

DEI news

In December Current

Presentation from Erica Koonman (November 12, 2022)

The branch DEI committee consists of chair June Reinert, Carlene Roberts, Diana Moran Sanchez Santos Thundercloud, Ann Brice, and Erica Koonman.

Our goal is to keep you informed of National, State, and branch's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion; how you can learn about it; and hopefully, incorporate it, into your daily life. Members of the La Crosse DEI committee will present short infomercials every couple of months.

The past few issues of the newsletters have given definitions of various terms used in DEI language: inclusion, equity, equality, etc...

If you were to ask 20 people, What is diversity?
It is likely that you will get 20 different answers.

So, far the AAUW is going to define it this way:
Diversity means variety and is all about what makes us unique.

What are some of the dimensions of diversity?
They can be anything that has been historically used to differentiate groups.

Some of these dimensions are more visible than others, and some are more relevant in the United States than in other parts of the world, given our history of discrimination and exclusion. Dimensions of diversity can be broken down into two categories:

- primary dimensions or inner sphere, which can't be changed, are usually the most visible and
- secondary dimensions or outer sphere, defined by way of experience, which we have some control over.

Primary dimensions include gender, ethnicity, ability, age, race, and sexual orientation. The visibility of primary characteristics lend themselves to the assumptions made by the majority society about the presumed worth of minority group members. The values and judgements assigned to these attributes by the majority group may determine whether minority group members are accepted as full participants.

Secondary characteristics are such things as legal status, education, job level, personal appearance, religious beliefs, military experience, and values for a few. You can see more on the chart. Secondary characteristics account for the ability to shape your life and choice, so the influence of secondary characteristics is more variable. Instructurally inequitable societies where access to opportunities is not equal across populations, personal choice in secondary characteristics is not always fully realized.

Many of these dimensions of diversity give meaning to our identity: For example, "I am a parent, ethnically I am a Heinz 57, I am from Wisconsin." All of these are elements of an individual's identity.

The beauty of diversity — and the thing that makes it so powerful — is learning to appreciate it and creating an environment where it can grow and thrive. Diversity can be a great source of strength.

Our aim is to create an environment where we can explore our differences in a safe and respectful way that helps each person understand their value and celebrates what diversity brings to AAUW.

The national AAUW website has extensive information about DEI terms and concepts as well as toolkits for learning more. Check it out! And we'll be back next month with more!

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/>

The DEI Committee will research the DEI toolkit on the national AAUW website to be able to design and execute a Diversity Plan. This plan will have the goal of assisting the branch members to become more knowledgeable about diversity issues. The end goal of the plan is to expose the branch members to be more aware of issues surrounding diversity issues (past and present). The long-range goal will be to attract a more diverse branch of members. We will need to develop programming and information sharing to assimilating them into our group. Successfully recruiting diverse members is only one step in this process: You also need to create an environment where all members feel included, engaged, and valued.

Date to be Accomplished: Ongoing.

People in Charge: DEI committee

Results:

- The DEI Committee will meet as a group once a month for planning and evaluating presentations. These meetings will meet in person or virtually.

Date to be Accomplished: June 2023

People in charge: DEI Coordinator, presenters for the month

Tasks:

- Call a meeting or set up meeting time for once a month.
- Assign persons to report their activities
- Look at evaluations and or feedback from the group to keep or change plans.

Results:

- The DEI committee will invite two main speakers on diversity issues.
- October 8, 2022 - Tashyra Jackson from HOPE RESTORES Fighting for black equality. Hope Restores purpose is to support, advocate, listen, and bridge the gap between African Americans in our community.
- February 11, 2023 - Panel Discussion- a panel of persons who have been marginalized in our society will discuss and share their experiences.

Person In Charge: Diana Moran Thundercloud

- The DEI committee will submit an article for the Current monthly. The Current is our branch's newsletter.

Person in Charge:

Chair of the DEI committee or assigned member of the DEI committee, as assigned by the chair.

Date to be accomplished: June 2023

Tasks:

- The designated person will assure that Erica gets these monthly before the 18th of the month.
- Follow up with feedback and discussion if needed.

Results:

- The DEI committee will submit articles or announcement of meetings for Facebook and Twitter.

Person in Charge: Diana, committee member

Results:

- The committee having the event, recruitment material, and the Membership Directory should have a statement on their material that reads:

When you send out the invitation or notice, include a welcome message to let invitees know they can contact the planner regarding accommodations. Your message might include text such as:

“We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to engage fully. Accommodation requests related to a disability or health condition should be made to the AAUW branch program committee.”

Person Responsible: Committee heads, program planners

Tasks: Ongoing.

Results:

- Assure that the meeting place, bathrooms, elevator are accessible. There is information on the internet on accessibility issues. A check list will be provided to all members.

Person Responsible: Committee heads, program planners

Tasks: Ongoing.

Results:

- The DEI committee would like 15-20 minutes for a presentation or activity at the general meeting. This is to help members understand or look at various DEI topics. Two of these presentations per semester will be scheduled. Each committee member would be responsible for planning one of the sessions. The presentations will be called IDEAs (Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Awareness)

Tasks/Persons Responsible: Some of the topics looked at could be the following:

- Dimension of diversity chart, how people are valued and the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion. Erica Nov. 12, 2022
- Understanding Unconscious Bias. Carlene Dec 10, 2022
- Creating Allyships/ Intersectionality Identified. Diana Jan 14, 2023
- Creating Inclusive Spaces. June Mar. 11, 2023

Date to be accomplished: June 2023,

Additional Resources: Attached

Carlene Roberts - Personal examples to use for the above topics.

Diversity - Specific dimensions of diversity and identity.

Specific Videos that are in the Toolkit on the National AAUW website.

Results:

- To look at the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT). Members could complete the test at home, a variety of tests might be taken. We could take a few minutes to discuss, or people could share their results if they are comfortable.

Tasks:

- Provide members with a quick overview of the IAT
- Provide members with a web site that they can obtain this test.
- Members could look at the outcome themselves and if they want to share, they should be afforded an opportunity to discuss at the next meeting.

Date to be accomplished: June 2023

Results:

- A DEI committee member will meet with one of the following areas to assist them in setting goals for their committee. The following committees would be assigned to a DEI committee member to help them develop goals for their committee. These goals will be integrated into the DEI goals for the branch. The committees approached would be Recruitment, Retention, Programming, Communication and Retention.

Refer to the objectives and the environmental Scan.

Tasks/Persons in Charge:

Please note that the environmental scan completed by our branch is in the Attachment Section

Recruitment CARLENE

- How do we currently recruit new members?
- What are the typical identities of the people we re
- Communication DIANA
- What methods do we use to communicate upcoming programs and news for our branch?
- Who uses or does not use these methods?
- What methods are we not using?

Leadership development/succession ERICA

- How do we get new board members?
- What do we do to encourage and support members to become leaders?
- Who do we encourage, and who do we not encourage?
- What is the makeup of our leadership?
- Does our leadership reflect the diversity of our branch?

Retention CARLENE

- What do we do to welcome new people to our branch?
- Who stays and who does not return?
- Why do you think that is?
- What is the identity makeup of our branch?

Programming JUNE

- Who is our programming intended for?
- Who does our current programming typically attract?
- Why do we think that is?
- How accessible are our programs in terms of location, date and time and more?

Results:

- To co-sponsor with the League of Women Voters, the International Women's Day program in March. A member of the DEI will assist with the program. Erica

The event features women from a variety of countries and cultures who share their stories of growing up in their country or culture, what they have experienced in the US (or outside of their culture) and their vision for gender equality. Also, they could talk about the intersectionality of their various identities.

Person Responsible: Erica

Date to be Accomplished: April 2023

Results:

- The Committee will recommend certain members of the branch to research and write biographies of women representing the Women's History month theme. Half of these biographies should be women of a diverse background. The bios are published each day in the La Crosse Tribune during March. These bios are also posted daily on the branch Facebook and Instagram pages to reach a wider audience.

Persons in Charge: Erica, Diana

Date to be Accomplished: April 2003

Results:

- A job description will be developed for a diversity internship for our branch, offered to students at UWL or Viterbo. See the Job Description which is attached.
- Various diversity offices will be contacted to see if they have any students interested in applying for this internship. A small fee will be paid by AAUW to the intern.

Person Responsible: This position will report to the DEI chair.

Person Responsible: Chair of the Diversity Committee

Date to be Accomplished: June 2023

Job Description: Attached

Results: