

VAFF DEI Committee Meeting

Date/Time: Wednesday, August 4, 11:00 AM ET

Present:

Committee Ex-officio and VAFF Advisory Board Member: Beverly Colwell Adams, PhD

Committee Members: Olivia Branch; Andrea Copeland; Daniel Fairley, II; Marc Paulo Guzman; Gary Nimax;
Jung-Bum Shin

VAFF Staff: Erica Barnes, Ty Cooper, Rob Dunnenberger, Chandler Ferrebee, John Kelly, Jody Kielbasa,
Jenny Mays, Lizzy Ramey

Minutes

I. Welcome Jody Kielbasa + Beverly Colwell Adams

a. Jody updates:

- Delta variant - everything we do will be guided by state and University Policy - UVA is currently opening back up. We could have a policy of everyone in masks, and may involve social distancing. Our intention is to be back in person fully and to do our very best to respond accordingly. We're looking at all the options and how we can present safely for our community and are looking at adding Drive-in movies.
- Gary asked if there will be a limited number of films - Jody stated that we do not know about what distributors will do - there is a commitment to live exhibition, but if there is a COVID resurgence, that could lead many to go straight to streaming or for films to sit on the shelf. A lot of key festivals are coming up - Toronto and Telluride will help dictate what we are able to do.
- Our first commitment is to keep our team together and to present something to the community and to present the very best Festival we can.
- Thank you to all of you for the work to be more inclusive and for your time and expertise.

b. Beverly: Image of "One of you I like, but I'm not allowed to say which one!"



Oftentimes we are at the table, but we are uncomfortable.

Look at subtle messages - look at differences and similarities. When you see this image, what do you see?

Gary: you might think there's more alignment between those that look and dress similarly

Jung-Bum: It's not enough to be at the same table, and not enough to put together a diverse group, but it's what we do that really matters.

Beverly: Your ideas and thoughts matter

Daniel: Having different people's experiences added to the table to relate to is important

Marc Paulo: Variability of Equity vs Equality vs Justice. There is much work to be done even if there's diversity at the table.

- II. Open Discussion on proposed priorities and actions for 2021 - This is a list of priorities and actions that we have been exploring internally. This is not a definitive list, but a starting point and we welcome your input on priorities that we could be making this year.
- FOCUS ON OUTREACH TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITH INCOME BETWEEN \$40,000-\$120,000
 - Chandler: From our annual survey, we can see that we are reaching those over \$120,000 income well.
 - Erica: We also see that our biggest gap of our audience compared to Charlottesville and Albemarle's demographics is with Black and African American community.
 - Chandler: This also hits home the perception of exclusivity and accessibility, so we want to highlight our affordable ticket prices in marketing and print materials.
 - Andrea: I'm happy to share information with the Chamber of Commerce Minority Business Alliance as well as within the Sistah Circle, a network of local Black women.
 - UVA BIPOC AND UNDERREPRESENTED STAFF, STUDENTS, and PARTNER PROGRAMS
 - Jenny: Historically, we've worked with student groups/departments and partner programs, but we need help to reach out to staff and faculty. Beverly and Gary previously offered to help with identifying ways to get the word out and I will follow-up with you.
 - Beverly and Gary: both happy to help
 - Marc Paulo: there are UVA related ERGs and specific departments/units
 - LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 - Chandler: We plan to add a Land Acknowledgement to all Festival screenings.
 - Jung-Bum: asked what a Land Acknowledgement is
 - Beverly stated is an acknowledgement that we are on the land owned by Indigenous Communities
 - Marc Paulo stated that clarity is needed - sharing specific films, and directing audience to get more information and Indigenous Resources and support
 - BA: One thing I really like is having a talk back after the film. To hear different aspects of the film discussed. I listen and learn.
 - CONNECTING WITH CHURCHES
 - Olivia: there are church group organizations such as the African Americans Pastors Council, and diversity group at UVA Carolyn Dillard. All churches have a bulletin and video announcements. Within appropriateness of highlighting - low cost or programming. For capturing them the first time, let's make it captivating - i.e. highlight a film that you know would resonate with dra community. I will happily do an email introduction with Carolyn (also a pastor/UVA DEI)
 - Marc Paulo shared: <https://aimcville.org/current-congregations/> maybe an opportunity to connect with the Interfaith Group if they have an easy way to connect with all their congregations
 - John: there are ways that we can work to eliminate roadblocks such as organizing buses for transportation
 - YOUTH ENTHUSIASTS

- Chandler: To connect with youth enthusiasts, we plan to work with educators to offer Programmer talks at area HS film clubs and classrooms.
- Jung-Bum stated reaching out to churches might be more difficult. Some churches are very conservative.
- Chandler: For churches, we would be looking to group to help build connections.
- Daniel asked, have we reached out to the Boys and Girls Clubs to reach youth and potentially have some busses that they can take to the film festival?
- Marc Paulo: I think outreach to historically Hispanic/Latinx communities - like schools that have lots of children from the Southwood community - would be great! There is also a Boys and Girls Club in Southwood that would be a great connection to the Latinx community
- Daniel shared contact info for Dylan Cope, Unit Director for BGC Southwood
- OUTREACH TO LATINX COMMUNITY
 - Chandler: To connect with Latinx and Spanish speaking communities, we hope to add bilingual flyers and program Spanish Language films with more traditional narrative
 - Andrea: Alex Urpi works with Forward Adelante and has strong ties to the Latino community. He is a chamber member and I work closely with him with the Minority Business Council. I'm sure he'd be happy to disseminate information to this community.
- IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS
 - Erica: To improve accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing community, we plan to add ASL interpreters and open captions at our major events, and improve accommodations request process.
- ANNUAL OUTREACH/PREVIEW RECEPTION
 - Erica: Each year, we have hosted an Outreach/Preview Event in October with the goal of welcoming and introducing BIPOC individuals to the Festival. Is this something we should move forward with this year?
 - Beverly: responding to what Jody had mentioned before about virus - are your friends/groups ready to go out to the festival again? Every day I hear something that is unsettling - a friend who is vaccinated and got COVID. I have not been to the movies. Reluctance with your groups?
 - Marc Paulo: there is a shift toward movie theaters. I'd rather get on my HBO Max. Proposal of Movie Packages (popcorn, candy, drinks) with zoom watching. Work with a local vineyard (maybe minority owned, etc) to send people (or local pickup) small samples for wine tasting and snacks - instead of having an in person reception.
 - Ty: as a promoter, I have events coming up that I'm promoting. One thing I do have is asking people to wear their face masks.
 - Jung-Bum: There's no way to know with COVID. At this point - it might peak, but things might relax. There's a Gamma Variant as well. General decision that Festival organizers need to make is being super safe or being a little more venturesome. I think we can be a little more venturing out, personal opinion.
 - Beverly: The reception is a little different

- Olivia: One thing we need to keep in mind is that we're asking a population that has been most vulnerable, to come out. Seniors. We're asking them to take great precautions. If outdoors, it would be easier for people.
- Ty: My question is at what point will we let people decide or are we limiting the number of people who can attend. We went through the first level of covid. We should allow people to choose to come or they can stay home.
- Gary: OLLI and LGBT Committee has upcoming events - people are currently asking whether we're still having it, or if there are options to hold something outside. For our events, we're looking at contracts and cancellation policies.
- Jenny: We canceled our stakeholders event, and now we're planning a Launch Party and Outreach Reception. Does it make sense to pause?
- Jung-Bum: as a DEI Committee, our focus should be thinking about how the virus affects the population we are trying to reach. How can we prevent certain disadvantages?
- Jody: My goal is to be as accessible as possible
- Gary: Event with children are of greatest concern
- Jody: Other than the HS Screening, we're not presenting youth programs like Family Day or Young Filmmakers Academy.
- Andrea shared in the chat: We're having these same discussions at the Chamber. A big part of what we do is convening our members. Hundreds of them... in one space. We had an event at The Clifton last month and got slammed for convening so many people. We did everything we were supposed to keep folks safe but the appearance of all those folks in one space was unsettling for some to see and we got some backlash. Now with the variant out there, we're discussing whether to move our already scheduled in-person meetings back online.
- SURVEY AND HIRING CONSULTANTS
 - Jenny: To more accurately understand who our audience is, who we are not reaching, and what the perception of the Festival is, we plan to work with a consultant to help survey our audience and community. We've met with two consultants introduced through the CNE: Trina Willard and Mary Francis Porter about how we can improve our surveys, how to use the information collectively. Some suggestions have included offseason focus groups to learn about barriers to entry and blind spots. We are awaiting bids and budget to determine what we should do now and what can wait.
 - Ty: Always for surveying and connecting to our target audience. We can start with people who have attended the reception in the past.
 - Marc Paulo: I agree, there needs to be a strategy on reaching out to have the right people to be involved
 - Beverly: I too like the survey
 - Jung-Bum: When would the survey take place?
 - Jenny: in 2021 evaluate and update our current audience survey, then in 2022 explore more of the focus groups and targeting specific groups for feedback
 - Daniel: I agree with the survey

III. Adjourn - VAFF staff will follow up individually with DEI Committee members