

**RESOLUTION ON MEMBERSHIP
AAUW LONG VALLEY, IDAHO BRANCH**

Approved September 18, 2010

Resolved: That AAUW Long Valley, Idaho Branch, re-affirm its support of changing the AAUW membership requirement to include all individuals who support the AAUW mission rather than requiring a degree for membership. The AAUW mission states “AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.”

Rationale (from 2006 resolution passed by Long Valley Branch):

- While the action taken at the 2005 Association Convention to broaden the membership requirement to include individuals with an Associate Degree or equivalent is a good first step it does not meet the standard of equity for all women and girls.
- It is time to decide if AAUW membership is about our mission or simply reflects our status as college graduates. What is AAUW’s reason for being?
- If AAUW purports to stand for equity for all women and girls, then AAUW should open its membership doors to all women and girls.
- The best way to work for all is to include all.
- Barriers to education are complex. Major barriers in the US today are economic and cultural. A large proportion of Idaho is rural and access to college is even more of an economic challenge than in predominately urban states.
- Many women take extended time to complete their degrees. These women need AAUW’s support and encouragement to “stay with it” and our networking opportunities to provide resources and contacts. Currently they are not welcome as members at a time in their lives when AAUW may help them the most.
- The mission of “equity for women and girls” is ill served by restrictive membership criteria. There is no equity when some are denied membership. Who defines education? Is it only that which takes place in the classroom? How do we accomplish positive societal change when we prohibit from joining those who may need our help or who support our goals, but who don’t have the “right” degree? Rural Idaho is particularly ill-served by this restriction.
- Members of today’s younger generation are not interested in the prestige factor and see AAUW as a closed club rather than a diverse organization. These women may judge AAUW as discriminatory and not want to join such a group. Many current members keep their AAUW affiliation from others to avoid the perception of belonging to an elitist group.
- How can we seek a “diverse membership” when we restrict participation on the basis of amount of formalized education? Being restrictive no longer motivates women to obtain their degrees.
- Students are eligible for reduced-rate membership but no longer can be members if they do not complete their degree work or receive an AA or equivalent degree.