

# IL-ACDA Summer 2025 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**June 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 - 4:00 PM**

Normal Community High School, 3900 East Raab Road, Normal, IL 61761

In Attendance: Paul Laprade, Amy Branahl, Ben Luginbuhl, Catherine Clare Songco, Nikoas Koukos, Paul Nielsen, Laura Coster, Puja Ramaswamy, Sean Newman, Janet McCumber, Jessica Heinrich, Sean Hoffman, Cory Boulton, Carol Munn, Marianna Kosaya, Roland Hatcher, Ali Kordelewski, Brian Smith, Nythia Martinez, Andy Bruhn, Julie Sharp, Stephen Eros

In Attendance Virtually: Alfred Sawyer, Mitchell Barrett, Carly Bieda, Randy Haldeman, Aaron Mejorada

Not Present: Jennifer Whiting, Keith Hampton, Brian Birch, Frank Piekarz, Jen Reece, Nick Brockcamp, Abigail Risner, & Christopher Windle

1. Welcome & Introductions: Paul L
2. Minutes: Puja (approval of minutes) Roland moves and Janet seconds, unanimously approved
3. Treasurer's report and Budget Approval: Paul N.
  - a. Bank balance and membership dues over time have decreased steadily since 2017
  - b. Cost of events may need to change due to not breaking even or profit losses
  - c. Web hosting company will remain the same
  - d. IL-ACDA has recently changed how money is collected - now using Zeffy (allows users to pay for processing fees)
    - i. We have spent approximately \$1,000 in PayPal fees that can be eliminated after switching to Zeffy
    - ii. Zeffy can be used to collect registration fees
  - e. Proposed Budget review
    - i. In the red - \$8,885
    - ii. Each event (except for Join Voices Chicago) is meant to be a break even event
      1. Event Proposals for FY25-26
        - a. Honors Show Choir, Join Voices Chicago, Junior Honors Choir Festival, Mature Voices Workshop, Tenor/Bass Festival, Treble Festival Central, Treble Festival North
      - iii. Seed grants are for new events
    - f. Approval of Budget and Treasurer's report - Amy moves and Cory seconds, unanimously approved
  4. Membership Update (numbers, etc)
    - a. IL-ACDA is 50% less than 10 years ago

- b. Missouri initiative - 2 year program encourages people to join at a lower rate
  - i. 50% discount 1st year, less of a discount 2nd year, and full price 3rd year
  - ii. Success rate is 75-80%
- 5. Old Business
  - a. Summer ReTreat 2024: low enrollment; projected 2025 (Paul and Amy)
    - i. Less time to get headliners and had to hold it the same week as Juneteenth due to bylaws
    - ii. Attendance was high 70s
    - iii. Registration for ReTreat 2025 is 130
  - b. Awards 2025
    - i. Harold Decker Award 2025 recipient: Jon Hurty (Laura C.)
    - ii. Young Directors Award 2025 recipient: Brian Smith (Laura C.)
    - iii. Partnership Award 2025: recipient: Christopher Owen (Paul L)
    - iv. Composition Contest 2024: Ed Frazier Davis (Paul L, for Chris)
      - 1. 47 entries written for professional chorus SATB divisi
      - 2. \$1000 cash prize, confirmed publication, and professional recording for \$500
  - c. Committees
    - i. DIC: BIPOC mentorship and more (Nythia)
      - 1. Connect 4 music education students/young directors with veteran directors (16 interested)
      - 2. Next steps: create a fall pairing and assess the program to impact the evolution of the program over time
  - d. Organizational Issues - progress: onboarding, governance, offboarding; DEI as systematic. (Paul L.)
    - i. We want to increase access
      - 1. New onboarding process with job descriptions
      - 2. Create an "open call" for board member applicants to fill in gaps in our board
  - e. Podium and 50<sup>th</sup> Year (Sean N.)
    - i. No ads received
    - ii. Articles due Friday, August 15 - President, D1, D4, D8, College/University, Collegiate/Lifelong, Music in Worship, Past President, Vocal Jazz
    - iii. Include favorite choral works from each R&R chair at the end of the publication
- 6. President's Overview: Paul L.
  - a. National ACDA: Minneapolis, 2027
  - b. Regional ACDA February 25-28, 2026 (Milwaukee)
  - c. IL-ACDA Board: open positions → A cappella
  - d. Goals
    - i. Future goals: re-build, motivate, engage, and maintain fiscal health
    - ii. Consider focus (repertoire and demographic) areas we underserve
    - iii. Chicago area: breaking through the wall to become a CPS vendor

- iv. Completing the governance restructure:
  - 1. Alignment of ability, desire, and talents
  - 2. Clear set of expectations (onboarding)
  - 3. Wider engagement in onboarding
    - a. R and R Chairs → President Elect will oversee
    - b. District Chairs → Past President will oversee
    - c. Social Media and Membership (next)

## 7. New Business

- a. IMEC 2026 Reading Session needs (Ben L.)
  - i. R&R chairs will submit 2-3 pieces by 9/15
  - ii. We want everyone in the room to be able to find at least 1 song they can use
- b. Summer ReTreat 2026 (Amy)
  - i. June 24-25, 2026: Bloomington-Normal with Dr. Kristina MacMullen, Baylor University and Dan Davison, composer
- c. Funding/Events AND Projects (Paul N/Paul L.)
  - i. Ben moves to vote for all proposals as one, Cory 2nds, all vote unanimously
  - ii. Ben moves to accept proposals and costs, Carol 2nds, all vote unanimously
- d. Awards (Paul L. and Chris)
  - i. Harold Decker 2026 - open now
  - ii. Composition Contest (Distribute flyers) - open now
  - iii. Award timing – vote needed (Partnership and Young Director)
    - 1. Young Director is every year
    - 2. Partnership is every odd year - next award in 2027
      - a. Paul N. moves, Jess 2nds, all vote unanimously
- e. DIC report (Nythia and Paul L.)
  - i. Needs, moving forward (Nythia)
    - 1. Work with the membership co-chairs
  - ii. Discussion of R&R combination - *vote needed* (Paul)
    - 1. Fold in DIC to Diversity R&R position - Roland moves and Catherine Clare 2nds, all vote unanimously
- f. Midwestern Regional Conference: *Reflections of Us*, Milwaukee - February 25-28, 2026 (Amy and Paul)
  - i. Honor Choir conductors announced, audition material will come out later in the summer
- g. Upcoming Meetings and Due Dates
  - i. Board Meetings and Statewide Events
    - 1. Fall Board Meeting : **Saturday, September 20, 2025. 11am-1:30pm** with lunch to build community among our board. In person unless you live 2 hours+ away from the location of the meeting..
    - 2. IMEC - (All IMEC dates and times are tentative as of June 2025)
      - a. Obed and Issac's, 9pm Thursday, Jan 29th

- b. Board Meeting – (Location TBA) Tentatively: 11:30am  
Fri, Jan 30 - In-person and, if possible, remote
    - c. Reading Session – tentatively: 3pm on Friday, Jan 30
  - 3. ReTreat 2026
    - a. Board Meeting: In person on Tuesday, June 23, 2026  
4pm  
Normal High School, Normal IL
  - ii. Regional and National Events (see Midwestern, above)
  - iii. Due Dates
    - 1. Repertoire and Research Chairs (Ben)
      - a. IMEC submissions to Ben (2-3 pieces by 9/15)
    - 2. Articles for the Podium (Sean N.)
      - a. Amy B, Nythia, Nick B. Abby R., Copy B. Randy H.  
Paul L., Vocal Jazz
  - h. Events (Chairs)
    - i. Join Voices Chicago (Nythia, for Grace) - October 10, 2025
    - ii. Show Choir All-State Festival (Sean H.)
    - iii. Junior High Festival (Carol M)
    - iv. Treble Fest/Treble (Ali K)
    - v. TTBB – Brian Birch (Spring 2026 - TBA)
    - vi. Mature Voices Workshop and Sing - February 2026 (Paul L. and  
Lori Sonnenberg)
    - vii. Music in Worship - November 7, 2026 (Sean N.)
- 8. Additional Discussion Topics (open floor)
- 9. Final Remarks (Paul L.)
- 10. THANK YOU for serving Illinois ACDA! Adjourn!
  - a. Paul N moves, Amy 2nds, all vote unanimously

## **IL-ACDA BOARD REPORTS – June 2025**

NOTE: The Treasurer's detailed financial Reports are in separate files.

### **President-Elect, Amy Branahl**

#### **Recent successes & challenges:**

- I am super excited about the planning that has gone into the Summer ReTreat 2025. I hope you all take away something amazing from our time together. We are super excited to bring on Co-chairs for social media! Don't forget to take a lot of pictures! We have had some new people join the board and it's a really exciting time to be a part of IL-ACDA.
- We have 108 people signed up for the retreat as I write this report. I am thankful for the fiscal responsibility of the previous boards to provide a little support for us if we are still in the red this year.
- Procured headliners for next year which are Dr. Kristin MacMullen from Baylor University and composer Dan Davison. We are incredibly lucky to have such

amazing headliners to come to our retreat. I think you will find them as great technicians and particularly down to earth. I got to hang with Dan for about a day at the National ACDA where he was a guest composer for the TTBB choir. I am excited to learn from both of them.

Activities in progress:

- Finalizing Contracts for Headliners for next year
- Onboarding new board members, HOORAY!
- Meeting with the presidents to get into my new role!

Future plans & goals:

- Get my bearings as I move into the presidency.
- Plan the 2026 Summer Retreat
- Build a Summer Retreat playbook that people can use over and over again.
- Work with Pres-Elect on all things IMEC 2026.
- Collaborate and meet with district chairs to move forward with the vision of the district chairs set forth by Paul.
- Learn more about the ins and outs of the Composition Contest

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## **IL-ACDA Membership Co-chair, Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos**

Recent successes & challenges:

- N/A, Assumed position in April 2025

Activities in progress:

- Familiarizing with demands and goals of position

Future plans & goals:

- Ensure that all colleges and universities in Illinois with Music Ed degrees have their own student chapter of ACDA
- Create an annual student-led event under the auspices of ILACDA (to be held during ReTreats or IMEC conference)
- Strengthen the presence of ILACDA in Southern Illinois; ensure that choral directors working in secondary education have active memberships

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## **Secretary, Puja Ramaswamy**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Developed a cadence for Board Report Reminders and food preferences
  - Initial email 1 month in advance and then reminders 2 weeks and 1 week before meeting

Activities in progress:

- Developing a Secretary checklist for each meeting so nothing is forgotten!

Future plans & goals:

- Work with the President to keep the Leadership List with term dates updated.
  - It has been challenging to make sure that email reminders are being sent only to current board members and that we are using the correct contact information for everyone.
- Discuss CPS vendorship application with Paul, Amy, and Ben

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## **Composer Award Chair, Christopher Windle**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- Selection, premiere, recording, and publishing of the 2024 Composer Award

### Activities in progress:

- Soliciting applications for the 2025 Composer Award. Please help spread the word!

<https://www.il-acda.org/awards/>

### Future plans & goals:

- Continuing to increase applicant interest in the Composer Award
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## **IL-ACDA *Podium* Editor, Sean Newman**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- *Podium* Volume 51, No. 2/3 published!
- Conversations have begun regarding Music in Worship Festival for November 2026 (thank you, Keith Hampton and Jeff Hunt)

### Activities in progress:

- Music in Worship Festival: tentative date of Saturday, November 7th, 2026 (8:30am-6:00pm)
  - Looking at host churches in Oak Park, Oak Brook, Chicago
  - Recruiting through community choirs would increase participation
  - Format of concert will be slightly different with mass choir singing verses on hymns (with congregational singing), diverse repertoire, testimonials from church choir members' experience
  - More than one guest conductor
  - Different option (from 2018's festival) for lunch catering to lower costs
  - Want this to be an annual event, regardless of who is on the IL-ACDA board

### Future plans & goals:

- Recruit, organize, and coordinate a successful Music in Worship Festival in 2026
- Next *Podium* issue (Vol. 52, No. 1) articles are due Friday, August 15th, 2025 from:
  - President
  - District 1
  - District 4
  - District 8
  - College/University
  - Collegiate/Lifelong Coordinator
  - Music in Worship
  - Past President
  - Vocal Jazz
  - Advertisements from District Reps: WE NEED THESE
  - NEW: one choral work from each R&R chair (like the "Favorite Choral Works" section in the beginning years of the *Podium*)

- Any other ideas for the 50th year of the *Podium*?
- Goal is to get *Podium* published one month after the article submission date (Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 for the next issue)
  - Still need articles by the due date so everything can be edited and formatted in a timely manner.

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## **IL-ACDA Webmaster, Aaron Mejorada**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- Made this year's new Summer ReTreat page
- Created the new Podium Archives page to document and display our historic podiums digitized by Randy Haldeman and his students (huge thank you to them!)
- Added and updated new payment options for our payment page for different events, including our Treble Festival, Tenor/Bass Festival, and Summer ReTreat
- Updated our information for the Composer Award page

### Activities in progress:

- Adding our new board members to our page

### Future plans & goals:

- Keep our event pages current as updates become available

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## **IL-ACDA Board: Social Media Co-Chair, Carly Bieda**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- Brand new to the board - very excited to learn, grow, and collaborate!
- Unable to access email - [ilacdaexec@gmail.com](mailto:ilacdaexec@gmail.com) - getting this fixed shortly

### Activities in progress:

- Currently promoting the Compositional Competition

### Future plans & goals:

- Board Member Spotlights (create a google form)
- Create a google drive or shared folder where people can submit pictures.
- Post more events

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## **Historian, Janet McCumber**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- Nothing to report at this time

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## **IL-ACDA Vocal Jazz Repertoire Chair, Jessica Heinrich**

Recent successes & challenges:

- n/a

Activities in progress:

- n/a

Future plans & goals:

- I would like to plan an a cappella and jazz festival.
- 

**IL-ACDA Show Choir Chair, Sean Hoffmann**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Outreach and communication to IL Directors has grown
- Looking to grow on Social Media

Activities in progress:

- All State Show Choir Festival
  - Oct. 16-18, 2025 @ Wheaton-Warrenville South High School
  - Ly Wilder - Vocal Clinician
  - Brennan Wilder - Choreographer Clinician

Future plans & goals:

- MEC Demonstration Clinic ~ The Art and Impact of Show Choir
    - Designed to showcase how show choir blends vocal performance, movement, and storytelling to create meaningful musical experiences. Choir directors will gain practical insights into show design, choreography integration, and the educational benefits of show choir in building student engagement and confidence.
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**IL-ACDA Board College R & R, Cory Boulton**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Just assumed the position this past summer, so not too much to report yet, in this position

Activities in progress:

- Conducting Masterclass in March 2026 for all area teachers/directors—will promote ACDA
- Planning the ILMEA All-state preparation workshop in September 2025
- Working on a Music Education day at Bradley for all collegiate chapters for fall of 2025

Future plans & goals:

- Continued Collaborations between colleges/universities:
    - Bradley and Eastern Illinois University and Heartland Festival Orchestra in October 2025
- 

**IL-ACDA Junior High Middle School R&R, Carol Munn**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Hired Julie Clemens as our clinician for Junior Festival
- Confirmed Bradley University as our host site for Junior Festival
- Submitted budget for approval for Junior Festival

Activities in progress:

- Presenting junior high/middle school music for retreat reading session
- Creating registration on IL ACDA website for Junior Festival
- Recruiting and advertising for Junior Festival Sept 27th

Future plans & goals:

- Continuing to recruit for Junior Festival
  - Hosting Junior Festival on Sept 27
  - Outlining next article for the Podium
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## **IL-ACDA Children's Choir Repertory Chair, Marianna Kosaya**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Attended the board meeting on January 31, 2025
- Selected repertoire for the 2025 Summer ReTreat Reading Session Lists

Activities in progress:

- Preparing to present two pieces for elementary children's choir at the ACDA Summer ReTreat Reading Session
- Preparing IL-ACDA Events Budget Form for the the Children's Choir Festival

Future plans & goals:

- Contact schools and community children's choirs to invite to the festival
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## **HS R&R CHAIR, Roland Hatcher**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Transitioned from D7 chair to R&R

Activities in progress:

- New to this position! Need to connect w/Ben to take over any currently ongoing projects

Future plans & goals:

- Monthly social media posts - quick hits we can share w/IL ACDA offering rep suggestions in each of our areas based on heritage months etc.
  - Plan/assist with more festivals
- 

## **IL-ACDA Community Choir Chair, Jennifer Whiting**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Glad to step into this opportunity!

Activities in progress:

- Still in the percolating stage, but I hope to create a community choir festival event.

Future plans & goals:

- Community choirs sometimes struggle to find their place in ACDA. I'd like to help develop...
  - more ways for them to connect with our organization,
  - more ways to celebrate their successes,
  - more ways for community choir conductors to network and support one another,
  - more ways for them to voice their ideas, challenges, and needs,
  - and more tangible ways IL-ACDA can serve them.

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## **IL-ACDA Treble Choir R&R, Ali Kordelewski**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Ran the Treble North Festival at College of DuPage in February 2025. We had many schools in the surrounding area who participated and 4 wonderful clinicians!

Activities in progress:

- Treble Festival North 2025 - working with College of DuPage to solidify our date ASAP!
- Working to create a running rep list for directors to be able to access with different rep ideas for all levels.

Future plans & goals:

- Will promote Treble Fest North over the summer, looking at tweaking the schedule for our event slightly to allow for more schools/ensembles to participate.

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## **IL-ACDA Tenor/Bass Repertoire Chair, Brian Birch**

Recent successes & challenges:

- We had a successful Tenor Bass Festival in February rescheduled due to weather in January.

Did I send pictures and videos for social media?

It was a challenge to get colleges involved.

Activities in progress:

- Working on planning the next year's TB Festival.  
I've contacted Bob Boyd about being a clinician. He's interested.  
The date isn't set yet.

Future plans & goals:

- I wonder if there is a better way to get colleges to send/bring students.
-

## **District 1 Representative and Diversity Initiative Committee Chair, Nythia Martinez**

### Recent successes & challenges/Activities in Progress:

- DIC
  - BIPOC MENTORSHIP PAIRINGS assigned on April 9th, 2025!
    - 4 current pairs
    - Rolling deadline
  
- JOIN VOICES CHICAGO
  - Planned for October 10, 2025
  - Northeastern Illinois - Dr. Christopher Owen
    - [Photos, Videos, and Stats](#) from 2024-25

### Future plans & goals:

- Continued celebration of diversity in IL-ACDA and ACDA
  - DIC at Summer ReTreat
    - CPS-focused events
- Increasing District 1 Membership

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## **District 2 Representative, Jen Reece**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- We have continued interest in the Central Illinois Treble Sing and Share; choirs are meeting in February at Washington HS. We are looking to secure a collegiate treble ensemble this year, do you have one to share?

### Activities in progress:

- Continuation of the updating ACDA membership list for choral directors in all D#2 schools by sending reminder emails about the upcoming IL-ACDA Summer Retreat.
- Have been in communication with Kady Le, one of the producers from “Choral Singing In America:Nurturing the American Soul”. I have asked for information about setting up a screening for Illinois, maybe virtual or in conjunction with our retreat/festival. Most of the screenings were in other states at ACDA conventions, although there was one at Wheaton last February. IL-ACDA sponsor opportunity?

### Future plans & goals:

- Brainstorming with other IL choral directors about creating a 7-9 Honor Choir opportunity similar to OPUS which is run by the Iowa ACDA. Not to be in coordination /competition with ILMEA’s JH AllState experiment.

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## **IL-ACDA District 3 Rep, Andy Bruhn**

### Recent successes & challenges:

- St. Joseph-Ogden HS Choir (Nathan Waterson, director) will be featured at IMEC 2026!

Activities in progress:

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Future plans & goals:

- D3 ILMEA Choral Audition Prep Day @ ISU 9/20/25. We'll have IL-ACDA be a "sponsor"--nothing required, but I'll just put IL-ACDA branding on it.
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## **IL-ACDA District 5 Representative, Juliane Sharp**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Nothing to share at this time

Activities in progress:

- Nothing to share at this time

Future plans & goals:

- East Central Illinois Acafest at Eastern Illinois University- Saturday, September 20th, 2025. Open to 7-12 graders. PD opportunities for teachers.
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## **IL-ACDA District 6, Stephen Eros**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Nothing to report

Activities in progress:

- Nothing to report

Future plans & goals:

- District 6 is unique in that we encompass the St. Louis metro east and a significant rural population outside of the metro east. There are very few independent choruses that I am aware of. Most of the educators in the metro east have ties to St. Louis, and therefore participate in MCDA/Southwest ACDA. My goal is to raise awareness of and encourage participation in IL-ACDA events.
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## **District 7 Representative, Mitchell Barrett**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Joining the board!

Activities in progress:

- Nothing to report

Future plans & goals:

- Creating more involvement at the Junior High/Middle School level for District 7 schools
- 

## **IL-ACDA District 8 Chair, Abby Risner**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Connected to D8 colleagues via email

Activities in progress:

- Brainstorming new ways to encourage involvement of D8 colleagues in ACDA

Future plans & goals:

- I am looking forward to starting in my new position at Dixon High School - this position is more centrally located in D8 so maybe this will help with outreach or potential event planning in the future.

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## **IL-ACDA Student Representative, Maggie Meyers**

Recent successes & challenges:

- Nothing to report at this time

Activities in progress:

- n/a

Future plans & goals:

- Continuing college and community outreach with requests to create a resource page for collegiate chapters.