National Capital Area ACA Intergroup Hybrid Committee

Considerations for Running Hybrid Meetings

Hybrid meetings are defined as meetings that include participants in person in a meeting room and other participants in a web-based video platform such as Zoom attending the same meeting.

The NCA ACA Intergroup Hybrid Committee has drafted this document to suggest protocols and processes for how to run hybrid meetings that would enable equal participation from all attendees at the meeting. The 12 Traditions of ACA guide these suggested protocols and processes and should guide whatever processes are put in place by each autonomous group.

Hybrid Meeting Coordinator Role and Protocols

The hybrid meeting coordinator would be responsible for the physical setup of the laptop/computer, microphone, speakers, webcam in the physical room (if using), and any other equipment needed to connect to the online meeting room. A tripod with a tray or a tray table may be helpful if the meeting room does not have a table on which to place the laptop. This role would be separate from the meeting chair who would still read the script and run the meeting in the traditional way. Because of the critical nature of this role in enabling hybrid meetings and the likelihood that this person will need to bring the equipment, there should be two or more individuals to fill this role so that there is always someone available to bring and run the technology for the hybrid meeting.

The hybrid meeting coordinator would do the following:

- log into the online meeting
- admit virtual attendees if a waiting room is used
- monitor the online attendees
- mute and unmute the participants when the time comes for sharing
- use a webcam to focus on each speaker who is sharing so that the online attendees can see who was speaking in the room
- handle "zoombombing" or inappropriate behavior on the part of online attendees, and have the ability to remove participants if necessary for everyone's safety
- be willing to mute someone online who oversteps whatever process is established by the group.

The chair of the hybrid meeting will need to ensure that each group gets an equal amount of the time allocated to share and that online attendees are full participants in the meeting.

In terms of the protocols for a hybrid meeting, the following should be considered:

1. The goal is for those on Zoom to be able to hear and see what is happening in the room, and for those in the room to be able to hear and potentially see those online. A large screen monitor would be optimal for those in the room to see those online. We suggest using speaker view online in both cases so that the speaker in either case is easier to see. The webcam would enable those on Zoom to see those in the meeting room and would move along with each speaker around the room.

2. The chair could ask for volunteers online for some of the readings to increase their engagement, perhaps alternating between those in person and those online for each reading.

3. The group will need to determine how to allocate sharing time between those in person, those online, and newcomers/burning desires. If the sharing comes mainly from one side (online or in person), then the other side is likely to feel less engaged. Each group will have to decide how they want to 'divide' the sharing time based on models we provide or the creativity of the group itself. Going back and forth is optimum for keeping people in both arenas engaged. However, how the divide happens would be a group decision.

The following are some models to consider:

a. Select two co-chairs who manage each group in tandem. One chair moves the sharing around their room for as many turns as agreed and then turns it over to the other chair to do the same in the other arena. In some meetings there will be equal attendance allowing for a 1 for 1 handoff. In other meetings there may be a 2 to 1 or even to 3 to 1 ratio between online and in-person attendees, so this process can be adapted for whatever shared configuration occurs to ensure fair sharing.

b. Another proposal is to divide the sharing time into thirds to accommodate three categories (in person, online, burning desires) depending on the length of the meeting and amount of time needed for opening, lead, and halftime. The chair would follow the usual process in the room, going around the room or calling on individuals depending on the custom of the group. The hybrid coordinator could call on people for the online portion of the sharing. The burning desires portion would need to be done by the in-room chair with assistance from the hybrid coordinator if there are people raising hands online. Newcomers/burning desires could alternate between those in the room and those online to allow each group an opportunity to participate.

4. For security purposes, the hybrid coordinator could ask those joining by phone or those whose name is not identifiable to identify themselves to ensure all are comfortable with their attendance. Groups can decide whether to remove someone who does not identify themselves after a defined number of requests are made.

5. During halftime, the chair needs to remember to ask if there are any announcements from those online, and the hybrid coordinator would mute and unmute as needed for the announcements to be made.