

2015-2016 Branch Report, Grand Forks Branch

The Grand Forks Branch has made our focus this year “connecting with our community” in hopes that we will be able to better tailor our group’s activity to the needs of the community, foster relationships with other groups that share common goals, and, of course, gain new membership. We have done this through several community activities and through our guest speakers and activities we hold at our monthly meetings.

Our opening “preview meeting” was held in early September and was used to both plan for our upcoming book sale and to introduce the group to the new “social media” platforms our VP of Programming, Nialani Green, put together for us. Our “aauw.net” website was expanded and updated and we now have a Grand Forks Branch Facebook group. We have also been moving to a more “paperless” meeting format with a PowerPoint agenda and emailed meeting minutes.

We have had good luck with our annual Book Sale again this year, and we were able to form a new relationship with the local Red River and Central High Schools. Their Honors Societies sent members who provided the “brawn” for the heavy lifting required for our sale and we were able to connect with students about to embark on their college careers.

Two of our newest members recently finished their PhDs and we were honored to have them share a little of their work with us during the December and March meetings. Lisa Burnette discussed the power of genetic manipulation and how scientists use these tools to understand our world. Amiee Rogers shared with us how comic books and graphic novels are a much more involved and interesting art form and story-telling medium than they are often given credit for. We also had the opportunity to talk with Nikki Berg Burin about her involvement with The Third Wave Group and feminist issues and Representative Cory Mock about his involvement with the Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals organization. We had a wonderful time talking with Kelly Painter, who works with military families as the School Liaison Officer to help facilitate the transition to and from our community. She also shared with us many of the activities they host on the AFB for women and girls, including a fascinating event where they feature the record-breaking, all female, “Lady Hawks” drone team.

Our organization continues to encourage UND student and faculty recruitment by attending the annual Involvement Expo. We also are continuing to participate in the annual Super Science Day, where last year we debuted a new booth and activity (Women in STEM and DNA extraction from bananas). This year we have updated our display to include a new table cover and updated literature geared towards younger members and scholarship opportunities for young people. Our branch also awards one or more scholarships to deserving young women. We are eagerly awaiting to see which fantastic young woman/women will be receiving this year’s awards, which include a membership to AAUW National and a cash prize. The awards are gifted at our May meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Burnette, Grand Forks Branch President
April 2016