

RESOLUTION ON MEMBERSHIP: TALKING POINTS

BACKGROUND

I am Roger Sween, voting delegate as State Board Administrative Assistant. I am also Secretary of the Red Wing Area Branch Board who presents this resolution with the backing of our branch members.

What this resolution asks for is that a motion for a bylaws change in membership be presented again at the 2005 Association business meeting as it was in June 2003. In those Association sessions it was clear from the votes taken that there is growing support among members for a broadening of membership requirements. The principle arguments offered in favor of greater inclusion in membership are two: requirements should be more in sync with the Association's stated mission and diversity policy; and, many women in each of our communities with whom we want to associate and work lack the baccalaureate degree through no fault of their own.

This resolution in its whereas clauses states the framework for that greater inclusion.

At Association, because of a procedural motion all votes on membership were counted by a counted-card votes. This process allows state and branch delegate chairs to vote for absent delegates as though they were present. Thus, while 795 voting delegates were in attendance, 364 branch delegate chairs and 49 state delegate chairs held about 750 additional votes in place of eligible delegate strength not in attendance.

Three alternative bylaws amendments on membership were put to the body.

Alternative one: AAUW open its membership to all who support the mission. This proposal failed on a card counted vote 1,069 to 369.

Alternative two: AAUW open its membership to those with an associate degree. This proposal received a majority of votes, 871 to 634 (57.87%) but not the 2/3 required for a bylaws change.

Alternative three: AAUW admit those with an associate degree but not allow them to vote or hold office. This proposal found favor with almost no one and failed 1158 to 93.

Subsequently a motion to reconsider the second option was brought back by a standing count vote, 370 to 263. A motion by Sarah Harder, former president of UW-Eau Claire and an AAUW Past President, amended the proposal for an associate degree or 2 year program. This amendment also passed on a standing count vote. Finally after extensive debate the motion failed on a 762 to 640 vote (54.35% approval), but once again lacking the necessary 2/3 for passage. Later, a resolution calling for an association-wide, structured dialogue on membership was heard and overwhelmingly accepted.

From this evidence it is clear that the proposed membership requirement embodied in this resolution reintroduces a change in membership that has the support of the majority of the Association membership.