



**ACA Board Meeting**  
**[Video Meeting]**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025**  
**[Approved 7/9/25]**

**WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Suzanne opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. ET. The agenda is presented in Appendix A. A motion was made to approve the April minutes. It was seconded. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

**Attendance.** Attendance was taken from the video logins. **BOD Present:** Suzanne Britt, Bill Caruso, Bev Cosslett, Jonas Ecker, Blake Haxton, Brenda Jin, Zach (Bud) Lökkken, Robert Kauffman, David Lumian, Ryan Rushton, Risa Shimoda, Aaron Small  
**BOD Members Not Present:** na  
**Staff Present:** Beth Spilman, Krista Lenzmier  
**Other Attendees:** na  
**Quorum** was obtained.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE (Appendix B)**

**Membership Survey.** Beth provided an update on the membership survey. She indicated that so far; she has received over 1,000 responses. She did not share the results at this time.

**Fundraising Plan.** Beth indicated that they had some extra funds. She has hired a fund raiser to develop a fundraising plan.

**Sport 80 Update.** The implementation of Sport 80 is progressing. We have slowed progress due to some other priority items.

**Moving funds to USOPE.** She indicated that there would be more on this with the Finance Committee Report.

**Smart Start.** Beth indicated that Smart Start was a program and acknowledged the contribution of Brett, Robin and Kelsey on completing the materials. She indicated that it is available on Amazon and that it is an important revenue stream and that it is a gateway program. You can get it as a hard copy or on Kindle. It is designed to wet people’s appetite as a “gateway” program into our other programs.

**COO Position.** Beth provided a brief introduction of Krista. She presented her presentation to the search committee on how she would spend her time with the organization. She has a lot of

experience in the program and event management side of nonprofits. They gave her a business topic title: “Assuming that you are hired as the COO by the ACA, how would you spend your time evaluating the staff and organizational structure?” Krista shared her presentation.

## **BUSINESS OVERVIEWS**

**SEIC.** (Appendix C) Ryan provided an update on the rollout of the Leader Pathways program. There were no motions to be passed.

**Competition Council.** (Appendix D) Risa provided an update on several initiatives. They have completed a draft of their operating procedures and have distributed them to the BOD for their review. Comments should be sent to Risa. [Secretary’s Note: *The draft is not included in the Appendices.*] They provided an update on upcoming competitions. Third, they are creating a database of competitors, spectators, and volunteers.

**Regional Activity Council.** Bill noted that they added two directors. We have a number of states participating in Kayaking 101 and National Safe Boating Week, which is coming up shortly. On policy, we are encouraging our State Directors to reach out to clubs, etc.

**Finance Committee.** (Appendix E) Continuing a discussion at the previous board meeting, the board identified a need to create an emergency fund and to invest surplus funds. There was a brief discussion on the report provided by the Finance Committee. The Committee’s motion was seconded, and the motion passed.

**MOTION: Recommend that the ACA hold 6-months’ operating budget in cash, with the remainder to be invested in the USOPE reserve portfolio, and the Finance Committee will make a specific recommendation regarding percentage allocation to the long-term portfolio at a later time.**

[Motion passed unanimously.]

**Board Committees.** (Appendix F) Suzanne presented her recommended committee assignments. She reviewed committee assignments. A motion was made to accept the committee. The motion passed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 9:48 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. ET.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert B. Kauffman  
Secretary

**Tentative 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule:**

Tuesday, January 14 <sup>th</sup>	August (skipped)
Tuesday, February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday, September 16 <sup>th</sup>
Tuesday, March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday-Saturday, October 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> & Annual Meeting
Tuesday, April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, November 12 <sup>th</sup>
Tuesday, May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, December 10 <sup>th</sup>
June (skipped)	
Wednesday, July 9 <sup>th</sup>	



## Appendix A

### American Canoe Association Board of Directors Meeting Agenda [Video Meeting]

Tuesday, May 6, 2025  
[Draft]

	Approximate Time
<b>WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	8:00 – 8:05
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 2025 minutes</li> </ul>	
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE</b>	8:05 – 8:20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership Survey (update)</li> <li>• Fund Raising Plan</li> <li>• Sport 80 Update</li> <li>• Moving funds to USOPE (at Finance Committee)</li> <li>• Smart Start</li> <li>• COO Position (brief update and introduction)</li> <li>• Krista: Introductory Comments</li> </ul>	
	8:20 – 8:35
<b>BUSINESS OVERVIEWS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEIC – Ryan: Leader Pathways Launch</li> <li>• Competition Council - Risa</li> <li>• Regional Activity Council - Bill</li> </ul>	8:35 - 8:45 8:45 - 8:50 8:50 - 8:55
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board and Standing Committee Leadership - Suzanne</li> <li>• Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Business from the floor</li> </ul>	8:55 - 9:05 9:05 - 9:30
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	9:30

<b>Tentative 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule:</b>	
<del>Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup></del> <del>Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup></del> <del>Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup></del> <del>Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup></del> Tuesday, May 6 <sup>th</sup> June (skipped) Wednesday, July 9 <sup>th</sup>	August (skipped) Tuesday, September 16 <sup>th</sup> Thursday-Saturday, October 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> & Annual Meeting Wednesday, November 12 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday, December 10 <sup>th</sup>

**1. Fully implement Sport 80 including seamless integration with CMS and QuickBooks by April 1st. In progress**

- Process put on hold due to S80 Major Release on 4/22/25 - testing started back up on 4/28.
- CMS integration and plan for Quickbooks are no longer constraints.
- Kelsey's focus on Smart Start has contributed to the implementation delay, but I think we made the right trade-off.

**2. Document and gain BOD agreement of staff vs. council roles and responsibilities by January 2025. This document will specify point staff or each council. Policy drafted including staff contacts. Further progress is in the hands of the committee.**

- I submitted Council Authority to the three council chairs and subsequently the BOD in January. This document identifies two staff liaisons for each council.
- The Board decided to form a committee, with Robert as Chair, to move this effort forward.
- Matt Drayer wrote an entirely new document. I have provided feedback, but I don't know where he and Robert stand in this process.

**3. Support SEIC's plan to implement the Creature Learning Leader Pathways project by June 2025. Work in progress being led by SEIC with staff support**

- Phase I of the launch is complete. Kelsey and Tara provided Ryan and his team support for this effort.

**4. Continue strong fiscal management with quarterly financial reports to the BOD. On track**

- Reports have been provided in the google folder for this meeting.
- Finance Committee has not met in 2025.

**5. Month over month 5% membership revenue growth by the end of the calendar year of 2025. Actively working on projects to retain and grow membership.**

- Year to date (through end of April) membership revenue is 5% lower than 2024. We are pushing hard to add new membership efforts.
- Smart Start program will generate unbudgeted membership revenue. I hope it will be enough to fill this gap.

6. Hire a Chief Operating Officer (begin January 15th, end April 30, 2025) **Complete**

7. Complete a survey of the membership to measure satisfaction and perceived benefits of membership by March 1st. **Survey has been distributed albeit later than planned. Response window closes tomorrow, May 7.**

8. Enhance and define staff support for all three National Councils, including ED attendance at least two (2) meetings per year per council. **On track**

- Staff support for the councils was identified in the Council Authority Policy document.
- I attended a State Director meeting and an SEIC meeting.


9. Maintain membership numbers through Sport 80 implementation and grow current membership numbers in the last six months of the year by 5% (reach goal). **TBD**

- Not yet applicable.
- Might need some clarification on how this reconciles with #4 above.

**OTHER:**

- I continue to actively participate in biweekly NASBLA meetings and share our content for the Micro Learning Charge.
- 2025 National Teams are officially selected for Sprint and Slalom. We are sending teams to Europe starting with SP World Cup 1 in Szeged, Hungary on May12.
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## Appendix C



### Leadership Pathway Rollout Update

#### Rollout Highlights

- Hosted 2 Q&A Sessions
- Delivered 4 Trainer Orientations to onboard existing IT/ITEs as Leader Trainers and Educators - Now have 55 Leader Trainers & Educators to start delivering courses.
- ACA staff has updated website to incorporate Leader Certifications
- Courses can be registered and reported in CMS.
- Course Workbooks now a ACA revenue stream on Kindle and Print-on-Demand.



### Leadership Pathway Rollout Update

#### What's Next

- ITEs who attended orientation are being equipped to onboard other IT/Es.
- Launch date of May 15th.
- Rollout focuses on onboarding Instructors who have delivered/reported previous trip leader trainings as Leader Trainer / Educators. .
- Rollout of multi-day/wilderness Guide Certifications.



## **CMS Instructor Trainer Candidate Evaluation Forms**

### **Tasking - Update IT Candidate Evaluation to Standardize IT Expectations.**

- ITE work group established by SEIC Board at Spring Meeting
- Work group created draft IT Candidate Evaluation and guidance document
- Sent for review and feedback to 10 other ITEs
- Feedback being incorporated by work group to be presented to SEIC board and reviewed by discipline committees.
- Targeting a vote of approval by SEIC Board at Summer SEIC meeting.



## **Other Updates**

- **Approved applications for 6 new/upgrade IT Certifications.**
- **“Skills Awards” approved as name for passing skills assessment.**
- **SEIC Involvement in Paddlefest**
- **Summer SEIC Board Meeting - June 17th, 2025**

Risa Shimoda <risa@theshimodagroup.com>  
To: Robert Kauffman <kauffman.rbk@gmail.com>

Sun, May 4, 2025 at 3:37 PM

Hi Robert,

## Appendix D

1) I would like to submit the updated for Board approval at the next meeting.

The Competition Council (CC) supports the mission of the ACA by developing and promoting athletic competition in paddle sports at the local, regional, national, continental, and international levels.

The role of the Competition Council is to:

- Enable United States athletes to achieve sustained competitive excellence in international competitions, including, but not limited to Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American, Parapan American, ICF World Championships, and World Cups
- Enable United States athletes in all paddlesports disciplines to pursue and enhance their skills, and experiences as members of the paddlesports community at U.S. National Championships
- Promote and grow community participation in "recreational" through to high-performance paddlesports competition the United States
- Promote competition for its benefits beyond on-water benefits among recreational paddlesports
- Serve as a resource for paddlesports competitors in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, governance, competition production, athlete development, coach development, official development, team development, fundraising, and inclusion
- Facilitate CC Committees process definition and compliance

The role of the CC Board is to:

- Facilitate cooperation among CC Committees
- Represent the interests of CC Committees, athletes, coaches and officials to the ACA Board of Directors


### Draft ACA Competition Council Operating Procedures for Approva I

ACA Competition Council Operating Procedures v.2018-02-07 Revision Notes Last Updated: 2024-10-09 Link to Original Version ARTICLE I. NAME This National Activity Council shall be known as the Competition Council (CC) of the American Canoe Association (ACA). In these operating procedures,

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[docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com)

2) Here is the Competition Council report, largely the same as the meeting notes.

- The Competition Council met March 27th. Jonas Eckar shared that he is the new chair of the Athletes Council and pitched the need for women council participants, emphasizing that the group's role is to discuss common issues and provide a voice for athletes in the organization.
- MacKenzie offered the following:
  - o The updated **Competition Council Operating Procedures** were approved by a majority of the CC members.
  - o The ACA has purchased a **zoom package for CC use** and has coached Risa and Matt Drayer and at least one discipline lead how to administer and schedule committee meetings.
  - o On October 17-19 the ACA will celebrate its **145th anniversary** in Charlotte centered at the National Whitewater Training Center.
- The Coaching Subcommittee has updated the website with its [video!](#)



### Coaching Portal - ACA

Connection Based Coaching. Grow your understanding of supportive environments that will help your athletes thrive on and off the water! The USOPC created this course in partnership with Stand Up LLC and with support from the Susan Crown Exchange, in an effort to train one million

h i i l d i l l i f h  
[americancanoe.org](https://americancanoe.org)

- **Fundraising** - Our guest Kathy Holcomb did not make it due to a zoom link mixup and will join us at the May meeting
- **Tapping into the mindset of event organizers** - The 2025 Gorge Games/Ocean Racing Nationals event leader has his hands full planning to host 1,000 competitors at the Gorge Games. We discussed opportunities to provide value to competitors and event organizers, including organizational packets for teams heading to major, often international events. While we don't require events to be sanctioned by the ACA to be listed on our website, we can see a day when we raise the value of being a member and can offer event notices on our sites as a benefit. We'll ask the new **events staff** to join us to share value discipline participants need to see for us to begin to grow membership among our many disciplines and the opportunity they offer paddlers of all ages.
- **Large participant/spectator data** we know are there (and seek to aggregate to support a 2026-2027 all team/multi-sport ask)! Grant Cooper from the SUP committee will help us set up an event participation model to develop a composite dimensionalized picture of competitive paddling in the USA. He has done so for SUP and confirmed that the numbers can be used beyond pitching sponsorship. Sport 80 has a module that would facilitate an upload and dispersion of paddlers/disciplines/events, and we will see if our package includes this empowering feature when we see it in action. If not, we will keep on going with our manual spreadsheet-based system. Risa will work with Grant and Matt to show others an example and template for all to contribute.
- **We will invite the RAC** to the next meeting and float the idea of having a CCA liaison to the RAC as requested a year ago, a bit too early on in our reboot effort.
- **Trevor shared that Rafting Nationals** will take place on the Trinity River September 12-14, 2025. This would be a great multi-sport event.
- **PaddleSummit in China**, Kristin / SUP attended and shared about this amazing event that takes place every four years.
- **Smart Start** - Suzanne encouraged everyone to order a copy of Smart Start.

**Next Meeting** - This will take place May 29, 2025 at 7 pm ET.

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## Appendix E

**Date:** Sunday, May 4, 2025

**Time:** 5:00 PM Pacific Time

**Adjourned:** 5:29 PM Pacific Time

### Attendees:

- **Voting Members:** Jerry Dunne, Risa Shimoda, Blake Haxton, Brenda Jin
- **Non-Voting Members:** Suzanne Britt , Beth Spilman
- **Absent:** Riaz Shaikh

### Discussion Items:

- Beth presented a report on the historical change in ACA net assets from 2015, highlighting a shift from negative to positive net assets beginning in 2020. Beth provided historical context as well to the shift in higher cash amount held for operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Discussion regarding the ACA's finances, including:
  - [REDACTED] bank accounts holding cash assets.
  - [REDACTED] in unrestricted cash funds.
  - [REDACTED] additional funds designated for sprint and slalom activities.
  - [REDACTED] currently invested in the long-term pool of the USOPE endowment.
- Discussion of the USOPE endowment vehicle and associated risk
  - Reserve Portfolio has a 90-day withdrawal period, possibly with higher liquidity depending on individual vehicles
  - Blake discussed considerations for fund utilization, stating that if funds are expected to be used within 12 months to 3 years, the long-term fund would not be recommended due to its high-risk profile.
- It was noted that [REDACTED] would be approximately 4 months' of operating cash.
- It was noted that Beth Spilman is on the Board of Directors for the USOPE endowment but does not receive any benefit from the ACA participating in the endowment.

### Motion:

- Recommend that the ACA hold 6-months' operating budget in cash, with the remainder to be invested in the USOPE reserve portfolio, and the Finance Committee will make a specific recommendation regarding percentage allocation to the long-term portfolio at a later time.
  - a. Motion by Blake Haxton
  - b. Ayes: Jerry Dunne, Brenda Jin, Risa Shimoda
  - c. Nays: None

## Appendix F

	Type	Committee	Members	
Board	Ad Hoc	Council Advisory Policy	Robert Kaufman Risa Shimoda Ryan Rushton Bev Cosslett Matt Dryer Beth Spilman	BOD Competition Council/Athlete Rep SEIC RAC Athlete Rep ex-officio
Board	Ad Hoc	COO Search Committee	Beth Spilman Anna Levesque Risa Shimoda Bev Cosslett Hunter Branstetter Kenny Kasperbauer Brenda Jin	Staff SEIC Competition Council RAC Athlete Rep Athlete Rep BOD assigned
Board	Ad Hoc	NASBLA Ad Hoc Committee	Brett Mayer Jeff Atkins Jake Vitak Brian McGorry Bill Caruso Robert Kaufman Robin Pope	Staff SEIC SEIC RAC RAC BOD appointment BOD appointment
Board	Ad Hoc	ED Review and New Position Sub-	Robert Kaufman Beth Spilman Hunter Branstetter Anna Levesque Suzanne Britt	BOD Secretary Staff Athlete Rep (BOD at-large member in 2024) SEIC BOD President
Board	Ad Hoc	Governance (Internal Policy & Procedures)	Hunter Branstetter	Cmttee Chair Athlete Rep ? ?? ?? ??
Board	Ad Hoc	Governance (External/Stewardship Policy )	Robin Pope Brett Mayer	BOD appointment Staff ?? ?? ??
Board Standing		Executive Committee	Suzanne Britt Bev Cosslett Robert Kaufman Brenda Jin Jonas Ecker	BOD President BOD Vice-President BOD Secretary BOD Treasurer BOD Team USA Athlete Rep

		Blake Haxton	BOD Paracanoe Athlete Rep
Board Standing	Finance Committee		
		Brenda Jin	BOD Treasurer
		Suzanne Britt	BOD ex-officio
		Risa Shimoda	BOD Athlete Rep
		Blake Haxton	BOD Athlete Rep
		Jerry Dunne	Properties Chair
		Riaz Shaikh	ACA Member
		Beth Spilman	Staff ex-officio
		Emma Walther	Staff ex-officio
Board Standing	Audit Committee		
		Brenda Jin	BOD Treasurer
		Suzanne Britt	BOD ex-officio
		Risa Shimoda	BOD Athlete Rep
		Blake Haxton	BOD Athlete Rep
		Jerry Dunne	Properties Chair
		Riaz Shaikh	ACA Member
		Beth Spilman	Staff ex-officio
		Emma Walther	Staff ex-officio
NonBoard Standing	Property Management		
		Jerry Dunne	Atlantic Division/Sebago/BOD Pres Appointment
		John Nowicky	Sugar Island Trustee Chair
NonBoard Standing	Nominating and Governance		
		Bev Cosslett	BOD VP / BOD President Appointment
		Bill Caruso	RAC (PAC & State Director Rep)
		Robin Pope	SEIC
		Stef Stannard	SEIC
			Athlete Rep
			Athlete Rep
NonBoard Standing	Ethics Committee.		
			Chair Position Voted by BOD
			1 other Position voted on by BOD
			Athlete Rep
NonBoard Standing	Grievance Committee		
		Hunter Branstetter	BOD Appointment / Athlete Rep
		Jerry Dunne	BOD Appointment / Athlete Rep
		Suzanne Britt	BOD President
National Activity	Safety Safety, Education and		
		Robert Kaufman	BOD President Appointment to SEIC
National Activity	Competition Council (CC)		
		Suzanne Britt	BOD President Appointment to CC
National Activity	Regional Activity Council (RAC)		
		Bev Cosslett	BOD rep would be ex-offio
National Activity	Athlete Advisory Council		

Jonas Ecker	Team USA Athlete Commission Primary Rep (10 yr)
Casey	Team USA Athlete Commission Alternative Rep (10 yr)
Aaron Small	BOD at-Large Athlete Rep (10 yr)
Blake Haxton	BOD Paracanoe Athlete Rep (10 yr)
Zak Lokken	BOD Slalom Athlete Rep (10 yr)
	?
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	?
	?
	?