AAJA National Advisory Board Meeting - Spring 2017
March 10, 2017
Loews Hotel, Philadelphia

Officers present: President Yvonne Leow, Senior Vice President Michelle Lee, VP of Journalism Programs Ramy Inocencio, VP of Civic Engagement Pia Sardar, Secretary Nicole Dungca

Officers absent: Treasurer Shawn Nicole Wong

Governing board members present: Lauren Hardie, Julianne Chiaet, Matt Stevens, Esther Gim

Advisory board members present: Nicole Vas, K. Oanh Ha, Willoughby Marion, Grace Wong, Frank Shying, Robert Boos, Daigo Fujiwara, Sameer Rao, Pamela Wu, Julia B Chan, Corinne Chin, Scott Wong

Staff present: Executive Director Kathy Chow, Treasurer Glenn Sugihara

Others present: Philadelphia chapter president Juliana Reyes

Yvonne called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Nicole took roll.

Kathy talked about the national office and operations, and our signature programs. Sameer talked about JCamp, Robert talked about Voices, and Julia talked about ELP.

Kathy talked about the transformational nature of ELP, and said it would be in New York this year and that the classes are usually 15 to 20 people. She then told the board more about MediaWatch.

She also discussed the roles as an advisory board member, and how they are the front line on sharing information on policy changes and upcoming items for your chapter. She talked about other chapter responsibilities.

Glenn then spoke about financial literacy and introduced how to go through the budget.

At 10 a.m. Glenn talked about financial literacy, going through the budget.

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Others present: Philadelphia chapter president Juliana Reyes
At 1:09 p.m, we took roll with the full advisory board.

Sameer welcomed us to Philadelphia, and Yvonne congratulated Sameer and Julia.

Yvonne, Nicole Vas, Oanh, Willoughy, and Pia told us personal stories about how they became journalists. We then took a break.

At 1:47 p.m. Yvonne talked about AAJA’s role in journalism, as the intersection between members and recruiters. She talked about AAJA’s pipeline, and the state of journalism: Journalists of color are 17 percent of newsrooms, a six percent increase from 1997. Trust is at an all-time low, news budget are shrinking, but new roles are growing.

She told us how the organization is working on brand identity, partly by redesigning the logo. She also said we are updating the website so it is easier for members to join.

We discussed the new logo. Kathy said there was not 100 percent agreement on the new logo, but most of the committee decided that it was a bold, identifying logo.

Yvonne said they’re aiming for mid-April with a website redesign, and that they need to define what the roll-out would be. The goal is to unify AAJA’s family brands across national, local, and signature programs. Oanh asked if there would be any changes to the mission statement, and Yvonne said no.

Frank asked about whether local chapters would need to reprint banners, redesign websites with new logo. Kathy said she doesn’t want to take away unique identity, but that she wants all chapters to fall into the family brand. She said we’ll have a national rollout, and then phase 2 will identify how to do it on chapter levels.

Lauren asked whether local websites will need their own individual sites. Yvonne said there will be a landing page, and it will say “find your local chapter.” She said she doesn’t know how much traffic goes to websites and it will vary. Lauren said Florida gets more traffic to their website than expected.

Julia asked about any plans to survey the chapters, and Yvonne said that was definitely going to happen.

After Robert asked about taking the logo back to their local chapters without any leaks, Yvonne said we were welcome to show the logo, but not make it public on social media.

Yvonne said she wanted to go through this process because they wanted to bring in design experts who understood AAJA, but also understood logo and brand identity. Michelle said that Yvonne put together a committee with a lot of people across the country and outside consultants. Kathy talked about how this logo combined past and present.

Yvonne talked about AAJA Family and what it means to be in AAJA, and what it means to have an aaja experience. She also talked about growing our family, thinking about growing us internationally.

Wes Nakama, of Hawaii, entered the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

Yvonne talked about how we’ll need to support journalists as press freedom is under threat, and more
freelance journalists are working remotely.

She said the Globe Editors Network approached AAJA about a partnership that would give members a 50 percent discount on the GEN Summit in Vienna. She said it could be a good opportunity. Yvonne said she also wanted to focus on media entrepreneurship: How can we transform from the ground up? She wants to offer training and a community for freelancers, self-starters, creators, and independent journalists.

Kathy then presented her national report. The convention is in July because NABJ booked a convention a few weeks earlier. NBC Universal has given verbal confirmation that they’ll be presenting media sponsor. GM has had a good conversation with the group as a presenting non-media sponsor. Coca-Cola will also be sponsoring opening reception.

Kathy talked about the Criminal Justice project in New Mexico, which has an editor and two reporters on the ground. Pam talked about the media access workshops in Santa Fe, and why AAJA focused on the area.

Michelle gave her senior vice president report, and talked about the new structure of the board and its affinity groups. She talked about the chapter structure evaluation, and how we have to address issues with chapters, some of which are growing while others are shrinking rapidly. She said the current chapter system may not be sustainable.

She said we also looked a heat map of where our members are. There are many at-large members that don’t have a president or representative. She said we need to take a sober look about whether we’re serving our chapter members.

She said she is trying to recruit for new affinity groups, such as mid- to large-market broadcast journalists, or network journalists.

She talked about the Muslim American Task Force, which started in February. It launched a diverse Muslim sources database. When Scott asked about whether it’s only open to members, Michelle said individual members are only allowed to use it -- for now.

We took a break at 3:07, started back up at 3:14 p.m.

Glenn talked about the audit, and how the audit committee must approve the statement of financial position.

Michelle presented the new website.

Matt Stevens, of the programming committee, then talked about how they programming is off to a great start. We had more programs in 2016 than 2015, and for 2017, they wanted to focus on quality, not quantity. They want something for everyone, but not everything for everyone. We’re going to talk about fact-checking, millennials and reaching new audiences, identity, and working for managers who don’t get some of the issues top of mind.

He said they also developed a leadership and entrepreneurship track: It will help spotlight what it means to be a woman in leadership, and how to bring up sensitive issues at work.
Esther talked about the new Story Slam committee, which features Jeannie Park and Alex Laughlin. They want this event to be a new karaoke-type event, i.e. something they return to every year. Esther said they are looking for video submissions that are about 6 minutes in length. The submission date was April 9. All finalists would get complimentary registration and cash prize for top 3. SAG-AFTRA will be cosponsoring story slam.

Esther said she is also heading up silent auction, which is a big task. They are looking for high ticket items. They’re trying to secure more tech products, like iPads, cameras, VR, Rumba. Esther said the organization is going to use mobile bidding again. Kathy said it’s about educating people on how it works.

Kathy said the sooner items are donated, sooner people can bid on them.

Kathy said we should tie the auction to the cause: student programming.

Nicole D., Grace, Lauren, Wes, Frank S., Matt S., Esther, and Sameer then shared their back stories.

We recessed the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

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At 9 a.m. Yvonne then called the meeting to order.

Nicole took roll call at 9:04 a.m.

Michelle L., Bobby, Julia, Daigo, Julianne, Ramy shared back stories.

Ramy talked about the journalism programs. He said J Camp will take on 42 students during convention. They’re trying to secure big names like Jim Acosta for speakers. The work will go on at Temple University, and Kathy says that they will meet advisory board members.
Ramy said they also need people to help sponsor kids. If chapters can donate funds, consider sponsoring. Kathy says that they reach out to chapters if there’s a student coming out of chapter. It’s about $1,500 for a student including flight, meals.

Ramy said Voices met up with Temple and Kathy and Yvonne recently. They are also trying to get guests to speak to them. They did a rebrand of the Voices website. Voices will be all digital this time, instead of having a newspaper.

Ramy said they’re trying to get scholarships/student sponsorships going. It’s spearheaded by Carolyn Hong. It would allow people to sponsor a membership for a student.

Michelle says you can pay for the j-school or student, but you don’t need to know the student. Yvonne said NYT does a similar effort, with people sponsoring student subscriptions.

Ramy said the mentorship program is on pause because they want to redo the structure. He said it’s been challenging. He said he was part of it during 2007, and his mentor was further away and did not have a lot in common with him. They said they need more mentors, since that is what the limiting factor is.

Robert said that it would be helpful to have some framework since some mentors say it’s up to the mentee to reach out. Kathy also said there should be a set timeline. Kathy said likely the program would involve more digital and broadcast mentees.

Yvonne said ideally we need to craft a position and get someone in charge of it.

Kathy talked about ELP. We received grant from Knight Foundation to take a look at making ELP a more sustainable model, and what’s the desire for it. ELP has been open to non AAJA members. She said that one of the things that has been eye-opening have been that with a different makeup in the class, the non-AAJA members think this is amazing. The AAJA members have been far more critical. Kathy said we’ll have a consultant look into whether it’s the right financial model, and whether it’s serving people. The group is Envision, which works with non-profit organizations to revamp programs. Matt wanted to know whether they’d look into the curriculum part, and Kathy said they would do some surveys -- but she noted that they’re also not journalists.

Kathy said that ELP was not necessarily going to be a good money maker, but that we need more AAJA folks to be publishers, managers. She says we have a good track record, but it needs to be a sustainable model.

Scott asked about general criticism, and Kathy said that some felt ELP was sometimes too touchy-feely, but others thought it wasn’t emotional enough. She said some of the criticisms were small. Kathy said the membership has opened up: data journalists, people on design side, people on business side were all participating, but they all worked in media.

Yvonne pointed out all of these journalism programs were founded by really dedicated, hard-working leaders and now we are trying to figure out the best way to carry these programs forward.

Pia presented her VP of Civic Engagement report: She said we found a co-chair for MediaWatch, CeFaan Kim. He was very active in the Watters World controversy, is very opinionated and collaborative.
Pia said we closed the loop on the Watters World controversy. We had a town hall, and Jesse Watters didn’t apologize to us, but did a Business Insider interview in which he apologized. She said Paul Cheung did have a conversation with an executive director of O’Reilly Factor, and he offered up some context in terms of getting a story pitched or having a guest on their shows. It was an offering of how we would move forward.

Pia said that if they’re genuine about bringing on and diversifying voices on Fox, then we should do that.

Pia talked about Vogue’s “diversity issue,” which included a photoshoot with Karlie Kloss in a geisha outfit. Kloss apologized on Twitter. MediaWatch went back and forth about the role that they should play. Because it was a Vogue fashion spread, it was art, how much say do we have their artistic license? But Vogue also has journalism. MediaWatch reached out to Vogue directly, and sent them a statement that asked if they were aware of the controversy and asked about ways to continue the conversation. Yvonne, Pia, and CeFaan, talked to Vogue communications, identifying whether there is someone on the staff who is Asian or interested in Asian issues, or is a member of AAJA. The conversation included an invitation to convention. They responded immediately, and she believed there was a sincere desire to work with us.

Pia said that they wanted to look at organizations that deal with fact-based, credible journalism, rather than every outlet. She said we have to figure out where we are drawing the line about what is fact-based and credible.

Yvonne said the first thing we have to think of is, “Do we have to respond to this?”

Pia said they’re trying to develop a baseline assessment: What is the offense, who is being offended (larger community, AAJA, etc), assessing whether the offense is under art, entertainment, opinion; and whether it’s a journalism news organization. Pia said they wanted to think critically about the best response. Pia also said it’s important to consider whether what we say will affect members of our organization.

Michelle said that Paul reached out to Fox News members during Watters World.

Yvonne also said that responses have traditionally been statements and blog posts, and we’re also talking about being active via social media. It doesn’t require a 500 word statement, and another way to respond is getting a network of community leaders and being able to activate them and see if there is collaboration that can be had.

Michelle said the Vogue example was important because it was MediaWatch working behind the scenes. Pia said the spread never made it online. It was unclear whether they would have taken it off.

Frank asked how we gauge the success. Pia said potentially the Watters World is a mark in our column if we’re able to get people on air, or diversify the voices. She said we have a starting point with a contact, but also have to be realistic about what to expect.

Kathy also said it’s a case-by-case basis of what is doable. When the Asiana controversy occurred, Media Watch contacted them immediately. It was a local team, and AAJA went and met with the general manager and talked about the situation and what it looked like moving forward. With Jeremy Lin controversy at ESPN, it was an individual case where the offending person got fired on the spot.
Frank asked if this was our case at being more activist. Pia said we can’t be advocates, so we’re trying to walk the line.

Julia said the opportunity with the Vogue case was to use it to explore this murky area of art and journalism. She said we could serve as facilitators.

Pia said that we are talking in a unified voice, so we have to be careful about coming out after every outrage.

Willoughby said we could focus on workplaces that would do long-term work to normalize diversity. Yvonne said that some of the instances are unfortunate mistakes. She said we can help educate and be a resource, and that’s where we tread that line about advocacy and correcting the records. She said if we don’t engage or Fox or Breitbart, we miss an opportunity to educate.

Scott said there’s a debate in the press corps about how to credential certain organizations. They’re under consideration, so it just means they get better access. That’s one measure of how we could approach some of the organizations: It separates Breitbart from some white nationalist blog.

Michelle said we issued a guideline to come out “illegal immigrants,” and we urged newsrooms not to use that term. It’s in our guidelines under immigration. She said we get knocked a lot about not taking a harder approach, and that we’ve let NAHJ lead that conversation.

She said, on a broader level, we have to ask how something on MediaWatch pertains to its mission. If it’s solely about emotion -- and has nothing to do with fairness or accuracy -- she said it doesn’t fit in for Media Watch. She said that she was uncomfortable with some aspects of the Watter Worlds response because it could portray AAJA New York as advocates. Even when we are the facilitators, she said we need to make the lines clear: Someone else can carry the outrage, and we have to be careful.

Wes asked whether it would be helpful to develop a matrix on a chart and to make those decisions about do we react and how to react. Yvonne said we’re looking at tiers about what it would do.

Yvonne wanted a 10 minute break at 11:17 a.m.

At 11:28 a.m. Nicole talked about VP restructuring proposal, which would elevate the secretary and treasurer positions.

At 11:35 a.m., Matt stevens talked about convention and conversations about how to keep us relevant and add value. Matt asked if doubling down on the Asian American part would make us more relevant, and Yvonne said it was a niche we could own.

Kathy talked about working with APIA vote, saying she believed the timing was right, and that it was an overall success.

Michelle then made a motion to go into executive session to talk about internal conversations, and Matt seconded the motion. All those present approved at 11:46 a.m. to enter executive session, and Glenn and Kathy were allowed to stay in the session.

At 12:43 p.m., we took a break for lunch.
At 1:29 p.m., Matt made a motion to leave closed session. Julia seconded the motion, and all those present voted to approve the motion.

Michelle talked about chapter restructuring, with the AAJA leadership guide and family. She showed the presentation that was shown to the chapter presidents, which asks why AAJA exists and why we’re still here. She said we need to prove our professional value, though we do very well at personal relationships, student mentoring.

Juliana spoke about the convention because she had to leave early: She said that people in Philly are very proud and committed to the city. She said she is looking to do some programming in the city, and working on getting us access to a members only journalist bar. She said that there’s a small journalism community, so they’ve worked to ally themselves with all journalists of color to come out for convention or other events.

Michelle went back to the presentation, showing that the organization should focus on quality over quantity. Yvonne said we’re looking for impact at the end of the day, and that we need to home in on our branding and messaging.

We broke out into groups to talk about chapter structure for about 20 minutes. One group talked about what it means to be a member, another looked at how being a member is about the relationships that come out of AAJA, another said members care about AAPI/diversity issues; and another said it was about the connection to the community in your first job and finding your crew to discuss issues or find your next job.

Michelle synthesized some of the responses: If AAJA starts at the one-on-one relationship, there’s the idea that if you’re a member, we’re invested in your future. If you’re joining a family, you’re joining a network invested in you now, you tomorrow, and you 10 years later.

Groups also talked about potential ways to get people to join AAJA, especially at-large members:

**Grace's group:**
-- nearest chapter should introduce themselves, talk about personal guidance;
-- discounted membership registration
-- advertising value of convention

**Oanh's group:**
-- important to have personal touch, phone call, email;
-- line them up with an affinity group, closest chapter;
-- mentorship program being geared toward at-large
-- work with NABJ, work with other organizations to see if they have members there;
-- asia chapter as a model, digital hangouts, uplink, virtual;
-- people feel like they’re having a connection and part of something larger;
-- sister cities w/ small and large chapters

**Julia's group:**
-- carving out regions, which chapters they should be a part of
-- regional boards become responsible for reaching out to them
-- ask them what they want, ask them in a remote area what they’re looking for,
-- always be looking for ways to loop them in;
-- newsletters relay sense of community;

**Frank’s group:**
-- let’s have an at-large chapter
-- they can serve exclusively who participate in digital, emailing advice to each other;
-- google hangout, slack group;
-- chapters can adopt at-large members

Nicole said it was clear that the at-large need that personal connection and an immediate talk.

Kathy said we could develop at large toolkit. Yvonne said the governing board will help develop a mechanism to get those at-large members involved.

Glenn and Scott then gave their back stories.

Willoughby left at 3:10 p.m.

Corinne, Pamela, and Kathy Chow shared their back stories.

We broke out into committees: Global Expansion, AAPI Heritage Month, Entrepreneurship, and Civic Engagement.

Oanh, Matt, Ramy, and Frank talked about **Global Expansion:**

They decided that there were three big goals they could consider:

1. Rebrand globally
2. Focusing on asia expansion
3. Bigger convention in asia

Oanh said that we should look at our branding outside of the US. Oanh said our biggest concentration of membership is in Hong Kong.

Asia could also open up N3Con to more Americans, or do a convention in Asia.

Lauren said smaller cities in other countries may have problems with connectivity. For the convention idea, she also gave the idea of having digital component.

Yvonne said the expansion should depend on return of investment. She liked the idea of convention, and says we should keep thinking about what convention means to us.

Michelle said priority would be working with Asia chapter to figure out global rebranding.

Julia, Nicole, Julianne, Scott, Daigo, and Nicole Vas talked about **AAPI Heritage Month**

Julia said we’re going to have an #inspirasian campaign. We would profile people who inspire us as
journalists, and use it as an engagement campaign to crowdsource our membership. We’d send out a Google form asap, tell us about an influential Asian American. It can be an artist, chef, celebrity, or angry blogger.

We would turn them around on the website. Sound off on your #inspirasian.

Yvonne, Corinne, Lauren, Sameer, and Wes talked about **Entrepreneurship:**

The group said training will be a big push, but community is also important. Lauren said it could be an annual retreat, with 12-15 people together to establish this training. Corinne said she knows many of these people who want to do this, but don’t necessarily feel empowered to do it. Yvonne said Knight Foundation funds these kinds of projects already.

Pia and Esther talked about **Civic Engagement:**

Pia said she wants to assess how effective media access workshops are. She wants to measure how many stories and successful pitches have come from the workshops. Kathy says she has some data under Kellogg grant.

Pia said she wants to build some sort of Asian-American database in terms of coming up with sources that people can use, and identify who we’d want to include this database. They could be people who are advocates, experts, etc.

She said we could also create a survey for communities we cover and asking them about what kind of coverage they think is lacking. She said we should do a follow up and ask them what gaps we haven’t covered.

Michelle said she thinks the source database is really important, and that anything we can do to make more sources available is a good resources.

Yvonne at 5:21 p.m. asked if anyone had any other new business to bring up.

Lauren said that Florida would dislike if chapters were taken away. If we build up at-large chapter or idea, then there won’t be a need for that.

Lauren asked if it was time reorganize as an entity: Instead of chapters, could we have ambassadors based on where membership needs it? Florida is spread out.

Michelle said we still haven’t resolved what to do with chapters that are spread out. Today, we focused on the at-large part, but the issue with the ambassadors is that it is hard to connect them from all over the place.

Pia said she met with Committee to Protect Journalists communications director, and heard about their efforts in Asia. They have a presence in Asia, with correspondents in India and Thailand. They also have a researcher and a program director. They need help spreading the word, and also flagging Western journalists that get detained. There are local journalists who get detained that nobody ever hears about it. They were welcome to have a partnership to help flag cases where someone is in trouble. Oanh said she’d bring it up with the board in Asia.
Matt asked about the census year, and whether we wanted to continue with the same model, and whether it would be appropriate to adjust the cutoff numbers. Matt said he’d propose considering crunching the data to see how it breaks down by chapter size. He wants to know if that might merit a change.

Grace made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 p.m. Sameer seconded the motion, and all those present approved the motion. We officially adjuourned at 5:37 p.m.

**AAJA National Governing Board Meeting - Spring 2017**
March 12, 2017
Loews Hotel, Philadelphia

**Officers present:** President Yvonne Leow, Senior Vice President Michelle Lee, VP of Journalism Programs Ramy Inocencio, VP of Civic Engagement Pia Sarkar, Secretary Nicole Dungca

**Officers absent:** Treasurer Shawn Nicole Wong

**Governing board members present:** Lauren Hardie, Julianne Chiaet, Matt Stevens, Esther Gim

**Staff present:** Executive Director Kathy Chow, Treasurer Glenn Sugihara

At 9:05 a.m., Yvonne called the meeting to order and Nicole took roll.

Yvonne talked about the 2018 convention. Kathy said they submitted their proposal to host. The next process is for board to make a vote to allow to go and explore site options. Kathy said we’ve never been in Seattle as AAJA. Seattle was the UNITY site in 1999. She mentioned that there was a small contingency of Canadian journalists.

Kathy said that process has made it less burdensome on chapters, and Sameer agreed. Matt asked why Seattle wanted to do it, and Kathy said they’ve got a lot of strong members.

Lauren asked about an Asia convention, and Kathy said the process should be more than a year.

Yvonne said that we get excited about new ideas, but we aren’t able to frame the goal. Asia sounds great, but what are we trying to achieve? Until we establish AAJA’s mission, we’re going to keep bringing up other ideas without being strategic. We need to figure out UNITY and the goals for 2018 convention.

Esther made a motion to allow Kathy to explore identifying hotels and locations for convention in Seattle. Pia seconded. There was a unanimous vote to approve, with Shawn absent.

Yvonne asked whether we wanted to go forward with any proposal for UNITY. Matt said he’d want to explore partnerships, but he said that it seems like the momentum is gone.

Nicole said she wouldn’t want to go forward with an SPJ/RTDNA conference, but would like to keep the SPJ option open. Pia said she’d want to keep the door open, as well.

Esther said she agreed with Julia’s comments yesterday: We need to figure out our direction then go forward.
Matt asked who would take the lead with joint convention, and Kathy said they’d have to look for a new model.

Michelle and Nicole had concerns about whether we could fill the niche specifically for diversity, but Kathy said we could talk more about racial equity and have a bigger role.

Ramy said that Baltimore as a city would make more sense if we were doubling down on a SAJA partnership.

Julia made motion to go into closed session, Ramy seconded, and all present voted to go into closed session at 9:55 a.m.

Julia then made motion to exit closed session at 10:30 a.m., and Pia seconded. All those present approved getting out of closed session.

Julia then made a motion to decline going forward with UNITY. Esther seconded the motion. All those present approved the motion.

Nicole made a motion to accept the VP proposal and start by-law changes. Sameer seconded the motion, and all present approved.

Kathy said she and Pia will work on a fundraising policy that will be reviewed and approved by summer of 2017.

Kathy started talking about keynote speakers. She said we want to make sure that gala will have 2 speakers.

We had a long list of potential speakers that we’d like to reach out to: Barack or Michelle Obama, Bush daughters, Lester Holt, Elaine Chao, Preet Bahara, Kamala Harris, Ellen Pao.

Other names:
George Takei
Joe Biden
Hillary Clinton
Ali Wong
John Cho
Mindy Kaling
Aziz Ansari
Hasan Minhaj
Ken Jeong
Justin Lin
Viet Than Nguyen
George Takei
Joe Biden
Hillary Clinton
Ali Wong
John Cho
Pia said she’s not a fan of the logo, and wanted to get a better sense of the process. She said it looked too abstract. Yvonne said the committee focused on community, impact, and thought leadership. Yvonne said it would be important to introduce logo to veteran members.

We took a break at 11 a.m.

Michelle then made a motion to go into closed session, which Julia seconded. All those present approved going into closed session at 11:21 a.m., with Kathy allowed in the session.

Julianne made a motion to exit closed session. Julia seconded the motion, and all those present approved exiting closed session at 12:08 p.m.

Julia made a motion to end the governing board at 12:09 p.m., and Julianne seconded the motion. All those present approved the motion and we adjourned at 12:09 p.m.