

Modernization of JDFL Association in Response to the BCLA OEI Report 2025

Cass van Benthem Jutting
Treasurer

Kyla Pedlow
Interim President

Jill Denis
Administrative Coordinator

JDf Lacrosse Association

BCLA Operational Enhancement Initiative (OEI) Report

- [viaSport](#) is the lead agency for stewarding the growth of amateur sport in BC through funding support and education to designated sport organizations including BCLA. To be a Designated Sport Organization and to be eligible for funding, BCLA must comply with their standards
- BCLA engaged with the consulting agency, SportLaw to review BCLA's existing governance structures (bylaws and policies, etc)
- SportLaw made 48 recommendations (pp.30-39, OEI Report) to enhance operational effectiveness and ensure compliance with BC Societies Act and leading practices in non-profit governance.

BCLA Operational Enhancement Initiative (OEI) Report con't...

- JDF Executive members attended the information session hosted by BCLA to better understand the OEI Report and the proposed changes to BCLA's bylaws (to be voted upon at the AGM 25 October)
- Proposed bylaw changes for BCLA are required in order to be compliant with [BC Societies Act](#), and to remain a qualified Designated Sport Organization under the purview of [viaSport BC](#)

Why does BCLA's OEI report affect JDF?

1. We are a member of the BCLA so we must follow their lead in order to remain a member. If BCLA changes how they operate to remain a Designated Sport Organization, we should likewise adjust our own operations to remain consistent with BCLA's direction.
2. We are incorporated under the *Societies Act* of British Columbia, which provides the legal framework for our operations. This legislation also defines our obligations to our members and establishes key governance requirements, including director accountability.

BCLA Bylaw Changes

- Current BCLA bylaw amendments have been proposed that will re-align them with the Societies Act:
 - BCLA's Board of Directors definitions will be redefined as they do not currently match what is defined in the Societies Act (eg: "Officers" should be "Directors", "Executive" should be "Board".)
 - BCLA's member voting rights must be redefined, as the current weighted voting structure is not legal under the Societies Act. Currently each association has a defined number of votes based on their registration numbers. The new voting structure will change each association to have one vote, regardless of its size.
 - Standing Committees of the Board: Only the following standing committees are required under the bylaws: Audit and Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, and Governance and Ethics Committee. All other committees may be established by the organization as needed to support its operations or strategic priorities.

BCLA Bylaw Changes

Current BCLA bylaw amendments have been proposed that will re-align them with the viaSport requirements for Designated Sport Organizations:

- Implement term limits: two-year terms, with a maximum of four consecutive terms.
- Clearly define and manage conflicts of interest.
- Establish clear distinction between operational and strategic roles (noting that BCLA employs staff, while JDF relies on appointed directors).
- Strengthen risk management practices and ensure full compliance with SafeSport standards.

ViaSport Leading Practices and Standards requires that its Designated Sport Organizations meet the following elements:

1. Legal Incorporation
2. Foundational Statements and Intentional Planning
3. Informed Governance (Good Governance)
4. Committee Structures
5. Human Resource Planning and Management
6. Financial Planning and Management
7. Risk Management
8. Safe and Inclusive Environments
9. Delivery of Programs and Services

How should JDF Lacrosse Proceed?

- JDF Lacrosse reviewed the principles and noted the recommendations in the report to initiate our own bylaw and governance review
- We started with SportLaw's three "Principles of Good Governance and Operational Effectiveness" in our review

Principles of Good Governance and Operational Effectiveness - Determined by SportLaw.

SportLaw - Principle 1	How this applies to JDF	Rationale
There is a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the Board and those of staff (when staff have been hired and are in place for an organization)	The distinction is between the Board, responsible for strategic governance, and the appointed Board members who are responsible for operations (like staff would be for BCLA)	<i>For JDF to run smoothly and grow in a sustainable way, we need to clearly separate governance from operations. The Board is responsible for big-picture governance — setting the vision, creating policy, and ensuring accountability across the association. Our appointed Board members and key volunteers take on the operational side — managing programs, events, and day-to-day activities that keep things moving. In larger organizations, these roles would typically be filled by staff, but at JDF, our volunteers fill that gap. By defining these roles more clearly, we’ll reduce confusion, prevent burnout, and make sure our Board can focus on leading strategically — while our volunteers continue doing the great work that brings lacrosse to life in our community.</i>

Principles of Good Governance and Operational Effectiveness - Determined by SportLaw.

SportLaw - Principle 2	How this applies to JDF	Rationale
The organization has Board structures and processes that enable it to govern and oversee the growth of the sport in an effective and professional manner.	Board size and composition. Leveraging skillsets and knowledge to carry out governing responsibilities. Proper establishment of committees.	<i>JDF Lacrosse needs to evolve its Board structure to clearly distinguish between governance—the strategic oversight and long-term direction of the association—and operations—the day-to-day delivery of programs, events, and member services. Establishing this distinction will allow the Board to focus on leadership, accountability, and the sustainable growth of lacrosse in our community.</i> <i>A well-balanced Board should include members with diverse skills, experience, and perspectives to effectively fulfill its governing responsibilities. This includes expertise in areas such as finance, governance, risk management, sport development, communications, and community engagement.</i>

Principles of Good Governance and Operational Effectiveness - Determined by SportLaw.

SportLaw - Principle 3	How this applies to JDF	Rationale
The organization's relationships with its Members, participants/registrants, and governing organizations reflect accountability, alignment, responsiveness, transparency, and clarity in communications	Governance = President and elected board members for accountability. Operations = Appointed Directors/Volunteers for effectiveness. Establish role clarity, clear lines of communication, membership engagement.	<i>JDF Lacrosse must foster transparent, consistent, and accountable relationships with its members, participants, and governing bodies. This begins with clearly defining who is responsible for what:</i> Governance — <i>The President and elected Board members are responsible for accountability, decision-making, and ensuring alignment with JDF's mission, values, and governing policies.</i> Operations — <i>Appointed Directors, coordinators, and volunteers are responsible for executing the day-to-day activities that deliver programs and services to members.</i> <i>By clearly distinguishing these roles and establishing defined lines of communication, JDF can ensure that information flows effectively between the Board, volunteers, and membership. Regular engagement, open dialogue, and transparent reporting will help build trust, responsiveness, and a sense of shared purpose across all levels of the organization.</i>

Rationale for JDF proposed Bylaw changes

- Our current bylaws and governance structure mirror those of the BCLA, which means we are also not in full compliance.
- It's also clear that our existing framework stems from the 2021 amalgamation of the Victoria Field Lacrosse Association and the JDF Lacrosse Association. The Bylaws were never changed to account for the increased responsibilities of year-round operations.
- Volunteer burnout — along with the growing internal and external pressures on the Board— has forced us to do a comprehensive review of our organizational structure and governance model.

What we need to do...

- We need to modernize our governance and operations model
 - we have grown significantly, particularly since amalgamation
 - a year-round workload for the Board results in volunteer burnout
- We need to strengthen our own capacity in order to capitalize on BCLA's strategic plans within our own community
- We need to follow BCLA's lead in risk management and policy enforcement to sustain operational effectiveness

How can we do it...

- Clarification of the rights with respect to Members, Directors that are elected and Directors that are appointed, and by whom.
- Legal responsibilities of Directors who govern, plan and prioritize on behalf of the Association (elected by the membership) and Directors who operationalize in-season plans and priorities (appointed by the elected Directors)
- Remove the detailed descriptions of the elected Directors' duties to focus on role they fill on the Board. Detailed descriptions will be in a separate document so that it may be reviewed annually to meet the demands of the organization

Clarification of our Bylaws

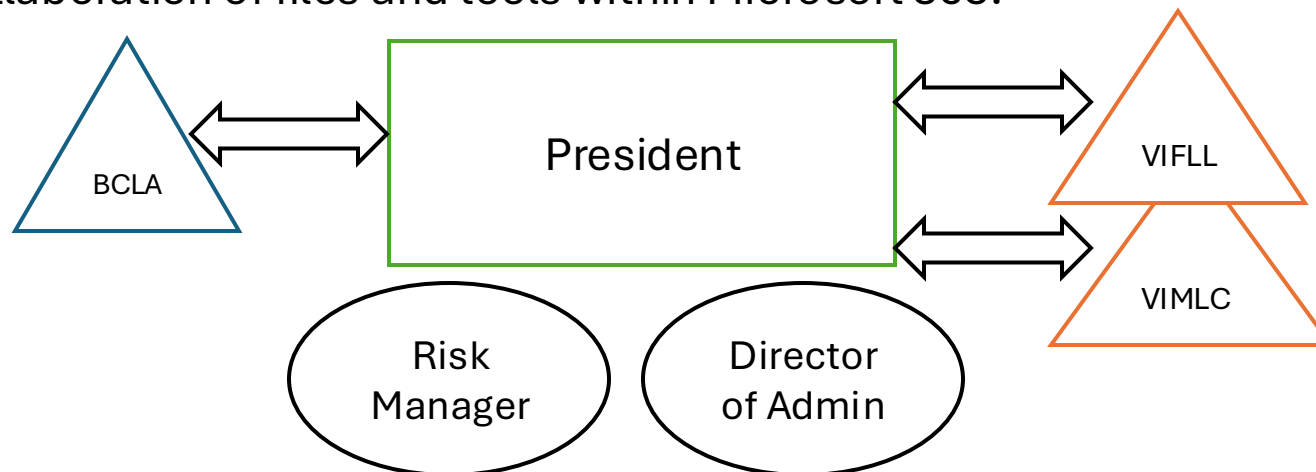
- Our definition of Executive Committee in bylaws is incorrect and should refer to the group as a Board of Directors
- Legal requirement to establish certain committees of the Board: Audit and Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Governance and Ethics Committee. Establish Terms of Reference for necessary committees eg. Tournament Committee, Operations Committee
- We have reviewed the bylaws and focused on those that impact the structure and internal communication lines as well as trying to ensure we meet the legal requirements to align with the Societies Act of BC and leading practices
- The organization chart is a visual description that follows what is written into the proposed bylaws solution to help with communication and a better understanding of Board roles and ultimately, responsibilities.

President

- The focus of this role is overall leadership of the board. They are the representative of the Association to BCLA, Vancouver Island Field Lacrosse League and Vancouver Island Minor Lacrosse Commission

The Risk Manager and Director of Administration are appointed positions that report directly to the president.

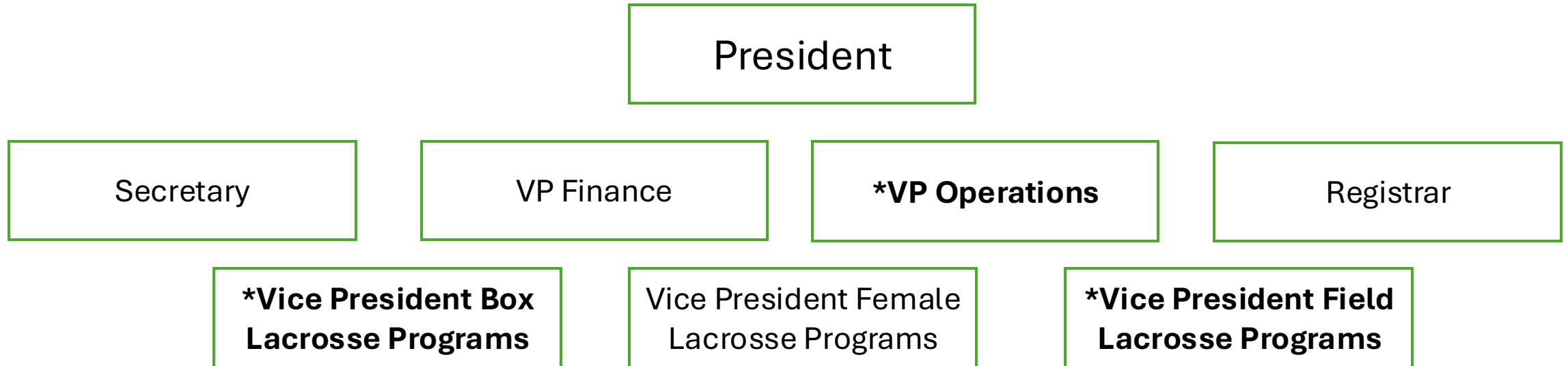
- The Risk Manager portfolio will be directly attached to the President as we will directly follow BCLA RM policy i.e. screening policies, insurance, discipline, SafeSport etc. See current [RM](#) Manual.
- The Director of Admin reports directly to the President and is responsible for the Information Management portfolio, including webmaster functions and the administration and coordination/collaboration of files and tools within Microsoft 365.



Governance

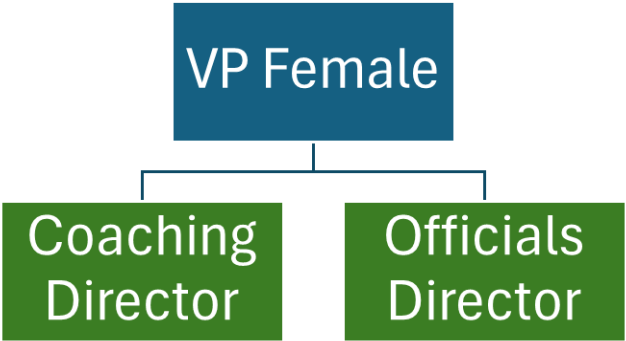
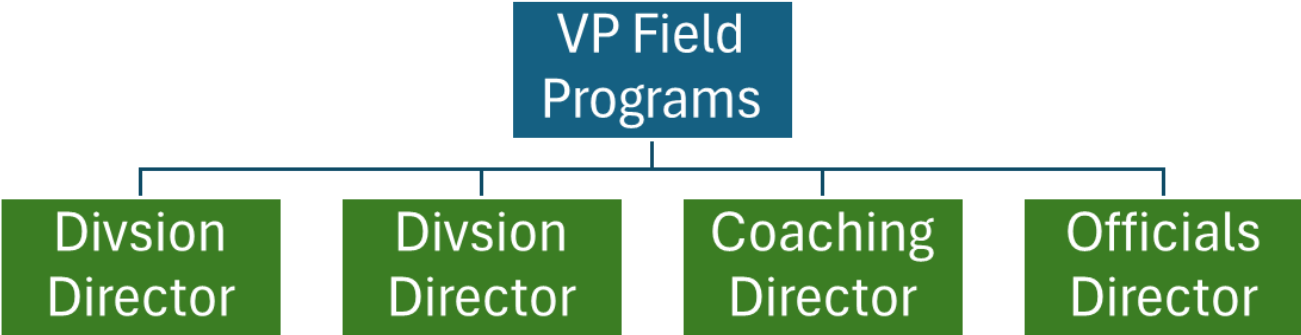
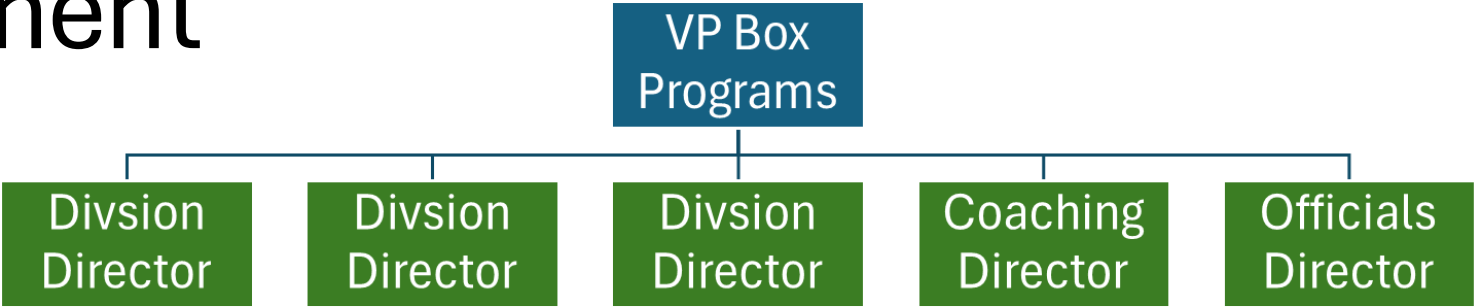
Elected Directors

These are our voting directors

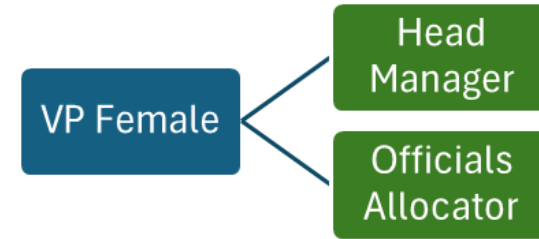
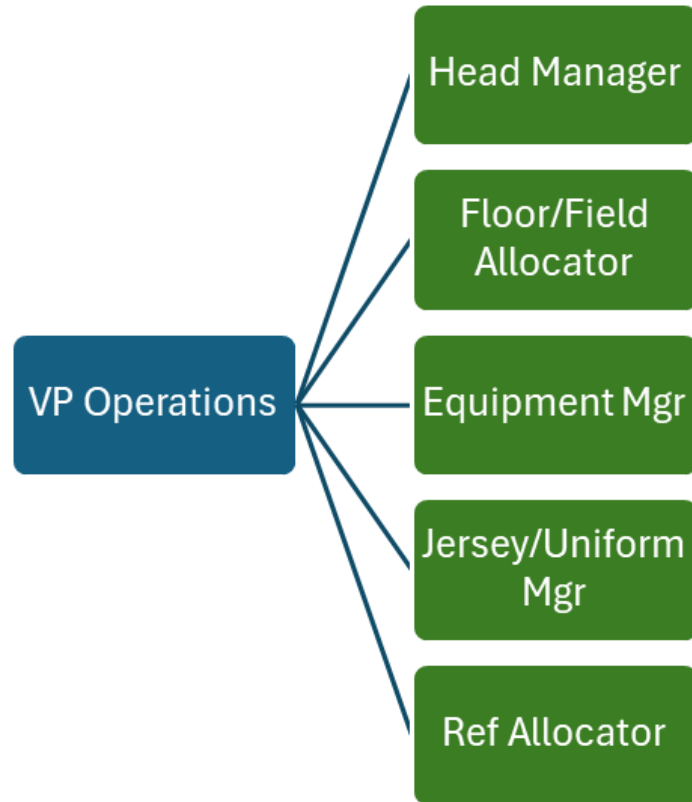


***Three new directors that would oversee the team operations and logistical support and link to future strategic planning initiatives.**

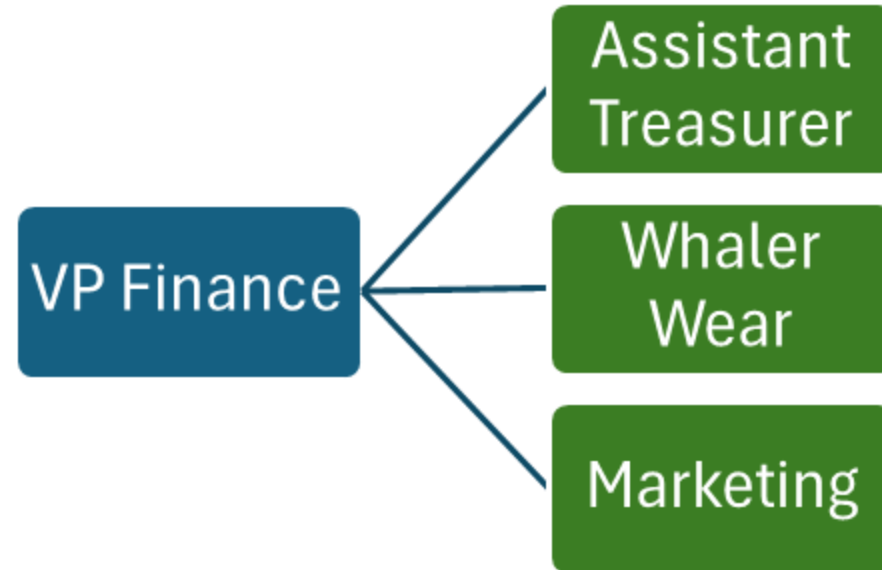
Development

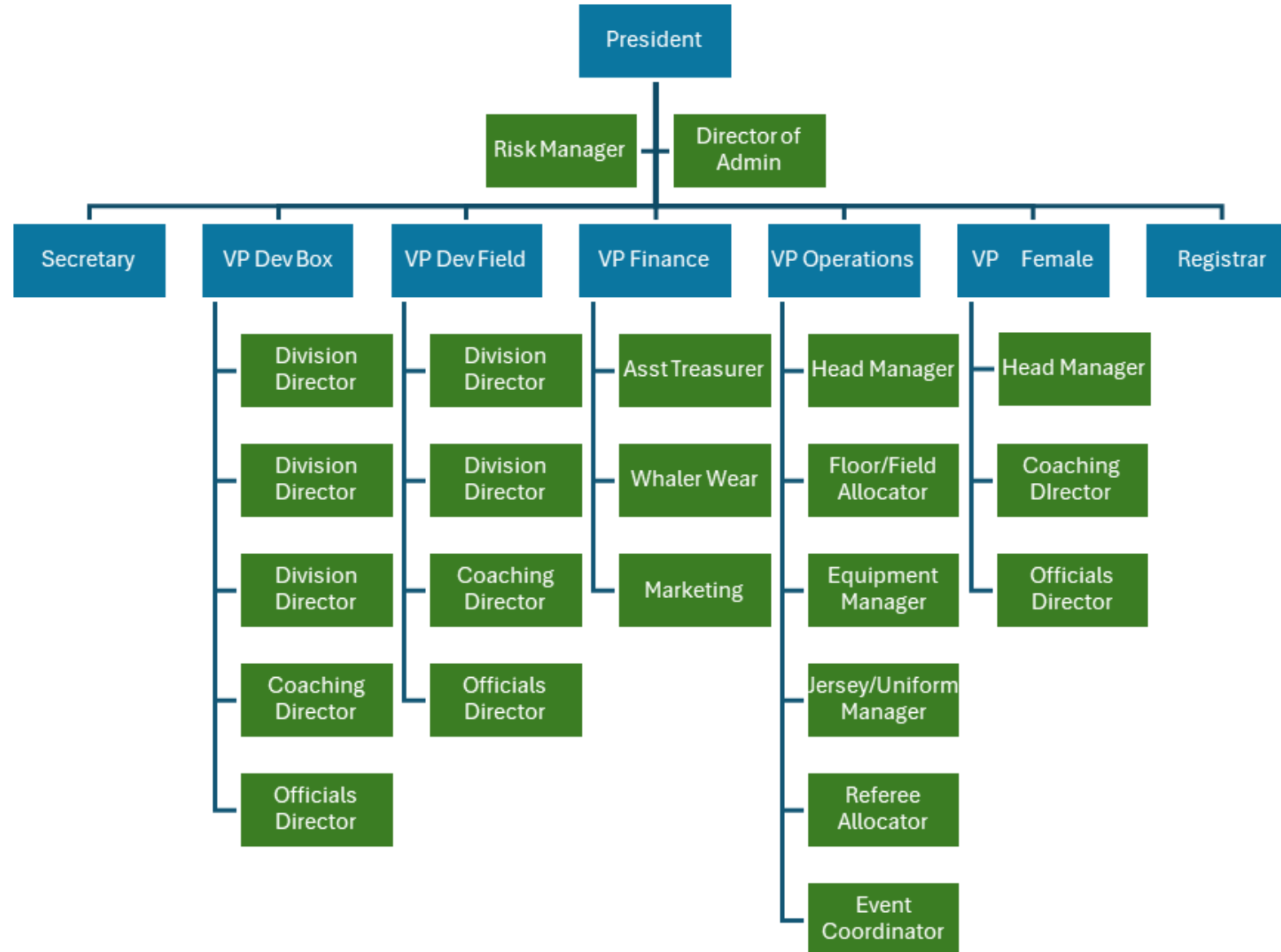


Operations Support



Finance Support





New proposed position definitions.

VP Operations

- The Vice President of Operations is a key member of the executive team and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the logistical and operational functions of the association. This includes scheduling, facilities management, equipment oversight, and event support. The VP of Operations ensures that all lacrosse activities run smoothly and in alignment with the strategic goals of the association. This role is critical in providing a safe, structured, and efficient environment for players, coaches, volunteers, and families.

New proposed position definitions.

VP Programs and Development (Box/Field/Female)

- The Vice President of Programs & Development plays a key leadership role in supporting the growth, quality, and sustainability of youth minor lacrosse in the Westshore. This role focuses on program development, athlete experience, coach support, and long-term participation pathways. The VP works collaboratively with the President, board members, coaches, volunteers, and community partners to ensure programs reflect the values of Fair play, Integrity, Skill Development, Leadership, Confidence, and Community.

New proposed position definitions.

Division Directors

- Oversee box lacrosse activities in the divisions assigned by the VP Programs and Development
- Liaising with the Director of Coaching for certification of Coaches in his/her division
- Attend and support JDF events such as tryouts, assessments, tournaments and league games
- Actively participate in the organization of the divisions assigned by the executive including start of season meetings
- Serve on operations committees of the Association
- Supporting evaluation sessions and tryouts for their divisions as part of the tryout committee and team selection process in their divisions
- Support low level conflict resolution for the teams in their division

Other considerations

- A failure to advance the organizational and governance changes heightens risks and affects the successful functioning of the association.
- We have a number of dedicated volunteers who are at risk of burning out.
- To meet our mission, vision and values, we need to have a plan that matches the values and strives for the vision. This is something the Board has been unable to achieve as a result of not having the structure to support a Governance vs Operational model. We fall short of our mission to provide the best lacrosse experience with excellent opportunities for development.

Conclusion

- Our immediate priority must be to review and update our bylaws to address the recent changes introduced by the BCLA, ensuring that we can operate effectively and fulfill our responsibilities as Directors.
- After the AGM, Board meetings should shift their focus toward governance and strategic planning, while the “Operations Team” assumes responsibility for day-to-day activities. This approach will allow the Operations Team to function as its own committee, enabling the Board to focus on its core role of governance and organizational direction.