

Approved by (10 attendees): KA, IW
Reviewed by (Admin): JG

Northwest Editors Guild

Minutes for Board Meeting on October 11, 2021 - Draft for Review

Location

Online (Zoom)

The meeting was recorded and the recording is available on the Guild Drive.

Attendees

- Board Members (10): Kris Ashley, Alison Cantrell, MariLou Harveland, Erica Akiko Howard, Sarah Peterson, Alicia Ramos, Laura Shaw, Jesi Vega, Ivonne Ward, Laura Whittemore
- Quorum? Yes (5 required)
- Admin: Jen Grogan
- Absent (0): none
- Guests: Megan Christy, Kyra Freestar

6:30 p.m. - Preliminaries

- Jesi called the meeting to order and led the group in an introductory check-in activity.
- Our two guests were introduced. The October meeting was an open Board meeting to allow interested Guild members to join, observe, and learn more about Board service. Megan Christy joined the meeting as a Guild member considering Board service and Kyra Freestar joined to participate in an update on the Board's DEI activities.
- The **Consent Agenda** was approved unanimously at 6:48 p.m. by a show of hands.
- Sarah, as Board Secretary, asked the group to make sure that meeting discussion always happened verbally, and never only through comments in the chat box, because she uses the video/audio recording as an important record for drafting the minutes.

Documenting Decisions Over Email

- After the August Board meeting, Brendan McLaughlin resigned his Board service, including his position as chair of the Communications committee. Alicia has stepped forward to manage Communications activities in cooperation with other Communications committee members and volunteers for the remainder of 2021.

6:50 p.m. - Prior Action Items

Guild and Board Policy Updates - Jesi, President

Jesi led a quick review of policy updates whose latest drafts had been reviewed by all present over email, prior to tonight's meeting.

Eds Guild Program Requirements

Jesi asked for a yes/no vote to approve the Program Requirements. She noted that all changes added or requested in the document during its most recent review had been implemented; none were difficult or controversial.

DECISION: Board members voted to approve the Program Requirements document. It will become part of Board policy for managing programs that take place under the NW Eds Guild.

Board Member Fitness and Client Complaints Policies

Jesi asked for a yes/no vote to approve the new policies that had been drafted on Board member fitness and how the Board will handle client complaints.

DECISION: Board members voted to approve the Board member fitness policy and the client complaints policy. These will be updated in the Board handbook.

6:55 p.m. Current Action Items and Discussions

Member Survey Highlights - Kris, VP of Member Services

Kris presented an overview of results from the fall 2021 member survey, designed and administered by the Programming Committee, with the following highlights:

- About 200 people responded, which is approximately 50% of our membership, a good turnout for the survey
- In response to new pandemic-specific questions, most respondents reported that business was going well or mostly well, despite the pandemic and its associated disruptions
- Members are located about 50% in Seattle and 50% anywhere and everywhere else. The variety of text responses to this question were delightful.
 - With a substantial percentage of our membership outside of Seattle, it increases the importance of outreach and responsiveness to non-Seattle audiences.
- Many respondents had never been to a member meeting. They reported time conflicts and Zoom fatigue as primary reasons, and a surprising number didn't seem to know what member meetings were.
 - We do not always use the nomenclature of "Member Meetings" consistently in publicity, so it's possible people are hearing about events or even participating in them without understanding that those are member meetings.
 - There were few specific requests regarding the method of delivery of virtual member meetings. A small number of respondents indicated interest in captions or transcripts.
- In a question designed to compare involvement in Guild activities before and since the pandemic, the largest response in all areas was "about the same," indicating that members don't feel their patterns of engagement have changed much because of the pandemic.
- Especially in the text responses, survey answers were confusing and wide-ranging (such as members being "not sure" if they had ever attended a Red Pencil Conference).

- The group discussed how to respond to the survey.
 - We should be aware of a tendency to be over-responsive to individual text answers that feel surprising or alarming but do not represent the majority of survey feedback. They just have very high visibility to us, because we are reading them as written responses.
 - It's clear that this survey represents a moment during the pandemic, but it will be interesting to learn whether this is the moment everything changed, and the survey is the first report from a new world, or whether it represents the interlude where "everything fell apart" briefly and returned to former activities and ways of engagement. Likely, we can only know in the future, and not right now, which reality the survey represents.
 - In the design of the Eds Guild Board, the member survey is intended to inform strategic planning activities. Since we are engaging in strategic plan revisions right now, Board members are recommended to see how member feedback in the survey might inform their strategic plan ideas.

Kris shared a link to the complete survey answers with the Board.

DEI Update - Jesi, President

Jesi gave a DEI update. Jesi was reminded, in a conversation with Kyra Freestar, that the Board hasn't communicated any progress or ideas about DEI to the membership since last year, even as the Board has worked on it in some areas. Discussion raised the following points.

- The Board had started with an idea on presenting a DEI training for members. Where did we leave that?
- At the end of 2020, the Board held a training for Board members delivered by the HeARTwork Collective, as a first step in exploring training opportunities. We decided that, before offering more trainings by external trainers to either the Board or the membership at large, that we wanted to do internal caucusing and building affinity groups and agendas within the membership first. This direction was the impetus for Jesi to start the Editors of Color coffee hour, which held its first meeting in September of 2021 and has met monthly since then. They also have a Slack channel and job board.
- In the most recent meeting of the Editors of Color coffee hour, the group talked about its purpose and goals for the future.
 - Members identified the Editors of Color coffee hour as a space for coming together and mutual support as editors of color. The group has members from the Northwest, but also nationwide and Barbados. The group makes a space for people who are already editors (as opposed to recruiting people who are not yet editors) and provides mutual support/community alongside the white-dominated mainstream of the editing field.
 - When asked explicitly if the group wanted to see its gathering/community building work become a springboard for diversifying the Eds Guild or the field of editing, the answer was no.

- Even if the group doesn't bring more members into the Guild, or bring more people of color into the editing field, it still provides benefit to our membership. Guild membership numbers or the count of editors of color among our members are not the only metric of success on this issue.
- It does take energy to run this group, and Jesi will be seeking assistance with its ongoing promotion and facilitation. She will bring these needs to strategic planning under the DEI focus area.
- Guild DEI efforts should have two prongs: (1) to build up and create safe space for editors of color, who are underrepresented in our field and our organization, and (2) to educate white editors in the mainstream, who form the majority of the Guild membership and the dominant population of our industry, about how to be non-harming, antiracist participants in a community that welcomes and supports editors of color.
 - The Editors of Color coffee hour and associated activities feel like a solid foundation for Guild efforts to support editors of color.
 - Work and further opportunities are still needed on the second prong of the DEI strategy that educates white editors and helps them build and participate in a more antiracist editing community.
- Other constituency groups could benefit from internal support within the Editors Guild community as well. People mentioned an editors with disabilities coffee hour as an example. An appealing ongoing effort is for the Board and others to keep thinking about how we can foster those relational connections and opportunities for support sustainably within our organization.
- In terms of the Board's timeline of activities on DEI, having in 2021 built a better foundation for support of editors of color, it feels like a better time to return to the question of how to bring this work to our wider membership, and the possibility of involving an external consultant.

7:45 to 7:50 - break

Strategic Plan Overhaul - Sarah, Secretary

Sarah introduced the strategic plan revisions process with the following focus areas and assigned committee representatives to take notes and write up revisions:

- Marketing and Communications focus area - Alicia R.
- Outreach focus area - Laura W.
- Programming focus area (previously Career Development & Resources) - Kris A.
- Culture and Diversity/DEI focus area - Laura S.

Sarah provided a Google doc to work from for each focus area that included links to past focus areas for reference and a new and simplified format, compared to past plan documents. The sections in the simplified format are goals and tactics, with the following definitions:

- Goals - general directions, aspirations, dreams, what we want to go toward
- Tactics - measurable actions we might take to get there

A change from past plan documents is combining two focus areas, Outreach and Fostering Community, under Outreach. A second change is assigning the Executive Committee to have responsibility for the DEI focus area. (Other focus areas had obvious connections/ownership to existing committees, but the DEI focus area did not have an obvious owner and the Executive Committee did not have responsibility for another focus area, so this assignment was made.)

Sarah and others provided the following directions for committee work on the strategic plan:

- Our work now, and recording our thinking and ideas now, can provide a valuable foundation for next year's Board work.
- If you are rotating off of Board membership, think of your strategic planning work as leaving a legacy out of your wisdom and experience for future members.
- The pandemic has been very taxing for our membership and for us as the Board. Engagement and energy are low for all of us. It's okay to focus on the most pared back and basic version of your committee's goals and activities, and to focus on maintenance and foundation building, instead of huge aspirations or plans.

Board members offered the following next steps and broader thoughts about the strategic plan process:

- Because good strategic planning does require synergy between focus areas and committees, the strategic plan documents will be due before the next board meeting to allow other Board members to read and discuss across committees and focus areas. Sarah will notify Board members about the schedule for these activities via email.
- If we can develop a positive relationship with our section of the strategic plan, it will make next year go better. The plan can also be a tool to increase continuity from year to year, something the Board has lacked, which has sometimes created confusion and lack of direction.
- Even though it is a separate focus area, the DEI focus area should really influence other areas strongly. Recall that all of us, in all committees, have antiracism and diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Guild as a goal, and that our particular committee-based activities should reflect that. As we develop tactics across strategic plan areas, we should keep in mind how DEI influences and works with other program areas and vice versa.

The group spent time in breakout rooms to begin the discussion on strategic plan revisions for their focus area for 2022.

10 minutes of committee/focus area work in breakout rooms

In the December meeting, there will be agenda time to conclude our discussion of the strategic plan and ready it for use by the new incoming Board, beginning in January 2022.

Other Agenda Items

- None.

Closing Items and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Items identified for continued discussion among the Board are:

- Strategic plan focus areas, by committees and points of contact as assigned.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 13, 2021, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.