



## ACA Board Meeting [Video Conference]

Tuesday, February 11, 2025  
[Draft]

### WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Dave opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The agenda is in Appendix A.

**Attendance.** Attendance was taken from the video logins. **BOD Present:** Susan Britt, Bev Cosslett, Jonas Ecker, Blake Haxton, Brenda Jin, Robert Kauffman, Zach (Bud) Lokken, David Lumian, Ryan Rushton, Risa Shimoda, Aaron Small, Andrea White

**BOD Members Not Present:** na

**Staff Present:** Beth Spilman

**Other Attendees:** Jerry Dunne, Emma Walter, Andrea Garcia, Michelle Flynn, Steve Kelly

Since the January minutes were not posted prior to the meeting, the board did not have a chance to review them and they were not approved.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

**Update.** (Appendix B) Beth provided a quick update on the materials covered in her report in Appendix B. Regarding the office, they have a new landlord. They are moving upstairs and the rent has not changed. They are actively pursuing the SEIC's leader pathways. Beth is attending the NASBLA meeting. Kelsey and she will be presenting the Smart Start at the conference.

**Changing Washington Landscape.** With the new administration, there have been changes in the affiliations, grants and other interactions with Washington. Beth lead a brief discussion and update on this topic. The changes can significantly affect organizations relying on grants for their income. The ACA should be okay in this respect. However, it could affect affiliations, including our alliance with Outdoor Alliance. It might affect our Coast Guard Grants although these funds originate from a designated tax on sporting equipment. Although the USOPC is independent of the administration, the changes in the gender policy and DEI could have carry over, particularly with the upcoming LA Olympics. Last, the administration's policies can affect the ACA's DEI initiatives as delineated in the bylaws and on the website. (Secretary's Note: *Although the Bylaws mention DEI by name in Article III: Section 5, the text depicts the*

*traditional concepts associated with equality.*) Beth noted that the USOPC government relations office was wiped out, which will affect our athletes getting visas.

## **COUNCIL UPDATES**

**SEIC** (Appendix C). Ryan provided an SEIC update of the 2024 accomplishments and the 2025 objectives.

**RAC** (Appendix D). Andrea provided the update of activities for RAC.

**Competition Committee**. Risa indicated that they are completing a coaching video consisting of a montage of the different disciplines.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**COO Search Update**. Beth provided an update on the COO search. They have had a few applications.

**Council Authority Policy Update**. Robert indicated that the committee had its first meeting. The group recommended the importance of linking proposals to the strategic plan. The group did a preliminary review of a volunteer policy proposal. At this time, there was nothing requiring approval.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Athletic Advisory Council Charter**. (Appendix E) Jonas presented the proposed AAC. After a discussion, the document was sent back to committee for additional comment and review. The Charter should be ready for approval at the next board meeting.

**BOD Officer Elections**. Two officers were due for elections: President and Secretary. The third office, Treasurer, needed to be filled because of the election results. Jerry Dunne was invited by the Executive Director to conduct the voting for any contested position.

The first election was for President. Three candidates submitted their statements as requested in the previous board minutes (Appendix F-1-3). The candidates for president were Suzanne, Robert, and Brenda. Robert withdrew his nomination. Jerry conducted the vote. Suzanne won 10 votes to 2 votes.

Consistent with Robert's Rules of Order, Suzanne, the new President, conducted the remainder of the meeting.

Bev indicated that she would continue as Vice President until the completion of her term next year.

The second election was for Secretary. Robert, the only candidate, was reelected unanimously.

Since Suzanne was elected president, the Treasurer position needed to be filled. Brenda was nominated. Being the only nominee, Brenda was elected unanimously.

**2025 BOD Meeting Schedule.** The group decided upon the following dates for future board meetings for the year.

Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

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>

Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>

Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 9:56 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. ET.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Kauffman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert B. Kauffman  
Secretary

**American Canoe Association  
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**

## Appendix A

February 11, 2025

Approximate Times

<b>WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b> - Dave	8:00 - 8:10
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES</b> - Beth	8:10 - 8:25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Sprint Program Manager</a></li><li>• Fredericksburg Office Move</li><li>• 2025 In-Person Annual Meetin</li><li>• NASBLA</li><li>• Current Staff Priorities</li></ul>	
<b>COUNCIL UPDATES</b>	
• Competition Council	8:25 - 8:35
• Regional Activity Council	8:35 - 8:45
• Safety Education and Instruction Council	8:45 - 8:55
<b>OLD BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS</b>	
• COO Search Update	8:55 - 9:05
• Council Authority Policy Update	9:05 - 9:10
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
• Athletes' Council Formation - Jonas	8:50 - 9:00
• BOD Officer Elections - Dave/Jerry	9:00 - 9:20
• 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule - New Chair	9:20 - 9:30

2025 Performance Objectives

February 2025 Update

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

- We had to go back to step 1 on the data mapping from YM to S80 but have completed our tasks and will meet with S80 next week to move this forward. YM handles data in a very messy and challenging fashion – especially transactional histories.
- Met with USA Climbing CFO to discuss their S80/QB processes. Had follow up call with CEO and head data guy at S80 to discuss transactions that have been invoiced but not paid – this is an Accounts Receivable issue. Waiting for them to respond with recommendations.
- They have also implemented an overhaul of the user dashboard functionality and need to update our test site with new functionality.

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

- 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.
- The first committee meeting will be next week.

**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**

- Kelsey meets with SEIC Exec Committee every Monday to support all SEIC efforts.
- I had a call with Ryan earlier this week to discuss SEIC's 2025 priorities and to offer support for the LP rollout effort. Specifically, I suggested to Ryan that he contact Tara and involve her in the rollout. Tara's time was included in the 2025 budget.

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

- Emma provided the requested reports to the Treasurer for the January Finance Committee meeting which I attended.
- Fiscal year end 2024 reports are included in the google folder for the February meeting.
- By February 15, we need to file the 990 or an extension.

**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.**

- Membership revenue in the first quarter of the year was materially affected by Hurricane Helene – November 2025 was \$14,000 lower than last year (\_\_\_%).

- We have reviewed and updated a plethora of member emails including membership renewals notifications, automated thank you replies for donations, and failed auto renewals. We have also reevaluated our paper mailings.

6. Hire a Chief Operating Officer (begin January 15th, end April 30, 2025) **On track to meet April date**

- We converted the subcommittee's detailed job description to a more consumer-friendly job posting and then launched the posting on Indeed last week. Despite the screening questions and explicit requirements, we really only received one resume that meets our requirements. I paused the Indeed posting on 2/4, and launched it on Linked In on February 7 – also with screening questions and geographical restrictions.

7. Complete a survey of the membership to measure satisfaction and perceived benefits of membership by March 1st. **March 1 date is at risk**

- We have had some preliminary discussions about this project, but I have not made any tangible progress. The March 1 date is in jeopardy.

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 the January Competition Council meeting and the first State Director onboarding call.

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:**

- Negotiated new lease with landlord saving us from a \$19,000 increase in rent.
- Worked with insurance broker to switch insurance companies, saving us from a \$18,000 premium increase.
- Our part of the financial audit is complete. We are waiting on our audit partner to complete his final review including decisions about deferred revenue for USPC income and Sebago's insurance payment.
- Actively participating in biweekly NASBLA meetings and shared our content for the Micro Learning Charge. Kelsey & I will attend their annual meeting in Lexington in mid-March and present Smart Start, which has recently been completed by Kelsey and Robin.
- Guided Brett's efforts to launch an advocacy awareness campaign and to promote as a member benefit.
- Interviewed several candidates for the Sprint Program Manager position and extended offer to an amazing candidate. The offer was accepted, and the candidate will start on March 1.

# SEIC Update

## 2024 Highlights

- Curriculum Design - Completed the new Leadership Pathway curriculum and passed motions making new certification a reality in 2025.
- Co-Hosted Regional Updates with RAC
- Rolled out the new Coastal Kayak curriculum
- Updated skills assessment and instructor candidate evaluations in CMS
- Elected a new Executive Committee Team with 4 active members

## 2025 - What's ahead

- Rollout of the new Leadership Pathway certification courses.
- Support discipline committees in their work
- Support Instructor and Leadership certification courses (and future Coaching certification) with e-learning modules. Top request from IT/ITE cadre.
- Standards - IT Evaluation Forms
- Next Steps the Curriculum Design work - Paddler, Instructor or Coaching Pathways
- Recommit to unfinished work from 2024
  - We need to reignite the Intro to Paddling Committee
  - Re-imagine the transition from PSF to Level 2



## Regional Activity Council Report 2-11-25

- **In January: results of State Director Elections**
  - More than 350 ACA members voted
    - > 245 ACA members voting during Board elections
  - 36 Active State Directors
  - ~50% returning and ~50% new





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[Overview](#)  
[Organizational Partners](#)  
[Summer Solstice Celebration](#)  
[Equity & Access Initiatives](#)  
[Regional Activity Council \(RAC\)](#)

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COMMUNITY

COMPETITION

## — Executive Committee

Chair: [Andrea White](#)

Vice-Chair: [Ryan Pepper](#)

Past Chair: [Meredith Waters](#)

Secretary: [Bev Cosslett](#)

Affiliate Clubs: [BG Smith](#)

## — Regional Representatives

Northeast: [Ann Barry](#)

East Coast: [Ashley McEwan](#)

Southeast: [Andrea White](#)

Gulf States: [Dave Holl](#)

Midwest: [Barbara Carmichael](#)

Heartland: [Pete Jizba](#)

Rocky Mountain: [Moriya Beck](#)

Pacific West: [Jamie Eubanks](#)

U.S. Territories: Vacant

International: [Stanley Esquivel Mesen](#)

## — State Directors

Alabama: [Craig Heflin](#)

Alaska: [Brian McGorry](#)

Arizona: [Sean Tracey](#)

Arkansas: [Ellie Wilson](#)

California: [Anthea Raymond](#)

Colorado: [Kyle Clark](#)

Connecticut: [Martin Torresquintero](#)

District of Columbia: [Meredith Waters](#)

Delaware: [Em McKeever](#)

Florida: [Tatiana Lopez](#)

Georgia: [Paul Winget](#)

Hawaii: [Mark Ling](#)

Idaho: Vacant

Illinois: [Marcos Garcia Norris](#)





## RAC Onboarding

- Structured in 5 parts:
  - 3 self-paced online modules: **Gamification!**  
Earn points for completing each task!!  
First SD per region to complete all tasks wins a prize!
    - Intro Tasks: Module #1
    - Facebook: Module #2
    - Club Express: Module #3
  - 2 Live (and recorded) Webinars
    - January 29 at 8 pm eastern (with slides)
    - February 4 at 8 pm eastern (with slides)

**Tedious, Admin Tasks;  
Immediate Visibility on Gaps**

**Nuanced Topics;  
Interactive Mentoring**



## RAC Onboarding

- **Live Webinars provide interactive mentoring on nuanced topics**
  - What should happen after you complete onboarding?
  - How to build connections across your paddlesports community
  - Staff resources
  - RAC Resources on Club Express site
  - Social Media Do's and Don'ts
  - Guidelines for Public Relations and Media
  - Guidelines and Resources for State and Local Advocacy
  - How to amplify state/local/recreational/club success stories



# RAC Online Modules: Intro Tasks Module #1

## EMAIL TASKS:

1) Please **reference the RAC webpage** and familiarize yourself with how we can direct members of the paddling community to the appropriate RAC leader in their area.

### 2) Set up your RAC email address

Your RAC Council officers have initiated the process with ACA staff to give you access to the email address that has been assigned to your role. You should receive an email from staff with password and login instructions.

This email address will be an aliased gmail account, so to add it to your devices go to your existing Google account and go to Settings--> Add Account and enter the email address and password staff have provided to you. Once you are in the account you can change Account settings to determine your notifications and email signature.

It is important for you to check this email address regularly in case paddling stakeholders in your community are reaching out and need your assistance to connect them with resources.

3) State Directors, **please send your Regional Chair an email from the RAC email address** to confirm you have successfully accessed your account.

~~RAC Council members please send your RAC Chair an email from the RAC email address to confirm you have successfully accessed your account.~~

## FACEBOOK TASKS:

1) Make sure you are **Facebook friends with your RAC Chair** so they can set the State Director up as an Admin for the ACA State Facebook page and can set Regional Chairs up as Admins for all ACA State Facebook Pages in their Region.

2) Make sure you have **read and understood the standard operating procedures** for administering an ACA social media channel. By turning in this task, you are **offering your formal attestation** that you understand these requirements and will abide by them.

3) State Directors, your RAC Chair will send you an invitation to be the Admin of an ACA state social media channel. Regional Chairs, you will receive invitations to serve as Admin for all state social media channels in your region. Invitations to serve as an Admin will appear in your Facebook notifications or you can go to the actual Facebook page and should see the notification there. **You will have 30 days to accept this invitation before it will expire in Facebook.**

4) State Directors, once you have access to your state social media channels, please **publish a post introducing yourself** and your new role to your community.

## CLUB EXPRESS TASKS:

1) The RAC Secretary should have sent you information to set up a **login to the RAC Club Express home page**.

2) This will be a resource you will need to know how to reference again in the future. **Please save this website** to your resources for frequently accessed websites.





## RAC Online Modules: Gamification and Monitoring by Regional Chairs

RAC Onboarding LEADERBOARD				Out of 95 Possible Points
Paul Winget	State Director	GA		85
Chris Carragher	State Director	NH		85
John MacDonald	State Director	UT		85
Robert Nissenbaum	State Director	WA		85
Bev Cosslett	RAC Council Member		RAC Secretary	85
Barb Carmichael	RAC Council Member		Midwest	80
Marcos Garcia Norris	State Director	IL		75
William Holman	State Director	NC		75
Burc Oral	State Director	ME		65
Sam Grubisich	State Director	MN		65
Em McKeever	State Director	DE		60

[illegible]



## RAC Onboarding

- **For both Live sessions we have been efficient enough to finish early**
- **Net Takeaways:**
  - The RAC is maturing.
    - Even returning State Directors are learning and growing
    - Critical Role of the Regional Chair
  - There is a lot of leadership and positive energy in our state and local RAC volunteers
    - Regional Chairs are the critical mentorship step that channels that energy into positive directions and deflects risks. **ALWAYS INCLUDE THE REGIONAL CHAIR.**



**AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION  
ATHLETE ADVISORY COUNCIL CHARTER (ATH-003)**

The Athlete Council is established pursuant to Article VIII of the By-Laws of the American Canoe Association (the “By-Laws” and “ACA” or “Association”), which requires the Athlete Advisory Council (the “AAC”) to adopt this Charter to establish rules and procedure for the composition, governance, and operation of the AAC in full compliance with applicable USOPC requirements. Except as expressly stated otherwise herein, all capitalized terms used in this Charter shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the By-Laws.

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the AAC is to support the mission of the ACA and to act as a liaison between the athletes and the Board and the staff of the ACA. Such purpose may include but shall not be limited to: (i) handling and addressing confidential athlete issues; (ii) advising the Board on athlete issues; (iii) acting as a resource for the Board and staff on athlete issues and perspectives; and (iv) providing ACA athlete perspectives and issues to the Team USA Athletes’ Commission through Athlete Representatives. The Board and staff shall be entitled to rely on the recommendations of the AAC on matters directly affecting the interest of Olympic and Paralympic paddle sport athletes.

**2. COMPOSITION**

The AAC shall consist of at least seven (7) and no more than eight (8) Athlete Members each of whom must qualify as a “10 Year Athlete” as defined in the ACA By-Laws Addendum A, including:

- a) the two Team USA Athletes’ Commission Representatives (Primary and Alternate);
- b) each Board Athlete Representative who qualifies as a “10 Year Athlete” under ACA By-Laws Addendum A;
- c) one female Athlete Member and one male Athlete Member, both of whom are also a “10 Year Athlete” in canoe sprint;
- d) one female Athlete Member and one male Athlete Member, both of whom are also a “10 Year Athlete” in canoe slalom;
- e) one female Athlete Member and one male Athlete Member both of whom are also a “10 Year Athlete” in paracanoe; and
- f) if a member seat cannot be filled per Section 2(c-e), the remaining seat shall be filled by an at-large Athlete Member who is a “10 Year Athlete” in canoe sprint, canoe slalom, or paracone.

**3. COMPLIANCE**

Prior to and as a prerequisite to appointment or election as an AAC member, each candidate must (x) complete, and submit to the ACA in accordance with its Conflicts of Interest Policy, the ACA’s conflict of interest disclosure forms, (y) execute and deliver the ACA’s standard confidentiality agreement, and (z) certify their compliance with the Team USA Athletes’

Commission Conflicts of Interest Policy and disclose to the Board any felony convictions or any period ineligibility served in sport (such as, by way of example and without limitation, due to violations of anti-doping codes, violations of the SafeSport Rules or, in the case of Paralympic athletes, the Athlete Classification Code).

#### **4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; MEETINGS**

Each calendar year, the AAC members shall appoint an Executive Committee for an annual term, by majority vote of the AAC members, consisting of a Council Chair, Council Vice-Chair and a Council Secretary. The Council Chair shall be appointed from the pool of Board Athlete Representatives. The Council Vice-Chair shall serve in the place and stead of the Council Chair when the Council Chair is unavailable and shall assist the Council Chair in guiding the work of the AAC. The AAC shall convene no less than once per quarter and shall meet more frequently as needed to fulfill its purpose as set forth herein. A majority of the members of the AAC shall constitute a quorum. Minutes shall be kept at all meetings by the Council Secretary, shall be reviewed and approved by a majority vote of the AAC following each meeting, and shall be available for review by the Board.

#### **5. TERM**

The term of office on the AAC of each of the Team USA Athletes' Commission Representatives and the Board Athlete Representatives shall coincide with their term of office for their service on the Board as applicable. The remaining non-Board affiliated AAC members will be elected by the eligible "10 Year Athlete" body, separated by discipline as outlined in Section 2(c-f), with a term of office that shall coincide with the terms of the Board Athlete Representatives.

#### **6. NOMINATIONS**

The AAC shall assist the ACA Volunteer Coordinator and ACA Compliance Officer to screen all non-Board affiliated AAC members for the AAC prior to an eligible "10 Year Athlete" body vote. As part of such screening procedures, nominations may include: (a) a written statement of intent, which may include a nominee's qualifications and reason for pursuing membership on the AAC; and (b) a brief resume.

#### **7. PROFESSIONAL CODE**

The AAC shall draft a Professional Code that will supplement the ACA Athlete Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Professional Code is to hold all national team athletes accountable for their actions as representatives of the United States, both within and outside of competition. The athletes of the ACA are expected to use the code to help each other grow as competitors on all levels as well as ambassadors of their sport and country. The code shall be treated as a living document and can be added to or amended as deemed appropriate by the AAC. The Professional Code shall be posted each season on the ACA website.

## Appendix F-1

### **Suzanne Britt, candidate for ACA Board President**

In my time on the board, I have come to understand the board's importance in being the visionaries and caretakers of the whole organization. The ACA will be 145 years old this year. It has grown, changed and adapted throughout its history. Yet, at its core – it is still a volunteer organization serving ALL its member paddlers. As a board, even with our strategic plan, we have struggled to find the alignment to propel the organization forward. I am stepping up to lead because I believe we should do the following:

1. Create better alignment within the board.
2. Prioritize the strategic plan with an overarching concept that we are a service organization. Always asking: Are we making decisions that are in the best interest of the members?
3. Stick to our priorities while continuously evaluating if we are on the correct path. Fix the foundation, get the everyday job done and keep moving forward.
4. Start asking the hard questions, like: are we moving the organization forward into the vision we created?
5. Begin discussions on how to fund, sustainably, our competition arm. I believe a long-term strategy would provide benefit to the rest of the organization.
6. Have more effective meetings.
7. Create a stronger, trusting and collaborative relationship between the board, staff and members.

Throughout my life I have experienced many facets of the ACA - recreational, marathon, slalom, sprint, SUP, and sailing. I have served on a variety of national committees, and have been active at a local, national and international level as a certified official and event organizer. During my time on the board, I have made it a point to learn as much as possible about the entire organization. I was a RAC liaison during the creation of their operating procedures, a committee member that evaluated a new governance structure for competition, testified with other ACA members at the WA state legislature and recently as a Competition Council liaison during the creation of their operating procedures.

I serve as ACA treasurer, an executive committee member, a grievance committee member, a strategic planning committee member and have chaired the officials' association. Internationally, I represent the ACA as an International Canoe Federation finance commission member and COPAC treasurer. In order to better understand the broad scope of the ACA, I have been proactively learning about how the SEIC operates, while fostering communication across the organization.

Further, I have more than 35 years of experience in finance and accounting. My diverse skills include bookkeeping, financial reporting, budgeting, and regulatory compliance, among many others. I have a proven record of managing diverse groups and working across organizations from frontline staff to CEOs.

I care deeply about this entire paddlesport organization and would like to see it thrive.

My unique combination of experience, passion, commitment and available time (having recently retired) will allow me to contribute to the board in order to further the goals of the many facets of the ACA.



## Appendix F-2

### Robert B. Kauffman, Ph.D. Summary Statement for President of the ACA

In my professional career, I have demonstrated the leadership skill set necessary to move the ACA forward. In this summary, I took a slightly different approach and used some typical leadership skills as my outline.

**Innovation:** Innovation and **problem solving** go hand-in-hand. When I arrived at Frostburg, I expanded the program from nine to over 125 students and from one faculty member, me, to five. I created a no-new resources master's program that utilized professional administrators from the field. A unique approach, it eventually became the first online program. In a two-year long initiative, I developed an evaluation system which evaluated university presidents on their shared governance responsibilities. A success, the staff and student councils adopted similar evaluations. In moving the ACA board forward, I have initiated the In Service and Outreach proposal, the USOPC Board Training Initiative, the Executive Director Review Process, and the COO position. These initiatives demonstrate my ability to innovate, solve problems, and complete projects.

**Communications:** Communication is a never-ending task for a leader. As chair of the system faculty, I wrote a monthly report. With the assistance of faculty members from our global campus, I wrote a series of position papers on academic integrity. Submitted to the Board of Regents, these commentaries stimulated a major system-wide initiative to change policy and culture. Not only will I write a report for each board meeting, but committees and councils need to submit reports. I seek to be **"transparent."** Good communication is fundamental to moving the ACA forward.

**Collaboration:** We move forward as a team. My previously mentioned ACA initiatives bear witness to my collaborative efforts.

**Flexibility:** When I returned to the board in 2023, I had three objectives: reconstitute water trails, develop a "community education" program, and address any needs identified by the board. At the February 2024 meeting, the board indicated other needs. Putting the first two initiatives on hold, I have focused on the board initiatives.

**Outreach:** In June 2023, I proposed the *"BOD In Service Training and Outreach"* proposal. Approved by the board, its purpose was to break down "silos." Moving forward, this effort needs continuation.

**Passion:** In my professional career, I have had two intertwining threads, education and boating safety. My involvement in paddlesports is broad based including slalom, wildwater, poling, coastal kayaking, extended backcountry tripping, and rafting. My boating education and safety projects have earned national and international honors. Prior to my current board stint, I served on the ACA board for over fifteen years. One might easily conclude that I am passionate about paddlesports and the ACA.

**My Vision:** The ACA is the oldest paddling organization in the country. Traditionally, it has been a full service paddling organization with competition, education and grassroots. Growth for the organization is in the areas of public education and our grassroots effort. As a team, we will develop a plan and grow the organization. We will move the organization forward. I've done it before. I will do it again.

[494 words]

Dear Board of Directors of the American Canoe Association,

First of all, thank you to each of you. I have had the privilege to engage each of you in meaningful conversations, which provided me with valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the ACA. Despite the historical challenges that many of you described, one topic unified all of my conversations: our shared belief in the importance of the ACA's mission of building inclusive paddling communities, supporting excellence, and fostering safety and stewardship through paddlesports education, competition, and recreation. It would be an honor to support this mission as President during this pivotal time in our 144-year history.

Despite being the newest member of the ACA among us, I am confident in my ability to listen attentively and find a framework that incorporates a broad range of concerns. My leadership approach is not authoritarian. Instead, in my previous role as Chair of *Girl Develop It's* Board of Directors, I focused on identifying opportunities for structural improvements that drove alignment and engagement, encouraging all voices to be heard and considered. This approach, in my experience, allows even the most contentious issues to be resolved in support of the mission and strategic plan.

Here is what I propose to accomplish during the first year of my term:

1. **Simplify Strategic Plan and Increase Executive Director Accountability:**
  - Spearhead an initiative to streamline the strategic plan, establishing a foundation for quantifiable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will enable a robust evaluation of the Executive Director's performance
  - Lead timely Executive Committee performance evaluations
2. **Refine Board Meeting Structure:**
  - Maximize input from all directors, provide transparency, ensure shared knowledge of financials and program impact, and establish a consent agenda for efficient decision-making
3. **Support the Nominating and Governance Committee:**
  - Work with the Nominating and Governance Committee to review procedural gaps in the bylaws that have historically hindered decisions
4. **Further Enable Athlete Participation:**
  - Enable Athlete Directors to participate in decision-making, even during heavy training and competition schedules

Regardless of the outcome, I am committed to supporting the ACA's mission and deepen my understanding of the diverse paddling community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brenda Jin  
January 21, 2025