



Washington Evaluators Board Meeting 6/16/2021 – MINUTES

In attendance:

Patricia Moore Shaffer, Past President
Melissa Chiu, Secretary
Natalie Donohue, Membership Chair
Esther Nolton, Program Chair
Courtney Carr, Communications Coordinator and Acting Communications Chair
Fanni Farago, Scholarship co-coordinator
Maryfrances Porter- co-coordinator for Mentor Minutes, lives in Charlottesville
Betsy Kaeberle- new coordinator for Mentor Minutes, GWU student, Program design and M&E
Val Caracelli, New Professional and Student Coordinator

Not in attendance:

Katherine Braga, Communications Chair – On Leave
Beeta Tahmassebi, President
Emily Bango, President-Elect
Jessica Pomerantz, Treasurer
Kantahyanee Murray, Community Engagement Chair
Eric Keys, Scholarship co-coordinator
Kelly Feltault, Program 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:

Brandi Murley – EnCompass, new member, wants to move to Monitoring and Evaluation
Jacqueline Singh- member living in the Midwest

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

2. Governance:

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

Melissa motioned to approve the minutes from May. Patricia seconded. **VOTE: approved, no nays.**

- **Review of monthly financials (Treasurer)**

Jessica not available.

3. Update on Strategic Planning

We got input from member meetings. Have a first draft. Board to submit comments on the Google doc, or, if that doesn't work, to Patricia by June 23rd. Send to pastpresident@washingtonevaluators.org.

Three Strategic goals, with objectives, and a cross-cutting objective. Two questions raised by Kantahyanee and Esther.

Goal 1 – many of the bullets are more tactical than strategic. Should we move to another plan?

We have traditionally created a separate Action Plan. Usually in the first couple months of the year. This year, we did the strategic plan, but we can do a more cursory version this year. Move to another document; we don't want to lose these ideas.

Use of the word diversity. Melissa wrote a definition in the cross-cutting objective- what do people think?

Many organizations have a glossary of terms for these things. Maybe it shouldn't live inside any of the goals but outside of it. Have definitions for diversity and equity. Don't want people to wait until the cross-cutting objective to see the definition. Others agreed that a glossary would be useful and to put it up front.

Also, "in all the ways individuals can be unique" can be added in order not exclude anyone by characteristics. Do we want to align with AEA's definition? They have something online (that Melissa referred to) but it is just a placeholder, and the group just formed so the fuller definition will not come for a while. **What was the Paragon definition?** Patricia will double check it and put it up front.

We also need the Board to approve it. Then will want to do a small communications campaign around this document when we release it.

4. Committee Updates:

- **Programming**

Advancing racial equity- lots of great speakers

EWB launch

July Board meeting

Evaluation in the service of racial equity

Esther is stepping up to be President-Elect; will need a new Program Chair.

Val and Esther have been talking about absorbing the DC SCEP conference- one day put on by students for new and emerging evaluators. It's an opportunity to practice presenting and network.

Valerie was our liaison for that. Esther was on the organizing committee before. There weren't a lot of students to pass it on to, and it stopped. Most of the costs before were about space and food. If it's virtual, then would not incur those costs. We had a career event and there were people who got jobs from it. It would be an administrative burden, but would also be exciting. This would be for around April 2022. Faculty have told us this is the best time, being mindful of finals, and helps the students while job hunting to have it on their CVs.

WE has grown into the world of supporting students more. This seems like a natural progression.

There's a lot missing by not doing it. By 2022 it might be able to be in person. We should follow the lead of universities – if they are in person then no reason not to be in person. This would increase costs, though. Not sure how many programs are able to invest in something like this now, as many higher education institutions are lacking funds.

Also, in 1998 we had a professional one-day conference at GWU. We could begin a conversation about that. It had seasoned evaluators, keynote speakers (reimbursed for expenses); Members would pay to attend.

Esther is ready to write an email to faculty to ask if they are ok if WE absorbs this conference. If they are on board, then ask what would it look like, budget, etc.

Should we only commit to 2022 only for now? We don't know what future Boards' bandwidth will be.

To help with bandwidth, could we do this joint with EERS and bring in students from other universities in the region? Something to explore. In the past, EERS did one big conference a year, and didn't share the limelight. On the other hand, recently EERS has been doing strategic thinking, asking questions like, should we be only a conference once a year?

The conference is missed and is a lost opportunity.

DC consortium of colleges and universities. Have a contact list from past conferences. Started by George Mason, GWU, and Kathy Newcomer, Rodney Thompson, Veronica Thomas. Many universities had students attend even if they didn't organize: UMd, AMU, Georgetown, etc.

Could be mutually beneficial ways to co-organize some of it with university ambassadors, and perhaps as that relationship develops between WE and the universities, there could be a student committee that helps support some of the planning <https://www.consortium.org/>.

The board felt it was ok for Esther to reach out to faculty to begin the conversation.

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

Fanni: EWB—5 nonprofit partners signed up, but 3 don't appear to meet the nonprofit definition. Mindelyn will reach out to partners from previous rounds to see if they are interested again. Will drum up more interest. Reached out to volunteers to record their videos to assist in matching. Katie and Mindelyn will match by June 19.

New Professional scholarship: 2 new winners, Blake Vullo and Nicole Germano. Nicole Germano and Blake will show up in the Fall to share their experiences with attending Michael Quinn Patton's evaluation course. Many thanks to the application reviewers.

Nicole is an M&E specialist, 3 years of experience. Background in M&E for communications sector. Took a 6-week backpacking trip that turned into 3 years and this inspired her to change fields.

Blake is a graduate teaching assistant and GRA in Sociology; has a bachelor's in Sociology, and MS in Applied Sociology. Worked in nonprofit organizations in Mississippi, Louisiana, Maryland. Interested in Forestry, urban forestry and food insecurity.

Maryfrances: Mentor Minutes – spent time aligning people.

Betsy—21 mentees, 8 matches with a few who have carried over. Backlog. There are 17 mentors who are active. Some people may be matched more than once in a year. Matching a lot of people right now. Some 7-8 mentees have specific requests that we don't have mentors for, e.g., environmental or corporate social responsibility and accountability frameworks. (Suggest Katherine Dawes?) How to recruit mentors for those 7 people? Put a call out in the Weekly Digest?

Can we revisit eligibility? It's really career consultation, not mentoring. Maybe it's about how we market it (as mentoring). We only ask for 2 sessions minimum, and it's career consultation. Market so it's not so intimidating to mentors.

Does every volunteer have to be a member? Can we revisit eligibility to be a mentor since this is perennial problem? Also there were comments from the member meetings to have more diverse mentors, and we already have problems with getting enough mentors in the first place. On the other hand, there is the liability issue of having non-members be mentors; we don't want to have an EEO suit, for example. Could we revisit, make a decision and then write a statement on it so that we don't have to keep having this conversation?

Can we go to AEA TIG who's relevant? But that person may not be a WE member.

Some mentees are not looking for the same length of mentorship. What's the end state of the mentorship?

There are two meetings stated in the literature, and many seem to meet once (and others for more than two meetings.) From the website: *Mentorship opportunities are short-term and flexible. We ask for a commitment of a minimum of two meetings focused on discussing topics related to the mentee's interests.*

There are different expectations and needs. We may need to clarify the mentorship program and also shorter-term mentoring, like professional consultation. There are people are interested in longer-term mentoring. Some have turned into a collaborative relationship that was mutually beneficial.

It seems there is more to unpack than just eligibility. ***We will add this to the agenda for the next meeting.**

To proceed for now, continue with current structure.

- **Communications**

Appreciate sending the jobs, but hasn't been receiving a lot of events. Katherine's guidance is events should be evaluation related. Board, please forward more events, communications@washingtonevaluators.org.

Looking for alternatives to Hoot Suite. Our social media presence has gone down. Will have alternatives by next meeting. **Can do vote by email.**

Fanni sent the info on the scholarship awardees for this week's Digest.

- **Membership**

20 organizational sponsors, added MAEC Inc. (Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC)). They have 78 members, 22 slots unfilled. We had the Idea that we could ask org's to donate a slot to a student.

512 members total, 55 of them are students.

Did a sweep of DMV area universities, majors and professors, to try to get additional departments.

One organization hasn't made their ACH payment- is that **Natalie or Jessica's role to follow up on?** She'll talk with Jessica, and also with Wild Apricot about getting all the countries into their payment system.

Natalie tested if you sign up but don't make the payment. Those people still get the emails. After deleting or moving to contacts, she's still getting the emails. In other words, these unpaid "members" are getting everything, including the Digest. She did not test trying to register for a members-only event.

Of 512, maybe less than 10 were pending for a long time. Wild Apricot's service department is slow but good. ***Natalie will ask if we can distinguish these two statuses in our email distribution.**

Courtney checked who is on the recipient list for the Digest – It goes to all members (no distinction).

5. Board Action Items (if any)

July Board Meeting- only for the voting Board members, will be a working meeting on the Strategic Plan.

7:59 PM ADJOURN