

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
August 6, 2025**

A videoconference meeting of the AAUW Board of Directors (the “Board”) was held on August 6, 2025. The meeting began at 4:03 PM Eastern.

**Directors Present:**

Dianne Owens, Chair  
Melissa LaDuke, Vice Chair  
Christine Schmitz, Finance Chair  
Sona Pancholy, Secretary  
Kimberley Adams  
Hope Tryon Bennett  
Aaliyah El-Amin  
Jenna Kirkpatrick Howard  
Jeanie Latz  
Shaila Rao Mistry  
Hope Ricciotti  
Auntaneshia Staveloz  
Gloria Blackwell, CEO (ex officio)

**Staff Present:**

Shannon Wolfe, Managing Director and Chief of Staff  
Katrina Sun Breese, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement

**Directors Absent:**

Edwina Frances Martin  
Monique Taylor  
Mayida Zaal

**Call to Order and Welcome**

Dianne Owens, Board Chair, called the meeting to order, noting that a quorum was present. Ms. Owens began with an icebreaker, encouraging board members to share one idea to help AAUW increase membership or funding. These ideas will inform future discussions.

**Strategic Plan Updates and Discussion**

Gloria Blackwell, CEO, began with an update on transition plans underway at AAUW in light of Shannon Wolfe, Managing Director and Chief of Staff’s upcoming departure. She thanked Ms. Wolfe for her work with AAUW and summarized the work underway to review the organization structure. A revised job description has been posted and

recruitment has started. Katrina Sun Breese's role will expand and she has agreed to take on a broader function. Carsyn Baxter has been promoted, expanding her role beyond special projects and will serve an important role in supporting the Board and governance. A new Executive Associate has been hired to back fill a vacancy. An updated org chart will be available to the Board at a future meeting. Ms. Blackwell praised the staff's dedication and assured the Board they were prepared to continue to lead during this transition.

Ms. Blackwell then provided an update on various programs starting with Fellowships & Grants. The team is onboarding the 2025 incoming class and launching the application for the 2026 class. New technology and workflow changes are being incorporated to create efficiencies. There are signs of continued strong interest in this offering from AAUW, as demonstrated by over 1000 applications started or completed within the first several days of opening the application process.

For the current class the team is providing flexibility and additional support. There are still some awardees awaiting visas and the team is working with them. There are alternates also available to receive awards if need be.

Lastly Ms. Blackwell noted that the team has launched a survey to F&G Alumnae to gather ideas about engagement, advocacy, research and giving.

Ms. Blackwell then turned to an update regarding policy work, highlighting key strategies the team is addressing at this time. She called out the work of LobbyCorps, grassroots efforts, training programs and supporting state and branches in their efforts, and reaffirmed AAUW's use of our voice and our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ms. Blackwell called upon Ms. Breese to provide top line results of the recent Branch Survey. Ms. Breese began by celebrating the significant increase in completion rates. Specifically, 453 / 613 branches completed the survey, resulting in a 74% completion rate. This is an increase from the prior year when 320 / 688 branches completed the survey.

Ms. Breese highlighted drivers of that success and identified further evaluation the team will do to continue the momentum. Amongst the key drivers were enhanced communication steps, an adjusted timing of when the survey took place, more user-friendly design, a grace period beyond the deadline, and a clearer value proposition.

Ms. Breese then turned to the survey data itself, focusing on branches that achieved success in the 5-star program. She noted that the number of branches achieving all five stars increased from 16 to 54 over last year. She also called attention to the overall

increase in the number of branches meeting the requirements to earn each individual star.

Finally Ms. Breese noted the top requests that came from branches in terms of things they would value from the national organization to help achieve even further alignment. Top requests included membership collateral, fundraising resources and tools, and virtual briefings on policy issues. Training on advocacy was also a top request. The team is putting together plans to respond to requests that surfaced from the survey and refine the survey for the coming year.

### **Board Pipeline and Target Skills / Competencies**

Melissa LaDuke, Vice Chair, updated the Board on the Nominating Committee's discussions regarding target skills / competencies for this year's recruitment. She invited feedback from the Board and incorporated suggestions within the Nominating Committee's draft materials. Ms. LaDuke encouraged all board members to consider sending her names of prospective candidates to support the effort. Five active and key members are rolling off the board this year. Interviews will start in September or October and wrap up in February.

### **The Vote for Inclusive Membership**

Ms. Owens announced a task force to review past efforts and explore the potential to revisit the vote for inclusive membership. Auntaneshia Staveloz will chair the task force. Ms. Owens asked Hope Bennett, Mayida Zaal, and Ms. LaDuke to serve, with Ms. Owens joining as an ex officio. Other members of the board were invited to volunteer to assist.

### **Consent Agenda**

Sona Pancholy, Secretary, directed the Board's attention to the Consent Agenda items, noting there are two items for action, namely the minutes of the June 2025 board meeting and the membership consent calendar. There are two items for information, including the executive committee minutes and the membership trends chart.

There being no further discussion and following a motion and a second, the board approved the following resolutions:

#### *Resolution Approving the Minutes of the June 12-13, 2025 Board Meeting*

The Board of Directors of AAUW approves the minutes of the June 12-13, 2025 annual and board meetings as presented.

#### *Resolution Approving the Membership Consent Calendar*

The Board of Directors of AAUW approves the Membership Consent Calendar dated July 24, 2025, as presented.

### **Other Business**

Hearing no other business, Ms. Owens thanked Ms. Blackwell and Ms. Breese for their time. Ms. Wolfe was invited to join the Executive Session.

### **Executive Session**

The Board met in Executive Session with attending Board members present and Shannon Wolfe present. Ms. Wolfe and Ms. Owens described the CEO performance evaluation process which is already underway.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM ET. Finally Ms. Breese noted the top requests that came from branches in terms of things they would value from the national organization to help achieve even further alignment. Top requests included membership collateral, fundraising resources and tools, and virtual briefings on policy issues. Training on advocacy was also a top request. The team is putting together plans to respond to requests that surfaced from the survey and refine the survey for the coming year.

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