

2023-2024 Conference Committee Meeting Report – October 19, 2023

Present:

Cindy Galli, ABC News / IRE Board (chair)
John Harden, Washington Post (vice chair)
Jodie Fleischer, Cox Media Group / IRE Board
Brian M. Rosenthal, The New York Times / IRE Board
Mark Walker, The New York Times / IRE Board
Caresse Jackman, Investigate TV
Julie Watts, CBS Sacramento
Annie Ma, Associated Press
Ben Wieder, McClatchy
Gonzalo Magara, KXTV
Madison Carter, WSOC
Craig Lyons, Indiana University
Kendall Taggart, Bloomberg News
Diana Fuentes, IRE Executive Director

We tackled several issues at this month's meeting, starting with affordability and the formation of the Affordability Task Force.

Affordability

Brian talked about the importance of affordability for our organization but especially for our conferences. We haven't addressed it in a systemic way – we've gotten better but we have a long way to go. As a result, we're forming a task force to look at things like tiered pricing, discounts, etc. – and that group will head up researching ideas to bring back to the committee – which will then present options to the Board. That research will include looking at other organizations' pricing, best practices and logistical issues, etc.

The group threw out initial ideas - **Julie** suggested ideas such as sponsorship with airlines which could provide discounted flights and also asked about miles donations. **Jodie** talked about partnering with local universities in conference cities to exchange dorm rooms for future registrations for students and **John** mentioned partnering with local restaurants. **Annie** brought up roomshares, **Gonzalo** asked about fellowships. **Ben** talked about geographical factors to consider.

Cindy asked anyone who may be interested in serving on the task force to contact Brian. Much enthusiasm to work on this in the committee so we will continue to discuss in next meeting.

Conference Status

Diana gave an update on how AccessFest performed – as well as where we are on NICAR registration. Early bird option is now open and we are still pinpointing sponsors – committee was asked to promote registration.

Keynote Speakers

Committee had initial brainstorm on keynote speakers for IRE24. The group is adding to a spreadsheet that will continue to be updated – more discussion on options to come in our next meeting with a hope to narrow down to a few options to present to the board by end of year.

NABJ Coordination

Madison spoke about future collaborations with NABJ – coordinating training between the two groups. Leadership will connect to get everyone on the same page but she'd like for the committee to brainstorm ideas on how we can link the two orgs more going forward.

Our next committee meeting will take place on November 9th.