

AAJA Board of Directors Meeting - Fall 2020

Saturday, Dec. 12, 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

Incoming governing board members present: VP of Finance-elect Jin Ding, VP of Civic Engagement-elect Julia B. Chan

Staff present: Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Jessica Xiao, Glenn Sugihara, April Siruno, consultant Julie Truong

Michelle Lee called to order at 12:07 p.m. ET. Shirley Qiu called roll at 12:07 p.m. ET.

President's report by Michelle: Everything we've gone through/accomplished this year has shown me the power of our community. We're still very dependent on volunteers; however, we've been able to build up the National staff with Naomi at the helm. Time to explore long-term financial support so we're not going year-to-year.

ED report from Naomi: We've reached 1,743 members as of Friday. This is the highest membership we've seen in years. As of end of November, netted \$555,131.24. On track to transition from Nation Builder → Salesforce. Working on microsites to help brand other initiatives (e.g. AAJA Awards, AAJA Studio). Heather is leaving the National staff; talking to new candidates. Brought on Jessica Xiao, a fellow and interns. Giving chapters and AGs their own Google accounts. Continuing to develop: AAJA Studio, 40th anniversary plans (oral history project), Catalyst, speaking programs, mini recruitment summit, rapid response comms.

SVP report from Nicole: Lots of meetups, panels/workshops, scholarships and internships provided by chapters and affinity groups this year. This sets us up for more virtual programming in the future. Big need/opportunity for yearlong leadership training, Camp AAJA. Big opportunities for 40th anniversary as well. Allowing for more formalized way to sponsor members.

VP of Finance report from Ted: Possibility that we may not get out of the hotel contract if we have to cancel convention again -- taking that into account. The way virtual convention worked demonstrated the strength of the community and is something we can build upon. Goal: board taking a more active role in fundraising.

Glenn: My takeaway from this year is that virtual is the way to go. Virtual saves on hotel/food/wifi/job fair, in total over \$250K.

Strategic planning with Julie Truong: Last time we talked about goals and impacts, policy, advocacy. Final vote on strategic plan in January/February. Key priority areas: 1. Program impact and pipeline; 2. Member

and alumni engagement; 3. Policy and advocacy; 4. Equity in newsrooms and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

1. Program impact

What can help members see the lifetime value of programs and how they all connect together? Strategies: Program follow up, veteran programming, mentorship and career coaching, scholarships, job search and career transition.

2. Member and alumni engagement

Finding better ways to communicate information, being inclusive to groups across ages/career stages, cross-collaboration between chapters and AGs, leadership support/development for chapter/AG leaders. Reframe mindset of what do I give to AAJA → what I get out of being in and serving as a leader in AAJA. How do we help retain institutional knowledge during leadership transitions? Core group of AAJA members (like Paul) to create some stability? How to incentivize volunteerism among members? Clearly communicate value propositions.

3. Policy and advocacy

What is it that we want to stand for/fight for? How far do we push our advocacy?

4. Equity in newsrooms and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Pushing for DEI in newsrooms, diversity in hiring. What can we do to support other JOCs? Other community partnerships? Knowing our role in a social change ecosystem.

Took a break at 2:30 p.m. ET. Reconvened at 2:45 p.m. ET.

Breakout rooms: Brainstorm 3 strategies per goal.

Julie, Michelle, Nicole and Naomi will distill our ideas and share in January. Possible survey of members to get feedback on these strategic plans.

VP of Civic Engagement report from Pia and Julia: Recruited new members for Media Watch committee, have become more nimble. New Style Guide Committee as well. Can we collaborate with other journalism organizations on a style guide? Building relationships with ethnic media?

VP of Journalism Programs report from Kris: Program leaders are committed to some sort of programming in 2021. Mentor Match actively recruiting a deputy director bc Ruth Liao about to go on leave. Online 2021 VOICES program -- applications rolling over from 2020. VOICES want a presence at 2021 convention. J Camp survey -- what do students need for 2021? Catalyst wants to sync up programming with Lunar New Year in Feb. ELP will be virtual or hybrid version (in-person would just be folks in NYC).

VP of Communications report from Shirley: Chapter elections deadline extended to Dec. 18. Michigan has become inactive -- Nicole and Naomi will follow up with them. Waiting on DC and NC chapters for election results. Feedback from Rahul Bali and Ellen Lee on Camp AAJA: suggested focusing on chapter finance management, fundraising, discussing member needs (esp. for older and lapsed members), leadership training, discussion on identity, anti-racism and allyship, and opportunities to connect with others on a personal level. We can aim for February weekend, develop programming then seek funding.

Michelle calls for motion to recess at 4:55 p.m., Kris seconds.

Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020

On Zoom

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Incoming governing board members present: VP of Finance-elect Jin Ding, VP of Civic Engagement-elect Julia B. Chan

Staff present: Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Jessica Xiao, April Siruno, Glenn Sugihara.

Michelle called to order at 1:05 p.m. ET. Shirley called roll at 1:06 p.m. ET.

#AAJA21: Naomi and Jin

Going to try getting out of the contract with the hotel penalty-free. Current liability is \$111K. Michelle proposes an all-virtual convention again. Olympics: July 23-Aug. 8.

Glenn: The \$111K doesn't include the \$40K deposit. Expenses for convention: Pathable, graphics creators. We would make more money going virtual -- profit would be about \$300K. Could possibly push it to 2023.

Naomi will send a proposed date after comparing with other organizations' convention dates. Jin, Naomi, Leezel and Frank will prepare a proposal for 2022 for spring board meeting.

AAJA @ 40: Naomi

AAJA Inaugural Hall of Fame, AAJA 40th Year Oral History Project, fundraising & development. Hopeful we can come together in-person in Q4 for a hall of fame & awards celebration; if not, we'll go virtual.

AAJA Style Guide: Pia and Henry

Already got the ball rolling with Muslim American Task Force and Pacific Islander Task Force. Should also ask people in newsrooms to flag style questions they're seeing. We need to be thinking about these things before newsrooms come to us.

Julia suggested coming together with other journalism organizations for an uber-style guide. SAJA is down for a collaborative style guide.

Flags from a staff perspective: Format? Do we want to soft-announce something so we can get some feedback from the members? Doris has said Poynter is interested in housing the guide and finding grants. Next step: We should connect with leaders who created the NAHJ/NAJA style guides.

Took a break at 2:15 p.m. ET. Reconvened at 2:25 p.m. ET.

Membership rates evaluation: Jin and Julia

New proposed membership tiers/description to be more inclusive. Rather than lowering rates, how can we accommodate people experiencing hardship? E.g. sponsoring membership, grace periods. Membership dues currently make up 8% of our revenue. Jin and Julia will flush out language and get back to us.

Veterans Task Force: Bobby, Yuri and Kris

#AAJA20 listening session in August, sent out a survey in September. Thinking a task force will fill this need for long-timers. Would provide programs like check-ins, workshops (e.g. Ron Brown), celebrations, manager-level mentoring. Plan to work internally with chapters/AGs and externally with IRE and SAJA. Working on drafting a memo and report.

This will act as a conduit for members who are active and not so active. Goals as a task force is to identify areas where we can get ppl more active.

Listening session coming up in January with long-timers

Scholarships and fellowships: Naomi and Jin

Our named scholarships do not have a lasting fund from which to draw. What's our process for receiving named scholarships? Most of our scholarships are for students; currently only one scholarship for mid-career folks for leadership development. Next steps: We won't take any named scholarships unless they can help with fundraising for reserves or endowment. Currently have about a dozen scholarships.

Will post spring 2019/summer 2019 minutes as soon as possible.

Ted motions to go to closed session at 3:48 p.m. ET; Kris seconds.

Bobby motions to come out of close session at 4:55 p.m. ET; Julia seconds.

Ted motions to adjourn at 4:56 p.m. ET; Pia seconds.