

LBRA Candidate Questionnaire – Michelle Mowery

1. The Board is responsible for coordination between the LBRA and its lessee organizations, the CSULB Crew, Long Beach Junior Crew, CARP and Powerhouse Fitness as a Board member how would you help to coordinate use of the facility between these organizations, their leadership and members, LBRA the members and use of the equipment?

As a new Board Member, unfamiliar with what has happened in the past, I would first want to review the agreements between these organizations and LBRA to determine what our status is with them and with the City. I would then follow up with a meeting with the designated representatives from each organization to determine what is working well and what is not and then meet with the LBRA Board to determine if agreements should be updated or if any actions need to be taken with the various organizations.

2. Membership in the club is growing by leaps and bounds primarily due to Learn to Row Day and the new lesson programs that have grown out of that effort. How do you propose to keep those new members happy and continue their development as rowers and effectiveness to the club as new members?

Some of what I would propose has already taken place: follow-up lessons and rows but I would also designate a coach specific to initiating new members. There should be a new member packet, specific days and specific equipment for new members, and a point of contact, probably that new member coach, assigned to new members.

3. As the club continues to grow so does the need for space and ongoing issues over boat storage, use of ergs and other equipment. How can the club continue to manage its existing storage and needs in the future?

As the club is successful, space is going to continue to be an ongoing issue. We, LBRA, need to take stock of our current fleet and determine what is being rowed regularly, what should be sold and what is obsolete. Member space should also be evaluated in this manner, are private boats being rowed? The same exercise should take place with our lessees. Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of storing boats in accessible member spaces that are not currently getting regular use.

4. What is your perspective on paid staff? Should or shouldn't the club hire manager or regular coaching staff? Why or why not? Pros and cons?

Having employees is a difficult task for a small, volunteer run organization like LBRA but we also need support for things such as cleaning and maintenance, coaching, etc. That said, to run the boathouse in a more professional manner, we need to have specific tasks taken care of more professionally. I would suggest LBRA determine what needs should be taken on by paid staff and what can continue to be done by its volunteers and then bring on contractors specific to the tasks that paid staff should be hired to do.

5. The LBRA fleet is aging and new boat purchases are ongoing and will continue. How should boats be prioritized for purchase in the future? How should this new equipment be prioritized for use by the membership? How do you propose this equipment be maintained?

Initially, an inventory of all of the club's existing equipment, the state of its condition for future use, and how much use the boat/oars have had in the last year, needs to be completed. A similar breakdown of the membership also needs to take place, dividing the members into categories such as novice, recreational, competitive, experienced and elite. Boats should then be divided into types to match the rower types, i.e. if the club has a regular group of elite men rowing an 8+ each week, the club should have a boat for this use and it should not be used by novice or recreational men and conversely if the club has 3 boats of recreational women rowing an 8+ each week there should be 2-3 recreational quality boats available to them for this use. If the club does not have the boats to fit these uses future purchased should be prioritized based on the needs assessed by the inventory and the membership. In addition, a member survey might be a good tool to assess the member's perceptions of the current equipment and any existing deficiencies as well as rower types.

7. LBRA has typically hosted 2 -3 regattas per year (Christmas, Spring/Solstice and Beach Sprints). There have been concerns with the organization of the events by prospective officials and other clubs who might participate in our events. How would you recommend conducting our events in the future to better serve visiting rowers and prospective officials who will conduct the officiating the day of the event?

LBRA regatta organization needs modernization and updating. Any of our members who have attended other local regattas such as the San Diego Fall Classic or Goldrush will tell you, our events have become severely out of date and need better coordination and management. If we are to continue to host regattas, the club must appoint a regatta coordinator – volunteer or paid – who is responsible for coordinating our events from the ground up. This individual will work with the LBRA Board and utilize its membership to work with the City of Long Beach, USA Rowing, coordinate with Regatta Central, coordinate volunteers, conduct outreach and advertising, boat rental and set up host accommodation for visiting rowers.