



A group of AAUW members in 1924

The word feminist in the past years has all of sudden gone from being a positive, something people were proud to call themselves, to something negative, and not only here; it's everywhere. Would you be proud to be considered a feminist?

Even the Dalai Lama is proud to say he's a feminist because being a feminist is just merely saying that all of us have an opportunity to grow and thrive, right? That's really what it's about. I think some of the anger came from marching and the idea that somehow women were angry about our position — sure, we deserve and have earned the ability to have equal rights to our male counterparts, right? I'm very proud to call myself a feminist, but in addition to being a feminist, I'm a humanist, and humanist means I believe in advancing equity for all, and last, I'm a pragmatist; I know we can't do all of this work tomorrow, but I know that we can look at it on a chart and say, 'how do we pick away at everything one by one and really allow the sunshine in so that people can see the issues and find the solutions?'.

Data that was recently released states that 1 leader out of 5 in the world is a woman now. It's not at 50% yet, but are you satisfied with this data?

No, no, never, satisfied and we certainly aren't there in the US, either, even with the 116th Congress finally looking like the woman of the year.

Yes, the last election brought about a big wave.

Yes, a big boost, and I was there for the State of the Union, and it was wonderful to see all of these women representing so many different constituents from around the country, but no, I am definitely not satisfied. I think that better decision making happens, when we're all seated at the table together. This isn't about excluding men, this is about including women. This is about us working together to make this nation, this globe, this planet that we all love and that we all reside on, better and stronger and more resilient, and we can't do that with the old system. We have to decide and be definitive, to know that together we are stronger and to move forward.



Kimberly Churches, AAUW CEO during her speech
at the AAUW Fellows Appreciation Dinner on March 13th in New York

You have now been in this organization for a few years. If you were to be offered Aladdin's lamp and you were granted three wishes for this organization that you lead, what would be the three main goals that you wish to secure by the end of your mission here?

One is leadership. We need at least one third, 30% of all leadership positions, whether that's elected, appointed, private sector, public sector, non-profit, NGOs, a third of the leadership — and we should be striving being that for 40% and then 50%. But if it was within 3-5 years, I would love to see that become a massive phenomenon. There are organizations that are achieving that, and they're seeing great results; you're seeing it in some city councils around the world, in some national parliaments and the like, but we're not there yet. And so that would be one major one; let's get to 30 knowing that the power of three is real in leadership; you can't just have one, you can't have two, you need to have at least three. That's a biggie. Second, is pay equity — it's achievable. Our own research, the simple truth on the gender pay gap, says that we're more than 100 years away from solving the gender pay gap. That's unacceptable to me, so I believe so I believe that we can actually close the gap by 2030, within our lifetime, but we have to look at it in a three-pronged approach, of making sure that we are training men and women on barriers, biases, discrimination, unconscious bias, and teaching women negotiation skills; 2) we need to be working directly with employers with industries, with sectors, with associations and chambers, to really get to the nuggets of what they need to do to improve their practices, and help them along in this. It will really help them to retain customers, it'll help them retain employees, and we know the evidence is there that their bottom line will increase. And then 3) We need to pass stronger laws; it's wonderful all that we're doing with the UN this week, but we can be even stronger in this work at a national level, provincial level, or state level, and city and municipal level. And you're seeing some good trends of this around the world, including in our nation; the state of California is at 91 cents on the dollar, whereas the national average in the US is 80 cents on the dollar. They have passed many, many laws and worked with many, many employers to improve those practices, and the numbers went up. So, I know it's possible.

Are you optimistic that you can reach those goals? Do you feel that the environment that we're in now, in 2019, is the right moment to jump?

Yes, I will give you an example. We sometimes get deemed as a progressive organization. If progressive just means equality, ok, I'll take it. But we're non-partisan, as I said; we're not aligned with democrats or the republicans. If I can get a mayor of a very, very conservative city to give me the key to the city, because he knows and believes that what we're doing is about the economic security for the families that he protects and serves every day, we're on the right track. It's not just the right now, the democratic House of Representatives talking about these issues; these are issues that cut across. They cut across national lines, they cut across state lines, they circle around the globe; that it's an opportunity and a moment. Is it going to be solved in five years? No. But one last: I have an 11-year-old daughter. When I left Brookings and came to AAUW, she said, "Mommy, why do we even need AAUW? Everyone knows girls can do everything boys can do. If we can keep that optimism, and keep this generation believing that everything — and break down those old paradigms — I think that we're onto something."



Kim Churches with AAUW Fellows and the Empire State NYC leadership members at the annual Appreciation Dinner on March 13, 2019 in New York City.

AAUW IN NEW YORK CITY



Maria Ellis AAUW Empire State NYC President

The **AAUW Empire State NYC branch**, headed by President **Maria Ellis**, promotes AAUW National's initiatives and mission by expanding its membership base at the local level. The branch's Communications and Visibility department, under the direction of **Dr. Jessica Ryan Sims** (AAUW American Fellow), disseminates information about AAUW on **social media** and at its in-person professional women's networking events. Dr. Sims explains, "I received an AAUW American Dissertation Fellowship for the 2016-2017 academic year. The American Fellowship provides financial support to scholars in the final year of their doctoral research. The award both helped me to graduate without taking on debt and shaped my dissertation project. In particular, it encouraged me to apply my theoretical work on Stockholm Syndrome and psychological coercion to the practical issue of domestic violence in the United States. Now I am working on a book length project that will introduce my ideas to a popular audience. AAUW members have been extremely supportive of my work and the feedback that they provide to me is invaluable. I serve as the director of communications for the Empire State New York City branch. My primary objective is to build a broad-based professional network in New York City that helps women advance their career goals in one of the most competitive cities worldwide. Our mission is to provide these emerging leaders with the support they need to get ahead in this fast-paced city."



Emmelina De Feo, Vice President of Funds (left) and Dr. Jessica Ryan Sims, Visibility and Communications Director at the AAUW Fellows Appreciation Dinner on March 13th in New York

AAUW Empire State NYC Vice President of Funds, **Emmelina De Feo**, recognizes the importance of having a permanent AAUW voice in New York City. She sees the vital importance of communication, growing the branch through memberships, ensuring that important information is disseminated, while forging partnerships with other like-minded groups and organizations throughout the city: "The mission of AAUW has always aligned with my beliefs as a woman, as a career professional, and now also as the mother of two very young daughters. Whether with legislation, educational funding, leadership, salary negotiations, or global connections – all that AAUW has done, and continues to do today, I believe remains paramount in reaching the goals we wish to achieve for women and girls, and their families. I was honored when the president of the Empire State New York City branch, Maria Ellis, asked me to broaden my relationship with the branch to become its Vice President of Funds, and I am thrilled to be working with such an amazing group of highly talented women. For more than 130 years, AAUW has worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families, and now I will be able to help continue AAUW's mission here in New York City within this role."

For those interested in finding out more about AAUW, the AAUW Empire State NYC Branch and how to become a member, please [visit this website](#), the **AAUW Empire State NYC Facebook** page, **YouTube** or follow them on **Instagram**.

Join the Conversation!

#AAUWNYC

#AAUW

#nycfellows2019

#ESNYCB

#PaycheckFairnessAct

#CSW63

#InternationalWomensDay

#NationalWomensMonth

#KimberlyChurches

#MariaEllis

@aauwempirenyc

AAUW National:

Facebook: fb.com/AAUW.National

Twitter: @AAUW

Instagram: @aauwnational

AAUW Chief Executive Officer: Kimberly Churches
 AAUW NYS President:: Janice Brown
 AAUW Empire State NYC Branch President:: Maria Ellis

Websites:

National: www.aauw.org
 State: www.aauw-nys.org
 AAUW Empire State NYC Branch: <http://empire-ny.aauw.net/>
 EYO: www.aauw-eyhconference.org

Webmaster: Chigurupati S. Rani, Ph.D.; csrani.rani@gmail.com
 Empire Times is published quarterly by AAUW Empire State NYC Branch
 Editor-In-Chief: Chigurupati S. Rani, Ph.D.; csrani.rani@gmail.com
 Editorial and Writing Team: Maria Ellis; mellis@fsacap.com,
 Chigurupati S. Rani, Ph.D.; & Anita Nahal, Ph.D.
 Design: Maria Ellis & Chigurupati S. Rani, Ph.D.

Members will kindly send in their articles for
 the Empire Times
 at the beginning of each quarter
 (January 7, April 7, July 7, October 7)
 to mellis@fsacap.com & csrani.rani@gmail.com.
 Send your ideas and letters to
 Maria Ellis and C.S. Rani, Ph.D.

AAUW EMPIRE STATE NYC BRANCH**Officers & Directors-at-Large**

President: Maria Ellis, AAUW Empire State NYC Branch (ESNYCB)

Program VP: Colleen Ward, AAUW Fellow, ESNYCB

Membership VP: Ayesha Shakya, AAUW Fellow, ESNYCB

AAUW Funds VP: Emmelina De Feo, ESNYCB

Recording Secretary: Gloria Abrams, ESNYCB

Treasurer: Chigurupati S. Rani, Ph.D., ESNYCB

Directors-at-Large:

Bylaws: Diane Haney, North Shore Branch, ESNYCB

College & University Relations: Lorrin Johnson, Westchester Branch, ESNYCB

Communications & Visibility Director: Jessica Sims, Ph.D., AAUW Fellow, ESNYCB

Cultural Director & Young Women Task Force Liaison: Terehas Edwards,

AAUW Fellow, ESNYCB

Diversity Director: Anita Nahal, Ph.D., ESNYCB

International Director: Julie Kleszczewski, ESNYCB

Parliamentarian: Laurie Ginnitti, Jamestown Branch

Public Policy: Edvina Martin, Rockland Branch, ESNYCB

Special Projects

Joan Monk & Anita Nahal, ESNYCB

Social Media Team

Jessica Sims, Ph.D., Emmelina De Feo, Ayesha Shakya, Terehas Edwards

Ellis & Friends Fund

Any individual donations to the Empire State NYC Branch
 will be matched by the fund.

American Association of
 University Women
 advances equity for women
 and girls through advocacy,
 education, and research.

AAUW will be a powerful advocate and
 visible leader in equity and education
 through research, philanthropy and
 measurable change in critical areas
 impacting the lives of women and girls.

AAUW values and seeks a diverse
 membership. There shall be no
 barriers to full participation in
 this organization on the basis of
 gender, race, creed, age, sexual
 orientation, national origin,
 disability, or class.



AAUW Empire State
 NYC Branch

973 216 4181

<http://empire-ny.aauw.net>

Because
 Equity Is Still
 an Issue



Moving the Mission Forward

The Empire State NYC Branch is the first virtual branch in New York State.

