Policy on Companion and Service Animals

Goals:
Virginia Wesleyan College is committed to providing full access to its programs, services, and facilities for all people, regardless of physical or other disability and/or other special needs. Virginia Wesleyan recognizes that the assistance of service or companion animals may be necessary for some individuals to gain access to programs, services, and facilities or to better manage their particular disability. Virginia Wesleyan also is mindful of the health and safety concerns of the campus community. The College seeks to balance the needs and rights of campus and community stakeholders in effectuating this policy on companion and service animal campus use.

This Policy seeks to encourage information flow and dialogue as necessary to assure the best possible environment for animal users, animals, and other Virginia Wesleyan community members.

General Rule Regarding Animals on Campus:
The College generally enforces a “no-pet” policy on campus, allowing only fish in aquariums that are 10 gallons or less. Exceptions are made for service animals and may be made for companion animals with appropriate documentation as defined under Procedures, item #2. Additionally, at College sponsored events to which animals are invited, it is expected that the animal be secured on a leash at all times.

Definitions:
Service Animal – A service animal is an animal individually trained to assist an individual with a disability.

Companion Animal – A companion animal is a pet owned by an individual and used by that individual to manage a disability.

Procedures:
1. Individuals seeking to use a service or companion animal at the College should complete the steps of this Policy and the registration form included in this Policy. The registration form should be provided to the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life if a residential student will be the animal user; to the Director of the Learning Center if a non-residential student will be the animal user; and to the Director of Human Resources if an employee will be the animal user. Any questions should also be directed to one of these
individuals. Proof that the animal is current on all required vaccinations must be submitted at the
time of request and annually thereafter.

2. The college will consider any request for use of a companion animal on a case-by-case basis.
For companion animals, please provide the following:

1. The credentials and contact information of the health care provider(s);
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability;
3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used;
4. A description of the current functional limitations;
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability;
6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications;
7. Statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability;
8. Statement on how the need for the animal relates to the ability of the resident/student or live-in
family member to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the College.

The College reserves the right to ask follow-up questions and seek clarifying information, as
necessary, upon review of the healthcare provider’s statement. After receipt of the requesting
party’s registration form, the relevant Director will consider the request; seek additional
information, if necessary; and establish guidelines for the companion animal’s presence on
campus. Such guidelines may vary from user to user, depending on the needs being addressed
by the animal. Typically, companion animals will only be permitted in the Residence Halls and
certain outdoor spaces. Unlike service animals, companion animals typically will not be
permitted in classrooms, labs, and other non-residential areas of the campus. The college will
notify the requesting party, in writing, of its decision regarding the companion animal and any
guidelines attending the animal’s use. Should the requesting party wish to appeal or seek
modification of the Director’s written decision, he or she should provide a written explanation to
the Disability Awareness Committee (“Committee”) to assist it in considering the appeal.
Should a requesting party appeal a Director’s decision and that Director be a current member of
the Committee, that Director will not participate in the Committee’s deliberations with respect to
the appeal. The Committee will consider the appeal on its merits, and seek clarifying
information from the appealing party as well as the relevant Director. The Committee may meet
with the appealing party and/or the relevant Director as part of the appeal process, but such
meeting is not required. The requesting party will be notified of the appeal decision in writing.

3. The user of the animal must be in full control and in the presence of the animal at all times
when outside of the user’s residential or office setting and be secured on a leash

4. All animals must be housebroken. The user is responsible for any necessary clean-up and any
property damage caused by the animal. (The College may designate areas adjacent to residential
settings where animals can excrete waste).

5. A service animal may be excluded from, or otherwise, limited in its access to a campus space
if its presence creates an undue burden on the College, fundamentally alters the College’s
services, or poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Such exclusions might occur
in commercial kitchen areas, laboratories, and/or other spaces. The college will discuss such potential exclusions with the animal’s user. Where accommodations short of exclusion are reasonable, the college will consider alternate arrangements. Any decisions made under this section of this Policy will be made on a case-by-case, fact-specific basis.

6. Where a service or companion animal creates a conflict with another campus user, such as by triggering allergies, biting, excessive barking, etc., the relevant Director will collect information as to all concerns at hand and resolve the conflict consistent with the goals of this Policy and applicable law. A resolution may require the animal be removed from the campus.

The College reserves the right to exclude, or restrict use of, an animal where circumstances indicate that the animal is not an appropriate member of the campus community. To be clear, the College is committed to supporting users of service and companion animals, and any exclusion or restriction on the animal will be established after dialogue, gathering of information, and a decision by the Director that the animal’s continued use is not a reasonable use under the guidance of this Policy and applicable law. In his or her decision-making, the Director will consider the use of the animal, the needs of non-users, the relative costs associated with the use or non-use of the animal, and any other relevant circumstances. If any person wishes to appeal a Director’s decision under this section of this Policy, he or she should follow the appeal process in section 2 of this Policy.
REGISTRATION FORM FOR COMPANION/SERVICE ANIMAL

User Name: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Animal’s Name: ________________________________

Type of Animal: ________________________________

Service Animal or Companion Animal? _____________

Description of Animal (breed, color, any other relevant identification):
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Please attach proof that the animal is up-to-date on all required vaccinations. Such proof is required on an annual basis.

For **companion** animals, please provide the following:

1. The credentials and contact information of the evaluator(s);
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability;
3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used;
4. A description of the current functional limitations;
5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability;
6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications;
7. Statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability;
8. Statement on how the need for the animal relates to the ability of the resident/student or live-in family member to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the College.

For **service** animals, please answer the following:

1. Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability? ________________
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

The College reserves the right to ask follow-up questions and seek clarifying information, as necessary, upon review of the healthcare provider’s statement.

“I have read and understand the Virginia Wesleyan College Companion and Service Animal Policy. I understand that the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residence Life, Director of the Learning Center or the Director of Human Resources is available to answer any questions I have about this Policy.”

Signature: ________________________________

Printed Name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________