

November 17, 2015

AAUW and Start Smart

To answer the question if AAUW members are promoting the Start Smart Program in Universities across the country, the answer is yes. While this may seem like a new program to most branches, it is really just a continued 52-year effort in our commitment to the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Let me see if I can connect the dots.

Start Smart originated with the WAGE Project whose founder, Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy, set out to educate women on *Why Women Make Less than Men*. Ms. Murphy put together a program to teach women on why the Gender Gap Happens and how to negotiate for a higher wage. Just about the same time AAUW released its ground breaking study on *Graduating to a Pay Gap*. The two organizations decided to team up and promote the program and the accompanying study to schools that were already AAUW College Partners. The fee that was charged to run the program would cover WAGE's operating costs, and the presence of AAUW would shine a light on the organization's effort to elevate and support working women. In addition, young women who were already e-student-affiliates through their university's partnership membership in AAUW might decide to continue as lifelong members of AAUW.

Since 2011, the program rolled along gaining momentum in 48 states, and over 300 Universities. It was however not without hiccups. Two glaring problems arose: cost and presence of AAUW. As mentioned, WAGE had overhead and charged an expensive license fee to cover costs. Schools balked at the \$650 per semester or \$1750 three-year license fee. To find some resolution, some AAUW branches agreed to cover the cost of the license if the school agreed to pay for: a venue, promotion/registration, printing costs and refreshments. The parties seemed agreeable and branches like San Jose and Berkeley purchased a three year license for SJSU and UCB. Our CCC Interbranch Council purchased a three-year license for the Contra Costa Community College District. These classes were presented by AAUW members. Schools such as Saint Mary's and Cal State East Bay chose to purchase their own license. The problem arose when after the initial presentation; AAUW was never invited to ongoing classes or presentations. In addition, these schools never renewed their license fees thus leaving WAGE or AAUW no way to know if they were still using the program or not.

In fall of 2014, AAUW acquired the rights to *Start Smart and Work Smart*. A team, including some former WAGE directors, was hired to redesign the program and align it with goals and visions of AAUW. In October of 2015, the revisions were rolled out. Facilitators are now trained for free online through webinars, discounts are given to AAUW members and affiliates, the PowerPoint has been reduced from three to two hours, and the program is more interactive to reflect the personal needs of the student.

AAUW Members who are interested in Start Smart can become Facilitators or Ambassadors. Ambassadors are usually AAUW members who have contacts or affiliations with local universities and can help navigate the system with the intent of presenting a Start Smart Workshop. For the past three years most Start Smart Classes were acquired through AAUW Ambassadors. Recently however, requests for the program have picked up. Santa Clara University and Humboldt State both personally inquired

about Start Smart. The requests came from the *Dean of Financial Studies* and the *Women of Science Program* respectfully. Two trained facilitators from AAUW were available to present the classes.

Without a doubt this is a new way of promoting and highlighting AAUW as a leader on woman's issues. Within the University and Community College Systems of this country we now have a visage young women can identify. What better time than to be in the forefront of our causes than in an election year with two women running for the office of President of the United States. Equal Pay and the Wage Gap alone are already prime topics for debate. For more information log onto salary@aauw.org

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