

REVISED: June 2023

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION (CCRIPSA)
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the Association shall be the Community College of Rhode Island Professional Staff Association / National Education Association Rhode Island / National Education Association (CCRIPSA/NEARI/NEA).

ARTICLE II: PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to provide for the general welfare and equitable representation of its members.

Section 2. To promote within the group the highest type of professional practices; to encourage active participation of all in the solution of mutual problems; to urge every member of the Association to be a continuing student of professionalism.

Section 3. To enable members to speak with an equitable and common voice on matters pertaining to their individual and common interests and views before representative legal authorities.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Since this organization is a unified affiliate of the National Education Association Rhode Island / National Education Association, any staff member wishing to join automatically becomes a member of the local, state and national organization.

Member: A person is a member of the Association if he or she holds a position within the prescribed limits of this Association at the Community College of Rhode Island and is a member in good standing with the local Association.

A voting member is a dues paying member that has the ability to serve on bargaining unit committees, hold an executive board position, vote in PSA elections, participate in the contract vote/ratification, and receive additional benefits through NEARI/NEA.

A non-voting member does not have rights listed above under the voting membership option. Therefore, is unable to serve on committees or hold a union executive board position, take part in union meetings, participate in contract negotiations, or receive the additional benefits provided by NEA/NEARI, including paying for contractual services such as filing a grievance or arbitration, if applicable.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

The Officers of the Association shall be: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The term of office shall be for two years. The term shall begin immediately following the election meeting.

Section 1. The President shall have the following duties:

- a) Preside at all meetings of the Association.
- b) Call all special meetings of the Association.
- c) Sit as a member ex-officio of all committees except the Election Committee or except where specifically noted.
- d) Represent the Association at those functions where Association representation is required or appoint a representative.
- e) Execute the mandates of the Executive Committee and/or the general membership.
- f) Be a voting member of the Executive Committee of NEARI/NEA.
- g) Within the tenure of the office, meet periodically with the president of NEARI/NEA.
- h) In cooperation with the Executive Committee, develop and/or coordinate appropriate legislation for the Association.

Section 2. The First Vice-President shall have the following duties:

- a) Preside at Association meetings in the absence of the President.
- b) Assist in the execution of the obligations of the Office of the President.
- c) Serve as Acting President with all prerequisites if the President resigns or is otherwise incapacitated.
- d) Serve as Chairperson of the Grievance Committee.
- e) In absence of the President, represent CCRIPSA at Executive Committee of NEARI/NEA.
- f) Serve as a member of the Delegate Assembly for NEARI meetings.

Section 3. The Second Vice-President shall have the following duties:

- a) Preside at Association meetings in the absence of the President and the First Vice President.
- b) Assist in the execution of the obligations of the office of the President.
- c) Serve as Acting President with all prerequisites if the President and the First Vice-President resigns or is otherwise incapacitated.
- d) Serve as Co-Chairperson of the Grievance Committee.
- e) Serve as Acting First Vice-President in event that the First Vice-President resigns or becomes acting President.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall have the following duties:

- a) Preside at all meetings of the Association in the absence of the President or the Vice-Presidents.
- b) Receive from any source and take custody of the Association's dues and monies and make prescribed distributions to NEARI/NEA.
- c) Supervise the expenditures of all Association monies. All checks shall bear two (2) authorized signatures. Persons authorized to sign checks are the Treasurer, President, and First VicePresident.
- d) Keep an adequate and accurate record of all association monies and report such at meetings of the Executive Committee and at general membership meetings.
- e) Publish an annual financial report and prepare a proposed annual budget for approval by the general membership. The Association's fiscal year is (Oct. 1 - Sep. 30). Initiate all payment orders for

clearance with the Executive Committee as outlined in the budget.

- f) Establish procedures for processing both financial and membership records.
- g) Prepare and distribute membership cards to new and old members as appropriate, and submit membership reports to NEARI/NEA.

Section 5. The Secretary shall have the following duties:

- a) Keep accurate records of the proceedings and attendance of all Association meetings, including Executive Committee meetings.
- b) Verify the necessary requirements for quorum, voting, candidacy and election.
- c) Prepare all correspondence for the Association after consultation with the President and committee chairpersons, where appropriate.
- d) Issue to the membership notices (with agenda, where possible) of all general and special meetings of the Association, giving one-week advance notice.

Section 6. Area Representatives shall have the following duties:

- a) Serve as “the eyes and ears” of the Association by listening to and addressing the needs and concerns of the Association’s members.
- b) Attend meetings of the Executive Committee. Each Area Representative shall have one vote.
- c) No Officer of the Association may concurrently hold the position of Area Representative. Should an Area Representative become an Officer, then the Area Representative position will become vacant. Vacancies created by this article’s enforcement may be filled by a temporary appointment approved by a simple majority of the Executive Committee.
- d) Responsible for signing-up new members and providing an overview of benefits of full/voting membership.
- e) Serve as members of the Grievance Committee.

Section 7. Lead Area Representative:

The Executive Board will select a Lead Area Representative from the list of elected representatives. The duties for this role include:

- a) All duties listed under the Area Representative description.
- b) Work with the Officers of the Association on training new and returning Area Representatives.
- c) Serve as a member of the Delegate Assembly for NEARI meetings.
- d) Serve as Acting Second Vice President in the event that the Second Vice President becomes the Acting First Vice President, resigns or is otherwise incapacitated.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

There shall be three (3) standing committees: Executive Committee, the Bargaining Committee, and the Election Committee, and one standing Delegation of the Association. The President may appoint other committees as the need arises.

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Association and representatives from each campus. There will be 5 officers and no more than 9 area representatives; representative members may be appointed, as needed.

- a) The Executive Committee shall function as a steering committee in matters that pertain to the general welfare and common good of the membership, and shall meet at least once quarterly.

- b) Whenever two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the Executive Committee shall vote that an officer or an area representative has been negligent in his/her duties or that he or she is incapacitated, it shall recommend to the membership that the office be declared vacant. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the general membership present is necessary to declare the office vacant.
- c) An interim appointment to any vacant position will be made by the Executive Committee except the Office of the President, First Vice-President or Second Vice-President until the next general membership meeting.
- d) A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of the majority of its members.
- e) The Executive Committee shall supervise all business of the Association on behalf of the membership when not in conflict with the Constitution or the actions of the general membership.
- f) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for authorizing all expenditures made from the Contingency Fund.

Section 2. The Bargaining Committee draws its authority from the Executive Committee and is empowered to negotiate contracts.

- a) The Bargaining Committee shall consist of the President and, whenever possible, members as specified in Article V, Section 1, but not to exceed 8 members.
- b) The Bargaining Committee shall solicit recommendations for contract negotiations from the general membership.
- c) The Committee members shall elect the Committee chairperson.

Section 3. The Grievance Committee shall be composed of a chairperson, who will be the First Vice President, the Second Vice-President and the Executive Board. Additional members to the Committee may be appointed by the President as the need arises. Such appointments do not require Executive Committee approval. The grievance committee will assist any member with respect to the interpretation, application or violation of any of the provisions of the CBA and will determine if the matter should be referred to the American Arbitration Association according to its rules.

Section 4. The President may appoint special committees from time to time as the need arises. Such appointments do not require Executive Committee approval. (Article VII, Section 4, takes exception to the Election Committee).

Section 5. There shall be an Elections Committee composed of five (5) CCRIPSA voting members and (1) Chair selected by the Executive Board in September of an election year. The committee chair and members cannot be running for an elected position.

A. The Election Committee Chair shall canvass the CCRIPSA members via their CCRI e-mail no later than September 30 requesting the names of those members who intend to run for office. Interested parties must send their names via CCRI e-mail to the Election Committee Chair by October 8. In addition, a candidate may submit a bio to be distributed to the membership, if submitted by the October 8 deadline. Anyone seeking an Executive Board position must be a dues paying/voting member for at least six (6) months prior to October 1. All those elected must maintain their dues/voting membership status.

B. The Elections Committee Chair shall create the ballot and email the names of all nominees (along with the submitted bios) to all voting CCRIPSA members via their CCRI email by October 13.

C. The official election will be held at the Annual Business meeting held in October. Only dues paying/voting members for at least six (6) months before October 1 will be allowed to cast a vote for the

election. The only exception is for those hired a month before the election, as long as they have completed their membership form by October 1. The Elections Committee will be responsible for coordinating, supervising, and executing the election, including tallying the votes.

Section 6. The Delegate Assembly shall consist of the President, First Vice President, Lead Area Representative and elected members (election takes place at the same time of the Executive Board). These representatives attend the afterhours NEARI Delegate Meetings and advocate for the interest of CCRIPSA. The President may appoint representatives as necessary.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

The organization shall have one meeting a year in the month of October. Special meetings may be called at any time by the President or upon petition by a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the active voting members of the Association. Written notice of all regular meetings, including agenda to be addressed, will be provided to the membership at least one week prior to such meetings. Similar notice will be provided for all special meetings when possible, but reasonable prior notice must be provided. Meetings may be held in-person, virtually, or through a hybrid format, based on the needs of the organization.

The Secretary and the President shall sign the record of each meeting. One copy of this record shall be filed in the Association Office and one copy kept by the Secretary while in office.

ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS

Section 1. Election of officers will be held in even-numbered years during the membership meeting in October. Officers shall serve two (2) year terms. Special elections may be called when necessary to fill vacant positions. The elections shall follow these procedures:

- a) The Elections Committee shall announce, through CCRI e-mail, the candidates for each office, in accordance with Article V, section 5.
- b) A from the floor option will only be available for positions without a declared candidate(s).
 - a. In cases where there are multiple openings, declared candidates will be awarded the position(s) and only vacant openings will be voted for.
- c) No one person may be elected to more than one office concurrently.
- d) When nominations are completed, the members shall vote for each office by secret ballot except when a candidate is running unopposed.
- e) A person shall be elected by a majority vote of those members eligible to vote.
- f) In the event that no one candidate receives a majority, a second ballot shall be taken.
- g) Balloting will continue until one candidate receives a majority.

Section 2. Elections for Area Representatives for the Executive Committee shall be held concurrent with the election of officers. Each candidate for Area Representative will declare their “main” campus based on their primary location. The top vote getter for each campus (Knight, Flanagan, Liston, and Newport County) will be elected for their campus. The remaining 5 spots will be considered “At Large” and filled by the next 5 total vote getters, not dependent on campus.

Section 3. Elections for the Election Committee shall be held concurrent with the election of officers.

Section 4. Elections for the Bargaining Committee shall be held at the annual meeting in the year

preceding contract negotiations.

Section 5. The membership shall elect delegates to the NEARI Delegate Assembly at the membership meeting concurrent with the election of officers. There shall be one delegate for every thirty (30) members or portion thereof, as verified by NEARI.

ARTICLE VIII: QUORUM

Section 1. At any general meeting, a quorum shall consist of ten (10) percent of the membership. The Secretary shall establish quorum after taking the roll. When a quorum is present, the vote necessary for the conduct of business shall be a majority of those members present, except as specified for Executive Committee meetings in Article V, Section 1, paragraph (e).

Section 2. Votes by proxy shall not be allowed.

Section 3. Absentee ballots shall be allowed for officers, elected positions and appropriate committee positions. Absentee ballots must be requested no later than five (5) working days prior to the election from a member of the Election Committee. Ballots must be hand delivered in a sealed envelope no later than the day before the election, and authenticated by a member of the Election Committee. Returning ballots through interoffice mail, U.S. mail, or e-mail ballots won't be accepted. Absentee ballots will be opened and contents disclosed at the membership meeting when the election is held.

ARTICLE IX: RULES OF ORDER AND PARLIAMENTARIAN

Section 1. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be fundamental parliamentary law of the Association meetings. "Special Rules of Order" shall govern the Association whenever possible.

Section 2. When deemed necessary to conduct the orderly business of the Association, "Special Rules of Order" may be established. Such special rules shall not conflict with the CCRIPSA Constitution and Bylaws.

a) The Secretary shall maintain a file of "Special Rules" in effect.

b) When deemed necessary by the Executive Committee, "Special Rules" may be added as an appendix of the CCRIPSA Constitution and Bylaws as per the procedure outlined by Article XIV.

Section 3. The President with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee may appoint a parliamentarian, who shall be sufficiently familiar with these rules in order to guide the president whenever a disagreement arises at a meeting over parliamentary procedure. Such guidance may be given at the request of the president or upon the initiation of the parliamentarian.

a) If not elected to the Executive Committee in his or her own right, the parliamentarian shall be an ex-officio member of that committee.

ARTICLE X: STIPEND FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive Committee members of this Association may receive annual stipends for services rendered to the Association.

ARTICLE XI: DUES

Section 1. The annual NEARI/NEA dues for membership in the Association will be as prescribed using the state and national associations as guidelines. Increase in the national and state dues shall be automatically passed through to the membership of the local, as these are required by the organizations.

Section 2. Local dues of the Association shall be set by the membership after presentation of the budget at a general membership meeting.

Section 3. Special assessment of the membership shall be accomplished by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a meeting of the Association.

ARTICLE XII: RATIFICATION OF CONTRACT

1. Copies of the proposed contract will be given to each voting member of the bargaining unit prior to a general meeting to discuss contractual ratification.
2. Voting for ratification of the contract will be held at a special meeting.
3. A majority of the votes cast by voting members in attendance must approve the contract to effect ratification.

ARTICLE XIII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any member of the Association functioning in a capacity that could affect the welfare of the membership, or any part of it, shall be required to temporarily abstain from those duties if the following conditions become apparent:

- a) The member becomes a candidate for a position outside the bargaining unit.
- b) The member becomes a candidate for a position other than the above, whereby a majority of the Executive Committee considers the candidacy to be "in conflict of interest".

Furthermore, a member of the Executive Committee shall be required to temporarily resign from the body if either conditions (a) or (b) apply.

The person affected by the enforcement of this Article shall be allowed to return to his/her original position following a formal decision on his/her candidacy presented in writing to the Executive Committee.

Absences created by this Article's enforcement may be filled by a temporary appointment, the method of which will lie within the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE XIV: ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE

All electronic correspondence between the Association and the membership shall adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Community College of Rhode Island's Information Technology department; "Responsible Use of Information Technology" policy (<https://www.ccri.edu/it/policy/responsible-use.html>).

ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS

1. Proposed amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be instituted by the Executive Committee upon receipt of a petition containing the proposed change, which is signed by ten (10) percent of the membership or a majority of the Executive Committee.

2. Upon receipt of such a petition, the proposed amendment(s) will be reviewed for technical accuracy and applicability by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. After such a review, the Executive Committee shall vote to submit the changes to the general membership at the next general meeting. The proposed amendment(s) must be submitted to the general membership ten (10) days prior to the general meeting. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast, a quorum being present, is required to ratify the amendment(s)