

Policies of the AAUW Tar Heel Branch

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The AAUW Tar Heel Branch is a virtual branch that serves the entire state of North Carolina. Its bylaws differ in some significant ways from those of a traditional community-based branch:

- The branch may act as fiscal agent for AAUW-related community and project groups. These are semi-autonomous groups of branch members with a responsibility to report their activities to the branch, but with fewer constraints than a branch satellite and less claim on general branch funds than a branch committee would have.
- There are no regular meetings to handle branch business, so the branch allows electronic and other votes of the membership in between meetings and in preparation for the annual meeting.
- The branch officers include a president (primary contact) and treasurer (financial contact), but the other board members are elected "at-large" and may shift specific responsibilities as their interests and constraints dictate.
- The branch claims a special status with respect to the state bylaws, and if it cannot recruit enough members for its board, it may ask the state to step in to help.

These policies are to describe how the branch implements these and other practices.

Branch records

1. As a virtual branch, the records of the branch are kept, insofar as possible, online. In particular, the bylaws, policies, minutes, and annual financial reports shall always be posted to the website.
2. Since the branch has few meetings, the president shall appoint a temporary secretary when needed for branch and/or board meetings.
3. The minutes submitted by the temporary secretary will be posted as part of the branch records, and if there are no objections to the minutes within 30 days after the post, they shall be considered "approved" without a formal vote.
4. Any votes taken as preparation for a regular meeting of the branch will be reported in the minutes of that meeting.
5. Votes taken by the board or the membership without a connection to a regular meeting will have their results reported on the website and, if practical, in the minutes of the next regular meeting of the voting body.

Financial procedures

1. Changes in branch dues take effect on July 1. The branch may invoice new and renewing members at the old rate until July 1.
2. The branch will offer half-year dues and any other special promotions approved by AAUW.
3. Members-at-large (MALs) who join the branch will have their initial dues adjusted based on the expiration date of their at-large membership following current policies of AAUW. As of spring, 2009, this means that an MAL who is not a life member will have their expiration date moved to June 30 of the year in

which the membership expires. At this time, AAUW does not pro-rate national dues for MALs joining branches. This may add or subtract months from the membership, and the branch will waive a year's AAUW dues or collect a year's AAUW dues as appropriate.

4. Between January 1 and March 15, a new member may join the branch as an "18 month member" through June 30 of the following year by paying the amount of national dues for a member-at-large plus 1.5 times the state/branch dues. For instance if national, state, local dues are \$49, \$11 and \$5 the amount charged would be \$73. [Compare this to a half year member joining for \$32.50 and renewing for the next fiscal year for \$65, for a total of \$97.50. The half-year membership is available as a "trial" membership, but the 18-month membership is a "best value" membership for someone who is committed to membership in AAUW for at least a year.] This is a local implementation of the AAUW policies that allow a member-at-large to transfer to a branch and extend their membership to June 30 as described above. This policy depends on AAUW continuing its current practice on the transfer and the national MAL dues being approximately the same as branch member dues.
5. The branch treasurer shall post a financial statement at least quarterly (see branch records above). At the end of each fiscal year and whenever a new treasurer assumes office, the president shall appoint a member to review a report showing income, expenses, and a statement of financial position (assets) and the supporting documentation (bank statements, receipts, deposit records, etc.). The reports shall cover the period since the last review. If the outgoing treasurer cannot complete the report, the president shall appoint another member to act for the treasurer in its preparation. The report shall be completed in a timely fashion, and it shall be presented to the board and posted with the branch records.
6. The finance reports shall show any amounts that pass through the branch checking account, such as dues paid to AAUW or contributions to AAUW funds.
7. The treasurer shall maintain an account separate from the branch general fund that shall be called "AAUW Tar Heel Branch - Local". This fund shall be used for community and project group activities that wish to use the branch as a fiscal agent. Any self-funding, short-term activity that uses this account shall be exempt from any custodial fee (see Article VI, Section 8 of the bylaws). However, excess funds may revert to the branch if the group responsible for the project makes no other provisions before the four-year deadline and so the group is encouraged to zero-out its portion of the account at the end of the project. The branch finance reports shall show income, expenses, and designated funds held in this account.
8. The branch president, as well as the treasurer, shall have signature authority on the branch bank accounts. The treasurer shall and the president may apply for a debit card on the branch's account.
9. No bill of more than \$25 shall be paid unless it is in the budget and approved by the officer assigned to the line item, is a pass through of dues or contributions from the members, or it is approved by the board. Smaller bills may be paid by the treasurer in consultation with the president on how payment would affect the overall financial position of the branch.
10. The branch will participate in national dues collection efforts (i.e. the 2009 "Membership Pilot Program") to provide for online payment of dues through aauw.org.
11. The branch will maintain a PayPal account to support online payment of dues by new members and donations and other incidental online collections.
12. Because of the special nature of the branch, it is expected that branch dues will be kept low so as not to be a barrier to members-at-large who wish to join the state organization. Any significant branch projects will be funded with special fundraising campaigns.

Methods of branch communication

1. The branch shall maintain a web site and will post announcements, information about the branch, and branch records there. [Currently hosted at WordPress.com for free: <http://aauwtarheel.wordpress.com>.]
2. The branch shall maintain an e-mail list to which all online members are subscribed and to which all members may post items expected to be of interest to the group. [Currently hosted at Google Groups for free: <http://groups.google.com/group/aauw-tar-heel-branch-members>.]
3. The AAUW NC account at Dreamhost.com provides the option to the branches for many additional web-based services. The branch is taking advantage of the following:
 - Registration of the subdomain tarheel.aauwnc.org
 - Setup of an account admin@tarheel.aauwnc.org at <http://partnerpage.google.com/tarheel.aauwnc.org> to provide for Google Mail and Google Docs accounts for the branch use (e.g. info@tarheel.aauwnc.org, members@tarheel.aauwnc.org, hosting for this document).
4. Each member who is not online (i.e. no e-mail address) shall be assigned a "buddy" to share online information and announcements and cast their vote in online ballots.
5. When a teleconference is required to discuss issues and reach decisions more quickly than is possible with an e-mail discussion, a service such as freeconferencecall.com will be used to connect all the participants. Note that each participant would then pay any long distance charges to reach the bridge. Reimbursement of these expenses should be discussed in advance.

Procedures for a voting

1. Online voting of the branch is done with a SurveyMonkey form whose address is distributed through the branch e-mail list (not on the web site). The link to the summary of the results of the voting is also distributed through the e-mail list and may be posted on the web site. [Sample - [2009 annual meeting results](#) .]
 - a. The ballot has a question where the voter chooses her/his name, so the results show who has voted, but not the specific ballot. The administrator of the survey does have access to the individual ballots and can address issues of duplicate ballots and those claimed to be invalid, and if there are any questions on the outcome, the individual ballots can be sent to the voters for verification.
 - b. If there is ever a need for a "secret" ballot, additional procedures will be approved by the board.
 - c. The SurveyMonkey account in use is being donated by a member who also acts as the administrator for the system. However, free online survey applications are available that would support similar ballots if there is an instance where having that member administer the vote would be a conflict of interest.
2. Voting of the board or the branch may also be done on a conference call meeting or at an in-person meeting or with an e-mail vote. If there is an online vote that is related to one of those meetings, the announcement of the vote shall clarify whether everyone (even meeting attendees) must vote online or whether additional votes will be accepted at the meeting.

Review of Branch Bylaws and Policies

1. An ad-hoc bylaws committee appointed by the president shall review the Bylaws and Policies at least biennially.
2. The committee shall draft proposed changes to the Bylaws for the approval of the branch. As stated in the Bylaws, a two-thirds vote of the branch is required to change the Bylaws.
3. The committee shall draft proposed changes to the Policies for the approval of the board. A majority vote of the board is sufficient to change the Policies.