

AAUWCA ONLINE Branch

Program Summary: NCCWSL

(NCCWSL is a collaboration between AAUW and NAPSA, the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education)

Feb. 25, 2015 to March 6

The program had four components:

1. Viewing YouTube videos from previous NCCWSL conferences
2. Commentary by Shannon Cholakian, a student at CSU Long Beach who attended NCCWSL and was chosen to serve on the National Student Advisory Council.
3. Commentary by member Jo Harberson, an avid supporter of NCCWSL who had also attended NCCWSL as an observer.
4. Establishment of a scholarship for the 2015 NCCWSL conference through donations from CA Online branch members. Donations were matched by president Krys Wulf and member Jo Harberson to reach a total of \$600.

List of the YouTube Videos:

History of NCCWSL—written description from AAUW Website
<https://www.nccwsl.org/about/history/>

Donya to the floor of the UN
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xPym1kMFok>

Tina Nelson 2012 NCCWSL Participant==Scholarship Winner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MauLjw2fCWE>

Christina Tjahjadi-Lopez Impact of NCCWSL
<https://www.nccwsl.org/2014/03/20/nccwsl-in-action-video-content/>

AAUW NYS 2014 NCCWSL Panel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yz2AvxMrkDo>

NCCWSL: What Does it Mean to be a Feminist?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-00CwzQ4BQ>

NCCWSL: How will NCCWSL Impact Your Life
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9PDFvzdoYs>

Next Generation of Women Leaders
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXrpq-C5zbA>

Sample questions Shannon was asked to consider:

Take us through a day at the conference. What did you actually do there?

Would you say it was life-changing to attend?

How did it affect what you are doing now?

If a scholarship recipient, how important was it to receive the scholarship? Could you have attended without it?

What skills did you learn or hone while attending?

What was the most impressive/memorable thing about the conference?

Actual Questions/Comments for Shannon:

I read through the background material and I am amazed that this program has been in existence since the 90's. The videos were eye opening. I would like to hear more about the specific experiences that Shannon had at NCCWSL.

Where to begin! I received a scholarship from AAUW-CA to attend because my campus had the most e-student affiliates of the state. I traveled by myself to Washington D.C., and navigated the metro to College Park, where University of Maryland was located. My roommate was a young woman from Cal Lutheran, and my suite mates were both from CSU Northridge. True to conference form, I went to workshops, breakout sessions, and panels, all held by strong professional women. Then we also had free time in the nation's capital, which was amazing for I had never been before.

We were allowed to pick four workshops, and I chose four whose names were essentially "Authentically You: Using your Identity to be the best Leader you can be," "How to Talk Yourself out of Any Sticky Situation," "Overcoming the Perfect-Girl Myth" and "Lean Over: Discussion on Identity."

Each workshop had 30/40 people in it and were engaging and interesting. Deciding which workshop to go to was so hard!

Also, we got to listen to and ask questions of our two distinguished speakers (Chelsea Clinton and Deanna Zandt) and of our five Women of Distinction award recipients.

And what I have described above is only a glimpse of the entire conference. Every moment was packed with opportunities to bond, compare notes, and network.

Since I left NCCWSL I have established the AAUW student branch on my campus, become a Student Advisory Council member for AAUW National, and have been speaking up the coast about my experiences. On campus, I became a cabinet member for our student government, and started an Inclusive Language Campaign to encourage people to be considerate of the diversity we have on our campus. I also started a scholarship, and caused a bit of an uproar

on campus by petitioning the office of the vice president of our school so we can get full-time representation for our resource centers. This semester I am continuing by planning two major AAUW events and continuing as a Resident Assistant on an all-woman floor.

How did you find out about NCCWSL? Did an AAUW branch provide you financial support (or any other type of support) for you to attend?

I knew of NCCWSL from my e-student affiliate membership. I would get emails every year that it was taking place, but knowing that it was in Washington D.C. I never expected to go. AAUW-CA ended up sending me on scholarship because CSULB had the most new e-student affiliates in the state, and for that I am forever grateful.

Is there a Women's Studies program at your university? Does the faculty or school disseminate information about organizations like AAUW?

Have you always taken leadership roles as you progressed through junior high and high school or was there something that sparked this interest? Are there strong female role models on either side of your family? If so, how close were you to that individual as you grew up?

CSULB has a phenomenal Women's Gender Sexuality Studies program, and I have been fortunate enough to take many of their classes. They do indeed encourage and inform about organizations like AAUW. On campus we are very fortunate to have many organizations like FORCE or Feminist Organization Raising Consciousness and Equality, URGE, Feminist Majority Campus Organization, and Women's Gender Sexuality Studies Student Association.

My mother is very strong-willed, having raised a child on her own and getting trade educated before having and raising two more kids. I have been lucky to know my grandmothers while they were alive, and they were all strong as well. While my mother emphasized the importance of my education, I will be the first to earn a degree in my family. My mother and I are not very close despite her being my first role model, but my older sister is twelve years older than me and has been my mentor from a young age.

For some reason I have always wanted to be a leader. I think I was just very well read and well-spoken at a young age and adults gave me attention and responsibilities, and I continued it from there. It has gotten me into trouble though (ha ha), I love being involved and helping. Sometimes it's hard to say No!

NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education -- What does NASPA stand for? It doesn't seem to relate to "Student Affairs" at all. I would also like to know 1) how much does the conference cost? 2) approximately how many scholarships are available for NCCWS? and 3) do they ever give partial scholarships?

I asked the same question when I first was introduced to NASPA. I have been told that it no longer is an acronym, or that they have un-marketed what it once stood for.

As for the other questions, it is hard to have a solid answer. Registration is one cost, but airfare is dependent on time of booking, etc. I was told that the scholarship I received was valued at \$1000.

Also, scholarships are varied because they can come from individual branches, or from the state, from individual people, or from national. I know a lot of Universities have travel grants that students can apply for to cover travel, but that is also dependent on the school.

A full break down [of costs] can be found here: <https://www.nccwsl.org/registration/>

Essentially, early-bird registration is \$425. You can also pay for pre-conference activities and an extra night stay, and there is a discount if four or more people register together.

Would say you need a "thick" skin to take on leadership roles? What is your response to those who criticize you in public, in particular.

In some sense yes, in some sense no. I don't think there are skills you need to be a leader. I believe anyone can and should do it. However, there are skills that definitely help.

As I discover more and more about myself as a leader, one of my highest valued skills is being able to be open minded and a good speaker.

I know plenty of on-campus leaders who have thick skin, but are unable to let things go. That is the true struggle: what is worth fighting and what is not.

So do you have to have a thick skin? No. Does it help? Yes. Do skins get thicker with experience? Yes.

Second part of the question.

One of the hardest experiences I've dealt with was being confronted by the Vice President of my university. She said some slanderous things about me, in front of other university officials. I answered as well as I could to these statements, and had to tell myself that just because I was being yelled at didn't mean that what I did was wrong. My goal was just different than hers.

I looked to my support system and mentors for perspective, and then I put my feelings for the Vice President to rest. In the end, we all wanted what was best for the school, we just thought those were different things.

So to answer the question, I start with a lot of introspection, and then I get back up from my support system, and then I decide what action should be taken. Sometimes the action is to re-approach the person, and sometimes it is to let it go. There's no real way to judge which to do until you're in the situation and feeling the tension.

The deal with the VP happened after NCCWSL, and I'm so glad of it, because I took a workshop called "How to Talk Yourself Out of Any Sticky Situation." The workshop was based off the idea that common improv tactics can be used in negotiation. Like, on an improv stage, if someone says "I'm a monkey!" You would respond with, "YES! You're a monkey AND you have a silly hat!" And as silly as it sounds, there are valuable takeaways from the practice. First, validation. The YES! Is essentially telling the person that you hear them, that they are of value. The AND is how you add in your perspective in a non-threatening way.

I have used this in classrooms, in my workplace, and when talking with the VP. That was only one of the workshops, and I took away a whole new way of approaching negotiating situations. I took away similar changes to my life with every workshop I attended.

Your accomplishments are impressive for someone so young. How did NCCWSL help you in these accomplishments?

Leaving NCCWSL I was energized. I felt like I could do anything. One of the major parts of the conference that we focused on was confidence. At the conference, there was no one to tell you that what you believed was wrong or that there was a limit on what you could achieve. It was three days of like-minded energizing, rewarding fun.

One of the major things I took away from NCCWSL was this amazing want to pay things forward. I wanted women to feel the energy I did, to believe in themselves, and believe in the power of women when we worked together. That's why I joined the Student Advisory Council. That's why I set my goals high and taunt failure. That's why I continue to speak at AAUW events as a representative.

So really, NCCWSL gave me some realistic confidence in myself, and that's what has translated into my recent accomplishments. I have also used the networking tools and tips and tricks I learned from the workshops, and I have made friends across the country who keep me on the pulse of the nation.

Questions for Jo Harberson

How did you decide to attend a NCCWSL conference? What were your initial and longer-term impressions?

I was in DC with a few other AAUW women and we decided it would be fun to attend the conference in Baltimore. It was an amazing experience, though a bit expensive since we had to pay for everything ourselves. But so worth it!

I was overwhelmed with the enthusiasm of these young women. I wanted to be their age again and have the opportunity to participate in NCCWSL! It was really hard to choose which workshops and programs to attend. I wanted to do everything.

I was so proud that AAUW is part of this program. It is life-changing for the young women and something we should make sure everyone in AAUW knows about.

Funding Scholarship to NCCWSL

Krys Wulff and Jo Harberson then challenged participants in this program to create a scholarship to help send one young woman to NCCWSL this spring. Because of the complex logistics of tracking specific donations from Onliners to NCCWSL through the Association's MSD, Krys worked with the Association to help make sure that any donations made by online members would be tracked correctly. She asked participants to notify her if they made donations. Krys and Jo also agreed to match donations--the goal being to raise \$600 as a tuition scholarship.

RESULTS:

AAUW CAONLINE branch raised enough money to fund one scholarship for a young woman to attend the 2015 NCCWSL conference.

Summary by Program Co-Chairs Cherie Sorokin and Jeanne Lese, Marcy 24, 2015