



American Association of University Women North Carolina (AAUW NC) Leadership Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: August 13, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Meeting Location: ZOOM and in-person Greensboro History Museum

Members Present: Jenise Abdull-Razzaq, Millie Hoffler Foushee, Tiffany Jacobs, Laura Tew, Christi Whitworth, Lena Murrill-Chapman, Shaunda Oberhausen, Treka Spraggins, and on ZOOM Mary Ann Bents, Ruth Wright, and Kathy Pearre.

Subject	Discussion/Progress/Decisions
TOPIC Facilitator or Speaker Name, Role	Notes
I. Meeting Opening, AAUW NC President, Lena Murrill-Chapman	Appendix A - Agenda Lena Murrill-Chapman opened the meeting at 10:07 AM.
II. Welcome	Carol Hart, Director Greensboro History Museum
III. History and Mission of AAUW	Lena Murrill-Chapman emphasized the legacy and the inclusion of AAUW North Carolina members at the national level. State board as a communication conduit with national and provide support to the branch members and leadership.
IV. AGENDA reports and information	
a. Executive Committee	Question posed to all participants: How did you first get interested in joining AAUW? Lena Murrill-Chapman, AAUW NC President, educator and media specialist who learned about AAUW through the local newspaper. She was invited by Everlena Diggs. Joined the Greensboro branch following Everlena invitation. Lena likes team work to empower women and girls. Through every role, Lena

	listens and learns and stays involved. Tiffany Jacobs: AAUW has allowed her to be mentored and become a mentor while serving at local, state, and national organizations. Christi Whitworth, Treasurer of the state and president of Tar Heel branch. AAUW has provided a network statewide and a resource in each community. She also served on a national STEM committee. Laura Tew, Branch Advocate - joined in 1997 and serves branch leaders throughout the state Millie Hoffler-Foushee, Funds Chair - wishes to mentor others to develop as AAUW and to assist with fundraising. Mary Ann Bents, Communications Chair - a member in Hendersonville branch since retiring from NASA. She was involved in DEI advocacy groups with NASA and wanted to continue that involvement in Hendersonville. Kathy Pearre, outgoing program chair - she worked for a number of years as adult education for the Girl Scout Council.
b. Branch Presidents	Question posed to all participants: How did you first get interested in joining AAUW? Jenise Abdull-Razzaaq, Greensboro Branch President, joined in 2018 after moving from Ohio. Volunteerism is important to Jenise and advocate in social justice and health. Ruth Wright, Brevard Branch President, software development for Northrup Gruman and moved to Brevard and joined AAUW to be more involved in the community.
c. AAUW NC Leadership roles, responsibilities, and recognition.	Lena Murrill-Chapman volunteers in all positions. Lena presents those present with stars and buttons. Attendees read their buttons which highlight challenges.
d. Programs and Initiatives in North Carolina	Tiffany Jacobs, Vice President - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion - Tiffany served at the branch, state, and national committees which developed a road map for success. Tiffany is helping identify a successor to her role in the state board. - Engagement and Participation not necessarily formal membership. First step: ASK how we collaborate with the community. Running good programs in the community and being creative based on community interests. - Belonging - people return when they feel welcomed. Avoid using insider language or acronyms. Tiffany mentioned the “women’s circle” model in Honolulu. AAUW sponsored programs that are more focused on women who are not members. Attendees pitched in with ideas and examples in communities from the western part of the state that benefit from collaborations and groups with needs, especially educators who need resources for further development for themselves and their students. Treka spoke to the inclusive approach to improve quality of life to perform as university and career women. - Messaging about AAUW - advocacy and impact; promoting shared purpose. - College and University Programs - scholarships for women, leadership and personal development, STEM

	- EmpowerHer Program virtual Zoom available to all members. Mary Ann mentioned that we need to consider holding watch-parties to include non-members, encouraging attendance and participation. Perhaps hold local branch meetings on the same topics as EmpowerHer. - Public Policy - Pat Ashe was leading and there is a lot going on. In Greensboro, the public policy forums are held at the synagogue. Two minute advocate promotion. State conference included League of Women Voters, NC ERA Alliance, and Congressman Alma Adams. State network of branch public policy chairs.
e Branch Advocate; strategic plan	Laura Tew. Handout – Appendix B
f. Communications - Website update, Newsletter, Social Media	Mary Ann Bents. Handout – Appendix C
g. Finance Officer	Christi Whitworth Current situation with AAUW NC financials approved budget for 2026-2027 <i>(Note: the approved FY27 budget is posted on the website at: https://www.aauwnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026-27-Approved-Budget-AAUWNC.pdf)</i> There is a shortfall for the upcoming year of about \$4000 which can be covered by reserves. The decision was made by the state board to keep \$6000 in reserve in the checking account. State and Affiliate Finance Roles For follow up: - Adequate insurance for branches is a question - Records retention guidelines
h. AAUW Funds	Millie Hoffler-Foushee What can be done in specific branches to raise funds?
I. Increase and enhance membership	Group Activity - ideas collected and shared Shaunda - introduce high school students; Incredible Ladies United. Period Treka - reach and collaborate with organizations of younger women Jenise - appeal to younger members by understanding issues that they are facing such as caregivers and financial issues Tiffany - help reduce barriers to participation for younger women Mary Ann - hosting meetings on weekends
J. Future directions & Goals	State conference 2028 Women's Equality Day August 26, 2026 Events Calendar on the Website Community Outreach and Partnership Continue the mission
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 2:00. Continue the mission until we meet againma

Appendix B – Branch Advocate Handout

BRANCH ADVOCATE

High performing leaders and members -Resources and Tools

FOUR BRANCH leadership positions

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/leader-resources-tools/state-branch/volunteer-leader-position-descriptions/>

President/Admin

Finance Officer

Funds

STEM

Compliance with local, state, and national expectations

Bylaws

Annual Reports

State and Federal registrations and returns

Submissions to Connect

Websites and/or other public branch identified communications

Alignment with state and national strategic plan

<https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2025/05/Leader-Briefing-Slide-Deck.pdf>

NATIONAL: Funding Higher Ed

STATE/BRANCH

Local Scholarships

K-12 Programs

STEM Ed Programs

NATIONAL: Remove barriers to success in Education and the Workplace

STATE/BRANCH Grassroots action on AAUW priority issues or those with local community impact

State/local policy initiatives and representation

Leverage AAUW National resources

Campus work with students and faculty

STATE/BRANCH Mobilize members for coordinated national action with regional focus.

NATIONAL Our Collective Impact Is Stronger Together

Advocacy Your voices amplify our message at local, state, and national levels.

Fundraising Your efforts help sustain critical member support functions.

Community Branch and state activities strengthen our ability to empower women locally

Appendix C – Communications Chair Handout

Notes for AAUW NC Leadership Meeting – August 13, 2026

Connect Newsletter

1. Newsletter distributed each month with the exception of July. An extra issue may be distributed with info about the Annual Meeting. We had extra issues in 2026 about the AAUW NC State Conference.
2. Always distributed on the 1st day of the month.
3. Each newsletter includes a section with the due date for the articles to be submitted. Reminders are sent to the State Board members and branch presidents.
4. Content for the newsletter is also found in branch newsletters, websites and FB accounts. However, many of these resources are not updated regularly. So, it is difficult to find content for some branches. It would be helpful to include the editor@aauwnc.org on the mailing list for branch newsletters. If newsletters are posted to the branch website for Members only, please provide the password, so that the newsletter editor can access yours.
5. The June newsletter includes an In Memoriam article to honor members that have passed during the past year.
6. Important not to include a lot of embedded text in images. Encourage images, text, Word and PDF files. Embedded text cannot be viewed by people using a text browser or adaptive software, etc.
7. The 10 most recent newsletters are posted on the AAUW NC News webpage. Therefore, newsletters are open to the Public to read.
8. New branch members are added to the MailChimp audience list based on New Member emails from National. Members have the option to unsubscribe.
9. Info about how many newsletter opens and most links accessed is shared at AAUW NC board meetings.
10. Please encourage your members to scan/read the newsletters.

AAUW NC Website

1. Mary Ann is an unofficial website editor for the state website. The Get You Found contractor is also used to help with some updates like the Gravity Forms used for the AAUW NC State Conference.
2. The sections of the website include:
 - a. About
 - i. Board of Director names
 - ii. Strategic Goals
 - iii. Documents
 1. Bylaws
 2. Policies

- a. Guidelines and Procedures – reviewed and updated at least every 2 years or as needed
 - b. Part 1: Elected Officials
 - c. Part 2: Appointed Chairs and Leads
 - d. Part 3: Checklists, Procedures & Additional Resources (by special request)
 - e. Part 4: Meetings
 - f. Part 5: Mission Related Activities
- 3. Grant Application
- 4. Annual Budget
- 5. Annual Meeting and Board Meeting Minutes
- b. Branches – includes names of Presidents, links to websites, FB, etc.
 - i. Includes a webpage with links to resources for branch leaders
 - 1. Community Hub Tools & Resources
 - 2. Community Hub FAQ
 - 3. Membership Matters Newsletter – most recent issue; use this link for the National Leadership Resources & Tools webpage – use the Membership Matter heading
 - 4. State & Branch Tools
 - 5. Leader Resources & Tools
 - 6. AAUW National Website Support – site-resources@aauw.org
- c. Events – including links to some recorded AAUW Zoom events
 - i. AAUW NC 2026 State Conference Info
 - ii. Empower Her Series
 - iii. Includes the Events Calendar for the fiscal year
- d. News – links to Connect newsletter (10 most recent newsletters), STEMEd newsletters and AAUW NC Facebook account
- e. Public Policy Info
- f. Programs
 - i. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
 - ii. Young People’s Literature Award
 - iii. Mini-Grants
 - iv. NCCWSL
 - v. NC Fellowships and Grants
 - vi. STEM
 - vii. WorkSmart and StartSmart links
- 3. Still working to trim obsolete/older content

Resource for Branch Website Editors – along with Laura Tew, the State Branch Advocate

AAUW NC Facebook Account – Administrator and Moderator Functions

1. Kathy Pearre, Laura Tew and Mary Ann partnered to improve use of this social networking tool
2. Content is open to the public
3. Mary Ann updates posts each month including the Connect and STEM Ed newsletters, some posts from AAUW National, posts from other resources pertinent to women and girls. Have started to reference some of these resources in the Connect newsletter. Encourage your members to visit this resource.
4. In 2025 there were ~400 posts. The sources of the posts that received reactions, shares, or comments are shared with the AAUW NC Board members. The number of posts each month for 2026 varies from 20-65.

AAUW NC Community Hub Liaison

1. Mary Ann available as a resource to help answer and/or resolve Community Hub issues and to serve as a liaison with the AAUW National support group.

Appendix D – Roadmap for AAUW development by the National Inclusion & Equity Committee

Roadmap for AAUW Success

Core Insight: Start with engagement and participation, not membership. Engagement builds trust. Trust builds connection. Membership may follow naturally — but meaningful community impact can happen regardless of formal membership.

First step: Ask! Find out what participants want to hear, see or do, which may not be what we want to hear, see or do.

Engagement is more likely to take place when individuals can:

- attend events, not lectures
- participate in programs that are relevant to their lives
- contribute meaningfully to themselves or their communities

Collaboration: Broaden the circle of groups with which you communicate.

- You may want to start with universities, community colleges, student groups and other community organizations
- Be creative. Are there community events you might attend as a group – example, attend a women’s sports event wearing the same t-shirts? What might a fun outing look like?
- Co-sponsor events rather than simply inviting participation and/or share leadership and planning responsibilities
- Attend community events hosted by others and/or support causes and initiatives that matter to partner organizations
- Create opportunities for continuing collaboration, not one-time contact
- Other groups: women’s professional organizations including young women’s professional organizations, subgroups within larger organizations such as universities, libraries and civic groups, nonprofits, immigrant and refugee support organizations, LGBTQ+ organizations, women’s veterans’ groups.
- Possible connection points: networking lunches or coffees, skill-sharing workshops, community service projects, outdoor walks, online discussions, “bring a friend” community events.
- **Why it works:** People are more likely to engage when relationships feel authentic, mutual, and community-centered rather than recruitment-driven.

Belonging: People return when they feel welcomed, heard, respected and valued so:

- Greet newcomers intentionally and warmly
- Avoid insider language and acronyms
- Invite participation at many levels
- Make space for different communication styles and perspectives
- Offer both social and issue-oriented activities
- Ensure leadership opportunities are accessible to newer participants
- Consider adding a more contemporary image or feature to your webpage
- Follow up personally after events
- **Why it works:** Belonging is created through relationships and repeated positive experiences, not simply through membership status

Women’s Circle Model:

- Events are open to members and community participants
- Focus is on serving the broader community, not just internal membership
- About 80% of participants are non-members
- Consider offering food and/or a minimal admission charge which may reinforce desire to attend
- **Why it works:** It removes barriers and introduces AAUW to new audiences organically

Design for Working Women

- Events are open to members and non-members
- Participants choose topics of interest to them
- Possible topics of interest include career transitions, workplace challenges, paths to leadership, financial literacy, difficult conversations about contemporary issues
- Offer real opportunities for advancement, not just discussions
- Schedule: once per quarter at lunchtime, duration is 1.5 hours, although consider a more flexible schedule
- Consider childcare options or shorter formats for busy schedules
- **Why it works:** It's a format that meets the lives of working women and practical, relatable topics drive engagement and attendance.

Messaging about AAUW – Engagement should focus first on community value and connections. It should be relevant to the lives of the participants. Messaging might include our advocacy and its impact, leadership development opportunities and promoting community connections.

Watchword: People don't join first. They connect first. Connection comes through relevance, participating, relationships and shared purpose.

And have fun !!!