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Fearless Friday: American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Mollie R. Sherman
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Abstract

Quickly establishing a reputation on campus for challenging inequality and holding events that grab attention and effectively communicate their message, the newly formed **American Association of University Women** club is a fearless and influential voice for change at Gettysburg. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, fearless, American Association of University Women (AAUW), change, women

Disciplines

Social Work

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW)

September 19, 2014

Quickly establishing a reputation on campus for challenging inequality and holding events that grab attention and effectively communicate their message, the newly formed **American Association of University Women** club is a fearless and influential voice for change at Gettysburg.

The AAUW aims to empower women by drawing attention to women's issues on campus. They hold various events in addition to biweekly meetings every Thursdays at 6:00PM in the Women's Center to educate the college community. Last semester, the organization held a "Gender Gap" bake sale in the CUB, where women paid \$0.75 while men paid \$1 for each item. The purpose of this sale was to shed light on the gender wage gap that exists in the workplace: a woman earns about 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man.



More recently, the AAUW sponsored a "Day of Awareness" in September in light of recent sexual assaults, promoting the hashtag "Not a Joke" to draw attention to the fact that sexual assault is often not taken seriously. They encouraged people to wear black with a turquoise ribbon (turquoise being the official color for sexual assault awareness), and also offered "#Not a Joke" tags. Their voices were met with a resounding response; Residence Life and DPS, along with countless students, faculty and staff, all wore ribbons in support. The Residence Life staff has since had a discussion about why sexual assault is "Not a Joke", increasingly spreading awareness campus-wide.

The social events by the organization have become open discussions for gender issues, and meetings often emphasize a particular issue. Additionally, they invite professors to talk about being a woman in their field of study, including challenges encounter, as well as the stages of progression in their careers.

“Bringing women’s issues to the forefront is important,” said Alyce Norcross, “as they often aren’t talked about.” The AAUW also gauges interest from their members; they try to bring up hot topics which relate to current issues locally and globally. They generally aim to create a comfortable, supportive atmosphere “to build a network of strong women before we all enter the real world, so we know we have the power to make a difference for women in the world,” said Aleecha McCune.

As any organization might, they have faced some obstacles. Natalie Young, AAUW’s current President, was surprised that they were sometimes met with “immediate opposition”, and that overcoming others’ initial perceptions of the group and their goals was difficult. In spite of their setbacks, the AAUW is a strong organization committed to their goal of empowerment and education. They have and will continue to leave a widespread impact in fearlessly working towards developing a more aware and open-minded college community.

The AAUW club was established in March, through the efforts of Professor Stephanie Sellers and Michaela Sweeney ’14. After Sweeney graduated this spring, Natalie Young ’16 took on the role of President. Rounding up the Exec Board are students Aleecha McCune ’15, Vice President; Alyce Norcross ’17, Public Relations Chair; Melanie Emerson ’16, Treasurer and Women’s Center Liaison; and Caitlyne Goodlett ’17, Secretary. Gettysburg’s AAUW also has the unique distinction of being one of the few branches at liberal arts institutions.

To learn more about the AAUW and what makes them FEARLESS, attend their weekly meetings every Thursday at 6:00 pm in the Women’s Center!

Mollie Sherman ’17