

RECRUITING YOUNGER MEMBERS

Perhaps the following insights may prove helpful in understanding and attracting younger members:

1. The educational backgrounds of young people include cooperative learning techniques, problem solving, thinking of things in new ways, and global world views. Younger participants (25-40) emphasized the importance of being truly welcomed, accepting (not just on the surface), and using their ideas (instead of we've always done it this way).
2. Young people may accept employment in a community and out of necessity may be transferred or move on within 2- 5 years. Thus they are interested in specific-short term assignments instead of accepting an officer role or having to jump through all the leadership hoops before they are given responsibility.
3. Young people grew up with technology, social networking, and use it easily. Branches who are struggling with the use of technology can seek the help of those who use it every day in their work. AAUWs 2012-13 Every Member Survey indicated that those 40 and under want to connect online, by website, and by email.
4. Today's work expectations are overwhelming in terms of time spent at work and the energy it takes. It is not uncommon for young people to work 50-70 hour weeks, leaving little time for relaxation and organizational involvement. They will make time for targeted issues/passions that are important to them.
5. Younger members are very active and seek action-oriented, hands-on activities to hold their interest, and use their skills. AAUWs 2012-13 Every Member Survey indicated they wanted to be involved locally. The Survey also indicated that the top three public policy objectives for all ages and member types were: (1) Pay Equity, Women in Science, Technology, Math, Engineering and Math, and Sex Discrimination in the Workplace. Other programming interests (although not a part of the Survey) included their development, career advancement/ transitions and empowering women. Younger participants indicated a need to get together in the branch to create their own vision and activities to keep them engaged.
6. AAUW's 2012-13 Every Member Survey found *non-member activists* (potential members) had the following issues on their minds: (1) unfair wages, (2) unequal pay barriers to women's success, (3) child care barriers to women's success, and (4) domestic violence barriers to women's success. They were most interested in our fellowship and grant opportunities, sex discrimination programming on campus, the Legal Advocacy Fund program, our STEM programming, and AAUWs research.

7. Be where young people congregate. Set up an AAUW information table at campus events, fairs, in student unions. Get acquainted with members of the young professionals groups and social clubs in the community and metro areas to spread the word about AAUW.
8. Contact campus women's groups, sororities, women's studies departments, and any other department of interest. They have their pulse on the heart of the campus and can help you connect with students. Invite students to a branch event...or better yet invite them to be the branch event, speaking about a program or project they are involved with. If their college or university is an AAUW institutional member they can automatically become eStudent Affiliate members free.
9. Hold a campus informational meeting and invite students, faculty and local members-at-large (now referred to as national members) as well as branch members. Discuss AAUW's mission, membership options, and community action projects. Tell them about the availability of Campus Action Project Grants that address timely issues and build student leadership skills. Share information about the Legal Advocacy Fund and the support given in sex discrimination cases along with discrimination prevention educational programming on campus. Share the "Smart Salary Negotiations" and "Elect Her" leadership workshops and other programs in a box. Provide information on graduate fellowships and community action grants' funding opportunities. Don't forget to include information about AAUW's groundbreaking research, etc. Let's not hide our light under a bushel!
10. Have a branch member who is a faculty or staff member at the college serve as a liaison and advisor to your student efforts. Gain campus support to send young women to the National Conference of College Women Student Leaders to network, gain new skills and participate in the Graduate Student Fair. Organize a young leaders conference on campus in coalition with other groups in your area. Help students develop a voter registration program on campus to register students to vote or an issue forum focused on their needs or concerns.
11. Pick up a good book on the Millennials to gain an understanding of this generation. Also refer to "The Process of Connecting our Generations" resource to help better understand, support, and work with diverse members more effectively on AAUW Iowa's website.

Our mission is to *pass the torch to those who are the future of AAUW* so they can lead the way in continuing our work to break down barriers and serve as a support system for women and girls in the 21st century so they can achieve the American Dream!