

**Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism**  
**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 26, 2020**

Wednesday, August 26, 2020, 2:00 - 3:10 p.m. EDT, Zoom

Attendees: Brett, Matthew, Susan, Safiyah, Tobin

I. Approval of minutes and agenda

- August 12's meeting minutes approved
- Agenda approved

II. Story circle recap and debriefing

- Only about half the number of registered participants showed up
  - For future events, we should consider including the Zoom link in the registration confirmation email
  - Going forward, we should anticipate that a portion of registered guests will not appear (i.e. assuming a 30% no-show rate and overbooking, particularly for student spots)
- Smaller groups were good as people felt more comfortable sharing
- We may want to make future story circles longer to allow more time for story sharing and group reflection
- The next story circle will be a "train the trainers" session with Anita, AEIJ members and faculty liaisons so that we can host future story circles without Anita
  - The school has set aside funding to bring Anita back for this training session
- A theme that emerged was the disconnect between student and faculty experiences; many faculty members described being unaware of incidents that had taken place in the classroom
  - There is a gap with faculty trying to learn more and address their privilege and biases but struggling because they don't know where to start
  - During the story circle, profs were unaware of what microaggressions are whereas students are comfortable with this vocabulary
    - Faculty will be undergoing unconscious bias training this week, so hopefully, profs will be leaving with a better understanding of microaggressions and other forms of oppression
  - AEIJ can reexamine the idea of building a toolkit and preparing resources for profs
- We can consider building a peer support mechanism into AEIJ so that students have peers to talk to when they encounter incidents and feel uncomfortable approaching professors or do not want to escalate the situation/file a complaint
  - With student permission, an AEIJ representative can bring these incidents and share them anonymously at faculty meetings (since we've previously discussed having a AEIJ rep regularly attend faculty meetings)

- There are already informal conversations taking place between students about incidents in the classroom, so AEIJ can consider holding less formal story circles that are closed for students to share their experiences and for our association to identify student needs
  - On a case-by-case basis, we can ask students about what changes they would like to see and how the incident should be addressed
  - This removes the onus from students to approach professors directly
- Matthew is planning to start a faculty book club to read *Teaching about Race and Racism in the College Classroom: Notes from a White Professor*
  - Through reading and discussion, the club will hopefully encourage profs to deconstruct race and give them the language to talk about these topics
- Currently, there is a tiered approach to addressing incidents in the program
  - Complaints of a more severe level are brought to Ikram and Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC)
  - Program-related questions and comments should be directed to the Permanent Working Group (PWG)
  - Where should students go when they feel isolated in a classroom setting because of their experience? Would peer support fill this gap?
- We can consider creating an external email address for AEIJ and adding a line to the webpage that encourages students to reach out if they would like support
  - Questions to consider: Who will be monitoring AEIJ's email account? Is it fair to put the burden on students to offer support to their peers? Are there any other options to address the above-mentioned gap in student support?
  - It's important for students to know where to go to get support, and we need to create/identify resources for students to turn to when they encounter microaggressions or want to talk about an incident that occurred in the classroom
  - Starting a committee email will give us a centralized place to receive suggestions, questions and new member requests
- With future AEIJ and school events, we should consider accessibility needs ligand provide closed captions and sign language interpretation upon student request
- Brett will change the wording on the AEIJ website from "get involved" to "reach out"
  - Currently, Brett grabs messages off of the webpage and forwards them to Safiyah; we agree we can stick to that system for now, but we may consider altering it in the future if we want to avoid having any faculty contact with messages directed to AEIJ
  - We can set up a Carleton email address for AEIJ; we just need to give Brett the go-ahead to reach out to ITS
- We can consider making AEIJ's email account accessible to AEIJ Exec Board members by sharing the login info
  - This would allow us to draw on our unique experiences to provide support
  - AEIJ Exec Board members will then be able to directly respond to students so it won't just be Safiyah or a single person's responsibility

### III. AGM planning and new member policy

- We should set a date for the AGM and decide on roles and responsibilities before then
  - We can consider hosting the AGM a week or two weeks after JSOC Welcome Week (Sept. 14 - 18)
- A few people have reached out with interest in joining AEIJ; should we invite them to our meetings?
  - **We can discuss this again when more AEIJ student members are present**
  - For now, we can send interested students an email about our plans and ask them hold on and attend our proposed AGM, since we're still in the process of figuring out our structure
  - After the AGM, they can join/create committees they identify with; core meetings tend to only involve the Executive Board anyway
  - Safiyah will email current AEIJ members asking whether they're still interested in taking part and what they're comfortable with committing to, as well as noting the term requirements for serving on the Exec Board

#### IV. Randy Boswell's email re Russell House

- Randy Boswell recently reached out to AEIJ about emerging calls for Carleton to rename the residence building Russell House, since [the name is tied to a slave owner](#)
  - There have been suggestions to rename the building after another Russell, but students are pushing for a complete name change
  - Safiyah will forward Randy's email to AEIJ members
- AEIJ can look into supporting these calls for renaming
- There are also ongoing efforts to push for the removal of the Gandhi statue, including a recent [petition](#)
  - The Institute of African Studies Student Association had been leading those efforts so we can connect with them if we want to support their calls
- **We will wait to see what other student members say on this topic**

#### V. Brett's updates on mentorship and first-year orientation

- Paul has compiled and sent a list of mentors to Alumni Relations
  - **Since the program is in its pilot stage, we are only connecting interested AEIJ members with mentors for now**
  - Brett will send an email to all AEIJ members, then connect interested members with Jennifer Gray from Alumni Relations, who will help pair students with mentors and detail next steps
- Randy is happy to mention AEIJ during the undergrad orientation for first-year students
  - BJ orientation day should be Tuesday, September 8
  - We agree that having student reps there would be best, so Safiyah and Tobin will be there to promote AEIJ's work; Brett will follow up with Randy about this
- Matthew will check with Janice Tibbetts, the graduate supervisor, to see if AEIJ members can drop by for the MJ orientation
  - MJ orientation day should be Tuesday, September 8, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

- If Eden and Haneen are interested, it would be nice to have grad students representing AEIJ at the orientation; Matthew can connect them with Janice

#### VI. Posting meeting minutes on AEIJ's website

- July 22 and August 12's meeting minutes have gone through the formal adoption process, so those will be posted on AEIJ's website
  - Once minutes are approved, Tobin will convert them into a PDF and send the document to Brett to post on our website
  - We should set a quorum and include it in our bylaws

#### VII. The PWG and the calls to action group

- The PWG is talking with the calls to action group and arranging a Zoom meeting to discuss where the school is at and how we'll move forward
  - **This meeting will ideally include representatives from AEIJ** and Ikram and Michael from EIC
  - Date is most dependent on Ikram and Michael's availability; more details to come

#### VIII. Updated Equity Checklist

- The Equity Checklist has been [updated](#) since AEIJ's August 12 meeting
  - Suggestion: the PWG should consider adding information about trigger warnings and subject matter warnings, since students at the story circle shared how these warnings were often provided without adequate warning ahead of class

#### IX. Story circle takeaways and upcoming faculty meeting

- Safiyah and Brett will ask Anita about posting the solutions she compiled from the story circle, and forwarding them to faculty
  - The chat function was helpful and allowed participants to share detailed suggestions
  - Safiyah will try to attend the faculty meeting on Friday, August 28 and bring the list of solutions that emerged from the story circle
  - Safiyah will share the solutions document with all AEIJ members

#### X. Plans for the next meeting and adjournment

- **Ahead of the next meeting, we will work to have a list of Exec Board roles and responsibilities so that we can discuss together**
- Safiyah adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m. EDT

**Next meeting: Wednesday, September 2 at 2:00 p.m. EDT (to be confirmed via email)**



Tobin Ng

Approved September 2, 2020