

AAUW Ashland Branch Succession Plan

June, 2020

The members of AAUW Ashland Branch are serious about mission and organizational sustainability. We are also serious about planning for smooth and thoughtful transitions of leadership - as well as making sure to be prepared for unexpected departures. Adhering to the "Succession Plan Template" provided by AAUW, here are some methods and structural processes which assist us in succession planning:

Strategic Planning

At our annual Board Retreat in June, the Board and members in attendance review the roster and term limits of current Board officers and Committee Chairs as specified in the By-Laws.

With an eye to the immediate challenges and those that lie ahead, members confirm the match of the talents of our leaders to Branch strategic needs. They discuss any outstanding leadership vacancies--- aside from the current roster--- that may be needed to fulfill the strategic plan, upcoming projects and emerging needs. Some examples in the past have been in areas like finance, marketing, and fundraising.

Fostering Leadership Development

The Board officers, Committee Chairs and members of the Nominating Committee, as specified in the Branch By-Laws, are all responsible for leadership development. It is acknowledged that developing new leaders provides the Branch with a "deeper bench" for succession, while maintaining the wisdom of past Branch experience. Throughout the year, it is their practice to identify potential leadership and provide opportunities for those identified to expand their leadership skills. For example, a member will be invited to serve on a committee, encouraging her with support, mentoring and coaching. The hope would be that this experience would give her the confidence to take the lead when that opportunity arises.

We encourage "team positions". For example, the Ashland Branch has co-presidents. One is elected each year to the Board and one rotates off. Shared leadership eases the work, encourages innovative planning and ensures that there is always an experienced, capable leader ready to serve. It is the Branch's plan to increase the co-leadership model to other leadership positions.

Work of the Nominating Committee as Related to Succession Planning

The Nominating Committee, as directed in the Branch By-Laws, meets from January-April to fulfill their responsibilities and specifically begin the following tasks in relationship to succession planning:

- Determine upcoming term expirations and identify anticipated vacancies.
- Identify potential leaders from the current Board roster plus those members who have been encouraged to consider future leadership positions.
- Maintain a “Leadership Succession Grid”. (This is a roster with the title of each Branch Board member and each Committee Chair position, the name of the current office holder, the name of the office holder’s mentor, current term and potential successor. The Nomination Committee Chair is responsible for the Grid.)

Co-Presidents’ Responsibilities as Related to Succession Planning

The Co-Presidents are responsible to see that the following tasks are completed annually:

- Assign a mentor to each newly elected Board member and Committee Chair. This mentor will be a coach and a support, increasing the new officer’s understanding of the leadership role they have assumed.
- Conduct a simple process of Board and Committee Chair self-evaluation that will encourage thoughtful reflection on each one’s individual leadership roles and evaluate the effectiveness of current assignments.
- Conduct exit interviews with Board members and Committee Chairs leaving their positions in order to better understand the exiting member’s challenges, celebrate their successes and pass on their experiences to their successors

