

AAUW in the 21st Century

By Ruth Z. Sweetser and Barbara L. O'Connor

Will 2009 be the year of AAUW's transformation? If so, each of us needs to be reminded that policies and procedures by themselves don't change an organization. Rather, it is YOU, the members, who have the opportunity to move AAUW from a 20th- to a 21st-century organization. Since transformation depends on the human factor, how does this happen?

First, we have to work together and think together as an entire community to ensure that we keep our AAUW Value Promise at all times. When planning branch activities or even personal activities, ask "How does this project or program or activity help keep AAUW's Value Promise?" In other words, how am I helping to break through educational and economic barriers for women and girls? Diligence in keeping AAUW's promise will make an enormous difference both in getting results for our mission and in branding our organization.

Whenever you read with your granddaughter, play in a bridge tournament that benefits the AAUW Educational Foundation, host a guest speaker on pay equity at a branch meeting, or write your member of Congress through our Two-Minute Activist portal, you're taking a step to break through barriers. Just asking yourself that question brings a new awareness to and appreciation of our work that is vital to making it succeed—and will help you focus as your branch plans its mission-based programming.

When you take that planning up a notch—asking how can my branch join with as many other branches and members as possible to apply our collective influence to a breakthrough—barriers, watch out! With nationwide engagement by members, our results, if documentable, will prove to be powerful and persuasive.

Second, plan to attend the 2009 AAUW National Convention: Breaking through Barriers, June 26–28, in St. Louis. There you'll have the chance to experience the new AAUW firsthand, to see with your own eyes what the future holds for our organization. You'll make AAUW history by participating in the bylaws votes, and, of course, you'll reconnect with old friends and make valuable and enjoyable new connections. But, please, come to convention well versed in the proposed bylaws and rationales; the briefings provide extensive information on these new approaches.

Third, adopt innovative tools and future-oriented thinking about what will make AAUW viable, attractive, and competitive. Yes, organizations compete for the attention and participation of current and potential members. If we are unable or unwilling to see the big picture of AAUW and its needs in 2009 and beyond, we risk the future of the entire organization.

So to finalize the corporate restructuring from three separate entities to one tax-exempt umbrella organization (501(c)(3) with a very small 501(c)(4) subsidiary, the Action Fund), we will need to adopt bylaws that support the respective legalities and functions. We also need new ways of operating that recognize updated ways to lead, technology that facilitates administrative work so volunteers can devote themselves to breaking through barriers, 21st-century ways of engaging with each other, and other practices.

A number of these innovative tools have been introduced through the series of [briefings](#) that AAUW has provided since early fall 2008. These tools include the [Programs in a Box](#), which provide how-to's for mission-based programming; the [Membership Pilot Program](#), which will allow leaders to manage their membership records online; and the [Branch and State Local Scholarship Clearinghouse Pilot Program](#), which will help branches market their scholarships and select their recipients from a pool of prescreened applicants. Our new method of submitting a leadership position application will allow members to express general and specific areas for service, along with an inventory of skill sets they can bring to these positions. The type of work expected of the regional director is so valuable that we are revamping and strengthening that role to ensure grassroots engagement for the new AAUW.

At the AAUW state spring meetings, board members and other leaders—champions—will present and facilitate discussion on all these transitions. Be sure to take advantage of this personalized learning opportunity, especially in preparation for the convention in St. Louis.

Each of these changes marks a departure from our business as usual, yet they are all designed to address our organizational shortcomings. It is up to us to take hold of what organizational development teaches us, leave behind AAUW practices and thinking that don't work, and build on AAUW's unmatched legacy to reshape its potential for the future. We need to be smart, as well as educated!

The critical question is, How will you help AAUW move into the 21st century? As noted, the forward-looking framework and policies/procedures are being developed for your consideration and decision. How you think about AAUW, its future and its promise, will determine both how you receive proposed changes and, more important, what you do with the new AAUW once it is in place. You—both individually and collectively as the AAUW community—are the agent on which AAUW's success rests!

The new AAUW is going to be a force to be reckoned with. With a community of nearly 100,000 determined women and men, focused on a single objective—to break through barriers for women and girls—we will be unstoppable.



Breaking through Barriers

The Clock is Ticking Down Have you Registered yet?

2009 AAUW National Convention
Breaking through Barriers
June 26-28, 2009
St. Louis



Each branch can send one delegate for each 25 branch members. Remember if your branch does not send delegates, it will not be represented and cannot vote at this convention.

If you are attending the convention or are still undecided, but want to share hotel expenses contact District Representative Janet Peavler at jpeavler2@tx.rr.com. Janet is working to match-up roommates from Texas for the convention. She will help match you up with another Texas member who also needs a roommate.

Are you still undecided about going to the Association Convention on June 26-28, 2009 in St. Louis, Missouri? Here are a few more reasons to consider attending:

- Sharpen your leadership skills.
- Acquire first-hand knowledge of AAUW's structural changes and next steps.
- Be involved in AAUW elections, briefings and business sessions, and skill-building workshops.
- Attend stimulating plenary sessions and be inspired by distinguished speakers, such as Lilly Ledbetter.
- Share stories and concerns on issues with other AAUW leaders—new and past acquaintances and friends—from all over the United States.
- Vote on the proposed bylaws and the future board.

We are holding a Webinar on Saturday, July 25—Join us

By Kathy Anthon

What in heaven's name is a Webinar?

If you go to Wikipedia the internet gurus will tell you that a Webinar is: Web conferencing used to conduct live [meetings](#) or [presentations](#) via the [Internet](#).

Now you are saying why do I care about this webinar information? The answer is that AAUW TX will be offering a post Association Convention webinar on Saturday July 25th at 10:00 a.m., Central Daylight Time. The topic will be all of the new and exciting information that was discussed and approved in St Louis.

In this web conference, each participant (one branch officer,

the branch board or the entire branch) sits at one [computer](#) and is connected to other participants via the internet. We will have a presentation that will be shown via the computer. You will also need a speakerphone (one on a cell phone will work; a home phone may be better for a large group) for the audio portion of the presentation. At the end of the meeting you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

As we get closer to the time the Branch President will receive the information on where to call for the audio connection and the link for the presentation. I hope that you will all plan on attending and will enjoy the cost and time savings of joining this meeting from the comfort of your own home

Highlights of AAUW Texas Board of Directors Meeting

By Dusky Wells, AAUW Texas Secretary

The 2008-2010 AAUW Texas Board of Directors held its third meeting of the biennium in Austin on February 28 – March 1, 2009. Between meetings, the board conducts business by email. The Board of Directors voted:

- To defer discussion of Site Selection Committee until after Association Convention in June 2009.
- To purchase and distribute a star pin to all individuals

who donate \$100 or more to the Ann Richards American Fellowship.

The board received an update from Shirley Breeze, Southwest Regional Director, regarding the Association Convention and the Association state and branch scholarship clearing house. She also congratulated Texas for participating in the membership pilot program, which allows electronic dues payment.

The board received an update on Association Bylaws from Jackie Littleton, Association Director-at-Large,

who is from the Tyler Branch. Jackie presented "Breaking through Barriers" for women and girls. This power point presentation, both a long and short version, is on Association website and discusses the upcoming changes to Association bylaws.

These changes, which are the result of a process that began more than three years ago, will be voted on by the membership at Association convention. As part of this process, the Association looked at its programs and retained only those that support the mission or value statement.