

AAUWNC DIVERSITY REPORT

April 1, 2007

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What is Diversity and Why Does Diversity Matter?

***Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue;
it makes it a requirement for survival.***

Rene Dubos

One of the biggest challenges for AAUWNC is to define diversity and why it matter. In a random survey last year of the state's branches it was discovered that many of the branches did not have a diversity chairperson. Of the branches who were trying to establish a diversity chair person, the responsibilities of the chairpersons were not defined. Some seek the role of the diversity chair as getting diverse or under-represented racially minority women to become members. Others had trouble understanding why having a diversity chairperson matters. Therefore, one of AAUWNC's goals, as one of its goals is to define, diversity policies and missions for the organization.

Secondly, AAUWNC will be asked to communicate and explain diversity. A suggested method of responding to this repeated question is to demonstrate the influence of cultural and how it influences the distinct way which people define and organize reality, their lifestyles, and beliefs about life. It is suggested that collaboration with other women and civil groups be considered in order to offer a broad spectrum of events including lectures, panel discussions, films and videos, musical, dance and dramatic performances, poetry readings, art exhibits and coffee houses for "singles," seniors, persons with disabilities and etc.

Last year's proposal of a branch membership survey and a review of the branches programs and activities were to be used as a tool to help the State of North Carolina in adopting a diversity policy, that complimented the national AAUW policy. We are still waiting on some of the branches to report, so our results are inconclusive. What is clear thus far is that AAUWNC is serving diverse populations throughout the state. From sponsoring Girl Scouts, vision screening, dinner/card parties, providing scholarships, to providing student affiliate memberships, and reading is fundamental projects AAUWNC promotes diversity and cultural understanding. It is also clear that the work of AAUWNC is one of the state's best kept secrets and we need to seek ways to share our stories with the state and the nation. I propose we find a way to market and tell women throughout the state what we are doing. Therefore, I am recommending that we find a way of telling our stories of commitment and services across the state. The goal is to develop a marketing film clip by February, 2008 to tell the AAUWNC story.

AAUWNC adopted the book, "*Blood Done Signed My Name*," as a statewide book as read as a means of sensitizing and reminding us that equity and justice are on going issues. This book was read in book clubs, branch meetings, community and faith

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gatherings throughout the state with the participation of large numbers of the membership throughout for the 2006-2007 year. A common comment about the book was that many people who read the book did not realize that it was factual. They never knew this type of situation could exist in America.

At the October, 2006 fall convention, we introduced and sought support on the "equal access to justice act" and legal reform. In November, I attended a "Race Matters" conference." Unfortunately equity and justice are still an issue for many women. If racism, bigotry sexism and justice exist anywhere, it also exist in schools. Thus, I propose that we become more involved throughout the state on Workforce Development Boards to plan and implement policies that exposes girls and students to a broad array of career opportunities and equal access to educational opportunities.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2007-2008

1. *Adoption of AAUWNC Diversity Policy Statement*

AAUWNC will form a diversity task force to coordinate the development and implementation of a state diversity plan

2. *Diversity awareness training shall be held throughout the state.*

It is suggested that programs throughout the year bring women and women groups to study and learn about lifestyles and cultures within our surrounding communities if we have not done so in the past. The process of learning about cultural diversity involves moving from a monocultural perspective that devalues differences at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels to cultural pluralist perspective which involve acceptance valuing, utilization and celebration of similarities and differences..

3. *Form NC School Watch Program*

Collaborate and work with public schools in our communities to look at how problems and services are being augmented to provide equal access and opportunities to educational.

4. *Continue to support Equal Access To Justice and Legal Reform*

We propose to expose and share stories of injustice to the North Carolina Equal Justice Commission.

Respectfully submitted

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