



Commission for **Adult Learners**

Bylaws

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ARTICLE I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Commission for Adult Learners is to provide advice and consultation to the University on issues affecting adult learners whether they attend full- or part-time; have degree, provisional, or non-degree status; and study in residence, or online. Penn State defines an adult learner as a student who is 24 years of age or older; or a veteran or actively serving member of the armed services; or returning to school after four or more years of employment, homemaking, or other activity; or assuming multiple adult roles, such as parent, spouse/partner, employee.

The Commission for Adult Learners will:

- 1) provide a visible University-wide body whose primary purpose is to contribute to a supportive climate for adult learners,
- 2) monitor the recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of adult learners,
- 3) advocate for adult learners' concerns by recommending changes in policy, practice, and procedures that impact adult learners,
- 4) foster coordination and information exchange regarding programs and services which attract and retain adult learners to Penn State, and
- 5) serve as repository and coordinating body for all adult learner-focused initiatives University-wide.

Administrative and operational, budgetary, research, and organizational support for the Commission shall reside with the office of the Vice Provost for Online Education. The Commission is sponsored by five administrators: Vice Provost for Online Education; vice president for Student Affairs; vice president and Dean for Undergraduate Education; vice president for the Commonwealth Campuses and executive chancellor; and vice provost for Educational Equity. The sponsors shall annually select among themselves a representative to serve as advisor to the Chairperson of the Commission in order to provide consultation and guidance. This representative will serve as a member of the executive committee.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Members must be employees or students interested in, and willing to contribute to, the improvement of opportunities for adult learners in the University community. Appointed membership shall include at least thirty percent from campuses other than University Park.

No individual member or committee shall take any actions on behalf of the Commission unless specifically delegated to do so by the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the full membership.

Employees must be in good standing to be considered for appointment to the Commission. For University activities such as commissions and award programs, a faculty or staff member is considered to be in 'good standing' if the individual is meeting the expectations of their position and has not been the recipient of recent discipline.

Student members must be actively enrolled and in good academic standing (this includes conduct.) Part-time students may participate.

Faculty, staff and administrative members shall include representation from offices/departments that work directly with adult learners, and offices whose services are crucial to all students including adult learners, and those who have been adult learners and/or advocates of adult learners, and representatives from each sponsor's unit.

The Commission shall be composed of appointed, ex officio, and affiliate members, characteristics of which and duties of each are described in the following sections.

Section 1.01 Types of membership

Appointed members are recommended by current membership of the Commission and invited by the sponsors' designated representative. Appointed members shall serve a three-year term and will have voting privileges. There are typically nine public/full Commission meetings per year; and appointed members are expected to participate in at least six (6) of those meetings. Appointed members, affiliates, and liaisons are also required to participate on a committee, attending two-thirds of the meetings of the committee of which they are a part.

Ex Officio member: The Adult Learner Data Analyst shall hold ex officio membership on the Commission for Adult Learners and its Executive Committee, with the privilege of the floor in all committee meeting and in Commission meetings, but without voting privileges.

Affiliate members. The Commission Chairperson may appoint Affiliate Members to actively contribute in a resource capacity when called upon. Affiliate members may serve on committees, as committee co-chair with an appointed member, and in any other role on the Commission except an elected officer. Affiliate members shall have the privilege of the floor in all committee meetings and in commission meetings, but do not have voting privileges. However, an affiliate who chooses to take on the responsibility of a committee chair accepts the rights and responsibilities of a voting member for their term. Affiliate members serve one year and may be reappointed.

Student members may serve a one-year term with voting privileges.

A Faculty Senate Liaison shall be appointed by the Faculty Senate office to serve a one-year term with voting privileges and may be reappointed.

An Adult Experience Coordinator (AEC) Liaison shall be appointed by the sponsors to serve a one-year term with voting privileges and may be reappointed. The AEC liaison shall be chosen by the current chair in consultation with the sponsors. This individual shall work with members to update the AEC list annually.

The Director for Adult Learner Programs & Services at University Park shall serve as or appoint a liaison to serve a one-year term with voting privileges and may be reappointed.

The Senior Director of Veterans Affairs and Services shall serve as or appoint a liaison to serve a one-year term with voting privileges and may be reappointed.

Members of the Commission are eligible for reappointment after an absence from the Commission of at least one year. The Past Chairperson remains a member of the Commission for one additional year immediately following the term as Chairperson.

Section 1.02 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, a temporary appointment will be made to serve during the member's absence; the replacement will leave the Commission once the member returns from the absence and the member shall complete their term of service.

If a member finds it necessary to resign from the Commission, the chairperson may appoint an individual to complete the term of service.

Section 1.03 Inactive Members

Members missing more than three of the regular meetings and not actively participating in committee work during any year (September -June) may be declared inactive by the Executive Committee and may be asked by the Chairperson to resign. After notification to the inactive member, the Chairperson may appoint a replacement member to complete that term of membership.

Article III. Officers/Executive Committee

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

Section 1.04 Officers

The officers shall work with the assigned support as provided in Article I in carrying out their respective duties.

Chairperson

The Chairperson shall be the presiding officer of the Commission for Adult Learners. The duties of the Chairperson shall be to have general and active management of the business of the Commission; to preside over all meetings of the Commission; to respond to and initiate communications with the sponsors and with any external constituencies on behalf of the Commission; to initiate and facilitate, in partnership with the administrative liaison, communication and information flow among the Commission, Commission leadership, Commission sponsors, interested constituents and stakeholders, to review draft meeting agendas and minutes prior to approval vote; to coordinate and facilitate preparation of documents related to the work of the Commission; to confirm that all members and volunteers are in good standing as per Article II above prior to confirming appointment, and to assume all functions usually associated with the office of Chairperson.

The Chairperson shall submit an annual report of the Commission's activities during each year. It shall include reference to the work of the Commission and its committees.

Chairperson-elect

The Chairperson-elect shall automatically succeed to the position of Chairperson, during the second year in office. During the first year, the Chairperson-elect 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 Chairperson-elect shall move into that position immediately. The vacant position shall be filled at the next annual election, or sooner at the request of the Executive Committee.

The focus of the Chairperson-elect shall be on the strategic initiatives of the Commission as identified by the Chairperson and Past-Chairperson.

Past-Chairperson

The Chairperson shall assume the duties of Past-Chairperson, during their final year in office. The Past-Chairperson shall assume the duties of Chairperson when the Chairperson or Chairperson-elect officer is absent,

The Past-chairperson will also chair the Shirley Hendrick Awards nominations and selection efforts and the Nominating committee; serve as liaison to the keynote speaker for the Hendrick Conference; and oversee a bi-annual review of the Commission's bylaws.

Secretary

The Secretary shall keep the official roll, shall prepare and publish notices, agenda, and minutes of Commission meetings, and shall perform other duties appropriate to the office. The Secretary, in consultation with other Commission Officers, shall review and disseminate issues of concern brought before the Commission or Executive Committee.

Section 1.05 Executive Committee

The Commission for Adult Learners Executive Committee includes the officers, Chairpersons of the working committees, the advisor selected by the sponsors, and ex officio members.

Should none of the above members include a representative from a location other than University Park, an at-large member shall be elected from the Commission member from a location other than University Park.

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. It will choose and prioritize issues, set up ad hoc committees to work on those issues, and serve as the rapid-response team for salient issues as they arise.

The Executive Committee will make decision on requests to provide sponsorship (financial backing and/or attaching the Commission name) to an event and/or program. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, determined by need, appropriateness to Commission goals, and available funds.

ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES

Section 1.06 Committee Structure

The Chair of the Commission, in consultation with the Past-Chair and the advisor to the Commission, shall determine its committee structure and composition with the following stipulations:

Chairpersons of a committee must be active members of the Commission. Chairpersons of committees must be appointed members of the Commission in active attendance and participation. In the event that an appointed member is not available to chair a committee an affiliate member may be selected. It is permissible for a co-chair of a committee to be an affiliate member. Committee Chairpersons will be appointed by the Commission Chairperson to serve for one year, with the option to renew the appointment.

All committees may add volunteer members from University staff or faculty or any student of the University on the basis of their interest, expertise, or membership in a particular sector of the University community pending confirmation of the volunteer's good standing by the Chairperson.

All committees are encouraged to seek advice or consultation on particular questions as circumstances might indicate.

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

Section 1.07 Task Forces

Task Forces are appointed by the Commission Chairperson and Executive Committee as needed. These groups 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 task forces.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Commission for Adult Learners shall be held from September through June on dates to be determined by the Executive Committee. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Commission.

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 who is not a member of the Commission for Adult Learners may request the privilege of speaking on any item of business before the Commission. Such a request must be made to the Chairperson in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI. QUORUM

A quorum consisting of two-thirds of the voting membership must be present in person or by audio- or video-conference at all meetings for an official action to be taken in the name of the Commission.

ARTICLE VII. ADOPTED PARLIMENTARY GUIDE

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

ARTICLE VIII. ELECTIONS

All elections shall be by confidential balloting or by electronic vote.

- 1) Nominations for the offices of Chairperson-elect shall be conducted by a Nominating Committee comprised of all outgoing members of the Commission. The Past-Chairperson will serve as Chairperson of the committee. Whoever nominates a person must seek that individual's consent prior to the nomination.
- 2) The process for electing the Chairperson-elect shall be: The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of names for the office at the regular Commission meeting in March. All nominees must be appointed members of the Commission. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time. Upon finalizing the ballot, it will be emailed to all members. Ten days will be allowed for completing ballots. The Past-chairperson will not vote unless the election ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, the Past-chairperson's vote will be counted. Results will be announced at the April meeting.
- 3) The secretary shall be elected for a one-year term. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of names for the office of secretary at the regular Commission meeting in March. All nominees must be appointed members of the Commission. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time. Upon finalizing the ballot, it will be emailed to all members. Ten days will be allowed for completing ballots. The Past-chairperson will not vote unless the election ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, the Past-chairperson's vote will be counted. Results will be announced at the April meeting. The secretary may run for re-election once.

ARTICLE IX. FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

The Commission may provide funding (contingent on availability of funds) or permit its name to be used on programs or events. The Executive Committee shall make decisions on the funding of programs or events with input when possible/appropriate by the full Commission membership.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

The bylaws serve to give the Commission direction as it serves its mission. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be reviewed bi-annually by the Past-Chair and the sponsor's Liaison and shall be approved by a two-thirds majority of the current voting membership of the Commission after they have been given opportunity to review proposed changes. Amendments shall be adopted by two-thirds of the membership by voice vote or e-mail ballot. Amendments shall be presented in writing with the vote or e-mail ballot following no less than three weeks afterwards. Upon approval, the amended bylaws will be uploaded to the Commission's website.

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Revised: May 2001

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