



Washington Evaluators Board Meeting 8/18/2021 – MINUTES

In attendance:

Beeta Tahmassebi, President
Emily Bango, President-Elect
Patricia Moore Shaffer, Past President
Melissa Chiu, Secretary
Natalie Donohue, Membership Chair
Esther Nolton, Program Chair
Katherine Braga, Communications Chair – On Leave
Kantahyanee Murray, Community Engagement Chair
Kelly Feltault, Program Coordinator
Courtney Carr, Communications Coordinator and Acting Communications Chair
Fanni Farago, Scholarship co-coordinator
Val Caracelli, New Professional and Student Coordinator

Not in attendance:

Jessica Pomerantz, Treasurer
Maryfrances Porter- co-coordinator for Mentor Minutes, lives in Charlottesville
Betsy Kaeberle- new coordinator for Mentor Minutes, GWU student, Program design and M&E
Eric Keys, Scholarship co-coordinator
Mindelyn Anderson, Evaluation Without Borders co-coordinator
Katie Pitts, Evaluation Without Borders co-coordinator
Danielle Lane, Program Coordinator
Marie-Ellen Ehounou, Membership Coordinator

Guests:

Blake Vullo -New professional scholarship recipient
Nicole Germano- New professional scholarship recipient

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

2. Governance:

- Approval of [June's meeting minutes](#) (Secretary)

Melissa motioned to approve the June meeting minutes. Kelly Feltault seconded. VOTE: approved.

- Review of monthly financials (Treasurer)

Paid the consultant. Membership numbers doing well. Cushion in our assets, \$23k+

Proposal: Upgrade the Wild Apricot account to have more contacts.

Natalie: We are up to 2000 contacts. Once you hit 2200, Wild Apricot shuts down account, can't have people register for events or join WE. We cleared out contact list in December- went down to 1600ish. Then we got this warning in June. How people become contacts? It's a bit murky.

Natalie looked at people who hadn't been a member since 2018 and hadn't logged in since 2018. There were a ton of contacts since March- makes sense because of all the events. We are gaining about 150 contacts a month on average since February. Existing contacts don't create a new record when they register, so they were fine. The last event was public, so people were registering for the first time and thus creating a new record, and we got shut down. We are currently at 1421- we are probably ok through the end of the year.

Katherine: currently \$190/month. Next level is \$350/month, goes from 2000 to 5000 contacts. Pricing plans: https://www.wildapricot.com/pricing-na?utm_term=wild%20apricot%20pricing&utm_campaign=branded-google&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&hsa_acc=9890756447&hsa_cam=62014109&hsa_grp=3464524229&hsa_ad=524019973669&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=aud-127384691069:kwd-21020436509&hsa_kw=wild%20apricot%20pricing&hsa_mt=e&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gclid=CjwKCAjw3_KIBhA2EiwAaAAlitf3LUgYSM7hCZhUI4WYH38zssxAljQpYfCZIDg8Rsq0wMiIEfGjehoc_dcQAvD_BwE

We will wait to see if Wild Apricot gets back to Esther, and pick it up again next month when we have more information. They are supposed to respond within 5 days, but then said that COVID is slowing them down.

Is Weekly Digest being sent to members only and not the entire contact list? And also check contacts can't get it without being a member. Digest is one of the most popular products we have. ***Katherine to look into it.**

3. Professional Development Scholarships

Fanni: 2 new scholarship recipients in this third round. Attended Michael Quinn Patton's course, and got involved in mentorship program.

Nicole Germano- Reviewers said she is a quick learner, positively impacts people around her. Hardworking, honest. With this opportunity will be an excellent evaluator in the future.

Blake Vullo- PhD program in Sociology. Reviewers said he seems to be honest, hardworking and responsible serious about what he intends to do and accomplish. The scholarship would help him do more in the field.

Nicole: new to DC and new to evaluation. Career change. Looking forward to moving to DC. Could see how to apply things professionally. There are things that professionals also still have to learn. This built

confidence. Takeaways: 1) how to manage difficult personalities. 2) Facilitating options, giving groups options, to help people get to consensus. Not having all the answers but working with others to make sure the evaluation is a good fit. Enjoyed coming to monthly speaker series. Gets a lot from the Digest- she has an opportunity to get and find a lot of information, e.g., an advisor sent her a podcast and she had already listened to it.

I'm grateful for the scholarship opportunity, and I look forward to seeing you all in the future.

Blake: gave him a little bit of tangible experience. Was very eager to work with Dr. Quinn Patton. Had read his work. He's now in 2nd year of evaluation experience. Glad to be introduced to this early in his experience. Opportunity to listen and learn. A lot of the exposure he had from his work. Cautioned against cookie cutter approach to evaluation. Evaluation and evaluation facilitation are different things. Relevant to non-profits he'd worked with in New Orleans on environmental racism. Facilitate with complex personalities.

Thank you for your time, everyone! I greatly appreciate the opportunity and I hope to imbue this experience into my scholarship and teaching

FUN NOTE: Class received a spoken word performance. MQP will write evaluation lyrics to songs. Search: omgmqp. Also see <https://www.evalacademy.com/articles/evaluations-yoda>

4. Update on Strategic Planning

Patricia: July 19th- posted first full draft copy for public comment. Until last Sunday at midnight, had no comments. **So we recommend approval and adoption of the strategic plan for the next 4 years. Katherine seconded. VOTE: Approved, no nays.**

Melissa: Action Plan. Had an Action plan in the same year developed first Strategic Plan. Drafted this to be light, but showing that we are planning to start doing something THIS year. Wrote many things as "create a plan" rather than "implement." Wrote program actions like in 2019, which Esther has gone way beyond already.

Comment on draft action to have Board members recommend 3 people to talk with/recruit: Try to avoid too many 'musts' in the Action Plan. Hard to get people to volunteer. But yes, do what we can do to recruit and promote. That's why the president-elect often has to recruit a large number of Board numbers.

Action: Review action plan: by 9/7. Here's the link to the draft action plan: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OaaeiaT8Uub8zv7gKlCDNyijfjKYpv1O/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114159905881752135640&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Katherine to draft something for next week's Digest. If you're interested, don't have to specify an exact role. Do that tomorrow- for Beeta's email.

*MC: send out election schedule, set up Nominations form, and event to meet the candidates. Board Info session Sep 1, 12-1. If can't make it- send TP's. else, core/voting Board. *MC to talk with Esther re October Meet the Candidates event.

5. Committee Updates:

- **Communications (Katherine, Courtney)**

Many thanks to Courtney for covering for Katherine while she was out on maternity leave! Courtney kept the Digest going and social media.

Social media platform- will vote next month. Hoot Suite's free account used to allow 30 posts a week and now only 5, so this is slowing down WE's social media presence. Was posting 3-5 times a day, and now once a day or once every 2 days. Would like to do one a day for both Twitter and LinkedIn. At the peak, we were posting 15/week per channel- but didn't have a strategy attached to it.

Investigated different services for pre-scheduled posts.

Hoot Suite \$49/month

Buffer: \$5/month, the cheapest. Unlimited social channels. Scheduled posts per channel: Unlimited.

<https://buffer.com/pricing#compare>

Edgar \$19/month for unlimited scheduled posts. 3 channels max.

Nicole has used Buffer in last few years, was user friendly, easy to use. Can do from a phone. Courtney has only used Hoot Suite. Communications committee to do 14-day trial to test it out.

- **Membership**

Currently have 555 members. We are crushing it! Helpful to have strong Program Chairs- shout out to Esther.

Comments from group: Great job, Natalie! Team work makes the dream work, Natalie!

Spike in organizational sponsors: Up to 19, = 74 actual members. People don't use all 5 of their slots. We remind them.

Reduced price of \$15/member. Now have 63 students and we usually have around 30, so we've already doubled the student membership!

Discussed Student group memberships with Esther. Administratively: How do you confirm a group, and what to do if someone comes later and says they are a student. Are there other options for simplicity, like lowering the membership price, Versus tracking groups.

Per the Graduate students on the call: \$15 is affordable. This is cheap for a professional organization.

MC thinks its on the edge of affordable (thinking about people who are not on the call or haven't joined). Is there enough value in years of low programming? Or do we redistribute funds like we just agreed to in the strategic plan? Or other ways to allocate something to people who cannot afford it, e.g., these donations go to more scholarships. Or on webpage: reach out to us if you have a hardship. Explain why in a few sentences, and have a set number of slots. Is the reason we don't have as many students because of the \$15 or other reasons?

Or have an add-on option to sponsor a student membership. We do have a donation button that we can activate. Also there are people who aren't students who can't afford the fee. This could also be easier from administrative point of view than to figure out tiers of pricing.

Do we want a group to think about it in next 2 months?

Esther: yes, sponsor a member. Or ask faculty member to take it on, like an organizational sponsor. Then faculty decide whom to distribute to. Can we offer to them? This shifts burden from student to

university. Would have more students because those students would probably never have become members.

Or universities could be organizational sponsors for faculty.

Small team to come back to Board with a proposal: Esther Natalie val Melissa, Fanni. Natalie will lead.

- **Community Engagement (Mentor Minutes, EWB, Scholarships)**

EWB: Mindelyn and Katie cohosted EWB match event. Connect volunteers and participating organizations. Goal to move from 1 MOU to 5 MOUs signed by end of July. Documented lessons learned.

MM: progress. Thank you to everyone who suggested special mentors. Since June there have been a lot of mentee requests, like 1 a week and only 16 active mentors.

Publicity: June (Thanks to Courtney for adding to Digest postings- different titles, and social media postings). 9 new mentors signed up. Mary Frances on vacation and Betsy is working on thesis and started a new position. = 26 active mentors.

Have 9 mentees left to match. We suspended the mentee recruitment for now. Took mentee registration form off website in June, to temporarily pause it so we can catch up.

Decision needed for Betsy and Maryfrances: do we want to prioritize the scholarship recipients for matching? Right now it's first come first served and they making sure the match is aligned.

Suggestion: Maybe rebrand as career consultation and then move to mentoring if the pairs want to. This is so the burden doesn't seem as heavy.

Maybe when people join they have an opportunity to become a mentor, maybe send a personalized note 1-2 times a year, and include in Digest.

Some people have been a mentor several times and hasn't been reached out to a second time. Others have had mid- to long-term relationships.

Recurring issue is that mentors must be WE members (traditionally for liability reasons). Do we want to recruit people who aren't WE members, e.g., people who can't be matched. Nat's colleague did it and it was great. Maybe send a list of people where someone **can vouch for the person**. Or, possibly give non-WE member a free or discounted membership? –This seems unfair to those paying full price and possibly paying for others.

Holding a Presidential dinner on Mentor program. Sept 9th! <https://washingtonevaluators.org/event-4259540>

Also, can the Board suggest mentors?

Melissa motioned to prioritize the scholarship recipients for mentor matching. Natalie seconded. **VOTE: Approved, no nays.**

- **Programming**

Happy hour for members and free to public to gain new members. Traditionally been a Tuesday, 5-6:30.

Conference is virtual, so will HH. Next month need things in place and announced. Open to all AEA members and attendees.

From Beeta Tahmassebi to Everyone: 07:59 PM

- Upcoming events through September (full list):
- 8/25 Accessible Data Visualizations (Members Only)
- 9/9 President's Dinner - Mentoring (Members Only)
- 9/15 September Board Meeting (Open to the Public)
- 9/23 Promoting Equity in Strategic Management (Members Only)
- WE Happy Hour - Save the date: November 9th (during Eval21)

Holiday party – typically in December. Things looked better a few months ago. Now not so much. We should probably have virtual again. Just have to book the Zoom. Will take any help to plan it.

It was fun last year despite being virtual. it was my first one and I had fun as well! i liked the breakout rooms.

***Ask people/orgs if want to sponsor raffle prizes.**

From Kelly Feltault : I'll help with that party.

ADJOURN 8:04 pm.

Additional discussion with a smaller group

Esther: a link in the email from Beeta today. Call to Action. Shared at the LAC call.

Evaluation Roots textbook. There is a Call to action to the authors to rewrite/write a new edition. Include indigenous authors, give them credit, etc. because they were not acknowledged. Marvin Alkin and Christina Christie.

One of the co-leads of LAC is a lead author of the letter, Aisha Rios. Kantahyanee and Esther on the DEIA group of AEA. She's there too.

On the LAC call, she encouraging all affiliates to share with constituents. Have people try to sign it.

If it's in the Weekly Digest, it is WE endorsing something. What it signals- what it means. Do we want to do this?

There is merit to the letter, grounded in good reasoning, cause, intentions. But it's been divisive, push back and feedback. Taken as an attack on them and preferred not to have been handled this way.

Esther's work will not let her attach affiliation. She must sign as an individual if she wants to sign.

Is that the only major negative thing is that it's a personal attack or is there more substance?

Have heard the authors have released a response that they are intending to make changes and book revamped.

Are there more pieces that we may or may not be aware of?

How do we curate what goes on in the newsletter? This is not a resource, this feels like advocacy. Is this a departure?

As a Board we shouldn't represent WE in signing. Want to read and investigate. We should sign as individuals.

Katherine: Never did a call to action in the last 1.5 years. But have shared Calls to Action from others, have had it as a Fresh Read. It's something that is not an endorsement, we release opinions all the time.

Did AEA endorse it? No, they have not. There was a movement to boycott Eval 21 conference. AEA tried to address it. Anisha has said she hopes people feel comfortable coming to staff to address concerns. No need to boycott to incite action. Want to hear members' concerns. Not endorsed or barred it.

What other actions have been taken to work with the authors, or were they resistant to an initial request, and rejected and that led to this letter? There may have been an initial attempt.

Tina and Marv are at UCLA, which has a large contingency of evaluators. We could burn a bridge for a speaker, member, etc. This is a risk. Many of them relocated to DC area.

Put in digest with both letter and the response, so it is clear we are not taking sides? Many agreed with this. We started year off with antiracism. Want to foster conversation. We're sharing what's actively under discussion in the field.

Add a line in Digest that we don't endorse, a permanent line? We don't have capacity to review everything deeply.

Don't want to be seen as not having space for these conversations. We're bound to have conversations we don't agree with.

Also, why this book? Not the only book on the history of evaluation.

Val is thinking about giving to Ethics Officer to see if she can sign on. There are a lot of issues we can further discuss. Who has the right to tell someone what should be in their book?

Should be shared. We came out with antiracism statement and we've been talking about it. So not promoting conversation about it would be hypocritical. For examples, Corporations had little follow through after George Floyd statements.

Creating space for grappling with the issue, being uncomfortable, people make their own decisions without advocating a point of view. **We can do it through the Fresh Reads, but we can add additional caution, we're sharing this, doesn't mean that WE is endorsing it.** We don't want to alienate, we want to build bridges. Bring more diverse people into WE and engage that. Maybe it doesn't resonate with us, but maybe with people we want to be more engaged with on WE, so create space to grapple and interrogate it.

A lot of people signed, many others did not. It has caused people to have to choose sides.

Yes, include the response if available publicly. If they come to a resolution/ constructive way soon, then don't push it.

We can share things without endorse/advocate etc. We should definitely not sign up as endorsers of the letter. Share without looking like we're pushing it on people.

There are few people who disagree with the letter. More people disagree with how this was handled. We don't have to support unproductive, unconstructive things. This has been polarizing.

Can we turn this into a program? Address DEI to push the envelope while building bridges?

In October, will have an event on Navigating Challenges to Resistance and Equity. Not exactly the same. Maybe can work it in. We can do more in this area.

The Board shouldn't represent membership without getting input. If there were a vote, that would be different. **Beeta will send note to people not to add their WE title if they do sign.**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNojhYI2RWIlqaKXfGGe97m5mcCwrywXuedcaOJlw4_YNAgg/viewform

8:36 pm Adjourn (again)