



Iowa Branch Connector

July, 2014

A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa

The Value of Affiliation with AAUW: *By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.*

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other members and branch leaders by forwarding it to them, or providing a hard copy.

AAUW Iowa Connector

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At the AAUW Convention in 2013, I had the opportunity to hear a very thought provoking speech by Olympia Snowe, retired Republican U. S. Senator from Maine and recipient of the 2013 AAUW Achievement Award. Recently she was a guest on an NPR news program discussing the topic “Can American Democracy Be Saved?” At the end of the program when asked what we citizens can do, her advice was “to be engaged and to speak out”.

While good advice for all citizens, it is especially applicable for an advocacy organization like AAUW Iowa. We’ve all witnessed the decline in civility and the increasingly louder and angrier voices on TV, radio, social media, and even among our neighbors and family. The effect has been to make many people hesitant to say anything and to become discouraged or disengaged.

As individuals and as an organization, we have many opportunities to engage within and outside of our AAUW groups and to speak out. To speak out can literally mean to talk with individuals or in a group, but it can also be in the form of a letter to the editor or an email to your legislator or U. S. Senator or Representative.

The AAUW Iowa Strategic Plan developed at the summer board meeting offers possibilities for you and your branch to engage and to speak out.

In addition to their own activities, branches are encouraged to work with organizations that share interests and goals compatible with those of AAUW. A few examples include:

- **50-50 in 2020** is a non-partisan organization with the goal to increase the number of women elected to public office in Iowa, to send a woman from Iowa to Congress for the first time, and to elect a woman governor. 50-50 does not endorse any candidates. They sponsor training opportunities for woman interested in running for office.

As individuals we can encourage women to run for office, donate to their campaigns and work on behalf of those women candidates we choose to support. We can sponsor NUDGE (No Use Delaying Gender Equity) gatherings.

As a non-partisan organization, AAUW Iowa does not endorse candidates, but we do encourage members to carefully examine voting records or voter guides to see where candidates, men or women, stand on issues important to AAUW. We also encourage all our members to vote.

- **League of Women Voters** sponsors candidate or legislative forums, works on voter registration, and studies issues. Is there a way you can engage with them to promote citizen involvement in government?
- Work within your community to raise awareness of human trafficking in Iowa and speak out when legislation is introduced to strengthen laws related to trafficking or to improve victim services.
- Is your branch monitoring appointments to your city and county boards and commissions? An amendment to Chapter 162 of the Code of Iowa to require gender balance went into effect on January 1, 2012. If your city or county still has not achieved gender balance on appointed boards and commissions, speak out!
- You can engage and speak out for women around the world. AAUW not only advocates for women and girls in the U. S., but supports human rights and women's rights worldwide. AAUW has consultative status at the U.N., which means AAUW can participate and make comments in meetings, not just observe. It has one U.N. representative and two Youth Representatives. The representatives attend briefings and form coalitions to take action on women's issues such as girls' empowerment or human trafficking.

AAUW has affiliation with several organizations at the U. N. and is an affiliate of the **United Nations Association—USA**. Your branch can engage with groups with international interests like **Women Graduates** and the **Iowa United Nations Association** or its local chapters to learn about international issues that affect women and to take action.

- Closer to home, your branch can engage with the local community college or four year college or university through student AAUW groups, by promoting \$tart \$mart salary negotiation workshops, or by supporting STEM activities.

Connecting With You

The *Connector* is published electronically each month. AAUW Iowa board members who work in specific areas will be providing you with additional information throughout the year as guest writers for the *Connector*.

The *Iowa Initiative* newsletter is published three times a year (two electronic and one print), twice a year board members make Board/Branch Connection phone calls with branch presidents, and the AAUW Iowa website and social media provide information for members.

In addition, this year AAUW Iowa will use online conferencing for topical meetings with our branch leaders and members. The Blackboard Collaborate conferencing program has been used for several years for online board or committee meetings and by the eNetwork. It is a cost effective and time saving way to offer information while providing the opportunity to discuss and ask questions. Information about these topics will help you be engaged and prepared to speak out.

Our first conference using Blackboard Collaborate is scheduled for Wednesday, August 6 from 7-8 PM. The topic is the revised AAUW Fundraising Policy 501 (previously 402) which is designed to assist AAUW state organizations, branches, and other AAUW-affiliated entities in raising funds to support AAUW's mission. Fundraising procedures, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, and state laws change over time. Fundraising Policy 501 and its related guidelines and FAQs will help all AAUW-affiliated entities stay current and preserve their nonprofit status.

AAUW Fundraising Policy 501 was approved by the AAUW Board of Directors and took effect July 1, 2014. Written by the AAUW Fundraising Committee with consultation from AAUW staff and legal counsel, the policy explains what AAUW and the IRS expect of AAUW members when fundraising in AAUW's name.

Diane Patton, former AAUW Iowa President and member of the AAUW Fundraising Committee will provide an overview of the policies and will answer your questions on August 6. Instructions for downloading Blackboard Collaborate will be provided prior to that date.

It is a privilege to be the president of AAUW Iowa for 2014-16 and to work with so many outstanding women. Please contact me with ideas, questions or concerns.

Maureen White, AAUW Iowa President
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