



Open Membership

Why Are We Here?

- In April, 2024, AAUW members will vote to eliminate AAUW's degree requirement for membership.
- AAUW's National Board, Governance Committee and Inclusion and Equity Committee support this change.
- Today we will review:
 1. How AAUW has an ongoing history of increasing inclusivity with its members
 2. The benefits of the change; and
 3. Next steps

First, What Do We Stand For?

AAUW Purpose, Vision, and Values

Purpose: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Vision: Equity for all

Values: Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Integrity. Inclusion and Intersectionality.

AAUW's Membership Requirements Have Changed Many Times to Become More Inclusive

In the Past:

- Up until the 1940's, members had to hold approved degrees from small list of accredited schools. Prospective members had to be voted upon for admission.
- World War II broadened AAUW's perspective, and women from all accredited schools could be admitted.
- **BUT: It wasn't until 1963 that degrees such as education, nursing and home economics** were approved.
- In 1987, men were allowed to join.
- In 2005, those with associate or equivalent degrees were permitted membership.

Expanding Our Reach Over Time to Meet Women's Needs

Pre 1940's

Small list of accredited schools,
Vote required for admission

1940s

Yes to all accredited
colleges

1963

Yes to Education,
Home Economics,
Nursing

2021

**63% Voted to
Approve Open
Membership Versus
a 66.7% Goal**

1987

Yes to Men

2005

Yes to Associate
Degree

We Also Know That The History and Battle For Equity Has Evolved Over Time

In the Past:

- The vast majority of jobs available to us were limited: teacher, secretary, nurse
- Men far outnumbered women in higher education
- Even fewer women in the trades, C-suite, military ...

Now:

- Women represent the majority on many college campuses and in many professional degree programs
- We are in leadership positions across industries
- Yet...discrimination against women continues....

AAUW's Equity Battle Today Represents All Women

- Today, we recognize that higher education is one of several paths now available to women.
- Professional certifications, on the job training, career technical experience and life experience are ALL alternative paths to obtaining education and skills for women.
- AND the fights for women's reform – reproductive rights, equal pay, maternity leave, sexual harassment – apply to ALL women, regardless of the path they choose.

The Benefits to This Change

- AAUW's stated mission is "to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy." This change allows AAUW to be **stronger and truer to our vision of Equity for all.**
- Our Value Statement states "Inclusion and Intersectionality." This change allows AAUW to become stronger by being a **more inclusive** organization.
- **Education and advocacy always have been and will continue to be a focus to our mission.** We want to include those with and without degrees in our work, and open membership could welcome even more advocates, which will make our impact stronger.

Points to Consider

- **What makes AAUW unique** is our breadth of programming, research, advocacy, grants and most importantly, a grassroots membership that can be mobilized to fight for our mission
- Eliminating the degree requirement alone is not likely to substantially increase membership. Changing requirements in 1987/2005 did not have a major impact. However, the requirement is counterproductive to **recruiting diverse and younger members.**
- **The AAUW name will not change!** For example, the Young Men's Christian Organization (YMCA) has progressed far beyond Men and Christians, yet they retain their name as their foundation. AAUW will do the same.

Here is How it Works

- Voting begins early April – Mid May
- Confirm you are receiving emails from AAUW National. If not, please work with your Branch leadership to ensure this is enabled.
- An email (along with email reminders) will be sent to you. It will include a link that allows you to vote. It is not necessary to have an AAUW Community Hub account to vote.
- Paper ballots with instructions will be sent to those without email addresses.
- If you need help casting your vote on line, please let your Branch leadership know.

PLEASE VOTE AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!!

Questions: info@openaauw.org

