

# 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. Branch dues for regular members are currently \$5. AAUW NC dues are currently \$11. National dues are currently \$49. So total dues for primary members (those who pay AAUW dues through this branch) are \$65. Any member joining the branch must pay AAUW NC and AAUW dues with their branch dues if those have not already been paid. Local, state, and national dues are changed by a vote of the corresponding membership. They are not subject to change by the corresponding boards.
2. As noted in the bylaws, the state and branch waive dues for honorary (50-year) life members, representatives of AAUW college/university partners, and for student affiliates. Student affiliates pay either \$17 unless their institution is a college/university member in which case they can become “e-student affiliates” for free. Honorary life members pay no dues; they just need to confirm they wish to remain members of the branch.

<b>Summary of Dues Amounts by Member Type to join through 6/30 of following year</b>	
<b>New Member type</b>	<b>Pays</b>
Regular	\$65
Honorary Life	\$0
Paid Life	\$16
Representative of college/univ. partner	\$0
Student Affiliate	\$17
e-Student Affiliate (undergrad at college/univ. partner)	\$0

3. Changes in branch dues take effect on July 1. The branch may invoice new and renewing members at the old rate until July 1.
4. The branch may offer half-year dues, graduate student discounts, Shape the Future discounts and any other special promotions approved by AAUW. Current branch discounts follow AAUW NC policy, with small additional discounts to make totals simple. While there is a provision for half-year dues, we rarely offer them in favor of “18 month” memberships – see below.

<b>Discount Type</b>	<b>Discount/Amt Due</b>			
	<b>AAUW</b>	<b>AAUW NC</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grad student	30.19/18.81	0/11	0/5	34.81
Shape the Future	24.50/24.50	0/11	.50/4.50	40.00
Half-year	24.50/24.50	5.50/5.50	2.50/2.50	32.50
STF/Half-Year	12.50/12.50	0/5.50	.50/2.00	20.00

5. The branch may also offer financial hardship discounted dues for renewing primary members. This will be implemented by the member submitting renewal dues for less than the full amount with a statement saying that her/his AAUW membership is valuable, but that her/his financial situation means that they cannot pay full dues. A minimum amount for such payments will be set by the board, and a total amount of funding for these

discounts will be set in the branch budget. For 2014-2015 renewals, the minimum is \$20 and the budget amount is \$100 plus any specific donations to the financial hardship fund.

6. National members who join the branch as their first branch will have their initial dues adjusted based on the expiration date of their national membership, following current policies of AAUW. As of spring, 2014, this means that a national member 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 national members joining a first branch. 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.
7. AAUW of North Carolina and the branch waive half-year dues for national members joining a first branch during January and February. This means that the national member can join in January/February through June 30 of the following year for the same amount that they would pay to join in April. The only exception is if their membership lapsed at the end of the previous calendar year – by AAUW policy, they need to wait three months after the membership has lapsed in order to “skip” a year’s dues and join for the following year.
8. 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 usual amount of annual dues. This is a local implementation of the AAUW policies that allow a national member 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 AAUW NC waiving half-year dues for a national member joining in January or February. So the steps are:
  - a. New member pays national, state, and local dues.
  - b. National dues are sent to AAUW and the person becomes a national member.
  - c. The member is then “transferred” into the branch with an expiration date of the following year, and the dues schedule of the previous paragraph applies (dues for the next fiscal year, but nothing for the current half-year are sent to the state).
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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](http://aauw.org).
15. The branch will maintain a PayPal account to support online payment of dues by new members and donations and other incidental online collections.
16. 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 \$43/year for upgrades to the free system. <http://tarheel.aauwnc.org>.]
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 branch shall maintain a private Facebook group and limit membership in the group to current members of the branch.
4. The AAUW NC account at Dreamhost.com provides the option to the branches for many additional web-based services. The branch is taking advantage the registration of the subdomain [tarheel.aauwnc.org](http://tarheel.aauwnc.org), but the email and mailing list services that could be set up are not being used to minimize the need for support from AAUW NC.
5. A free Google Apps for Domains account (no longer available) is used to provide email service, e.g. [info@tarheel.aauwnc.org](mailto:info@tarheel.aauwnc.org), and Google docs features.
6. The branch also uses a DropBox account that includes source files for documents, shared information on finances, and a file that has passwords for the systems supporting the branch.

7. 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.
8. 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 voting

1. Online voting of the branch is done with an online survey 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.
  - 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 Branch ballots have been implemented with a SurveyMonkey account donated by a member and with the AAUW of North Carolina account. However, free online survey applications are available that would support similar ballots if there is an instance where the board would decide to use a different method.
2. Voting of the board or the branch may also be done on a conference call meeting, at an in-person meeting, 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.