



## **Quello Advisory Board Minutes**

Tuesday 24 September 2015 at 4pm-5pm EDT

Draft 9 October 2015

Present: *Marjory Blumenthal, Johannes Bauer, Laura DeNardis, Prabu David, Bill Dutton, Brian Fontes (Chair), Michael Nelsen, Steve Wildman, Richard Wiley*

Online: *Rick Coy, John Evans, Alyssa R. Harvey-Dawson, Richard McLelland, Eli Noam, Gary Reid, Karole White*

*Apologies: Christine Borgman, Robert Pepper, David Donovan (difficulties connecting), James Spaniolo*

*In attendance: Director of Development Meredith Jagutis*

Meeting Held in Richard Wiley's Conference Room at Wiley Rein, 1776 K Street NW, Washington DC on Tuesday 24 September 2015 at 4pm-5pm (EDT)

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Steve Wildman volunteered to chair until Brian Fontes could join the meeting at Item 3. Members introduced themselves and Steve welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. Notes from Previous Meeting and Any Matters Arising**

Notes from the March 2015 meeting were approved as provided. No matters arose that were not otherwise on the agenda.

### **3. New Appointments, College and Department Stimulus Funding, and Forward Strategy**

The Chairman, Brian Fontes, joined the meeting at this point, and took the Chair.

Bill Dutton reminded the Board of the Quello Center strategy of concentrating resources on research staff to build a greater scale of research to have a more significant impact. He noted the recruitment of a Post-Doctoral Researcher, Dr Bianca Reisdorf, who joined the Center on 15 August 2015, but is working out of

country until her visa clears for her to travel to the US for her new position. We hope she will be present at MSU in November.

The second new faculty member is Dr Aleksandr Yankelevich. Aleks completed his doctoral degree in economics, and has spent his last four years at the FCC, where he received recognition for his contribution as an economist. He comes onboard 1 October 2015, after four years at the FCC.

Dr Reisdorf and Dr Yankelevich join our part time research specialist, Mitch Shapiro, to form the core research team based in the Center.

With funds focused on research staff, the Department of Media and Information, and the College of Communication Arts & Sciences, agreed to provide matching additional support to the Center for one year to ensure that it could continue its events and other outreach activities. The Director thanked the Dean, Prabu David, and Chair of MI, Johannes Bauer, for this stimulus funding, and members of the Board expressed their gratitude.

#### 4. Development Goals and Strategy for the Quello Center, discussion of presentation by Meredith Jagutis, Director of Development for Communication Arts & Sciences at MSU

Growing individual gifts and endowments could augment research grants and contracts in building the scale of Quello activities, and also be critical to maintaining the academic independence of the Quello Center. It is a key priority of the Center.

Meredith Jagutis outlined her views on the strengths and limitations of any new initiative to build on the existing endowment of the Quello Center. The Center was among the first endowed centers in the College, raising the largest endowment for the College, through donations from nearly 200 contributors. The endowment of approximately \$3M has been managed well by the University, growing to \$5M. Moreover, the College is in the midst of a University-wide initiative to raise more endowment.

However, as a public, land-grant institution, MSU has not been as well supported by endowments as many other universities of comparable size and impact. And, since 1998, when most endowments were committed to the Center, a number of contributors have passed away, and the Center and College could not actively pursue stewardship of these many founders over the ensuing years. Therefore, Meredith had reservations over the feasibility of appealing to the original founding contributors, or generating a rationale for new support that would be as compelling as the occasion of James Quello's retirement after nearly a quarter of a century as an FCC Commissioner.

Following this introduction, the Board had a useful and extended discussion that generated a number of thoughts on factors critical to fundraising generally and strategies of possible value to the Center. Among the ideas were thoughts on how to bring together even a small subset of the original 200 contributors to the Center's endowment, such as for a conference. A symposium or conference could discuss the transformations that have occurred since their gifts, and the founding of the Center. It would provide an opportunity to review accomplishments of the Center over the last decade, and also showcase key talks and discussion of the next decade, and critical issues on the horizon that the Center should address.

In line with this forward-looking conference, members noted the ways in which James Quello's founding vision, such as around his commitment to freedom of expression, was in line with emerging issues, particularly how to protect an open, secure and global Internet. Are we approaching the 'End of the Open Internet?'. How can we preserve freedom of expression as a universal principle in the digital age of instant global networking?

This idea of a forward-looking invited symposium that brought many founding contributors together with leading academics, as well as others from business, industry and government, including the Advisory Board, seemed attractive to many around the table. Bringing some of the original founders together had promise for attracting attention, as well as the potential to bring in some stars from MSU alumni, possibly not among the original founders, who should be concerned with the future of information and media policy in the Internet age. Such a conference could clearly make the case that the support of individuals and associations, such as MAB, really can make a difference.

Other ideas were raised, such as the development of challenge grants, or matching grants, and there was discussion of what contributors are looking for, such as concrete short-term impacts, transformational change, or academic research in support of longer-term goals such as freedom of expression. Others suggested that broadcast station owners in Michigan might be open to contributing as they were supportive of the Center's foundation through the Michigan Association of Broadcasting, which could help facilitate contacts with these owners. Thoughts were also discussed on individuals, who - like James Quello - have shaped policy and practice and who might be open to the Quello Center raising funds to support a chair or student scholarship in their name.

While some of these ideas have been discussed in the past, times have changed and it may be time to revisit some tried and some new ideas.

**ACTION:** The Director and Center will discuss these ideas with the Director of Development and Dean of the College and come back with suggested strategies for endowment fundraising.

## 5. The Idea of a Quello User Forum (draft was circulated for discussion.)

The User Forum draft generated discussion around the idea and its implementation. Generally, several members thought the idea of a forum was quite good. One thought it was a 'great idea' – the commitment to serving those relatively un- or under-represented. However, many raised questions over its implementation. Generally, members thought the proposal should be more focused, and maybe even initially targeted on Michigan, so that it could evolve overtime to new issues and beyond the state. Also, the name 'user forum' was discussed as possibly too close to user forums developed for specific products and services. Alternatives were suggested, such as a Quello Strategy Forum. Others stressed the need to avoid any corporate support, least it be branded an industry initiative. Exemplary or potentially competitive forums were identified, such as the Leading Edge Forum: <https://leadingedgeforum.com/about-us/> Partnering was suggested as a means for scaling faster and having greater impact, such as linking with other research centers or PEW to tap into their surveys of users.

ACTION: Bill Dutton will meet with Rick Coy and Mitch Shapiro to consider a revision based on this feedback.

## 6. Quello Center Events

The Director noted recent lectures by Dr David Bray, the CIO of the FCO, on public service change agents in a time of exponential change, and a lecture earlier in the day by Professor Laura DeNardis on Internet governance. Both lectures are now online. Professor Eli Noam's Quello Lecture is forthcoming: [http://quello.msu.edu/event/media-concentration-in-the-digital-age-a-quello-lecture-by-professor-eli-noam/?instance\\_id=292](http://quello.msu.edu/event/media-concentration-in-the-digital-age-a-quello-lecture-by-professor-eli-noam/?instance_id=292)

The Director noted the possibility of the Quello Center working with the journal, *Information Communication and Society (iCS)*, on a symposium around policy and regulation. In addition, he was considering an application to European Forum Alpbach for a panel or activity in summer 2016. See: <http://www.alpbach.org/en/> This would be one means for gaining greater visibility in Europe and particularly among Germanic-speaking Europe, although the forum is primarily conducted in English.

It was noted that all events past along with those planned in the near-future are online at: <http://quello.msu.edu/events/> Critiques of our events and suggestions of new events are welcomed.

## 7. Up-date on Research Proposals and Project Developments

The strategy of focusing on grant and contract research has already yielded three new proposals over the last month. The Director noted that he had received word

that the first two have been awarded (one on digital divides in Michigan, and another on ICT4Detroit), and the third was just submitted and still pending (focused on a national database on broadband connectivity). Two other grant proposals are in development, one for a study of a particular development in Detroit, and another for NSF support that would build a national database of value for the study of digital connectivity and its implications.

#### 8. Progress on Offices and Online Presence/Outreach

All the offices have new furniture and fittings to improve its role as a center for students and researchers across the college. Updating of the electronic equipment and furnishings help support the fresh start of the Center. The Center invites Board Members to visit whenever the opportunity arises.

In parallel, the Center now has an increasingly active blog, Twitter presence, and a new Facebook page. A Board Member noted her positive impression of the growing and balanced digital presence of the Quello Center. Of course, based in East Lansing, the digital outreach of the Center is likely to be critical to our potential impact on the field, so this remains a key priority.

ACTION: the Director will alert members of the Board to ways of following the Center on its:

- Wordpress Blog: <http://quello.msu.edu>
- Twitter: @QuelloCenter
- Facebook: Quello Center, Michigan State University

#### 9. Emerging Issues of Policy and Regulation

Time was limited for discussion of new issues on the horizon, but there was general agreement on the centrality of the general theme raised during discussion of development – the centrality of maintaining an open, global and secure Internet. Perhaps this is the over-riding issue of the Center for the digital age, which is in line with the founding vision. Earlier discussion of emerging issues is available online at:

<http://quello.msu.edu/quello-policy-issues-comments-on-emerging-issues/>

#### 10. Membership of the Advisory Board (Dutton)

The Director reinforced his enthusiasm and support for the present membership of the Advisory Board. He was particularly pleased with the turnout in person and online for the day's meeting. He noted that the Center is challenged to live up to the quality and reputation of its advisors. However, he wanted to give all members an opportunity to step off the board, in case they felt overcommitted or less able to commit to the Center than when they agreed to join. He will write all members, asking members if they wish to remain or move to a more emeritus status.

## 11. Dates and Number of Future Meetings

The place and timing of meetings was briefly reviewed. It was agreed that two meetings a year, one in Washington DC around TPRC, and another in the Spring in East Lansing, continued to help involve most members of the Board.

ACTION: The Director will confer with colleagues and select a date for the next meeting to be held in East Lansing in the Fall of 2016. Ideally this will be linked to a talk or event of possible interest to members of the Board.

## 12. AOB

There was no other business raised.

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