

Through a member initiative, the Asian American Journalists Association is providing a print/online news mentorship, which will pair students and beginning journalists with veteran members primarily of the print/online industry in hopes of developing the future generation of journalists.

Rationale:

Given the success of the organization's small market broadcast mentorship program AAJA is creating a similar mentorship opportunity for any beginning journalists who are interested in working in a non-TV medium. This mentorship is needed more than ever given the uncertain state of the industry. With students and fledging journalists hesitant and wary of the future of the business, having a mentor to lean on and go to for advice is crucial. This is where the fruitful collaboration of a news mentorship is vital in providing guidance and assurance for the future generation of journalists.

This mentorship will also assist in championing AAJA's mission of leading the charge for diversity in the newsroom and continuing to be a watchdog, ensuring fair and accurate representation of our communities.

Another reason why I am taking this initiative is because I want to give back to AAJA. The organization has provided me with financial support as a student, a spot on the Sports Journalism Institute program and countless invaluable contacts over the years. Also, my successful experience with mentorships has shaped me to be the journalist I am today. I only hope others can have a similar experience.

Expectations/parameters:

While the dynamic and frequency of communication between each mentor-mentee pairing will vary, ideally each partnership should make it a goal to communicate (via phone, e-mail, text) at least once a week for the first two months. By that time, conversation should feel routine and a transparent, trusting, synergistic and proactive partnership should be well on its way to being formed.

Mentors are expected to provide career advice, to be a springboard for bouncing off story ideas, to serve as a writing coach and, most importantly, to be a person whom their mentees can lean on. AAJA hopes mentors will receive the satisfaction and gratification of developing and helping the next crop of journalists succeed.

AAJA expects mentees to be respectful and mindful of the time and energy put forth by mentors. AAJA hopes each mentor-mentee relationship establish goals on what they each want to accomplish in their journey together. Mentees are expected to take the initiative in contacting mentors during the mentorship.

Short-term goals: Sustainability. Assemble a core group of dedicated mentors and have 24 pairings established by the National Convention in August 2010.

Students from AAJA Voices will be approached first followed by students from Southern California universities (UCLA, USC, etc). By keeping the mentorship small in numbers at first it will help build a stable foundation. Once a solid base is built, AAJA will expand the mentorship to Northern California and eventually the network will expand to the rest of the nation.

Guidelines:

Students must submit a resume and a short response to: What are your current goals for your career and what would you like to accomplish in a year with a mentor.

Students must be current members of AAJA and preferably enrolled in college as an undergraduate or in graduate school. However, all beginning journalists will be allowed to participate as mentees.

While mentorships are slated for one year, partnerships are encouraged to go beyond that. At the end of the first six months, mentors and mentees will send an e-mail on the status of their mentorship, highlighting the positives, negatives and what they hope can change.

An effort will be made to pair mentees and mentors based primary area of interest (beat reporter, copy writer, designer, online producer, etc.) and location.

Measure of success:

To bring a steady flow of young journalists into the industry who feel they are prepared for the next step thanks to the guidance, preparation and knowledge passed on to them by the veterans of the business.

To see the continuous growth of the mentorship network.