



Summary of Responses from Check-in with CFUW Clubs about Recruitment and Retention

Prepared by the CFUW Membership Committee

1. What members told us in 2018 about Recruitment and Retention

- Few clubs increased in number
- Several clubs declined in membership and some dissolved.
- Nationally, membership numbers have declined.
- Members are tired and not willing to take executive positions again
- Difficulty attracting younger women
- Best success is found in recruiting friends
- Many clubs have said their recruitment strategy is to find nearing retired and retired women, because younger and working women do not join, or stay.
- Dissolving and declining membership clubs say: 'We have aged in place'; 'We are older'; 'we can't get people to fill executive positions' 'many of us don't drive at night so we want to / have moved to daytime meetings'; 'our demographic is not one of growth'; younger women don't want to meet with us

What do we learn from this?

- We see that while recruiting our friends represents our greatest success, it results in getting only people of our demographic and the current challenges of sustainability & executive leadership remain. We must be strategic if we want to grow our organization. We need to be creative & innovative in seeking new ideas to broaden our demographic.
- Tell our story of the tremendous achievements of this organization in the last 100 years and the enormous potential to be the leading edge organization in the country and across the world insisting on women's empowerment and equal rights.
- Aggressively target younger women. Engage and accommodate them. Ask them to mentor **us**. Think broadly: speak to women who want to spend time with women who revere knowledge and education. There will be many who are younger women, working women, women whose attachment to the workplace is flexible in hours and days, women new to the community who don't have an established circle of influence.



- Recognizing our successes of the last century have included more women graduates, professionals, choice in personal and professional life we proceed to our next century. We will identify and succeed in the challenges that lie ahead.
- Membership decline is where we are starting! Ooh cringe – too negative. One hundred years of existence and persistence is where we are starting and embarking on the next 100 of new challenges leading us to new successes!

2. What Success looks like – Club Comments

- Annually attracting 6 to 10 new members while retaining most of existing members
- Members stay because of interest groups, advocacy projects, personal contacts therefore these areas must be vibrant
- Close friendships develop and members feel support
- Having a Club website
- Yearly “Bring a Friend” campaign (draw for \$50 gift certificate for members signing up a new member.
- Welcoming of new potential members- wine and cheese with introduction of CFUW purpose and goals as well as local activities
- Follow up phone call to members who do not rejoin
- Two week Bulletin Board display at the local library each Fall
- Our meetings with speakers are always open; we advertise meetings in local paper
- Speakers are chosen to reflect the wide range of interest of club members
- Women also learn about our club through our partnerships
- Have a membership committee which brainstorms various ways of recruiting and evaluating success of these initiatives.
- Bring a friend is the most successful recruiting tool
- we review the new members survey which is done each Spring
- Members join throughout the year and for members who join after February 1st, their fees are applied to the following year
- Students have a discounted fee
- Our fees include a scholarship amount which lessens the pressure for fundraising which some members see as a deterrent
- Mix of times for interest groups i.e., day and evening mix
- New members have a special name tag and emphasis is put on all members to seek out these new members at fellowship time
- we have monthly pre- meeting fundraiser dinners (special community projects) which allow for conversation and encourage members to bring a friend



- We keep in touch with scholarship winners and try to forge relationships with them and their peers.
- Letting new-joins, particularly younger members, have at it to plan and organize to be respected as contributing women

3. What Clubs have told us about Why Members Stay

- Our many and varied interest groups: book discussion groups (fiction, non-fiction, mystery - which meet during the day or evening); bridge groups (meet during the day); tap dance group; walking group (mornings); bowling group (afternoons); craft group; lunching out group; dining out group; community outreach committee; resolutions committee; plus the book sale (opportunity to work for a good cause)
- friendship
- Advocacy - heightened awareness among members- many of our speakers address local social justice issues
- Belief in CFUW's goals and mission (education, human rights)
- New Members' Social in fall (and throughout year if new members join later)
- Interesting guest speakers at meetings

4. Ideas from Clubs on Recruiting, Retaining and Renewing Membership

- Make presentations at (or provide handout material for) retirement planning sessions for local businesses
- Provide similar information to local professional organizations e.g. Chartered Accountants, Insurance Institute, Bar Association
- Package to Real Estate companies who may be helping newcomers settle in to the area
- Distribute information to residents of Retirement communities
- Bulletin boards everywhere – libraries, grocery stores, coffee shops, high rises, etc.
- Paid advertising (e.g., Zoomer magazine; newspapers; investigate advertising space on the new LRT)
- Offer free trial membership to CFUW for 3 months
- Review and develop a more polished New Members brochure/package
- Develop a few PowerPoint slides that can be used for presentations (depending on format of the retirement planning sessions)
- Consider daytime general meetings
- Encourage new members to join interest groups
- Engage new members on Committees and Exec Committee
- Choose more appealing venue for monthly general meetings
- Raise awareness of club through partnerships with community events (e.g., Open Closet, Dec. 6 Vigil, Music Marathon, Annual Used Book Sale)
- Distribute a simple survey to poll the membership re: daytime meetings, facility features, etc.



- Personal invitations (phone calls, conversations) to encourage participation on committees
- Nametags with red lanyards for New Members at General Meetings (to encourage other members to engage them in conversation, etc.)
- Annual Member satisfaction survey asking what they like the Executive to stop or start.
- Strong emphasis on helping members meet others and to get involved. We ask them to work as a group to provide the refreshments in February, March and April.
- Word of mouth - inviting potential members to come to a meeting as guests
- The annual well publicized Open House in September
- Handing out invitation cards, especially during a membership drive in the spring
- Information on our website, plus a phone call from the Membership Chair to those who leave their names on “join up” section
- Meeting/Event information in media (“go-guide” in newspaper), on university events calendar etc.
- Extensive community advertising for our annual Book Sale (when to donate books, how to volunteer to sort books, set up for sale, attend sale)
- Publicity for our scholarships (funded by Book Sale)
- More effort to spread the word that members do not need to be graduates of a university
- New members receive an information package, and we have held special information sessions for new members - now plan to hold an afternoon tea to which new members would be personally invited, and encouraged to tell us how we can help improve their experience as CFUW members, then follow up on suggestions.
- Club website
- Yearly “Bring A Friend” campaign (draw for \$50 gift certificate for members signing up a new member.
- Nametags with red lanyards for New Members at General Meetings (to encourage other members to engage them in conversation, etc.)
- Greeters at entrance to General Meeting Room
- Promotion of public being welcome to attend General Meeting programs
- Monthly newsletters to keep members up-to-date
- Involvement in scholarships—enabling the provision of scholarships to female students
- Emphasize opportunities for all women to be engaged—social activities, social issues/advocacy, variety of groups/committees
- Buddy system for new membership
- New members who join the Club part way through the year pay a membership fee which covers the remainder of that year and the next year
- Identify potential new members and host a social event attended by both members and potential members



- Invite women to volunteer at various events, such as book fairs
- Invite women to attend an Open House, a celebration of a Club anniversary, the scholarships award ceremonies, an appetizers social and sundry similar activities
- Utilize Facebook and other social media formats to showcase “what we do” and “who we are”
- Reduce membership fees for students
- Where possible, set up information tables at events other than CFUW events
- Develop membership kits for both new members and potential members
- As necessary, update website and include pictures of members engaged in various CFUW activities

5. Steps Taken by Clubs in Targeting Soon-To-Be Retirees, And Retirees

- We have business cards carried by many of our members to give to potential members. The name of the current member is written on the back so that the potential member knows who to contact.
- We play down the name of our organization referring to it as CFUW.
- We created an ad for publication – see attached
- We targeted a specific homeowners association for the ad, one where there was already a high number of members, an older community, and one with a high end regular newsletter. The ad ran in the spring and fall issue at \$125 per issue, and when the editor requested a full page article with pictures for the fall publication at no cost we supplied one.
- The ad was also posted in our libraries and multicultural meeting places along with our information cards
- We notify the local papers of our meetings for the community events schedule.
- We email our newsletter to former members.
- We have greeters at each meeting to mentor new members.
- We investigated the cost of placing an ad in the Retired Teachers publication but the \$2500 cost was prohibitive.
- We have a good web site easily searchable.
- Many of our interest groups are now meeting during the day as many of our members do not drive at night. We still have a few at night.
- Presentations at preretirement seminars
- Reaching out to professional associations (e.g. Allied Health Professionals)

6. Their Success in Targeting Soon-To-Be Retirees And Retirees

- Business cards – No substantive feedback but seems to be a good idea
- Using the full name of the organization is counter-productive particularly for those women who do not have degrees.
- The ad and article generated no new members this year from the targeted neighbourhood.



- No feedback from the library posting
- We occasionally get a new member from our notices in the local papers and libraries.
- A few of our past members have returned due to our persistent newsletters. E-mails cost nothing. Only when a former member requests to be removed from our mailing list is she removed. Often women are going through a very busy or trying period and have no time for CFUW but when the home situation improves, she comes back and knows who to contact.
- Our greeters are helpful. It gives the new people a name and face in a sea of strangers.
- The ad in the Retired Teachers magazine should be the prevue of CFUW nationally or provincially to spread out the cost. The ads can be adjusted to give a local (or provincial) contact in each one.
- Our web site may generate members but there is no feedback.
- Day time meetings serve our current retired members but working women cannot participate