



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

APA BOARD JANUARY RETREAT NOTES

APA California Board Retreat
 Virtual Retreat Via Zoom
 Saturday, January 23, 2021

ATTENDEES:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
 Past President
 VP, Administration
 VP, Conferences
 VP, Diversity and Equity
 VP, Marketing and Membership
 VP, Policy and Legislation
 VP, Professional Development
 VP, Public Information
 California Planning Foundation President
 Commission and Board Representative
 Student Representative

Ashley Atkinson, AICP
 Julia Lave Johnston
 Derek Wong, AICP
 Bob Lagomarsino, AICP
 Miroo Desai, AICP
 Marc Yeber, ASLA
 Eric Phillips
 Stephanie Roxas, AICP
 Ellie Fiori, AICP
 Hing Wong, AICP
 Stefan Chraghchian
 Elizabeth Owen

SECTION DIRECTORS

Central
 Central Coast
 Inland Empire Section Director Elect
 Los Angeles
 Northern
 Orange Section
 Sacramento Valley
 San Diego

Jennifer Clark, AICP
 Rachel Raynor, AICP
 Christine Saunders
 Tony Mendoza
 Florentina Craciun, AICP
 Amy Vazquez
 Tracey Ferguson, AICP
 Tara Lake

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

National Board Director, Region VI
 APA Representative Council, Region VI
 Planner Emeritus Network President
 California Planning Roundtable President
 Chapter Awards Coordinator – Northern California
 Chapter Historian - Southern California
 Distance Education Director

Kristen Asp, AICP
 Nazmus Sadat
 Hanson Hom, AICP
 Bill Anderson, FAICP
 Susie Kuo
 Steve Preston, FAICP
 Greg Konar, AICP

FAICP Coordinator
National Policy and Legislative Representative
Statewide Program Coordinator
Young & Emerging Planners Coordinator

Robert Olshansky, FAICP
Nicholas Maricich, AICP
Chris Rhie
Annapurna Singh

STAFF

Cap City Consulting – Executive Director
Stefan/George – Lobbyist

Sande Stefan
Lauren De Valencia

RETREAT NOTES

Ashley's Follow-Up to Board 2/2/21:

Update on the Google Workspace demo: to accommodate those who have Wednesday commitments, the 2nd Google Workspace demo will be on Monday, 2/8. The calendar invitation has been updated accordingly. Let me know if you have any questions!

On Mon, Feb 1, 2021 at 10:59 PM Ashley Atkinson <president@apacalifornia.org> wrote: Hello Board, thank you for your engaged participation in our first gathering of the year! Sande will follow up with meeting minutes and some additional business items, but I also wanted to reach out personally on a few things from the retreat: 1) your 2021 short-term goals; 2) the Google Workspace demo and 3) our shared values. Please review below and let me know if you'd like to chat!

2021 Short-Term Goals: If you haven't already, **by Friday, 2/5 please email me two goals you hope to achieve as a Board member in the first half of 2021.** They should be realistic, but impactful -- I will connect with you to discuss them further. (Elected and appointed Board members are asked to participate; it is optional for Section Directors, National reps, and those from affiliated organizations.)

Google Workspace Demo: I will demo key Google Workspace features (Shared Drive, Calendar, Meets, Groups, Docs/Sheets) on Wednesday, 2/3 and Wednesday, 2/10 at 5:30 PM. You should be able to see the event in the APA California calendar and join directly through Google Meets -- attend either one, no need to RSVP.

Board Values: The Executive Board will follow up on our retreat exercise and develop a short list of shared values to guide our work together this year. In the meantime, please take a look at the excellent concepts your colleagues came up with and think about how they can inform your goals:

1. Embrace Diversity, TRUST Trust, Limitless Encouragement, Engaging Achievement, Equity
2. Thoughtful collaboration, be inclusive, problem solve with creativity, nurture relationships, FUN
3. Communicate with Respect, Have Fun, Accountability, Creativity, Service
4. Deliver impact, Advocate for our values, Collaborate and Communicate, Promote inclusivity, encouragement, and recognition, be bold and visionary
5. Advocacy, Inclusivity, Respect, Reliability/Professionalism, Service, Collaboration
6. Communicate consistent and clearly to achieve inclusivity and collaboration; Maintain and enhance professionalism through increasing knowledge and learning about planning; Ensure professionalism through vision and credibility; Become inclusive through diversity; Balance our objectives with one another (i.e., other goals and objectives) as well as other needs; Bring joy and have fun

--
Email this group using board@apacalifornia.org.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to board+unsubscribe@apacalifornia.org.

--
Email this group using board@apacalifornia.org.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to board+unsubscribe@apacalifornia.org.

Sande's Retreat Notes:

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President Ashley Atkinson laid out her key goals for the Board going forward:

1. Trust
2. Structure
3. Action

Structure allows the Board to do more: allows the Board to see ideas realized in the short term.

The Strategic Plan will be on hold since there is still so much uncertainty this year. The Strategic Plan will be discussed over the year for launch in 2022.

CORE VALUES EXERCISE

Ashley then split up the Board into 5 breakout groups for a Core Values Exercise. The exercise had several goals:

- Choose 4-6 values that are important to Board members and the Board to be successful, assists us in making decisions when faced with difficult problems or reflect the right thing to do at this moment, and influence how the Board members perform their roles.
- Add a verb to each value so it works as an action.
- Identify your “actionable” values in order of priority.

Florentina’s Group:

1. Embrace diversity
2. Trust, trust: credibility, erosion of trust, trust planning
3. Limitless encouragement – plenty of time for uplifting, engaging achievement

Julia’s Group:

1. Collaboration
2. Inclusivity
3. Creativity in problem solving
4. Fun – working together, working with other planners
5. Relationships – with other professionals, to impact the profession and community

Nick’s Group:

1. Communicate with respect
2. Have fun – since we are all volunteers it is an important aspect
3. Accountability – for work we are tasked with doing
4. Creativity
5. Service to the Board and the profession

Elizabeth’s Group:

1. External – to members/impact/advocate for values
2. Internal – be true to values
3. Personal – what we set for ourselves on the Board – be bold and visionary

Ashley’s Group:

1. Advocacy – as a service
2. Inclusion
3. Respect – for communities we serve, include them in process as sign of respect – advocate on their behalf if they can’t get a seat at the table
4. Collaboration – part of professionalism and respect – words are related
5. Reliability

6. Professionalism – how these values all come together – wellbeing/fun/balance

Ellie's Group:

1. Communication – be consistent and clearly communicate to achieve goals
2. Professionalism – in outcome or approach
3. Inclusion
4. Balance
5. Fun
6. Creativity
7. Wellbeing – before doing for others take care of yourself

Ashley said the next steps would be to distill these values into 5-6 statements of values for the Board for the year and come back to the group with recommendations. The Board can then look for opportunities to restate them and elevate them in our work. These values can then be reinforced and reimagined over time.

ASSOCIATION/LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (AMS/LMS) DISCUSSION

Julia Lave Johnston provided an overview of the Association and Learning Management Systems that her committee is considering. Ben has looked into the various options for the committee to review, and there are many options out there.

Ben's summary of the options and benefits:

The Chapter has hosted or co-hosted over 40 virtual events over the past year, and an opportunity was identified to better serve members through a Learning Management System (LMS). Generally speaking, a LMS would allow the chapter to organize educational content, create 'learning paths', sell recordings, and, if relevant, manage CE credits and certifications.

Many associations combine their LMS with an Association Management System (AMS). Combining an AMS and a LMS would provide a number of benefits, notably "member" and "non-member" tiers for selling educational content, data on which members are engaging with content the most, streamlined event registration, and more. Besides these features, a good AMS would streamline accounting, handle member email communication, automate dues renewal, and allow the chapter to easily reach out and re-engage ex-members, ex-student members, or other target populations with data segmenting.

One of the Chapter's strategic plan goals is to:

"Build our membership strategically by targeting groups that can increase our long-term sustainability and effectiveness as an organization, such as students, academics, young planners, and mid-career planners by provide meaningful membership services and engagement opportunities that give value to membership at all levels of our members' careers into retirement."

We are also striving to increase diversity and build relationships with affiliate organizations. An AMS system would help with all of these goals as well as assist APA and its sections in outreach, marketing, and communications.

Another benefit of having a consolidated AMS that the chapter and sections could both information share, have more consistent branding and reduce the number of other services the chapter and sections currently contract for.

The Chapter also needs to upgrade its website. Many of these services include a website.

Next Steps / Timeline

Before moving forward, it will be important to answer a few big questions. In no particular order, it would be important to address:

- What are the chapter's priorities with regards to an AMS/LMS?
- How would we like to use this to better serve our members?
- How important is ease of use for chapter administrators as well as end users?
- Does it make sense to stick with DigitalGear, or start fresh?
- What are the budgetary limitations?

We should have a clear sense of how the system should function before moving on to demos and implementation discussions.

Julia said that the costs of Digital Gear the Chapter is currently paying would offset the costs of these programs. The new programs would update the older software that Digital Gear now provides the Chapter and allow the Chapter to pay for only the features the Sections and the Chapter needs and wants. The Committee's goal is the determine the needs and determine the best options in the next three months.

The Board, in discussing these options, suggested that the Board be cautious in the ultimate choice and make sure to get it right, because the Chapter would be stuck with the choice for quite a while. Also suggested was looking at what other organizations are using that are similar in size, and really explore the functions to find the best fit so we aren't paying for things we can't or don't use. The Chapter's existing systems haven't been looked at in a long time, and the internet wasn't the main means of operating at the time the website was launched – the website was locked in as the only option for services. The Board also wants easy access beyond the few people who have access now. And the Chapter shouldn't have to pay for someone to work within the platform – Board members should be able to do tech support themselves.

Julia said that Ben will be on hand to assist in finding the right systems.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE TRAINING FOR BOARD

Ashley said that she would set up a separate training session on the Google Workspace for Board members who are not familiar with the program. The goal is for Board members to use the calendar to schedule events, use Google Meet to set up online meetings since it is free and easy to use without a reservation or code, and to work on documents and post/retain documents.

BOARD GOAL-SETTING EXERCISE

Ashley next asked the Board to participate in a goal-setting exercise. She asked the Board in the remaining meeting time to split into groups to discuss 5 questions, getting through as much as possible. The questions were:

1. What do you hope is different about APA California in 4 months? Consider your own goals and what you've heard from other Board members.
2. What do you hope is different about APA California in 4 months? Consider your own goals and what you've heard from other Board members.
3. What is the main challenge in the organization achieving your short-term vision?
4. What 1-2 things do you hope to achieve in your own role in **4 months**? Do these goals reflect outcomes or support initiatives from the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan? It's OK if not.
5. What are the steps needed to achieve those goals?

Julia's Group:

1. What is different in the next 4 months? Chapter will be using the AMS/LMS.
2. The Chapter will be communicating more with members and will add new ways to support them.

Florentina's Group:

1. Create connection between N. Section Board members.
2. Mentoring senior Board members and mentoring junior Board members.
3. Increasing visibility of value for membership.

Jennifer's Group (from her notes):

2021 Retreat - Goal-Setting Exercise

Names: Jennifer Clark, Julia Lave-Johnston, Ellie Fiore, Florentina Craciun, Kristen Asp, Sande George

Team: breakout room 3

1. What do you hope is different about APA California in 4 months? Consider your own goals and what you've heard from other Board members.

- more inclusion and seamless communication/interaction
- communicating with members and better understanding their needs
- coaching program
- take eNews to next level
- plan for website
- AMS/LMS

- revisit scope of contractors
- learn Google suite
- coordinate with national on expectations
- develop standard functions/calendar for the Executive Director

2. What is the main challenge in the organization achieving your short-term vision?

Time
Tools
Human resources

3. What 1-2 things do you hope to achieve in your own role in **4 months**? Do these goals reflect outcomes or support initiatives from the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan? It's OK if not.

Better organization
More consistent communication
Micro-steps for implementation

4. What are the steps needed to achieve those goals?

Group didn't get to these.

Goal

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
What is this step?	What is this step?	What is this step?	What is this step?
What do you need to accomplish this step?	What do you need to accomplish this step?	What do you need to accomplish this step?	What do you need to accomplish this step?
Who is responsible?	Who is responsible?	Who is responsible?	Who is responsible?
Whose help is needed?	Whose help is needed?	Whose help is needed?	Whose help is needed?
How will you know	How will you know	How will you know	How will you know

when you're ready to move to the next step?	when you're ready to move to the next step?	when you're ready to move to the next step?	when you're ready to move to the next step?
---	---	---	---

Ellie's Group:

1. Bring the eNews to the next level in design, efficiency.
2. Update plan for new website.
3. Push staff to work on new and existing tasks.

Eric's Group:

1. Use technology to stay in touch with members.
2. Improve member services for more member value.
3. Make sure advocacy adds value to membership and add members – use services to add value to members so members view APA as the solution to problem, not the problem.

Main takeaway: work on gaining value for membership and communicate the value to members.