

## **AAJA Board Meeting - Spring 2021**

Saturday, March 20, 2021  
On Zoom

**Board of Directors members present:** Senior Vice President Nicole Dungca, VP of Communications Shirley Qiu, VP of Finance Jin Ding, VP of Civic Engagement Julia B. Chan, VP of Journalism Programs Kris Vera-Philips, Large Chapter Representative Henry Fuhrmann (LA Chapter), Small/Medium Chapter Representative Julia M. Chan (Atlanta Chapter), Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bethany Ao (Philadelphia Chapter), At-Large Chapter Representative Benjamin Pu (New York Chapter)

**Board of Directors members not present:** President Michelle Ye Hee Lee (joined briefly at the end), At-Large Chapter Representative Yuri Nagano

**Board members present:** Arizona Chapter Representative Aric Johnson, Asia Chapter proxy Mark Zastrow, Atlanta Chapter Representative Julia M. Chan, Chicago Chapter President Nader Issa (joined later), Florida Chapter Representative Moni Basu, Hawai'i Chapter Representative Wes Nakama (joined later), Minnesota Chapter Representative Nancy Yang, New England Chapter proxy Lian Parsons, New York Chapter Representative Emily Tan, Portland Chapter Representative Peter Wong, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Representatives Cecilia Lei, Seattle Chapter Representative Anika Varty, Washington, DC Chapter Representatives Kelyn Soong and Seung Min Kim

**Board members not present:** San Diego Chapter Co-Presidents Justine Saldana and David Jones

**Affinity Group directors present:** Freelance Co-Directors Erin Chan Ding, Heather Chin and Ellen Lee, Features Forum Co-Director Maricar Mendoza, Photo Co-Directors Darrell Miho and Alex Wong (joined later), News Nerds Co-Director Thomas Oide, Radio and Podcasting Director Rahul Bali, Sports Task Force representatives Josh Tolentino, Karlo Sy Su and Sandeep Chandok, Video Co-Directors Violet Wang and Dolly Li (joined later), Women & Non-Binary Voices Co-Director Corinne Chin, Yung AAJA Director Beena Raghavendran

**Affinity Group directors not present:** Enterprise Director Sally Ho, Small Market Broadcast Director Stella Kim

**Staff present:** Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Waliya Lari, Jessica Xiao

Nicole Dungca called to order at 10:35 a.m. ET. Shirley Qiu called roll at 10:35 a.m. ET.

[See Zoom recording](#) (passcode: TY!R05k.)

## **Board of Directors Meeting - Spring 2021**

April 11, 2021  
On Zoom

**Board of Directors members present:** President Michelle Ye Hee Lee, Senior Vice President Nicole Dungca, VP of Communications Shirley Qiu, VP of Finance Jin Ding, VP of Civic Engagement Julia B. Chan, VP of Journalism Programs Kris Vera-Philips, Large Chapter Representative Henry Fuhrmann, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Julia M. Chan, Small/Medium Chapter Representative Bethany Ao, At-Large Chapter Representative Benjamin Pu

**Board of Directors members not present:** At-Large Chapter Representative Yuri Nagano

**Staff present:** Executive Director Naomi Tacuyan Underwood, Waliya Lari, Jessica Xiao, April Siruno

Michelle Lee called to order at 12:04 p.m. ET. Shirley Qiu called roll at 12:05 p.m. ET.

AAJA21 (Jin): we're extending the convention pitch deadline to mid-May. Will design programming from pitches but will also have our own ideas in mind.

Convention fundraising is full speed ahead.

Theme for AAJA21: "Proudly looking back, boldly looking forward." Dates: Aug. 24-28, 2021

Sent a cancellation letter to The Mayflower. Holding off on a public announcement, but our sponsors know about the dates.

Found a platform called Cadence that we think will be a better fit than Pathable. Has a Zoom integration, ability to integrate with your own calendar, centered around user experience. Eager to keep innovating on that front.

40th anniversary planning (Naomi and Jessica): AAPI women-owned consulting agency helping us manage our 40th anniversary projects -- oral history project, hall of fame, fundraising, book.

Impact goals: want this to be an ongoing process to archive our history and have more ownership over making sure we're in the narrative. Strengthen intergenerational relationships.

We're the only journo organization that doesn't have a hall of fame. We want to keep recognizing our members and our members' work. Thinking about an inaugural hall of fame event in LA in Q4 -- we'll pivot to virtual if necessary.

Capacity-wise, it's a lot. We could use some help with some overseeing from a board level and make sure people stay on track.

Michelle: In terms of board oversight, maybe we can create a slack channel where Naomi and Jessica provide updates for the board. We'll likely need more board involvement than a monthly update -- maybe start with a biweekly update.

2020 year-end finances (Naomi): We were good last year and on track this year. Worked hard on fundraising, pivoting on memberships.

Michelle: Right now, our biggest source of funding is media sponsors, but they have the most precarious budgets. We want to move away from being so dependent on media sponsors and diversify our funding sources.

Naomi: 2/3 of new memberships came after the Atlanta shootings coverage guidance.

Nicole: We should follow up on partnership with SAJA membership bundle. Possibly could replicate it in other ways with other organizations, like IRE.

Took a break at 12:47 p.m. ET. Resumed at 1 p.m. ET.

Strategic plan 2021-2024 (Michelle): Currently circulating top 4 strategic plan priorities to some internal ppl who can provide feedback and whose buy-in will be crucial to rolling out the plan. Julie Truong is working on collecting that feedback; hoping to vote on this during our May meeting. We would roll it out publicly after the May vote.

Kris: Where's the line between what's appropriate/inappropriate advocacy? I think some people would appreciate having more clarity on that.

Nicole: We're always toeing the line between what is appropriate/inappropriate advocacy, re: policy and advocacy. MediaWatch could help with that too.

Julia B. Chan: There are some natural guardrails here that already exist with some of the rules newsroom have. E.g. some newsrooms allow use of #StopAAPIhate while others do not. As individuals, everyone is making decisions for themselves, but as an organization, it's always a conversation.

Naomi: How can we be thought leaders with our style guide?

Michelle: Heard from gov agencies, alumni networks, corporate businesses that shared our style guide following the Atlanta shootings that helped people beyond our industry discuss what happened.

Digital innovation has been almost completely erased from this document -- but we can't lose sight of that. Would like to work that back in somehow.

Future coordination with other journalism orgs?

Naomi: There are more open lines of communication that weren't necessarily there in the past. Caution here is UNITY became an unsustainable model. While it had a lot of advantages for our members, the reality is it was financially unsustainable. There are possible other versions of UNITY that accomplish goals on smaller scales. E.g. STF or local chapters partnering. How can we do that to scale?

Michelle: We'll put together a final version for a vote in May and figure out our comms plan.

Took a break at 1:52 p.m. ET. Resumed at 2 p.m. ET.

Awards revamp (Jessica): Convening awards committee to start revamping awards.

Julia B. Chan: Great incentive to lean into: members can submit for free. No limit on submissions. Maybe this can be an angle for a membership push during awards season. Do we need to rethink what happens when someone wins an award?

Michelle: One of the challenges will be building excitement and prestige around our awards.

Who are the awards for? Our community or larger journalism community?

Advisory and AG restructure (Nicole and Ben): What's the best way to include more voices in the advisory board? AG representatives? Task force?

We want to have some proposals ready for this summer.

How do we better set expectations for how to engage with HQ?

Next steps: survey the AGs and TFs, then pull together a committee to figure out a plan. By the summer board meeting, it would be great to have the committee in place and have done one round of surveying.

AAPJ Heritage Month (Nicole): Pulling together programming that others are already working on. E.g. AAJA Philly panel on reporting on hate crimes, Naomi putting together panel on meaning of AAPJ, etc. We want to amplify the work others are already working on during the month of May -- reach out if you hear of any or want to pull any together.

Took a break at 3:25 p.m. ET. Returned at 3:35 p.m. ET.

Jin motioned to go into closed session at 3:36 p.m. ET. Ben seconded.

Julia motioned to exit closed session, Nicole seconded, at 5:01 p.m. ET. Ben motioned to end the meeting, Nicole seconded at 5:01 p.m. ET.