

## ***Convention survey results - 2007***

A survey of branch presidents was conducted to determine interest and participation in the AAUW NC's state convention. Twenty of the twenty-one branch presidents were reached by phone. In the case of the three branches that have co-presidents, only one president was surveyed. Following are the results.

### ***Context questions***

#### **I. Have you been to a state convention?**

##### **A. Yes - 17**

##### **i) How many?**

Fifteen said 1-6. 3 almost always attend and have for many years.

##### **ii) When?**

Most remembered the most recent locations, i.e. New Bern, Asheville, Raleigh. Some only attended if the convention was very near to her hometown or one that her branch hosted.

##### **iii) What was most valuable to you?**

**PROGRAM** Workshops-both AAUW and experts from outside AAUW  
Learning about the workings of the NC state organization, the high level of accomplishment and abilities of the women in our state.

**LAF speakers** Hearing National officers speak

Meeting other AAUW NC members – Networking – Mealtime conversations

Outside speakers, i.e. New Bern convention cited many times as having excellent and interesting speakers/workshops from outside AAUW. Raleigh convention cited as having many National AAUW officers.

Breakout sessions/small group discussions

##### **Special Comments:**

All convention attendees should receive a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of all attendees. Speakers and workshop leaders should be included so that they can be contacted in case of follow-up questions.

##### **B. No - 3**

##### **i) What prevented you from attending? Did you even consider it?**

Was employed full-time and couldn't take the time to attend.

Might attend this year.

##### **ii) Have you attended any other meetings similar to a state convention?**

One president who works full time has attended a state meeting of another organization.

## **Logistics questions**

### **I. Do you prefer an all-inclusive fee or a la carte. Say \$100 registration and meals or registration and meals priced separately.**

Twelve prefer a la carte

Six really haven't thought about it or they don't have an opinion

One would like a choice to be available

One thought it should be an all-inclusive fee for everyone except the host branch

### **II. If cost is a factor in determining your attendance, please give us an idea of what you'd be willing to budget for such a meeting.**

For at least nine of the presidents, cost is not a factor. \$200-300 seemed reasonable to most of them. Some felt that cost is a factor for some members of her branch.

Other comments: Would prefer \$100-200 price range. We don't need a fancy hotel.

### **III. Is the place that we hold it important to you? Do you prefer meetings that are formal or informal? [Head table, dress, and hotel vs. campus or community hall.]**

LOCATION: A major factor in attendance for those in the far western and eastern regions of the state. At least 4 said they would never travel across the state for a meeting. Several others said they loved going to different locations and would go wherever the meeting was held. A couple of people said they love the tours and getting to know another city.

6-8 respondents prefer a hotel, in town, with good parking

2 do not care where it is held so long as it is less expensive.

Most (12-14) prefer informal dress and dining set up

3 prefer some formality – head table and dressing up for the banquet.

The rest do not care where the meeting is held so long as everything is in one building and there is sufficient parking. Going from one building to another is difficult for some older members.

**Special Comments:** Attendees at conventions should dress professionally. I have been so disappointed to see our standards go down on this issue.

I tend to skip banquets because of the need to dress up.

### **IV. Is Internet access important to you during convention?**

Yes – 6                      No – 9                      No opinion - 5

Most felt they could live without it for the weekend or they don't use it enough to have an opinion.

**Special Comments:** There is too much 'stuff' sent from AAUW-NC. I can't possibly find the time to read all the material that is sent. The national website is too difficult to navigate.

**V. Would changing the convention from every year to every other year be a good idea? (From the point of view of your attendance and the organization).**

Yes – 9                      No – 4                      No opinion/not sure – 7

**Special Comments:** If held every other year, the leadership conferences should be meatier/more important.

Cost effectiveness may be a factor.

Stagger the times of year that convention is held. Let's not always have it the same month each year.

Getting time off from work is a real factor for me.

Those who wanted it yearly said the new officers, especially presidents, need the information before taking office.

People are too busy for yearly meetings. Better to do less of them.

Some people will lose direction if you cut to alternate years.

## **Program**

**I. What draws you to the event? The program? The area of the state? Your responsibilities to the organization? Habit?**

Program – 9

Area of the state/location - 7

Responsibility to the organization – 6

**Special Comments:** A big name speaker would be a draw.

Workshops that interest me

I would never travel across the state for this meeting.

I love going to different areas of the state and enjoy seeing new places.

Cost does matter.

Cost doesn't matter.

Time matters. It is difficult to get time off from work.

**II. What do you think is the right balance of AAUW ideas vs. workshops from people outside of AAUW?**

The majority wants a 50-50 balance of AAUW workshops and workshops put on by outside people. They see value in having both.

**Special Comments:** If membership is the subject, then use AAUW materials.

Coalition partner programs would be helpful.

Speakers on topics relating to our state's public education have been boring.

DO NOT always get FREE speakers. Going on the cheap is not always good.

A balance is OK but I enjoyed the outside speakers the most.

Outside speakers need to interest all ages (i.e. identity theft workshop).

We really need the variety brought by outside speakers.

Workshops that require participation are the best.

### **III. What's an upper boundary on the time that should be spent in business meetings vs. workshops and other events?**

Time OK as is – 5

**Many other comments follow. Strong feelings are capitalized.**

No time limit but the chair **MUST** move the business along faster.

Business must be confined to no more than ½ day.

There should be a **MINIMUM TIME** spent on business meetings. The Executive Committee **BEFORE** going to convention should iron out most things.

More things should be in written report form so fewer people get up and speak.

There should be less time on business meetings and more on workshops.

Two hours or less should be spent on business.

Executive Committee must do more. Please let us not continue to go over and over the same topic at these meetings.

To go over and over the same thing is a waste of time. The Chair must move the business forward in a better manner.

Limit all business to no more than 2 ½ hours including the Friday night meeting.

Would like to finish business by 10 or 10:30 AM on Sunday so those of us with long distances to travel can get on the road.

Business meetings are too long and very boring.

**Special comments:** Several people stressed the following:

The Chair must see that speakers stay on topic, as some people like to hear themselves talk.

Write out all announcements and **PLEASE** do not read them to us.

Rules of discussion should be printed out. There is no need to read them to us.

**NOTE:** Doris Bernlohr and Grace Knechtel conducted the interviews. We both found the presidents interesting and easy to talk to. Many felt quite strongly about the questions and some didn't. Most were glad to talk about everything we asked and some things we didn't ask. It was hard to keep some respondents on topic and many interviews ran 20+ minutes. Grace tried numerous times by phone and email to reach the president of Cherokee County without success.