

Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 22, 2020

Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 2:30 - 4:45 p.m. EDT, Zoom

General attendees: Brett, Matthew, Susan, Haneen, Eden, Safiyah, Tobin

Special attendees: Ikram Jama (Equity and Inclusive Communities), Arvin Joaquin (alumnus)

I. Approval of minutes and updates

- Review and adoption of July 15's meeting minutes
- Update from Pascale: 3/13 faculty slots and 25/30 student slots for the story circle have been filled
 - **Committee members must sign up as well**
 - Brett will mention the story circle at July 23's faculty meeting

II. Review of Haneen's doc: draft mission statement

- Re mission statement: we want to be careful to distinguish the journalism program from the school, which includes the communication program
- Our group plans to host inward and outward facing events
- The FPA has given us a set amount of funding for a number of specific planned events. Each year, the journalism program head will be able to ask for event- or project-specific funding on behalf of the AEIJ.
 - Like JSOC, our group can apply for more funding for specific projects
 - There will be no need for us to fundraise at this point in time
- Re mission statement: we mention "journalism and journalism education" to include the industry as well as the journalism program
 - We hope the change we create as a group will have broader impacts and influence j-schools and news organizations
- Re mission statement: we're including "other forms of oppression" to keep it open ended, recognizing there may be other angles or lenses we haven't considered
- Re mission statement: we're mentioning microaggressions to note the nuances of oppression and to help students/faculty feel seen
- The Permanent Working Group (PWG) met with Ikram and Michael from Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) last week to discuss the process for handling microaggressions
 - Traditionally, complaints and incidents are reported to the program head and don't trigger a response from EIC
 - However, faculty might not have the expertise to deal with concerns of a certain degree or severity, hence engagement with EIC is encouraged
- Our group can introduce an informal channel for handling complaints and incidents by holding story circles
 - Informal story circles allow students to voice their concerns without engaging with EIC, which may be a lengthy and intimidating process

- The FPA has approved funding for a training session where Anita can train us to lead story circles; the funding is available for us to use before Christmas, so we just need to book Anita for a session sometime in the fall semester
- Re mission statement: we're mentioning "activities and opportunities," which is less ambiguous than "programming" and includes events, initiatives, networking opportunities, etc.
- Final draft of the mission statement:
 - **"The Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism is a student-led group dedicated to informing, advising, and working with the Carleton journalism program to address racism, ableism, queerphobia, transphobia and other forms of oppression and microaggressions in journalism and journalism education. The association's role includes creating activities and opportunities for students and pushing for changes such as diversifying curriculum, achieving better representation at all levels of the program, and more. Our mission is to make the journalism school a safe(r) space for Black, Indigenous, and students of colour, 2SLGBTQ+ students, and students living with disabilities."**

III. Review of Haneen's doc: structure suggestions

- **We're adopting a new name: The Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism (AEIJ)**
 - More expansive than "committee" and highlights how our membership is open to all journalism students
 - We're leaving Carleton out of our name so other students can draw inspiration from our group and start AEIJs in their own j-schools; we specify "the Carleton journalism program" in our mission statement
- We'll create committees as subgroups under AEIJ (e.g. for 2SLGBTQ+ students, for BIPOC students) as they come up, rather than designating specific committees right now when we have few members
- We'll create an Executive Board and introduce positions such as secretary, treasurer, and communications/outreach
 - This Executive Board will guide the association as a whole
 - As each committee is created, a committee chair will be designated and that individual will join the Exec Board as a representative for their committee
- We're looking to build a social media presence to meet students where they're at and boost our outreach efforts
 - Managing our social media accounts will fall under the mandate of the communications/outreach role on our Exec Board
- Current members who are already filling certain roles on the Exec Board can just remain in their positions and take on the according title
 - This gives us a place to start as we build AEIJ from the ground up

- For vacant Exec Board positions, we'll hold an AGM and have our members vote for individuals to fill them
 - The AGM system allows for a “closed-door” democracy and eliminates paperwork; we avoid having to create applications and sift through submissions
 - Around the third week of September, we can hold the AGM with all our members as our first activity
- The interim Exec Board can remain in place until at least fall 2021
 - After, we can use AGMs to vote for all members of the Exec Board
- We can adopt Robert's Rules for meeting minutes and use them as a guideline for our meetings
- We'll create a mailing list for everyone interested in AEIJ's work (journalism students who aren't involved with AEIJ as well as AEIJ members)
 - We'll provide updates on our meetings, list opportunities to help out, etc.
- We want to make sure our Exec Board is diverse and includes representatives from each community
- After our story circle, we can have an AEIJ student representative sit in on a faculty meeting
 - This can be an ongoing commitment to ensure AEIJ is engaging in regular communication with the faculty
- We should go over bylaws later on (e.g. the role of alumni, building in positions for faculty members and the program head)
- Brett is presenting the PWG's mandate at the faculty meeting on July 23
 - Brett will also be introducing the diversity and inclusion checklist, which has been reviewed by EIC
 - Professors will be following up to tell the program head how they've incorporated the checklist in their syllabi
 - Brett will provide a full PWG update at a separate AEIJ meeting
- We should cap the number of AEIJ Exec Board positions

IV. Ikram and Arvin's suggestions on Haneen's doc

- Re mission statement: Ikram will check on the wording of “students living with disabilities” and touch base with Brett and/or Safiyah after
- We can resend the mission statement to Ikram for edits once all AEIJ members have taken a look at this new version
- Since our association will likely include several committees, we should anticipate some difficulty with communication, decision-making and member contributions
- We should take our time with building a foundation and structure for AEIJ; we can always modify things later on if they don't work
- Our bylaws should be clear and easy to understand so that those who come after us will be able to easily interpret them
 - We can look at other groups' bylaws as examples and find a set that aligns with what we hope to adopt for AEIJ
- We can create an allies group that can serve as a resource group

- This allies group can come at a later stage, once we've defined our mission and refined our structure
 - Allies should know and understand that they have a responsibility to step back and listen to the communities they're trying to support
- We should create a community agreement or a set of 10 or so value/belief statements as part of this structuring process
 - Along with our mission statement, these values will guide our work
 - Ikram will look for some examples and send them to Brett and/or Safiyah
- We should decide on the size of our Exec Board based on the number of roles we want to introduce; up to 5 executives is a good goal
- We may want to cap membership for AEIJ at 30 members, with 3-5 individuals in each committee
- As far as Ikram knows, we're unique as a student-led equity and inclusion group, so we might not have similar organizations to look to
 - Most equity and inclusion groups are faculty-based (e.g. the sociology and anthropology department has one)
 - However, in terms of bylaws, we can connect with other student groups at Carleton (e.g. CUSA); Ikram will check with other student groups
- We should decide how long membership terms will be
 - A two-year minimum may work as it ensures members are committed and stay long enough to understand the ins and outs of AEIJ and the journalism program
 - Equity and inclusion work is about building relationships, and it takes time for students to understand the systems in place at the school
 - We'll have to decide how graduating students can participate (e.g. Will AEIJ members who graduate still be eligible members? And if so, for how long after grad?)
- Equity and inclusion work is urgent and important, but we should take our time to get it right
 - We want to build a sustainable group that can remain long after we graduate
 - Starting from scratch and laying the foundation for a whole new group is difficult
 - We can update those who are interested about what we're doing and the progress we've made so far, but we shouldn't feel rushed
- As we draft our bylaws and continue structuring discussions, we can reach out to Ikram for edits and advice
 - Ikram will connect us with her coworkers Amal and Sehrish, who have worked extensively with student groups
- EIC is also working on training for all student groups that focuses on how members of student-led organizations can bring equity and inclusion into their work
 - In the fall, EIC can hold this training session with the AEIJ team and its members
 - The session will outline university processes, Carleton's human rights policy and sexual violence policy, etc.
- Until we've built a strong foundation, allies can support us by showing up to our events and helping us with advertising and outreach

- Ikram is leaving to go on vacation on July 24 and will be back on August 4
 - If she finds anything that might be useful as we create our bylaws and refine our structure, she'll send it to us once she returns
 - We can reach out to Ikram if we have any more questions or need advice

V. Story circle

- We mentioned anti-racism in our event poster but didn't explicitly state in the event description that we want to prioritize BIPOC folks
 - The importance of this point depends on the goal of the story circle and whether we're hoping to focus on the experiences of BIPOC students or equity and inclusion more broadly
- Anita's questions for the story circle are more general and address diversity and inclusion broadly
- We may want to make this story circle a closed space for BIPOC
 - This likely won't be an issue, but it's a good idea to go through the Eventbrite guest list and see if any white folks signed up to participate as there are limited spots
 - As Ikram mentioned, there's a place for allies and they should understand when it's time for them to listen and step back
- If necessary, we can send out an email to student participants noting that we'd like individuals with lived experience to be prioritized

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 5 (to be confirmed via email)



Tobin Ng

Approved August 12, 2020