



Photo by: Lisa Flanary

Wrestle Like A Girl

Board of Trustees

Role and Responsibilities



Wrestle Like A Girl Board of Trustees

Location: Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Company: Wrestle Like A Girl, Inc.

Industry: Nonprofit

Wrestle Like A Girl, Inc., (“WLAG”) is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to empower girls and women using the sport of wrestling to become leaders in life. Our advocacy and education initiatives help remove barriers to participation and provide opportunities for girls to wrestle, worldwide.

Girls’ wrestling is the fastest-growing high school sport in the United States. Wrestling strengthens physical and mental resilience, builds self-confidence and leadership skills, and teaches athletes how to persevere through adversity to reach their full potential. As one of the oldest competitive sports in the world¹, wrestling has historically only offered these avenues for self-development to boys and men.

WLAG champions the importance of equal access, equal opportunity, and equal leadership development for girls and women through the platform of wrestling.

Customized Programming

The Wrestle Like A Girl Leadership Program, launched in 2021, focuses on advancing gender equality by empowering girls and women for leadership positions. The two cornerstones of the program are:

Empowering Girls through Sports Leadership Program

This program introduces 11th-grade and 12th-grade girl wrestlers to essential leadership skills. Participants receive leadership development training and choose a project that advances gender equality within their local communities.

Empowering Women through Sports Leadership Program

This five-month program focuses on empowering international women wrestlers to serve their local communities by increasing access to, and opportunities for, participation in sports. Annually, 4 to 6 participants demonstrating leadership skills and experience in the sports sector are chosen from a list of nominees selected by Washington, D.C.-based national embassies and wrestling governing bodies across the world. These delegates are between 25 and 40 years of age, proficient in English, and have had international wrestling success.



1 International Olympic Committee (IOC). (2015). Wrestling: History of freestyle wrestling at the Olympic games. Olympic Studies Centre.

As a part of the nomination process, each delegate identifies a key need or challenge facing girls and women in underserved communities in their home country. During the program, delegates develop a detailed action plan to address this challenge through sports. All action plans are designed to be implemented in delegates' communities. The development of the action plan serves as the culmination of the leadership experience.

Stakeholder Education

Female-specific coaching education is paramount as female wrestlers flock to this traditionally male-dominated arena. Within the last two years alone, high school girls' wrestling has grown by an incredible 55%². Additionally, higher education is left wanting for female wrestling coaches as the number of college wrestling programs has increased dramatically from ten to over 165 as of 2023. Empowering women to take on coaching and other leadership roles is critical to the continued growth and impact of women's wrestling.

Wrestle Like A Girl develops evidence-informed coaching material unique to female wrestlers through group think tanks made up of the country's most accomplished coaches of female wrestlers. We identify where coaching girls is similar to coaching boys AND the areas where gender-specific training is necessary to support the female brain, body, and health. Through webinars (both virtual and in-person), in-person professional clinics, task forces, and our educational resources, we have directly engaged thousands of coaches and wrestling leaders since founding WLAG in 2016.

Our partners have included USA Wrestling, British Wrestling, Canada Wrestling, the National Wrestling Coaches Association, the National Federation of State High School Associations, and the Women's Collegiate Wrestling Association - as well as significant partnerships from a variety of countries including Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine. Collectively, we have extended our reach of wrestling educational resources across the national and international wrestling platforms to over 1 million constituents in just the past three years. With our focused informational resources, we have built a valuable, reliable network that connects thousands of coaches who are pioneering women's wrestling across our country and throughout the world. There is a continued need for education and for additional resources to strengthen and grow our network, as well as a need for female leaders from all walks of life to engage with our mission and provide mentoring to the nascent leaders borne of WLAG's efforts to support both athletes and coaches in this sport.



Determined Advocacy

Scholastic Youth Initiatives. Wrestle Like A Girl has a strong commitment to the growth and development of female wrestling and provides unique opportunities to wrestle at the high school level. Wrestle Like A Girl supports the start-up of new high school wrestling programs and advocates to increase the number of approved girls high school state tournaments across the United States. In 1998, the state of Hawaii was the first to officially recognize girls wrestling, and as of 2021, 38 more states have followed.

University Initiatives. Wrestle Like A Girl was successful in bringing women's wrestling under the NCAA umbrella as an Emerging Sport in 2020 and is continuing its efforts to raise Women's Wrestling to NCAA Championship Status by 2025.

Critical Research

Research on girls and women in competitive wrestling is limited – largely because of the historical prioritization of boy's and men's wrestling data. That trend is now shifting with reports and research being focused on female wrestling at the national level, as well as targeting the state of gender equity in wrestling. Based on a qualitative study conducted by Stanec & Bhalla (2015), there are strong indications that “elite women wrestlers have positive experiences and can see upward social mobility by participating in the sport.”

There is an urgent need to further understand this landscape for females. Specifically, who is driving the advancement of the sport, what are the current trends, and who are the powerful influencers who are likely to advance the sport overall? More detailed research must be conducted with a focus on the following: the general outcomes of participation for girls and young women; the personal experiences for those who are young and just starting in the sport; and the critical trends and impact of the sport at the collegiate and university levels. With results from continued research efforts, the sport can improve best practices for all participants, shape both the curriculum and the pedagogical approach to the sport, and influence and drive a positive culture for future athletes and coaches.

Position Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to provide oversight and direction in the areas of strategy, operating and financial performance, governance, and fundraising, thereby supporting WLAG to fulfill its mission and continue to impact the domain of female wrestling here and abroad.



Other responsibilities for Trustees include, but are not limited to:

- Assist in the development of, and approve, a strategic plan and annual budget
- Regularly monitor the plan's performance against its goals and objectives
- Provide oversight of financial management including assessing the organization's financial and operational performance
- Assist in securing financial resources for the organization
- Provide ongoing evaluation of the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
- Determine the appropriate compensation for the Chief Executive Officer
- Assist in the development of the organization's 990 form
- Ensure that WLAG fulfills its ethical, legal, and regulatory obligations
- Evaluate the composition and performance of the Board
- Determine the characteristics and critical skills required of prospective Trustee candidates
- Periodically review and approve changes to the Bylaws and solicit appropriate legal support
- Read supporting materials before Board and Committee meetings
- Attend a majority of the Board's meetings (75%), on an annual basis, and actively contribute in such meetings
- Perform other such functions as the Board believes appropriate or necessary

Current Board Members & Officers

Our Board is currently made up of 9 Trustees – and we are in the process of expanding our Board. Sally Roberts is the Co-Founder and CEO of WLAG and has served on the Board since the organization's inception in 2016. She is a U.S. Army combat veteran and 2x World Bronze Medalist in women's wrestling. The Wrestle Like A Girl Board of Trustees is chaired by Maryann Bruce, Former Fortune 100 Division President & CEO. Molly Culhane, Senior Vice President, DC Managing Director at Amalgamated Bank, serves as Treasurer and Chair of the Audit Committee, and Nicole Kelsey, public company Chief Legal Officer and Secretary, serves as Secretary and Chair of the Nomination and Governance Committee. Other Trustees are: Lisa Flanary, Strategic Advisor & Coach; Nicholas Stonestreet, CEO of Ronald Blue Trust; Dan Hyman, Director at PIMCO; Nate Ackerman, Mathematician; Kerry McCoy, Executive Director and Head Coach, Lehigh Valley Wrestling Club; and Helen Maroulis, 2016 USA Women's Wrestling Olympic Champion.



Key Selection Criteria

The Nomination and Governance Committee continues to seek and solicit potential Trustee candidates for consideration to join the WLAG Board.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for an individual who has a passion for Wrestle Like A Girl's mission and shares our organization's commitment to helping girls and women succeed. Trustees will be selected based on their commitment to the mission as well as their expertise in relation to the needs of the organization and the composition of the Board as a whole. The candidate's accomplishments, skills, and networks will be utilized to continue to provide essential oversight of the organization, to obtain much-needed resources for the organization to continue its efforts in supporting girls and women in the sport of wrestling and beyond, and to attract other potential Trustees and supporters of the organization. The ideal candidate will be an accomplished executive who adds value to the organization by providing specific subject matter expertise, oversight, insight, and foresight.

In addition, candidates will bring a mix of the following skills and qualifications:

Desired Skills and Competencies

- Strong business judgment, with an ability to provide informed and thoughtful counsel and act as a sounding board to the Chief Executive Officer, and other members of management
- Ability to represent WLAG and promote and enhance its public standing by acting as an ambassador within their professional and personal networks
- Significant strategic acumen, with experience in contributing effectively to strategy discussions, and to the evaluation of business plans and their implementation
- Experience with sponsorship, new business development activities, and fundraising
- Subject matter expertise in one or more areas including the sports industry, fundraising including grants and securing sponsorships, strategic planning, marketing and brand management (including social media and public relations), accounting and financial, legal and governance, technology, human capital management, and risk management
- Industry experience in the sport of wrestling, sports generally, human rights activities, and/or non-profit organizations
- Leader in his/her respective field
- Financially literate with an ability to provide oversight of financial matters
- Free from conflicts of interest



Personal Characteristics

Personality/chemistry fit with the Chief Executive Officer and other Trustees is critically important. The successful candidate should be a “doer,” comfortable in an environment that emphasizes a close-knit, working Board. In addition, he/she must have:

- Highest standards of personal and professional integrity and ethics
- A passion for the mission of WLAG and its future
- Leadership experience with a strong history of achievement
- The ability to communicate openly, candidly, and persuasively with colleagues and management in a collegial, collaborative, and respectful manner
- Open-mindedness and excellent listening skills, including a willingness to consider other points of view
- The time and commitment to attend, and participate in, regularly-scheduled Board meetings

Personal Commitment

Trustees are expected to devote their time, talent, and treasure to contribute to the fiscal well-being and continued growth of the organization, in allegiance with its mission. Accordingly, WLAG’s Bylaws require Trustees to contribute a minimum annual donation of \$5,000 through a monetary donation, in-kind donation(s), or a combination of monetary and in-kind donations.

Board Committees

- Executive Committee
- Audit Committee
- Nomination and Governance Committee External Accounting Partner: BiggsKofford

The Committee structure was finalized, with composition of each Committee (including Committee Chairs), in the first quarter of 2023. In addition to these three Committees, the Board of Trustees approved the creation of a Social Media Committee, comprised of certain Trustees, to convene on relevant matters for the organization on an as-needed, ad hoc basis.

Board Calendar

The Board meetings are held on a quarterly cadence, and in view of the spread of geographic locations of the Trustees, the meetings are typically held virtually. In addition to these four



quarterly meetings, the Board holds a separate, fifth meeting that is scheduled at the time of the organization's annual gala, and devoted to a deeper review of certain critical and/or strategic matters of the organization. The 2024 Board calendar will follow this established cadence.

Board Compensation

Because WLAG is a charitable organization, we expect board members to forgo any reimbursement for travel and related expenses as part of their philanthropic commitment to WLAG.

To submit a biographical statement for consideration, please send it (including any details of your relationship with WLAG) to Sally Roberts at Sally@wrestlelikeagirl.org or Nicole Kelsey at nicolelindakelsey@gmail.com.

