



Washington Evaluators Board Meeting 6/17/2020 – MINUTES

In attendance:

Patricia Moore Shaffer, President
Beeta Tahmassebi, President-Elect
Melissa Chiu, Secretary
Josh Joseph, Treasurer
Natalie Donohue, Membership Chair
Katie Pitts, Program Chair
Katherine Braga Communications Chair
Emily Bango, Community Engagement Chair
Bryce Leary, Mentor Minutes
Sue Cottrell, New Professional Scholarship Coordinator
Giovanni Dazzo, Past President

Guests:

Esther Nolton

Not in attendance:

Mindelyn Anderson, Special Initiatives Coordinator
Erin Murrock, Deputy Program Chair
Laura O'Brien, Evaluation Without Borders Coordinator
Charles Gilman, Deputy Membership Chair
Val Caracelli, New Professional and Student Coordinator

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Agenda Review

2. Approval of [May 20, 2020 meeting minutes](#)

Melissa motion to approve minutes. Beeta: Seconded. VOTE: Approved, no nays.

3. [Treasurer's Report](#)

Quiet month: \$500 revenue. Last year had a similar dip in May from memberships. Every month, except this month, we've been on par or ahead of last year's numbers. Assets: \$22,000. We haven't been spending money on anything. All of it is going into assets.

4. New Business: WE Commitments to Antiracism

WE started an ad hoc working group focused on racism. With the protests that erupted, a small group of us discussed the role of Washington evaluators. WE wants to produce a public statement on what we plan to do as an organization moving forward, to bolster the public statement. They met as a working group, issued an initial statement of solidarity and a statement of actions to bring the statement of solidarity into an action-oriented state. This effort is to make sure we have enough action-oriented statements that give us flexibility to implement these principles now and ongoing into the future. Evaluation is not exempt from biases if we are not vigilant about our work. It is an ongoing process, not just stating that we are anti-racist. We will progressively learn more about our own biases as we implement the actions into our work. Learn, listen, grow, share, and be accountable.

Statement:

As a board, we understand that evaluation training and privilege are not exempt from systemic oppression, that oppression pervades our environments, hides beneath data, and emerges in biases if we are not vigilant in our work. We are committed to upholding the principles of antiracism, diversity, inclusion, representation and equity in our programs, marketing, events, membership efforts, and community engagement.

Commitments - 2020 and beyond:

- **LEARN:** We will do the work - on an individual and organizational level - to embody antiracism practices in our personal and professional lives.
- **LISTEN:** We listen to our BIPOC community members to better understand their perspectives, ideas, and lived experiences related to evaluation and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **GROW:** We will make positive contributions to the evaluation community as a whole to move towards antiracism in community-accepted policies, principles, and practices.
- **SHARE:** We will amplify antiracist practices in evaluation through our website, social media, AEA network and professional development opportunities.

BE ACCOUNTABLE: We will put words into action, by establishing metrics to measure our progress and intentionally and publicly integrating these best practices into our programming, mission and vision.

Note: BIPOC= Black Indigenous Persons of Color. Spell out in final version.

WE may hire a consultant as we develop our strategic plan. The WG are not experts in this area, so Board wants to discuss the statement and action commitments.

DISCUSSION:

Terminology: anti-racist vs. multicultural and inclusive?

Yes, scholarships: Reached out to community college and historically black colleges. Did we go far enough? Maybe it wasn't antiracist, but it would be more inclusive if we had gone farther. We can think about how we move ahead. Maybe a consultant can help us make sure we're effectively doing outreach for upcoming programs. We can acknowledge that we did our best with the resources and tools that we

had at the time. We can spend time figuring out how to increase the diversity and equity in our community and the voices.

Others felt strongly we must adopt the antiracism terminology to have increased diversity and inclusion. Right now there is also a sense that talking about diversity and inclusion is a bit too timid and that we should be firmly "anti-racist" which feels like a stronger stance. The stronger stance and terminology is appropriate in this moment. It feels like we're being called to take a strong stance.

Further, 'antiracism' is about dismantling systemic issues. How do we challenge that system as an organization, not just that we want to do well, but that we are opposing these systems? There's no middle ground. "Defund the police": those who understand it know it doesn't mean to remove all funding of police. Agree that we should be firm with our language. One person suggested changing the frequency in how much it is used throughout and instead pepper in some other ways of describing what we were really getting at. Would be wonderful to include language on systemic issues.

WE could be a repository for statements like this. Glad you've taken this on. Love this statement, especially, the ability to connect to our role as evaluators. It hasn't necessarily overflowed from personal into the professional realm. It connects to everything in our communities, and using metrics. It's what we do and we're doing it here as well.

As a local affiliate of AEA, can we do what we want or is there an obligation on our part to tell them what we're doing? We are an independent non-profit with no formal oversight from AEA. WE establish our own policies and procedures, statements. The AEA Topical Interest Groups (TIGs) have more oversight. We've looked at other affiliates. Milwaukee has been interested. Looked at AEA. It will be a public-facing statement and it will guide our work.

Are people in general comfortable with this statement, even if we have a few edits to make?

Do we have the capacity to do this?

It will depend on what those initial actions will be. Will depend on us putting it in motion and accountability on the back end for us as a board.

We do have a statement of solidarity that is already public. This is the statement of action plan. Would like to post this prior to the next board meeting, maybe a virtual approval process. Provide feedback and vote on next iteration. We are not meeting in July and we want to get this out with some speed. Important to act promptly on this. Silence is violence. It doesn't reflect well on us.

Agree it's better to get it out promptly, but worry if it will be viewed as us doing the document rather than doing the doing. Decided to do by end of the month to get more voices from the Board and committee members and provide other opportunities. (Not everyone is in attendance today.)

Action steps: The statement is one thing. WG talked about what actions we can take as an organization. Won't go into now. Putting together a task force on this issue. Reach out to Patricia, Emily, Giovanni, Esther has expressed interest too. Talk about the connection between the work of that group and the strategic planning.

How do we want to do this in practice? Plan for next 5 years of strategic planning. Think about timelines and budget for how we'd like it to look.

Resources- maybe have a page on our websites specific to evaluation and building awareness, building antiracist practices into our practices. How would we want our outreach to work. How can it be informed by a consultant's perspective.

Next Steps:

Patricia will convert to a Google Doc, send link to Board to provide feedback or comments by end of the month. Then back to the workgroup for adjudication of comments, then a virtual vote. Then we will determine actions and links to strategic planning.

5. 2020 Mid-Year [Action Plan](#) Update and Review

We should be happy with what we have accomplished, given the pandemic. Celebrate what we have accomplished.

1.1.1 Launch next generation evaluators, and 1.1.4- new Professional Scholarships. Congratulations to Sue for completing this action item, and ahead of schedule.

1.1.3 Meet with University Ambassadors – for August. Talk with Emily on how we are going to engage that community.

1.2 Promote the field of evaluation nationally – most in the Fall, such as Beeta and Comms and EWB for AEA 365 (blog) week.

1.3 Provide expertise to other professional evaluation development and advocacy organizations – Beeta has a monthly phone call with other local affiliates (LA), has a range of topics. It's an open space for different discussions and how LAs have been responding to what's going on socially, e.g., insurance. We ask for advice and vice versa, and WE is often leading the pack. They're often asking us for ideas too. Asking about relationships to AEA and with each other, e.g., the AEA conference. Beeta follows up with Patricia or relevant person afterwards.

1.4 Recruiting, membership -- We asked Zachary (AEA) for information last year on AEA members in the DMV. We're holding steady on membership numbers. However, IREX fell off of organizational sponsor list, now at 10. Some of the organizational sponsors didn't have 5 people on their roster. She did outreach to member societies. Charlie and Natalie have done some, but nothing yet. Some of them have

paid positions open and it's surprising we haven't heard from them. We scheduled a lot of the events but now mostly on hold.

1.4.4 Membership survey-- planning to add demographic information on the membership survey to look at equity issues.

1.5 Communicate benefits of membership. -- Weekly digest is great. Other deadlines- updating membership webpages, we are in shape for those.

2.1 Convene at least 5 deep dive events-- We've done it already. Congratulations! WE has increased membership because of the deep dives, and the approach to put things virtually has enriched their membership, e.g., have someone from Indiana. Keep in mind non-local members. Virtual events are important.

2.3 Strategic partnerships—Beeta, WE held a great event in March, we were a co-sponsor, thanks to Evaluators Institute for hosting that event.

3.1 Professional skills events – used to have field trips, EWB, etc. We held one in-person event. IBM committed to hosting us quarterly. Field trips we had to put aside. EWB is ongoing—thanks to Laura for a difficult recruiting season because of the pandemic.

3.2 Personalized development -- Mentor minutes has had 10 pairings so far. Will look for information on how they are going, pain points, how to improve, and promote it along with other WE programs. It's a great way to recruit, especially emerging evaluators.

4.1 Financial sustainability - Josh has exceeded the quarterly reports Action. We get monthly reports from Josh.

4.2 Recruit and retain volunteers for WE leadership —This year created Deputy Committee Chair positions. The only one missed is the Deputy Communications Committee Chair, but for context, WE didn't even have a Communications Chair last year.

4.3 Effective operations: Patricia has been providing Board meeting agendas at least 5 days ahead and will try to get it one week ahead.

Not on Action Plan, but a reminder:

SOPs for all key board positions-- provide updates at end of the year.

Does Emily need one for community engagement or one for each of the three programs? This is a new committee, so we don't have an SOP. Think about it, e.g., timeline for the committee. Many things are happening and they are date-sensitive- you may want to build in at the Committee level.

I think it's helpful to think about what you would want to put in writing to help the next group that steps into this role. Last year I found that creating an SOP for the treasurer role as I was doing things was really helpful so it wasn't all left for the end.

6. Other Committee Updates

a. Programs: If you have ideas, let Katie know.

Beeta reached out to organizations slated to participate in career fair in march. A few have said they are not hiring. So, not yet getting a feeling of critical mass. Should get a small group to discuss what this could look like. Questions about if we do online, could we open to more than just GW students.

b. Community Engagement: EWB has had a few hiccups and Patricia to discuss. Differences in expectation in the evaluation organizations and lack of response. Want to make sure we can continue with this first round this year.

Statement of solidarity, and WG has taken a bigger role last month. Thanks for Beeta, Giovanni, Katherine, Patricia on that document. Thanks for the input – questions and clarifications, openness of everyone. Please give more feedback.

c. Membership – see Action plan updates above, especially Objective 1.4.

d. Communications- no major updates. Member spotlight to be published shortly. What spotlight to put out next? How to complement the statements we're putting out? Have a list from Natalie from January. We might want to change our selection process lately. Thanks for sending fresh reads and jobs, appreciate it. Thanks to you all for sourcing so much of our digest content. Member spotlights could also be something to flag for the task force. Look for those touchpoints with the statement.

e. Other

As an idea to consider...there is a big launch right now for #eval4action campaign that anyone can join and participate in. Perhaps something for WE to consider supporting. It is a global initiative but could be of interest <https://www.eval4action.org/about>

EERS is considering moving to virtual for 2021.

Just in case there are any of you or folks in your teams who are interested in the TEI courses that are coming in July - the courses are filling up fast so you may wish to reserve your spots. WE members do get 20% off but you need to contact the team for the special code.

7. Adjournment 7:43 p.m.

Reminder: No Board meeting in July.