

This is a moment to celebrate!

On April 15, our board met, approved and accepted AAUW South Haven's 5 Year Strategic Plan. This was the culmination of the work we began a year ago at the 2019 annual meeting. Our members were then asked to consider three simple but essential questions.

**What do we value?**

**What's missing?**

**How do we grow?**

Membership input at that meeting and throughout the year guided each step of our work. Past presidents, current board members, members at large, gathered several times during the past year to create a blueprint that will guide our organizational decision making into the future.

We also want to recognize the assistance we were given by AAUW MI board member Danielle Nelson Beard who facilitated the process at key junctures, keeping us focused and moving us forward to an end-product that is responsible, practical and realistic.

As a board we are committed to "working the road map" and respecting what we can accomplish within its guidelines. The many stated goals and responsibilities will be championed by designated committees and board positions. Specific timelines and measurable outcomes will be established by those members who have direct responsibility. The strategic plan will be reviewed by the board each year to ensure its workability and success.

What we realized again and again throughout this process is AAUW SH does much of its work successfully, while meeting our members expectations. GREAT! We also recognized a strong need to do more to enhance already established programs. There was and still is, an exciting sense of "What else?" and "What's next?"

Although, we are technically rolling this strategic plan out tonight, much of the work has already begun. You probably noticed this as you read through the plan. Most of these, "movements forward" will be noted by committee chairs during their upcoming reports tonight.

I want to take a few moments to highlight some other specifics of the plan.

Four themes emerged as we analyzed member input and these themes are important to note.

**Significant Impact:** We need to make a real difference in the lives of woman and girls as we empower them to live their fullest lives and pursue their dreams.

**Relevancy and Visibility:** We need to be recognized as an organization of import and thoughtful contribution within our community.

**Sustainability:** We can not bite off more than we can chew. Thoughtful consideration of the broader impact of any project or event we decide to engage in or continue will become routine, making us a stronger more effective organization.

**Diversity:** We recognize diversity is an area where we struggle. We want to become a resource for all women. Our members know the rewards of our social capital and the ongoing support we offer one another. We need to work to broaden that impact to include a wider variety of women. AAUW SH needs to be recognized as worthwhile and welcoming to all cultures. Perception might not be reality, but if perception is limiting the kinds of members we attract, then we need to improve our perceived identity. We KNOW that greater diversity on all levels will make us a stronger organization.

We KNOW we have work to do. We hope (and are counting on) member input to once again help us move forward and achieve this goal. We can thank Mike Saenz for his new member membership and the role he now plays in our organization, one of which is instantly making us more diverse. Thanks Mike!

A few more goals to highlights

**Approach 100% participation in Rapid Responders.** We understand that this is an ambitious goal, but wouldn't it be exciting to be able to not only make that claim, but to benefit from the strength that 100% participation would give our advocacy mission?

**Provide training for current and new board members. Explore ways to encourage/facilitate leadership among members.** The more committee leaders and board members feel their work is worthwhile and enjoy their work, the more attractive leadership positions become. The more we appreciate and support the efforts of all members and the role they play in the effectiveness of AAUW the more valuable their investment of time and energy become. It follows that members will then be more willing to step up and into new roles and the opportunities these roles can provide.

**Create a member data base of talents and interests.** This collection of information will allow our "talent searches" to become more effective, and dare I say ... strategic.

There is much more, so much more, but you get the gist.

I said that tonight was a culmination. I lied.

It is a culmination of the AAUW SH Five Year Strategic Plan Part One

Now, on to Strategic Plan Part Two, which is **work, review, REWARD with strength.**