

AAUW of Oregon: Using STAR Voting To Select Scholarship Recipients (2025)

NOTE: This study describes AAUW of Oregon's use of STAR Voting to select its 2025 NCCWSL Scholarship recipients. However, IT DOES NOT SUGGEST AAUW of Oregon endorses STAR Voting over other voting methods.

Each year, [AAUW of Oregon](#) has offered scholarships for aspiring Oregon college or university students to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), held at the University of Maryland in College Park near Washington, D.C. These full scholarships cover the entire cost of the event, including conference registration, travel, lodging, food, and incidentals.

Our application process includes asking for the applicant's credentials (school, area of study, expected graduation date, etc.) as well completing three short essay questions:

NCCWSL's goals are for students like you to build leadership, advocacy, networking, and other skills to be a change agent on campus and in your community. Attach a page with answers to these questions (max 300 words total for all three questions):

- 1. How do you think you would benefit from any or all of these goals?*
- 2. Describe how you might apply or share the experiences and information gained from the conference in your current and future leadership roles?*
- 3. How will these leadership skills contribute to your field of study and future career?*

This year (2025), we were tasked with selecting 3 scholarship recipients out of 10 applicants. Given the relative subjectivity in our selection process, a tight deadline, and the overall stellar credentials among all applicants, it can be challenging to identify the ideal recipients. To succeed, we wanted to encourage as many AAUW of Oregon representatives as possible to participate in the process. In the past, this has involved scheduling a meeting for multiple representatives from across Oregon to convene (virtually) to discuss the candidates and reach a consensus. The process was complicated and time-consuming.

In 2025, we used BetterVoting.com's STAR Voting process, combined with a ballot for each AAUW of Oregon representative to review. The ballot included a summary of pertinent information about each applicant, along with their respective essays. We anonymized participants' names to reduce unconscious biases. Advantages of this process included the following:

- Each AAUW of Oregon representative could review the anonymized ballot and vote her preferences at her leisure (within a specified timeframe).
- STAR voting made it easy for each AAUW of Oregon voter to express both her favorite candidates, as well as the degree to which she favored them, increasing the odds that the outcomes would reflect the most representative choices among the group.
- We reduced the risk that a group discussion might cause "group think" and/or herd mentality bias to influence the outcome.

In short: We were able to clearly—and, we believe, relatively accurately—identify our three top recipients, while eliminating the time and hassle of scheduling a group discussion.

In terms of room for improvement, we could have used more AAUW of Oregon voters participating in the election, to further strengthen our results. We had nine voters. Also, one of our early voters misunderstood the process, and only scored her top three candidates. We promptly sent out additional instructions, to ensure all other votes took optimal advantage of STAR Voting's ability to accurately express preferences across all candidates.