



Proposal to District Conference: STEM AWARD

District 28 moves to amend Zonta International Bylaws Article XIII Committees by changing the number of SECTION 15 to SECTION 16 and adding a new SECTION 15, with the following content:

SECTION 15. Women in STEM Scholarship Committee. From submissions put forward by districts, this committee shall select and recommend to the Zonta International Board candidates for annual Zonta International Women in STEM Scholarships.

Rationale

The STEM scholarship has run successfully since 2018 and has contributed to the increase of visibility of Zonta at local, national, and international levels. It has already demonstrated a positive effect at the local level, empowering women to step into male dominated technology and engineering fields. Recipients report that they are taken more seriously because of our Scholarship. It has also been used to attract new and younger members and to demonstrate Zonta's commitment to women's development in a world dominated by men.

Women are still underrepresented in STEM. A 2019 [Lancet report](#) explored the systematic and institutional barriers to women in science. Women have less success in winning grant funding, hold fewer positions in academic publishing, and author papers less often. They also face outright discrimination.

Climate changes have a significant impact on gender inequality, and we need women in STEM to use strong voices to push for strategies for urgent climate actions. The IPCC [International Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change] found in 2020, that gender inequalities are further exaggerated by climate-related hazards, and they result in higher workloads for women, occupational hazards indoors and outdoors, psychological, and emotional stress, and higher mortality compared to men.

Furthermore, as the UN Secretary General pointed out at CSW67, the "gender digital divide is fast becoming the new face of gender inequality." The CSW67 reaffirmed the importance of women and girls' full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership in science, technology and innovation, and expressed concern on the limited progress in closing the gender gap in access to and use of technologies, connectivity, digital literacy and education. It also expressed grave concern about the continuity and interrelation between offline and online violence, harassment and discrimination against women and girls and condemned the increase of such acts.

Action is needed now to redress the balance. The Amelia Earhart Fellowship is limited to women pursuing Ph.D/doctoral degrees in aerospace engineering and space sciences. With the additional STEM scholarships we cover a much broader range of subjects in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as including women studying in the second year of an undergraduate program through the final year of a master's program. Having a STEM scholarship also enhances the success and prestige that we already have with the well-established, highly regarded, and iconic Amelia Earhart Fellowship.

The Zonta Women in STEM scholarship is the perfect complement, and a crucial addition if we want to meet the challenges of the future, to the other Zonta educational programs: Amelia Earhart Fellowship, JMK Women in Business Scholarship and the Young Women in Public Affairs Award.

We, the Zonta members of District 28 believe that by the Zonta Women in STEM Scholarship contributes to the increase of female role models in STEM and will therefore contribute to the needed sustainable change in our societies.

Therefore, we encourage all Zonta members to endorse this proposal.

Marburg, 26 June 2023
For the District Board D28



Christine Dersch
Governor



Kathrin Laubacher
Lt Governor