



DEI Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: September 10, 2024 8:00 pm EST/5:00 pm PT

Attendees

DEI Committee Members: Jenny Withycombe, Malcolm Doldron, Myrna Gotrell, Molly Moore and June Marshall

USRowing Board Member Liaison: Stephen Ciraolo

Guests: Amanda Kraus, CEO, USRowing
Rich Cacioppo, Executive Director, USRowing
Jennie Traves, Chief Community Engagement Officer, USRowing

I. **Call to Order:** 8:05 PM EST/5:05 PT

- Due to time constraints of Committee members and guests, meeting began immediately after the call to order.

II. **New Business:** 8:15-9:00 pm EST

A. Amanda Kraus, Rich Cacioppo, and Jennie Traves

- Ms. Kraus and Mr. Cacioppo began by providing an overview of their thoughts with respect to the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic performance of Team USA Rowing. Discussion ensued regarding the highlights and disappointments of the team's results. USRowing Board Member Sara Hendershot is collecting data now based on athlete exit surveys.
- Ms. Kraus discussed the realities of the needs with respect to planning the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic games regarding logistics of venue, staff and team that will be needed for a successful Olympics and Paralympics. Ms. Kraus mentioned however that it was brought home that LA28 is a unique opportunity to host the event.
- Mr. Cacioppo stated the challenges of athletes sticking around for LA28 that there was a need to focus on flat water rowing and coastal rowing in the future.
- Discussion also took place regarding USRowing's plans for diversifying the athlete and coaching pipeline in preparation for LA28. Ms. Kraus mentioned that a larger diversity impact may be seen for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.
- Ms. Traves acknowledged that compared to other Olympic sports, the lack of diversity in rowing is stark. Ms. Traves also acknowledged that there were not enough para-athletes being sent. Ms. Traves mentioned a new partnership being developed with Arshay Cooper, Brett Gorman and Josy Verdonkschot that is currently being developed to broaden the pipeline. More would be shared with the Committee. There is funding budgeted for 2025 for additional grants and

scholarships but there is a need to grow access. Ms. Gotrell discussed that rowers of color have an opening to the pipeline in scholastic and high school rowing and that is a large aspect and that she successful had indoor rowing to the curriculum for physical education for middle and high school students in Hackensack, New Jersey.

- Mr. Cacioppo added that college rowing is not a driver for participation and is critical for the sport. Must reframe thinking into capturing athletes who do not attend college, the narrative of the sport will need to change. Mr. Ciraolo mentioned the need for improved coaching, Mr. Doldron agreed.
- Ms. Traves agreed that discussion and collaboration with the Committee will occur in the future.

B. OKR Impact

- Discussion then turned to OKR Impacts. Specific questions for Ms. Kraus and Mr. Cacioppo were provided regarding the Olympics and Paralympics were provided in the September meeting agenda.
- Mr. Cacioppo explained how the OKRs were used internally in the organization. Ms. Withycombe described the Committee's review of the OKR process and how the Committee believed that it can assist the goals of the organization and provided examples. One example with respect to hiring of USRowing staff and looking through a DEI and broader lens. Ms. Withycombe assured the guests that the Committee wants to be helpful and not hinderance to the process.
- Mr. Cacioppo initially described challenges in implementing the collaboration, but further discussion ensued.
- Mr. Cacioppo provided two next steps to initiate the collaboration with the committee (1) preview OKRs between OP1 and OP2, (2) if we go live with Director if Emerging Disciplines/Sport Growth, engage Committee on recruiting and (3) establish process/questions to ask whenever USRowing is launching/doing something
 - What are time FAQ's
 - Aligning and getting one on board
 - Having drafts

III. Open Issues:

A. OPEN #3: Guest Calendar

1. **September:** Amanda and Rich (Jenny)
 - a) Topic: OKRs
2. October: Ellen Minzner (Molly)
 - a) Topic: Para Rowing
3. November: Sarah May (Jenny)
 - a) Topic: CFO/Budget
4. December: Lizzie Seedhouse (Jenny)
 - a) Topic: Communications and Marketing

IV. **Overflow and Executive Session**

A. Board Committee Updates

- Committee updates were deferred to the October 2024 meeting due to the time constraints of the Committee members.
 1. United We Row – Stephen – No
 2. Finance - Jenny
 3. NomGov - June
 4. HR / Comp - Malcolm
 5. HP Subcommittee - Cara, June

V. **Adjourn:** 8:55 PM EST/6:55 PM PST