

**COMMISSION FOR WOMEN BYLAWS**  
**February 2008**

**I. COMMITTEES**

**Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall coordinate the activities of the commission and its committees; it shall act for the commission during and between meetings and shall exercise budgetary responsibility for the commission; it shall serve as an advisory council to the elected commission officers.

*Purpose:*

To prioritize the issues forwarded by the Issues Committee, make decisions based on the priorities, and serve as the rapid-response team for salient issues as they arise.

*Members:*

Chair(s), chair(s)-elect, past-chair(s), Assessment Committee chair(s), Issues Committee chair(s), Marketing Committee chair(s), and Campus Liaison. Consider including at least one representative from each constituent group and at least one non-University Park representative.

**Standing Committees**

Standing committees accomplish the commission's substantive work. The commission shall determine its committee structure and composition with the following stipulations: any University employee or any student of the University may be appointed to a committee; the chair(s) or co-chairs of a committee should be appointed members of the commission. It is permissible for the second co-chair(s) to be an affiliate member.

Committee chairs or co-chairs will be appointed by the chair(s) of the commission to serve for one year. Committee chairs or co-chairs are members of the Executive Committee.

With the approval of the Executive Committee, all committees may add to their memberships any member of the University staff or faculty or any student of the University on the basis of his/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.

**Assessment Committee**

*Purpose:*

To review current information/data or collect new data to assist in identifying issues; report general findings. Issues can be raised through the Assessment Committee or by constituent approaches to the commission, Issues Committee, or liaison contacts, etc. Assessment Committee forwards data/information/general findings to Issues Committee.

*Members:* Representatives from all constituent groups.

**Issues Committee***Purpose:*

To assist in defining issues, recommend possible responses, and design recommended response plans (i.e., new policy, new program, letters, etc.); to maintain current programs and/or recommend deleting programs or developing new incubation programs. Ad hoc subcommittees can be created to initiate incubator/pilot programs. The Issues Committee forwards issues to the Assessment Committee to collect information for informed response plans. The Issues Committee forwards issues for prioritization to the Executive Committee.

*Members:* Representatives from all constituent groups.

**Marketing Committee***Purpose:*

To increase the visibility of the commission, promote the purpose and accomplishments of the commission, recommend updates to the Web site, and publicize its special programs and events.

*Members:* Representatives from all constituent groups.

**Awards Committee***Purpose:*

To solicit nominations for, select the winners of, and annually present the Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award and Achieving Women Awards.

*Members:* The committee is chaired by the chair(s)-elect and other members are determined by the chair(s)-elect.

**Nominations Committee***Purpose:*

To solicit nominations for chair(s)-elect and executive committee and to replenish the appointed membership. The past-chair(s), as chair(s) of this committee, handles and oversees the process for the chair(s)-elect and Executive Committee election processes, new appointed-member nomination and selection process, and changes and amendments to bylaws.

*Members:* Past-chair(s) and outgoing members, where applicable.

**Ad-Hoc Committees**

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.

Commission committees serve as advisory bodies to the Executive Committee and, by extension, to the full commission. Committee chairs are responsible for reporting the status of their committees' programs and initiatives to the Executive Committee. They are not authorized to make decisions without Executive Committee approval unless they receive specific, issue-related authority from 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 chair(s) or co-chairs of each committee are responsible for scheduling regular meetings of the committee, preparing meeting agendas, and taking and distributing meeting minutes, with a copy to be filed with the Educational Equity liaison. The chair(s) or co-chairs of each committee are responsible for providing a year-end report with recommendations to the Executive Committee.

## **II. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Appointment of Members**

Individuals appointed shall be persons interested in and willing to contribute to improving opportunities for women in the University community. Appointed members are responsible for attending the monthly membership meetings and for serving on at least one committee.

The President of the University appoints members of the Commission for Women.

Commission members are not appointed because of their offices or positions. Commission members changing employment category will complete their terms of membership in the employment categories of their new appointments. Appointments each year should be made based on the goal of achieving nine members each within the following categories: administrative/staff exempt; faculty; student (graduate and undergraduate), and technical service/staff nonexempt. Members shall be appointed each year to serve three-year terms. As needed, one-year terms will be granted. When the distribution of applicants/nominees allows, it is preferred to appoint at least two faculty members from the tenured or tenure-track ranks, at least one administrator, at least one staff exempt, and at least one technical service employee.

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.

It is preferred that appointments include at least two persons from campuses other than University Park.

Members of the commission who have held three-year appointments are eligible for reappointment after an absence from the commission for at least one year. Members of the commission who have held memberships for two years or less may apply for full commission membership during the next election cycle. The past-chair(s) remains a member of the commission for one additional year immediately following the term as chair(s).

The Educational Equity liaison will maintain a listing of all members and affiliates with their current committee responsibilities, and will make the listing available to all members. The lists will remain current and reflect any changes in membership.

### **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, he/she will be asked to resign, and the Executive Committee will appoint a replacement.

If a member finds it necessary to resign from the commission, the Executive Committee, as endorsed by the President, will select from a list provided by the Nominations Committee a replacement to complete the term of service. Members missing more than half of the regular meetings and not participating in any committee work during any year (July through June) shall be declared inactive and shall be asked to resign. After notification of the inactive member, the Executive Committee will forward a recommendation to the President.

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

### **Officers**

The chair(s) shall be the presiding officer of the Commission for Women. The duties of the chair(s) 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 chair(s). The chair(s) also serves on the Joint Commissions Committee.

The chair(s)-elect shall automatically succeed to the position of chair(s) during his/her second year in office. During his/her first year, he/she shall assume the duties of chair(s) when that officer is absent and shall perform the duties appropriate to that office. In the event the chair(s) resigns or is unable to serve, the chair(s)-elect shall move into that position immediately. His/her vacant position shall be filled at the next annual election, or sooner at the request of the Executive Committee. The chair(s)-elect also serves on the Joint Commissions Committee and is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the commission budget and any development-related activities. The chair(s)-elect shall assume the duty of chair(s)ing the Awards Committee. In this role, he/she is responsible for all aspects of the Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award and the Achieving Women Awards programs.

At the end of his/her term, the chair(s) shall automatically succeed to the position of past-chair(s). The past-chair(s) shall assume the duty of chair(s) of the Nominations Committee. In this role, he/she is responsible for managing the election process for the chair(s)-elect and Executive Committee, membership replenishment, and changes and amendments to the bylaws.

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 chair(s) from its membership to serve until the next regular election.

### **Educational Equity 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, assist in maintaining commission records, assist with commission-related logistics, and perform other duties as needed.

### **Ex-Officio Members**

Seven ex-officio positions are designated for the director of Women's Studies; director of the Center for Women Students; director of the Affirmative Action Office; associate vice president

for Human Resources; director of the WISE Institute; a representative from the University Park Undergraduate Association; and a representative from the University Faculty Senate.

Other ex-officio members may be appointed annually, as needed, upon recommendation by the Executive Committee. These members do not have voting privileges.

### **Affiliate Members**

Each year, the commission may select affiliate members to serve on standing committees. Affiliate members may apply at anytime; however, they will be asked to reapply for affiliate membership each year. Affiliate members are also encouraged to apply for appointed membership during the annual call for membership in the spring, should they wish to do so. Affiliate members may serve on all commission committees and subcommittees. Affiliate members shall have the privilege of the floor in all committee meetings and in commission meetings, but do not have voting privileges.

### **Other Membership Responsibilities**

A representative from the commission is selected to serve on the Staff Advisory Council. The chair(s) and chair(s)-elect serve on the Joint Commissions Committee.

One appointed member will be designated as the liaison for non-University Park campuses. This member also serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

A representative of the commission is selected to serve as a member of the Faculty Senate Committee on Educational Equity and Campus Environment. At the Faculty Senate's request, and if possible, this appointment should be for two years. It is desirable, but not essential, that the member chosen for this responsibility be from the faculty.

## **III. ELECTIONS**

The Commission for Women shall elect annually an Executive Committee; it shall include a chair(s) and chair(s)-elect and six appointed members. In addition, the immediate past-chair(s) shall serve on the Executive Committee. Preferably, 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, technical service employees) 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.

All elections shall be conducted by confidential balloting via surface mail. The Nominations Committee shall conduct all elections.

The process for electing the chair(s)-elect shall be as follows: the past-chair(s) shall present a slate of names for office at the March commission meeting. Consideration of existing first- and second-year Executive Committee members is suggested. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time. The chair(s)-elect ballot shall be distributed via surface mail to every appointed member of the commission within two days after the March meeting; ten days will be allowed for return of the ballots. All ballots will be returned to the past-chair(s). The past-

chair(s) will not vote unless the election ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, the past-chair's vote will be counted. The chair(s)-elect will be announced as soon as the ballots are counted.

The process for electing Executive Committee members shall be as follows: within five days following the announcement of the newly appointed commission members, the current chair(s)-elect of the commission, in consultation with the current chair(s), shall assemble the slate of Executive Committee nominees. The nominees shall be assembled from the list of all appointed commission members, including incoming members but excluding outgoing members. The ballot will be constructed in such a way as to encourage a balanced representation on the Executive Committee. A minimum of ten candidates on the ballot is recommended, with a minimum of two in each of the following categories: administrative/staff exempt, faculty, student (graduate and undergraduate), and technical service/staff nonexempt. 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 shall be provided for each candidate. The ballot will instruct voters to vote for six candidates. The ballot shall be distributed via surface mail by the past-chair(s) to every member of the commission holding an active appointment (i.e., including outgoing members but excluding incoming members). Ten days will be allowed for return of the ballots. All ballots will be returned to the past-chair(s). The six candidates receiving the highest number of votes will comprise the new Executive Committee. Executive Committee members will be announced as soon as the ballots are counted.

#### **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. In addition, the Executive Committee meetings are held each month, and committees are expected to meet once a month.

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 chair(s) at least four days before the meeting.

The chair(s) 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.

#### **V. 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 and determined by 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.

## **VI. REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the bylaws may be adopted by simple majority vote from the appointed membership, either electronically or by paper ballot, as preferred by the past-chair(s). Revisions and amendments are presented at a full commission meeting or via e-mail, and ballots are sent to the voting membership within a week after the meeting. All revisions and amendments made prior to 2006 are considered to be historical documentation; documentation is on file in the commission's office.

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