COSW Chair

As stated in the bylaws, the charge of the **Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession** is to “study and promote the status of women in Philosophy of Education.” This charge gives the committee and its chair considerable leeway to decide how best to carry it out. It is important to bear in mind, however, the charge’s specificity: The COSW is tasked with attending to the status of women *in the profession*. Members have often taken up the status and interests of women more broadly. This is a legitimate project insofar as women’s scholarship in recent decades has frequently emphasized the importance of attending to questions of gender, to context, and to real injustices faced by women throughout education. In supporting such research, the COSW supports the women in the profession who carry it out. The COSW might with equal legitimacy, however, focus on other interests or issues of concern to women in the profession. In any given year, the COSW chooses how to focus its efforts, in response to concerns raised by women in the profession.

COSW consists of five members serving staggered three year terms. A major responsibility of members is to attend the committee’s annual meeting and participate throughout the year in ongoing initiatives. COSW meetings have always been open to anyone who wishes to attend, and the meetings are usually attended by a number of PES members who are not currently serving on the COSW.

There are few fixed tasks for the COSW to carry out on an annual basis. Rather, it is up to the committee to decide, at its annual meeting during the PES conference and in conversation with the President and Executive Committee over the course of the year, what pressing issues for women in the profession it wishes to address. In its earliest years, the COSW worked to ensure that women were on the program, their scholarship recognized as legitimate. In recent decades, as women have gained a foothold in the academy, the COSW has focused on more subtle professional challenges faced by women. Recent projects have included:

- An annual reception, funded by PES, intended to build a sense of community. All PES members were welcomed, as the COSW recognized that while women in the society often complained about feeling marginalized at PES, this feeling was not exclusive to women in the profession.
- Participation by the chair of COSW on the Ad Hoc committee to address sexual harassment within PES and its annual conference
- Co-sponsorship of a symposium with *Educational Theory*. At present (2018), *Educational Theory* is committed to working with PES committees in rotation to organize a pre-conference workshop followed by a published symposium. The COSW can expect to work with *Educational Theory* approximately every third year.
- Traditionally, the COSW has been guaranteed a slot for one alternative session at the annual meeting. At its annual meeting, the COSW chooses a member to organize this session for the following year. Generally, the committee brainstorms ideas and chooses the one that seems most promising on the basis of topicality and the commitment of some member to organize the session.
Sponsorship of a pre-conference writing workshop. Participants were invited (in the fall) to submit a work-in-progress (by January or February). These were circulated before the pre-conference among the authors, COSW committee members, and any other interested PES members, who then met Thursday before the PES conference to discuss. This could be done again in the years when Educational Theory is not sponsoring the symposium with COSW.

The special responsibilities of the chair include:

- Overseeing ongoing projects over the course of the year, as appropriate;
- Contacting the Program Chair, usually sometime in the fall, about the COSW alternative session;
- Preparing an agenda for the COSW’s annual meeting, which is generally scheduled by the program chair for an early morning time slot;
- Running the COSW annual meeting.
- Preparing an annual report for the Executive Committee that details the annual activities as well as the percentage of women on the program (disaggregated by papers, responses, alternative sessions) and percentage of women in service positions. These numbers are usually shared during the Business Meeting.