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
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:

AAUW National Website (www.aauw.org)
*Lead On*, AAUW’s monthly member leadership e-newsletter:
https://svc.aauw.org/contact/index_LeadOn_signup.cfml
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)