



Board Update and Summary of Meeting

Dear Chief Instructors,

It has been quite a while since we've had the opportunity to train together, now that seminars and summer camp have been canceled due to COVID.

Despite the pandemic and our inability to meet in person, the Board has managed to hold numerous virtual meetings to discuss the effects of the pandemic on our community. How we can provide support and keep everyone connected was a primary focus in our discussions. Fortunately, we are still managing to see each other, as many members are taking classes with one another virtually, including participating in the USAF weekly zoom classes, thanks to the work done by and on behalf of the Board. Another important ongoing Board project this year has been the Dojo-cho Video Conversations.

In lieu of our annual Summer Camp meeting, the Board convened on Zoom over 2 afternoons at the end of August with Board advisors, committee members, and Laura and Karen. We discussed a variety of topics and committees reported their activities. Here is a snapshot of what was discussed:

- 1) ***Review and approval of minutes of past meetings*** – The various committees, Board and Technical Committee have a number of special meetings throughout the year in order to discuss and implement USAF initiatives. In total, the Board reviewed and approved the minutes of 17 previous Board and committee meetings.

2) ***International Aikido Federation (IAF)*** - Charlie McGinnis, Chief Instructor of Aikido of Cincinnati, is the USAF's representative to the IAF and a member of the IAF Directing Committee. Charlie reported his activities to the Board including updates on IAF's Youth Working Group, Fee Equity Working Group and, in particular, the Gender Balance Working Group to which Sharon Dominguez (chair of the USAF Working Group) was recently appointed. New to the IAF, which Charlie was instrumental in implementing, are the IAF Zoom aikido classes featuring women instructors. He also reported that many IAF functions have been canceled, postponed or modified due to COVID.

3) ***Technical Committee (TC)*** – The TC reported on its virtual conversation with instructors. A recent email to instructors included a link to this conversation's recording and Yamada Sensei's and the TC's update regarding testing and promotions during COVID. For your reference, here is a link to the summary and the recording of the DVC. **[DVC TC Summary Letter](#)**

4) ***Working Group (WG)*** – The WG has been participating in Board projects, including the zoom classes and conversations. The WG reported on these activities and its email that was circulated on 8/6/2020 under the title "*Good News from the USAF Working Group*". The WG is revising its mission and goals as it will now be assisting with marketing and growth projects to help the USAF and its dojos.

5) ***USAF Aikido Classes Online Series*** – The Zoom Class Committee reported on the status of the Online Series, including viewer statistics of each zoom class. Based on the success of this series, zoom classes will continue for the foreseeable future. Classes can be accessed in real time on zoom and Facebook live and each class recording is archived for public viewing on the USAF YouTube page.

6) ***Dojo-cho Video Conversations (DVC)*** – Four sessions have taken place so far and are as follows:

DVC-1 on 6/23/2020 – Conversation regarding instructors' plans, if any, on reopening dojos and safety protocols to be implemented; how dojo-cho are maintaining connections with members, and experience thus far with video and outdoor classes.

DVC-2 on 7/21/2020 – This was the first in the Working Group's series entitled "*Equity, Inclusion and the Future of Aikido*" and included a panel of professionals in the field to discuss Race & Bias.

DVC-3 on 8/16/2020 – A Conversation with the USAF Technical Committee presenting USAF policy towards testing and promotion during the pandemic; discussing the challenges we may be encountering with re-opening our dojos and any possibilities of returning to “normalcy” in our aikido training.

DVC- 4 on 10/6/2020 - A fourth conversation was originally scheduled for September 29 on the topic of “How are you coping” but was rescheduled to Oct. 6th.

7) **Finances** - In every Board meeting, a topic of primary importance is the finances of the USAF. Needless to say, the 2020 budget did not forecast the pandemic and the deleterious impact it would have on member dojos, and therefore, the USAF itself. The USAF relies on membership and testing fees for its financial viability. In March, most dojos began to shut down so the Board extended 2020 renewals until the end of the year, December 31, 2020. This created a ripple effect for USAF finances but fortunately, we received a PPP loan, which helped offset personnel costs for a few months. A revised 4th quarter financial outlook was discussed, with adjustments to income and expenses based on current trends and expectations.

The Board is faced with many difficult decisions as the USAF finishes out 2020. To err on the side of caution, we must assume that COVID will continue to negatively impact our ability to resume normal aikido activity for some time. Therefore, a committee of the Board will be working closely with Laura and Karen to find ways to substantially reduce expenses and/or raise revenue in order to achieve a balanced budget for 2021. The Board will review a proposed 2021 budget along with other important topics at its annual meeting over zoom in November.

Finally, we want to let you know the Board members are available to discuss matters with you concerning your dojo and the USAF. A list of Board members and emails is set forth below.

Wishing you all the best.

The Board

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