In an effort to raise the visibility of the election and to promote participation, as of February 25, 2013 all interested candidates were invited to submit a photo, a biographical sketch and a position statement. Nominations will be required for all Trustee candidates on the day of the election; additional nominations of candidates not included on this circular may be made on the day of the election. Candidates appear in alphabetical order. Incumbents are marked with an asterisk.
Biographical Sketch

Keith W. Eckel is a board member of Nationwide, one of the largest diversified insurance and financial services companies in the world. He was first elected to the board in 1996 and has served as board chairman of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company, the parent company of the Nationwide organization, since April 2008. Mr. Eckel is former board chairman of Gartmore Global Asset Management Trust and Allied Group, Inc. and former director of Nationwide Financial Services, Inc.

Mr. Eckel is owner of Fred W. Eckel Sons and president of Eckel Farms, Inc. in northeast Pennsylvania. He received the Master Farmer award from Penn State in 1982 and the American Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service Award in 2009.

Mr. Eckel is a trustee of Pennsylvania State University. He is a former board member of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, the Pennsylvania Agricultural Land Preservation Board, and the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development. He is a former president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, a position he held for 15 years, and the Lackawanna County Cooperative Extension Association. Mr. Eckel has served as a board member and executive committee member of the American Farm Bureau Federation and is a former vice president of the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperative Extension Associations.

Born in Scranton, PA, Mr. Eckel is a graduate of Newton-Ransom High School in Clarks Summit, PA. He attended Keystone Junior College, Dickinson College and Penn State. Mr. Eckel is a member and administrative council chairman of the Countryside Community Church, a United Methodist Fellowship.

Position Statement

I respectfully request your support for my election to the Penn State Board of Trustees. In 2012, when I solicited your support, I noted "For the past 8.5 years that I have served on the Board of Trustees I have endeavored to improve the governance of the Board and strengthen the University from both a program and financial perspective." That commitment continues and has resulted in an audit committee, the setting of five-three year term limits and full involvement of the Board in setting the President's compensation. Clearly, I have been an advocate for strong Board governance and fiduciary responsibility—years before the challenges that confronted Penn State in November, 2011.

Since then my focus has been on the young victims, our 95,000 students, our outstanding faculty, our inspiring student-athletes, our life changing researchers and every Pennsylvanian touched by the University. My commitment to serving our agricultural industry and our farm families has never wavered. Likewise, the challenge to more positively impact the quality of life of all Pennsylvanians through the educational mission of our Land-Grant University has never been greater nor more financially pressured because of the reduced availability of federal and state funds. Therefore the University must become more innovative and efficient.

My current assignments on the Board offer an opportunity to make a difference—I chair the newly created committee on Legal and Compliance and recently was named to the Presidential Search Council. Because of the great strength of the Penn State family, I believe our future is bright and that we will turn today's challenges into opportunities, as we focus on the future.

*Incumbent
Biographical Sketch

Abe Harpster is co-owner of Evergreen Farms, Inc. Located in Spruce Creek, Pennsylvania, Evergreen Farms, Inc. is the largest dairy farm operation of its type in the northeast, producing enough milk weekly for 90,000 families. With his two brothers, the partnership farms 5500 acres and milks over 2800 cows. Abe and his wife, Trish, have three small children and they are being raised on the family farm, learning the same solid agricultural values that has molded Abe.

A 1994 graduate of Penn State with a degree in Agricultural Business Management, Abe was an active member of the Ag Student Council. Abe has held membership offices in many ag associations on the local, state and national levels. He is a member of agricultural charitable boards and foundations including the Northeast Agricultural Education Foundation and currently serves on the Governor’s Dairy Advisory Board.

Abe regularly volunteers as a guest lecturer in the College of Agricultural Sciences, and at industry conferences. In addition, Abe hosts many student classes at the farm, hires Penn State graduates and offers summer internships for students seeking dairy business experience.

Today, Abe is a member of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Baileyville Grange, the Professional Dairy Managers of Pa, the Holstein Association, and has served on the Boards of the Beef Council, the FFA Foundation, the Agway Foundation, the Beef Quality Assurance Commission, and the Pennsylvania 21st Century Environmental Commission. Abe is a life member of the FFA Alumni association, and the Penn State Alumni Association.

Position Statement

In my life I have four great passions: my family, my farm, my country and all things Penn State.

As a seasoned business owner and a contributor to the agricultural education experience at Penn State, my goal is to facilitate efforts to improve our university. Living and working in the State College area, I have daily interaction with people who work for and attend PSU. This interaction affords me insight and understanding of issues facing students, faculty, staff and alumni of the university.

I am committed to the value of higher education.

I will strive toward making Penn State affordable to all, while seeking to attract the brightest faculty and staff.

I will work toward making the University more responsive to the needs and service of all students.

I will aim to strengthen the University's partnerships with corporations, industries, and small business by funding educational research and promoting the exchange of ideas. Partnering with industry ultimately helps our graduates secure the best employment opportunities available.

Penn State was established as a land grant university. As a farmer who makes his living from production agriculture, I will work to maintain and strengthen the agricultural roots from which our university has grown.

Finally, I hope to better serve the community as a whole by expanding extension services, and to support the growth of the branch campus system which can make a Penn State education accessible to everyone in the commonwealth.

My Penn State experience has given me the tools to be a successful businessman and leader. I would like to use those tools to ensure future graduates will have the skill and ability to achieve the highest levels of success.
Biographical Sketch

Paul Semmel is Owner-Operator with his wife of Excelsior Dairy Farm. Paul is a graduate of PSU with a B.S. in Agricultural Education with graduate work at PSU and Temple. Paul while concurrently farming also taught Physical Science for 15 years and served 24 years in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Paul was Chairman of Veterans Affairs/Emergency Preparedness Committee for four terms. He is actively involved in his "Commonwealth Community." PSU Alumni Association-Lifetime member/Golden Lion Society, Jordan Lodge I.O.O.F, Pennsylvania Holstein Association, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Schnecksville, Lehigh/Northampton Pomona and Pennsylvania State Grange, and Union Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Current positions include: Delta Theta Sigma Board of Directors (PSU-Agricultural Fraternity), Lehigh County Cooperative Extension Board-Vice President, Lehigh County Farm Bureau-National Legislative Committee Chairman, PA Dairy Leadership Council-appointed by Governor Corbett, and PA Holstein Association State Director, Future Committee Chairman, 100th Anniversary History Book Chairman, and Penn State Extension Council.

Numerous awards include: Commonwealth Meritorious Service Award by Governor Schweiker, Delta Theta Sigma, Kutztown University-Legislative Fellow, National-National Guard, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Honorary County Extension Agent, Schnecksville Community Fair (Friend of the Fair) and the naming of a cattle building.

Position Statement

I offer my candidacy to continue providing access to the commonwealth's general population, maintaining Penn State's core function of providing education, research, and service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and beyond. This needs to be continued throughout the entire University System (Main/Branch campuses, Medical College-Hospital, etc.). A high level of support must remain for the College of Agricultural Sciences whether undergraduate or graduate studies along with Extension and Research.

I humbly ask for your favorable support and advocacy for my candidacy of Pennsylvania State University Trustee.