

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, STANDING RULES**

CONSTITUTION

**ARTICLE I
PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission for Women is to promote the efforts of women of the University in their various roles and activities, and to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas within the University.

The Commission for Women shall serve as an advisory group to the President on any matter that may affect women of the University, including but not limited to:

1. identifying and supporting women's leadership within the University;
2. facilitating the recruitment, retention and development of women faculty, staff and students;
3. developing increased sensitivity to the importance of a supportive educational environment for graduate and undergraduate women students;
4. working to achieve and sustain gender equity in all services and academic programs of the University;
5. encouraging the improvement of working conditions within the University so that women staff and faculty will be able to participate fully and effectively; and
6. monitoring the reporting on the status of women annually to the University community.

**ARTICLE II
MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 - Appointment of Members

Individuals appointed shall be persons interested in and willing to contribute to the improvement of opportunities for women in the University community.

- A. Members of the Commission for Women are appointed by the President of the University.
- B. Commission members are not appointed because of their office or position. Commission members changing employment category will complete their term of membership in the employment category of their original appointment. Three faculty members, three administrators/staff exempt, and three staff non-exempt/technical service members shall be appointed each year to serve a three-year term. Where the distribution of applicants/nominees allows, it is preferred to appoint at least two faculty from the tenured or tenure track ranks, at least one

administrator, at least one staff exempt, and at least one technical service employee.

- C. Student members shall be appointed until they leave the University, with a maximum of three years. The number of appointments made each year shall restore the total number of student members to nine. An equitable distribution of graduate and undergraduate students is preferred.
- D. Of the above categories, appointments shall include at least two persons from a campus location other than University Park.
- E. Members of the Commission who have held a full 3-year appointment are eligible for re-appointment after an absence from the Commission of at least one year. Members of the Commission who have held membership for two years or less may apply for full Commission membership during the next election cycle. The Past Chairperson remains a member of the Commission for one additional year immediately following the term as Chairperson.

Section 2 - Resignations, temporarily inactive members

If a current member of the Commission finds it necessary to be absent from the University for a period of six months or more, the President will be asked to appoint a woman nominated by the Executive Committee to attend in her absence. Upon return to the University, the first member will complete her original term of service and her substitute will leave the Commission.

If a member finds it necessary to resign from the Commission, the President will be asked to appoint a woman, from a list provided by the Executive Committee, to complete her term of service.

Members nominated as replacements should be from the Nominations and Awards Committee's list if feasible in both of the above instances, and should be from the same membership category as the original member.

Section 3 - Inactive Members

Members missing more than one-half of the regular meetings and not participating in any committee work during any year (September-May) shall be declared inactive and shall be asked to resign. After notification of the inactive member, the President will be asked to appoint a woman from a list provided by the Executive Committee to complete that term of membership.

Section 4 - Ex-Officio Members

Six ex-officio positions are designated for:

1. the Director of Women's Studies;
2. the Director of the Center for Women Students;
3. the Director of the Affirmative Action Office;

4. the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources;
5. the Director of the WISE Institute; and
6. a representative from the Undergraduate Student Government.

Another ex-officio position is designated to be held for one year by the second past-chair of the Commission. Other ex-officio members may be appointed annually as needed upon recommendation by the Executive Committee. These members will not have voting privileges.

Section 5 - Affiliate Members

Each year, the Commission may appoint Affiliate Members to serve on Standing Committees. Affiliate Members are appointed for one year, but may be reappointed. Affiliate Members may serve on all Commission committees and sub-committees with the exception of the Executive Committee and the Committee on Women's Athletics. Affiliate Members shall have the privilege of the floor in all committee meetings and in Commission meetings, but do not have voting privileges.

ARTICLE III AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted by two-thirds of the membership by mail ballot. Amendments must be presented in writing at a regular meeting, with the mail ballot following no less than three weeks after that meeting.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1 - Executive Committee

The Commission for Women shall elect annually an Executive Committee; it shall include a Chairperson and Chair-elect and six members-at-large. In addition, the immediate past Chairperson shall serve on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall include at least one non-University Park representative among the six elected members. If among the six elected members any of the four constituencies (student, faculty, staff, tech service workers) are not represented, then the newly elected Executive Committee can appoint from the appointed Commission membership up to two additional Executive Committee members to ensure balanced representation. The members-at-large will serve as chairpersons or one of the co-chairpersons of standing committees.

The Executive Committee shall coordinate the activities of the Commission and its committees; it shall act for the Commission in the interim between meetings of the

Commission; it shall exercise budgetary responsibility for the Commission; it shall serve as an advisory council to the elected Commission officers.

Section 2 - Officers

The Chairperson shall be presiding officer of the Commission for Women. The duties of the Chairperson shall be to preside over all meetings of the Commission; to respond to and initiate communications with the Office of the President; to serve, ex-officio, on all committees of the Commission; and to assume all functions usually associated with the office of Chairperson. The Chairperson also serves on the Joint Commissions Chairs Committee.

The Chair-elect shall automatically succeed to the position of Chairperson, during her second year in office. During her first year she shall assume the duties of Chairperson when that officer is absent and shall perform the duties appropriate to that office. In the event the Chairperson resigns or is unable to serve, the Chair-elect shall move into that position immediately. Her vacant position shall be filled at the next annual election, or sooner at the request of the Executive Committee. The Chair-elect also serves on the Joint Commissions Chairs Committee.

All elected officers and members of the Executive Committee shall hold office for one year beginning July 1 or until their successors are determined. In the event both officers resign or are otherwise unable to serve, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Chairperson from its membership to serve until the next regular election.

Section 3 – Liaison

A liaison from the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity shall be appointed to serve as staff support for the Commission. The liaison will attend all Executive Committee and Commission meetings, will assist in the maintenance of Commission records, will assist with Commission related logistics, and will perform other duties as needed.

ARTICLE II ELECTIONS

All elections shall be by secret ballot. Election to the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominations for the offices of Chairperson and Chair-elect shall be conducted by the Nominations and Awards Committee comprised of all outgoing members of the Commission for Women. The past chair of the Commission will serve as chair of the Nominations and Awards Committee.
2. The process for electing the Chair-elect shall be: The Nominations and Awards Committee shall present a slate of names for the office at the March Commission meeting. It is suggested that consideration be given to existing first and second

year Executive Committee members. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time. The Chair-elect ballot shall be distributed to every member of the Commission within two days after the March meeting; ten days will be allowed for return of the ballots. The Chair-elect will be announced as soon as the ballots are counted.

3. The process for electing at-large Executive Committee members shall be: A second ballot shall be distributed to every member of the Commission within five days after the Chair-elect ballots are counted to select six at-large members. The current Chair of the Commission shall assemble the slate of nominees from the list of continuing members, in consultation with the current Executive Committee. The ballot will be constructed in such a way as to encourage a balanced representation on the Executive Committee; in addition to a statement encouraging voters to consider the importance of balanced representation on the Executive Committee, job titles, job categories, and campus locations should be provided for each candidate. Ten days will be allowed for return of the ballot. Executive Committee at-large members will be announced at the May or June meeting, and then via the Commission's "members and friends" email listserv.

ARTICLE III COMMITTEES

The Commission shall determine its committee structure and composition with the following stipulations:

- A. Any University personnel or any student of the University may be appointed to a committee.
- B. Chairpersons or co-chairpersons of a committee must be appointed members of the Commission.
- C. A simple majority of the membership of a Commission committee must be current members of the Commission.

Committee chairpersons or co-chairpersons will be appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission to serve for one year.

Section 1 – Committee Structure

The substantive work of the Commission is done by standing committees whose chairpersons or one of the co-chairpersons are members of the Executive Committee. Membership on the Executive Committee can be waived for the chairperson of the Athletics committee. Standing committees may include:

- 1. Athletics
- 2. Nominations and Awards (chaired by the past-chair)
- 3. Budget & Development (normally chaired by the chair-elect)
- 4. Outreach

5. Faculty Issues and Development
6. Staff Issues and Development
7. Student Issues and Development
8. Technical Service Workers Issues and Development

Ad hoc committees are appointed as needed. Ad hoc committees may be short- or long-term depending on the nature of the issues to be addressed. All policies and procedures that apply to standing committees also apply to ad hoc committees.

Section 2 – Committee Responsibilities

Commission committees serve as advisory bodies to the Executive Committee and, by extension, to the full Commission. They are charged to develop and implement programs and initiatives as appropriate. Committee chairs are responsible for reporting the status of their committee's programs and initiatives to the Executive Committee. They are not authorized to make decisions without Executive Committee approval unless specific, issue-related authority has been designated to them by the Executive Committee. Any actions or initiatives requiring financial support from the Commission or involving the selection of speakers at Commission sponsored public events need the advance approval of the Executive Committee.

The chairperson or co-chairpersons of each committee is responsible for scheduling regular meetings of the committee, preparing meeting agendas, and taking and distributing meeting minutes. The chairperson or co-chairpersons of each committee is responsible for providing meeting summaries and a year-end report with recommendations to the Executive Committee and the full membership of the Commission.

Representatives from the Commission are selected to serve on the Staff Advisory Committee and the Joint Commissions Committee (chair-elect and one member-at-large).

One member of the Outreach committee will be designated as the liaison to non-University Park locations. This member will also serve as a member of the Executive Committee. Every effort will be made to include at least one representative from non-University Park locations on the Student, Staff, Faculty, and Technical Services committees. All committees are responsible for communications and updates to the liaison.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Commission for Women shall be held each month during the academic year on dates to be announced by the Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE V
AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Bylaws may be adopted at any meeting of the Commission for Women by two-thirds vote of those members present, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been sent to each member at least fifteen days before the meeting.

STANDING RULES

ARTICLE I RULES OF PROCEDURE

The rules of procedure in the meetings of the Commission for Women shall be those of Robert's Rules of Order, most recent edition.

All meetings of the Commission are open to members of the University community, unless matters of a confidential nature are being discussed. Any member of the University community not a member of the Commission for Women, may request the privilege of speaking on any item of business before the Commission. Such a request must be made to the Chairperson at least four days before the meeting.

The Chairperson shall have the authority to place a time limit on the remarks of any participant in a Commission meeting.

The Commission shall publish minutes of its proceedings in a timely manner.

Lists of all members and affiliates, with their current committee responsibilities, will be maintained by the Commission liaison and made available to all members. Lists will be kept current with changes of membership.

The Nominations and Awards Committee shall prepare a list of persons to recommend to the President for appointment to the Commission. The Nominations and Awards Committee shall encourage an open process of nomination, seeking suggestions from a wide variety of sources.

ARTICLE II COMMITTEES

With the approval of the Executive Committee, all committees may add to their membership any member of the University staff or faculty or any student of the University on the basis of her interest, expertise, or membership in a particular sector of the University community. All committees are encouraged to seek advice or consultation on particular questions as circumstances might indicate.

All committees shall record minutes or provide for a summary report of their activities, to be filed with the liaison of the Commission.

ARTICLE III SPONSORSHIP

The Commission for Women may provide sponsorship (financial backing and/or attaching the Commission name) to an event and/or program. Decisions will be on an individual basis based on need, appropriateness to Commission goals, and available funds. Decisions are made by the Executive Committee with input when possible/appropriate by the full Commission membership.

Revised June 2005

REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Revised April 1999

Note 1: Amended Bylaws Article I, Officers/Executive Committee, Section I – Executive Committee – change number of members at large from five to six

Note 2: Amended Bylaws Article II: Elections. – changed Nominating Committee to Nominations and Awards Committee

Revised February 2000

Note 1: Amended Constitution Article II: Membership – changed tenure requirements for reappointments and election criteria

Revised February 2001

Note 1: Amended Bylaws Article I, Section 1: Executive Committee - Added that the Executive Committee can be expanded beyond the six elected members to ensure representation. Added that the members-at-large serve as chairpersons or one of the co-chairpersons of standing committees.

Note 2: Amended Bylaws Article I, Section 2: Officers – Added that the Chairperson and Chair-elect also serve on the Joint Commissions Chairs Committee.

Note 3: Amended Bylaws Article I, Section 3: Liaison – Redefined Secretary as Liaison and updated the description of the duties of that position to reflect current practice.

Note 4: Amended Bylaws, Article II: Elections – Revised the timing for the election process to be consistent for Chair-elect and members-at-large. Added details as to ballot construction.

Note 5: Added two new Section to Bylaws, Article III: Committees – New Section 1 defines the structure of standing and ad hoc committees. New Section 2 defines the responsibilities of standing and ad hoc committees and the duties of their chairpersons or co-chairpersons.

Note 6: Amended Standing Rules, Article I: Rules of Procedure – Added that liaison keeps up-to-date lists of all members and affiliates with their current committee responsibilities.

Note 7: Amended Standing Rules, Article III: Sponsorship – Added that decisions are made by the Executive Committee with input from the full Commission membership when possible/appropriate

Revised September 2003

Note 1: Amended By-laws, Article III, Section 1: Committee Structure – Deleted Campus Liaison as a standing committee.

Note2: Amended By-laws, Article III, Section 2: Committee Responsibilities – Added section on incorporation of campus liaison position into Outreach committee. Defined committee responsibilities in relation to liaison.

Revised December 2004

Note 1: Amended By-Laws, Article III, Section 1: Committee Structure – Added “Budget” to the Development Committee, so the committee name is now “Budget and Development Committee”.

Note 2: Amended By-Laws, Article II, Section 3: Elections – revised the section on the selection of nominees for the Executive Committee. The chair is now responsible for contacting appointed members of the Commission to ascertain their willingness to have her name on the ballot. Executive Committee ballots will now be forwarded no more than 5 days following the election of the chair-elect.

Revised June 2005

Note 1: Amended Bylaws, Article II.3: Elections – revised the section on deadlines for Executive Committee ballot returns. The Executive Committee at-large members will now be announced at the May or June meeting and then via the Commission’s Plus listserv.

Note 2: Amended Bylaws, Rules of Procedure – revised the procedure for the Nominating and Awards Committee by only forwarding the actual number of nominations to the President.

Note 2: Amended Constitution, Article II. Section 1, C and D: Appointment of Members - to allow greater flexibility in appointment of members.

Note 3: Amended Constitution, Article III: Amendments – to allow for ballots to be sent electronically.