the executive committee is subject to review by the full board at its regular meeting. The decision of the board of directors is final.

All complaints and grievances should be handled biblically. It is expected that all employees of WRS will limit any criticisms to the proper channels, following the normal "chain of command," and will not take advantage of their position to harm the reputation of the seminary which employs them.

## **Termination**

Faculty members normally are hired for an indefinite time. Each spring the board of directors sets the salary levels of the faculty. If no contrary action is taken, the faculty member remains on the faculty. Any faculty member may resign from the faculty, but under normal conditions, he is asked to give sufficient notice so that a replacement can be found without interrupting the seminary program. If the resignation becomes effective before the completion of the academic year, the salary will be prorated accordingly.

The board of directors may terminate a faculty member's employment at any time for reasons sufficient to itself. These reasons might include an unforeseen financial shortage by the seminary, teaching by the faculty member which contradicts the theological stance of the seminary, serious moral or ethical lapses of the faculty member, or unresolved conflicts involving the faculty member. The board reserves the right to determine the financial arrangements of the termination. When possible, sufficient notice of the termination will be given to enable the faculty member to find other employment and to provide a smooth transition.

## **Retirement**

At this point, the board of directors has not set compulsory retirement age. However, it is expected that faculty members between the ages of 65 and 70 will be transitioning into retirement. Besides matching contributions into the FICA and Medicare programs for those faculty in that system, and contributions into the faculty member's 401(k) account, the seminary has no other pension plan.

Regular faculty members who retire are still considered a part of the seminary family. As such, they are asked to contribute as they can to the life of the seminary and are included in many seminary functions and benefits. They often provide significant assistance and counsel to the students and faculty of the seminary and still work part-time in various ways. Retired faculty members, with their matured wisdom and experience, make an important contribution to the seminary's mission.

(Revised 2020)