

Key messages from the 2006 Conference of State Leaders

Nancy Shoemaker, AAUW NC President

Mission-based programming is essential to survival

What are we about? If what we are doing is not targeted at advancing the mission, let's step back, regroup and see what can be changed. Many branches have more mission-related ideas than they have the resources to implement, but the Association has many suggestions and tools to help those who need a fresh start. Unless we "walk the walk" our members and our potential allies are confused as to who we are and why we deserve their support.

"Dress for the job you want"

Take that well-known principle and apply it to how your branch and its members appear to those you are trying to recruit. Aside from what your branch is *doing* (see mission-based programming), what other factors affect your community's perception of AAUW? Particularly if you're trying to rebuild and change the characteristics of your average member, be sure to talk with, listen to, and act on the advice of members of the underrepresented groups.

Focus on our "sweet spot"

Our core is where "equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change" intersect. There are thousands of community needs that our members may be concerned with, but our mission is broad enough to meet an enormous range of interests. Be sure that you can tie the branch's "signature projects" to the mission in just a few sentences that can form the basis of your "elevator speech."

The future will not look like the past

We don't know what the AAUW of 2020 will be. Membership changes and financial challenges mean we will not stay the same. We can prepare for change and work to ensure that local changes do mean progress.

We're in this together

Individual members, branches, states and the Association all share the goal of advancing the mission. The Association serves to provide a framework so that the volunteers can support one another and leverage what they learn and develop. Plan to come to Phoenix to get connected to this incredible network and get energized to take our message to others in your community.