ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commission for Women (hereinafter identified as the CFW) is to address issues affecting the welfare of women in the University community and to improve the climate for diversity within the University. The CFW serves as an advisory group to the President on any matter that may affect women at the University, including but not limited to the:

1. evaluation of the efficacy of present University programs, policies, and procedures as they affect women;
2. identification of areas in which new or revised policies, programs, and/or procedures are needed to assure that women have full freedom of opportunity within the University, and help to remove barriers that impede learning, development, creativity, or employment;
3. recommendation of initiatives that ensures the full and effective participation and representation of women in University affairs; and
4. recommendation of initiatives that are dedicated to enhancing the climate for diversity, to emphasizing the merits of diversity in the attainment of Penn State’s missions, and to educating members of the Penn State community on issues concerning equity of women.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Membership on the Commission is open to full-time employees and full-time students of the University. The CFW is composed of appointed members, ex officio, and affiliate members, characteristics of which and duties of each are described in the following sections. Individuals appointed shall be persons interested in and willing to contribute to improving opportunities for women in the University community. CFW members are not appointed because of their offices or positions.

Section 1: Appointed Members

The CFW is composed of no more than thirty-six voting members.

A. Appointed members of the CFW are appointed by the University President for three-year terms and are eligible for reappointment after a hiatus of at least one year. The appointment of members who serve as chair, chair-elect, or past chair shall be extended for a period of up to three years as needed so as to allow them to fulfill their duties. As needed, one- or two-year terms may be granted.

1 Throughout this document, the term, chair, refers to a single Commission chair or to co-chairs.
B. Appointments each year should aim at the goal of achieving approximately nine members each within the following categories: administrative/staff exempt; faculty; student (graduate and undergraduate); and technical service/staff nonexempt, when possible. 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. CFW members changing employment category complete their terms of membership in the employment categories of their new appointments.

C. Employees must be in 'good standing' to be considered for commission membership. For University activities such as commissions and award programs, faculty or staff are considered to be in 'good standing' if they are meeting the expectations of their positions and have not been the recipient of recent discipline. Individuals should also exhibit qualities such as civility, collegiality, and a commitment to the overall success of their departments.

D. Student members of CFW are appointed for a maximum of three years or until they leave the University, whichever comes first. The number of appointments made each year is designed to restore the total number of student members to nine. An equitable distribution of graduate and undergraduate students is preferred. Undergraduate student members must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5 in order to retain commission membership and participate in commission activities. Graduate student members must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 in order to retain commission membership and participate in commission activities. Only students without a recent conduct history will be eligible to serve on a Commission.

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

F. Appointments are made from a list compiled annually by the Nominations Committee.

G. Appointed members do not serve concurrent appointed membership on other President’s Commissions for Equity.

H. There are typically nine public CFW meetings per year; appointed members are expected to participate in at least six of those meetings. Appointed members are also required to participate on a committee, attending two-thirds of the meetings of the committee of which they are a member. Appointed members on the Executive Committee are expected to participate in at least eight of the eleven Executive Committee meetings held during an academic year. Participation in public CFW meetings or Executive meetings can be in person, by phone, or online. For appointed members, active participation in CFW service generally requires four to seven hours per month.

Section 2: Ex-Officio Members

Five ex-officio positions are designated for (1) the department head of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; (2) the director of the Center for Women Students; (3) the vice provost of the Affirmative Action Office; (4) the vice president for Human Resources; and (5) a representative from the University Park Undergraduate Association.

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

Section 3: Affiliate Members

Affiliate members of the CFW are those persons who work on the CFW even though they are not appointed to the CFW by the President.

A. Affiliate members may serve on committees, as committee co-chair with an appointed member, and in any other role on the CFW except as chair, co-chair, or chair-elect. Affiliate members have the privilege of the floor in all committee meetings and in commission meetings, but do not have voting privileges.

B. Employees must be in ‘good standing’ to be considered for commission membership. For University activities such as commissions and award programs, faculty or staff members are considered to be in ‘good standing’ if they are meeting the expectations of their positions and have not been the recipient of recent discipline. Individuals should also exhibit qualities such as civility, collegiality, and a commitment to the overall success of their departments.

C. Undergraduate student members must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5 in order to retain commission membership and participate in commission activities. Graduate student members must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 in order to retain commission membership and participate in commission activities. Only students without a recent conduct history will be eligible to serve on a Commission.

D. Affiliate members serve a one-year renewable term beginning July 1 and ending June 30 the following year. Affiliate members may apply at any time. The Nominations Committee requires affiliate members to confirm their continued interest each year during the annual call for membership in February. Affiliate members also are encouraged to apply for appointed membership during the annual call for membership in February, should they wish to do so.

E. There are typically nine public CFW meetings per year; affiliate members are expected to participate in at least six of those meetings. Affiliate members are also asked to participate on a committee, attending two-thirds of the meetings of the committee of which they are a member. Participation in public CFW meetings can be in person, by phone, or online. For affiliate members, active participation in CFW service generally requires three to six hours per month.

Section 4: Resignations, Inactive Members

If a member is no longer affiliated with the University, membership automatically ceases.

Members may resign from the CFW. If a member is on HR-initiated leave or a student is no longer actively registered for courses, then the member must resign from the Commission. Also, if a member is absent from the University for a period of six months or more, the member must resign from the CFW.

Members missing more than half of the regular meetings and not participating in any committee work during any year (July 1 through June 30) are considered inactive and must resign from the Commission.

When resignations from the CFW occur, the President may be asked to appoint an individual to complete the term of membership vacated. Such an appointee is selected from the most recent
list of potential members compiled by the Nominations Committee.

If feasible, in all of the above instances, replacements should occur from the same membership category as the resigning member.

Section 5: Termination of Membership
An appointed or affiliate member may be removed from the CFW through a vote of the Executive Committee if the member is found to have violated the bylaws of the CFW and/or policies at Penn State, is not acting in the best interest of the CFW, or is creating a hostile meeting environment. Termination procedures are specified herein:

a. CFW members may bring concerns of membership behavior to the Executive Committee via email to the CFW chair or in person at an Executive Committee meeting.

b. Members in question may request a meeting with executive members for the opportunity to address their case.

c. After concerns and rebuttal (if requested) are presented, a course of action must be passed by a majority vote by the Executive Committee. The course of action may be immediate termination of membership or a written warning that continued behavior will result in termination of membership.

d. Members are notified of termination or warning by a written notice from the chair of the CFW.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1: Officers
The chair is the presiding officer of the CFW. The chair manages the general and active business of the CFW; presides over all meetings of the CFW; ensures that all orders and resolutions of the membership are implemented; responds to and initiates communications with the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, the Office of the President, and any external constituencies on behalf of the CFW; serves, ex-officio, on all committees of the CFW or appoints a delegate to do so; oversees and monitors the CFW budget and development activities; compiles the Commission’s annual report; and assumes all functions usually associated with the office of chair. The chair also serves on the Joint Commissions Committee.

The chair-elect automatically succeeds to the position of chair during the second year in office. During the first year, the chair-elect assumes the duties of chair when the chair is absent and performs the chair’s duties. In the event that the chair resigns or is unable to serve, the chair-elect moves immediately into the position of chair. The vacant position of co-chair-elect is filled at the next annual election, or sooner at the request of the Executive Committee. The chair-elect also serves on the Joint Commissions Committee. The chair-elect assumes the duty of chairing the Awards Committee. In this role, the chair-elect is responsible for all aspects of the Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award and the Achieving Women Awards programs.

At the end of the chair’s term, the chair automatically succeeds to the position of past chair. The past chair assumes the duty of chair of the Nominations Committee. In this role, the past chair is responsible for managing the election process for the chair-elect and Executive Committee and membership replenishment. The past chair also is responsible for completing changes and amendments to the bylaws.
A secretary is chosen by the chair from among volunteers. The secretary records minutes during public commission meetings and Executive Committee meetings and is responsible for placing the minutes in the CFW Box folder within 72 hours after an Executive meeting is held. The secretary also tracks and maintains a record of attendance at public CFW and Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee must make updates and corrections to the minutes 72 hours prior to the next public or Executive Committee meeting, so that voting on the corrected version of minutes can occur.

All elected officers and members of the Executive Committee hold offices for one year beginning July 1 or until their successors are determined. In the event both chair and chair-elect resign or are otherwise unable to serve, the Executive Committee appoints a chair from the members of the Executive Committee to serve until the next regular election.

Section 2: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the CFW consists of the chair of the CFW, the chair-elect of the CFW, the most recent past chair of the CFW, chairs of each standing and ad-hoc committee, a secretary, a representative to the University Staff Advisory Council, a liaison for non-University Park campuses, a member of the University 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), and six at-large members (see Article VIII below). Other members may be invited by the chair to serve as at-large members. Each committee must send a proxy to meetings of the Executive Committee if the committee chair cannot attend.

The Executive Committee coordinates the activities of the CFW and its committees; acts for the CFW during and between meetings and exercises budgetary responsibility for the CFW; and serves as an advisory council to the elected CFW officers. The Executive Committee chooses and prioritizes issues, sets up ad hoc committees to work on those issues, and serves as the rapid-response team for salient issues as they arise. No individual member or committee may take any actions on behalf of the CFW unless specifically delegated to do so by the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the full membership.

Section 3: Educational Equity Liaison

A diversity planning analyst from Educational Equity is assigned as a liaison to each Commission. The analyst’s primary functions are to:

- provide consultation and advice;
- maintain and archive appropriate commission records and documents;
- facilitate communication and information flow between Commissions, Educational Equity administrators, commission leadership, commission membership, interested constituents, and service providers;
- provide continuity as commission membership and leadership rotates;
- facilitate access to administrative support in the implementation of budget, correspondence, event planning, marketing, publications, scheduling, and web content management.

The analyst assigned to act in the role of a liaison is the primary point of contact for CFW members with Educational Equity. The analyst is key to effectively accessing resources, information, and services within Educational Equity and elsewhere in the University. To complete certain tasks, the CFW needs the assistance of administrative and other staff expertise within Educational Equity. CFW accesses these services through the liaison. The
CFW also has access to the vice provost and the assistant vice provost, but the liaison relationship is primary and communication with the Educational Equity administration should occur in consultation with the liaison. Refer to the Commission Resource Guide at equity.psu.edu/about/crg. All executive members should read this e-publication.

ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES

There are two distinct types of committees within the CFW. The first set of committees is the process committees that are essential to the overall functioning of the CFW. The second set of committees is the program committees that focus on the current issues being addressed by the CFW. These committees are further described in this section.

Section 1: Process Committees

The CFW’s substantive work is accomplished through its process committees. All committees work with the CFW chairs and with the Educational Equity liaison and office as outlined in Article III, Section 3. The CFW determines its committee structure and composition according to the following stipulations:

a. Officers and chairpersons of committees must be appointed members of the CFW in active attendance and participation standing. If an appointed member is not available to chair a committee, an affiliate member may be selected. One co-chair of a committee may be an affiliate member.

b. Committee chairs or co-chairs are appointed by the chair of the CFW to serve for one year and may be reappointed by subsequent chair. Committee chairs or co-chairs are members of the Executive Committee.

c. With the approval of the Executive Committee, all process and program committees may add as an ex-officio member any member of the University staff or faculty or any student of the University on the basis of interest, expertise, or membership in a particular sector of the University community. Individuals who are not University faculty, staff, or students may be added to a committee upon approval of the Executive Committee of the CFW. All committees are encouraged to seek advice or consultation from the Executive Committee on particular questions as circumstances might indicate.

d. All committees serve as advisory bodies to the Executive Committee of the CFW and, by extension, to the full CFW. They 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 CFW or involving the selection of speakers at CFW-sponsored public events need the advance approval of the Executive Committee.

e. The chair or co-chairs of each committee are responsible for scheduling regular meetings of the committee, preparing meeting agendas, and reporting on activities at the Executive Committee meetings. The chair or co-chairs of each committee are responsible for providing a year-end report with recommendations to the Executive Committee.

The process committees are as follows:
1. **Assessment Committee:** The Assessment Committee reviews current information/data or collects new data to assist in identifying issues and reports general findings. Issues can be raised through the Assessment Committee or by constituent approaches to the commission or liaison contacts, etc. Members may include representatives from all constituent groups.

2. **Awards Committee:** The Awards Committee solicits nominations for, selects the winners of, and annually presents the Rosemary Schraer Mentoring Award and Achieving Women Awards. This committee is chaired by the chair-elect and other members are determined by the chair-elect.

3. **Campus Liaison Committee:** The Campus Liaison Committee coordinates activities and communication among the campuses across the state. Members may include representatives from all campus-based CFW groups.

4. **Educational Program Committee:** The Educational Program Committee, at the direction of the chair, plans the slate of topics for the public commission meetings throughout the year. This involves identifying and arranging for speakers, working with the Marketing Committee to promote the meetings/programs, and conducting an evaluation of the program after it takes place. Members may include representatives from all constituent groups.

5. **Luncheon Committee:** The Luncheon Committee coordinates all logistical arrangements for the annual CFW awards luncheon, including, but not limited to identifying, booking a location, arranging food, AV, etc.; setting up, and delivering the event. Members may include representatives from all constituent groups.

6. **Marketing Committee:** The Marketing Committee works to increase the visibility of the CFW, promote the purpose and accomplishments of the CFW, recommend updates to the website, and publicize its special programs and events. Members may include representatives from all constituent groups.

7. **Membership Committee:** The Membership Committee works to create a welcoming climate for CFW members and potential new members in order to retain current members and increase CFW membership; to be a point of contact to members and potential members, providing information about the membership application process, membership roles and responsibilities, and providing individuals with requested information, clarification of questions, and/or contact information; and, to address membership initiatives addressed by the CFW chair. Members may include representatives from all constituent groups.

8. **Nominations Committee:** The Nominations Committee solicits nominations for chair-elect and the Executive Committee and to replenish the appointed membership. The past chair, as chair of this committee, handles and oversees the process for the chair-elect and Executive Committee election processes and new appointed member nomination and selection process. Members of this committee may include the past chair and outgoing active appointed members and/or committee chairs, where applicable.

**Section 2: Program Committees**

Program committees are appointed by the CFW chair and Executive Committee as needed. Program committees may be short or long term, depending on the nature of the issues to be
addressed. All policies and procedures that apply to process committees also apply to program committees.

The current program committees are listed on the Commission for Women website.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the CFW are held each month during the academic year on dates to be selected by the chair. In addition, the Executive Committee meetings are held each month, and committees are expected to meet once a month. Special meetings of members, for any purpose or purposes, may be called at any time by the chair of the CFW.

All public meetings of the CFW 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 CFW may request the privilege of speaking on any item of business before the CFW membership. Such a request must be made to the chair at least four days before the meeting. The chair has the authority to place a time limit on the remarks of any participant in a CFW meeting.

The CFW publishes minutes of its proceedings in a timely manner.

ARTICLE VI: QUORUM

A quorum consisting of half the voting membership plus one must be present (participating in person, by phone, or online) at all meetings in order for an official action to be taken in the name of the CFW.

ARTICLE VII: ADOPTED PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE

Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (most recent edition) governs CFW proceedings in all cases in which they apply and in which they are not inconsistent with other bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS

All elections are conducted by confidential balloting via surface mail or by electronic vote. The Nominations Committee conducts all elections as follows:

1. At the February public CFW meeting, the past chair presents a slate of names for chair-elect. All nominees must be appointed members of the CFW. Consideration of existing first- and second-year Executive Committee members is suggested. Nominations from the floor are accepted at that time. The chair-elect ballot is distributed via surface mail or via electronic ballot to every appointed member of the commission within two business days after the February meeting; ten calendar days are allowed for return of the ballots. All ballots are returned to the past chair. The past chair may not vote unless the election ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, the past chair’s vote is counted. The identity of the chair-elect is announced as soon as the ballots are counted.

2. The CFW elects six at-large members to the Executive Committee annually in June.
After the announcement of the newly appointed commission members, the current chair-elect of the commission, in consultation with the current chair, appoints committee chairs/co-chairs and special liaisons for the upcoming year and then assembles the slate of Executive Committee nominees. The nominees are assembled from the list of all appointed commission members, including incoming members but excluding outgoing members, and excluding members already selected to serve as committee chairs/co-chairs or special liaisons. The ballot is 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, a statement encouraging voters to consider the importance of balanced representation on the Executive Committee, job titles, job categories, and campus locations are provided for each candidate. The ballot instructs voters to vote for six candidates. The ballot is distributed electronically or via surface mail by the past chair to every member of the commission holding an active appointment (i.e., including outgoing members but excluding incoming members). Ten days are allowed for return of the ballots. All ballots are returned to the past chair. The six candidates receiving the highest number of votes serve on the new Executive Committee. The identities of Executive Committee members are announced as soon as the ballots are counted. If, among the six elected members, any of the four constituencies (student, faculty, staff/administrative, technical service/staff nonexempt employees) are not represented, then the newly elected Executive Committee can appoint from the appointed commission membership up to two additional at-large members to ensure balanced representation. This is accomplished by June 30 before the beginning of the next fiscal cycle.

ARTICLE IX: SPONSORSHIP

The CFW may provide sponsorship (financial backing and/or attaching the CFW name) to an event and/or program. Decisions about sponsorship are made on an individual basis and determined by need, appropriateness to CFW goals, and available funds.

Decisions are made by vote among the Executive Committee with input when possible/appropriate by the full CFW appointed membership.

ARTICLE X: REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the bylaws may be adopted by simple majority vote (quorum) from the appointed membership, either electronically or by paper ballot, as preferred by the past chair. Revisions and amendments are presented at a public CFW meeting or via email, and ballots are sent to the voting membership within a week after the meeting. All revisions and amendments made prior to this document are considered to be historical documentation; documentation is on file in the Educational Equity liaison’s office; documents older than five years are archived in Pattee Library according to standard library procedures.

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