AAJA National Advisory Board Meeting - Spring 2018
Friday, March 30, 2018
Mariott Marquis Houston
1777 Walker St, Houston, TX

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

Officers absent: Treasurer Shawn Nicole Wong

Governing board members present: Julia B. Chan of SF Bay Area, Anh Do, Kathy Park, Mihir Zaveri

Advisory board members present: Jodie Lau of Arizona, Oanh Ha of Asia, Willoughby Mariano of Atlanta, Wes Nakama of Hawaii, Hibah Samad of Los Angeles, Dorothy Hernandez of Michigan, Nancy Yang of Minnesota, Daigo Fujiwara of New England, Philip Yam of New York, Elizabeth Yuan of New York, Kris Vera-Phillips of San Diego, Shirley Qiu of Seattle, Gene Park of Washington DC

Staff present: Executive Director Kathy Chow

Others present: Sabrina Qutb, consultant

Jodie Lau, Hibah Samad, Elizabeth Yuan, Kathy Park, Shirley Qiu, and Mihir Zaveri attended an early meeting for new advisory board members.

At 9:05 a.m., Sabrina started the session and introduced herself. Jodie Lau, Hibah Samad, Elizabeth Yuan, Kathy Park, Shirley Qiu, and Mihir Zaveri introduced themselves and why they joined the advisory board.

Sabrina introduced the mission of the organization to the board.

Everyone introduced their chapters. Anh Do came in at 9:52 a.m.

Sabrina talked about the signature programs, and the overall organization of AAJA to better show people how decisions are made. She also presented larger sponsors, and explained the various funding sources of AAJA.

We took a tour of the convention hotel at 12:30 p.m.

Yvonne started the meeting at 1:35 p.m., and Nicole took roll.

Yvonne started off the introductions. Yvonne Leow, Jodie Lau, Oanh Ha, Willoughby Mariano, Michelle Lee talked about the reasons that they joined AAJA.

At 2:16 p.m. Kathy presented the national board report. She said that National will help strategize for fundraising, and help to recruit and identify new and lapsed members.
She talked about the new Facebook partnership, and how we need more applicants. She said that the board could discuss that partnership in light of the controversies over Facebook. Pia asked about how other minority journalist groups are dealing with Facebook partnerships.

She said Comcast is the presenting media sponsor for AAJA18.

Yvonne presented her president’s report. She talked about the strategic vision for 2020: increasing membership, being a leadership in diversity, focusing on digital innovation, expanding presence in Asia, and advocating for veteran AAJA members.

She talked about being in a post-UNITY era. Pia asked Kathy if recruiters are going to go to NABJ/NAHJ instead of our convention. Kathy said that she doesn’t believe that is happening.

Yvonne said we want to position AAJA to grow and invest, strengthen the local and national leadership pipeline, launch marketing campaigns to promote members and tell stories about AAJA’s impact, and develop continuing programming beyond annual conventions and signature programs.

She said we can reach out to ethnic media companies, and establish international partnerships and create more global programming. She also said we can use data and demographics to promote AAPI news coverage.

Michelle said we’re working with a professor at UC Riverside to get more data driven journalism about Asians into coverage.

Mihir asked if we ever survey our members about what hardships they face in the industry. Yvonne said it is mostly anecdotal -- and Kathy said we usually get low turnout for surveys.

Yvonne then talked about Catalyst, and how it can help us find out what kind of products or resources we can give to the kind of people who go there.

Yvonne then introduced a freelance platform idea. She said we wants to recruit a project committee with designers and developers. She thinks there is a need for freelance platform, with the hope to launch a prototype from August to September.

Michelle presented the senior vice president report. She talked about how the affinity group process is now fully integrated into the system, how a group is trying to develop chapters that need help, and the Muslim American task force.

Ramy then talked about journalism programs. They designed new logos for some of the signature programs. InHouse International developed the new logos. Voices had 69 student applications and are hoping to get 12-20 students. They’re working on funding with help from Paul Cheung, which comes from the New Venture fund. That fund also helps with the Executive Leadership Program (ELP).

Mentor Match has been revamped this year with help from Ruth Liao, Archith, and Hannah Bae. The new program is very structured.

Frank Bi called in to give us an update on the convention. An IRE workshop is possible, and the committee will soon sift through the programming pitches they got. He mentioned the official convention
logo. He said Story Slam is happening again, led by Mihir Zaveri and Emily Chow. Yvonne asked if we could Facebook Live again, and Frank and Mihir said they were open to doing that. Frank said Voices will livestream their presentation, and the story slam can use those resources on the same day.

Julia asked if we were livestreaming some of the conference, and Frank said he would look further into that.

Yvonne asked about the volunteer service day, and Kathy said they were still planning one in Houston. Frank said there were 130 submissions for panels, and there will be around 35 or 36 panels. He talked about some submissions, such as newsroom unionization.

Michelle asked about the affinity group submissions, and Frank said every affinity group has submitted their pitches.

Pia explained her role, which is in its second year. She talked about MediaWatch. She said we’ve made giant strides on being timely and quick. Her co-chair, CeFaan Kim, said he was effective in both instances in February: The first was WEEI in Boston, where one of the co-hosts imitated an Asian sports agent with a stereotypical accent. There was a quick response to it, and the host got suspended and apologized. Daigo said it was a good lesson, and he had to navigate between activism and journalism.

She also talked about how AAJA put out a guide on how to pronounce Pyeongchang.

We took a break at 4:28 p.m.

At 4:40 p.m., Kathy talked about financials. The net income for this year was about $250,000. We’ll be evaluating membership dues and convention dues because we haven’t raised membership dues in significant amount of time.

Daigo said it looks like Voices and JCamp lost money. Kathy said that Voices was long a signature program and it was often included in convention revenues. It was never pulled out under a separate operation, but now has its own separate line item so that we can see how it’s impacted. When it takes a loss, often comes out of convention revenues. JCamp, depending on the year, generally breaks even.

Kathy then talked about keynote speakers. AMC asked about Angela Kang, the head showrunner for Walking Dead, participating in convention. We’ve submitted an invitation to Angela Kang. They’ve also talked about Daniel Wu. Sports Task Force also may have connections to Chloe Kim, Kristi Yamaguchi.

She said we are also working with WB to do an advance screening of Crazy Rich Asians for opening night. There could be a junket, a screening, and a question and answer session.

There could also be a service project with Hurricane Harvey.

Oanh talked about Digital N3 and N3Con. She asked how many people actually joined the livestream: It connected the big chapters in Asia and US. It was on Feb. 9 in the US, and Feb. 10 in Asia. It was meant to be a 90 minute get-together but ended up being 2 hours. The first hour was news driven coverage, and it was meant to talk about story ideas and how to cover the hot topics in Asia.
Oanh talked about using Uber Conference and how she wouldn’t use something like that with a bigger event. Kathy mentioned Zoom.

Oanh also talked about N3Con and several members said they’d be interested in going. Google is doing a GoogleNewsLab with training at N3Con.

At 5:30 p.m., we recessed on Friday.

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

Nicole Dungca, Shirley Qiu, Mihir Zaveri, Gene Park, Ramy Inocencio, Daigo Fujiwara, Philip Yam, introduced themselves.

Willoughby, Kris, and Michelle talked about the chapter development initiative. Michelle said a lot of chapters felt alone and needed help, so we started an initiative to help lift up those chapters. Willoughby said the Atlanta chapter has suffered because of layoffs, affecting many of the core members. Fundraising and programming slowed down. Kris said that San Diego needed to build up their board and expand beyond journalism.

Michelle said that they have set up a shared calendar to help show what events every chapter is doing, and others can help promote those events. She said the initiative will help members amplify each other’s events and work.

Willoughby said that Florida had a huge geographic issue because they are all spread out. Kris checked in with Arizona, and they said they need to connect better with students. Michelle said priority chapters were chosen by responding to chapters that have needed more help, such as North Carolina.

Michelle said chapters have been paired up:
Julia asked about the reasoning behind promoting other chapter’s events. Michelle said it is a way of connecting chapters with even more people.

Oanh asked about a membership directory. Kathy said we’re trying to release convention attendees. Previously, members had been stalked so there were privacy issues. But Kathy said they’re looking into the opt-into options. People have different expectations of privacy.

Nicole said that reaching out on the national level has helped excited people in chapters that need help.

Julia asked about metrics of success. Michelle said we’ll be looking for feedback. Julia said hearing from members, not just chapter leaders, could be helpful.

Brandon Benavides of NAHJ and Bryan Pollock of NAJA joined us for a google hangout. Brandon said they’ll have their own board meeting and adopting several policies, such as anti-harassment, and will consider a by-law that will create affiliate chapters. They will also add a line that says president should not also be executive director.

He said NAJA will be having a convention at the same time as NAHJ’s convention this year. He said that they are financially stable and moving in the right direction.

Yvonne asked about challenges among the industry and its members, and Brandon said members want training. He said there will be a lot of hands-on training after hearing from members.

Michelle asked about the partnership with NABJ in 2020. Brandon said they’ve already signed the MOU, and are looking forward to it. They had a successful convention when they were in DC. He said there’s always room for improvement and said he didn’t want to comment on rumors or negative publicity, but says they are working together.

Michelle said we were in discussions about a convention in DC, and said she’d want to work together or have talks about it. He said he didn’t want to commit to anything because his term ends in July. The new board will be planning 2019 and 2020.

Pia asked about the membership. Brandon said NAJA was going to help with room block, but they’re responsible for their own programming.

Brandon asked about AAJA’s focus, and Yvonne said they’re trying to think about how national can support Asia during their regional conference. She said they’re also thinking about a freelance platform, and how to improve and support their local chapters.

Bryan said NAJA has just completed a 3-year strategic plan. They used data from a survey to guide their work. They have about 500 members in NAJA, which is the largest it’s ever been. They have one staff member. They’re trying to ramp up their capacity, so a lot of their goals are currently in fundraising.
They're reaching out to gaming tribes. They want to add one or more full time staff members. They also want to ramp up their student programming.

Pia asked about fundraising efforts with the tribes. She wanted to know about the nature of the relationship, and whether there are any concerns about pairing up with them. Bryan said there weren’t issues, but there was a lack of professionalism in the efforts to identify potential funding sources and go after them. He said the benefits are obvious.

Pia asked about what impact the dissolution of UNITY has created, and whether it concerned them. Bryan said it has yet to be determined. He said that the power of UNITY is that it served as a bridge for the organizations, and its philosophy and importance as an organization that bridges us remains. The responsibility falls on the organization, and being on the call showed it will still happen. The call then ended.

Pia said she was glad that we had those connections. Oanh asked if NABJ was invited, and Yvonne said they were, but the invitation was relatively last-minute.

Kathy introduced necessary forms: the conflict of interest, nondisclosure, and an emergency contact form. She said if there is an issue at the board meeting, they know who to contact.

Mihir asked about a sexual harassment policy. Kathy said we have a code of conduct that includes a sexual harassment policy.

Yvonne asked if everyone had gone to 2016, our town hall forum. Yvonne said it was a good trial run. We partnered with AAPI Vote to pull it all together. She said about AAPI Vote and a different vision for 2020. She said they want to have more of an open channel with the candidates.

Kathy said there were a lot of wins for both sides, but there were a lot of challenges, as well. She said the philosophy and execution sometimes clashed. She said that we’ve learned that the location isn’t as important, but what we’re going to build out for the sponsor level and the candidates.

Michelle said it may not be the same partnership in 2020. They said they want it to be a community driven event in Las Vegas. Michelle said we are set on DC in 2020. It will be the first time in six years. Logistically, DC makes more sense with a political component.

Michelle said other professional organizations are interested in partnering, but it would be good to have AAPI Vote. We are trying to engage them and see to what extent they want to be engaged.

Julia made a motion to go into closed session, and Pia seconded. All presented approved, and the board entered closed session at 10:53 a.m.

Pia made a motion to exit closed session and Kris seconded the motion at 11:39 p.m. All present approved, and we entered open session.

Nicole talked about the elections this year for president, VP of Finance, and VP of Civil Engagement.

The proposed timeline was:
Kathy talked about Atlanta and San Diego as possible chapters for the 2019 convention. She mentioned that local involvement has really evolved - it isn't as taxing on chapters. Phil asked about how sister chapters could affect convention planning.

Oanh wanted national to consider Asia. She said they'd be ready to have AAJA in 2019, but knows it could be hard to mobilize national that quickly. Yvonne said Asia could also focus on growing N3Con further. Kathy said they have to think about costs, as well.

Oanh said they would be announcing a sponsor for the hotel soon, and it would be in the low $100s.

At 12:14 p.m., we broke for lunch.

We started intros at 12:30 p.m. Pia Sarkar, Kris Vera-Phillips, Kathy Chow, Elizabeth Yuan, Kathy Park all introduced themselves.

At 1 p.m., we broke out into committees:

Marketing (AAPI History Month)- Nicole Dungca
Finance - Kathy Chow
Civic Engagement - Pia Sarkar
Freelance Platform - Yvonne Leow
Programming (Asia) - Ramy
AAJA 2020 - Michelle

Phil and Willoughby talked about the finance committee work. They talked about the ethics and conflicts of receiving money, and how to better deal with that. Phil also said there should be more frequent training for chapter treasurers. He said we need to better deal with succession planning.

Willoughby talked about sponsors on the national level, particularly who our target sponsors are. How do we determine our naming rights, such as Buzzfeed sponsoring J-Camp? Willoughy also talked whether there are ways to get new revenue: AAPI wire service? Is there a way to have your stories distributed by AAJA? Are there career services? Is there a food guide? Phil talked about stipends, such as how to start a scholarship. Kris asked about the guidelines to starting a scholarship, such as best practices. Dorothy said she'd be willing to help spearhead a food guide.

Yvonne talked about the freelance platform. She talked about some issues they brainstormed, such as quick tests to help vet people, as well as a review system. Is there a way to put anonymous reviews up, so that people can see real feedback about how people are to work with?
Pia talked about civic engagement, such as Asians being left out of mainstream stories; often times, reporters will come to Asians when it has to do with an Asian issue, but they’re left out of the discussion otherwise. They were hoping to build out a source list, which includes Asians of all expertises. Experts, professors, analysts, and people in the community. She talked about National Geographic’s reckoning of their old coverage, and the New York Times also went back and saw which obituaries weren’t written for women. We could encourage newsrooms to do audits on this kind of issue.

Phil said ONA has a diversity sourcebook. Oanh said that newsrooms have resources about diversity, and whether we can work with those newsrooms. Pia said we should look to see if there are ways to find these lists.

Willoughby said she has been part of an audit committee in a newsroom, and asked if there were good ways to measure success and improvement, and whether this is an important thing. There is limited success even when there is buy-in from the top. Willoughby said they got numbers about an audit - the newsroom sat in the newsroom and looked through a month’s worth of content and counted how many people of color were quoted. Yvonne asked if there was a more proactive way to do that - talk to people about award-winning work that’s focused on race or diversity. Michelle talked about how the Arizona Republic audited their newsroom regularly, and created a diverse sources database. She said it could be a helpful, but difficult ask.

Julia asked about a show your work series, where members could show off their work. A documentary, a question and answer session, and an interactive. We’ll be offering that platform to volunteer and engage in a fellow member’s work.

Pia also talked about MediaWatch partnering up with the other taskforces. Not everything rises to MediaWatch - but things go unnoticed that allows a racist culture to fester. How do we work with our Sports Taskforce to understand culture of talk radio so we can talk to newsrooms and sports departments about covering these issues with greater sensitivity?

Ramy talked about programming and expanding AAJA-Asia. He talked about quarterly digital sister panels. We’d have to know what telepresence platform we’d use. Some are Uber Conference, Zoom. Oanh said having a lot of digital content could draw more people in, especially those that are far away or mid-career.

Ramy said trivial bowl could be a digital engagement event, where we could have teams across the country or the world. There could be a trivia master city. Arizona’s spelling bee could be another example.

Kathy talked about how Seattle and Sacramento both have a chef’s showcase, and they could have some sort of challenge between two chefs in different cities. Ramy and Oanh also talked about ways to grow Asia and engage the US as well.

Michelle talked about the 2020 committee (Mihir, Shirley, Gene). They talked about AAJA’s priorities: the spirit of UNITY, diversity leadership, civic engagement, and training and jobs. She said we need to have realistic expectations even when we’re pursuing the spirit of UNITY. We need to leverage local relationships of the DC convention. Could we have discounted registrations for people going to all conventions?

They talked about opening up new channels to awakening the “non-woke.” For training and jobs, we can
leverage the DC market. The job fair could look different because there are different markets. With civic engagement, could we provide more than just a town hall? We could incorporate civic engagement into programming. Kathy asked about other organizations: National Association of Asian American Professionals.

Julia asked about how we elevated AAPI voices at the town hall. Michelle said the most tangible gain is that we’ve never had a presidential forum address the AAPI community at that scale - that was the first time ever.

Wes said the end result was great, but a lot had to fall into place for it to happen. He said he doesn’t feel confident that everything could fall into place. Michelle said there were a lot of different opportunities - can we get CSPAN to highlight parts of our conventions? There are other ways to explore this and get creative.

Elizabeth asked about a podcast. Yvonne said they put together an audio/podcasting committee, but wasn’t necessarily from National. Mihir asked about a toolkit for newsrooms where you can give newsrooms ways to improve diversity.

Julia Chan, Anh Do, Hibah Samad, Dorothy Hernandez, Nancy Yang, Wes Nakama finished up their introductions.

Julia made a motion at 4:42 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Phil seconded the motion. All present said yes. The advisory board meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

**Sunday, April 1, 2018 - Governing Board Meeting**
Mariott Marquis Houston
1777 Walker St, Houston, TX

**Officers present:** President Yvonne Leow, Senior Vice President Michelle Lee, VP of Civic Engagement Pia Sarkar, VP of Communications Nicole Dungca

**Officers present via conference call:** Ramy Inocencio, VP of Journalism Programs

**Officers absent:** Treasurer Shawn Nicole Wong

**Governing board members present:** Julia B. Chan, Sameer Rao, Anh Do, Kathy Park, Mihir Zaveri

**Staff present:** Executive Director Kathy Chow

**Others present:** Sabrina Qutb, consultant

At 9:01, Yvonne called the meeting to order.

Sabrina started her board training. She talked about legal duties, key responsibilities, and board and staff cooperation. She touched on legal duties. After hearing about some of the limitations that Sabrina explained were best practices, Pia and Julia suggested having a limit of how much board members could be paid for services, in line with other nonprofits.
Sabrina also talked about key responsibilities. She said that we might want to include more key performance indicators to talk about our programs.

Ramy joined by speaker phone at 9:53 a.m.

At 10:30 a.m., Yvonne told the board to look through the minutes.

Michelle made a motion to approve the fall 2016 minutes, and Pia seconded the motion. All present approved.

Michelle made a motion to approve the minutes for spring 2017 and Ramy seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all present approved the motion.

Ramy made a motion to approve the summer 2017 minutes, and Julia seconded the motion. All present approved the minutes, with Pia abstaining because she was not present.

Julia made a motion to approve the fall 2018 minutes, and Michelle seconded the motion. All present approved the minutes. Nicole abstained because she was not present. The motion passed at 10:59 a.m.

Pia then discussed the fundraising policy. Kathy explained that we changed the policy to earmark funding requests to specific programs. There was also something that said a monthly report about sponsors, but it’s been changed to say that they’re working together and discussing, instead of a monthly report.

Kathy and Pia will work on a draft defining some guiding principles for evaluating sponsors and whether they fit our mission. Anh said she would help them with that.

Mihir asked for the target date, and Kathy said it would be ideal to have it before the summer board meeting. But the bigger deadline is before the end of the year.

Mihir brought up a line that asked about a public-supported media organization, and we agreed to take out the line because it was vague and would largely be addressed in other ethics policies.

Ramy suggested a change to the wording that addressed local chapters and programs going after the same sponsors as National. We changed it from “Chapters and all AAJA program directors should work with the Executive Director to identify potential sponsors and donors” to “Chapters and all AAJA program directors should work with the Executive Director to identify potential national sponsors and donors.”

Anh made a motion to approve the fundraising policy. Ramy seconded the motion. All present approved the fundraising policy at 11:16 a.m.

Julia asked about why Gannett didn’t continue the Al Neuharth Scholarship. Kathy said she was unclear on the reasoning.

Ramy said Bloomberg has increased their sponsorship, and he would be leading a question and answer session during convention.

Kathy said that some staff had formal communications training. She said that she’s planning a Media
Institute for local Houstonians, and they can offset a lot of the funds for training. Pam Wu, Ellen Lee, and Tomoko Hosaka will be coming back to help with Media Institute.

Pia asked if there’s a way to track how many media hits the participants get. Kathy said it’s harder for media access, but easier for media institute. She said that they’ll be following up with participants, particularly because it’s important for the grant.

Kathy said there’s a lot of activity this year: New Venture, Democracy Fund, convention, and figuring out how to operate more efficiently and smarter.

Kathy talked about personnel issues and how staff members have succeeded in recent months.

At 11:52, Julia moved to go into closed session to discuss personnel issues, and Michelle seconded the motion. All approved the motion at 11:53 a.m.

Julia made a motion to go into open session at 12:08 p.m., and Michelle seconded the motion. All approved the motion to go back into an open session.

Michelle then made a motion to adjourn the governing board meeting, and Julia seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.