

Body of message to AOJ members and contacts May 10, 2016:

Here is the text of a joint statement by AOJ, the American Society of News Editors, and the Poynter Institute for Media Studies.

The AOJ Board's decisions were the results of several months of research and negotiation, as described in previous messages to our membership. The officers and trustees affirmed both agreements in a teleconference meeting May 5, and details of the announcement were settled on May 9.

ASNE's president will join our May 15 meeting in Washington DC to work out a transition plan.

We will share information about the process at each milestone. For now, you might want to put convention on your calendar. It is Sept. 11-14 in Philadelphia. A pre-conference workshop will focus on digitally oriented change in news organizations.

The faculty of the Minority Writers Seminar unanimously endorsed that agreement, asking only that the classrooms in St. Petersburg be slightly less intensely air-conditioned.

– David Haynes, AOJ president

AOJ to join forces with ASNE, turn over writing seminar to The Poynter Institute

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (May 10, 2016) – The Association of Opinion Journalists announced today that it will be turning over its programming and signature training on the evolving craft of opinion journalism to the American Society of News Editors and The Poynter Institute.

AOJ members will become members of ASNE, one of the nation's leading proponents of fair and principled journalism, First Amendment rights, freedom of information and open government, following a vote of the full ASNE membership at the organization's convention in September in Philadelphia.

Under an agreement in principle, ASNE will manage AOJ's annual State Department Briefing and other activities. ASNE also will form a standing committee on opinion journalism to advise the organization and will appoint an opinion journalist to its board. Under the agreement, ASNE will receive AOJ's unencumbered funds, which will be earmarked for programming and administration.

Poynter, the global leader in journalism training, will direct AOJ's Minority Writers Seminar, with assistance from ASNE. The seminar is a 20-year-old program that annually trains minorities and women in opinion writing. This year's program will be Nov. 2-5 at the Poynter Institute campus in St. Petersburg, Florida. The writing seminar joins two other diversity initiatives at Poynter: the Leadership Academy for Women in Digital Media, in partnership with the Online News Association; and the Leadership Academy for Diversity in Digital Journalism, with the National Association of Black Journalists. Under an agreement in principle with AOJ, Poynter will receive the endowment that funds the writing seminar.

"AOJ's mission is a great fit for ASNE, and we're excited to have new opportunities to train and support opinion writers and editors across the United States," said AOJ President David D. Haynes, editorial page editor of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "We're thrilled that the Minority Writers Seminar has found a home at the Poynter Institute, which remains the country's pre-eminent journalism training organization."

"We appreciate the confidence the AOJ board showed in approving this merger with ASNE,"

said ASNE President Pam Fine, Knight Chair for News, Leadership and Community at the University of Kansas. “We’re continually looking for ways to provide creative, forward-looking, inclusive and digitally focused programs and services. We know our new members from AOJ will be energetic and thoughtful allies in these efforts.”

“We’re honored, indeed, that the Association of Opinion Journalists chose Poynter to carry this valuable program forward,” said Poynter President Tim Franklin. “We believe that opinion writing will continue to grow in both size and influence over our democracy. It is critical for our democracy that diverse voices be included in that sphere of influence.”

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About the Association of Opinion Journalists

The [Association of Opinion Journalists](#), with nearly 200 members nationwide, was founded in 1947 as the National Conference of Editorial Writers and renamed AOJ in 2012. AOJ is dedicated to advancing the craft of opinion journalism through education, professional development, exploration of issues of public importance and vigorous advocacy within journalism organizations. It is based at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla.

About the American Society of News Editors

The [American Society of News Editors](#) focuses on leadership development and journalism-related issues. Founded in 1922 as a nonprofit professional organization, ASNE promotes fair, principled journalism; defends and protects First Amendment rights; and fights for freedom of information and open government. Leadership, innovation, diversity and inclusion in coverage and the journalism workforce, youth journalism, news literacy and the sharing of ideas are also key ASNE initiatives. Learn more at [asne.org](#), like our [Facebook page](#) and follow us on Twitter [@NewsEditors](#).

About The Poynter Institute

The Poynter Institute for Media Studies [poynter.org](#) is a global leader in journalism education and a strategy center that stands for uncompromising excellence in journalism, media and 21st century public discourse. Poynter faculty teach seminars and workshops at the Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla., and at conferences and organizational sites around the world. Its e-learning division, News University, [www.newsu.org](#), offers the world’s largest online journalism curriculum in 7 languages, with more than 400 interactive courses and 330,000 registered users in more than 200 countries. The Institute’s website, [www.poynter.org](#), produces 24-hour coverage of news about media, ethics, technology, the business of news and the trends that currently define and redefine journalism news reporting. The world’s top journalists and media innovators come to Poynter to learn and teach new generations of reporters, storytellers, media inventors, designers, visual journalists, documentarians and broadcast producers, and to build public awareness about journalism, media, the First Amendment and protected discourse that serves democracy and the public good.

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