



October 19, 2017

Dear Members of the Rowing Community,

What a remarkable fall it has been already, and USRowing is on the move. In the first month as the CEO of USRowing, Patrick moved into the offices in Princeton, began getting to know the staff, participated in his first board meeting, completed both his first FISA Congress and the USOC Assembly, with no question the highlight being the week in Sarasota at the World Rowing Championships. It is now our job, the USRowing board and staff, to ensure that we have the organization and resources to enter a new era, as we build the foundation for dominating the Olympic podium in LA 2028.

The leadership and Board's top priority is to modernize and improve our organization. Key to achieving this will be improving our communications, our transparency and our receptivity to new ideas and feedback from our community.

The Board of Directors, its governance committee, and an attorney specializing in NGB (National Governing Body) governance issues have been examining the governance policies and structure of USRowing's Board over the past few months. The objective of the work is to strengthen our associations, improve the quality of the services and program we provide our athletes and member organizations, ensure consistent and increasing funding, and ensure those funds are used effectively. We believe to meet these objectives changes to the bylaws are needed.

The Board approved at its Quarterly Board Meeting in September to [revise the bylaws](#) of USRowing to set the size of the Board to fifteen and restructure the Board composition by adding the CEO to the Board, increasing the number of At-Large Directors, and providing representation to our donor group, the National Rowing Foundation (NRF). Additionally, we have changed our member-voted positions to four organizational membership zones and one membership director.

These changes will:

1. Ensure the full accountability of the CEO;
2. Develop a more cohesive and comprehensive long-term strategy for fundraising that financially supports the broader priorities of USRowing throughout the country;
3. Significantly enhance our ability to increase revenue that will be invested in both domestic programs, as well as the national teams;

4. Enhance the ability of the Board members to have the relevant expertise and perspective to proactively focus on growing the interest and participation in rowing throughout the United States; and
5. Bring USRowing's governance structure into better alignment with the guidelines of one of our key stakeholders, the United State Olympic Committee.

Specifically, the new board would have fifteen members:

- One (1) CEO Director
- Five (5) Membership Directors (four elected by member organizations in respective zones; one elected by individual members)
- Three (3) National Rowing Foundation recommended Directors (at least one female)
- Three (3) At-Large Directors (consistent with current policy, appointed by the Board)
- Two (2) AAC Athlete Directors (one male, one female)
- One (1) Athlete Member Director

As required under our Bylaws, any change to our board composition requires approval by a vote of our organizational and athlete members, and such a vote will be scheduled from **December 3 to 15**.

In preparation for the vote, the [proposed revised bylaws](#) will be distributed to the member organizations, as well as published on USRowing's website, on October 19. This allows for a review period of 45 days prior to the vote by the membership beginning on December 3. During this period, the Board of Directors and staff are available to address questions and provide further background. In addition, we will schedule telephonic information sessions during this period, as well as a session at the USRowing Convention in Sarasota, Fla.

We know that changing culture and approach is a work in progress, but our team is committed to building an organization that will promote the continued growth of rowing across the country, while giving our members the opportunity to have a voice in what we're doing. These changes are designed to give voice to membership and build a partnership with all of us who are committed to the goals of rowing. We hope you agree and vote for them to be approved.

Thank you again for your support of our organization, all of our members and members organization, our athletes, and our future.

Sincerely,

Marcia Hooper, USRowing Board Chair and Patrick McNerney, CEO

Contact:

members@usrowing.org

609-751-0700