

Board of Directors
Council of Divisions
Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication
234 Outlet Pointe Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29210

8/22/2016

Dear members of the AEJMC Board of Directors and Council of Divisions,

We are writing to express a concern regarding the lack of cooperation between AEJMC and professional journalism associations such as the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), and the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA). Specifically, this letter is to request that AEJMC leadership coordinate with NABJ, NAHJ, and AAJA the timing of its annual conference so that AEJMC can benefit from participation by members of the aforementioned groups.

NABJ and NAHJ held a joint convention this year Aug. 3-7 in Washington, DC, which fully overlapped with the AEJMC conference Aug. 4-7 in Minneapolis. AAJA's 2016 convention was Aug. 10-13 in Las Vegas, within less than a week from our Minneapolis gathering. Alarming, NABJ's 2017 annual conference is already scheduled for August. 9-13 in New Orleans, and it will, once again, fully overlap with AEJMC's next year's conference in Chicago.

This presents a problem for securing presenters on diversity-related panels at AEJMC, considering that many journalism educators are also NABJ, NAHJ, and AAJA members. The Magazine Media division, in fact, faced this obstacle at the 2016 conference in Minneapolis, which featured a diversity panel (co-sponsored with MAC) called "Why Magazines Don't Look Like America and What to do About It." The panel was all white. Several would-be participants of color regretted they could not participate because they would be attending NABJ.

The Magazine Media division is placing an emphasis on diversity issues, and invites AEJMC to join its efforts. The division is in the preliminary stages of exploring how to encourage more research into the area of diversity and to help its members recruit, retain, and prepare minority students for a career in the industry, with an intent to, in turn, assist the industry in increasing diversity in the workplace

While conducting research for the diversity panel in Minneapolis, it was alarming to learn that no magazine association keeps records on diversity. Anecdotally, we are convinced that the percentage of minorities in the magazine industry is extremely low. It was disheartening to also learn that newspapers, which, through ASNE, do keep records, have seen a drop in recent years of the already dismal percentage of minorities, to 12.37 percent from its 13.73 percent high in 2006. This is at a time when, according to an ASNE report, non-whites make up roughly 37 percent of the U.S. population.

The problem of a lack of diversity in media is acute. As college professors of media students, we have a responsibility to address the situation. Toward that end, we believe that AEJMC should do everything it can to help assure participation by important minority organizations in its annual conference. Whether that takes the form of holding the conferences at different times or holding them at the same time but in the same city is up for discussion.

Inclusion should not be just a lofty goal; rather, we believe it must become a practice. We in the Magazine Media division look forward to learning of conversations that may occur with NABJ, NAHJ, and AAJA. And we are excited to open a continuing dialogue on other ways to deepen the commitment to diversity.

Sincerely,

Miglana Sternadori, Magazine Media incoming head

James Shahin, Magazine Media PF&R chair

Sharon Bloyd-Peshkin, Magazine Media program chair/vice-head

Pamela Nettleton, Magazine Media research chair and student contest co-chair

Vanessa Gregory, Magazine Media membership chair

Lisa Weidman, Magazine Media teaching chair

Kevin Lerner, *Journal of Magazine Media* editor

Joy Jenkins, *Journal of Magazine Media* associate editor and division newsletter editor

Carol Holstead, Magazine Media student contest co-chair

Jeff Inman, Magazine Media social media chair

Chelsea Reynolds, Magazine Media graduate liaison

Carol Schwalbe, Magazine Media webmaster

Susan Sivek, Magazine Media outgoing head