



Spotlight on STEM



Winter 2011

From the White House to Your Own Backyard!

It's been a busy time for AAUW members, leaders, and staff! We've been turning the spotlight on the urgency of attracting and keeping women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). At the White House, on the National Mall, and in numerous conferences around the country, AAUW has been stressing the importance of inspiring women and girls in these fields. If we had any doubts about whether our efforts have paid off all we have to do is look at the tremendous media coverage that we've gotten for our STEM research, our work with the Obama administration, and our participation in the United Nation's Expert Working Group on STEM (see details in this edition of *Spotlight on STEM*).

I hope you will join me in taking a moment to look back with pride on the year's accomplishments. Now we can look forward to another exciting year with AAUW's first One Member, One Vote election and our 130th Anniversary year, as well as our upcoming 2011 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders and the 2011 AAUW National Convention, both of which will take place in Washington, D.C., in June. [Visit the AAUW website](#) today to get involved.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Linda D. Hallman, CAE
AAUW Executive Director

P.S. Missed an issue of *Spotlight on STEM*? Interested in sharing with a friend? Back issues are now [archived](#) on the AAUW website.

Why So Few? Goes Global

The theme of the 55th [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) is participation of women and girls in science and technology, including women's equal access to full employment and decent work. The CSW will meet at the U.N. in New York in February and March 2011. To prepare for that meeting, the [U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women](#), in collaboration with the [U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization](#), convened an [Expert Working Group](#) (EWG) on gender, science, and technology from September 28 to October 1, 2010, in Paris. AAUW Chief of Strategic Advancement Jill Birdwhistell participated in this important meeting to draft recommendations on increasing the global participation of women in science and technology. The EWG identified policies and programs that would accelerate progress toward internationally agreed-upon goals, including the U.N.'s [Millennium Development Goals](#). It focused on strategies for the following:

- Increasing women's access to and use of technology, including more gender-responsive products
- Increasing women's access to and participation in science and technology education and training
- Eliminating barriers to women's participation in science and technology employment

Each of the approximately 30 participants in the EWG was asked to submit a background paper that would help to guide the group's discussion. AAUW's submission focused on our key research, programs, and advocacy related to increasing women's and girl's participation in STEM. AAUW also included an executive summary of our recent research report, *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*, which was used extensively by the group in drafting their U.N. recommendations. This research will also provide the basis for AAUW's panel discussion of critical STEM issues for women and girls at next month's CSW meeting.

Why So Few? Findings Presented Around the Country

Capping off a year that has included dozens of presentations and hundreds of media stories on AAUW's 2010 STEM research report, *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*, report co-author Christianne Corbett presented the opening keynote address at the [Working Mother Media: Women in STEM Summit](#) in New York City in October. The summit introduced skill-building workshops to enable women to become better leaders in their fields. Corbett also presented the Why So Few? findings to an enthusiastic audience of more than 5,000 young female engineers at the [Society of Women Engineers Annual National Conference](#), in Orlando, Florida, in November.

National Girls Collaborative Project Pre-Conference and Collaboration Conference

The national NGCP Collaboration Conference, held October 21–22, brought together community-based organizations, teachers, and corporations committed to encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEM. A pre-conference meeting was held at AAUW headquarters, for AAUW NGCP liaisons from across the country to discuss strategy for the future of their collaboratives and AAUW's STEM initiatives. Liaisons met with AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman and heard updates from AAUW program staff. Learn

more at the [NGCP website](#).

USA Science and Engineering Festival on the National Mall

Hundreds of organizations took over the National Mall for the USA Science and Engineering Festival October 23–24. Staff and volunteers at AAUW's booth educated children and their parents about women who have made gains in STEM fields and had fun, hands-on science activities. We were thrilled to host hundreds of children and their parents over the two-day festival! Read more about the event and see photos on [AAUW's blog](#). [Dogwood Elementary](#), a school in the D.C. suburbs, sent 50 girls from their [Girls Excelling in Math and Science \(GEMS\)](#) club to the festival. The girls participated in experiments and hands-on activities and had lots of fun learning about science and engineering.

STEMtech 2010 Conference

AAUW Senior Researcher Andresse St. Rose was one of the keynote speakers on women and STEM at the prestigious [STEMtech Conference](#), which was hosted by the League for Innovation in the Community College and held in Orlando, Florida, October 31–November 3, 2010. More than 400 sessions covered topics from recruiting and retaining students for STEM-related programs to using information technology to improve organizational and student learning. AAUW NGCP liaison Jen McDaniel also presented at the conference on *Why So Few?*, bringing key findings of AAUW's research report to attendees.

Campus Action Project Grants Announced

Recipients of this year's [Campus Action Project \(CAP\)](#) grants were announced December 6. Each year, AAUW uses CAP grants to assist campus-based groups in implementing programs that help disseminate current AAUW research. This year the projects will focus on women's participation in STEM in line with the research presented in the *Why So Few?* report. The 11 selected teams each uniquely address the issue.

WASHINGTON UPDATE

The White House Hosts Science Fair

In October, AAUW staff attended the [White House Science Fair](#), which showcased winning science experiments from children across the country. The fair was a part of President Barack Obama's [Educate to Innovate campaign](#), which is designed to inspire students to excel in STEM. In praising the participating children the president said, "If you win the NCAA championship, you come to the White House. ... If you're a young person, and you produce the best experiment or design, the best hardware or software, you ought to be recognized for that achievement, too." To read more about the event, go to [AAUW's blog](#).

The Atlantic's Women of Washington Series

Shirley Ann Jackson, President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, was featured at a STEM event at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., in October. Jackson was the first African American woman to earn her doctorate at MIT, and the first woman and African American to be on the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. At the event, Jackson was interviewed by *Time* magazine's Margaret Carlson. Jackson stressed the importance of STEM advocacy and its role in moving the nation forward. [Learn more about what Jackson had to say on AAUW's blog](#).

FOR THE GIRLS

New Partnership with Howtosmile.org

Howtosmile.org is part of the National Science Digital Library, which brings together a consortium of science museums to empower educators. This online tool features a collection of thousands of hands-on interactive science and math activities dedicated to making learning fun. Branches and members can use these activities to work with children in their community. AAUW encourages STEM involvement outside of school. All activities on www.howtosmile.org are accessible without registration or subscription, allowing anyone to use this wonderful resource. You can even add your own science activities by e-mailing stem@aauw.org!

Registration Opens for Explore Your Options Conference

The eighth annual [Explore Your Options conference](#) is sponsored by the AAUW New York City, Westchester, and Manhattan (NY) Branches and the College of Mount Saint Vincent and will be held at the college on March 19, 2011. This popular conference is an exploration of careers in science, technology, and math for seventh grade girls in New York City and Westchester. Girls who attend will meet women in STEM careers, perform hands-on activities, and learn about a wide range of career choices.

NOTES FROM THE FIELDS

AAUW Naperville (IL) Branch Hosts Science Spooktacular!

The AAUW Naperville (IL) Branch held a Science Spooktacular October 16. The Spooktacular included [50 interactive science displays and 14 exhibitors](#) with information about STEM activities, including summer camps and after-school programs. This successful event, intended to get girls interested in STEM issues, attracted 290 girls and their parents, making it a success!

AAUW Ashland (OR) Branch Presents *Why So Few?* Forum

The AAUW Ashland (OR) Branch held a forum presenting the findings of AAUW's *Why So Few?* research report on November 13. The event featured three women who are STEM professionals in the Ashland community. Young women from the Girls Engineering Class (GECOS) were also on hand to discuss their projects and experiences from the previous year's after-school program.

NEW REPORTS ON STEM

Critical Lack of Minorities in STEM-related Careers

A report issued by the National Academy of Sciences in November focused on the critical lack of minorities in STEM-related careers and offers concrete ways to address this issue. [Expanding Underrepresented Minority Participation: America's Science and Technology Talent at the Crossroads](#) outlines the demographic realities of the country's changing population and the urgent need to focus on the disparities in education for low-income and minority groups. The report provides a road map for increasing involvement of underrepresented minorities.

AWARD PROGRAMS FOR BRANCHES AND TEACHERS

Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The National Science Foundation is accepting nominations for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) through April 1, 2011. PAEMST is the highest recognition that a K–12 mathematics or science teacher may receive for teaching in the United States. Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education. Consider nominating a teacher at www.paemst.org.

AAUW's Breaking through Barriers Awards

Does your state or branch have an innovative program that benefits women and girls? Apply online for AAUW's new [Breaking through Barriers Awards by February 15](#). This year, AAUW is inaugurating the biennial awards to recognize and reward three exemplary branch programs and a group of finalists and honorable mentions that showcase the ways in which we are fulfilling the AAUW mission in our communities. Please note: Only AAUW members may apply for this award.

UPCOMING STEM CONFERENCES

STEM 2011: Bridging Research and Practice Conference

The Bridging Research and Practice Conference will take place January 19–21, 2011, in Austin, Texas, and will act as a venue for educators and administrators to share current STEM research. Goals for the conference include raising awareness and promoting the fields of STEM education, promoting best practices regarding research and collaboration among teachers and administrators, and raising awareness of the importance of STEM education and careers. Online registration ends January 11; find out all the details [on the conference website](#).

National Science Teachers Association National Conference

This year's NSTA [National Conference](#) will be held in San Francisco, March 10–13. The theme is [Celebrating the Joy of Science: Imagine and Create](#). Conference topics include Embracing Technology in the 21st Century Classroom; Accessing Language through Science and Mathematics Content; Exploring Earth, Wind, and Fire; and Building Scientific Minds: Inspiring Teaching and Effective Learning. The registration deadline is February 4.

Encorps Teachers Program Launching STEMposium

STEMposium is a symposium event that will take place on April 1, 2011, at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. This event will cultivate innovations and connect leaders in STEM education throughout California. To find great ideas and speakers, STEMposium is holding a video contest for students and teachers to enter successful ways they have improved STEM education. The top five ideas will win \$5,000. At the STEMposium, students, teachers, and educational innovators will share their ideas with a live and digital audience. Go to www.STEMposium.org to enter the contest by January 31.



AAUW is a leader in the National Girls Collaborative Project, which is bringing together more than 1,600 programs serving more than 3.5 million girls. Seventy AAUW-led programs are already using the National Science Foundation supported network to [identify new tools](#), [watch free webcasts](#), and hear about [upcoming events](#) and [grant opportunities](#) for girl-serving STEM programs. Visit NGCProject.org today to learn more about this FREE resource available to all AAUW members.



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