

AAUW Birmingham Branch

Foundation Board and Branch Board
Strategic Planning Working Meeting

June 3, 2024

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AAUW Birmingham Branch Strategic Planning Working Meeting June 3, 2024

Preface

Julie Blair explained that to create effective Foundation and Branch-wide plans, we first need to look at what is the compelling vision for our members to be part of AAUW and to be active in supporting our mission of empowering and educating women and girls. A compelling vision is heartfelt, personal, and focused on a better future. Because it is about the hope of a better future, the vision is also what motivates new members to join AAUW. The vision reminds members that they share our Branch values and the vision helps grow members' trust and active involvement in the Branch.

The vision works the same for our combined Foundation and Branch Boards members at this June 3, 2024 meeting. Once we have a vision, we're more energized and positive to work together to both retain and grow our membership, support our Branch organization, and plan fundraiser activities. The vision brings us all together on the "same page."

To jumpstart the discussion, Julie created a rough draft vision from her work with Katie Weise on the Scholarship Fundraiser and passed out a diagram showing major vision enablers, key support tasks, and sources of income. Julie then led a creativity session to brainstorm improvements to help the Branch achieve the vision and not only produce the deliverables identified by Katie but address membership involvement and growth concerns.

Julie took all the attendees' new ideas, revised the vision diagram, and incorporated the creativity exercise "post it note" implementation ideas. Here is the team's latest work:

Strategic Planning Mission-Based Vision,

Mission-Based Enablers and Deliverables,

Key Support Tasks and lists of unfiltered "Implementation Ideas," and

Foundation and Branch Mission-Based 2024 – 2025 Calendar.

Note: References for Preface and Vision to be added later

AAUW Birmingham Branch Strategic Planning Team

The following team members were able to attend the June 3, 2024 planning session. Titles of individuals listed are for their positions in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

AAUW Birmingham Branch Foundation Board

President - Katie Weise
Treasurer - Cindi Hopkins
Recording Secretary and Director - Julie Blair
Director - Christine Dagenais
Director - Michele Wogaman

AAUW Birmingham Branch Board

President, Jean Ivory
Treasurer, Susan Wheatley
Dues Treasurer and Electronic Communications – Sharon McKenna
AAUW Funds - Sally Doty
Scholarship Representative LTU, Walsh, OCC, Pontiac High School - Eileen Hitz
Scholarship Representative OCC, Bloomfield Hills HS - Patty Beaujon

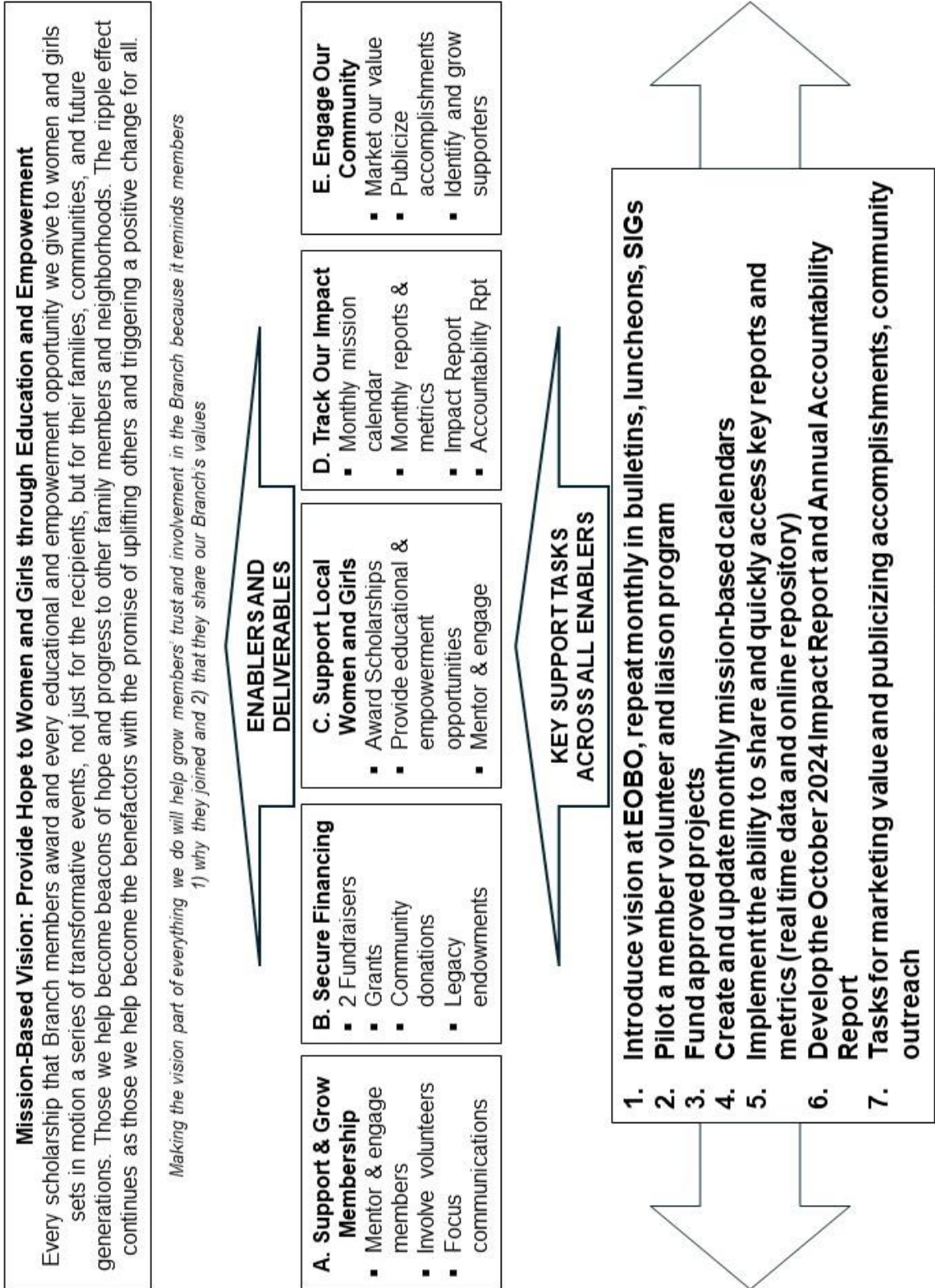
Key Invited Members

Former Foundation Director and Former Branch Treasurer - Nancy O'Connor
External Consultant on Legacy Endowment Giving - Joan Hanpeter

Unable to attend

Foundation Director - Jody Kuhn
Branch Board Scholarship Representative Birmingham Scholar - Cathy Hurley
Branch Board Bulletin - Patty Orlowski

AAUW Birmingham Branch Strategic Plan Graphic



Julie Blair July 11, 2024

AAUW Birmingham Branch Mission-Based Vision

Provide Hope to Women and Girls through Empowerment and Education

Every scholarship that our Branch members award and every educational opportunity we give to women and girls sets in motion a series of transformative events, not just for the recipients, but for their families, communities, and future generations. Those we help become beacons of hope and progress to other family members and neighborhoods. The ripple effect continues as those we help become the benefactors with the promise of uplifting others and triggering a positive change for all.

Mission-Based Vision Enablers and Deliverables

In order to achieve our vision, we need the following enabling activities and deliverables to be ongoing and robust. Each of these is explained in more detail on the following pages.

A. Support and Grow Membership

- a. Mentor and engage members
- b. Involve volunteers
- c. Focus communications

B. Secure Financing

- a. Conduct two member fundraisers per fiscal year
- b. Apply for grants
- c. Seek community donations
- d. Secure legacy endowments

C. Support Local Woman and Girls

- a. Award fiscal year scholarships
- b. Develop empowerment and educational opportunities
- c. Mentor and engage women and girls

D. Track Our Impact

- a. Monthly mission calendar
- b. Monthly reports & metrics
- c. Publish October Impact Report
- d. Develop fiscal year Accountability Report

E. Engage Our Community

- a. Market our value
- b. Publicize Foundation and Branch accomplishments
- c. Identify and grow community supporters

Key Tasks Supporting All Enablers and Deliverables

For this vision and our mission to be valued and supported by our Branch members, the planning team identified Key Support Tasks and Implementation Considerations. Here is a short overview of the Key Tasks. The next section, Implementation Considerations, is where more details of the Key Tasks are given as well as lists of “unfiltered” task implementation ideas brainstormed at the June 3 meeting.

1. Introduce Mission-Based Vision at EOBO, repeat monthly in bulletins, luncheons, and SIGs

Start engaging members by introducing the mission-based vision and discussing in as many ways as possible throughout the year. This forms the basis of both mentoring members, engaging members as volunteers, inspiring members to support fundraisers, and inspiring members to help track our impact. Focused communications then spread the word about the mission-based accomplishments of our Branch and may help to grow membership.

2. Pilot a member volunteer and liaison program

Getting involved in volunteer programs builds community among our members, increases their trust in our organization, and contributes to attracting new members. Mentoring high school or college scholarship recipients could encourage them to stay in school but also attract new student Branch members. Community involvement is also a major accomplishment required in grant writing and successful fundraising.

3. Fund approved projects

To secure the Branch’s future and support all our empowerment and engagement efforts, Foundation fundraising needs to include a combination of near term, mid-term, and long-term sources of revenue. Near term includes our current twice/yearly member fundraisers and small amounts donated for memorials, tributes, eBay sales, and bank interest. Mid-term includes seeking out and applying for grants, educating members on tax favorable RMD donations, and soliciting donations from the community. Long-term revenue comes from establishing legacy endowment funds and other legacy bequests.

4. Create and update monthly Branch Mission-Based Calendar

The calendar published in the Branch monthly bulletins is for Study and Interest Groups – the social part of our member engagement. A Branch mission-based calendar is needed to ensure that Key Tasks are scheduled and accomplished. The mission calendar is what our organization leaders will use to track the progress of tasks, enablers, and ensure that we produce critical deliverables. Members should also be made aware of the mission calendar so they know when two fundraisers and when other mission-based activities are scheduled to let members see the “big picture” and get prepared and ready for these requests.

5. Implement the ability to share and quickly access key reports and metrics (real time data and online repository)

A critical task supporting Branch management and ensuring deliverables are met is to have key reports and metrics easily and quickly available in a shareable online repository. The repository allows us to collect data once and reuse it for a variety of purposes. Examples include collecting both words and metrics needed to manage mission-based projects, providing essential words and metrics for the annual Impact Report and a new Annual Accountability Report, and collect data needed for publicity, marketing, and grant writing. Note that the same data can also be reused to help attract new members, support fundraising, inspire member volunteers, engage our community, and even be a source of information for our monthly Branch Bulletins and the Branch Annual Report.

6. Develop the October 2024 Impact Report and Annual Accountability Report

The October 2023 Impact Report needs to be updated and published as the October 2024 Impact Report. A new larger Annual Accountability Report needs to be designed and the types of required words and metrics need to be identified. Both of these reports are used for engaging members, fundraising, publicity, marketing, grant writing, and attracting new members.

7. Tasks for marketing value and publicizing accomplishments, community outreach

To engage our community, we need specifics that can be used in newspaper or online articles promoting the work of our Branch. Similar to the work of Key Task 6 above, the types of words and metrics need to be identified to be able to approach and involve community people.

Key Support Tasks – Details and Implementation Considerations

For this vision (or some improved version) and our mission to be valued and supported by members, the team brainstormed implementation considerations for the Key Tasks:

1. Introduce Mission-Based Vision at EOBO, repeat monthly in bulletins, luncheons, and SIGs

- a. For general Branch planning about repeating the message:
The point is not to repeat the same vision words but spend time at each gathering pointing out how the Foundation and Branch activities support the vision and asking members to give examples, say what they are proud of, what are their ideas – then report this in the bulletin and communications.
- b. For Jean Ivory's opening slides and remarks at EOBO:
Jean Ivory suggested a new "speed dating" format for EOBO in which current and prospective members move among tables to learn about mission-based projects and social gatherings. Building upon that idea, suggestions for Jean's slides:

We're doing things differently this year because our primary fall goal is to energize and engage members in helping women and girls. We know we're famous for our fundraising but we're going to put that on the back burner and work together with you on new projects to help women and girls. Yes, we'll fundraise next spring but not this fall. Maybe show a new mission-based calendar?

Describe member volunteer projects. Tell members we want you to sign up for at least one of the projects because we need everyone to make them successful. No matter what your skill is, you can help. From making phone calls, writing letters or emails, planning, or mentoring – we need you.

- c. Implementation Ideas:
 - i. Use Study and Interest Group Chairs to promote member involvement in community projects and fundraising – must give specific instructions.
 - ii. Have competition between study groups on % of participation.
 - iii. At every monthly luncheon recognize volunteers and ask for more volunteers.
 - iv. Link vision needs with societal trends.

2. Pilot a member volunteer and liaison program

- a. The team had a long discussion about candidates for new volunteer or liaison programs that would both benefit local students as well as be recognized as a contribution to the community. Ideas discussed were continuing the Monday Fun Day program started earlier this year, partner with OU and the Pontiac Promise Zone, pilot a program with either high school or college students about staying in school, and pilot a college program to introduce students to AAUW and get them to join as student members.

- b. Implementation ideas:
 - i. Get a better understanding of member skills / interest to identify potential volunteers/ liaisons – create a skills database (not bridge, books, etc. skills).
 - ii. Follow-up with NCCWSL attendees.
 - iii. Follow-up with first year college scholarship recipients - “stick with it,” “stay in school.”
 - iv. Partner with student AAUW chapter members – quarterly lunch meetings? All OCC students are members because OCC is an AAUW Affiliate. Rochester AAUW is affiliated with OCC and has no problems.
 - v. Meet with high school counselors to explain our AAUW mission.
 - vi. For OCC, Walsh, and LTU – have to deal with Financial Aid office – not directly with students unless the contact person is flexible and willing to help. OCC’s Eric is flexible.

3. Fund Approved Projects

- a. The team decided that going forward there will only be two member fundraisers per fiscal year to reduce member concerns that the Branch is “always asking for money.” The team also decided to switch the order of the two fundraisers.

The Scholarship fundraiser for local educational scholarships at three area high schools, three colleges / universities, and three leadership scholarships for NCCWSL aligns better with the fall and the starting of local schools. The AAUW Funds campaign for donations to National AAUW’s administered major projects aligns better with the national AAUW organization and March Women’s History Month.

Here is how the team decided this switch will occur given that we just ended a successful local Scholarship fundraiser in April 2024:

For fiscal year June 2024 through June 2025 only, we cannot have a second local Scholarship fundraiser in September 2024. We will use proceeds from the successful April 2024 fundraiser and, if needed, use reserves to fund our 2024-2025 local Scholarships and NCCWSL.

The AAUW Funds campaign donation must be submitted by each year no later than December 31. Since this campaign will now be in March 2025, for this fiscal year only, we will send a donation to AAUW National by December 31 using funds from reassigned scholarship donations, eBay sales, Kroger rewards, memorial donations, and tribute donations. Using reserves is also a possibility.

For fiscal year 2025-2026 and afterwards, the normal Scholarship fundraiser will occur in September to fund 2025-2026 scholarships, and the funds from the AAUW Funds campaign in March 2025 will be donated to AAUW National as that year’s contribution.

b. Implementation ideas:

- i. Snowbird fundraising is better in April. It is best to make special phone calls to them.
- ii. After 2 weeks of fundraising, send a follow-up letter or call those who have not donated.
- iii. For members who have not given for several years, investigate why.
- iv. Replace Lavish Lunch with a similar activity to raise funds – need some fun, camaraderie.
- v. Ensure sufficient spacing between the two fundraisers.
- vi. Differentiate messages about 2 fundraisers.
- vii. Explain difference between local scholarship donations and AAUW National Funds donations (update Julie’s diagram). Show how each is related to our mission. Use phrase “AAUW National donations help women control their own lives.”
- viii. For AAUW Funds – is there a way to designate donations as educational initiatives or political initiatives? If so, when sending funds to National, specify where each type goes.
- ix. November – mid December is prime time for fundraising. Need special plan for December’s monthly luncheon fundraising because many members only attend that luncheon.
- x. Suggest an “average” amount in the “ask” letter.
- xi. Notify members that “ask” letter is coming.
- xii. Develop targeted message to new members explaining the importance of vision and fundraisers.
- xiii. Use more bullets in emails. Shorter, less reading.

4. Create and update monthly Branch Mission-Based Calendar

- a. Let members see the “big picture” – what we’re doing- to generate trust and pride in our hard work.
- b. This calendar is not the same as the monthly Study and Interest Group calendar.

5. Implement the ability to share and quickly access key reports and metrics (real time data and online repository)

a. Implementation ideas:

- i. To avoid problems with mixed data formats and laptops, standardize formats for specific documents accessible by different laptops. Work with data owners to be able to contribute and share information.
- ii. Identify type of data needed to be stored online.
- iii. Work with data owners to add metrics, helpful to other parts of the organization, to monthly reports – such as dollars, hours, number of attendees, and number of students.
- iv. Share monthly reports - short and full of metrics.
- v. Build a donor history database to analyze donation trends.
- vi. Share tribal knowledge.

6. Develop the October 2024 Impact Report and Annual Accountability Report

a. Implementations Ideas:

- i. Reach out to current owners of data – what files do they have?
- ii. Collect specific metrics for activities – dollars, hours, students, attendees, etc.
- iii. On tear-off donation form, have a check box for Scholarships or AAUW Funds.
- iv. When an Annual Accountability Report is developed, some of the details for the Branch Annual Report will come from the Accountability Report

7. Tasks for marketing value and publicizing accomplishments, community outreach

a. Implementations Ideas:

- i. Publicize to Oakland County.
- ii. Use publicity in grant writing and soliciting donations from businesses.

Mission-Based Calendar for 2024-2025

The team's ideas on mission-based calendar items included:

From June to mid-August 2024:

1. Form committee and develop specs for member project 1: Monday Fun Day, designate EOBO table host, table handouts table.
2. Form committee and develop specs for member project 2: OU + Pontiac Promise Zone, designate EOBO table host, table handouts table. Pilot this member project in September.
3. Form committee and develop specs for member project 3: College Student Liaisons, designate EOBO table host, table handouts table.
4. Assist Jean who will be presenting the vision at the EOBO to inspire members. Help write the speech, make slides.
5. Foundation Finance Report changes: The Scholarship fundraiser will move to September in 2025. The AAUW Funds campaign will move to Spring 2025 where it effectively aligns with Women's History Month. To make up for not donating AAUW Funds in calendar year 2024, we will approach 2 key donors from the recent scholarship fundraiser to ask if some/all of their scholarship donation can be applied to AAUW Funds. With their agreement, on the Foundation Finance reporting form, the Treasurer will transfer funds from the 2024 scholarship restricted income line item to the 2024 AAUW Funds line item for the purpose of sending a donation to National by December 2024.
6. Organize ways to obtain and expand scholarships and educational projects information.
7. Ask Joan Hanpeter to identify how and when the subject of Legacy Giving and Endowment Funds should be introduced and discussed. Joan suggested she could host a table at EOBO.

September 2024:

Start developing Impact Report. Identify data needed and request data from responsible owners.

October 2024:

Publish Impact Report with tear off (?) for donating to scholarships or AAUW Funds. Distribute information on RMD technique for donating.

November 2024:

End of year RMD fundraising?

December 2024:

End of year RMD fundraising?

January 2025:

Feb 2025:

March 2025:

AAUW Funds campaign.

April 2025:

Legacy Giving and Endowments campaign.

May 2025:

Form committee for September 2025 Scholarship Fundraiser.

June 2025:

2025 Scholarship Fundraiser committee planning meeting.

July 2025: Beginning of 2025 – 2026 fiscal year.

2025 Scholarship Fundraiser committee work items: revise website donation and banner page for September, develop yellow envelope letter and response card, work with Treasurer to create Excel tracking file, etc. Committee for member involvement projects identifies projects.

August 2025:

2025 Scholarship Fundraiser committee meeting. Committee for member involvement projects.

September 2025:

2025 Scholarship Fundraiser committee: Start emails, mail out yellow envelopes.