

The first time I heard of the AAUW was during the winter of my freshmen year. I had a meeting with three wonderful and inspiring members of the AAUW, discussing the NCCWSL Conference and my opportunity to attend through a scholarship. From them I learned that the AAUW has been around for many years and its goal is to inspire and empower women, which is definitely what it did for me by helping me attend this conference. It was not until after my experiences with the AAUW/NCCWSL that I really started to think about what feminism was, and what it stood for. Before, I would not have called myself a “feminist”, as in my mind this held a negative connotation. Now, I can proudly say that I am a feminist and I believe in equality between men and women. As a woman of color, more specifically from a Catholic, Mexican background, I grew up in an environment that one would call “machista”, where men had dominant roles, and were submissive and expected to always obey.

These disparities have allowed me to create a passion for equality. Through my experiences I have become very interested in reproductive rights and also in the very prominent issue on college campuses, sexual assault. 1 in 5 women in college will be sexually assaulted during their time in college; I think that is absolutely unacceptable. Because of my background, these issues are very important. I come from a culture where the woman will be blamed because “she should not have been dressed that way” because if she takes birth control or opts for an abortion she is harshly judged. As women, we should have the rights to decide what happens with our bodies. These issues are very important to me, and I believe that I would bring an asset of diversity and perseverance to this organization. Intersectionality is important in any organization, and I believe that I possess not only drive in what I do, but can bring a diverse point of view.

During my time at Kalamazoo College I have done a lot of work with the Center for Civic Engagement, focusing around social justice. I’ve learned that understanding our privilege is very important in making change. As I love social justice, being a woman and working towards achieving equality, I decided to apply for the SAC position. I want to be able to voice my opinions about women, and issues that we face, I want to make a difference, and I want to do it meaningfully. The AAUW has been great in empowering young women like me, and it would be an honor to have the ability to be a part of creating and continuing that change.

As I have already mentioned, I am passionate about social justice, which is why I work with the Center for Civic Engagement at my college. This role has allowed me to grow as a person, realizing my privilege of education and my place in the world, as well as allowed me to develop as a leader in my community. I have been able to work with the greater Kalamazoo community, through working with students with very similar backgrounds to my own, who can identify with me, and to whom I can give a vision to of college opportunities. Through this position I have developed leadership skills, critical thinking, which I think are good skills to have in a position like this one. I am passionate about social justice, and have a sense of humility and determination that combined, I believe make a good work ethic. From serving on the SAC, I would hope to not only gain more knowledge about empowering young women like me, but to

learn from the people that I work with, benefit my community as well continue to make AAUW a wonderful organization. I hope for this to be a reciprocal/bidirectional relationship, one that I can learn from and also contribute to.