Notes from April 4 TMC notes

Present: Jo Ellen, Manolia, Rachel, Sharon, Maya, Kyle, Antoinette, Lisa, Caitlin

Absent: Ivan, James, Steve

Jo Ellen opened the call with a discussion of the TMC financial situation. She said the organization is in “good shape,” but she’d like to focus this year on expansion, to move forward and to grow moderately. We have about $40,000 to $50,000 in reserve and she’d like to spend some of that toward two goals: Having two full-time staff people and better communicating with the group as a whole. She also wants to see if we can get more grant money.

Communication:

Jo Ellen and Manolia have identified a Cloud-based system (name?) that would include contact information for all TMC members and their staff. This will allow TMC staff to pull more informed reports and, therefore, better serve members, and it would allow better communication among members themselves.

Cost: $3,000 to set up the program, annual cost of $4,000 a year. If we move our website to Drupal, we would be able to get additional functionality, members could pull own reports off membership database. Goal would be 1) implement membership database and 2) redo our website.

Why Drupal over WordPress? Manolia said Drupal offered tighter security and will allow us to do more with the database system. JoEllen said the cost to move the database system from WordPress to Drupal is very small. Once we’ve done that, we will begin with the redesign of our website, which will take longer.

As we move toward the new website, we’ll put together a task force and begin discussion. At this point, we don’t know how much a site design will cost. Jo Ellen guesses about $5,000 to $10,000.

The Coordinating committee approved going ahead with the (name?) database and to get started on website redesign. Next meeting we’ll get into the website redesign more.

Racial equity:

From our discussions at the February conference, we have come up with a three-part strategy:

TMC in Color

Diversity pipeline

Structural race equity fund

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We would look for a fund from some big foundation, perhaps a couple hundred thousand dollars, for TMC members to do our own race equity work within our own outlets. It has to happen at the level of the outlet.

Diversity pipeline:

Diversity fellowships or making diversity hires -- an important first step in race equity. Carries with it its own issues: journalists see cultural issues, expectations that don’t match what journalist wants to do. Want to create some institutional support for these diversity programs. Want the journalists to thrive so we can retain them.

TMC in color:

So far, just a newsletter. Would continue semimonthly and would focus on stories, collect TMC stories. Website is tmcincolor.org. We’re going to connect it to our website so others can see rich stories by journalists of color and about the issues.

Another piece would be reporting on immigration and combating xenophobia in the US and Canada. This can change from year to year, but for now we would start with immigration programs.

The question came up on how to measure success.

Manolia discussed how we started small, highlighting the voices of journalists of color once a month. They we added a component on the issue at our meeting and more than 28 people of color showed up. There we talked about challenges culturally, how they stay in touch with each other, to support each other. From the conference, it made sense to try to develop a coordinated messaging to enlist voices of immigration, how we can have a measured and coordinated effort.

Outreach to people of color who are members of TMC: Hoping to continue this dialogue and to schedule a first conversation around how we should be looking at the process to center immigrant voices. Planning a phone call with journalists of color, especially immigrants or those who cover immigration. We also ask advocacy groups for story ideas.

By the end of this month, we hope to get a framework for our approach to this issue.

Events: TMC members could host or coordinate on events highlighting speakers who already have a relationship with TMC organizations. This would be a way to draw interest in the stories. We can collaborate on stories, but collaboration on events would be desirable for foundation funders.

Member outlets are already doing these stories, we just want to connect more regularly around things they’re already doing.

Better communication with members

The group agreed on four ways of communicating:

The current listserve, a Facebook group, the TMC in Color newsletter and a Drupal community page, which is down the road.

Discussion around an affinity group for people who want to collaborate. We want that discussion to be from the ground up, not just a place for people to jump onto projects that have already started.

Membership committee:

Needs to have 8 to 10 people on it (currently has three). Looking for recommendations among our outlets’ staff members. Could be helpful for people wanting to make connections.

Treasurer:

Jo Ellen is looking for a volunteer treasurer to be a second set of eyes on the budget and the budget process.