

BOARD MINUTES SUMMER 2012

AAJA National Board Meeting, Aug. 4, 2012, Mandalay Bay Las Vegas:

Doris Truong calls the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m., PT

Officers present: President Doris Truong, Vice President Broadcast George Kiriya, Vice President Print Tom Lee, Treasurer Rene Astudillo, Secretary Theodore Kim. Board members present: Yvonne Leow, Chi-Chi Zhang, Maria Ebrahimji, Niala Boodhoo, Victoria Lim, Wes Nakama, Nancy Ngo, Tali Smith, Paul Cheung, Sital Patel, Renee Chou, Juliana Reyes, Nicole Dungca, Pamela Wu, Hoa Quach, Tomoko Hosaka, Ellen Lee, Tom Huang, Bobby Calvin, Joz Wang, Sanjay Bhatt.

Absent: Tillie Fong, Ankur Dholakia.

Staff present: Kathy Chow

Special Guests: Gautham Nagesh, Raul Bali, Curtiss Kim, Maria Hechanova, Richard Prince, Chris Jose (representing Denver Tillie Fong), Howard Chen (representing Michigan Ankur Dholakia), Amanda Betat.

Doris makes some announcements and offers some 'thank yous.' Doris said she hopes to convene a virtual town hall this fall to discuss alternate convention models.

Tom Lee made some announcements and said AAJA continues to tweak the mentor/mentee program.

George Kiriya offers a report on various AAJA broadcast groups. Maria Hechanova discussed how the Small Market Broadcasters Journalists group continues to gain in members and engagement. Curtiss Kim noted that the Asian American Radio Group, for the first time, helped live-stream the UNITY 2012 convention. Raul mentioned how radio broadcasters hope that future conventions have more radio programming. Doris noted how she is planning to meet with American Public Media in the fall in Minnesota to discuss future partnerships. George mentioned how the Student Broadcasters group also continues to grow.

George mentioned how this will be his final advisory board meeting and he offered his farewell (for a while, at least).

Doris said she, incoming President Paul Cheung and others will continue to tweak the MediaWatch program. She also reviewed this year's JCamp, Executive Leadership Program 2012, AAPI Heritage Month activities. She noted that AAJA is rejoining the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

Doris described her continuing outreach efforts to all the AAJA chapters and other groups, including SAJA, NABJ and others. She had mentioned how she hopes diversity will soon become a larger part of the ASNE agenda.

(break)

Board reconvenes at 10:14 a.m.

Budget discussions. Executive Director Kathy Chow says some of the early projections are concerning, but that it is early and many unknowns exist.

Treasurer Rene Astudillo noted that this is his last advisory board meeting. He noted that the group has a stable collection of assets totaling some \$1.7 million. Also, total chapter assets are some \$500,000. Rene noted that AAJA has established a credit line at Bank of San Francisco in case of emergencies, but that the credit line as an option is not ideal because of terms.

Rene noted that the board budgeted for a \$0 profit budget. As of June 30, the organization faces a projected deficit of some \$129,000. But he cautioned that the estimates are still early. He noted that AAJA projected some 650 registrations at UNITY. As of the meeting, AAJA was counting just over 500 registrations.

Kathy Chow noted that financial information remains incomplete from UNITY. She also noted that AAJA tried hard to reduce UNITY expenses, but there was little follow up from UNITY staff. Following a question from Niala, Kathy mentioned that she has continued to press UNITY for projections, with little success. Kathy noted how sponsors like Comcast and General Motors stepped up for AAJA this year.

Sital Patel asked if the UNITY profit is determined by room blocks. Kathy said no. Rene noted that UNITY is not hampered by room block. He and Tom Lee also noted that General Motors commended AAJA during a sponsor luncheon for their partnership efforts. Sital also asked about past success in securing grants. Kathy noted that the key is delivering quality metrics to donors and sponsors and grantors. She said the general success rate is more than 50 percent.

Rene noted that JCamp is running a deficit and that alliance partners need to help fund the program. Maria Ebrahimji said her employer, CNN, thinks JCamp is one of the most valuable student training programs.

Bobby wanted to know the general ethnic breakdown of JCamp. Mostly Asian American? Kathy said it depends by year. Yvonne Leow asked about what goes into budget/expense projections. Kathy noted that a key JCamp grant this year did not come through.

Rene noted that ELP 2012 also is running a deficit, but that the program's existing cash balance will help blunt that. Sanjay Bhatt noted that ELP can't count on one-time

infusions like this year. Kathy said it was harder to secure sponsorships this year. In the past, Dinah Eng did a lot of outreach to sponsors. Now, that task falls to Kathy, who already has lots to do. Sanjay noted that the current program directors may need to help fundraise. Doris/Kathy noted that, for many years, McCormick Foundation was the anchor sponsor. That has created a key revenue shortfall.

Several board members asked about accounting procedures. Kathy noted that projections are generally conservative and realistic. Ellen Lee noted that it is up to board members to be more aggressive with fundraising.

(break)

Board reconvenes at 11:18 a.m. Rene said AAJA regular audits have begun. He noted that chapters are now responsible and accountable for their finances (now more than in the past). He noted treasurers are required to file mid and end of year reports. Rene noted that one discussion remains how audit costs will be covered between national/chapters. Currently, the costs are calculated by assets/membership.

Joz Wang said the L.A. Board wants the audit costs to be included in the national budget. Kathy noted that audit costs vary by chapter and financial activity. Rene said the board continues to refine the way in which audits are paid for.

Kathy Chow presented the national office report, beginning with some announcements. She announced that AAJA has begun partnerships with UPS, Southwest Airlines and AARP. She also said AAJA is partnering with NLGJA on a special heartland diversity reporting project funded by the Ford Foundation.

New guests:

Guests: Neda Habibi (Denver). Nomaan Merchant (Texas)

Doris noted that 2013 chapter convention assignments are coming now. During the appointments, board members discussed how chapters might better coordinate their assignments.

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Programming Co-chairs:

Tom Huang, Texas

Arthur Chien, New York

Also:

Vicki Lim, Florida

Emma Carew, D.C.

Silent Auction:

Sanjay Bhatt said he and others are taking lessons learned from the Silent Auction and hopes to offer some suggestions in the future.

Seattle, San Diego, Philadelphia.

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Media Access Workshop:

Los Angeles, Arizona.

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National Awards:

San Francisco, New England, North Carolina.

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Scholarships:

Sacramento, Portland.

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Special Awards:

Minnesota, Denver.

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Gala Script:

Pamela Wu.

Still requiring assignment:

Asia

Atlanta

Hawaii

Michigan

Chicago

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Committee updates:

Paul Cheung noted that AAJA worked on AAPI Heritage Month went well.

Membership committee:

Tom Lee said he and others continue to look at how better to improve mentor programs and interest in scholarships, among other initiatives.

Finance:

Rene said he will work to make sure the incoming treasurer and others will implement the findings of the independent report. He also said the finance committee has posted thoughts about how we might use our endowment in the future. Rene also mentioned how the investment committee continues to look more in depth at how AAJA's money is invested.

Policy and Issues:

Theodore Kim said the policy committee hopes to begin a fruitful discussion on modifying the structure of the advisory/governing board so that the board makeup remains consistent with the changing industry and AAJA landscape. The hope is to get a discussion thread going by fall and, by spring, have concepts that we might be able to shape into proposals. He also said he will draft some broad, brief election guidelines for social media, etc., to be in place in time for the next election.

Yvonne Leow has agreed to look into the prospect of student voting and more student organization.

Social Media:

Tomoko said she has crafted a draft on social media guidelines for national and chapter. She also hopes to draft a report on the findings of a survey of local chapters and their social media operations.

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Doris Truong said an updated source book is coming. Maria Ebrahimji said she will help on source book.

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Website Redesign:

Paul Cheung offered an update on the design of the AAJA website. He said the current website is temporary. He hopes to train staff on some aspects. Paul suggested beginning a discussion on whether to be more consistent in branding across websites. Several members said chapters have different needs and some individuality is needed. Members said maybe a middle ground can be struck.

(Guests: Shirley Leung, Marian Liu, Joe Nguyen)

(break)

Marian Liu offered a report about the Voices news project, saying that it went well and continues to go well.

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2014 Convention.

Tom Huang began a debate on the AAJA convention model. He rehashes many of the points covered in his Convention Models Task Force Preliminary recommendations and points. The goal is to experiment in 2013 and 2014, with an eye toward reinvention four to five years down the road.

Key points for 2013 include: Additional sponsored training, partnering with SAJA, developing in-town excursions, offering more sponsored entertainment excursions, tap start-ups in New York, charge additional fees for extra activities.

Tali Smith asked if there's value to doing conventions *only* in top membership cities. Paul Cheung said it's important to have conventions in smaller markets, as well, because it helps cultivate membership in those chapters.

Ellen Lee asked about when the next city will be picked. Kathy said the sooner the better. Joz Wang noted that the host chapter retains the vast burden of convention responsibilities.

Tom Lee asked about value-added pricing (e.g. What if members paid extra to roam the job fair?) Tom Huang said the task force looked at that, but that it has potential downsides (e.g. new accounting complexity.) Rene Astudillo asked about the Voices student project, which is a valuable endeavor but is very expensive. Tom Huang suggested partnering with media organizations to use the news project to identify potential recruits.

George Kiriyaama cautioned that all changes need to fit into Kathy Chow's timeline so that the national staff has enough time. Tomoko Hosaka said UNITY's sponsorship or job fair packages were too inflexible. AAJA, she suggested, should be more flexible. Maria Ebrahimji suggested opening up the job fair to every journalist in the city -- not just those at the convention.

Theodore Kim and several members discussed their core goals for the convention, including reducing costs, generating new revenue streams, reengineering the employment fair and revamping programming. Kathy Chow suggested polling members on where to go. Bobby Calvin suggested lining up cities earlier so that each city has more time to plan. A number of members mentioned a litany of pros and cons to the various convention models.

Kathy Chow noted that high-impact changes will take time to plan for. Rene suggested not to discount the involvement of small cities.

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Doris tasked Tom Lee to look into a potential rate increase for members. Within that same debate, Doris/Kathy also said they would look into the possibility of discounts for alliance members to join AAJA.

Board members gave some announcements. Bobby Calvin made a motion to adjourn, Ellen Lee seconded. None opposed or abstentions.

Meeting adjourned: 2:16 p.m., PT

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Governing Board Meeting, Aug. 5, 2012, Mandalay Bay President's Room, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Officers Present: President Doris Truong, Vice President Broadcast George Kiriyaama, Vice President Print Tom Lee, Treasurer Rene Astudillo, Secretary Theodore Kim. Board members present: Joz Wang, Tom Huang, Paul Cheung, Yvonne Leow, Tomoko Hosaka, Ellen Lee.

Also present: Executive Kathy Chow, Incoming Vice President Broadcast Niala Boodhoo.

Meeting, comes to order at 9:13 a.m., PT.

Doris made a motion to approve the Advisory board minutes, Governing board minutes, and Addendum to the minutes as amended for spring. Joz Wang and Paul Cheung seconded. Motion passed.

Doris Truong proposed that Niala Boodhoo and Gautham Nagesh be given access to AAJA Wiki as of today. Tom Lee moved, Rene seconded. Motion passed.

Rene discussed finance committee work on how best to use the AAJA endowment. Several members asked technical questions about the endowment and its use. Joz Wang said she is uncomfortable tapping the endowment for anything but the most dire of circumstances. Tom Lee agreed.

Rene said the original intent was to raise \$2M, and to tap the interest for programs. The money is currently earning less than 1 percent where it currently is.

Kathy Chow said it's important to note that the endowment constitutes a pot of money that can help AAJA in its lean times. Tom Lee said he thinks it's a slippery slope to borrow on the endowment. He asked what best practices are. Rene said organizations differ on how they use endowments. Tom Huang said it's better to borrow from the endowment than borrow from a line of credit. He said it's also important to be transparent during the entire process.

Ellen Lee said she thought it's important to cut the budget before tapping the endowment. She said she would be in favor of substantial cuts to programs before tapping the endowment. Several members discussed a series of pros and cons of cutting the budget versus tapping the endowment. Joz Wang said she wants the board to be as transparent as possible.

Tom Lee emphasized that the endowment should only be tapped as a last resort. Kathy Chow noted that the programs need to be rejiggered for the future so that they continue to be attractive to sponsors. Several members asked follow-up questions related to the endowment policies.

Paul Cheung said there are other options the board may want to consider (e.g. assessments). Joz said chapters remain angry about assessments paid in 2009, so she said this might not fly. Several board members discussed signaling to members that all of these budget options (including program cuts) are on the table. Board members continued discussing what other options there might be.

Doris Truong said she will arrange a call with ELP, JCamp and Voices directors and the AAJA officers to discuss hard budget choices that need to be made. Rene said he will convene a task force to calculate the pros and cons of tapping the endowment. Paul Cheung noted that chapter presidents need to be involved in some of these fiscal discussions.

(break)

Doris made some announcements. Kathy Chow discussed audio/video hiccups at the AAJA Gala. Tom Huang asked for a copy of the 2013 New York convention contract.

Tom Lee made a motion to head into executive session to discuss personnel issues. Ellen Lee seconded the motion. Tomoko Hosaka moved to exit Executive Session. Joz seconds. Executive Session concluded.

Paul thanked outgoing officers Doris, George and Rene: "The industry has changed a lot. I appreciate that you bring in what you believe and think is right."

Ellen Lee moved to adjourn. Yvonne seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m., PT.

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