



*Newsletter of the*

## **Saint Louis Branch**

**Founded April 1893 ~ Celebrating 132 Years!**

**2025-2026, No. 6, January 2025**

*"AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy."*

*AAUW is open to graduates who hold the associate, baccalaureate, or higher degree from a qualified college or university.*

### Who we are...

The Saint Louis Branch of AAUW supports the broad goals and actions of AAUW by holding public outreach events, engaging in political action, collaborating with local organizations and educational institutions regarding AAUW topics, and by supporting area young women and girls directly. We promote a "You Can Do It" approach. We are one of five branches in the Saint Louis, MO, area that comprise the AAUW Metro Saint Louis Inter-branch Council (IBC).

### Branch Officers, 2025-2026

**Diane Sher**  
President, Public Policy  
dsher63105@gmail.com

**Carol Davis McDonald**  
Finance Officer, Newsletter,  
Website, Facebook page  
davis-mcdonald@outlook.com

**Christine Nobbe**  
VP Programs, STEM, AAUW  
Funds

**Janet Scott**  
VP Membership, Diversity

**Margaret Weck**  
College-University Relations

### Web Sites:

**Branch Web Site**  
<http://stlouis-mo.aauw.net>

**IBC Web Site**  
<http://stlouis-ibc.aauw.net>

**State Web Site**  
[www.aauwmo.org](http://www.aauwmo.org)

**AAUW St. Louis Branch | Facebook**

**National Web Site**  
[www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

## **St. Louis and Kirkwood-Webster Groves Combined January Online (Zoom) Meeting**

Missouri lawmakers set a new record for pre-filed bills. Our speaker for the **January 15th Zoom meeting** will be Mo. State District 90 Representative Mark Boyko who will update us on pending legislation for 2026. Among the 10 bills Rep. Boyko himself has pre-filed are two proposals: one for charter school regulations and another to lower the compulsory education age from 7 to 5. Please mark your calendar for our session; **"doors open" at 6:30 pm for networking.**



Rep. Boyko, who represents part of St. Louis County (which includes parts of Kirkwood, Glendale, Des Peres, St. Louis County, and Valley Park) was elected to his first two-year term in November 2024.

Rep. Boyko earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, his Juris Doctorate from the University of Missouri School of Law, and his LL.M. from New York University School of Law. He has been practicing law for the past twenty years, with the majority of his career spent practicing as an ERISA litigator (Employee Retirement Income Security Act). In the house he serves on the primary and secondary education committee, utilities committee, and government efficiency committee among others.

Beyond his legal career, Rep. Boyko has been involved in his community. He has served on the Kirkwood School Board and the St. Louis area non-profit Places for People and is currently a director for both the St. Louis Area Diaper Bank and Friends of the Kathy J. Weinman Center, where he supports vital services for local women and families in need.

**What questions do you have for Rep. Boyko? *See next page for important links.***

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3041753234>

(Program information continued from page 1)

## 2026 Missouri Legislative Session

The Missouri Legislative Session begins on January 7, 2026, and ends on May 15, 2026. You can follow the proceedings by visiting the websites listed below. Governor Mike Kehoe will deliver the 2026 State of the State Address detailing his legislative priorities and his Fiscal Year 2027 budget proposal on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.** The speech will be live-streamed on [Governor Kehoe's Facebook page](#), the [State of Missouri's Facebook page](#), and [mo.gov/live](#). A satellite uplink with closed captioning will also be available. The link, schedule of the day's events, and logistical details will be provided at a later date.

Please bookmark these websites to refer to throughout the legislative session.

- ⇒ Missouri Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/>
- ⇒ Missouri House of Representatives: <https://house.mo.gov/>
- ⇒ Governor: <https://governor.mo.gov/>
- ⇒ Budget: <https://budplan.oa.mo.gov/budget-information/fy2027>

To study the prefiled bills, you can go to these two webpages.

- ◆ Senate: <https://www.senate.mo.gov/BillTracking/Bills/BillList?year=2026&session=R> (646 bills filed as of December 30, 2025)
- ◆ House: <https://house.mo.gov/BillStatisticList.aspx?in=1&out=> (1023 prefiled bills on December 30th.)

Missouri lawmakers set a new record for pre-filed bills. so it should be a busy and interesting session to follow. You can view (or just listen to) the proceedings of both the Senate and House using the website links above. Chris (KGW and STL member) is following two gifted education bills, as shown below.

Bill: [HB1748](#) Sponsor: [Miller](#)

Date/last action: 12/01/2025 - Prefiled (H). (LR# 4621H.01I) - Adds provisions including gifted education pupil count for purposes of funding schools through the foundation formula

Bill: [HB1757](#) Sponsor: [Shields](#)

Date/last action: 12/01/2025 - Prefiled (H). (LR# 5274H.01I) - Establishes procedures for school districts to test for gifted students

## CALENDAR

Jan 6	Branch board meeting, 7 pm, Zoom	Mar 10	International Relations lecture, 10:45 am, "Plastics."
Jan 10	AAUW MO Branch Right Sizing State Program	Mar 26	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>Sula</i>
Jan 13	International Relations lecture, 10:45 am, "Pandemic and Vaccines"	Mar 28	Spring Fling!, Raquet Club Ladue
Jan 15	Combined St. Louis and K-WG branch meeting	Apr 7	Branch board meeting, 7 pm, Zoom
Jan 17	Statewide MO AAUW board meeting	Apr 14	International Relations lecture, 10:45 am, "Crop Yields and Future Food Security."
Jan 19	Dr Martin Luther King Jr celebration day	Apr 23	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>My Friends</i>
Jan 22	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>All the Colors of Dark</i>	May 2	Annual state conference, in person, Columbia, MO
Feb 2	Branch board meeting, 7 pm, Zoom	May 5	Branch board meeting, 7 pm, Zoom
Feb 10	International Relations lecture, 10:45 am, "Supply Chains."	May 28	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>Anna: The Biography</i>
Feb 24	Quarterly IBC meeting, 7 pm, Zoom	June 25	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>By Any Other Name</i>
Feb 26	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth</i>	Sep 24	Adelante book group, 1:30 pm, Zoom, <i>Accidentally, On Purpose</i>
Mar 3	Branch board meeting, 7 pm, Zoom		
Mar 8	International Women's Day		

# Dedicated Branch Members Have Goal to Make an Impact!

With the much-appreciated help of Jo Taylor, Christine Nobbe, and Ruth Reese, the AAUW St. Louis Branch has requested AAUW community action funds for “Women Making Their Mark,” a March 7-April 18, 2026 project sponsored by the St. Louis AAUW Branch **in collaboration with the St. Louis Montessori Adolescent Program (MAP)** located in the St. Louis Grand Center Arts District. The project will focus on women scientists who produce microscopic images and biological models, as well as a Diné Navajo Nation math teacher and internationally known weaver who depicts computer chips in her weaving. The women will: 1) reach all MAP 7-12 students by making presentations in a School Wide Council Meeting; 2) provide a workshop tailored for students in the MAP 12 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP); 3) discuss their career path and products of their work in a public exhibition held in MAP’s Front Gallery.

The project will feature the following presenters.

- ◊ Katherine Basore, PhD, is a staff scientist in cryo-electron microscopy at Washington University St. Louis Center for Cellular Imaging (WUCCI). The images produced in her work provide 3D renditions of biological specimens, revealing their structures, relationships, and their beauty;
- ◊ Natasha Case, PhD, assistant professor of biomedical engineering at Saint Louis University, builds models to advance understanding of how mechanical, biophysical, and biochemical stimuli interact to enhance repair strategies for orthopedic breast cancer tissues.
- ◊ Lexi Simar, PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher from Columbia University, New York, who is working at WUCCI. Her PhD is in Bioengineering, and her expertise is in bio-imaging.
- ◊ Marilou Schultz is a math teacher and traditional weaver who lives in Mesa, Arizona. A Diné of the Navajo Nation, she is internationally known for incorporating science in her weaving (<https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/1224>).

In addition to engaging MAP students, AAUW will invite groups and organizations to the exhibition. First, AAUW will send invitations and fliers to leaders of **Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri (GSEM)** with whom AAUW members collaborated from 2021 to 2023; the leaders will be encouraged to bring their troops to the exhibition (see Branch capacity and qualifications); Second, AAUW St. Louis Branch will send invitations and announcements about the exhibition to members of the five local AAUW branches in proximity to St. Louis. Third, AAUW volunteers will distribute fliers about the exhibition to businesses, museums, and maker’s art facilities in the Grand Art District where MAP is located (see details below). Fourth, AAUW will send exhibition fliers and invitations to art department chairs at colleges and universities in St. Louis (members have begun compiling a list of the 31 institutions of higher education in St. Louis).

**St. Louis AAUW Branch members are asked to volunteer to support the following efforts. PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE ABOVE-NAMED MEMBERS IF YOU ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE!**



- **Send** to leaders of Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri (GSEM) invitations to the public exhibition and ask them to distribute them to every member of GSEM.
- **Develop and send** to presidents of the five local AAUW branches invitations to the public exhibit and ask them to distribute to all members of their branches.
- **Distribute flyers** about the exhibition to businesses, museums, and markers’ art facilities in the Grand Art District.
- **Send exhibition flyers and invitations** to art department chairs at colleges and universities in St. Louis and ask them to distribute them to their students.

Each of us watches a selected movie on **Netflix**. The movie is then discussed by the group on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Request to join the email list? Submit to [dsher63105@gmail.com](mailto:dsher63105@gmail.com). Prospective-member guests are welcome!

Mon. Jan 26: *Stand By Me*

Mon. Feb 23: To be decided

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81582657369?pwd=aqAkICdAvoiebBFwc1t97u8UNDYjua.1>

Meeting ID: 815 8265 7369

Passcode: 168308





Join Us As we Honor  
Our Barbara Lackritz  
AAUW Service Awardee  
**Sheila Bassoppo-Moyo**

**March 28, 2026**  
**Spring Fling**  
**at Racquet Club**  
**Ladue**

## **Sheila Bassoppo-Moyo**

by Sally McGowan and Jan Scott

The purpose of the AAUW Metro St. Louis IBC Barbara Lackritz AAUW Award is to recognize the branch member who:

1. Upholds the mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.
2. Provides service to AAUW at any of the local, state, regional or national level(s).
3. Provides leadership to AAUW at any of the local, state, regional or national level(s).
4. Provides service and leadership in non-AAUW areas in the community, religious, professional, and/or political arenas.

This year we have selected Sheila Bassoppo-Moyo as our honoree. The Spring Fling luncheon on March 28, 2026 is where and when we will formally thank Sheila for her dedication to AAUW. Sheila is a St. Louis native. She's been a member of AAUW St. Louis Branch for 13 years. Prior to that she was a member in North Carolina where she served as membership vice president and participated in several events with AAUW. She is the healthcare coordinator for the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging. Her primary interests are tai chi, poetry, pets, and how the performing arts benefit older adults, as well as how the arts are used in development.

She graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy, holds an Ed.D. in Higher and Adult Education from the University of Memphis, an M.S. in Sociology from North Carolina Central University, and a B.A. in English Literature from

Barnard College in New York.

AAUW Missouri's state project, the 19th Amendment Celebration Task force, "Votes for Women Trail Project" in 2023, was a project Sheila took interest in. She chose two women - Cynthelia Knefler and Victoria Haley. After in-depth research on Suffragist Victoria Haley, she developed her findings into a play. The play is a historical drama about three African American suffragists who came together in early 20th-century St. Louis; what happened when they spoke on a panel at a segregated conference led by an all-white suffrage association; and their connection to a decorated war hero and member of the Harlem Hellfighters. The play is set against the backdrop of racial justice, women's rights, and wartime heroism and can be viewed on YouTube.

Sheila co-founded a theatre group called Black Aging Arts Theatre in 2024. Her play, *Sister Suffragists and the Harlem Hellfighter*, was produced by the Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop and the New York Billie Holiday Theatre in 2025. Her recent publications include *Workplace Experiences Across International Borders* (2023) by Bassoppo-Moyo, Agbai, and Nwosu; a memoir entitled *Ten Years in Zimbabwe*, Penultimate Press in 2026, and *Black Mask Magazine* (Summer 2024).

She has volunteered on several AAUW committees, assisted branch presidents, helped achieve branch Star Awards, coordinated several events, and moderated several movie club discussions. Sheila is also the coordinator for the St. Louis Branch of the Silver Haired Legislature and is always looking for volunteers to go to Jefferson City and advocate for issues that improve the quality of life for older adults.

**AAUW Community Hub Tips:** The new AAUW Community Hub is every member's personal portal into AAUW. It allows people to self-manage their membership, donations, contact details, and personal preferences. Using Community Hub, you can now:

- Renew your individual membership through the Community Hub Personal Snapshot. [Login or create your account](#) to get started.
- Access the [training videos](#) for detailed instructions on how to manage your membership and make donations.

## AAUW METRO ST LOUIS IBC

St. Louis is **one of the five branches** that form the AAUW Metro St. Louis Interbranch Council, more commonly known as IBC. They meet 4 times a year, some virtually and some in person. Each branch is allowed 3 voting delegates, and historically the officers of each branch have served as those delegates.

The purpose of IBC is to foster cooperation among member branches and to financially support programs and projects and to open channels of communication among branches for the sharing of ideas and interests.

**The next quarterly meeting will be on Tuesday, Feb 24, 2025, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.**

The website is <https://stlouis-ibc.aauw.net/>. All AAUW members are welcome to attend.

## IBC ¡ADELANTE! BOOK GROUP

This group meets virtually to discuss books written from diverse perspectives.



Where: Join Zoom meeting:

For a clickable link to the meeting, please email: [PattyMurrayAAUW@gmail.com](mailto:PattyMurrayAAUW@gmail.com)

When: 1:30 pm the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month in September, October, January, February, March, April, May, and June.

Contact: [PattyMurrayAAUW@gmail.com](mailto:PattyMurrayAAUW@gmail.com)

### Upcoming selections:

**Jan 22** *All the Colors of Dark*, by Chris Whitaker, 608 pages, June 2024, Kay Meyer, facilitator.

1975 is a time of change in America. The Vietnam War is ending. Muhammad Ali is fighting Joe Frazier. And in the small town of Monta Clare, Missouri, girls are disappearing. When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, the most unlikely hero emerges—Patch, a local boy, who saves the girl, and, in doing so, leaves heartache in his wake. Patch and those who love him soon discover that the line between triumph and tragedy has never been finer. And that their search for answers will lead them to truths that could mean losing one another.

**Feb 26** *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*, by Sarah Smarsh, 304 pages, 9-18-2018. Lynne Roney, facilitator.

**Feb 26** *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*, by Sarah Smarsh, 304 pages, 9-18-2018. Lynne Roney, facilitator.

Sarah Smarsh was born a fifth generation Kansas wheat farmer on her paternal side, and the product of generations of teen mothers on her maternal side. Through her experiences growing up on a farm thirty miles west of Wichita, we are given a unique and essential look into the lives of poor and working-class Americans living in the heartland. During Sarah's turbulent childhood in Kansas in the 1980s and 1990s, she enjoyed the freedom of a country childhood but observed the painful challenges of the poverty around her; untreated medical conditions for lack of insurance or consistent care, unsafe job conditions, abusive relationships, and limited resources and information that would provide for the upward mobility that is the American Dream. By telling the story of her life and the lives of the people she loves with clarity and precision but without judgement, Smarsh challenges us to look more closely at the class divide in our country. Beautifully written, in a distinctive voice, Heartland combines personal narrative with powerful analysis and cultural commentary, challenging the myths about people thought to be less because they earn less.

**Mar 26** *Sula*, by Toni Morrison, 192 pages, 1973. Nancy Hutchins, facilitator.

Sula and Nel are two young black girls: clever and poor. They grow up together sharing their secrets, dreams and happiness. Then Sula breaks free from their small-town community in the uplands of Ohio to roam the cities of America. When she returns ten years later much has changed. Including Nel, who now has a husband and three children. The friendship between the two women becomes strained and the whole town grows wary as Sula continues in her wayward, vagabond and uncompromising ways.

**Apr 23** *My Friends*, by Fredrik Backman, 448 pages, May 6, 2025. Jayne Kasten, facilitator.

**May 28** *Anna: The Biography*, by Amy Odell, 464 pages, May 3, 2022, Teri Brecht, facilitator.

**June 25** *By Any Other Name*, by Jodi Picoult, 544 pages, August 20, 2024, Kay Myer or another group member, facilitator.

**Sept 24** *Accidentally, on Purpose*, by Kristin Kish, 352 pages, April 22, 2025, Jayne Kasten or another group member, facilitator.

## Metro St. Louis Branch Programs

**Ballwin-Chesterfield Branch**—On Thursday morning, January 8, 9:30 am, the monthly meeting will occur via Zoom. Contact [Carolyn Brown](#) for a link. The program will be presented by Emeara Burns, the Fundraising Development Officer for the St. Louis Story Stitchers, where she has dedicated eleven years to advancing the organization's mission. She is passionate about creating artistic programs and opportunities for at-risk youth, helping them grow into confident, professional artists. Her work supports the continued growth of St. Louis as a vibrant and thriving arts city.

The branch has an interesting program series in winter called Munching Matters: Lunch with Food for Thought at a local restaurant, where members tell about something interesting in their life/careers.

**Ferguson-Florissant Branch**—Contact [Joyce Bluett](#) for meeting information, 314-800-8979.

**Saint Charles Branch**—Meets the first Thursday at 1 p.m. at First St. Charles UMC, 801 First Capitol Drive, St. Charles 63301.

**St. Louis Branch**—Kirkwood-Webster Groves Branch and St. Louis branches will combine their meetings for the 2025-2026 AAUW year (see page 1).

The speaker for **January 13, 2026**, will be **Steven Lawrence, MD**, MSc Epidemiology, Washington University School of Medicine: **Vaccines to Prevent the Next Pandemic: Is There a Will to Find the Way?**

Dr. Lawrence earned his MD degree from Washington University School of Medicine in 1997 prior to completing internal medicine residency at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in 2000 and infectious diseases (ID) fellowship training at WashU Med in 2004. He subsequently earned his MSc degree in Epidemiology from the London School of Tropical Medicine and joined the full-time faculty of the ID division in 2005, where he is a professor of medicine. He has been actively engaged with preparedness, education and response to ID threats including the 2001 anthrax letter attacks, 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, 2014 Ebola outbreak and COVID-19, for which he has served on numerous WashU and public health agency task forces.



Dr. Lawrence is assistant dean for curriculum within the Office of Medical Student Education where he oversees several components of the new medical student Gateway Curriculum. He conducted published research studies on influenza and other respiratory viral illnesses, vaccines against viral illnesses, and infections in transplant patients. He sees patients and supervises trainees in the WashU ID outpatient clinic and on the transplant ID consult service in Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

## International Relations Lecture Series

If you are interested in international relations and learning about worldwide issues, you will enjoy these lectures held at **10:45 a.m. on the second Tuesday of January, February, March, and April** each year at the **Ethical Society building** on Clayton Rd in Ladue. AAUW and the Tuesday Women's Association have sponsored these lectures for over 90 years, and they are always interesting.

The Tuesday Women's Association (TWA) from the Ethical Society will lead the group again since no AAUW people were available to take the leadership. The Ethical Society supplies the facilities and equipment at no cost for the lectures. Speakers are paid \$250 from the funds raised by our donations and by passing the basket at the lectures.

### ZOOM for WINTRY WEATHER ONLY

Meeting ID: 819 6279 7894 Passcode: 412511  
For direct link, email [pattmurrayAAUW@gmail.com](mailto:pattmurrayAAUW@gmail.com).

### DID YOU KNOW . . .

that AAUW's member benefits can enhance your professional and personal life and will save you money along the way? Most important, every time you use one of your benefits, you are also supporting AAUW's vital work, which is what makes AAUW one of the nation's most powerful voices on women's issues.

With each purchase, AAUW receives a royalty that supports equal-pay advocacy, community programs, leadership development tools, the student leadership conference and so much more! [Click here](#) to see the list of perks and discounts.

# National News

From Susan Barley  
AAUW Advancement Committee  
December 25, 2025  
314-361-2920  
[barley702@gmail.com](mailto:barley702@gmail.com)



Greetings from the AAUW  
Advancement Committee!

In this holiday season, we want to thank you for your accomplishments this year and look forward to what is coming in 2026. To that end, and to make your work easier, we are sharing links to resources.

- **Alumnae Recognition Award 2025:** <https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/aauw-celebrates-2025-alumnae-recognition-award-honoring-finance-leader-yie-hsin-hung/>
- **Archivist Webinar Recording:** “Branches in Action: A Century of Advocacy, Fundraising and Impact,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pcLysNAbgl>
- **Bylaws Toolkit:** The Governance Committee also worked on creating better directions for bylaws updates: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member-leader-resources-tools/bylaws-toolkit/>
- **Degree Equivalency Policy:** In May 2025, the AAUW National Board of Directors approved a formal policy for Degree Equivalency for prospective members. This policy explains the criteria for equivalency. The policy can be found on page 4 of the May 14, 2025, Board of Directors’ Minutes: <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2025/07/5.14.25-Board-Minutes-FINAL.pdf>
- **Membership Webinar:** Four branches, Carlsbad (NM), Morgan Hill (CA), North Hills Pittsburgh (PA), and Rapid City (SD): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XydvfPODZS8>
- **Public Policy Priorities 2025-2027:** <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2025/05/Public-Policy-Principles-One-pager.pdf>
- **Public Policy Webinar on Collaborations:** “Working in Coalition: Building Power through Partnerships,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im6VsWTi7X8>
- **Right-sizing Toolkit:** The Governance Committee worked on how branches can streamline their bylaws and their operations so they can be more successful: <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2025/11/AAUW-Right-Sizing-Toolkit-10.1.2025.pdf>

Attached is “At Your Fingertips: AAUW Leader Resources and Tools” list that accompanied the membership webinar last month. It’s a handy guide to finding key resources on the national website. You will find these helpful in leading your states and branches.

## AAUW December Updates

- **NCCWSL:** NASPA has recently shared updates, and they are posted on their website here: <https://www.naspa.org/events/nccws> The event will be held May 27-30, 2026, at the University of Maryland College Park. Registration amounts: Residential attendees in double occupancy: \$585, single occupancy: \$625; and commuters: \$385. The registration deadline is **May 18** for those needing housing; for commuters, the registration deadline is **May 28**.
- **Membership Recruitment Best Practices Webinar:** The recording is live on our website and YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XydvfPODZS8>
- **SAVE THE DATE:** February 18<sup>th</sup> Member Gathering (virtual) – 4:30pm ET / 1:30pm PT. Invitation and registration link will be sent in January.
- **Branch and State Website Maintenance:** Please be advised that the branch websites will be undergoing scheduled maintenance. TENTATIVELY, this will begin on Friday, January 9th at 5:00 PM (EST). The maintenance window is expected to conclude on Monday, January 12th at 9:00 AM (EST). During this time, branch and state websites hosted on [aauw.net](http://aauw.net) may be unavailable. More information will be shared once the timeline has been confirmed.
- **Annual Branch Survey:** Approximately 155 branches did not complete the 2025 branch survey. Tremayne Parquet has been seeking feedback from those branches, state leaders, and the Advancement committee to make improvements for the coming year that will enable more branches to respond. We need to increase and reinforce getting these responses. The changes made last year increased the response rate, but there is more that can be done by understanding barriers to completion. The deadline for submitting the follow-up questionnaire for these non-responding branches is Feb. 28, 2026.

Continued on next page

- \* **Support Needed:** Tremayne Parquet emailed all State Presidents a list of Branches that did not complete the survey in their state on September 26<sup>th</sup>. He also included a link to the short 5 question questionnaire to learn more about their barriers to completion. The link to the questionnaire is here: [FY25 AAUW Annual Branch Survey Feedback](#) He sent an additional two reminders – but we still have low participation. **Please reach out to the branches in your state that DID NOT fill out the survey for 2025.** If you need to receive that list again, please email Tremayne at [parquett@aauw.org](mailto:parquett@aauw.org)
- **Feedback from Unresponsive Branches:** So far, we have only 19 responses from this group, so conclusions now are preliminary. That said, there are four reasons that more than one respondent gave:
  - \* **Communication about the survey:** 5 of the 19 respondents said they missed survey notifications or said they did not receive anything;
  - \* **Purpose of the survey:** 4 of the 19 said they were uncertain as to why the survey matters to branches. We need to strengthen the messaging around the value of completing the survey and the value the national office brings to branches;
  - \* **Branch capacity:** 2 of the 19 said they do not have someone who can complete the survey, suggesting that their branch status is uncertain and/or that they too few members;
  - \* **Survey completion support:** 3 of the 19 needed extra support to complete the survey: 3 said they had a timing conflict—they didn't have the time to complete the survey by the deadline; others needed help with the online form or needed an alternative method (paper form or phone call) for completing it.

So far, there has not been resistance to the idea of the survey; it is mostly that more support and communication are needed. As leaders change, we need to continue to communicate well about this. Through the end of February, follow up with those who have not responded yet to this questionnaire as needed.

### **News from the Inclusion and Equity Committee** **Karen Francis and Trish Garner, co-chairs**

The Committee has focused this cycle on strengthening members' comfort, confidence, and skill in engaging in inclusion and equity conversations during a time of heightened polarization. Our goal is to support members in practicing courageous listening and taking meaningful, practical steps toward more genuine inclu-

sion across AAUW and the communities where we live and lead.

### **Recent Committee Activities**

- **Reaffirming AAUW Values through Conversation** – In State Diversity Chair meetings, we have centered our discussions on “The Courage to Listen, The Willingness to Act: Moving Inclusion Forward,” highlighting AAUW’s ongoing commitment to fairness, equity, and justice—while acknowledging both successes and missteps in past DEI efforts.
- **Shifting from “Talking To” to “Talking With”** – We introduced and practiced simple, accessible discussion frameworks and exercises designed to help branches and states move from presentation-style conversations to more reciprocal, member-centered engagement.
- **Member Engagement Over Webinar Production** – Rather than rushing into webinar development, we have intentionally invested in building capacity and trust through direct dialogue with State Diversity Chairs, modeling the inclusive practices we hope to amplify across the organization.

### **Plans for the Coming Months**

- **Showcasing Branch and State Initiatives** – State Diversity Chairs will share how they have implemented inclusion and equity conversations locally; we hope these examples will form the foundation of our next national webinar.
- **Addressing Challenging Information Environments** – Because “facts” increasingly depend on differing media ecosystems, the Committee will develop guidance for engaging with diverse news and information sources as part of healthy inclusion practices.
- **Clarifying Key Concepts** – We plan to help members explore complex topics such as engaging with diverse news and information sources and topics such as “equity” vs. “equality” through practical frameworks that keep discussion grounded, respectful, and accessible.