



Washington Evaluators Board Meeting 12/16/2020 – MINUTES

In attendance:

Patricia Moore Shaffer, President
Beeta Tahmassebi, President-Elect
Melissa Chiu, Secretary
Josh Joseph, Treasurer
Natalie Donohue, Membership Chair
Katherine Braga, Communications Chair
Emily Bango, Community Engagement Chair
Bryce Leary, Mentor Minutes
Laura O'Brien, Evaluation Without Borders Coordinator
Val Caracelli, New Professional and Student Coordinator
Katie Pitts, Program Chair
Mindelyn Anderson, Special Initiatives Coordinator
Esther Nolton

Guests:

Marie-Ellen Ehounou
Ivana Miranda
Debbie Kaddu-Serwadda
Jeremy Danz
Jessica Pomerantz
Karyna Tafel
Erica Jackson

Not in attendance:

Giovanni Dazzo, Past President
Sue Cottrell, New Professional Scholarship Coordinator
Erin Murrock, Deputy Program Chair
Charles Gilman, Deputy Membership Chair

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Agenda Review

Introductions for 2021 Board

Special call out for Natalie for organizing the holiday party yesterday, which was a lot of fun.

Received a proposed plan and protocol for Town Halls from our DEI consultant.

2. Approval of November meeting minutes

Melissa motioned to approve the minutes. Beeta seconded. **VOTE: approved, no nay's.**

3. Old Business:

a. Holiday party reflections

Congratulations to **Esther Nolton, who was awarded Volunteer of the Year 2020.**

Small breakouts were a good way to get to know each other.

Next time, give people instruction on how to exit – some people got cut off because they were kicked back to the main 'room.'

For older people or those with a hearing impairment, this was nice to be in a quiet room and have a conversation, unlike at a restaurant where it's too loud.

Also we met new people, at an in-person party people tend to talk to those they know.

The prizes were great, and Natalie did it in a way that didn't stop the flow and it was festive. Many liked the raffle idea, and it encouraged people to stay to the end. Natalie will be connecting the winners with their prizes after she re-draws some names because some of the winners didn't attend.

We were surprised by how generous people were with their time (for the raffle). Got some big names too. Pleased that people were willing to support the organization and profession.

Felt a positive energy coming from people I spoke with in sessions.

Missed the food, though.

Several people had trouble accessing Zoom, didn't get the Reminder. **Need to include a contact email for technical issues. Add another reminder right when the event starts.** –It turns out something happened with Zoom that changed, so we have this taken care of. Natalie did check the contact email, but didn't check until 7. In the future: Also, emails get queued in Wild Apricot- could take a few hours. So, only having the Zoom info in the reminder, or sending out last minute may not get the information to people in time. So, suggest setting everything up together, and put **Zoom info into the confirmation email** for people registering late. ***Katie will edit the SOP and resend to Esther. Should I add this part about the Zoom link in the section for Marketing Events?**

Virtual business card- have a virtual background that says name and organization. Otherwise, wasn't sure how else to use them. Beeta has been sharing the Flip Grid videos for people/Board to introduce themselves. Can we share the virtual space for the business cards? Do we need permission? – we

suggest using it in future networking events, Push it and re-use what has been created and then make it more a part of our virtual events.

Virtual memberships? Yes, folks seemed very interested when asked about this in breakout sessions. People who want to stay connected to the DC community.

Interspersed some business there, talked about the Board.

Thank goodness for Zoom in this snowy weather. Lucky to have this avenue. A good commute!

b. Update on DEI consultant/town hall and membership engagement strategy

Background: WE competed a DEI consultant. WE selected Paragon Consulting. We had a special Board meeting to kick off the work in November. They came back this week with a proposal for the Town Hall, and how to market and engage this process. 2020 Board members received it.

Recommendation: frame it as a professional learning experiences, “Applying Antiracism,” because so many members come to WE for professional learning, use that to attract them. Meaningful content for feedback to inform the strategic plan and priorities.

Three prongs for facilitating:

- How and why evaluators can support organizations and institutions on the extent of applying antiracism in their work
- WE seek to apply antiracism in strategic plan by ensuring Board conversation, disrupt inequity.
- Invite evaluators to apply the WE definition of antiracism to generate meaningful priorities for WE’s next organizational phase.

Don’t think should call these town halls, but “Local Evaluator Meetings,” so that we don’t introduce a new format to WE.

Strategy – will have a Pre-meeting Participant Survey on demographics. Guide participants to prepare for meetings and offer comments anonymously.

For the actual meeting discussion, will have 3 framing questions.

- What should WE do to sustain a community of evaluators through the coming years?
- How has racism impacted WE and this community of evaluators, and if you can, what work needs to be prioritized to truly advance equity in this community of evaluators in the midst of our inequitable society?
- What do you imagine WE can do or be?

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The education approach is wise- we hired them because we don't know what to do. Tie the 3 questions at the end to education, to the topics and real need we need to discuss.

Some liked that they critiqued our ideas. It is a thoughtful approach, creative. I like the range of things they've thought about, people need to come prepared. Like the framing, not as a Town Hall- it all sounds right. Length of one hour may be a problem- if you do a front end learning piece, then will they need more time to discuss and get the info. The best parts of conversation is when you let it go on a bit. *Many people nodded that we should **extend the time to 90 minutes**. *We will have to see if the consultants are willing to adjust their scope in that way. That's asking for each meeting to be 50% longer than they had planned.

Q: Is the focus on the anti-racist dimension due to what is happening in the country in general and therefore we are taking advantage of a Strategic Planning process to review our commitment to prevention of racism in WE or is there a problem of racism in WE that prompted this?

– A: When social justice issues erupted this summer. As a Board, there wasn't an existing problem, we wanted to strive to be positive and building towards being a better organization. WE issued a statement. Then thought about how to embody the statement. Task Force created a proposal for the Board on how to apply and commit. We are a volunteer Board, what can we do? One thing was to hire a DEI consultant for strategic plan, and make sure it's aligned with commitment we put forth.

Here is the anti-racism statement we published: <https://washingtonevaluators.org/page-1816524>

Strategic plan is for 5 years.

Are there different townhalls for each Strategic Goal and its corresponding objective? – No, to broaden to our members, have at different times of day. Want to open the floor for members. Didn't want to limit the discussion just to programming or Board structure.

Board: review the deliverable. Want to give feedback early next week. *Share thoughts in writing to Patricia.

Can we share the proposal with new Board members? –Yes, but we wouldn't necessarily require you to give feedback, but we will not turn away your feedback. Don't share with membership yet, it's still draft.

Proposal has messaging suggestions. – Katherine to review more closely.

Scheduling: First full week of January. Messaging in the next week/week of Christmas, because they need time to gather feedback.

Multiple people noted that people are coming off of vacation and also need time for people to prepare for the meeting. Communications in this time period/end-of-year, plus it's a tough year, people will check out, and the messaging may not stick.

Maybe second week of January? Third week is inauguration. Can it be pushed back in a way that we discuss in February for feedback to the Board? WE are looking for an outcome rather than a timeline.

The consultants need time for reflection. They may need more processing time if we push the events back. We may want to space out the two events in different weeks to get lessons learned, give time for people to reflect, raise awareness of this, etc.

There were no objections to pushing back the timing of the meetings, knowing it will push back the plan a bit, Board discussion in February.

Feel free to send Patricia and Beeta an email if you have more thoughts.

4. New Business

a. Transitions:

i. Standard operating procedures

On the [Google Drive](#) we have SOPs for Communications, Programs, Treasurer, and two for President. We don't have SOPs for Community Engagement (new Board position), Membership, and Secretary. Latter two are carrying over; Emily will draft one for Community Engagement. Melissa will write a Board Transition SOP and will take care of passwords.

SOPs can be timelines, matrices of duties, to detailed procedures. Don't kill yourself. It's helpful to have even the scaffolding of an SOP. It was helpful for Josh, for instance. It was helpful and it's not necessary to put in all specifics. Even flagging things such as, you can ask me about X, without having to put in all the detail. It helps to know if you could talk to someone more if you want to.

Since you have figured out how to use **Wild Apricot** for your position- make sure to transition the knowledge, as that can take some time to figure out on one's own.

Also, go ahead and meet with incoming person.

ii. Committee chair/elected position transition meetings

Go ahead and meet with incoming person.

Melissa and Patricia are meeting to transition the administrator account and email addresses.

iii. Email transition

Melissa will take care of all Google Account management. Board members use the washingtonevaluators.org addresses to take pressure off of personal email accounts, e.g., with AEA. It gives our members and stakeholders a way of getting to us.

Main email account is used for communications. General inquiries go to Katherine.

Melissa/Secretary will have the secret account to do password resets, etc.

Who gets access to an email account? – This is at the discretion of the Chair. Community Engagement had multiple users, which may have resulted in personal email use. But for official communications, definitely used it.

Also it's helpful not to include the Communications email in the event invites. Whoever is coordinating or hosting the event should be the contact person/email in the event information.

iv. Website adjustments

Beeta has reached out to new board members- look at bios, photos, send to us. Deadline for bios was this Sunday. Katherine will update and launch 2021 Board page as soon as it gets proofed. Then take down 2020 in January.

Beeta has uploaded upcoming events for Jan/Feb Board meetings.

Beeta will work on a letter from the President in January to establish priorities for the year.

v. Annual report

Giovanni started the tradition of issuing an Annual Report.

Patricia will go back to the Action Plan and write the report based on the Action Plan. May need to reach out to individual Board members to collect info for this. Will share with Beeta before it's published.

Will we do an Action Plan in early 2021 or do we get the Strategic Plan in place? A: In 2017 we prepared the strategic plan, then the action plan.

This year, we didn't publish the action plan until May, but we were behind schedule.

5. Adjournment / Passing of the gavel

Patricia thanked Josh for serving as Treasurer this year; this is his last Board Meeting.

Josh: it's been a good year and an interesting one. Glad to see the inner workings of the Board. Glad to contribute. Good to see the thinking behind an organization like this.

Patricia thanked Giovanni, who is past president and is stepping down. He's been a long-time Board member. Then thanked all committee members and Board members. "We all stepped forward as leaders in various ways. It's been an honor to work with you all."

Patricia noted what an incredible leader Beeta is. She's looking forward to see where you take this.

Beeta noted that we have collectively done so much! We led by example moving things forward, contributing in every way you could. Amazing board you pulled together- with different kinds of organizations and expertise.

Thank you to Josh for getting insurance.

Laura is moving off of Evaluation Without Borders. It was a trying year.

Excited about the new directions we can take with all the committees this year.

People Patricia's calm, even keeled approach to be around. Your voice is indicative of your approach, very calm. Not rattled.

It was difficult for everyone this year. Echo Beeta's sentiments and thanks.

Many people echoed how it was an honor to serve on Patricia's Board.

ADJOURN 7:48 PM