



International Academy of Mediators

Report of the Communication & Outreach Committee

Christine Masters, Chair

July 17, 2020

Purpose and Evolution of the Committee: As envisioned by former Chair Chuck Doran, the purpose of the IAM Communication and Outreach Committee (C&O) is to communicate IAM's vision and accomplishments to IAM members, potential members, and consumers of commercial mediation through social media, blogging, and, internally, through Member Updates. I assumed the mantle of Chair of the C&O Committee in mid-July 2019, when Chuck Doran assumed the role of Presidency of the IAM. At the time, Keith Seat was the IAM Editor in Chief, responsible for blogging efforts.

Initially, the C&O Committee consisted of Lynne Bassis and myself doing Member Updates, with Keith Seat handling the Blog (with me serving as assistant) and Chuck doing everything else. Eventually Todd Smith, Rande Sotomayor, and Jeff Truman agreed to join in to assist with Member Updates. In early November 2019, after serving admirably since May 2015 and having shepherded 60 blogs to publication, Keith decided to step down as Editor in Chief. Despite best efforts, no one stepped up to fill his shoes. Following the Scottsdale conference, it was decided that the Update Committee members would become members of the C&O and the Update Committee was disbanded. I agreed to continue as Chair.

The C&O Committee took a hiatus in December, set to begin again sometime in spring 2020 publishing blogs and asking for member updates. Since then, the Committee has expanded and evolved beyond the primary areas of the Committee's focus in the past, which were primarily the Member Updates and the IAM Blog.

With Jon's encouragement, in April 2020 I invited a number of fellows to join the Committee. Vance Cooper, James Mang'ere, Tat Lim stepped up to the plate, bringing a global perspective to the committee. Tim Corcoran has become our FaceBook Moderator and Scott Markus boldly serves as ListServ Moderator, while Jeff Kichaven moderates Book Talks. We all are working closely with Richard Rejino to ensure the mission as envisioned by Chuck is accomplished. Here are some of our results.

Member Updates

Member Updates provide fellows with an opportunity to stay connected and informed about what is going on with other members, both professionally and personally. Members are asked to share a personal and/or professional update of up to 150 words. In reaching out for Updates, each committee member encourages our colleagues to consider submitting blogs or other postings on social media.

Our goal has been to publish an Update generally three to four times per month via the Listserv, and

until the December hiatus, we were meeting that goal. Since resuming our efforts in April, we have posted 6 updates, and have 5 more ready to go.

IAM Blog

Since May of 2015, under Keith's excellent direction 61 blog entries written by 35 different authors were published. In February 2020, we published an article by Jan Schau (an ever reliable author) entitled "To What Extent Should Mediators Dictate the Language in the Terms of a Settlement". In May, we published a three-part Blog by Jeff Trueman, "Saving Face in Employment Mediations". We are working with Dwight Golann to finalize his article (based on his presentation at the IAM Spring Conference); it should be posted before the upcoming Board meeting. (See the link to these postings: <https://iamed.org/iam-blog/>)

Our goal is to release Blogs approximately every 4 - 6 weeks and to cover a range of topical issues primarily addressing the concerns of practicing mediators or those interested in using mediation. This is intended to establish the IAM blog as a trusted and reliable source of expert information, in the hopes it will grow in reputation and popularity.

Each committee member has agreed to propose a blog idea, and work with the author to get it in shape for posting to the IAM Blog. If any Board member has an article they are writing or even thinking about, please contact Jeff Trueman or myself.

IAM Social Media Efforts

While updates and blogs have been the organization's primary communication and outreach tool, the Committee has also used other social media outlets to broaden the circle of potential readers. Since IAM's social media accounts were set up in 2015, there have been many postings, but not a comparable level of responses. On Twitter, we have more followers 228 (up from 221 two years ago) but not much tweeting activity. Our LinkedIn Group currently has 73 members (up from 59 two years ago).

With Chuck's help, Richard is learning how to do Hoot Suite, to eliminate have to make multiple entries in our Twitter, Instagram, Linked In accounts. He is in process of posting our recent blog entries on the IAM Twitter feed, Instagram, and LinkedIn group.

Further, we have two Facebooks pages, one public and one a closed group. Tim Corcoran moderates our Facebook accounts, and has regularly posted news about upcoming events on our private page. Currently we have 249 followers (up from 228) and 225 "likes" (up from 213).

To really achieve the goal of getting IAM out on social media and establishing our presence as a reliable informative source of information, we need help. We primarily need folks to identify content to be posted. Perhaps a letter from our President asking several persons to commit to this on a monthly basis. He might also encourage members to regularly review the IAM website, as well as to send either Richard or me any news about their practices, any articles/books they have published and a link thereto, and to respond to requests for updates. Members might also

be encouraged to contact Wendy Kramer or Logan Cooper if they have ideas for a webinar.

So far this year, IAM has hosted 6 webinars. While the webinars are only for IAM members and mentees, the Board might want to consider opening them to the public.

Although I am not sure whether the following qualifies as “social media”, but I am asking the Board to approve Alicia Kuin’s proposal for a Zoom presentation by Sara Cook, MSW, focusing on Trauma and Resilience for Practitioners (Ms. Cook’s resume is attached). Richard, Alicia and I discussed the proposal at length on Friday as timely and important. In addition to the stresses of life, health, and work without a pandemic, IAM members now have the additional stress of dealing with folks already in conflict now having to face issues associated with the virus. I personally see this as an outreach service that we can provide our members, who can benefit from Ms. Cook’s perspective and teachings during these troubling times. We also discussed the possibility of a small stipend to Ms. Cook (\$150) to show her appreciation for her time and experience. Alicia has queried Ms. Cook about her availability to make a 50-minute presentation with a 20-minute Q&A. Assuming the Board approves, Ms. Cook and Alicia prepared to make the presentation on Saturday August 8, 2020 at 12 or 1 pm EST.

Book Talks

Book Talks, a Zoom program created and hosted by Jeff Kichaven, began in April. Since then, Jeff has moderated six successful programs. Several authors lead discussions of their recent books: Alexandra Carter “Ask for More”, Michelina DiSibio “The Art of Unlearning”, John Sturrock “A Mediator’s Musings”, and Sherry Brouman “Walk Yourself Well”. The program was initially well attended as members adjusted to the new world occasioned by the pandemic, but as folks are up and running with Zoom, attendance has fallen off. It was decided to take a summer break as of July 1, 2020 and re-assess the program in the fall.

I am grateful to the dedication of committee members, who spend many hours reaching out to members collect, review, and edit these Updates and blogs. Please send me an email if you're interested in submitting an update or a blog or have any news to post at christine@masters-ribakoff.com or give a call 818-9555-8518.