



Alternative Governance/ Leadership Structures

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What does “Alternative” Leadership Structure mean to you?

- Something other than traditional branch officers?
- Redesigning a leader’s job description?
- Creating a new way to get things done that meets the needs of your branch?

3 Steps to Finding an Alternative That Works For Your Branch

1. **Understand** your branch culture
2. **Evaluate** your current leadership structures
3. **Explore** new ways to lead

Step 1. Understanding Your “Branch Culture”

A “Branch Culture” is the overall personality a stranger would perceive when attending a branch meeting or function.

★ The key to figuring out what leadership structure will work best for your branch is to understand your branch culture.

Understanding Your Branch ...



- How many members? Age? Retired? Work?
- Membership recruitment/ retention rates?
- Branch meetings well-attended?
- What programs/projects does branch support?
- Commitment to AAUW Mission & Programs?
- Interest groups?
- How often does branch/board meet? Monthly?

Step 2. Evaluate Your Current Leadership Structure

- What is the Process?
- What about Bylaws?
- What is working? What is not?
- Has Member Participation increased or decreased?

What is the Process?

- Discuss leadership issues with branch board
- Identify key areas of concern
- Plan branch meeting to discuss issues and get input from members
 - Consider using an AAUW Leader, who is not in your branch, to facilitate the meeting
- Identify and Prioritize next steps
- Work toward solutions

What About Bylaws?

- DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE BYLAWS
 - You can always amend them



- MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
 - 3 Required Contact Positions

Administration, Finance, Secretary

What is Working & What is Not?

- Is it hard to fill leadership positions?
 - Why? What's keeping them from saying "Yes"?
- Are you recycling members/leaders?
- Are the members willing volunteers?
 - When? And for what?
- Do leaders feel **good/bad** about their roles?
- What's not working in **your** branch?

Has Member Participation Increased or Decreased?

- Do you *need* to meet monthly as a branch? Board?
- How do you connect/communicate with members?
- Are members' needs being met?
- Do you have programs/projects that no longer interest members? Are no longer supported?
 - Is the branch willing to “let it go”?

Now What ...



Step 3. Explore New Ways to Lead

- Discuss Pros and Cons of:
 - Co-Officers
 - Rotating Officers
 - Leadership Committees or Councils
 - Task–focused Teams
 - Term Limits
 - Ideas from Audience



More Exploration ...

- Break programs/projects into individual tasks
 - No one wants to be “chair,” but may do one part and ask friends to help with the other tasks
- Eliminate unnecessary meetings
- Consider changing day and/or time of meetings
- Eliminate activity the branch no longer supports
- Be Creative – divide one job into two short-term jobs

Tips to Keep in Mind



- There is no “right answer”.
 - Don’t be afraid to try something. If it doesn’t work, try something else.
- Just because something works for one branch doesn’t mean it will work for every branch
- Don’t hold onto projects, programs, or structures
 - Because “we’ve always done it that way”
- Embrace change, even when it is uncomfortable.

Tips to Keep in Mind

- Change is a process. It can't happen overnight.
- Focus on what needs to be **done**
 - Function rather than structure
 - Job content rather than job titles
- It is important to understand who your branch is **now**, not who it used to be.
- Set a time to evaluate all changes you make
 - What worked? What didn't? Make adjustments.



Celebrate Your Successes!

Resources

- Contact other branches or IBCs to exchange ideas and learn from each other.
- AAUW CA leaders are available and willing to help.
 - We are only a phone call, email, or branch visit away!

AAUW Online Resources

AAUW CA Website (www.aauw-ca.org)

Some areas require a login: **user name:** member **password:** aauwca

Leadership Training:

<http://aauw-ca.org/index.cfm?go=pages.view&pagesid=333&parent=332&coparent=333>

AAUW National Website (www.aauw.org)

Lead On, AAUW's monthly member leadership e-newsletter:

https://svc.aauw.org/contact/index_LeadOn_signup.cfm

Member Leadership Program's page: <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/member-leadership-programs/>

How to Spice Up Your Programming:

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-spice-up-your-branch-programming/>

How to Use the Relational Recruitment Method to Grow Your Branch:

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/relational-recruitment-method/>

How to Design an Engaging Planning Meeting: <http://www.aauw.org/resource/how-to-design-meetings/>

AAUW Programs in a Box: <http://www.aauw.org/resources/by-type/programs-in-a-box/>

Member Services Database: <https://www.aauw.org/login/> (requires your member id to log in)