



## **Washington Evaluators Board Meeting 3/17/2021 – MINUTES**

### In attendance:

Beeta Tahmassebi, President  
Emily Bango, President-Elect  
Patricia Moore Shaffer, Past President  
Melissa Chiu, Secretary  
Jessica Pomerantz, Treasurer  
Natalie Donohue, Membership Chair  
Esther Nolton, Program Chair  
Katherine Braga, Communications Chair  
Kantahyanee Murray, Community Engagement Chair  
Bryce Leary, Mentor Minutes  
Fanni Farago, Scholarship co-coordinator  
Kelly Feltault, Program Coordinator

### Not in attendance:

Mindelyn Anderson, Evaluation Without Borders co-coordinator  
Katie Pitts, Evaluation Without Borders co-coordinator  
Eric Keys, Scholarship co-coordinator  
Danielle Lane, Program Coordinator  
Val Caracelli, New Professional and Student Coordinator  
Courtney Carr, Communications Coordinator  
Marie-Ellen Ehounou, Membership Coordinator

### **Agenda:**

#### **1. Welcome (7 min)**

Moment of silence, grateful to medical workers. For all we've lost this year.

#### **2. Governance:**

- **Approval of [last month's meeting minutes](#) (Secretary) (3 min)**

Jessica motioned to approve the minutes. Melissa seconded. Vote: APPROVED, no nays.

- **Robert's Rules and a review of how we work together (Secretary) (15 min)**

Melissa gave a presentation summarizing WE's voting procedures, and prompted a discussion of decision-making procedures. According to WE's bylaws, Article V. Directors, Sec 1, Sec. 3, there are 9 Board members or directors. Four are the Principal Officers: President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. These Board members are elected, as is the Past President. Four more are "nominated by the

President and chosen by the Board from applications submitted by Association members.” They are the Chairs of the Committees for: Programs, Communications, Membership, Community Engagement. These 9 Board members have voting power at Board meetings.

**Issue 1:** Sometimes a decision is needed between meetings. The WE bylaws are silent about voting outside of a meeting. How does WE make decisions outside of a meeting?

Washington, D.C. Non-profit Organization Laws (Title 29, Ch. 4, Subch. VI, Part B §29–406.21) state that action “may be taken without a meeting if each director signs a consent in the form of a record...”

Robert’s Rules of Order, a best practice for parliamentary procedure, is very formal and detailed on the language used in discussions and voting. This is not appropriate for WE’s structure and size.

Best practices recommend written consent as best in non-controversial or routine matters of business. Best practices have modernized written consent: a written ballot, board portal system, email. Written ballots do not solve the problem when a quick decision is needed. A board portal system may be complicated and costly for WE. **Email voting is a cost-effective and efficient solution**, but also has cautions. WE would need to check that email counts as a “record” in DC, otherwise, votes would be nullified. Also, email, being text only, can be misinterpreted, misstated, vague, or misleading, leading to unintended votes. Email may inhibit thorough discussion, and if voting in a group email, the first few votes could bias later votes. Finally, emails aren’t captured in meeting minutes, i.e., those decisions are not transparent to membership.

**What are the situations where WE would want to use email voting/consent?  
Do we need to change the bylaws to be explicit about conditions?**

**Issue 2:** When does the Board need to vote on an issue? Apart from a few specific scenarios, the WE bylaws do not discuss this. Melissa proposes that WE create a Board Decision-Making SOP that documents the conditions and procedures for voting, how to interpret and implement the bylaws. We could walk through and revisit the SOP each January to vote on adopting the SOP as the decision-making procedure for that year. The advantage of this is that it is nimble and doesn’t require a vote of the membership to change (unlike the bylaws). Also, each Board could decide how it wants to make decisions, including the role of non-voting members of WE leadership, for example, the Mentor Minutes coordinator.

Discussion:

When wouldn’t want to wait for a Board meeting? A: For the holiday party 2019, the venue fell through last minute and Melissa needed a Board approval for the increase in price for another downtown venue. Also, WE skips one Board meeting in in the summer.

We don’t want to overregulate people for day-to-day; Like the idea of putting in an SOP. If it’s a small question, maybe only a few people on email. Or if it changes the way we work, we can subsequently include in the minutes, say it in a Board meeting so that we err on the side of transparency. Majority of issues there isn’t a question about (routine, non-controversial).

Mechanics of how to vote in Zoom: use the Raise Hand function in Zoom.

Timing: Instead of reviewing and voting on a decision-making SOP in January, perhaps introduce the SOP in January, and be prepared to discuss and approve in February. This is to help onboarding new Board

members, a related issue. Alternatively, we could start the onboarding process earlier, like December, because currently there is not enough overlap and transition, e.g., for Programs to start programs in January. Regarding onboarding, perhaps new Board members should sign something when they come on. Should we have a small task force to think about it?

**ACTION: Email Melissa and Beeta with comments and questions.**

### 3. Committee Updates:

- **Programs (10 minutes)**

Have scheduled announcements out. Held 6 events and 40 planned events, including Board meetings. Have been restricting registration to members. Have seen people sign up for membership and then sign up for an event.

**Proposal for Budget:** move Zoom up to Programs and increase the level of the account. Programs is the main user. Maxed at 100, would like to increase to 300. Don't expect to hit 300, but we have come very close to 100 before. Increase in cost is \$150. \$149+tax, then 200 +tax. We can always scale back next year if we are in a different formation for virtual programming.

Beeta motioned to approve. Melissa seconded. **VOTE: Approved.** No Nays.

**Issue:** is the number of emails we are sending too frequent? The Member Digest is good for members (only). The event emails are effective for getting new members, since they go to non-members. How to balance emails/overwhelming vs. awareness?

We could send a quarterly email about upcoming events. This would go to all non-members even if they've registered. Would be more work for Programs and Communications. We may miss last-minute scheduling. Try to get 6 weeks out.

WE members said once a week in last year's survey. But there may be wiggle room. Maybe once a quarter, each committee has something that is special and send an email, i.e., each committee gets one event per quarter to send extra emails. It would go slightly above once a week. If we have a quarterly email for non-members, would it help if the content was collaboratively put together in order to reduce the burden on the programs/communications committees? so for instance, every committee would submit info according to a specific format and with some specific language as requested, into a google doc or some shared document that would then require minimum formatting before it's sent out.

Communications with non-members: Is it wrong to email non-members- if they wanted it, they would become members. Can they opt-out?

Esther (and Melissa in 2019) has not received complaints about receiving too many emails. Some people want to stay on the list to learn about free and open events. Some people thank Esther for letting them know. Also, non-members are on our contact list- they signed up for it, and the emails generate "fear of missing out (FOMO)." The member survey was of members, not non-members, so we don't know. Last month, Katherine discussed communicating with "Explorers," people circling around WE, but haven't joined. Members wanted fewer emails, though; we had 11 this month, for example.

Also, more contact with non-members may connect with any strategies we have around elevating diversity, equity and inclusion.

Would people tell us if they have too many emails? Do people unsubscribe? That's a good indicator.

**ACTION: Katherine, Natalie, Esther will meet and come back with recommendations next month.**

**ACTION: If you are receiving reminders for events they haven't signed up for: let Esther know.**

Upcoming events:

April 21st is Evaluators Info Session, open to members only

May 12th is Nonprofit Partners Info Session, open to public, so please share!

<https://washingtonevaluators.org/event-4221961>

July 14th is EWB Launch Event (closed even for only participants)

Suggest adding some details on the EWB page on the website

- **Community Engagement (Mentor Minutes, EWB, Scholarships) (10 minutes)**

Bryce has started with the mentor-mentee matching process. Moving to second round of New Scholarship Program. Mindelyn and Katie are in the planning stages of EWB with info sessions. April 21 Evaluators info program and May 12. July 14 will launch. Will connect with Katherine on how to get it in social media and the Digest. Also, Mindelyn and Katie would like to update the EWB forms to mirror the demographic questions used by Paragon Consulting.

Also, we appreciate the help from Esther, Katherine and Courtney.

Fanni, Scholarships: \$3000 worth of courses are offered. Danielle Haywood assisting (was on the Organizing Committee for the DCSCEP days). Had 8 applicants. Communications helped spread the word. George Mason University is a new University Ambassador to help spread the word among students. Recently hosted an event to support applicants for preparing an application. Second event in mid-April. Will post it on the website to make it available. Next will be 3 days before the second round closes.

Bryce, Mentor Minutes: have 4 pairs so far this year, 4 in the works. Preparing a spotlight of people. Communications is putting in an appeal for more mentors. Having 8 pairs is almost half of last year, so at this rate, we need to recruit more mentors. Mentors need to be members.

We're updating the SOPs to reflect these pieces, like who needs to be a member to volunteer. Appreciate it if you continue to promote events on your personal social media. Put a call out where there's a need for recruitment.

- **Communications (10 minutes)**

Will have a spotlight on Danielle Haywood by end of the month.

Got AEA 365 sponsorship week: **January 2022**. We owe them 7 articles by December 20<sup>th</sup>. Will likely have a new strategic plan and maybe be past COVID. Think about possible themes to propose for these articles. Hot tips and tricks, daily resources. Last year we focused on EWB.

Timing of the Friday Digest: Friday morning may not be the best time to send, when people aren't planning their week then. A better time is when people are looking at their email, like noon. Is there a historical

reason for sending on Friday and does anyone feel strongly about it? Discussion: Monday or Tuesday may be better. However, Fridays are quieter and people can pay attention to it. If people are scheduling, then Monday. It's tradition to send on Friday, but not many good reasons to keep it on Friday. **Also, what Katherine and Courtney do is a gift to every evaluator.** Can see all this stuff going on and you're covering a broad swath of topics.

One idea might be to try to send it at another time and just look to see what the difference is in open rates before committing to a new time. There is marketing analytics that will recommend some good days/times to do outreach. Survey methodology literature suggests web surveys are best not sent on Mondays or Fridays. My question would be what is the best day for the Communications team to put together?

Courtney, discussion of our hashtags: Professional Development, #ProfessionalDevelopment #Newandemergingevaluators #Freshreads #evaluationjobs. We don't have a lot of hashtags. Any ideas for other hashtags that we see going around? Also, some of the events don't fall under these hashtags.

If people aren't as social-media savvy: They shouldn't focus on the hashtags and not click on the link. How to get people to click on the link if they didn't think it's for me/them? (What's the correct use of hashtags. It's supposed to be inclusive but the way we're using it – received a comment – it may be more exclusive. Had to say, yes it's for you.)

**ACTION:** Go out to your networks, see what people are using. How are they approaching it? **Send suggestions to Katherine and Courtney.**

Ideas:

- #networking
- #YEE
- #eval
- #eval21
- #evaltwitter
- #evaluation
- #membersonly
- Something around #lifelonglearning for some of our educational events that's for new and experienced folks?
- #WErock
- Consider placing "equity" or "anti-racism" in future hashtags when we have relevant events. #DEI
- Maybe use AEA's hashtags? #Eval21 may be specifically for the AEA conference
- There are lots of LinkedIn groups. Monitoring and Evaluation LinkedIn group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1493297/>

Suggestion to switch hashtags to the end so people don't focus too much on it. Character limit. The Board was very appreciative of the work Katherine and Courtney have been doing.

- **Membership (10 minutes)**

Have 2 volunteers, they have lots of energy.

Have 380 members. Holding steady, +40 people in the suspended mode. Will do personal outreach. There are 3 notices in the months leading up to expiration. Send a personal message, programs coming up. Then if they don't respond, we stop.

We have 15 Organizational sponsors- 6 are figuring out their rosters. Many do not have full rosters. So we'll send them email: give us logos for website, you only have 3 members, etc.

Cara MacFadden, Guidehouse administrator for their organizational sponsorship. Feedback: the auto-admin email in Wild Apricot talked to her as if she were individual not an organizational sponsor. Could be a structural thing in our contact list.

Targeting student members: all the universities in DMV, look online for PhD candidates- send them pointed messages. Work with University Ambassadors.

If they already have career centers or career fairs- can we get a boost? E.g., join us for \$15 and it's great networking.

Every year, could get the AEA member list from AEA's Zachary Grays. Melissa did this for the DEI discussion session. Send the email you want to send to the AEA member list to Melissa and she'll take care of it, work with Zachary.

Could create an org sponsor list too.

Membership benefits- we say we give people an opportunity to present research. Last year we talked about letting people present and also being responsible about what they say, inappropriate or contrary to what we've stated as a Board. **Is there an actual opportunity to present?** If not, we should take it off the website. We do state that we are a society devoted to "information sharing", which is what this could fall under.

Programs would take in those requests for presenting. Ideally we would have some criteria for how we select sessions that come to us. Most of the time we are going out and creating the events but we sometimes have people who want to present to us.

Also, do we take attendance at WE events. Sometimes can see who signed up, but not who definitely went. A: Attendance is not taken and it's hard in Zoom since the screen name may be different from the registration name, or they may call in. No on larger events. No on Zoom. Yes, on holiday party and small in-person events (2019).

**ACTION: Revisit the presentation opportunities next month?** We have traditionally welcomed people making those events. People haven't asked, and when we do, we should have criteria.

#### **4. Quick update on Strategic Planning (10 minutes)**

Patricia: waiting on final report from Paragon. Expecting it later this week. Then will post on website. Essential for strategic planning. Then we can start the planning process. Sometime in April will schedule a 2-hour retreat for the Board on strategic goals. Then later will create goal teams for strategic objectives and strategies for the strategic plan. **Develop by July.**

Will the task force review the final to see what they changed and be sure it's okay for publication? A: The Paragon report draft can be shared with the task force for review prior to web publication. It needs one more review.

#### **5. Review of monthly financials and approval of 2021 budget (Treasurer) (5 min)**

Close to budget finalization. Jessica will update with Zoom upgrade.

Projections for 2021: we may be underestimating revenue and opposite for costs. I'm ok with that.

Pay Pal/Wild Apricot Fees- we don't have those this year. We shifted to Wild Apricot for our pay system. So, remove the \$300 for Paypal, and put \$450-480 for Bank fees.

Website domain has been paid. What is the \$42.99. Billers network solutions LLC. It may be an overcharge. Will investigate.

Kept \$2800 for the Holiday party. Assumes in-person party. Comfortable keeping it in the budget, though not optimistic about having it in-person. Question for now: do we prefer to keep it in or not? We have \$20k in the bank, though not even between expenses and revenue. We decided to dip into the savings account for the consultancy. **The Board seemed fine with keeping the \$2800** (which is the estimated cost *after* members pay a fee for the party). NOTE: Esther has received comments from some members that who were not happy about paying membership and still having to pay for events. This is related to Esther's (future) pricing structure proposal for events for non-members.

Will have a real final next week.

**8:03 PM ADJOURN**