## **Summary of Report from Laura De Veau re: Strategic Planning for AAUW-CT**

The Strategic Planning Process was facilitated by Laura De Veau, Principal & Founder of Fortify Associates.

## **SWOT NARRATIVE for AAUW-CT**

**Strengths:**

* Finances are relatively stable
* Longstanding organizational structure that focuses on regionality within the state
* Several traditional programs of which members are proud
* Strong sense of longtime membership affinity to organizations
* Broad number of Higher Ed and K-12 institutions/districts from which to recruit members

**Weaknesses:**

* Membership lists are decentralized
* Not a clear understanding or appreciation from membership regarding CT AAUW’s value
* Executive Leadership is performing all the work
* Organizational capacity is hindered due to lack of leadership “on the bench”
* No statewide tradition or mechanism for communication

**Opportunities:**

* Strong & Engaged Leadership
* Longstanding Tradition & “Good Reputation”
* AAUW National New Strategic Plan
* CT has statewide quality of public & private education
* Organization is small enough that it can be nimble

**Threats**

* National average of membership: 79 years of age
* AAUW membership is not considered a value add
* AAUW may be considered an “old fashioned” organization by younger potential members

## **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

Interviews with 12 current members of the organization were performed on May 26

The interviews provided consistent insight:

* That while the organization was beneficial the value was largely a usefulness to those seeking social connectivity and interaction (book clubs, mahjong, etc.).
* With the exception of two members of the focus groups who were currently employed on college campuses, young women and girls were not mentioned by the focus group participants.
* Communication was inconsistent and sat in the hands of branch leadership. There was not a great deal of centralized communication, however, such state-wide communication would be appreciated.
* The organization could be more intentional in reaching out to young women and girls.

## **PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

We are recommending the following as strategic priorities:

**Membership**The organization’s membership is aging and not rejuvenating. In addition, volunteers are not transitioning into leadership roles. As a result, there is not “a bench” to pull from for statewide leadership positions or for assistance in leading events. This is creating a leadership gap as well as a membership void.

CT-AAUW must perform a full audit of membership using records from the AAUW national membership and cross reference to records that are being maintained by the branches.

Specific action steps:

* Create a category of members that are “seasoned” long-time members. These are individuals invited to specific events that are social in nature, but do not receive financial support from the AAUW national as they do not align with the mission-driven expectations.
	+ Appoint 2 members to manage coordination of events and act as a conduit to the Communications Coordinator (see below) to advertise regular events.
* Set membership goals for the next three years. These goals should be focused on recruiting and retaining new members. K-12, Higher Education and New Professional membership categories should be tracked.
	+ Foundation for others to step into this – rather than start over again.
	+ Creating Campus/District contacts
* Create a membership committee that has representation from campuses as well as from K-12 as a means to do intentional outreach to college and graduate students as well as K-12 administrators and teachers
	+ Utilizing virtual communication means (Zoom, GoTo Meeting, Google Hangouts, etc.) offer free networking opportunities each year that would provide a primer for potential members to interact, and then push them to joining CT AAUW
* Audit the membership list
	+ Confirm partnership/contacts at institutions and school districts
	+ Obtain full CT list of membership from AAUW
	+ Obtain “internal records” from CT AAUW leadership

**Communication**

Communication to membership is largely disjointed, this dilutes the message and does not provide statewide visibility of efforts.

Specific action steps:

* Perform a branding exercise where CT-AAUW commissions consistent branded collateral. This can be an email template, a written program template, post cards, etc. The leadership should determine what the best branded items are and move forward with commissioning a volunteer or paying a designer to create what is needed.
* Identify a preferred client communication and distribution software such as MailChimp, Constant Contact, HubSpot, etc. Proper utilization and coding of the distribution list can allow for more targeted communication which would allow for Branch or other specific messaging as well as state messaging.
* Identify a Communications Coordinator who will manage marketing and communications for the state. Branch directors and other leaders should work in concert with this individual.
* Creation of a monthly/quarterly communication schedule. The schedule should identify what is to be disseminated on a monthly basis and this information will be curated by a volunteer who will be responsible for state-wide distribution. All branches will be represented as well as statewide content.
* Regular AAUW updates from the national should be provided to CT AAUW members, in an effort to connect them with the full organization.

**Event Alignment**

Specific action steps:

* Event calendar with Color Coding system – Showing Events that are mission, networking, traditional, etc.
* An annual meeting to discuss the event calendar for the upcoming year as well as to review the outcomes and success of the previous year should be convened.
* Create marketing information that highlights longstanding traditional programs, this should be pushed out regularly with “save the date” information via the Communications Coordinator’s existing communication method.
* Share the calendar with the state leadership in advance of advertising to members. The state leadership should provide feedback
* Coordinate with Branches to create a consolidated scholarship program to encourage young women to attend events. Such a program will not only show that there is value to participating in CT AAUW events, but it will also be a means by which to capture information on those who may be likely to join CT AAUW or lead the organization. It is also a means by which to do some fundraising for the organization and help to raise the perceived value of membership.