African Studies Association Women’s Caucus
Articles of Association, By-Laws, and Policies and Procedures

Mission Statement

The purposes of the African Studies Association Women’s Caucus are:

1. To promote the study of women and gender in the various disciplines of African studies;
2. To promote and ensure the greater inclusion of African women in scholarship and in the ASA;
3. To promote and ensure an active and representative role for women within the ASA at all levels of leadership and engagement;
4. To develop and maintain scholarly and activist links between the WC, the ASA and women in Africa.

Article I. The African Studies Association (ASA) Women’s Caucus, hereinafter referred to as the WC, is a Coordinate Organization within the ASA. It is subject to the rules for Coordinate Organizations in the ASA By-Laws, which provide that at least 25 members of a Coordinate Organization must be members of the ASA. Membership is open to all members of the ASA and other scholars and activists with a commitment to African women’s studies and the interests of African women. Members must be in good standing to stand for election as officers or members of the Steering Committee (SC) or to cast votes at annual meetings or online.

Article II. In accordance with the requirements for 501(c) 3 status, the WC declares that it is organized exclusively for educational and charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(c) 3 of the US Internal Revenue Code, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under this or future US revenue laws. Upon the event of the dissolution of the organization, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c) 3 of the current law or applicable future laws.

Article III. The WC shall operate according to the following by-laws. By-laws and amendments to by-laws must be passed by a 2/3 majority of votes of members in good standing who vote at the annual meeting and/or by online ballot. Policies and Procedures may be passed by a majority vote of members in good standing at the annual meeting. They may be amended by a majority vote of the SC between annual meetings, and ratified by a majority vote at the annual meeting.

Section I. The WC shall hold a meeting open to all members at the ASA Annual Meeting to conduct WC business and hold elections. The SC shall hold a meeting prior to the WC business meeting. The business of the WC between annual business meetings at ASA annual meetings shall be managed by the officers, in coordination with the SC as
appropriate. WC officers and SC members must be members in good standing of ASA and the WC.

Section II. Officers and Steering Committee (SC). The officers of the WC shall be two Co-Convenors, a Past Co-Convenor, a Treasurer and a Membership Secretary. Except for Past Co-Convenor, offices are open to individuals who volunteer as candidates or are nominated by the WC Nominating Committee. Candidates for Co-Convenor must be able to serve as the public representatives of the WC at the time of their election. Co-Convenors will serve two-year staggered terms; exceptions required by particular circumstances may be approved by the annual membership meeting or by the SC between annual meetings. Co-Convenors are normally not expected to stand for a second term immediately following their first term. The Co-Convenor in her second year is hereinafter referred to as the lead Co-Convenor. The Past Co-Convenor shall serve a one-year term. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary shall each serve three-year terms. They may stand for re-election at the end of their terms, based on their performance during their previous terms. In the event that officers resign between annual meetings, the SC will approve new office-holders.

The SC, of up to nine members not including WC officers, shall be elected for three-year staggered terms. From 2015 forward, up to three members shall be elected each year. At the end of their terms, they may stand for re-election, based on their performance during their previous terms. Former Co-Convenors willing to take an active role in the WC are encouraged to stand as candidates. If SC members resign during the year, new members may be appointed by the SC and officers as needed to fill out those terms, subject to election at the next annual meeting. Officers shall be considered de facto members of the SC during their tenure of office.

Officers and SC members shall be elected at the annual business meeting by members in good standing at the time of the election. Provision for online voting by members not present at the ASA annual meeting may be arranged in future if deemed desirable and feasible by the SC. (See Section III. Membership, below, for “members in good standing” definition.)

Section III. Duties of Officers and Steering Committee Members.

a) Co-Convenors shall work in coordination with the SC, but shall take leadership on organizing WC events at the ASA and WC activities during the year, delegating tasks to WC committees and SC members as needed. (See Policies and Procedures.) They shall maintain oversight on all WC activities, and shall send periodic reports to the SC on work accomplished and work needing to be done. The Co-Convenors shall have signing authority on all WC bank accounts. They shall organize and distribute an agenda for the WC annual meeting and preside at the meeting; shall poll SC members for suggestions for luncheon speaker, arrange for SC members to vote on choice of speaker, and then shall invite the speaker, maintain contact with her, and convey necessary information to the Treasurer so that she can make travel and hotel arrangements with the speaker; shall work with the SC to organize WC committees; shall, after receiving the Treasurer’s Report, file the required annual report for Coordinate Organizations with the ASA; shall
work with the Treasurer on finances; shall work with the Membership Secretary and Membership Committee on recruitment and retention of members, and shall ensure that a current membership list is maintained by the Treasurer and Membership Secretary; shall work with the Nominating Committee to recruit new officers and SC members; shall manage the website; shall write reports of WC activities for the newsletter and shall have final editorial authority over the newsletter; shall liaise with the ASA secretariat; and shall maintain an archive of tasks and WC materials accessible to officers and SC members. Additional tasks may be added, and some of the listed tasks may be transferred to other officers or members of the SC, at the discretion of the Co-Convenors, in coordination with the SC.

Co-Convenors shall seek approval from the SC regarding major issues that must be handled between ASA meetings, including recruitment of new co-convenors or changes in co-convenors’ terms of office. They shall consult with the other officers and the SC on major expenditures. They shall ask the SC members for suggestions for the speaker for the Women’s Caucus luncheon, and a vote by the SC will decide the luncheon speaker.

b) The Past Co-Convenor shall serve for one year after serving as lead Co-Convenor. At the end of one year, she may stand for election to the SC if she chooses, on the same basis as other WC members. In the event that both Co-Convenors leave office at the same time, both will be considered Past Co-Convenors for the following year. The Past Co-Convenor, as an officer, will be a voting member of the SC. She will provide continuity by contributing information, materials and other assistance regarding the work of Co-Convenors, as requested by the current Co-Convenors. She may be asked to take on specific tasks by the Co-Convenors.

c) The Treasurer shall be the primary financial officer of the WC. She shall have custody of funds and financial records of the WC, and authority to receive, deposit and pay out money on behalf of the WC. She shall prepare a Treasurer’s Report for the preceding year (November 1 to October 31) for presentation at the annual WC business meeting, and prepare a quarterly report by February 15 of the following year that includes monies received and paid since November 1 and send it to the Co-Convenors, the Membership Secretary and the SC. The Treasurer shall prepare a list of paid members by February 15 each year and send it to the Co-Convenors and the Membership Secretary, and update the list quarterly and send it to the Co-Convenors and the Membership Secretary. She shall work closely with the Membership Secretary on recruitment and retention of members. She shall make travel and hotel arrangements for the luncheon speaker and arrange payments and reimbursements to the speaker as necessary.

d) The Membership Secretary shall have primary responsibility for maintaining membership lists and for leading recruitment efforts, working closely with the Treasurer on recruitment and retention of members. The Membership Secretary shall maintain a listserv of WC paid members, updated with reports from the Treasurer, and lists of past members and of luncheon attendees for use in recruitment. She shall provide a list of members in good standing to the Co-Convenors by November 1 of each year for use in annual elections and recruitment at ASA. She shall chair the Membership Committee,
and work with the Co-Convenors, Treasurer and ASA secretariat on maintaining and expanding membership.

e) Steering Committee members shall commit to taking an active part in the WC’s work by:

(1) Responding promptly to communications from the Co-Convenors, Treasurer and Membership Secretary and providing assistance as requested, including recommending and voting on luncheon speakers; a voting majority of the SC shall mean a majority of those who cast votes by a time set in the call for voting;

(2) Be willing to commit to taking responsibility for one of the key projects of the WC as an active member of a WC committee, including chairing committees;

(3) Attend the meetings of the Steering Committee and the Women’s Caucus, and the Meet n’ Greet, if present at the ASA Annual Meeting;

(4) Help with recruitment of new members;

(5) Advocate on behalf of the WC with the ASA as requested by the Co-Convenors.

Section IV. In addition to the Officers and the SC, there shall be an Advisory Committee (AC), composed of volunteers who have served as Co-Convenors and SC members in the past. The AC will not be expected to work on the running of the WC. Members will make themselves available to provide institutional memory for the WC, and will on occasion be asked to advocate on behalf of the WC within the ASA. Members will be encouraged to attend and support WC events at the Annual Meeting and to assist in recruitment of new WC members.

Section V. Membership. Membership in the Women’s Caucus is open to all members of the ASA and other scholars and activists with a commitment to African women’s studies and the interests of African women. The membership year will run from November 1 to October 31. Dues paid at the annual meeting will be considered as dues for the year following the annual meeting. Members must be in good standing (with the next year’s dues paid unless entitled to free membership) to stand for election as officers or members of the SC or to cast votes at annual meetings. If online votes are held, members must be in good standing at the time of the vote in order to participate. Changes in the Dues Schedule must be approved by a 2/3 vote at the annual meeting and/or online. The [proposed] Dues Schedule is:

Annual Salary $30,000 and above -- $30

$20,000 - $30,000 -- $20

Students and Annual Salary below $20,000 -- Free

African women in Africa -- Free

African Activist Organizations (non-voting membership) -- $25

Institutional Organizations (non-voting membership) -- $50
Lifetime Membership -- $600

No other free memberships will be available except those listed above. All chairs of Gender Studies programs in Africa will be included in the membership list.

Section VI. Organizational Communications. The Women’s Caucus shall have two major forms of organizational communication—the website and the newsletter. The purpose of both is to communicate with the WC membership, with the ASA membership, and with the larger community of Africanists and others concerned with the study and interests of African women. The website shall be maintained by the Co-Convenors, in cooperation with the SC as appropriate, or delegated to an appropriate committee and overseen by the Co-Convenors. The newsletter shall be organized and edited by the chair of the Newsletter Committee, in coordination with the Newsletter Committee, the Co-Convenors and the SC. The Co-Convenors shall have final responsibility for and final editorial authority over the newsletter, on behalf of the SC and the WC.

Section VII. Committees shall be organized as needed, and disbanded when no longer needed, as agreed by the Co-Convenors, other officers and other members of the SC. New committees may be created, old committees dissolved, and committee details changed by the Co-Convenors in consultation with the SC. Separate by-laws are provided for the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize Award. Current committees are as follows:

a) Membership (Chaired by the Membership Secretary; Treasurer also to be a member). The Membership Committee shall work with the Membership Secretary and Treasurer on recruitment and retention of members, including organizing the Meet and Greet at the ASA meeting, developing recruitment plans, coordinating outreach with the ASA, and such other activities as they deem desirable. Potential changes in membership rules and the fee schedule will be evaluated by the Membership Committee and recommendations made to the SC. Changes in the fee schedule require a vote of the membership.

b) Nominations (Chaired by the second Co-Convenor). The Nominations Committee will recruit candidates for officers and steering committee members, as needed, through contact with members using WC communications (newsletter, website, membership list) and personal networks. The second Co-Convenor chairs the committee, so that she can lead in recruiting a co-convenor to serve with her in the following year.

c) Annual Meeting Panels. The Co-Convenors will appoint a chair for the Annual Meeting Panels Committee in consultation with the SC, and, with the chair, recruit other committee members as needed. The committee will consult with interested SC members about topics for WC-sponsored panels, publicize the topics to SC and WC members for submission of proposals, and organize panels in consultation with the Co-Convenors. The WC as a Coordinate Organization may offer one panel that is exempt from the regular review process. The WC may offer other panels as sponsored panels, which will go through the regular review process. The Panels Committee is encouraged to organize at least two sponsored panels in total. The committee may also choose to invite members to
submit appropriate panels they have organized for inclusion as WC-sponsored but non-exempt panels.

d) Newsletter Committee. (Chaired by the Newsletter Editor) The Newsletter Committee will work with the Newsletter Editor to produce the WC Newsletter, in cooperation with the Co-Convenors and the SC, including writing and soliciting articles, editing submissions, and finding photographs. The Newsletter will be posted to the website by the Co-Convenors.

e) Nancy “Penny” Schwartz Student Travel Award. The committee chair will send a timely announcement to the SC asking for nominations for this award. There are currently two awards of $250 each for assistance with travel for graduate students, subject to change in future by the SC. The committee will choose award winners and communicate their decision to the winners and the SC, and the chair will present the awards at the WC luncheon at ASA.

d) Outreach. The chair of this committee will send emails as needed to the SC and the membership about events outside the ASA that are relevant to WC members, including conferences, speakers, special events, and so forth, so that individuals may participate, or the WC may choose to make statements or participate.

e) Marketplace and Auction. The Marketplace and Auction Committee will organize the marketplace and auction goods collection, display and sale. The chair will coordinate arrangements for ASA: staffing of the marketplace table at the ASA, setting up of table, collecting money and depositing it with the Treasurer, and arranging for handling of unsold goods. She will arrange appropriate auction prizes and have them available at the luncheon, where the drawing and announcement will take place, as time allows.

f) ASA On-Site Events (Co-chaired by Co-Convenors, coordinated with Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and Marketplace and Auction Committee Chair). This committee will set up a second table, at which WC memberships and luncheon tickets will be sold and organize staffing of that table. (Both tables will be next to the ASA Registration tables, by arrangement with ASA.) This committee will organize the receipt of money for membership and luncheon tickets, so that those staffing the table ensure that members (whether dues-paying or free) fill out membership forms, and receive receipts if paying dues. It will ensure that lists are kept of those paying memberships and those buying luncheon tickets. The committee will arrange hosting the speaker, and luncheon logistics, including admitting ticket holders, distributing box lunches, organizing speakers and awards presentations, distribution of agendas and membership forms on tables, organizing SC members to sit at different tables and encourage people to join, collection of membership forms and dues by SC members and delivery to Treasurer. It will organize the SC meeting and the business meeting, with agendas, and the Meet and Greet.

g) Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize Committee. The Co-Convenors will appoint committees for the scholarly and creative book prizes. (See Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize By-Laws.)