

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Survey on AAUW NC Changes

AAUW NC has been discussing changes to its structure for some time. There are currently nearly 50 people on the board which makes it difficult to be a nimble organization for the 21st century. At its retreat scheduled for Jan 28-29, 2005, the board will be considering specific changes as well as formulating specific goals to guide it through the next few years. Any changes to the structure would need to be approved by a two-thirds vote at the AAUW NC convention. This survey is part of the process of ensuring that any recommendations made at the 2005 convention have had broad input from the membership.

Under the current AAUW NC Bylaws and Policies, the state board is composed of nearly 50 members (6 elected officers, 3 appointed officers, 17 committee chairs and 22-23 branch presidents). Each member has a vote at the board meetings. Over the last several years, attendance at state board meetings rarely exceeded 25 members. Many branch presidents do not attend; committee chairpersons are not always present. One way of improving board effectiveness is to look at the structure of the board and assess where and how the board's work could be streamlined without losing valuable input from all members' points of view. Two approaches merit consideration:

- (a) grouping officers with similar responsibilities into committees and allow for co-chairs to manage the group, and
- (b) condensing branch presidents' input by identifying branch president representatives.

These two suggestions are certainly not the ONLY ones for improving board practices and communication. Your suggestions for other options are welcome at the end of the survey.

Section I. Overview

This survey will ask your opinion about various proposed changes, but first tell us a bit about yourself.

1. **Your primary branch:** _____

2. **Please check all that apply to your current or past experience:**

- I have served on the branch board.
- I have held an elected position in the branch.
- I have been a branch president.
- I have served on the AAUW NC board.
- I have held an elected position in AAUW NC.
- I have been an AAUW NC president.

3. **How many AAUW NC conventions or summer leadership conferences have you attended in the last five years?**

- None
- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-10

4. **How many AAUW NC board meetings have you attended in the last five years?**

- None
- 1-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

5. **How many cluster meetings have you attended in the last five years?**

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

IMPORTANT: Instructions for Good Idea/Bad Idea questions:

To save space we've condensed the text for the choices on some answers. The web version listed these as:

- Great idea.
- Good idea, but needs some changes or clarifications
- Good idea, but needs a LOT of changes or clarification
- Bad idea.

Changing the Composition of the Board

Section II. More emphasis on committees

According to current AAUW NC bylaws and policies, there are 17 committee positions which must be filled at the state level. One suggestion for changing the board structure is to group officers with similar responsibilities into fewer committees. The committee chair (or co-chairs, see above) would be on the board and the other members of the committees would not. All committees would be encouraged to recruit members from across the state and to work as a group to accomplish the work assigned to them. This section asks for comments on specific groupings of committees. PLEASE be sure to include specific comments if you say the ideas are good but need changes or clarification.

- 6. Create a Communications Committee whose members would (following the practice recommended by the Association) handle the duties now assigned to the bulletin editor, the public information chair, and the web manager.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs a LOT of changes Bad idea
- 7. Create an Administrative Committee whose members would handle the duties now assigned to the Corresponding Secretary/Administrative Assistant/Housing, Cluster Coordinator, Historian, Technology Committee (except for web site management), and Bylaws Committee.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 8. Expand the Public Policy Committee (and, perhaps, rename it) to include the responsibilities of the equity (educational equity), international, and resolutions committees as well as state and federal public policy issues.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 9. Eliminate the Strategic Planning Committee and assign its responsibilities to the Executive Committee.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 10. Comments on grouping current officers into committees:**

Section III. Support for co-chairs and officers

- 11. Change the bylaws to explicitly allow two people to be elected or appointed to one position and serve as a team in that position.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 12. Allow two people to share one position on the board, but word the bylaws so that they would also need to share a single vote at board meetings.**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 13. Allow a committee chair to appoint a member of the committee to carry the chair's vote at the board meeting. [Branch presidents can do this now.]**
 Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea
- 14. If the bylaws were clarified to allow two people to share one position on the board, how should the policies be clarified with respect to reimbursement of expenses?**
 - The reimbursement amount should be limited to the amount due to one person.
 - Both people should be able to claim full reimbursement.
 - Other (please specify)

15. Change the bylaws and the policies so that the nominating committee elects its own chair and that all other officers and committee chairs are appointed by the president with the approval of the executive committee. [The current bylaws say some are appointed by the president, some by the executive committee, and some simply appear.]

- Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea

16. Other comments on co-chairs or co-officers:

Section IV. Changes for branch presidents

As noted earlier, many branch presidents do not attend the AAUW NC board meetings. This hurts the board (which misses their viewpoints) and may hurt the branches (since other officers may “assume” that the branch president is keeping the branch informed even though they “know” that the branch president wasn’t at the meeting). There are a number of reasons why branch presidents do not attend state board meetings — time, money, feeling of disconnect with state business, etc. Identifying members who would represent the branch presidents may eliminate some of these reasons for not attending. This section asks for comments on strengthening branch president representation on the AAUW NC board.

17. Change the bylaws so that groups of branch presidents (perhaps by cluster) elect representatives to the state board who would be responsible for communication between the board and those particular branches.

- Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea

18. Change the bylaws so that the branch presidents as a group elect 4-5 statewide (at large) representatives to the board. Those representatives would then divide responsibility for communication between the branches and the board.

- Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea

19. Instead of having all branch presidents on the board, change the bylaws to add 4-5 members ELECTED AT THE STATE CONVENTION who would be responsible for communication with the branches.

- Great idea Good, but needs some changes Good, but needs lots of changes Bad idea

20. Instead of having all branch presidents on the board, change the bylaws to add 4-5 APPOINTED board members to be responsible for communication with the branches.

- Great idea Good, but some changes Good, but lots of changes Bad idea

21. Other comments on how to improve communication between the branch presidents and the rest of the state board:

Changes to Clusters

The “cluster” system in North Carolina has been an informal grouping of branches in a geographic region. No business is conducted at clusters and they are not mentioned in the bylaws. One direction to change the AAUW NC structure is to put more emphasis on clusters.

22. From your point of view, why are clusters important?

Rank these 1 to 4, with 1 being most important and 4 being least important. Use each number no more than once.

- _____ They encourage social interaction and offer a chance to get to know other AAUW members in our area.
_____ They allow us to sponsor programs that would be difficult to arrange for a single branch.
_____ They encourage sharing of good ideas.
_____ They provide a forum to discuss issues that are critical to AAUW NC and the Association.

23. Should AAUW NC make clusters a more formal part of the organization by incorporating the concept in the bylaws?

- Yes
 No

24. Other comments on clusters:

Other changes in governance

Current bylaws say the following people can vote at the AAUW NC Convention.

- Elected and appointed officers
- Committee chairs
- Past presidents of AAUW NC
- Branch presidents
- Branch delegates (1 per 25 members or major fraction)
- MAL delegates (typically none)
- C/U delegates (rare)
- Members of Association (national) committees (rare)

Adding to this list may increase participation at Convention. Please consider the following possible changes.

25. Change the bylaws to extend voting privileges at convention to all members of AAUW NC committees (following the Association practice).

- Great idea Good, but some changes Good, but lots of changes Bad idea

26. Change the bylaws to allow branch presidents to name a proxy to carry their vote to convention. [The bylaws allow this for board meetings, but not for convention.]

- Great idea Good, but some changes Good, but lots of changes Bad idea

27. Comments on these changes:

Final Comments

28. Please add any additional comments on ideas for restructuring AAUW NC.

\

The following information is optional, but we'd like to be able to contact you to clarify any of your comments.

Your name: _____

Your e-mail address: _____

Your phone number: _____

Return to Karla Atkinson, 506 Stone Dr., Brevard NC 28712, 828-884-7648.
A branch representative may also enter information from those without web access into the online form.
See www.aauwnc.org.