

AAUW Bellingham Branch WWU Student Outreach

India Nishi
Co-President Bellingham Branch



1

First, some questions.....

1. How old were you when you joined AAUW?

- a. 20-30
- b. 31-40
- c. Over 40



2. Why did you decide to join?

- a. I supported the mission
- b. For social reasons
- c. Legacy (I had a relative who was in it)



2

Why do I ask?

- Our membership is at risk of aging out
 - Average age over 70
- Many women I have talked to joined “later in life”
 - Looking for social connections or ways to give back
- Younger people I talk to have never heard of AAUW
 - Not visible on college campuses in a sustained way



3

What are we doing about this?

- One way is to improve the outreach at our colleges and universities
- Bellingham Branch has relationship with four:
 - Western Washington University
 - Whatcom Community College
 - Bellingham Technical College
 - Northwest Indian College
- We have had some success with WWU to date



4

Accomplishments

- Student chapter formed around the year 2000



- Elect Her Successes from 2011-2015



- 100-year celebration video



- PR Support from student group from a communications class



- Most recent student group - 2019

5

Latest Collaboration - Project Scope

- Determine level of interest of WWU students in forming an AAUW student organization
- How to increase AAUW presence and awareness at WWU
- Help to modernize social media and electronic communications



6

Interest level in forming WWU student org.

- Step One: Determine awareness of AAUW

- Surveys
- Focus Groups



- Step Two: Educate students on benefits of joining as student associates

- Fund education
- Encourage campus change agents
- Connect with community



- Step Three: Bring student associates together

7

What the Surveys Found

- Students know very little about AAUW
- Little current interest in forming a student chapter
- We need to do a better job promoting ourselves on campus



8

Ways to increase AAUW presence/awareness

- Collaborations between our branch and WWU

- Facilitate Work Smart training
- Offer “brownbag” speaker sessions



- Promote our activities on campus

- Marches
- Film Series



- Communicate using methods that reach students



9

Example of Student-Built Info Brochure



We need to figure out how and where to disseminate

Social Media and Electronic Communication

- Website
 - Change platform – more branch control
 - Update look and feel
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
 - Use tools that broadcast to multiple platforms
- Make it sustainable
 - Easy to follow instruction manual
 - Utilize student associates/WWU classes to help train and assist



11

Social Media – Is it working for us?

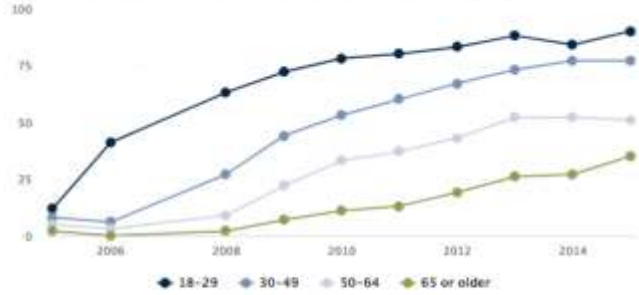
We are trying but not reaching enough people yet!!



12

Why isn't it working for us?

Among all American adults, % who use social networking sites, by age



➔ Younger Use of SM

➔ Our Use of SM

Source: Pew Research Center surveys, 2006-2008, 2008-2010. No data are available for 2007.

Credit: PEW Research Center

Please like and follow us on FB!!!
AAUW Bellingham (NOT AAUW Bellingham Branch)

13

Why Follow Other AAUW Facebook Pages?

Great Content about our Mission!



14

So What are our Next Steps?

- First:
 - Working with University to set up an internship to help with Social Media outreach
 - Hosting/Facilitating Work Smart presentations
- Then follow with:
 - Continuing to promote social justice events
 - Setting up brown-bag learning events
 - Reaching out to other colleges in Bellingham



15

One Final Thought...

Young Professionals Are Not Joining Associations, But Not for the Reasons We Think

by Amanda Kaiser, on 9/28/17 8:00 AM



THE REAL REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T JOIN

It is possible some of the aforementioned reasons influence younger members. However, in my research, never once did a professional say they based their decisions on one of them. The reason young professionals do not join, they say, is because they did not know about the association. Or if they know about the association, they did not know it was for them. Most often young professionals think the association is for their manager or their manager's manager. Or if they did know the association was for them, they did not join because they did not see value. And this is the key, value.

The decision to join is heavily linked to value. Does your association provide value for young professionals? Is the value you provide the value today's young professionals need? Are we marketing that particular value in our member's words? When associations have a hard time attracting young professionals the answer is likely in the value we are providing.

THIS IS WHY YOUNGER MEMBERS ENGAGE, OR NOT

While joining is linked to value, engaging links to member experience. Consider these typical experiences for a younger member soon after they join. They attend their first chapter meeting and no one welcomes them, so they sit there awkward and alone. They try to search the website's resources, but their search does not produce anything helpful. Or a flood of emails starts pouring into their inbox, but none of the messages seem to apply to them.

When the first experience with the association is bad, members think, "Oh no, I made a mistake in joining. This association is not for people like me. The membership will not be worth my time, money, and attention." When someone tries to engage and that test does not go well, they will not engage again. Because they are not engaging, they will not renew. If the association is having a hard time retaining younger members, likely there is a problem with the kinds of experiences younger members are having with the association.



16

Table Exercise

- Pick a scribe and a spokesperson at your table
- Take 5 minutes each to brainstorm the following questions:
 - How can we engage younger people and show that we add value?
 - How can we increase our social media presence when over half of our membership are probably not using it?
- Have spokesperson report out your table's input