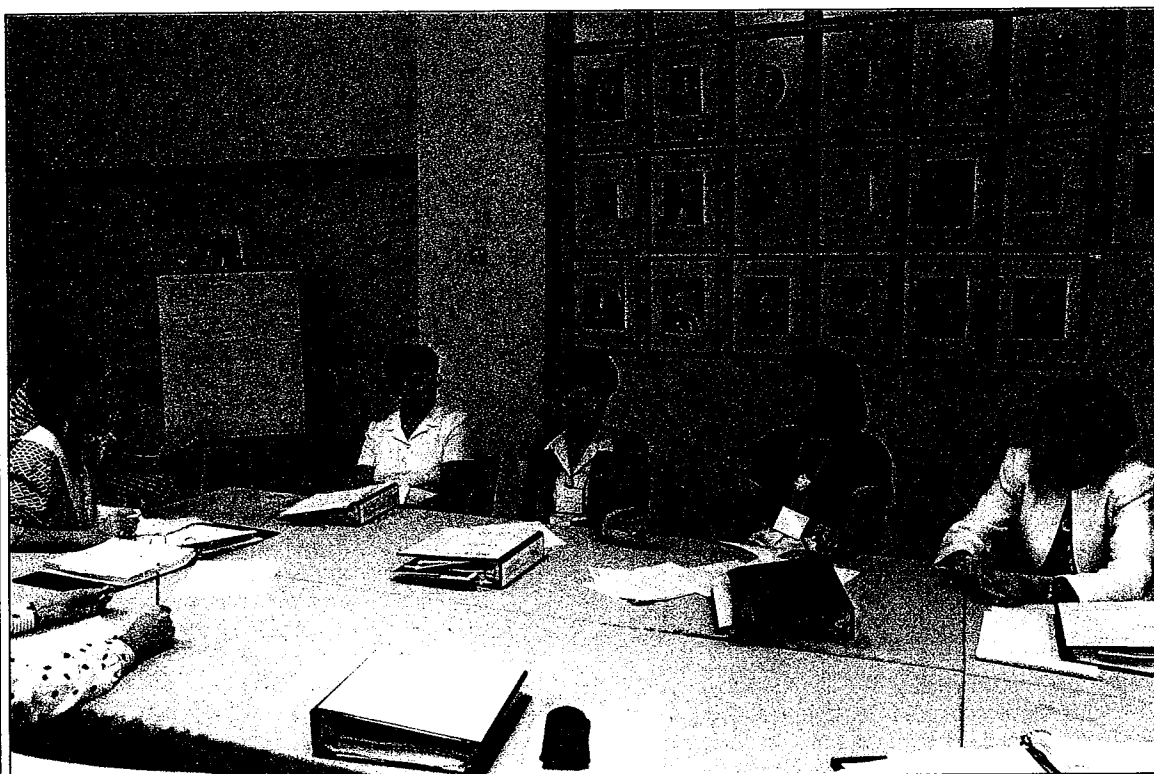


# WOMEN'S WORK/WOMEN'S WORTH

## MANY WAYS TO LEAD



AAUW, TOO,  
MUST ADAPT TO THE  
NEW REALITIES OF  
WOMEN'S LIVES.

*"AAUW encourages its branches and divisions to explore organizational structures which make the most effective use of the time, talents, energies, and resources of leader members and to report the results of such explorations to the Association."*

**T**HIS RESOLUTION, PASSED BY DELEGATES TO AAUW'S 34th Biennial Convention in June 1987, sprang not from an abstract committee exercise, but from the needs and aspirations of women and their families heard from kitchens, offices, day-care centers, and classrooms nationwide.

This year, the Census Bureau released a landmark figure: more than 50 percent of women with children under one year of age are in the paid work force. Overall, women's labor force participation has more than dou-

*(Continued on next page)*

bled since 1940. The overwhelming majority of women who work outside the home do so because they have to—to house, feed, and educate their families and themselves.

Force Chair Dorcas Doering said, "It's time to put on our rose-colored glasses and stroll on the sunny side of the street to dare, dream, and finally design new operational struc-

#### BYLAWS: ELIXIR OR EXCUSE?

"It's terrible that the first thing a group of people who want to get something done think they have to do, is write bylaws," said Association Parliamentarian Eleanor "Coco" Siewert when she addressed the CDP last June. "That's the worst thing you can do. Instead, begin with a list of what you want to do—to get a pay equity bill passed, improve teens' awareness of life options, raise funds for EFP—and then worry about structure."

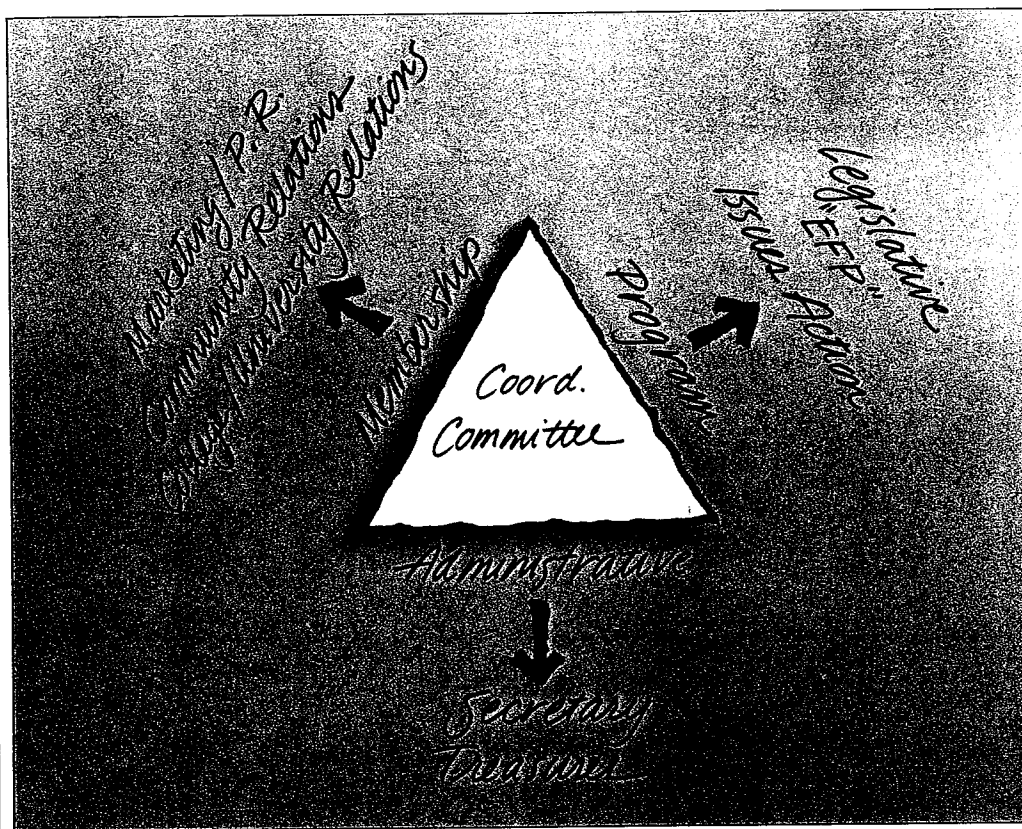
The AAUW Bylaws (from which all branch bylaws derive) do tend to be cumbersome and confusing, especially for new leaders. The Association Bylaws Committee has recommended a resolution calling for a full revision of the Association Bylaws to provide a basic framework which will still support branch flexibility and effectiveness. But you need not wait for more streamlined Association Bylaws to rethink structure. "I heartily encourage all branches to experiment with leadership alternatives that will structure AAUW to do what we want it to," said Siewert.

Even the unnecessarily detailed portions of bylaws can sometimes be interpreted to allow more flexibility—for example, by sharing responsibilities and combining offices. In addition, as several division presidents pointed out during the CDP Future Planning Sessions, new procedures or structures do not necessarily require bylaws amendments. Two more flexible options—if branch members feel uncomfortable without something in writing—are statements of policy or procedure.

If in reconfiguring your branch's leadership structure you need assistance with a bylaws-related matter, please contact Coco Siewert, 576 Abbey Road, Birmingham, MI 48009.

#### WORK IT OUT TOGETHER

The prime reasons for rethinking a branch's leadership structure are members' changing needs, so be sure to involve each and every member in the process. Begin by reprint-



#### MANY BRANCHES ARE ALREADY LED BY "COORDINATING COMMITTEES."

Over the past three decades, as these changes in women's lives have evolved into socioeconomic facts of American life, AAUW has pressed business, academia, and other sectors of society to adapt to them creatively and productively with initiatives such as flexitime, family leave, and dependent care. If AAUW is to enter the 21st century as a viable, effective organization, it too will have to adapt.

More than anything, this will require greater flexibility in branch and division structures, so members can both contribute to and benefit from AAUW as their time, resources, and energies allow. As Association *Women's Work/Women's Worth* Task

forces for AAUW that address the realities of women's lives today."

Last June, at its Future Planning Sessions, the Conference of Division Presidents (CDP) filled a day's worth of newsprint with ideas for alternative branch and division organizational structures. This Action Focus, an extension of Association-division-branch partnerships on these initiatives, is the result. Central features are a clip-exercise to help your members determine the best branch structure for *their* needs and a clip-article for your branch bulletin to introduce possibilities for change. Diagrams of just a few of these possibilities are included—along with examples of successful innovative leadership structures already being piloted—to spark members' creativity. Although this Action Focus is geared primarily for branch use, it is almost entirely applicable to divisions.

## C L I P - A R T I C L E

## MANY WAYS TO LEAD

*"AAUW encourages its branches and divisions to explore organizational structures which make the most effective use of the time, talents, energies, and resources of leader members and to report the results of such explorations to the Association."*

This resolution, passed by delegates to AAUW's 34th Biennial Convention in June 1987, sprang not from an abstract committee exercise, but from the needs and aspirations of women and families like ours, heard from kitchens, offices, day-care centers, and classrooms nationwide.

Over the past three decades, as changes in women's lives have evolved into socioeconomic facts of American life, AAUW has pushed business, academia, and other sectors of society to adapt creatively and productively to them with initiatives such as flexitime, family leave, and dependent care. If AAUW—and our branch—is to enter the 21st century a viable, effective organization, we too will have to adapt.

More than anything, this will require greater flexibility in branch structures, so all members can both contribute to and benefit from AAUW as their time, talents, resources, and energies allow. Last June, at its Future Planning Sessions, the Conference of Division Presidents (CDP) filled a day's worth of newsprint with ideas for alternative branch and division organizational structures. At our next branch meeting, we will focus on "From Dream to Reality," an adaptation of the small-group exercise they used to arrive at those ideas. Through the exercise we will examine how to organize the branch to make the most effective use of our member resources, the barriers to reorganization and how to overcome them, how our division can help us, and how we can help our division, to reorganize leadership structures, and which of our ideas can be implemented immediately.

The goal of the exercise will be to come up with as many workable leadership alternatives—with input from as many different perspectives—as possible, so your attendance will be especially critical.

As we experiment with new ways of leading our branch, we will not be alone. The Los Alamos (NM) Branch is one of many that will be trying out a new leadership structure in 1988-89. "Last year, members didn't feel as involved or fulfilled as they had in the past," said 'president where necessary' Georgia Fritz, "so we decided to try a coordinating council model. Many of our members have some background with this model as members of Los Alamos Women in Science, which is run in a similar way."

Last April, the branch decided by consensus, as a "committee of the whole," to amend its bylaws in order to try the coordinating council model for the next two years. At the end of that period, the branch will evaluate the model and decide how to proceed. "We hope that this pilot project will encourage more members to get involved, and attract some new, younger members as well," said Fritz, who is acting chair of the nine-leader coordinating council. "Since very few of us have the time necessary to devote to certain big offices—such as program or membership vice president—some of those duties will probably be shared. We're already rotating responsibility for taking minutes."

The branch will bring the results of its first year of coordinating committee management to AAUW's 35th Biennial Convention in Washington, DC, June 24-28. By that time, our branch should also be moving toward a leadership structure that will maximize your time and energies—and reward them in ways most meaningful to you.

*Clip or adapt for reproduction in your branch bulletin.*

ing the clip-article provided on this page in your branch bulletin. It will introduce members to the importance of seeking branch leadership alternatives and let them know that their input will be sought at the next branch meeting. Plan to focus that meeting on the clip-exercise provided on page 11, an adapted version of the one performed by division presidents at the CDP Future Planning Sessions in June.

Changes in branch leadership structures call for a high level of trust, a willingness to take risks, and an awareness of what members bring to and need from the organization. Therefore, it might be a good idea to survey branch members before the meeting to gather information that could be distributed to participants along with the clip-exercise. Use the survey to find out how many members are available for how much time per week or month. Keep it simple—don't get into dollars or even skills.

This survey doesn't have to be a traditional survey of the entire branch: save time and effort by conducting a "focus group." Focus groups, a widely used market-research mechanism, involve interviewing six to ten people who are representative of a target audience in an informal group setting. In conducting a focus group on branch member resources, gather a group of members who are representative of the branch's membership in terms of age, profession, geography, and dependent care responsibilities, and have them respond to questions about their availability and interests.

And what about the needs and resources of prospective members? As Doering pointed out, "A 1987 profile on volunteering funded by J.C. Penney revealed that short-term projects are the most important incentive for people to become volunteers. Non-volunteers between the ages of 25-49 said they would be interested in volunteer activities in which their families could participate, and that low-cost day care would also be an incentive." These findings can be readily applied to most branches'

**TO BE MORE**

**EFFECTIVE,**

**WE MUST**

**BECOME MORE**

**FLEXIBLE.**

organization and implementation of programs and projects.

At the beginning of the branch meeting devoted to the clip-exercise, distribute photocopies of the exercise and the results of your focus group survey. Arrange the attendees into several small groups (as small as two and as large as 10 per group, depending on branch size). Each group should choose a facilitator and a recorder to report the group's results to the entire branch after each brainstorming session. Ask the groups to spend 10 minutes brainstorming answers to each of the questions posed. Remember to supply each group with newsprint and a magic marker.

## BEGIN WITH WHAT

### THE BRANCH WANTS

#### TO ACHIEVE, THEN

#### WORRY ABOUT

#### STRUCTURE.

### MODEL OPTIONS

The goal of the clip-exercise is to come up with as many workable branch leadership alternatives as possible, so don't cramp members' creativity by presenting preconceived structures for their consideration. Once the groups have reported their leadership models to the entire group—or if they are really having trouble getting off the ground—you might want to display some of the models provided in this Action Focus, although chances are your members already will have thought of them! Or you may want to refer to these models later on in refining those proposed by your members.

However the branch chooses to use or refer to these models, remember that they are intended only as MODELS. The composition of and labels applied to the parts of each model, for example, are intended merely as shorthand for a wealth of possibilities. *Only you and your members can devise a leadership structure that will be just right for your branch.*

The model on page 8 is one variation of the "coordinating committee" or "core group" structure many branches are already using. In this model, a core group of leaders who have time for ongoing responsibilities organize and allocate projects and tasks to other members who are in-

terested in participating more discretely, without having to worry about the what, where, why, and who. By including leaders of three or more major areas on the coordinating committee—in this case administration, membership, and program—this model ensures consideration and integration of all branch priorities.

The "task force" model provided on page 12 is the apotheosis of goal-oriented structures. By minimizing the administrative responsibilities of all but a few leaders, this set-up maximizes the time and energy most leaders and members can devote to direct action. Task forces can be organized for "standing" efforts such as EFP fund-raising, or short-term projects such as passage of a particular piece of legislation.

The task force model is also remarkable for its use of titles such as "human resources coordinator," "community relations coordinator," and "finance coordinator," which signify new ways of defining traditional areas of responsibility. The human resources coordinator, for example, might be made responsible for task forces on recruitment, retention, members skills inventory, and leadership development; the community relations coordinator for directing media efforts, college/university relations, and networking with other groups; the finance coordinator for facilitating EFP fund-raising as well as conducting budget management and dues collection; and the program/policy coordinator for overseeing this year's branch-division-Association partnerships initiatives.

The "skills teams" model presented on page 13, which was devised at the CDP Future Planning Sessions, demonstrates how teams of members possessing different skills and talents can complement each other. The action skills team, for example, cannot advance branch goals in areas such as legislation, EFP fund-raising, or *Promoting Individual Liberties* without the support of the system skills team's maintenance of membership and financial records and efforts on scheduling and coordination. The membership and marketing skills team's efforts—such

as recruitment, publication of the branch bulletin, and public relations—depend on and enhance the quality of programs executed by the action skills team and the efficient operation of the branch as administered by the system skills team. Structures dependent on team configurations tend to offer the greatest flexibility.

### EXPERIMENT TO LEARN

Once branch members have sketched a variety of models, ask them to evaluate the pros and cons of each and choose one or two models with which the branch might want to experiment in the coming year. Try to make decisions by means of consensus (see "Resources" on page 14). Consensus takes more time up front but probably is more efficient in the long run because of the support it engenders. Since all members support the final decision, there is a lower chance of sabotage or lack of follow-through on their part.

Flexibility and responsiveness are key in more ways than one! Use charts, diagrams, and "Post-its" (or other moveable materials) as you progress through the early stages of conceptualization. Remember that the branch can experiment with more than one new leadership model through project management. In other words, it can experiment with one model for managing the branch as a whole (i.e., organizing branch board functions), and with a different model to manage legislative program activities, EFP fund-raising, or a project such as Time to Care.

The Los Alamos (NM) Branch is one of many that will be experimenting with a new leadership structure in 1988-89. "Last year, members didn't feel as involved or fulfilled as they had in the past," said 'president where necessary' Georgia Fritz, "so we decided to try a coordinating council model. Many of our members have some background with this model as members of Los Alamos Women in Science, which is run in a similar way."

(Continued on page 12)

## FROM DREAM TO REALITY

*Divide your branch into several small groups and ask them to spend 10 minutes brainstorming answers to each of the following questions. Each group should choose a facilitator and a recorder who will report the results to the entire branch after each brainstorming session. Remember to supply each group with newsprint and a magic marker.*

*The numbers of members and hours available are typical of a medium size branch. If your branch has more than 150 members, double these numbers; if it has fewer than 50 members, halve them.*

Imagine we are restructuring our branch to carry out its current mission and purposes. The branch president has recruited four members to the board who are willing to give 12 hours a month to AAUW for the coming year. Eight other members have offered the branch eight hours a month, and 15 are willing to give five hours, but some in this later group have requested involvement in limited projects only. The remaining members have agreed to two or fewer hours. All the skills that we need are present in the total group.

Remember, we want our membership to include a cross-section of our community, and therefore want our leadership structure to be flexible so members can assume various roles as their needs, interests, skills, and time allow. We may sense that our administrative function may reside in, for example, a coordinating committee or core group rather than a conventional board of directors.

- 1.** *How will we organize the branch to most effectively accomplish its goals? Try to devise two or three alternative leadership models.*
- 2.** *What are the barriers to initiating this model? How can we overcome them?*
- 3.** *How can the branch encourage members to embrace new leadership structures and strategies? Try to devise at least five ideas.*
- 4.** *How can branches help our division—and our division, its branches—to implement new leadership structures? Try to come up with at least five strategies.*
- 5.** *Which of these ideas can be implemented immediately in our branch or division?*

### Some tips to keep in mind:

- Focus on function rather than structure. Concentrate on goals rather than the organizational chart we may think we need to achieve them.
- Ask “What can we do for our members?” rather than “What can our members do for AAUW?”
- Focus on job content rather than job descriptions or titles.
- Consider “shared” or “rotating” leadership models, as well as consensus decision-making.
- Be open to organizing members into working groups by geographic location (home or office), professional interests, or skills.
- Don’t worry about the bylaws.

*Clip and use for a branch program.*

Last April, the branch decided by consensus, as a "committee of the whole," to amend its bylaws in order to try the coordinating council model for the next two years. At the end

As your branch experiments with new leadership structures, keep in mind the following points formulated during the CDP Future Planning Sessions.

you; learn from them. As Thomas Edison said, "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration."

#### SHARE THE WEALTH

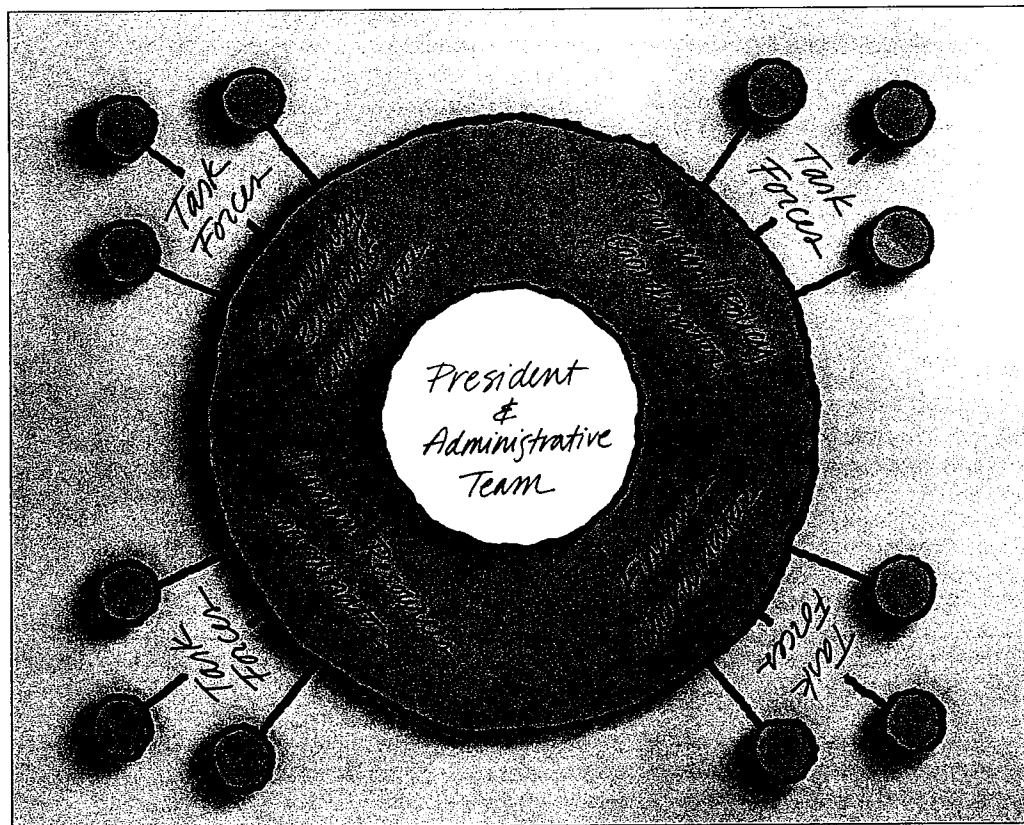
No matter how the branch's leadership structure turns out, chances are it can be enhanced by several innovative approaches to organizing and delegating responsibilities.

Rotate functions to keep tasks manageable and offer members a broad range of experiences. In 1986-87 the Victor (NY) Branch decided to experiment with round-robin production of its *Bulletin*. At the branch's September meeting that year, Coordinating Editor Donna Biviano asked for two different members to volunteer to produce each issue; that night, 16 members—six of whom were new—signed up.

For each issue Biviano planned the content, gathered the copy and graphic materials, and did a layout. She sent these, with instructions and a copy of the previous issue, to the member who had volunteered to retype the articles and paste-up the final artwork for that issue. This member would then send the final artwork to a third member, who had volunteered to duplicate and mail the *Bulletin*.

It may sound complicated, but for the 40-member Victor Branch round-robin production was wildly successful. "It gave new members a chance to get involved without being overwhelmed because it gave them something manageable to do, while providing them an excellent AAUW orientation. Members—new and old—who don't usually interact got to know and enjoy each other by working together," Biviano said.

This rotation of responsibilities also helped to develop leaders. "We always talk about leadership development and training, but with this project we really increased our members' skills and interest," Biviano said. In fact, the 1988-89 editor, Diana Campbell, is one of those who began as a part-time volunteer. "I never would have become editor of the bulletin if I hadn't had the



**TASK-FORCE STRUCTURES** of that period, the branch will evaluate the model and decide how to proceed. "We hope that this pilot project will encourage more members to get involved, and attract some new, younger members as well," said Fritz, who is acting chair of the nine-leader coordinating council. "Since very few of us have the time necessary to devote to certain big offices—such as program or membership vice president—some of those duties will probably be shared. We're already rotating responsibility for taking minutes."

**MAXIMIZE TIME AND ENERGY FOR ACTION.** The branch will bring the results of its first year of coordinating committee management to AAUW's 35th Biennial Convention in Washington, DC, June 24-28.

- Identify goals and structure the branch's pursuit of them in accordance with available resources. Draw an organizational chart only after you have structured positions and responsibilities to achieve goals (including, most notably, meeting members' needs).
- If the branch's resources are fairly limited, concentrate on—and prioritize—a few realistic goals. If resources are more plentiful, match member time and skills to jobs in pursuit of multiple goals.
- Don't do too much too fast. Be realistic about which changes can be implemented immediately, and which may have to evolve over time. Begin by restructuring leadership models for a particular project or goal and fine-tune as you go along. Publicize pilot structures through the branch bulletin, and invite member comment. Don't let mistakes discourage



opportunity to test the waters by doing aspects of it, a month here and a month there," said Campbell.

Job-sharing is another approach that has enabled many branches to benefit from the skills and expertise of members who would otherwise be reluctant to take on leadership roles. It is especially helpful for leaders who work both in the home and the paid work force. "I'm a relatively new member to AAUW," said Honolulu (HI) Branch EFP co-Chair Linda Nishigaya, "and I never would have volunteered to hold a branch office this early on if I hadn't been able to share it. Like many of our members, I'm busy with a lot of other things as well, and sharing an office literally cuts the work in half."

Job-sharing can involve leaders serving as "co" leaders, or one member serving as an "assistant" leader. Whichever style is used, the responsibilities and accountability of the positions should be defined clearly. Successful job-sharing seems to require compatibility, good communication, an understanding that effectiveness depends on both partners' performances, flexibility, trust (or lack of competition), and an ability to exchange constructive criticism.

By all accounts, working partnerships also allow more complete coverage (because two people can be in two places at once) and wiser decisions (because two heads are better than one). "Jane Asher, my co-chair, knows a whole network of people inside and outside the branch different from my network," said Nishigaya, "so between us we have double the resources when it comes to getting things done. We had a great time running the EFP Boutique at the Mountain-Pacific Regional Conference, which was held in Honolulu this summer."

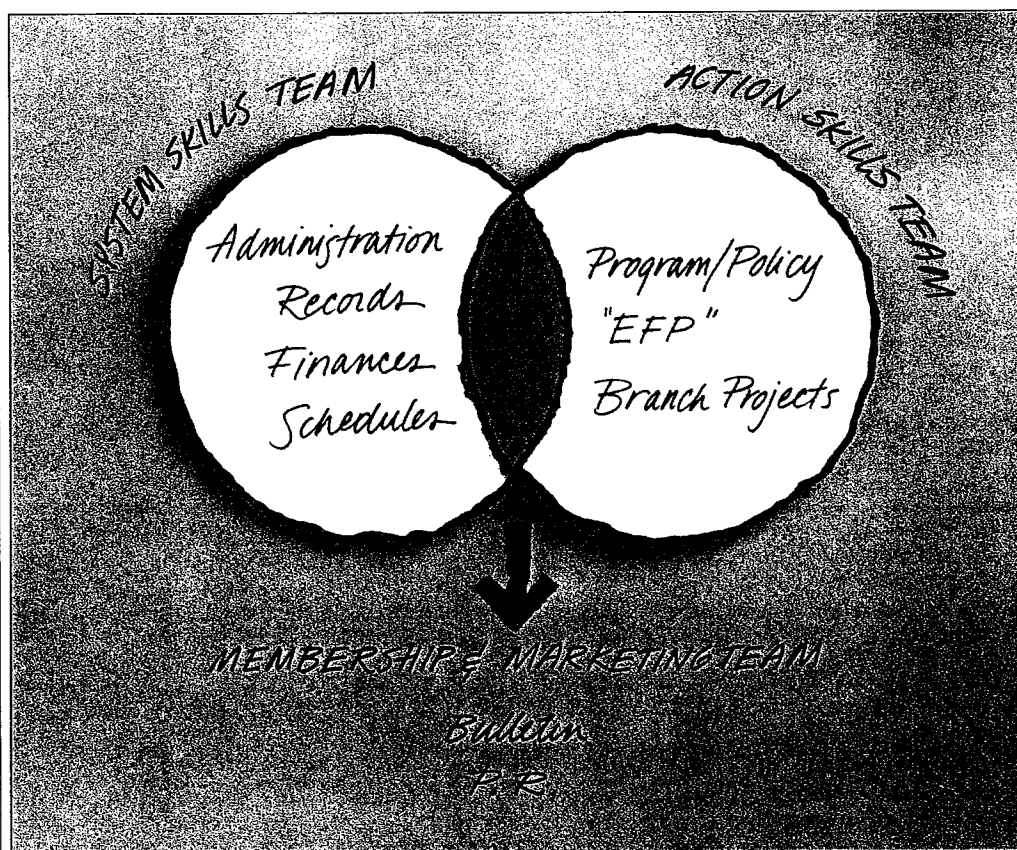
While some branches have streamlined their operations by choosing not to fill certain traditional branch offices, sharing them, or subsuming them under other positions, others are beginning to create new ways to handle new priorities and opportunities.

"We have just appointed a branch

data processing chair and would like to know if and how other branches may have automated branch functions," wrote McLean Area (VA) Branch co-President Carolyn Kaye. "We envision computerizing our membership files and analysis, interest inventories, volunteer availability, bulletin mailings, and treasurer's files." If your branch is attempting some-

during them. Things like publishing meeting minutes in the branch bulletin or handling them through a minutes reading committee, instead of reading them at the beginning of every meeting.

Meetings should make sense, not noise. Once the branch bulletin becomes the major communicator of branch business information, meet-



thing similar, McLean Area members would like to compare notes. Please contact Carolyn Kaye, 1330 Potomac School Road, McLean, VA 22101; 703/790-8427.

#### MEET TO ACT

Even when a branch makes wholesale structural changes, little things can make a big difference. Things like establishing telephone trees. Things like circulating items on a clip-board at meetings, instead of taking up valuable time to announce them. Things like asking members to brainstorm and collect ideas before meetings, instead of brainstorming from scratch

ings can be focused on member contact and program content. Try to concentrate branch meetings on action planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Schedule meetings flexibly in terms of frequency, length, purpose, and timing. Many branches schedule meetings in conjunction with meal-times or project tasks. In 1982, then Grand Island (NE) Branch President Arlene Rea began to schedule board meetings for 5:00 to 6:00 on weekday evenings, so branch leaders

#### LEADERSHIP MODELS

DEPENDENT ON TEAM

CONFIGURATIONS

OFFER GREATER

FLEXIBILITY

## RESOURCES

**"Skills at a Glance" Packet.** This packet, which includes items on consensus decision-making, skills assessment, problem-solving, and conflict management, was distributed to all members who participated in Partnerships Training at the 1988 AAUW Regional Conferences. Please contact members in your branch or division who attended.

***Building United Judgment: Handbook for Consensus Decision-Making***, by Michel Avery, et al. Madison: Center for Conflict Resolution. \$8.95 plus \$1.50 for shipping from New Society Publishers, P.O. Box 582, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. 1981.

***Leadership for Change: Toward a Feminist Model***. \$3.45 plus \$1.50 for shipping from New Society Publishers, P.O. Box 582, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. 1985.

***Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills***, by David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson. \$28.00. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1987.

***Making Meetings Work***, by Leland P. Bradford. \$19.95 plus \$3.50 for shipping (plus 6.5% sales tax for CA residents) from University Associates, Inc., 8517 Production Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121; 619/578-5900. 1976.

***Moving Up! Women and Leadership***, by Lois B. Hart. \$13.95. Boulder, CO: Leadership Dynamics, 1981.

***Process Politics: A Guide for Group Leaders***, by Eileen Guthrie and Warren Sam Miller. \$12.95 plus \$3.50 for shipping (plus 6.5% sales tax for CA residents) from University Associates, Inc., 8517 Production Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121; 619/578-5900. 1981.

***Working Together: A Manual to Help Groups Work More Effectively***, by Bob Biagi. \$7.00 plus \$2.25 for shipping from Citizen Involvement Training Project, Furcolo Hall, Room 225, University of Massachusetts—Amherst, Amherst MA, 01003; 413/545-2038. 1978.

could arrive at the meeting directly from work and still have most of the evening left after adjournment. "The new meeting schedule improved attendance and participation considerably," said Rea, who is now Nebraska Division president. "It was particularly helpful to those of us with careers and families, and still is."

### FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

In April, branch presidents will receive the 1989-90 Branch Officer Report Form (due June 1, 1989) which determines the recipients of Association leadership mailings. Same old bureaucratic stuff, right? Wrong.

For the first time, the Branch Officer Report Form will be geared to help branches implement and reinforce innovations in leadership structures and roles. The only offices stipulated on the form will be the seven branch board members specified in the AAUW Bylaws: president, membership vice president, program vice president, EFP chair, legislative program chair, secretary, and treasurer (or secretary/treasurer). The form will include another nine slots which will not be reserved for any particular office, so that branches can designate leaders in accord with their needs and structure. So, say goodbye to scrambling around to fill offices on the form that bear no relation to branch priorities; say farewell to guilt over not being able to force branch activities and members into the traditional mold.

For further information and assistance—or, better yet, to let us know about your branch's leadership innovations so we can share them with others—please contact Bonnie J. Berger, Staff Associate, AAUW Program and Policy Department, 2401 Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20037; 202/785-7784.

*This Action Focus was prepared by Lauren Fishbein, Senior Editor, under the direction of Association Women's Work/Women's Worth Task Force Chair Dorcas Doering, and Ann Chipley, Director, and Bonnie J. Berger, Staff Associate, Program and Policy Department.*

### FOR THE

FIRST TIME,  
BRANCH OFFICER

REPORT FORMS  
WILL REINFORCE

LEADERSHIP  
INNOVATIONS.