

Brief Report
Survey & Focus Group Results
AAUW Long Beach Reimagining Study Group

The Reimagining Study Group is an ad hoc committee of the AAUW Long Beach Branch. See Appendix A for the study group's membership. When convened in October 2024, its charge was to explore options for a program to follow the successful and long run of the STEM Conference for middle school girls. This brief report summarizes the results from a survey and focus groups conducted in December 2024 and January 2025.

The survey of nine questions was developed by the Reimagining Study Group after conversation with the STEM Conference organizers and review of the City of Long Beach Commission on the Status of Women and Girls' priorities, successful programs at other AAUW branches, and AAUW policy issues. It was focused on branch members' priorities and interests for the next branch-sponsored program. The draft survey was reviewed and approved by the Branch's Executive Committee. See Appendix B for the survey instrument. The protocol for the focus groups was developed by the Reimagining Study group and was focused on participants' perspectives on priorities for future programming by the Long Beach Branch. See Appendix C for the focus group protocol. A final report of the Reimagining Study Group with recommendations for future programs will be issued in March, including the environmental scan and benchmarking data mentioned above.

Procedures

Survey. The survey was announced at the holiday party on 12/7/24 and the QR code was made available to members to take the survey. Several email announcements and distribution of the survey went out to all Branch members as did paper copies of the survey to Branch members who do not use the internet. The survey was also available on the Branch's website. The survey was closed on 1/7/20. There were 43 respondents to the survey; 36% of the Branch membership.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were announced via email and signup was completed online. Three hour-long focus groups were held on January 11, 15 and 16, 2025, facilitated by Judith Nast. Fifteen Branch members participated in the focus groups.

Survey Results

Results are organized by question. A brief summary of the responses is followed by the responses that include the distribution of responses where appropriate. In addition the focus group's responses are categorized by common and recurring themes and categories.

Question 1: Please rank the topics from highest to lowest priority from your perspective.
33 responses

Summary

Career Development was the preferred program focus which includes learning about careers and supporting professional growth through mentorship or leadership programs. Education and equity was the next preferred focus, confirming the strong preference for education and learning.

Topic	% ranking either Very High (1) or High (2) Priority
Career Development	72%
Education & Equity	66%
Financial Literacy	36%
Supporting Healthy Families	24%

Descriptions of the four focus areas.

Career Development (for example, creating opportunities for women and girls to learn about careers; supporting women's professional growth through mentorship or leadership programs; education on salary negotiations; professional development workshops; advocating for workplace flexibility policies; entrepreneurship support; personal branding and career coaching)

Education and Equity (for example, addressing students' barriers to education such as access to financial aid, technology, or childcare; promoting access to vocational training programs; supporting women in higher education leadership; or supporting gender-sensitive curriculum)

Financial Literacy (for example, personal finance; investment; credit management; retirement planning; property ownership; estate planning; debt management; financial planning; understanding the gender-based pay gap)

Supporting Healthy Families (for example, supporting a woman's choice to make healthy decisions about her own body; access to equitable maternal care; access to childcare and/or eldercare; availability of healthy food; sustainability and environmental justice)

Question 2: Please rank the group to be served by our program from highest to lowest priority. 41 responses

Summary

The survey results showed a preference for serving high school girls and college women and also an emphasis on low-income and historically underserved communities.

Group	% ranking either Very High (1) or High (2) Priority
High School	54%
Girls from Title 1 Schools	44%
College Women	37%
Middle School Girls	29%
Early Career Women	27%
Mid-Career Women	5%
Elementary School Girls	5%

Question 3: How would you like to see a program delivered? 36 Responses

Summary

Survey respondents strongly preferred a hybrid program delivery that included both online and face-to-face activities.

Modality	% Ranking Very High (1) Priority
Hybrid	81%
Face to Face	25%
Online	8%
Other	0%

Question 4: Do you prefer one large Branch project/event or several small projects/events? 41 responses

Summary

Survey respondents did not express a clear preference for how a program would be structured.

Program Structure	% Ranking Very High (1) Priority
Either one large or several small is fine	56%
Several small projects	34%
One large project	10%

Question 5: How often would you prefer a program to be run? 33 responses

Summary

There was overwhelming support from the survey respondents for once a semester or two times per year schedule.

Program Frequency	% Ranking Very High (1) Priority
Once a Semester/2 Times Per Year	61%
Annually	18%
Quarterly	15%
Other	6%

Question 6: Identify the skills and knowledge you have that might be helpful as we plan this program. 33 respondents

Skills & Knowledge	% of Responses (Raw Number)
Planning & Coordinating	70% (23)
Partner Communications	33% (11)
Financial & Budget	30% (10)
Marketing & Communications	30% (10)
Fundraising & Sponsor Relationships	12% (4)
Other	12% (4)

Question 7: Identify the skills and knowledge you have that might be helpful as we plan this program.

- Onsite assistance and coordination during the event
- Since I'm a lawyer, anywhere we could use that skill. I am also very good with resumes and career counseling.
- Public policy and advocacy

Question 8: Would you be willing to be a hands-on helper either before, during or after the program?

Summary

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly willing to help with the program as a hands-on helper.

Willingness to Help	% of Responses (Raw Number)
Yes	88%
No	12%

Question 9: What else would you like to tell us? What have we forgotten to ask?

Summary

Topics mentioned include: piloting the program before expanded implementation, partnerships with other organizations, and a range of areas upon which a program could focus.

- You have already given this a lot of thought. Thank you.
- Start off with a pilot program twice a year, expand to quarterly. More opportunities for guest speakers, donors and supporters to know about the Branch and to join as members.
- I have been very involved in the branch in the past, but not in recent years due to health issues. I would like to become involved again in the branch activities, but am still dealing with the death of my husband this month so not sure just how soon I can be involved again.
- I do have coordinating and fundraising skills but will not be willing to participate until 2026. Need time off.
- Safety issues for women and girls came out as the 2nd concern of the Commission on Women and Girls survey.
- You might want to explore what other groups in the community are doing and consider working with them.
- Finding an intersectional topic which targets all of these arenas like the Early Childcare and Education workforce would be amazing.
- To have "it" be innovative the way STEM was until everyone jumped on the bandwagon

- Hoping there might be collaborations with other women's groups
- Question 1, most interested in Career Development; other question...college students are busy with their education...don't see it much college students as a target group; not interested in programs pertaining to food choices; overall my participation depends on my interest in whatever project is chosen.
- chosen, interested in mentoring
- What are other branches doing in regard to our prospective focus?

Focus Group Results

Focus group results are organized by question and summarized by discussion themes.

Question 1: Think about a program, project or event that you've attended when you were engaged, excited or challenged. A program that made a real difference from your perspective. It could be last week or decades ago. It could be connected to school, work or your community. What about the program/event was memorable and important? What might be important characteristics for this new AAUW program so that it reaches people and makes a difference?

Summary

Programs have three characteristics: a meaningful goal, opportunities to build social connections and an environment to support learning.

Finding and Building Social Connections

- Sharing common experiences and challenges in both structured groups and in informal conversations.
- Social connections formed as a result of the event.
- Opportunity to meet others, network
- Overpowering emotional experience of joining together
- Collaboration to accomplish something significant
- I found my people.
- Building important interpersonal connections

Opportunities for Learning

- For participants to be able to ask difficult questions and receive many answers and perspectives
- Learning, exploration
- Opportunity to explore
- Encourage participants to continue their education
- Something to learn
- Recognition of accomplishments

- Affirming experiences ignited learning
- How to foster skills

Developing a goal

- Excited and engaged audience—impactful, making a difference
- How to collaborate with other groups that are doing things to achieve something important together.
- Mutual activities to increase understanding and ability to work together
- Hearing about opportunities, hearing mentors or others further down the path of career, showing possibilities

The survey asked you to prioritize 4 areas of focus. What programs or areas of focus are a priority from your perspective?

Summary

Emphasis was placed on education with a focus on either career support at different life stages or financial education so girls and women could make informed decisions and plans that include that important information.

Career-focused Education & Mentorship

- Mid-career women in underserved communities who are juggling careers and families and who are not supported by other programs.
- Mentorships & career counseling to address the gap between college and a career
- Career Development: how to move from school to career, high school and college age
- Mentorship, role modeling, and exposure to things you didn't know even existed.

Financial Literacy Education

- Financial literacy: giving women important information to plan and achieve financial wellness

Clearinghouse

- Connecting people to services

Additional Comment

Greatest need for the community? What do we want to do vs. what do we need to do?

What age group should be a priority for a new AAUW program?

Summary

Focus group participants' responses were bifurcated: either adults in college up to mid-career– or middle school girls. Part of the discussion was about which group was easiest to work with in terms of rules and permissions.

- 20-30 College to mid-career
- College and up, fewer rules than high school or middle school
- High School
- Emerging adulthood
 - Thoughts about AAUW increasing membership recruitment of program participants
- Mentorship: could be an umbrella to serve a range of development
- Middle school: making mini decisions about their future pivotal point, early enough to set on the right path, cognitive abilities

Would you like to see the program be delivered face-to-face, remote or hybrid?

Summary

While focus group participants generally preferred face-to-face meetings, there was a recognition that an online component would make program participation available to a wider audience

- For a mentorship program: periodic large group meetings face-to-face with small meetings via Zoom.
- Combination of in-person and remote
- Zoom option is important for busy people with families
- Depends on audience and what we're trying to do
 - Cast a net more broadly, but may lose a sense of connection
- Research how alumni associations conduct programs and connect
- Prefer small group in-person meetings

Preferable way to deliver this–frequency?

Summary

While all options for a program schedule were discussed, many of the focus group participants preferred twice a year/once a semester meetings. And, in the case of a mentor program, individual meetings could occur more frequently but large group events would be scheduled for every few months.

- Quarterly lectures, more frequent pair meetings
- Twice, quarterly so AAUW is more visible, collaborating with other orgs.
- Quarterly: more opportunities to participate for AAUW members, e.g. Food Finders
- 3x a year since we're dark in the summer.
- Fall and Spring, 2x per year
- Quarterly and individual meetings
- Frequency depends on the amount of effort it requires
- Webinar in fall, spring presentation face to face for example to present participant projects
- Monthly sessions to get to know one another.

Other Comments and Guidance

- Pilot to see how it's received, plan budget
- Make sure that existing partners/funders are included
 - What are their priorities? What would they like to fund in the future?
- Membership of Branch has gotten older and less able. What kind of event can the Branch actually support?
 - Keep in mind that Branch members volunteer because it's fun to work with friends, important to have an impact and the volunteer role does not demand too much time or effort.
- Previous program used a career assessment tool and time at CSULB to explore career-related resources

Appendix A
Reimagining Study Group Members

Denis Montoya, Co-Chair
Erin Murphy, Co-Chair
Jane Hansen
Harriet McDonald
Leila Menzies
Judith Nast

In attendance when available

Tobi Balma
Amy La

Appendix B Survey Instrument

Reimagining the Next AAUW Long Beach Program!

We need the participation and input from all Branch members. What sort of program should our Branch offer? Who should it serve? How often should it be offered?

The Reimagining Study Group is an ad-hoc committee charged with exploring options for the next program to be sponsored by our AAUW Long Beach Branch. In addition to looking at existing Long Beach programs and exemplary programs developed by other AAUW branches, the study group is interested in what the Branch membership sees as priorities. Please take a moment to complete this brief survey. Participation is voluntary. Results are confidential and will only be reported in summary form.

Thanks for contributing to planning what should come next after a long-lived and successful STEM Conference. Please think broadly about a new program--its focus, its audience and how it might be delivered. We're interested in your opinion!

Please rank the topics from highest to lowest priority from your perspective. Drag and drop the items in the order you want.

- Education & Equity
- Career Development
- Supporting Healthy Families
- Financial Literacy

Please rank the group to be served by our program from highest to lowest priority. Drag and drop the items in the order you want.

- Elementary School Girls
- Middle School Girls
- Girls from Title 1 Schools
- High School Girls
- College Women
- Early Career Women
- Mid-Career Changers

How would you like to see a program delivered? Please rank from most preferred to least preferred. Drag and drop the items in the order you want.

- Face to Face Program
- Online
- Hybrid

- Other

Do you prefer one large Branch project/event or several small projects/events/

- One Large Project
- Several Small Projects
- Either is fine.

How often would you prefer a program to be run? Drag and drop the items in the order you want.

- Annually
- Once a semester/2 times per year
- Quarterly
- Other

Identify the skills and knowledge you have that might be helpful as we plan this program. Check all that apply.

- Planning & Coordinating
- Financial & Budget
- Fundraising & Sponsor Relationships
- Marketing & Communications
- Partner Communications
- Other

Would you be willing to be a hands-on helper either before, during or after the program?

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to participate in an hour-long focus group in January to discuss what program topics or focus would be important to AAUW Long Beach?

- Yes
- No

What else would you like to tell us? What have we forgotten to ask?

Name

Appendix C Focus Group Protocol

5 min. Introduction

The Reimagining Study Group, an ad-hoc committee, is exploring options for the next program to be sponsored by our AAUW Long Beach Branch. In addition to looking at existing Long Beach programs and exemplary programs developed by other AAUW branches, the study group is interested in what the Branch membership sees as priorities. We're interested in your thoughts about future programs.

- There are no wrong or right answers. Consensus is not expected or requested. Expect that there will be different experiences, perspectives, and priorities. You're encouraged to share differences of opinion.
- The focus group discussion will be audiotaped, confidential and anonymous.
- Results will only be reported in summary form. No names will be linked to any information reported.
- The focus group will take 60 minutes.
- By participating you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information shared in this group.

- 15 min. 1. Take a moment to think about a program, project or event that you've attended where you were engaged or excited or challenged...or a program that made a real difference from your perspective. It could be last week or decades ago. It could be connected to school or your community.
- a. What about the program/event was memorable and important?
 - b. What might be important characteristics for this new AAUW program so that it reaches people and makes a difference?
2. The survey asked you to prioritize 4 areas of focus:
- a. **Education and Equity:** promoting access and reducing barriers for public policy issues such as financial aid, vocational training, positions of leadership in education, gender-sensitive curricula
 - b. **Career Development:** Opportunities to learn about career paths, mentorship & career coaching, leadership programs, entrepreneurship support, advocating for workplace policies to support women.
 - c. **Supporting Healthy Families:** access to maternal and medical care, daycare, eldercare, sustainability, healthy food, environmental justice.
 - d. **Financial Literacy:** financial planning, budgeting, credit & debt management, real estate transactions, retirement planning

What programs or areas are of particular importance from your perspective?
Why?

- 10 min. 3. From your perspective what age group should be a priority for a new AAUW program? E.g. elementary school, middle school, high school girls, women beginning careers or mid-career women who are changing careers?
Should our program focus on girls from Title 1 schools?

Why do you think AAUW can have the most impact with this particular group?

- 10 min. 4. From your perspective would you like to see the program be face to face, online or a combination of both? Why? What type of program do you envision being delivered effectively using this method?

- 10 min. 5. Related to that is your opinion about if the new program should one large event be held annually or perhaps several smaller projects/events that could be held once a semester or quarterly? Why?

- 10 min. 6. Comments and/or questions

Thanks....