

AAJA Board Meeting - Spring 2020 – APPROVED

Saturday, March 28, 2020

On Zoom

Officers present: President Michelle Lee, Senior Vice President Nicole Dungca, VP of Communications Shirley Qiu, VP of Finance Ted Han, VP of Civic Engagement Pia Sarkar, VP of Journalism Programs Kris Vera-Philips

Governing Board members present: Large Chapter Representative Henry Fuhrmann, At-Large Chapter Representative Yuri Nagano, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bobby Caina Calvan, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bethany Ao, At-Large Chapter Representative Elizabeth Yuan

Board members present: Arizona Chapter Representative Aric Johnson, Asia Chapter Representative K. Oanh Ha, Atlanta Chapter Representative Julia M. Chan (subbing for Willoughby Mariano), Florida Chapter Representative Moni Basu, Hawai'i Chapter Representative Wes Nakama, Michigan Chapter Representative Dorothy Hernandez, Minnesota Chapter Representative Nancy Yang, New England Chapter Representative Daigo Fujiwara, New York Chapter Representative Emily Tan, Portland Chapter Representative Peter Wong, San Diego Chapter Representative Justine Saldana, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Representative Lauren Kawana, Seattle Chapter Representative Amy Wong (joined later), Washington, DC Chapter Representative Kelyn Soong

Affinity Group directors present: Video Co-Director Dolly Li, Video Co-Director Ang Li (joined later), Women & Non-Binary Voices Co-Director Jin Ding (joined later), Women & Non-Binary Voices Co-Director Corinne Chin, News Nerds Co-Director Alex Lim, Yung AAJA Director Beena Raghavendran (joined later), Photo Co-Director Darrell Miho, Freelance Director Erin Chan Ding, Radio and Podcasting Director Rahul Bali

Affinity Group directors not present: Sports Task Force Director Victoria Lim

Staff present: Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Jessica Xiao

Michelle Lee called to order at 10:04 a.m. ET. Shirley Qiu called roll at 10:06 a.m. ET.

Oanh introduced Gilles Demptos, who then introduced himself and partnerships he's worked on. Role is to develop new sponsors and partnerships in Asia.

Decided to postpone N3Con in HK for the end of August this year.

Right now trying to get partners on board and have contingency plans to make sure it'll happen no matter what. Definitely want to have this opportunity, so if we can't do it in person we can do it fully or partially digital. Google already signed to be a platinum sponsor for the conference; have a conversation coming up with Facebook.

Michelle explains that we worked closely with Asia to hire the first staffer for their board. Uncharted territory and good model for other chapters to potentially follow.

Oanh presents AAJA 2022 new convention model. Thinking about hosting 2022 at HKU.

Why Asia? It's an increasing focus for US media, international growth opportunity for AAJA, N3Con lays foundation for joint conference with AAJA22. Usually get ~300 attendees at N3Con, last year had

attendees from 14 different countries. Surveyed attendees, lots of enthusiasm for this. Want to find ways to make it affordable too.

Naomi explains her thoughts on this new convention model. Morning plenary on the West Coast and evening plenary on the East Coast?

Intros: Dolly Li, Darrell Miho, Erin Chan Ding, Rahul Bali, Kelyn Soong, Alex Lim, Wes Nakama

Michelle presents [President's Report](#). Membership has declined from ~2000 in 2008 to ~1600 in 2018. Coronavirus has hurt journalism industry significantly, despite uptick in web traffic, because of big hit to ad revenue. Freelance is especially hard hit.

Goal: 2020 members by the end of 2020. Elevating AAPIs to highest levels of the industry. Visibility. We are much more stable now than we were 5 years ago but will work on recession plan.

Coronavirus updates:

Pia presents on COVID-19 coverage advisory and anti-racism statement. Other journalist associations signed on in solidarity. AAJA National is info-sharing advisory and statement with AAPI organizations.

Nicole presents on the member survey. S/O to Jessica Xiao, Frank Bi, Shirley Qiu, Paul Cheung for help with this. We will share top line takeaways from time to time with chapter leaders.

Naomi presents on Discrimination Reporting form. S/O to Lauren Kawana for starting this. There has been an uptick in discrimination related to COVID-19. Want to work on what we should do to respond. Stand Against Hate survey is also in there.

Shirley presented on comms plan, internal and external, related to COVID-19 coverage.

Ted presents on call for volunteers. Looking for folks who can help with social media rapid response efforts and other efforts.

Michelle opens up for a free-flowing brainstorming session. What are you hearing from your chapter/AG members, colleagues, etc? How can we help?

- Rahul: boss laid out info, resources for employees/freelancers. How can we be a resource to get that info out? In Georgia, freelancers can't get unemployment. Waiting for guidance in setting up that system to integrate freelancers/contractors into their system.
- Erin Chan Ding: Freelancers can't apply for unemployment assistance...but there might be other resources? Could help if we can be clear on how freelancers can apply for help.
- Emily Tan: On a few NY list serves, anyone with a 1099 can apply for unemployment insurance. Depends on how you file your taxes. [Emily shared that in the Zoom chat](#).
- Naomi says for next newsletter, figure out centralized trusted sources and send out that info.
- [Lauren Kawana shared other resources in Zoom chat](#). Also shared this [resource doc from AAJA-SF](#).
- Beena shared takeaways from convo with Yung AAJA. It was nice to talk it out, happy to see there are other happy hours happening. [Put together a google doc](#) that shared out resources they'd talked about on the call.
- Moni Basu shared what she's been hearing from students. Lots of them have had internship canceled, lots of conferences they were going to go to have been canceled. Lots of students freaking out about graduating in this time.

- Aric Johnson: hearing the same thing at ASU.
- Bobby: lots of mentees are very worried/anxious about this right now.
- Bethany Ao asked if there's a list of internships still available?
- Ted and Kris offered to talk with people who are worried. Kris suggests office hours.
- Bobby reminds people of mentoring program. Coordinate with the leaders of that. Kris offered to do that.
- Beena offered to start that up with Yung AAJA, coordinate with Ted.
- Liz and Emily shared AAJA happy hour. 15-18 people showed up. Kris and Paul were also there. Pretty successful considering it was the first time doing it. Want to streamline it a bit, maybe think of topics. Open mic?? Something fun or useful for people. Anyone can join, we're doing this every Thursday. Comedy festival?
- Jin: WNB group is doing a nation-wide hangout on Zoom next Tuesday. Her own workplace is doing webinars on mental health, happy to share sessions on this.
- Lauren Kawana: Mental health piece is really important. Put out our own survey a couple weeks ago to see what member needs are. Have 23 responses, but top concern was increasing instances of racism, followed by finances, online workshop on handling crisis reporting. Lots of members say they want to volunteer/help out.

Continued member intros: Victoria Lim, Beena Raghavendran, Bobby Calvin, Liz Yuan, Bethany Ao, Justine Saldana, Henry Fuhrmann, Corinne Chin, Alex Wong, Dorothy Hernandez, Daigo Fujiwara

Took a break at 12:02 p.m. ET. Reconvened at 12:18 p.m. ET.

Jin and Leezel introduce themselves. Convention planning is on schedule. Convention planning committee has 12 members. Different tracks: reporting beats, professional development...question that keeps popping up from the team is whether convention is still happening. But otherwise team has been great, very methodical about vetting the pitches.

Cost of canceling convention at this point is a third of our annual budget. Cost will only increase after April deadline. Option to carry on with in-person + virtual option? Postpone until the fall? Will have more details by the end of April. Will also push early bird registration by over a month. We're committed to providing recruitment, training, networking for members.

Kelyn asked what registration is looking like so far. There are 24 registrations so far. Typically we'd have 150 by early bird registration deadline.

Oanh asks why we don't talk about postponing it? Spitball virtual convention -- in Asia looking to do that. Michelle says postponing is certainly on the table, would be sometime in the fall. Our thinking is if the Olympics can postpone one year, AAJA can also handle a change of plans. One unknown around postponing is in order to do full program planning, getting speakers to attend in person, registrations on board, it'll take 2.5 months from the date of convention for people to commit to it. The question is are we going to actually know how the pandemic is going to be by late June/early July. Looking very closely at how people reemerging from flattened curve is working out (like HK) -- if it doesn't work for them, it might not work for us.

Oanh says when they postponed in Asia, it made sense to the sponsors to postpone. We were able to upsell Google by a little bit.

Ted says one thing to keep in mind is not just hotel contract costs, but also conversations with sponsors. There are a lot of moving parts in figuring out how to minimize risk.

Michelle says even if we postpone, we will still take a massive financial hit. Option with Mayflower is still viable if we postpone.

Jin says if we postpone, what will happen now until postponing date? Our members still need this kind of service.

Kris asked if there have been talks of having joint conventions? Penalty fees for cancellation, how to avert that.

Wes asked about VOICES -- any further considerations regarding that deadline or other issues connected to VOICES? Naomi says we're thinking about how we provide an opportunity for students this year. We're fully committed to figuring out what is possible this year.

Intros: Kris Vera Phillips, Pia Sarkar, Julia M. Chan, Aric Johnson, Nancy Yang, Emily Tan, Ang Li, Yuri Nagano, Daniel Garcia, Jessica Xiao, April Sirano

Went into breakout rooms

Took a break at 2:15 p.m. ET. Reconvened at 2:20 p.m. ET.

Intros: Lauren Kawana, Amy Wong, Peter Wong, Moni Basu, Ang Li, Suevon Lee, Ted Han, Nicole Dungca, Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Presentations:

Chapters

- Acknowledge program participants at events/mixers, in newsletters
- Get off of Nation Builder
- Have standardized language from AG leaders to chapter leaders to explain to members why it's beneficial and important to join these groups
- Have AG member public to members

Affinity groups

- Gifting memberships to young journalists
- Amplify achievements
- Have programs with mid-careers, networking focused on C-suite intros

Michelle says purpose of exercise was to think beyond your own role in AAJA, and that's something to bring back to your chapters. Think differently about what your networks within your chapter/affinity groups can do, and how you can broaden that network.

Bobby asked what the structure is for AGs. Jin talked about founding of AAJA Women & Non-Binary Voices. Did some webinars, newsletter, coaching sessions (which weren't as successful). No officers structure, but most of the AGs have multiple leaders.

Beena explains that she was appointed as director, not elected.

Lauren talks about importance of consolidating information -- who participates in which programs? Who gets scholarships? Can we see rosters of affinity groups? For AGs, is there a one-sheet we can distribute to members?

Took a break at 3:14 p.m. ET. Reconvened at 3:35 p.m. ET.

Naomi gives national update. 2020 is still a major opportunity -- Census year and election year. What does visibility (AAJA, AAPI community, among members) in 2020 mean? What's our strategy? How are we leveraging this long term? How do we talk about ourselves, flex?

Priorities: national restructure (ongoing conversation with 3 board iterations). Staffing to be more nimble, professionalize operations.

Director of Programs and Partnerships job posting went out; in the final stages of hiring for that.

Moved out of the Hearst building in downtown SF and gone bicoastal; two shared coworking spaces in SF and DC. Have cut down a lot on operations cost. Working on transitioning off of Nation Builder. Worked on visibility as well -- newsletters, more engaged with Twitter and IG. Use #AAJAdudos when you can.

Strategic partnerships: Mathison partnership, which we hoped would help with freelancers for more jobs outside of big J Journalism. Going to continue working with them.

Beyond training we do for students/younger journos, moving up takes much more self promotion.

How can we bring back plenaries? How can we cultivate ourselves to be thought leaders? How are we convening and curating convos for people who aren't traditional big J Journalists? 3 plenaries over 2 days of the convention: intersection of civic engagement & journalism, intersection of tech journalism and what ownership could mean for us, intersections between news tech and policy.

Michelle says we met the founders of AAJA in LA last December. Really struck by how the founders created an organization that could help them be seen and feel seen. People want to build their soft power in the industry. No real path to building power. Why aren't there more ppl in C-suite who look like us?

What are we able to ask of whom, and who is asking for us?

Michelle would challenge everyone on this call to think about that one powerful person you know for a years-long engagement. For example, one of our keynote speakers in 2015, Melvin Mar, has become a great supporter of AAJA since then. We recently saw him at the last board meeting and he met more members of the board. We should continue this type of long-term engagement with people who may otherwise interact with AAJA just once, for example as a keynote speaker.

Lauren: Pacific Islander task force (newly formed)

Decided to form a task force to raise awareness of and increase representation of Pacific Islanders in AAJA. Noticed there is sometimes a lack of Pacific Islander representation within those spaces. Joined with Thomas M, Anita, Rachel Ramirez. Only 20 members in AAJA have identified as Pacific Islander. Want AAJA to be a leader in this area. Want to look for others who'd like to help out with the task force -- if you're interested in getting involved, let Lauren know.

How are we prepared internally for members potentially dying of coronavirus? What is our role here? One member who has been recovering from COVID-19 wants to help share her experience somehow. One other member is on a ventilator -- Maria Mercader. Longtime member and recruiter with CBS. We may not

comment on specific cases if families do not want us to, so the way we publicly talk about this may vary. If anyone hears of other cases, please let us know.

Yuri says maybe it doesn't have to be National in touch, could be an affinity group if that's who the member is closest with. Michelle says yes, should be organic, but we'll coordinate with chapter leaders. Always more appropriate when people closest to them organize the response. Our national procedure is if there's a death, we state our condolences and share where to direct funds/ask for privacy.

Naomi discusses #WashTheHate, campaign to combat discrimination/hate directed toward our community. Share if you can with #AAJAFamily. Website: washthehate.com.

Pia asked who is organizing that effort and how active we should be? Are we as an organization comfortable with working with them? Naomi says IW Group is a PR group, the message is just to bring awareness, no policy angle. It really is just a PSA.

Bobby says coming from AP, it's really strict about the orgs we associate with. It's nice to get a heads up before we partner with any organization.

Lauren asked how chapters are supporting their members in this time? Bethany says Philly chapter has put together resources from local coverage. Ted says in the guide that he helped put together, wanted to make sure the links wouldn't go out of date quickly. Make sure there are onramps for how to contribute.

Yuri asked if it's possible to use National's Zoom page. Naomi says Daniel is looking into pricing currently. Michelle says currently a paid account is \$15/month for a Zoom account. May be worth a chapter investment. We should also get as many members on slack as possible as well.

Bobby suggests reaching out to people who you think might need to chat.

Kris motioned to recess, Ted seconded at 4:46 p.m. ET.

+ [Jessica's notes doc](#)

Spring Governing Board Meeting - Spring 2020

Sunday, March 29, 2020

On Zoom

Officers present: President Michelle Lee, Senior Vice President Nicole Dungca, VP of Communications Shirley Qiu, VP of Finance Ted Han, VP of Civic Engagement Pia Sarkar, VP of Journalism Programs Kris Vera-Philips

Governing Board members present: Large Chapter Representative Henry Fuhrmann, At-Large Chapter Representative Yuri Nagano, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bobby Caina Calvan, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bethany Ao, At-Large Chapter Representative Elizabeth Yuan

Staff present: Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood

Michelle Lee called to order at 12:12 p.m. ET. Shirley Qiu called roll at 12:12 p.m. ET.

Officer updates:

Michelle: has been monitoring COVID-19 coverage. Nicole: trying to establish herself as point of contact for AG leaders.

Pia: There are some inactive members on Media Watch. Usually falls on the officers. Pia and CeFaan have told everyone they're no longer needed; now looking for new members to help. Help recruit if we know anyone who would be good for Media Watch. Pia and CeFaan developing expectations. Doing targeted recruitment and open call for applicants.

Liz asked how many people we're looking for. Pia says we had about 8 people; thinking we will look for 5 but need to give it more thought.

Ted: there are still serious data challenges for chapter leaders. Working with Frank on that. Looking to get auto-renewal for memberships. Broader question of where we're going in 2020 is what services are we going to implement while planning at the same time?

Naomi says we retained Nitt from convention. Has worked on integrating data into Salesforce as a test. What can we do better in the meantime as we move toward a long-term solution?

Shirley: working with chapter presidents to create a sense of community and support, leadership training.

Bobby mentioned Camp AAJA. Sandy and Bobby have been talking about something they could offer for half-day during convention. Sacramento chapter could possibly offer seed money for this? Want to create a pipeline for new and emerging chapter leaders.

Bobby said when we had Camp AAJA, it was funded by Chevron. We used to hold it at Poynter. Naomi says we will take a look. Bobby said that's how he got involved with AAJA.

Kris wonders if this could be offered to AG leaders?

Shirley shared the takeaways from the webinar -- people on chapter level see the job as daunting, negative experience. "Voluntold," "exhausting," "no time," etc. Want to turn that messaging around.

Bethany says it would help to have others in the chapter to lean on. Bobby says that was a great thing about Camp AAJA. You can't do it alone, and a lot of chapter leaders try to do it alone. But they may not have the time or skills to do so. A lot of ppl do this out of a sense of service to their community.

Ted says people join up to start things when there's a lot of momentum. For smaller chapters, that might be more difficult. So how do we motivate people to do that? Part of it is the national brand, part is local.

Yuri asked if there's a way to hand out stipends to chapter presidents? Bobby says that's on a chapter by chapter basis. In Sacramento, we give money to basically anyone who applies. Bobby gets a stipend for travel, and so does the president. Yuri says for chapters who don't have as much money, is it possible for National to do that?

We have confirmed that Maria Mercader passed. We'll work on a statement.

Kris: working with different program leads. Mentor Match working on making matches soon. ~50 mentee applications, ~20 mentor applications, recruited some more mentors. Kicking off with a series of webinars. VOICES marks 30th anniversary this year, applications close tomorrow. Looking for someone to step up as VOICES director -- that application is due today. J Camp marks 20th anniversary this year; thinking about what to do this summer.

Brief break to look at statement for Maria before we jump into policy review. Reconvened at 2 p.m. ET.

Kris motioned to go into closed session to discuss convention contingency 2:02 p.m. ET; Ted seconded.

Ted motioned to go out closed session 3:10 p.m. ET; Kris seconded.

Took a break; reconvened at 3:20 p.m. ET to discuss recession plan.

Michelle has talked with Sharon and Candice about how to handle recession. Also will discuss with funders so they know we're planning for recession. Good thing is now we are in a much better place financially than in 2008 -- we have a reserve that we've built up to ~\$800,000. But not nearly enough to weather the storm. What can we start now to help mitigate the loss in long-term budget? 1-2 years? 5-10 years?

Develop individual donor/high-network donor program sooner than we had anticipated.

Sharon and Candice advised to lean into expertise of members who left industry in '08/'09.

Make sure diversity is not being taken for granted or deprioritized in this time. Ted says transparency with diversity of newsroom would help.

We want to make sure we have advisors to help support members. Digital webinars? Resume workshop? Partner with Report for America?

Bethany suggests having chapter leaders advocate for themselves in their respective newsrooms, why they deserve to be there, ahead of cuts. Talking points would be helpful. Arguing for the value of diversity in a newsroom. Worth engaging with other groups on this as well -- e.g. JOC slack group, Open News, unions.

Pia says Mentor Match program and ELP will be especially helpful in this time. Can we beef up those programs? What are the opportunities out there -- financial planning? How can we lean on those executives and coaches? How can we raise up those JOCs to C-suite positions?

New business:

Putting SAJA partnership on hold. SAJA offered free memberships for rest of year due to COVID-19. But the good thing is we have a structure laid out for how a partnership would work.

Monthly board call? Michelle will provide a few options.

We've been invited by APIA VOTE to provide media access training virtually from April 2020 - April 2021. This would be a federal CDC grant (we fill in the blank), due Thursday. Could be an opportunity to do some of our work virtually. Training local community experts on training their communities to respond to COVID-19. Naomi will give us a download after her call via slack.

Kris motions to go into closed session for personnel at 4:01 p.m. ET; Ted seconds.

Kris motions to get out of closed session at 5:02 p.m. ET; Ted seconds.

Ted motions to adjourn meeting at 5:03 p.m.; Yuri seconds.