



Open Membership Talking Points

- There will be a vote in 2024 on the degree requirement for membership.
- In 2021, more than 60% of the voters approved the change. Fewer than 10% of the members voted against it. Fewer than 25% of the members voted.
- As AAUW has changed to adapt to the changing world, its membership requirements have changed many times to become more inclusive.
- This change would allow all who support our mission to stand with us.
- Those without degrees fight for gender equity just as we do. We can be stronger advocates as we learn more about their battles and their alternate paths to success.
- The AAUW Board of Directors and the Inclusion and Equity Committee both support the change and the associated campaign to pass the bylaws amendment to open membership
- Our standing as a national organization that advances gender equity with a value of inclusion is at risk if we do not allow all who support our mission to join us. Please vote.

Members May Ask

1. This change has been rejected several times in the past. Why are we voting on this again?
 - More than 62% of the voters in 2021 approved the change. Fewer than 10% of the members opposed it and prevented it from reaching the two-thirds affirmative vote required for a change to the bylaws.



- Turnout in 2021 was less than 25%, indicating many members had no strong feeling either way.
- Let's finally put this to rest. If you voted "no" or did not vote in 2021, we respectfully ask you to consider the arguments in favor of the change and plan to vote in 2024.

2. What are the reasons to vote in favor of the change?

- It is an opportunity to understand the breadth of the fight for gender equity in today's world and to strengthen our advocacy efforts by including those directly affected.
- It is an opportunity to honor our stated value of Inclusion. This is important as diverse, particularly younger, folks consider joining us
- It removes the contradiction introduced in 2009 when we approved an organizational overhaul to better prepare the organization for its future. We dropped "uniting graduates" from our purpose (it had been missing from the "mission" for years) and replaced it with "advancing equity". However, after a spirited floor debate, we kept the requirement that we all be "graduates".
- What's more important -- the honor of being a member of AAUW because of your degree, or the work we do to advance equity and the inclusiveness that requires?

3. What about serious questions raised in opposition to the change?

- Does this devalue our support for education? No. We can continue to change without forgetting our roots – our commitment to higher education as a path to success, our support for fellowships and grants, and more. We just will allow those who have taken parallel paths to join us as we work for gender equity.
- Won't we have to change our name? No. We'll be "AAUW". When asked "What's AAUW?", say you are part of a national membership organization that works for gender equity then describe your local



projects and events. There's really no need to use each word from the acronym, just as YMCA doesn't need an explanation.

4. How will this affect my branch if it passes?

- Each branch will determine its own destiny. Embrace the change, and it may open you up to new opportunities as well as new members. It's up to you.
- If you have members who believe AAUW is defined by its membership requirement, not by its current mission, vision, and values, you may find that conversations on the issue will sway some of them. Watch for suggestions on how to have those conversations.

Open Membership Task Force

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