



**Minutes of the California Online Branch
Board Zoom Conference Call Meeting**
January 4, 2022

Branch Established October 2, 2001

Attendance:

Jean Simutis, Treasurer
Gail Swain, Program VP
Bev Van Citters, Membership VP
Harriet Tower, AAUW Funds VP and Book Interest Group Chair
Sandy Kirkpatrick, Communications Chair
Cathy Foxhoven, Speech Trek Coordinator and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Chair
Sandi Gabe, Technology Interest Group Chair
Wendy Levine, Public Policy Committee Chair

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Shelley Mitchell.

Bev Van Citters announced the AAUW OR Online branch has extended an invitation for our branch board members to participate in their January 11 program featuring AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell. Several board members expressed their intention to do so.

Interest Group Reports – all groups are meeting using the branch Zoom account.

- Harriet Tower reported that the Book group has met once in the fall and plans to begin monthly meetings this month. Noting that the group discussion is best if the size remains small, it was suggested that if more branch members wish to join and the size becomes unmanageable, newer group members would be asked to create a 2nd group, with the possibility of one group being for fiction readers and another for non-fiction. *[Cathy Foxhoven joined the meeting at this point.]*
- Wendy Levine reported the Public Policy group held a planning meeting in October, and monthly meetings since then: one focusing on abortion rights led by Sandy Kirkpatrick in November, and one on the impact of the lack of women in medical research led by Kristina Rueckert in December. *[Jean Simutis joined the meeting at this point.]*
- Sandi Gabe reported the Technology group has an actively engaged group that meets monthly, covering topics such as Zoom and online surveys.

Minutes. Motion (Jean Simutis) to approve the Q2 board minutes was adopted.

Financial Report. Motion (Gail Swain) to approve the Q2 financial report was adopted.

Programs. Gail Swain reported on the Q1 program (email list discussion of the book “Caste”) and the Q2 program (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Zoom discussion). It was agreed the Q3 program would be the branch Speech Trek contest. Possible topics for the Q4 program were reproductive rights or the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. It was agreed that Gail could also ask branch members for topic and guest speaker recommendations for the Q4 program in the next newsletter.

Membership. Bev Van Citters reported we currently have 75 members. She noted the monthly “Meet and Greet” meetings have averaged 10 members, with 21 different members participating thus far. In response to member feedback, she is using different days (Thursdays or Fridays) and times (3 pm or 5:30 pm) throughout this year to see if having alternatives increases access for some members. By the end of the year she’ll have a better feel of how well that has worked.

Communications. Sandy Kirkpatrick discussed options for the branch’s currently unused private Facebook group that was originally created in 2019 for a program discussion platform. It was agreed to transition it into a private member social platform, renaming it “Member Connections,” and removing all program posts except the 2019 “Getting to Know You” posts. Branch members who have joined since then would be encouraged to visit and add their own comments to those threads, offering them a chance to get to know long-time members and vice-versa as they add their responses. Other posts could be added that are links to the videos Bev Van Citters has made to introduce members to the branch.

Sandi Gabe pointed out additions that could be made to the branch website, such as a link to our public Facebook group and a link to make a donation, and Gail Swain offered to communicate the changes/additions needed to our webmaster, Alice Labay. One of the additions will be a calendar widget. Now that we have interest groups and a branch social gathering meeting monthly rather than only quarterly programs to post on a calendar, all those events need to be sent to Alice by each of the appropriate interest group chairs and branch officers to load on the calendar.

It was noted the branch needs to update its logo to match the new color scheme of national AAUW’s logo. Since national AAUW has not yet created individual logos for states and branches, Bev Van Citters offered to use national’s logo to create a branch-specific logo for the branch to use on all communication platforms.

Dues. As the cost of the branch Zoom account was discussed, it was noted that if the board feels that a dues increase is needed, it would need to be decided by March in order to be embedded in AAUW’s renewal system to have the correct amount of dues collected. Sandy Kirkpatrick offered to verify the process for approving dues increase in the branch bylaws and will report back via the board email list where the discussion can continue.

AAUW Fund. Harriet Tower thanked Gail Swain, and Gail’s assistants Sandy Kirkpatrick and Jean Simutis, for stepping in to handle the close of the branch auction fundraiser when Harriet had surgery. Harriet noted the auction raised a similar amount to last year, but that it’s basically the same dozen or so members who donate items and offer the winning bids. It was also noted that our system of the winners paying AAUW directly does not meet AAUW Fund tax-deductible donation requirements (which state the donor has not received goods or services in return for their donation). It’s possible that the auction as a fundraiser has run its course, but if next year’s board decides to hold another one, they would need to have all winning bidders send their payments to the branch treasurer, who would then send a single check as a branch donation to AAUW Funds, which would mean a lot more work for the treasurer.

Harriet will write a newsletter article asking for members’ suggestions for a branch Named Gift Honoree, and will bring recommendations to the board to decide.

Bylaws/Policy. Sandy Kirkpatrick reported the bylaws committee will be holding one more meeting on January 17, with the hopes of completing the proposed bylaws amendments and revision of the branch policy to present to the board. She noted it was important to have the policy with job descriptions in place soon for the nominating committee to use as they seek candidates for next year's officers. Sandy agreed to write a newsletter article to inform the members of the work of the committee.

Speech Trek. Cathy Foxhoven reported 4-5 students from various parts of the state will be participating in the branch Speech Trek contest. It was agreed to hold the competition on Saturday, February 26, at 1 pm. Cathy noted that AAUW CA has changed the rules for the branch competition and now allows AAUW members to be judges. Gail Swain, Bev Van Citters, and Sandy Kirkpatrick agreed to be branch judges.

It was noted that the branch budget allows for a \$25 Amazon gift certificate to go to the winner of the branch Speech Trek contest. Shelley Mitchell offered to donate funds to the branch to provide gift certificates for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-place winners.

Nominating Committee. Bev Van Citters and Cathy Foxhoven were appointed as this year's nominating committee.

[Sandi Gabe and Wendy Levine left the meeting at this point.]

Branch Goals Review.

Goal #1: Actively advance the mission of AAUW

- Have at least one AAUW mission-based program per quarter—*On track to achieve.*
- Fundraise for the [AAUW Fund](#), averaging at least \$50/member in overall donations.—*Harriet Tower will check to see if we've achieve this.*
- Achieve AAUW 5-Star status—*It was agreed we could probably at best achieve 4 stars, but that we would aspire to at least that much.*

Goal #2: Grow, engage and actively promote retention of online branch membership.

- 5% membership growth (from 79 to at least 83 members) and a retention rate of 75% of new members—*Currently at 75 members, and Bev Van Citters will research and report the retention rate.*
- Survey membership annually on program and project preferences.—*This will be done in May.*
- Have at least 50% of members subscribe to at least one program.—*Achieved on the Q1 program with almost the entire branch subscribed to the program email list.*
- Provide monthly newsletter to keep members informed and engaged.—*Achieved to date; ongoing.*

Five-Star Status Review.

See attachment with notes on current status and plans.

Meeting adjourned 8:40 pm.

Signed,

Sandy Kirkpatrick

AAUW BRANCH 5 STAR PLANNING 2021-22

Criteria	Current State	Branch Plan	Responsible Party	Current Progress	Help Needed	Date Completed
Programs						
Appoint a Diversity Officer to lead diversity and inclusion planning on behalf of the branch with the support of the board. *Diversity Officer does not need to be a board member and does not require a change in bylaws.				Cathy Foxhoven appointed DEI Officer		August 2021
Host at least 4 mission-based programs that align with the AAUW national strategic plan. *At least 2 of your programs must have a diversity, equity, and inclusion focus and at least 1 must be in collaboration with 1 or more branches in your state.	First quarter, read and discussed book, "Caste." Second quarter, presentation on DEI, presented, recorded, and shared.	Seek collaboration for the ST program with branches near where contestants live.	Cathy will reach out to branches to collaborate with ST program.	DEI for Q1 and Q2 programs.		
Advancement (Only 3 required for a star in S)						
Raise \$30 per member in FY22* towards the Greatest Needs Fund.				Harriet T. will check and report to the board.		
Increase contributions to the Greatest Needs Fund by 25% from the last fiscal year.				Harriet will check and report to the board.		
Retain at least 90% of your branch membership.				Bev will check and report to the board.		
Increase the Legacy Circle Membership in your branch by 10% over previous fiscal year.				Sandy will check with Charmen Goehring to see how many LC members we had last year and this year.		

AAUW BRANCH 5 STAR PLANNING 2021-22

Criteria	Current State	Branch Plan	Responsible Party	Current Progress	Help Needed	Date Completed
Make a branch affiliate contribution to the Greatest Needs Fund in honor of AAUW's 140th Anniversary.		Didn't plan for this, so it didn't happen.				
Communications and External Relations						
All existing websites and social media accounts use current AAUW branding and have 3-5 postings with a DEI focus in FY22. (Use the DEI Toolkit)	Using old logo.	Will develop new branch logo and use it on all communication platforms. Add DEI posts to website and public FB group.	Bev will make logo. Sandy will ensure it's posted in all appropriate places. Cathy will submit DEI posts.			
Public Policy and Research						
Conduct an annual meeting with a member of Congress, Governor, or a member of their staff around a strategic plan focus. Branches in the same state can work in coalition to achieve this goal.		Not possible for our branch.				
Appoint a branch public policy chair who collaborates with the state public policy chair.				Wendy Levine appointed PP Chair		August 2021
Host at least one event where there is an opportunity to sign up for the Action Network.		Make this part of the Q4 branch program	Gail			
Governance and Sustainability						
Branch board institutes a succession plan to ensure new ideas and perspectives are included in future leadership.	No plan	No plan				
Branch board develops and uses a strategic plan that aligns with AAUW national strategic plan.	No branch strategic plan	No plan.				