AAJA National Advisory Board Meeting - Summer 2018

Saturday, August 11
Houston III 1777 Walker St

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, Sameer Rao, Anh Do, Kathy Park, Mihir Zaveri


Staff present: Accountant Glenn Sugihara

Others present: Young Jin-Kim, president of New England chapter; Ted Han, incoming VP of Finance; Ellen Lee, Kellie Hwang, Darrell Miho, Rahul Bali, Howard Chen, Crystal Duan, CeFaan Kim, Sandy Louey, Howard Chen, and Pamela Wu

At 9:06 a.m., Nicole called roll, and Yvonne then introduced the agenda.

The members present introduced themselves, including memorable and defining moments for AAJA.

At 10:13, Michelle Lee introduced affinity groups and how they worked. We now have 9 affinity groups: Small Market Broadcast, Student Broadcast, Sports Task Force, Photojournalists, Freelance, Features Forum, Enterprise, Radio & Podcasting, and Yung AAJA.

Kellie Hwang, of the Features Forum, talked about how the group contributed to programming and hosted a mixer this year. They want to host criticism workshop for feedback. She will also be hosting a mixer at the Association of Food Journalists in September in Phoenix.

Alanna Quillen spoke for small market broadcast: She said the Facebook page is growing, and the group had a pre-convention google hangout, as well as a reception at convention.

Darrell talked about how AAJA Photo had a North Korea panel, which went well. They invited local photographers for hangouts that were open to general public. They want to bring more people to atlanta.

Rahul of podcasting and radio said the audio editing panel had great questions. They received feedback about the voice coaching, and how participants wanted it to be longer.

Howard talked about the Sports Task Force: They had an WEEI panel at the convention, in which Christian Fauria flew on his own dime to convention. He said they had a lot of great points from panelists.
STF also gave out $2,000 in scholarship for people to go to convention, financed by Don Yee, Tom Brady’s agent who has long supported AAJA. The group partnered with DAT Winning for scholarships, and the relationship recruited 2 new AAJA members. It has grown to over 100 members, and they created a new Instagram page. Howard said he was going to step down as chair after the two-year mark, and is actively recruiting for new co-chairs. Victoria Nguyen may be one of the new co-chairs, and they are looking for the second candidate.

Yvonne and Michelle talked about potential sponsor partnerships with affinity groups. Michelle talked about how the affinity groups were looped into the fundraising policy.

Ellen Lee talked about freelance: She said that the Facebook group and panels and newsletters are trying to forge one-on-one relationships between freelancers and editors. Ellen said the panel on the Business of Freelance was trying to address photo and video. There was also a networking panel, where five editors were able to meet one-on-one with freelancers, who were able to pitch. The Washington Post has also reached out to the freelance group to get referrals.

They also want to create a database with assigning editors, and be more active, in general.

Crystal Duan on Yung AAJA: The numbers have grown every day, and are currently at over 300 active members. They’ve had a robust verification system to make sure everyone is a verified AAJA member. Goldthread had a sponsored party, and two webinars. They tried to build an accessible and active following. Next year, Ben wants to organize more events coast to coast. He also wants board’s blessing to absorb student broadcast affinity group - directors have agreed. Michelle Lee said several registered for convention because Yung AAJA’s Facebook page made it sound like a big deal. She said Ben Pu also helped purge Facebook members from the group who weren’t AAJA members, and it helped personally drive 300 membership renewals.

Henry Moritsugu also joined at 10:39 a.m.

Nicole talked about AAJA Enterprise. Sally Ho sent in an update: “The Enterprise affinity group continues to make development progress. We launched a Facebook group, an internal Slack channel and the "How I Got The Story" series with a look at The Seattle Times' Quantity of Care series. The group plans on publishing these blog posts once a quarter, which will stand in as our chapter "event" given that members are physically scattered.

One of our official pitches (a "How I Got The Story" workshop featuring reporters and an editor talking about their recent work from pitch-to-publish) was accepted by the 2018 convention programming committee. We also planned an unofficial coffeehouse gathering for members at convention Wednesday afternoon.”

Michelle asked for any ideas for new affinity groups. There have been discussions about a new data visualization group.

Julia asked whether we’re going to set procedures for succession - Are leaders always going to be appointed, or could it be elected? Michelle said that right now it’s an application and appointment process, and that they’re keeping it flexible without treasurers, etc. They’re easier to disband and dissolve.

Crystal of Yung AAJA and Kellie Hwang left.
Howard explained how succession works with the AAJA Sports Task Force, and that there’s usually a shortlist of those who are capable of taking over leadership. They’ve been talking and gauging interest, and so far, it has been a wait and see.

Michelle said it has been impromptu so far, but we’ll have to think about how it will be in the future.

Julia said it would be important to create a process so that there’s no favoritism. Julia asked about purging Facebook groups, and how people with the same name may have an issue.

Pamela Wu, Ellen Lee, and CeFaan Kim talked about Media Institute. Pamela talked about the two-day training program for non-journalists to diversify the subject matter experts who are called upon by the media. It launched in 2014, and they’ve trained more than 150 participants. The curriculum includes how to pitch, interview techniques, and on-camera mock interviews. There was a bit of struggle in enrollment this year, but they got 15 and will reach out early in Atlanta. CeFaan said it was one of the most gratifying programs that he has been involved in. Willoughby said that they should connect with her for Atlanta contacts.

Pia then talked about her duties as the vice president of civic engagement, and the progress of MediaWatch. In June, a Telemundo contributor made a racist gesture with his eyes. CeFaan said they gave them 24 hours to respond, and Telemundo suspended the contributor.

CeFaan talked about the Dave and Judi show, which included racist remarks about the Attorney General, a Sikh man who wears a turban. In 24 hours, they were forced to apologize and were suspended.

Pia talked about the process: It’s in the slack channel, and they draft a response quickly. CeFaan said the WEEI incident was a template for how to move quickly, particularly with the grey area of shock jock personalities. CeFaan had something ready ASAP, and everyone chimed in.

Pia commended the New England chapter for following through on the WEEI incident, which included bringing Christian Fauria to convention.

Pia also talked about a story about the son of a New Mexico imam, who was characterized as being linked to terrorism. The Muslim American Task Force helped respond to it by reaching out to NBC and CBS. The story aired during convention, so it was harder to respond.

She also said they want to be more proactive about events such as the Olympics. CeFaan said that could include a pronunciation guide, especially in light of the South Korean Olympics and how journalists were mispronouncing the host city.

Young Jin asked about best practices: He said they crafted a statement, then went to Task Force, so what’s the best way? Pia said they wanted to send a consistent message, so the best practice is to get in touch with National right away so that it’s well-coordinated.

Yvonne said National has a lot of relationships with those companies, so there are ways to address internal and systemic changes because we have a direct connection to their diversity officers.

Shirley asked about a question during the sexual harassment seminar, about whether we have a policy that addresses serial abusers, or having resources available for victims. Yvonne said that we have a code of conduct for convention and membership that addresses how to treat one another in this area, but the ongoing conversation is an open question.

Fawzia Rahmann of Houston, a co-director of Muslim American Task Force, gave an update: This week, they had an example of how to move on breaking issues quicker because of the New Mexico coverage of
She moderated a panel on covering Muslims, which helped introduce people to the task force. There have been good discussions about terms, such as "Muslim ban."

Willoughby asked whether they can use the task force as a resource for questions about coverage. Fawzia said they haven’t done it yet, but they’d be open. Pia said that MATF is a great group to work with MediaWatch so that it’s as complete as possible.

Sameer asked about how much they interface with other groups that represent Muslim community. Fawzia said there is a member who is reaching out to groups that already exist.

Paul Cheung gave an update on a New Venture Fund grant, which is through the Gates Foundation. About $200,000 was put toward expanding ELP brand and curriculum, particularly improving data gathering, streamlining program operations, and how to expand core curriculum. He said that it also involved Voices, JCamp. They are looking into what happens to graduates. Through the grant, AAJA has hired consultants to look at gathering data and how it’s structured. He said they are doing a half-day strategy meeting where all the journalism program directors will discuss their common visions and what strategies they have. He said they also want to elevate ELP into a brand and ecosystem, which focuses on leadership -- not through mid-career, but also college and high school students. Some of that will include training mentors, and bringing more ELP curriculum into convention (ELP presents manager conversations, etc). It won’t be a special club, but an ecosystem.

For about $60,000, a consultant will also look at AAJA’s tech platforms. That consultant will meet with Ted Han, a VP of Finance with tech platform expertise. A researcher will also help backfill the missing data. All of it resides in various Google spreadsheets, which isn’t strong database management.

Mihir asked about the breakdown of the costs. Paul said that breakdown already existed in the proposal. He said the consultant’s findings will send that to Ted, and they can evaluate whether we can afford it. Yvonne said Paul and Kathy worked on the budget. Paul said the grant also helps support Catalyst, another program.

Julia asked about the foundation that gave us the grant, and Paul said Gates Foundation recommended us to the New Venture Fund grant. Sharon Chan, former president, helped get the relationship rolling.

Elaine Ramirez talked about this year’s ELP class, which had about 15 students. Paul said the goal of ELP isn’t about climbing the corporate ladder, but about introspection. Paul said they’re anchoring the program in New York.

Glenn talked about finances. He said the organization is very healthy, and went through the financial statements. Elizabeth asked about the effect of having no executive director. Yvonne explained how the responsibilities have been delegated. Pia asked if Kathy’s salary goes to the search, which they confirmed.

Glenn said that we’ve made our hotel room count, and that we’ll need to adjust the budget to allocate some of Kathy’s salary to the executive director search.

Daigo asked about convention attendance, and Yvonne and Michelle said we were at about 800 - a relatively consistent number for cities that aren’t on the coast.

Maya Sugarman and Jessie Tseng talked about running Voices. Jessie said all the stories went live yesterday morning, and they were fairly well-received: About 1,400 unique visitors to the website, 1,500 impressions, 450 views on the livestream, great comments from alumni, and they produced their first podcast with student groups. Maya said there were five collaborative projects. She said the podcast sounds very professional, and that CodeSwitch tweeted about it. Maya said they were very intentional about having students communicate what they want next in their career - they wanted the students to be
visible and clear about what they’re looking for. Jessie said the population was more diverse: undergraduate, graduate, one is a PhD at Stanford.

Maya said there were 69 applications - fewer than last year, but quality was higher than usual. The application included story pitches. It was easier to get free convention trainers and sponsor lunches. Maya said they already have a 2019 ideas list. They wanted to have designated assignment teams: investigation, podcast, features, etc. They want to have assigned roles in teams, such as having an illustrator that works across all projects, and having a graphics or coding reporter that can be on the investigative team.

Jessie said they were floating the idea of students and faculty flying out Sunday, so that they have a full extra day on Monday. Currently, they’re flying on Monday.

Yvonne commended Jessie and Maya for their work in the second year, with an incredible learning curve.

Sameer and Willoughby asked about and offered resources for students.

Jessie said that in previous years, mentors were responsible to get there. Having that covering mentors was less of a financial burden.

Ramy talked about JCamp, which is run by Arelis Hernandez. The program had 41 participants at Wayne State University, many of whom came from areas that were disparate and remote. Many were from lower income brackets, as well. They honored ESPN’s Kevin Merida and Donna Britt.

We took a break for lunch at 12:04 p.m.

At 12:17 p.m., Yvonne introduced Daphne Kwok of AARP. She talked about her history in AAPI advocacy, chairing Obama’s advisory committee for AAPI. She said many of the issues that AAPI have fought for for years are still the same. She talked about the need for data, and disaggregation of data -- a movement that is under fire.

Willoughby asked about what shared issues that black and Asian communities can rally around. Daphne said that hate crimes continue to be an issue and on the rise. She said it, unfortunately, bonds communities together. She thinks it’s important to have the AAPI community go down to South to learn more about civil rights movement.

Sameer asked if he has seen progress in solidarity across race lines since the election. Daphne said she’s curious to see AAPI faces in Black Lives Matter movements, etc. She said she doesn't know exactly whether it’s solidifying at that ground level. She said there’s hope that it’s happening at the younger level - is it happening in older generation? She said she didn’t know necessarily. She said Hispanic issues are so similar - Koreans are large portion of DACA. She also said AAPIs can’t be used as wedges in issues such as affirmative action.

Pia asked about the language barrier - how do you penetrate when so many Asians speak different languages? Daphne says the ethnic press is critical, and they’re struggling to survive. She also mentioned working with on the ground community organizations.

Elizabeth asked about suggestions for building bridges with ethnic press and how to better work with them. Daphne said they have the resources for advertorials, but it’s also being able to feed them
Michelle talked about the executive director search, which was off the record.

Michelle made a motion to go into closed session at 12:41 p.m. to talk about the executive director search. Julia seconded the motion, and all present approved the motion.

Julia made a motion to go back into open session at 1:05 p.m. Phil seconded the motion. We went back into open session at 1:06 p.m.

Oanh talked about N3Con and Asia. She said students make up 20 percent of membership and there’s a lot of potential to grow. Elaine talked about how Asia used the Mentor March program to help Asia chapters connect. They will try to integrate their program with the national program.

Oanh said that N3Con 2019 and 2020 will be in Hong Kong. The most recent conference had high profile speakers, like the publisher of the South China Morning Post, panels on #metoo, covering harassment, and disparities between local reporters and foreign.

Yvonne encouraged board members to actually join Asia members at N3Con, which is always in May. Oanh also talked about the chapter’s N3 salons, which connect chapters digitally at the same time through streaming. Elizabeth also said there is no foreign reporting affinity group, but Asia is basically that.

Young-Jin asked about the Mentor Match program, and Elaine said it’s a national program.

Frank Bi and Aimee Cho talked about the AAJA Programming Committee. Aimee talked about some of the panels that she attended. Frank said the WEEI panel was overflow only. A lot of the off the record panels did well.

Frank said that they went back to analog feedback forms. Feedback said the panels that provided training (audio editing, how-tos) did well. There were no more than 4 sessions at the same time, and he thought it was a good number for next year. They also recorded headcounts. Frank said Story Slam was a huge success. Crazy Rich Asians was an exciting moment, and he said the panel about Asians on Hollywood had great chemistry.

He talked about KevJumba, a Youtube star, who attended and came with a day pass. He wants such influencers to come next year. Frank said affinity groups came up with good panels.

Daigo asked about leaving space for panels that are more topical so that there are panels that react to breaking news. Frank said he has been thinking about it for the last two years, and they built in some flexibility. But the challenge is getting pitches and finding speakers in time. He said they’ll have a few open slots next year.

Phil asked about the job fair, and Frank said we had several new sponsors.

Darrell said that it’s harder to get people to register if the panels aren’t finalized by early bird registration. Frank said he wants the key dates to be synchronized.
Shirley said moderators and panelists should have clickers next year, so that not everyone will have to be standing. Frank said it depends on the hotel layout. Julia also had concerns about the equipment setup, and Frank said they welcome feedback so they can utilize them for next year. Oanh asked about the half-day sessions, and Frank and Aimee said that NBCU and IRE workshops probably had about 50 people.

Yvonne and Michelle thanked Frank and Aimee for their work.

Yvonne introduced conversation about the 2019 convention, which will be in Atlanta. She asked about whether we want to continue the tradition of revealing the next convention at gala.

Willoughby said the strategic advantage in Atlanta is that it’s where the area has grown leaps and bounds. There is a connection to the civil rights movement, including a bus tour and a visit to the new lynching memorial. She said we have an incredible opportunity to raise that awareness, and share in and have an intersectional convention with African American community.

Sandy pointed out that 2019 is the 25th anniversary of UNITY, so we’ll be able to have some cross-cultural opportunities. we can act as a coalition to community groups and journalism groups.

At 2:11 p.m. we had a five minute break. At 2:19 p.m. we started up again talking about sponsorships. We talked about ways to supplement the expo hall, and better disseminate opportunities for these sponsors. Sponsors have been asking for more data on attendees, as well as better ways to meet mid-career people.

Moriah said she was shocked at how difficult it is to recruit, and wants a formalized process to reach as many people as possible. She thinks there could be some sort of form for people to fill out.

Yvonne asked about who was familiar with Recruiter Plus, and Sameer raised his hand. She explained the program, and said it has been a productive service. But she wanted to ask about what we can do to build on that.

Yvonne then talked about connecting more with media makers, the “lower-case J” journalists: those on Instagram, YouTube, etc. She said it's a trend we should be leaning into to continue our relevance. Are there ways to engage those people for training, etc?

Michelle said that a JCamp student reached out to AAJA to say he had an op-ed and wanted to publish it in the Post. She explained the process to him, and said he didn't have programs and local papers around him. She talked about KevJumba, who has 2.8 million subscribers, coming into a convention. She said that her building sources workshop was also full, and that a reporter wanted to learn more about ethics.

Darrell Miho left the meeting.

Willoughby said there is a large population of content creators that can’t afford this, and that there’s a pay-to-play aspect. Pia said she knows why NYT would be interested in him, but what can we give so that he wants to interface with us and NYT? Michelle said that there are aspects of business that can appeal to a YouTube star, etc.
Mihir mentioned organizations like Reporting for America, and how we’d compete with places that are seeking to do similar things. Yvonne said that’s a recurring theme with sponsorships and partnerships, and that we want more feedback than anything.

Sandy asked about sponsors and whether they continue media literacy and education, gauging whether people live there.

Elizabeth Yuan has asked about the expo hall and how it would be harder for mid-career people to approach a booth.

Michelle said that NYT has hybrid sponsorship model, where they have a booth but also have intimate conversations with mid-career. They also have private receptions and private meetings. They’re happy with that hybrid model, so we’re looking at more of those.

Julia said feedback was that people are older and that our veterans pipeline is working. Would that have affected the expo hall? Michelle said expo hall foot traffic has been harder for several years.

Yvonne said key performance indicator is how many qualified candidates they actually get. CNN said they would get 100 over 2 days from expo hall.

Aric said that a list of all the convention attendees is helpful, like ONA does. Foot traffic is slow. Aric said registration could force people to go to expo hall. Aric told us to think about is how the expo hall is situated compared to where the sessions are. It’s not a path where people are crossing - in NAHJ, you would be located between registration.

Sameer mentioned Wordpress and whether there are opportunities with places like YouTube to bond with outlets related to journalism adjacent content makers. Yvonne said that the booths are there for marketing and recruiting.

Kris said other expo halls all look the same. Is there a way so that we can make it more technology or have a virtual experience?

Mihir wants to know what journalists think they can get - Yvonne said they may gain legitimacy from legacy publications.

Yvonne asked about new business. Julia said she was approached about funding an AAJA podcast. James Boo, a documentary filmmaker, is trying to engage members to seed idea for a podcast and bring them into the fold: "self-evident." They’re hoping for funding before producing anything.

We then broke out into groups:

Community Engagement - Pia

Funding AAPI brands - Julia

Recruiting - Moriah and Aric

What is AAJA’s role in sexual harassment? - Shirley
Corinne Chin brought up sexual harassment, very candid, shared personal experiences;

At 4 p.m., we reported back on our findings.

Julia Chan talked about funding AAPI brands: Julia said she wanted to revisit the idea of not doing it. The consensus was no, because logistically it would be fundraising for staff position, etc. One idea was to suggest that people looking for funding could go to Catalyst, etc.

Pia talked about community engagement: Young-Jin mentioned reaching out to younger communities, and teaching them to be journalists. He said it’s been a goal for New England to do more community outreach, where we would go out to Chinatown, and Lowell, which has a large Cambodian population.

Moriah brought up a Recruiter + program to make things easier for recruiters, etc. She also mentioned an AAJA academy sponsored for discrete skills, such as reading quarterly reports by Bloomberg.

Shirley talked about sexual harassment in AAJA: We have a code of conduct, but we could also create an affinity group for women in AAJA, which could grow into other things. Julia asked if there was a women’s-only channel in slack.

Michelle made a motion to adjourn at 4:21 p.m., and Pia seconded it. All those present approved the motion, and we adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

**Sunday, August 12, 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

Nicolle took roll at 9 a.m.

Yvonne asked about elections and affinity groups and how to produce leaders. Could we have a limit, or can we create a structure?

Nicolle said it’s harder for an election process because it’s so nimble.

Michelle said that it’s harder because it’s a volunteer organization.

Yvonne wanted to know what our system should be to appoint each other because they’ll have a lot of influence.
Pia said she liked the election model because the members would choose. Julia said we could allow groups to choose which method they want to use, whether it is an election or an appointment by committee.

Michelle said they like the choose your own leader system.

Yvonne said it would be good for the board and national to know who is elected on the various timelines, so that we could communicate with the.

Mihir asked if there’s a class A and class B, with a certain amount of revenue.

Yvonne said we’d agree that there are two potential strategies: elections or open application process with committee selection. Michelle said she will ask affinity group members.

Glenn wanted to talk about next year’s convention. He wanted to put Derrick Jones on the contract for $25,000. He will travel to the board meeting in March to meet with hotel staff, and start lining things up there. He will be on site from Sunday to Sunday.

Yvonne asked if he’s been on a contract every year.

Glenn said he’s had the same amount every year. He wanted to draft the contract when he gets back.

Kathy asked how long he’s been doing this for us. Glenn said it’s the third year. We pay for his travel.

Mihir asked if we had someone before him. Glenn said there were previously many glitches without someone like Derrick.

Anh asked what the difference between Keala and Derrick: Glenn explained that Keala helps as an intermediary between hotel and us. Derrick is on site organizer.

Glenn said it’s important for the board to read the contract. We talked about the logistics of hotel booking.

Yvonne said we should consider such contracts when thinking of changing convention model. Some conferences go to the same hotel for several years.

Yvonne asked whether we should be thinking about 2020. CNN’s diversity officer is very insistent that we should be introduced to NAHJ for something about NABJ and NAHJ. DC 2020 is a potential option. Other options are going on our own, expanding what we do on a Saturday by opening it up to the community.

Julia asked if we could all be in the same city, but not in the same hotel.

Anh said that the joint idea is a recruiter and sponsorship dream, but there would be many logistical difficulties.

Julia asked about the length of the initial contract. It could be tied, what if they want/need a bigger salary? Could we offer to revisit after a trial period?
Mihir asked if we talked to staff about potentially not being in San Francisco. Yvonne said we’ve told them that we’re looking everywhere, and we’ve gotten candidates from everywhere.

Kathy asked if we’ve ever had a remote workers.

We discussed an issue from Amy Wang, which was placing Taiwanese as a nationality on a drop-down menu. Ted explained some of the identity issues behind Taiwanese.

Ramy joined by speakerphone at 10:20 a.m.

Sameer asked about how we choose keynote speaker interviewers. Michelle said Kathy used to choose them. Yvonne said we may want to formalize a process to choose next year’s convention keynote speakers.

Julia and Michelle will figure out the keynote speakers, and the governing board will be involved in the decision.

Yvonne said Frank Shyong mentioned the OC Register wanted to pick up a story, and the board agreed to having OC Register pay for our content.

Michelle said we should start a policy over such content.

Julia wanted registration numbers, and Mihir said it would be good to have a comprehensive report on the convention.

Yvonne said she was a bit concerned about attendance.

Julia made a motion to enter into closed session to talk about personnel at 11:02 a.m. and Mihir seconded the motion. All those present approved.

Julia made a motion to exit closed session at 11:14 a.m., and Sameer seconded the motion. All those present voted to approve the motion.

Julia made a motion to adjourn at 11:14 a.m., and Kathy seconded the motion. All those present voted to adjourn the meeting.