

AAJA 2022 Spring Board Meeting Minutes

Advisory board meeting

Saturday, April 16, 2022

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. ET

On Zoom

Board of Directors members present: Michelle Lee, Nicole Dungca, Kris Vera-Phillips, Jin Ding, Julia B. Chan, Shirley Qiu, Julia M. Chan, Ben Pu, Aric Johnson, Anika Varty, Moriah Balingit

Advisory board members present: K. Oanh Ha, Moni Basu, Samantha Masunaga, Anh Do, Nancy Yang, Daigo Fujiwara, Ambreen Ali, Kristine Villanueva, Peter Wong, Sandy Louey, Sameer Rao, Mallika Kallingal, Zela Chin, Bobby Calvin, Cecilia Lei, Alex Wong, Rahul Bali, Josh Tolentino, Karlo Sy Su, Corinne Chin, Hangda Zhang, Heather Chin, Sandeep Chandok, Erin Chan Ding

National staff present: Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Jessica Xiao (last day was yesterday)

Advisory board members not present: Ariel Cheung, Wes Nakama (coming later)

Michelle called to order at 11:03 a.m. ET. Shirley called roll at 11:03 a.m. ET.

AAJA-Asia ANDA Report with Oanh Ha

[Advancing News Diversity in Asia](#) began a year ago, with the support of the Meta Journalism Project. This project is multi-pronged and multi-year. Launched in key Asia markets, where we have a lot of membership. We conducted interviews with people in media in those market areas, and out of that, conducted the survey and released survey results. There hasn't been a survey like this conducted in Asia before.

We found that diversity is a value here in Asia but we do see disparities in what it means in newsrooms. Women are discriminated against. We saw a direct correlation between job satisfaction, retention and whether an organization values DEI.

We also created DEI Stories, featuring different voices across Asia, also in partnership with Meta Journalism Project.

Next steps: Get more visibility and try to see how to address some of these issues.

Advice for others interested in doing similar work: You really need specialists to help you. We found people experienced in academic research projects to help out. Debby Go, former journalist, current researcher, helped a lot with this. Getting funding from folks who you know and already have a good relationship with helps move the process along quickly.

Intros for new Board of Directors: Moriah Balingit, Aric Johnson, Anika Varty

AAJA National Update with Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Ai Uchida hired as director of operations after a long search. Jessica Xiao is stepping down; her last day was yesterday.

Financial update: We're in healthy shape. We have \$5.3M in assets. Net income so far in 2022 is -\$50K, but not worried about that because we're ramping up for convention sponsorships and Q1 in nonprofits is usually slow.

Our Case for Support presentation is new – this is the first time we've messaged our narrative in a comprehensive way for fundraising. This can help local chapters as well who are pursuing fundraising locally.

Mental health initiative: We've gifted \$100K to AAPI journalists for mental health. There's still continued interest in the funding world to support this.

Comms & engagement report: Catalyst has been on hold for a little bit. We'll be bringing on two new co-leads, one of whom is a Catalyst alum; we'll announce those in the weeks to come. Our transition to Member Suite CRM is happening now. Our goal is to have monthly chapter rosters so chapters can keep their chapter lists up to date. We have 3 diamond-level sponsors this year for convention, which is really exciting.

AAJA22 Update with Jin Ding

Co-chairing again with Leezel Tanglao. The sessions we're doing are significantly reduced this year because we're in person, not virtual. We've started reaching out to session speakers, and early bird registration closes next week.

We're also accepting volunteers this year – if you volunteer x hours, you'll get registration for free. Speakers also will get free registration.

In the past, we had around 700 attendees, and we're aiming for the same number, But it's unclear how many will feel comfortable attending in person. COVID precautions: We're going to ask everyone to upload your vaccine status (using a HIPPA-compliant service for this) ahead of time (no on-site registrations). You must have a registration pass to enter the convention floor. We'll follow local hotel guidance on masking.

Michelle: We're also coordinating with the Asia Chapter on joint sessions, because N3CON will be happening at the same time. That's the first time we'll be airing live on both continents.

Anh: This year we're working with David Ono on a multimedia experience on Japanese American Incarceration. Teresa Watanabe is leading that effort offsite in Little Tokyo. We're looking for sponsorships and thinking about logistics of getting everyone offsite. We're also having a Hall of Fame luncheon on Friday afternoon, where we're planning to induct the AAJA founders to the hall of fame. It will be open to the public, movers and shakers in the community. This will be an added price to convention registration.

Naomi: We're full speed ahead on sponsorships. If there's anyone missing from the list, please flag it to us.

Rahul: Why the extra charge for the Hall of Fame luncheon?

Naomi: For this year only, we've decided to make sure that we're on par with 2019's convention rates. Most journalism orgs charge extra for their gala, which we do not. We want the Hall of Fame to spin off as a separate standalone event for fundraising.

Anh: Most of the people are not coming to the convention and helps our attendees bond who are not in the journalism world. This event is not so much to make money as create a networking environment to allow founders, community members to meet and mingle.

Bobby: Right now is there an amount being talked about for entrance fee? Is there a discount for members? It seems like a lost opportunity if we make it cost-prohibitive for younger members to attend.

Jin: Hall of Fame is viewed as a fundraising event, even though this year we're not making money on it. This year, we're piloting a long-term fundraising plan that isn't tied to convention. Summer is not the prime fundraising season for nonprofits, so down the road we'd like to move this event to a different season. We're absorbing some of the costs with our own budget to keep the cost at \$275 for registration this year. We're not going to break even this year; this is an investment in this fundraising effort for the long-term.

Took a break at 12:32 p.m. ET. Returned at 12:39 p.m. ET.

Naomi: We expect AAJA22 registration to be up this coming week.

AAJA Awards with Julia M. Chan

We're currently in the screening round; we're working on moving 10 submissions on for this round. Then the judges will make final decisions in May. Ben is leading the member community awards. But we're trying to get the journalism excellence awards done first and we're on track to do that.

The revamp of these awards happened to align the kinds of content we want to honor and build prestige, elevate these awards, and to acknowledge the great work our members are doing.

Nicole: Julia and Jessica have been so on the ball on this, for a year. So much work has gone into it and they've done a lot behind the scenes.

Naomi: Our goal is to continue iterating. Thank you to everyone involved in this (including Nicole, Jin, Ben, Shirley). So thankful for the thoughtful leadership here.

AAJA Programs update with Kris Vera Phillips

Super excited about moving forward for in-person J-Camp, ELP, Voices. We created a document to make sure everyone is up to date on roles and expectations for leaders on those programs. J-Camp, ELP, Voices are in the process of reviewing applications right now.

Mentor Match has finished – 150 mentor/mentee pairings, with some on the wait-list.

J-Camp is trying to get 25 participants, Voices is trying to hit 2019 numbers. We're making J-Camp smaller to make it safer for COVID and got a lot of positive feedback in our virtual programs, which were smaller groups as well, that it was more intimate and helpful.

ELP will have a hybrid program.

Camp AAJA and Affinity Groups with Nicole & Shirley

Shirley: Last year was the first time we did Camp AAJA after a long hiatus. We wanted to bring that back this year. It was originally planned as a three-day program over three weekends, but we're condensing this into a one-day program. Jessica has put an outline together; the next steps are to set a date, figure out programming details and reach out to potential speakers.

Nicole: I will work on formalizing the Affinity Group process in a better way this year (e.g. AGs not having to renew so often); I will bring a proposal to the summer board meeting.

Civic Engagement with Julia B. Chan

In February, we addressed the case in which ABC misidentified Asian women's names. We spoke with them about how to prevent this kind of mistake from happening. We also co-signed and shared guidance with AMEJA when the war in Ukraine started, to combat "civilized/uncivilized" framing.

In March, we reshared guidance during the 1-year anniversary of the Atlanta shooting. We also highlighted the issue of using irrelevant images of Asians in stories about COVID.

We're still recruiting a co-chair for Media Watch. If you have interest, please reach out.

Nicole: I would encourage everybody to consider if they want to join Media Watch in general or if they want to be a co-chair.

Moriah: I'm interested to know if any of the chapters have partnered with unions or other orgs to call out companies on bad parental leave policies, DEI policies, underpaying women and journalists of color?

Julia B: The Philly chapter has worked with the union at the Philadelphia Inquirer, so there's definitely precedent. Having more clear guidance would be great to develop. I think this question will continue to come up for folks.

Naomi: I think this is an excellent question and warrants further dialogue.

Sameer: To what extent would we have agency to make statements about these things around consolidation, newsrooms shutting down certain companies. These bigger picture moves newsrooms sometimes make seem to play directly into DEI issues as well.

Julia B: One way we support our members during those cuts is we reach out and try to support them as individuals first; then we can think about tackling this larger issue.

Broadcast snapshot with Sandy Louey and Chris Casquejo

Sandy: We took on the Broadcast Snapshot Project, a census/study on how broadcast stations are doing around the country on DEI. We've put together a report on this.

Chris: Some of the limitations of this study are that some of this info is already dated. We did this census last fall. Some stations didn't respond to our inquiries. (E.g. NBC, who made a big splash with their 50% women/50% BIPOC employees initiative.)

Nicole: Big thanks to Sandy, Chris and Waliya on this big endeavor. Underrepresentation in TV broadcasts is a huge issue and I'm glad AAJA is able to highlight that.

Chris: One of the surprising things we found was even in the places we thought DEI would be on par, like in Seattle, it wasn't. Some stations hired one Asian broadcaster and hoped they would represent the Asian community.

Naomi: With this first foray into research, how do we leverage this for further steps? How do we continue iterating? Newsrooms will not respond to surveys, so what's our next strategy? Hiring researchers to poll 500 JOCs?

Nicole: I think this is the kind of advocacy that it makes sense for AAJA to participate in. Data is impossible for organizations to ignore.

Sandy: I think things like this can help local chapters amplify and work with community orgs to advocate for change. Here's the status as of a year ago. What has changed, what hasn't changed?

New Business

Ben: Want to shoutout new programs AAJA NY is running, like the Corky Lee scholarship (\$6,000 for photographers in NYC). We're also NYC Marathon partners. If you know anyone interested, you should have them select AAJA as a charity partner.

Alex Wong: Can anyone who lives outside NYC apply if they want to do a project in NY?

Ben: They have to tell the story of folks in NYC. So I don't think that'll be a problem? But that's a good question.

Jin: Naomi and I are thinking about J-Camp Local. There's so much interest right now with funders that we want to localize that project.

Naomi: The goal is not to supplant what we have going on internally, but think deeper about how we're extending our impact and working more with local chapters. I have a sketch of this that Kris Vera-Phillips, Jin and I reviewed together. It's nothing immediate, but it's one way to increase and deepen our impact in different ways.

Sandy: Doug Mitchell has done similar work with Next Gen Radio Project.

Ben motions to adjourn at 2:07 p.m. ET. Kris seconds. Meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m. ET.

Board of Directors meeting

Sunday, April 17, 2022

4-7 p.m. ET

On Zoom

Board of Directors members present: Nicole Dungca, Kris Vera-Phillips, Jin Ding, Julia B. Chan, Shirley Qiu, Julia M. Chan, Ben Pu, Aric Johnson, Anika Varty. Michelle Lee joined at 5 p.m. ET.

Board of Directors members not present: Moriah Balingit

AAJA staff present: Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Nicole called to order at 4:15 p.m. ET. Shirley called roll at 4:15 p.m. ET.

AAJA23 convention with Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Working to lock in a contract in DC at the Omni Shoreham hotel for AAJA23. Reached out to DC chapter leadership and they are on board – we're in communication currently.

Ben: Have we ever looked at what locations get the best attendance?

Nicole: The biggest crowds have typically been in NYC and LA. Coastal cities tend to do well.

Naomi: The tentative dates for AAJA23 are 7/27-7/29. The exciting thing about DC is we have ASU and Medill offices in DC – that would be great for student partnerships.

For 2024, we're considering Las Vegas. That will be another presidential year.

Nicole: We do have a lot of AAPI community activists in Vegas. I'm not totally sure what our turnout will be in Vegas.

Jin: Working with the LA chapter has been great for this year's convention – they have been super involved, which has made it much less stressful for me. I'm really comfortable with the idea of DC because much of the board lives in DC and we have strong local connections there as well.

Naomi: What sort of expectations are we putting on local chapters near the host city? If we go somewhere smaller maybe we have a different agreement because we understand their lower capacity. Let's set expectations depending on location. For Vegas, maybe we could pull together a multi-chapter committee.

Nicole: I love Kris's idea of surveying our members to see which locations would be appealing to them. You have to think of two things: Is the city one where lots of people go? Are there lots of

places people want to work? I was there when we were planning the Las Vegas convention – it was really all National planning and running the show.

Naomi: I know there's a lot of chatter about UNITY and reminiscing about that, and we should be clear in messaging the financial and organizational challenges that led to UNITY dissolving. For the most part we know that business model wasn't sustainable or workable from a practical standpoint. This is not a panacea for all our members' issues. I would encourage us to think about the other AAPI orgs in the next 3-5 years.

Aric: Several recruiters have passed through Cronkite. The hiring pool is shrinking (less people are watching TV news at home with their parents), and those companies are going to have to try harder. They're really worried about hiring people. That plays in our favor – if they're reaching out to our students at Cronkite so early, it seems like that's a big concern of theirs.

Jin: We worked very hard to get financial stability during the pandemic and finally started a long-term funding plan. AAJA should focus on moving forward according to our strategic plan.

Julia B: Do we have data that backs up the assertion that recruiters are going to NABJ/NAHJ and not AAJA? And how many people have gotten jobs directly out of the job fair? That's the biggest data point.

Jin: Maybe we can develop a survey to ask who has gone to the convention in the past 1-2 years, and who got a job out of it.

Took a break at 5:28 p.m. ET. Resumed at 5:35 p.m. ET.

New Business with Michelle Lee

Fall board meeting – maybe the first weekend of December? In person?

We want to convene a network of AAPI executives to support each other, get them into a cohort. We wanted to get them together during our fall board meeting. So doing something in person would be of value. We want to know far enough in advance that the top executives could schedule.

Naomi: We were talking about Vegas. But we were also looking at DC since DC is our next convention location.

Aric: I could get space in Phoenix at Cronkite. So if we needed space, there's a nice space to meet in.

Michelle: We can look at the first weekend or second weekend of December. We'll see what works best for people. And it would be contingent upon the COVID situation at the time.

Shirley: What's the plan for the summer board meeting?

Kris Vera Phillips: I would love to do something more casual. Maybe over a meal. And if we could cover the first round of drinks or something, that would be great.

Michelle: Yeah – maybe we do a get-together on Saturday, followed by a 3-hour meeting. Maybe board office hours.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan Update with Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Our three prongs: 1. We want to formulate a research agenda to address points 3 and 4 in our strategic plan. This is not something we have done extensively in the past, but it's something we can build up.

2. Building up a state-based agenda. We want to get executives to testify – in California, AAPI Legislative Caucus work

3. Figure out a national agenda. What levers can we pull in Congress to move the needle on DEI in newsrooms and the racism perpetuated in the news industry. In 2019, CAPAC asked to meet with us, and I put together a presentation for them. I am interested in seeing what's possible – what accountability measures are possible?

Jin: I think we all see the value of this work – so it's more about getting the work done rather than how we get it. It's not just us reaching out to one PAC who has influence but we're doing an open call for it. I'd like to see us try an advocacy route that our peers could cosign because we're at a moment that's critical to collect the AAPI data. Would love to model this on the GAO report "Workforce Diversity: Analysis of Federal Data Shows Hispanics Are Underrepresented in the Media Industry."

Michelle: I think when we do this we separate reporters' press contact from AAJA's work. I would like to give our members cover and distance from this work to protect them.

Naomi, you have the board's support. Please keep us updated, and we should get a first draft of a plan together.

Ben motioned to go into closed session at 6:14 p.m. ET. Jin seconded.

Ben motioned to leave closed session at 7:03 p.m. ET. Julia B. Chan seconded.

Anika motioned to adjourn at 7:04 p.m. ET. Kris Vera-Phillips seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m. ET.