

## Michelle Lee, AAJA Senior Vice President Candidate Statement

As the first person to serve as AAJA senior vice president, I have worked this past year and half to define this new position. It's been a rewarding and humbling experience, and I'm excited to be seeking re-election.

As senior vice president, I have been overseeing local chapters and affinity groups. I'd like to build on the work I've done so far, by expanding the affinity group process and critically evaluating the current chapter structure.

I'd like to recruit new affinity group leaders to improve representation of the varied career interests and needs among our membership. The vocational needs within our membership are evolving quickly, and our skills-based training and mentorship and networking opportunities are essential. We also need to take a critical look at our chapter structure. Too many chapters are strapped with resources or have disengaged members. We need to ensure our chapter structure is providing the professional support our members need, and maintaining a leadership pipeline.

I also want to focus on AAJA's Muslim American Task Force. We are filling a major need in the industry right now, and we have so many opportunities ahead of us to engage within and outside of the AAJA community. AAJA is uniquely positioned to lead this effort to ensure Muslim American communities are accurately, fairly and robustly portrayed in news.

I joined AAJA as a college student 10 years ago, in 2007. I don't know who I would be as a journalist or a person without my AAJA family. We are bound by our passion for diversity in newsrooms and news coverage. AAJA has helped me every step of my career, and as senior vice president, I hope to continue helping AAJA grow. Thank you for your vote.