



NEWSLETTER

CADA

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF ACTIVITIES



NADI: BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE FOR CALIFORNIA ACTIVITIES DIRECTORS

Every great student program begins with a well-prepared advisor—and in California, that preparation now has a name: NADI, the New Activities Directors Institute. Developed by the California Association of Directors of Activities (CADA), this innovative initiative is designed to

Continued on page 5.

CADA'S MISSION

Our mission is to promote and support leadership development through student activities.

14 RULES OF SPIRIT GAMES

When I first joined CADA, I had the privilege of meeting Bob Burton, affectionately known as "Mr. Energy," from Fallbrook High School. A lifelong activities director, Bob authored *Spirit Works...Turn It On* in 1987, a book that became a go-to resource for fostering school spirit and culture. Packed with lunchtime and spirit game activities, it was a lifesaver for any activities director in California. *Continued on page 5.*

HUMANS OF CADA

If you've ever been to a CADA event, whether a leadership camp, a state convention, or a board meeting, you've likely heard the voice, seen the smile, or been warmly greeted by the one and only Jim Nyberg. And if you're lucky, maybe all three. To many of us, Jim isn't just a member of CADA; he is CADA. A legend, a mentor, a friend, and to some, affectionately known as "The Mayor of CADA." *Continued on page 14.*

FCMAT UPDATES

The 2024 FCMAT Associated Student Body (ASB) Manual includes several important updates compared to the 2015 ASB Manual. These updates reflect changes in laws, regulations, and best practices for managing student body funds, as well as recommendations for improving financial oversight and accountability in schools. *Continued on page 8.*



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LINDSEY CHARRON

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Community Matters- Put in the Time Now, So You are Not Crying in January

It is so easy to just jump into all of the events that you are expected to put on on your campus. And let's be honest, that can lead to student government feeling more like a group project gone rogue than a well-oiled machine of campus leadership. But before you throw in the glitter-covered towel, consider this: the secret sauce to a successful student leadership program is not just Robert's Rules of Order—it is community.

Yes, community. That magical force that can transform teens with varying musical interests, hobbies, and fashion styles into a powerhouse of spirit weeks, service projects, and lunchtime karaoke (bless your ears). When student leaders feel connected, supported, and genuinely part of something, the results are not just better events—they are better humans with empathy. And isn't that the whole point?

Here are a few ways to start building that in your own classroom.

1. Start with Silly Traditions

You do not need a charter to start a legacy. Whether it is Waffle Wednesdays, Motivational Mug Mondays, or wearing capes to your first meeting of the month (yes, please), shared traditions create inside jokes and fond memories. These small, regular rituals build trust and give students something to look forward to—even if it's just Otter Pops.

Pro tip: Let the students invent the traditions. They'll take more ownership (and you won't have to come up with a new costume theme every week).

2. Compliment Each Other

Leadership students are often the ones thanked the least on campus. Allow students to recognize each other. Have each student decorate a paper bag that you can hang on the wall. On Fridays, have students take the time to write a note to acknowledge someone in the class that helped them out that week. Challenge your students to write one for everyone in the class. Read them at the end of each month. Students love this!

3. Celebrate the Little Wins (Loudly)

You don't have to wait until the end-of-year banquet to acknowledge your success. Shout out to the lower classmen who finally nailed the morning announcements. Applaud the senior who stayed late to pick up glitter confetti. Create goofy superlatives ("Most Likely to Be Mistaken for a Substitute Teacher") or pass around a weekly rubber chicken trophy. Recognition builds motivation and shows your students that their efforts—big or small—are seen and valued. After we finish our first big assembly of the year, I host a "Sip n Paint" for my students with a hot chocolate bar and a drawing tutorial video from YouTube. In the end, building community is not about scheduling more meetings or running tighter agendas. It is about creating an environment where student leaders feel like they belong, like they matter, and like they are part of something bigger than themselves.

So go ahead—bring the snacks, crank the music, and let the leadership magic happen. Just... maybe skip the trust falls.

Lindsey Charron
CADA President



CAMP CADA 2025: LEAD OUTSIDE!

MELISSA EDSALL

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Get ready to pack your backpack and lace up your boots—it's time to Lead Outside! Camp CADA is more than just a theme—it's a journey. Over three transformative days, educators from across the state (and nation) will embark on a trail of learning, connection, and professional growth. Each day represents a unique step in the leadership adventure, guiding us from personal reflection to shared purpose.

We'll begin our journey by stepping outside of our comfort zones, pushing past the familiar and embracing what it means to lead with courage and authenticity. To kick off this bold beginning, we'll be joined by KC Mack, teacher-turned-comedian and a star of the Bored Teachers comedy tour. With humor and heart, KC will remind us that leadership doesn't always have to be serious—it just has to be real.

As we continue down the trail, we'll shift into exploration mode—digging deeper into our roles, our impact, and how we show up for our students and school communities. This leg of the journey will be guided by Emma Lovewell, world-renowned Peloton instructor and wellness advocate, who will inspire us to explore with energy, resilience, and intention—on the bike and beyond. Finally, we'll close our journey gathered together around our campfire—a symbol of community, reflection, and shared mission. There, we'll hear from longtime educational thought leader Phil Boyte, who will help us tie it all together with his signature wisdom, storytelling, and insights on creating lasting culture and connection on campus.

Whether you're new to the world of student leadership or a veteran advisor, Camp CADA is your space to reconnect with what matters, re-energize your purpose, and come together with fellow educators in an experience unlike any other. So bring your energy, bring your curiosity, and most importantly—bring your willingness to Lead Outside.

Melissa Edsall

CADA President-Elect



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3-KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
100+ WORKSHOPS
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EXHIBIT HALL

PRESENTERS

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN!

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DEADLINE TO APPLY IS OCTOBER 31, 2025

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New Activities Director Institute

NADI: BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE FOR CALIFORNIA ACTIVITIES DIRECTORS

PAUL CHYLINSKI

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"This 48-hour conference gave me more actionable ideas and information than any other conference in my career"

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

empower first- and second-year Activities Directors and their administrators with the tools, systems, and community they need to lead transformative programs on campus.

The program launched in 2024 with its inaugural cohort held at the University of California, Santa Barbara. That first group laid a powerful foundation, and its overwhelming success led to the program's expansion in 2025, growing from one to three separate cohorts, all still hosted at UC Santa Barbara. Each cohort offered a unique experience but shared the same mission: to build sustainable, inclusive, and effective student leadership programs through expert mentorship, practical training, and lifelong connections.

Cohort One – July 2025: Setting the Standard

Instructors: Jill Mortensen, Jana Remington, and Jen Rodrigues

Location: University of California, Santa Barbara

"During this past week, a group of newly-appointed Activity Directors throughout the state of California joined together to create the NADI I cohort of 2025. Throughout our time together, we learned invaluable skills, were given access to a wealth of resources, and were undeniably influenced by a group of passionate individuals—Jill Mortensen, Jana Remington, and Jen Rodrigues. Jill, Jana, and Jen effortlessly collaborated to support our needs in the highest sense. By sharing their personal experiences, they created and maintained a safe space that allowed us to connect, communicate, and concentrate on what truly embodies leadership: acts of service. We will all honor what we learned by encouraging a culture of leadership that promotes inclusivity, opportunity, and diversity."

—Lauren Swanson, Cohort One Attendee

The inaugural 2025 cohort brought together fresh faces with bold ideas, but what emerged was far more than a training—it was a community. Through hands-on sessions, open dialogue, and countless moments of shared vulnerability, this group set the tone for what NADI would become: a transformative experience rooted in purpose.



Cohort Two – Summer 2025: Foundations That Last

Instructors: Katie Baker, Tommy Maloney, and Julie Larrivee

Location: University of California, Santa Barbara

"When I first entered Activities, there wasn't a manual. And as a one-high school district, support wasn't always easy to find. So when I heard about the opportunity to teach at NADI, I jumped at the chance. Being able to help provide a solid foundation to new Activities Directors—and the admin who supports them—was a great experience. The attendees came in with a willingness to learn and a passion to better the experiences of their students, staff, and schools. Together with an amazing team of instructors, we were able to provide systems and support that will help them develop their programs throughout the year and beyond. In addition to the time spent in the classroom, having the opportunity to get to know 25 new friends and bring them into the CADA family has been fantastic. Together, we created a bond that will last throughout their time in Activities, and I look forward to everyone continuing to support each other as the years go on. After the first day, I knew NADI would be a success, and I look forward to participating for years to come."

—Tommy Maloney, Instructor

"The NADI presenters—Katie, Tommy, and Julie—were ultimate professionals with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. In my 34 years of teaching, this 48-hour conference gave me more actionable ideas and information than any other conference in my career. From rallies to finances, the team organized and shared a ton of resources that new Activities Directors and their supporting admin staff can take home to revamp or reshape any level program for both middle and high school campuses. The presenter team demonstrated (with relevant examples) how a meaningful student leadership program can transform school culture and climate to improve engagement, achievement, and inclusivity. Providing access to their templates and documents will enable each of us to organize our programs and projects in accordance with FCMAT standards, while also creating an environment where activities are accessible to all students. The team was able to differentiate the instruction for the various levels of experience and needs of the attendees, and I appreciated the organization and access they provided to us in our time together. I look forward to reaching out to them as questions arise and to collaborating with the other attendees as we gain experience and capacity in our new positions. Thank you for providing this critical training for new Activities teachers and directors."

—Jennifer M. Dolan, Righetti High School
Student Activities Director, Yearbook Adviser, NHS/CSF Co-Adviser

Cohort Two built on the strong start of NADI's first session, providing a well-organized, high-impact environment for learning and connection. With veteran teacher-leaders guiding the experience, attendees received tools for finance, programming, student inclusion, and leadership development—grounded in real-world practice and aligned with FCMAT expectations.

Cohort Three – Summer 2025: Building Courage and Community

Instructors: Allie Garcia and Kassandra Garcia

Location: University of California, Santa Barbara

"As newer Activities Directors ourselves, we still consider ourselves learners—constantly inspired by the incredible educators we meet through CADA. While we bring fresh ideas and energy, we've never forgotten what it felt like to walk into the role of Activities Director for the very first time. NADI III gave us a unique opportunity to pour into the next generation of leaders by focusing on the things we wish someone had told us before Day One. It allowed us to step back and ask: What do new directors really need? We were so inspired by the excitement, the new ideas, and the fresh perspectives that all of our NADI attendees brought throughout the experience. NADI isn't just a training—it's a community. It creates a space where new Activities Directors feel seen, heard, and supported. It acknowledges that this role can sometimes be isolating, especially when you're the only person on campus tasked with building school culture, leading student voice, and balancing all the paperwork. But through this experience, those feelings of isolation are replaced with connection. NADI III helped us not only reflect on our own journeys but also gave us the platform to lift others up and walk alongside them. We're proud to be part of something that supports Activities Directors not just for a week, but for the long haul."

—Allie Garcia and Kassandra Garcia, NADI III Instructors

"'Courage is about being willing to try.' – Ted Lasso. NADI 2025 helped build my courage as I go into the 2025–2026 school year as a first-ever Activities Director and Core teacher. I have zero experience, but knowledge from experience—3+ decades ago! What do I do? Where do I start? It's just 'event planning,' right? Well, no. No, it is so much more. I had the privilege to attend the 3-day introduction to what makes a leadership teacher a leadership teacher! From building a Mission Statement to energizers. From Code of Conduct to ways to be inclusive throughout the whole school, from students to staff. My two instructors, more like goddesses, Allie Garcia and Kassandra Garcia (no relation, but one would never know), showed, taught, answered, and validated what all of us 26 attendees needed. We all left on the third day still feeling overwhelmed, but filled with excitement and an underlying sense of 'We got this!' From gentle reminders to start slow to the powerful message that 'you are not alone,' this training is the key for all new directors and teachers. Having the opportunity to see CADA Camp in action for students and meeting CADA's current president, vice president, and other council members validated that ALL Activities Directors are not alone. I wish I could put into words what the 3-day conference can do for a newbie like myself, but really, the only way to truly 'get it' is to attend. Attend all that CADA offers—from council meetings to the Convention. Get the emails. Check out the Snapshots and the wealth of information that is shared. I know that I need to buckle up for the new school year, in general, and I know there will be challenges. But I also know that it will all be okay. Knowing I am not in this alone allows me the space to be there to support, guide, and encourage my leadership students to thrive and to become more—to become a legacy to carry on for future leaders."

—Lorin Harris, NADI III Attendee

The third and final cohort of 2025 brought heartfelt energy and renewed courage. Allie and Kassandra led with empathy and authenticity—creating space for vulnerability, validation, and vision. As a result, new Activities Directors walked away with clarity, confidence, and connection—the true cornerstones of leadership.

The Takeaway: NADI Is Here to Stay

More than a conference, NADI is a movement—a commitment to ensuring that California's newest Activities Directors are not just prepared, but empowered. It provides the structure, mentorship, and support needed to build strong, sustainable leadership programs that uplift entire school communities.

As NADI continues to grow, so does the ripple effect across California campuses. The program's success has sparked interest for even more cohorts, follow-up mentorship, and increased visibility of the vital role Activities Directors play in shaping student culture.

If you're stepping into this role or supporting someone who is, don't go it alone. Join the next NADI cohort. Because leadership begins with learning—and learning begins here.

New Activities Director Institute

Registration Includes:

- 2-night stay at UCSB Dorm
- 16+ hours of expert instruction from seasoned activity directors
- 2-breakfasts, 2-dinners, & 1-lunch
- Giveaways

**UC SANTA
BARBARA**

**JULY
2026**

Tailored for first or second-year activities directors, this program is your gateway to professional growth and success. Seize the opportunity, unlock your potential!



REGISTRATION OPENS EARLY 2026

14 RULES FOR SPIRIT GAMES

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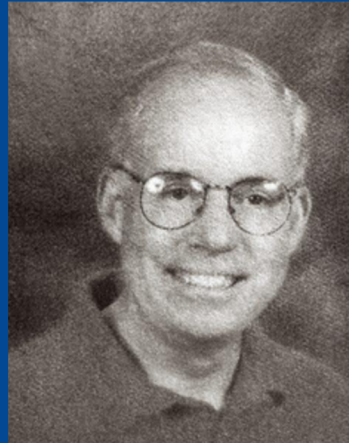
CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

While some of the games may not fit today's litigious climate, Bob's checklist for a successful lunchtime class competition remains just as relevant. Below is a paraphrased version of that checklist—one you'll definitely want to print out for your students next year!

CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL LUNCHTIME CLASS COMPETITION ACTIVITY

- 1. Safety First** – Consider all potential risks of injury for participants and spectators. Take steps to eliminate hazards. If necessary, choose a different activity. Use cones to mark off areas or utilize a stage when available.
- 2. Pre-Select Contestants** – Select participants at least a day or two in advance. Avoid last-minute scrambling or public begging for volunteers. The person running the activity should be notified at least three days prior and have backups in case they're absent.
- 3. Involve a Variety of Students** – Engage different types of students to participate. The best approach is personal outreach. The activities commissioner should always thank participants after each competition.
- 4. Keep It Brief** – The event should be short and engaging. Don't let it drag on unnecessarily.
- 5. Notify Your Principal** – Always keep your principal informed about planned activities. No surprises!
- 6. Ensure Clear Communication** – The student leading the activity should be able to communicate effectively with participants and spectators. If using a microphone, ensure they know how to use it properly. Rehearse beforehand.
- 7. Offer Prizes** – Besides awarding points for class competitions, provide small prizes for winners, such as pens, pencils, or other inexpensive rewards.
- 8. Involve Yearbook and School Newspaper** – Notify the yearbook staff and school newspaper in advance to capture photos and coverage of the event. Some of the best photos come from these competitions
- 9. Have a Staff Member Present** – The director of student activities or student council advisor should be present at all class competition events.
- 10. Include Staff Teams Occasionally** – Involve staff in some competitions, such as homecoming events. Show appreciation by washing their windshields, leaving thank-you notes, buying them treats, or publicly acknowledging them in the school paper or at meetings.
- 11. Inform Contestants of Their Event in Advance** – Ensure that participants know exactly what event they will be competing in when they agree to participate. No surprises! Well-organized events attract more students.
- 12. Keep Events Simple and Achievable** – The activity should be easy to understand and complete. It's better to have a competition where the winning class scores multiple times rather than just a few. Always test the event beforehand.
- 13. Ensure Fairness** – All students should have an equal chance to win. Avoid pairing students with significant advantages (e.g., a football player against a non-athlete in a throwing contest). Impartiality is key.
- 14. Make the Rules Clear** – Before starting, ensure that both participants and spectators fully understand the rules of the competition.

NOTE: This appears in CADA Snapshots, which is a member-only weekly shared tidbit; some Snapshots are sent to the entire state. If you are interested in joining CADA, call (831) 464-4891 for more information.



Bob Burton served as the Director of Student Activities at Fallbrook High School from 1966 to 1996. He has won the Hall of Fame, Warren Shull and Jack Moore Award (1990) while a member of CADA. Bob passed away on January 13, 2007 at the age of 67. He was a long standing favorite at CADA Convention and Area

Conferences, and has been truly missed.

Since 2009 CADA has given the Bob Burton Spirit Award to one member from each area, every year, for their exemplary leadership in the development of a positive culture and climate by making spirit work on their campus.

Spirit Works ... Turn It On!





CADA LEADERSHIP CAMP : CURRICULUM AT THE LEADERSHIP FACTORY

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This summer, student leaders from across the state stepped into a world of pure imagination at CADA's Leadership Camp, cleverly themed The Leadership Factory, inspired by the whimsical world of Willy Wonka. Packed with color, candy, and creativity, this one-of-a-kind camp wasn't just about fun—it was about stretching minds, building grit, and learning how to lead in ways that leave a lasting impact.

From the moment students arrived, they were encouraged to think beyond the ordinary and boring. With the help of Wonka-inspired challenges, activities, and workshops, campers tapped into their "pure imagination" to explore what leadership looks like when it's innovative, inclusive, and full of wonder. Ideas flowed like a chocolate river as students worked in teams to dream up new ways to make their schools more connected and positive.

But leadership isn't all sugar and sparkle—it also takes grit. That's where the theme of sweet resilience came in. Campers faced challenges designed to push them out of their comfort zones and develop the kind of mental strength leaders need when things get hard. Whether it was tackling group problem-solving activities, speaking in front of others, or reflecting honestly on areas for growth, students learned that doing hard things is what makes leadership meaningful—and that quitting isn't an option when others are counting on you.

The final layer of camp magic was discovering how to create the Golden Ticket Effect on their campuses. Students analyzed who makes up their school community—who's involved, who's overlooked, and what everyone really needs. From there, they brainstormed and planned events, systems, and outreach strategies that make everyone want to be part of the fun. Just like finding a golden ticket in a candy bar, students aimed to create moments and spaces on campus that feel exciting, inclusive, and unforgettable.

By the end of the week, these young leaders weren't just walking away with candy in their pockets—they left with confidence, purpose, and a factory full of ideas to take back to their schools. With imagination, resilience, and heart, they're ready to lead in ways that make their campuses shine.



Summer Training for your students

CADA Leadership Camps

@ UC Santa Barbara



@CADACamps

*Multiple sessions available
throughout July*



www.cada1.org/leadershipcamps



CADA CAMP RECAP: THE LEADERSHIP FACTORY IS IN FULL PRODUCTION!

JEFF CULVER

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Another summer of CADA Leadership Camps has come and gone! This year, our theme transported student leaders into the whimsical world of the Leadership Factory, full of golden tickets, Oompa Loompas, and pure imagination. For four energizing days, students and advisors dove into leadership training to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Special thanks to the 2025 CADA Camp Curriculum Team, led by Melissa Edsall (Douglass Middle School), with support from Bryan Speed (Torres High School), Jessica Leek (Nipomo High School), and Jessi Lindell (Excelsior Middle School). This group met virtually throughout the spring to plan the lessons centered on pure imagination, sweet resilience, and the golden-ticket effect, and helped refine council projects.

To help keep the camp running smoothly behind the scenes were a team of directors: Paul Chylinski (logistics), Todd Arrowsmith and Verne Johnson (operations), Ron Ippolito (media/technology), and Monica Anderson, Joe McMahon, and Shannon Hurtado (adults). This year's Camp Directors, helping to steer the students through the #CADACamps experience, were Bryan Speed, Jessi Lindell, Shawna Sousa, Nestor Cerda, Melissa Edsall, and Kim Karr.

This summer, we welcomed over 1,600 student leaders accompanied by 230 advisors from 168 schools across the state of California, plus some friends from Kansas, Georgia, and Hawaii. All four camps were held at UC Santa Barbara, our long-time educational partner, located right next to the Pacific Ocean, where we enjoyed one of the coolest summers in memory!

Supporting our theme and mission to inspire student leaders, our keynote speakers provided thoughtful words and encouragement for their leadership journey. The "Amazing" Tei Street, first introduced to the CADA stage at the Heart of Leadership in 2017, returned to CADA Camps this summer to share an impactful message with our campers and reminded students, "You can't be whatever you want to be. You can be whatever you WORK to be!". And for the first time, speaking at CADA Camps, we welcomed Heather Schultz at all four camps. She encouraged everyone to handle the tough stuff better. And rounding out our slate of speakers, Johan Martinez-Khalilian spoke at camps 1, 2, and 4, with CoolSpeak's Chris Collins taking the stage at camp 3. Johan posed the question, "What are you going after?" and Chris taught us that "perspective creates power."

In addition to our keynote speakers, students also had an opportunity to attend Rotations focused on fundamental skills necessary for leadership students to successfully navigate the school year. This year's rotations focused on developing creativity using the Brainsprouting method, a deep dive into organizational structures of the leadership class, and a selection of lunchtime activities.



CADA/CASL Leadership Camps are an intensive 4-day experience where students are divided into councils where they have the opportunity to meet other students from around the state to share ideas, network, and work on a camp project together. Students come out of camp with a solid foundation to start the school year with goals in mind for themselves and their school's activity program. Catch up on all of the posts from this summer's CADA Camps program by searching #CADACamps on Instagram and Facebook. Follow @CADACamps on those social media sites, and view this year's camp videos on the @CADACamps YouTube channel.

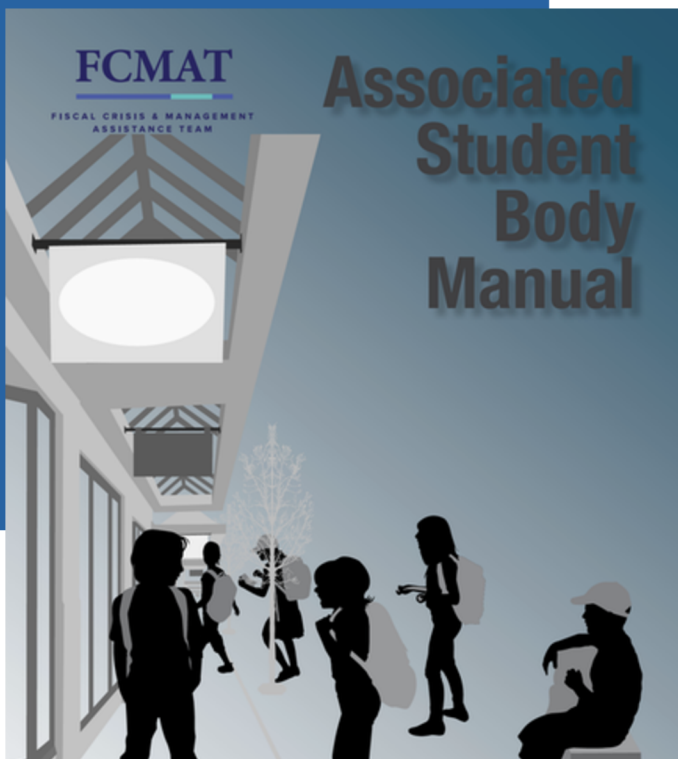
We want to acknowledge the following CADA Medallion Sponsors for direct donations/discounts which helped make this year's camp program a success: All Action Awards, All-Star Events, The "Amazing" Tei Street, Audio Dynamix, One Stone Apparel, Pegleg Entertainment, SOS Entertainment, and Spirit Sox USA.

Save the Date

We are in the process of finalizing dates for July 2026 at UC Santa Barbara. Watch cada1.org/leadershipcamps for updates. Registration opens in January. Turn in your district/school trip requests for approval early to avoid payment delays. Camps sold out earlier than ever in 2025... so don't delay in registering in the new year.

Scan the QR code to check out the Camp Recap Videos Playlist for a glimpse into the Camp program. You can also view the four camp lip dubs produced in less than a day at each camp on the YouTube channel.





FCMAT ASB UPDATES

Continued from front cover.

Here's a summary of some key differences:

1. Legislative and Regulatory Changes

- **Changes in State Laws and Regulations:** The 2024 manual incorporates updates reflecting recent state legislation, including changes related to the management of student body funds, financial reporting, and transparency.
- **New Guidelines for Fundraising and Spending:** The manual clarifies rules around fundraising, particularly in terms of allowable expenses and fund management, ensuring compliance with evolving state and federal guidelines.

2. Financial Transparency and Accountability

- **Improved Reporting Standards:** The 2024 version emphasizes enhanced financial transparency, including more detailed reporting requirements for student body organizations and how schools must document and track expenditures.
- **Internal Controls:** There are more stringent recommendations for establishing internal controls to prevent misuse of funds. This includes more robust guidelines for audits, reconciliation of accounts, and oversight practices.

3. Digital Recordkeeping and Technology Integration

- **Increased Use of Technology:** The 2024 manual advocates for the integration of digital tools for managing ASB finances. This includes the use of software to track transactions, manage budgets, and generate reports.
- **Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** There are updated recommendations on how schools should safeguard financial data, with a focus on cybersecurity and protecting sensitive student financial information in digital formats.

4. Expanded Guidance on Equity and Inclusivity

- **Equitable Access to Funds:** The 2024 manual places more emphasis on ensuring equitable access to student body funds, especially for clubs and activities representing marginalized groups. It encourages schools to avoid inequitable distribution of funds and provides examples of best practices for allocating resources fairly.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** There is also a focus on making student government decision-making more inclusive and representative, ensuring that ASB funding decisions reflect the diversity of the student body.

5. Student Body Leadership & Governance (See Extended Analysis Below)

- **Updated Governance Structure:** The 2024 manual includes updated guidance on how to structure ASB leadership and student government, emphasizing clear roles and responsibilities, as well as best practices for effective communication and decision-making.
- **Training for Student Leaders:** There is an increased focus on providing training and support for student leaders, ensuring they understand their fiduciary duties and the ethical handling of funds.

6. Fund Management and Budgeting

- **More Detailed Budgeting Guidelines:** The 2024 manual includes more specific guidelines for preparing and reviewing ASB budgets. It clarifies the expectations around budget approval processes and provides templates for managing ASB funds effectively.
- **Long-Term Fund Planning:** The new version encourages schools to create long-term financial plans for ASB funds, including savings for future student activities and capital projects.

7. Ethics and Compliance

- **Stronger Ethical Standards:** The 2024 update emphasizes the importance of ethical behavior when managing ASB funds. It includes clearer guidance on conflicts of interest, the use of funds for personal gain, and other ethical issues.

- **Compliance with Federal and State Guidelines:** There are more detailed instructions on how schools must comply with federal and state regulations concerning student body finances, including rules about the handling of donations, grants, and other external funding sources.

8. Legal and Liability Issues

- **Liability Protections:** The 2024 manual includes additional information on protecting students, advisors, and school districts from potential legal liabilities related to student body activities. This section also addresses issues related to insurance and risk management.

9. Fundraising and Expenditures

- **Streamlined Fundraising Guidelines:** The 2024 manual clarifies and streamlines the guidelines around fundraising events, ensuring that schools comply with all legal and tax requirements.
- **Expense Categories:** There is a more detailed categorization of permissible expenses, including rules for what types of expenditures can be funded through student body accounts, and recommendations on managing specific types of expenses like travel or capital improvements.

10. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- **Increased Stakeholder Engagement:** The 2024 manual encourages more involvement from school communities in ASB activities, including collaboration with parents, local businesses, and other stakeholders to support student events and programs.

11. Virtual and Hybrid Activities

- **Guidance on Virtual Events:** With the increasing role of virtual and hybrid student activities, the new manual provides specific guidance on how to manage online fundraising, virtual events, and how to account for revenue generated through these platforms.

These updates in the **2024 ASB Manual** reflect evolving educational needs, greater emphasis on financial responsibility, and an effort to adapt to changing technological, social, and legal environments. One of the key supports I found in the update is where it speaks about training for students.

The **“Training for Student Leaders”** section in the **2024 FCMAT Associated Student Body (ASB) Manual** is a key update that highlights the importance of providing comprehensive training for students who take on leadership roles within student government or ASB. This update reflects a broader understanding that student leaders need more than just a basic understanding of student body operations; they must also be well-equipped with the skills, knowledge, and ethical framework to manage funds responsibly, lead with integrity, and represent their peers effectively.

Key Aspects of the Training for Student Leaders

1. Emphasis on Financial Literacy

- **Understanding Budgets and Fund Management:** Student leaders are trained on the fundamentals of budgeting, how to track income and expenses, and how to make decisions that align with the goals and financial health of the student body.
- **Fiduciary Responsibilities:** Training emphasizes the fiduciary responsibilities of student leaders, explaining that they are trusted with managing funds that belong to the student body. This includes understanding the importance of ethical financial practices, transparency, and accountability.
- **Financial Reporting:** Student leaders are taught how to read and interpret financial statements, how to monitor expenditures, and how to ensure compliance with district or state financial regulations.

2. Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making

- **Ethical Standards and Conflict of Interest:** There is a focus on teaching student leaders the ethical standards they must uphold while managing ASB funds and making decisions that affect the student body. Topics include how to avoid conflicts of interest, how to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of all students (not just a select few), and how to maintain transparency in their actions.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** The manual stresses the importance of being transparent in decision-making processes, especially regarding the allocation of funds, organizing events, and reporting to stakeholders (e.g., students, school administrators, parents).



AS SEEN ON CADANEWS.ORG
2024 FCMAT ASSOCIATED
STUDENT BODY (ASB)
MANUAL

Continued from the previous page.

3. Leadership Skills and Governance

- **Role and Responsibility Clarification:** Student leaders are trained on the specific roles and responsibilities associated with ASB leadership positions (e.g., president, vice president, treasurer, secretary). This helps to ensure that there is no confusion about what each role entails, and that responsibilities are clearly understood and respected.
- **Effective Communication:** Training also includes developing communication skills, which are critical for leaders who must represent the interests of the student body and collaborate with various school staff, administrators, and external stakeholders. Students are trained on how to run effective meetings, present proposals, and engage in discussions that foster collaboration and decision-making.
- **Conflict Resolution:** ASB leaders are trained in conflict resolution techniques to manage disagreements that may arise within student government or between different groups (e.g., between student body members, faculty, or external partners).

4. Legal and Regulatory Awareness

- **Understanding Legal Boundaries:** The training incorporates information about the legal and regulatory requirements for ASBs, particularly concerning the handling of funds, fundraising activities, and ensuring compliance with both state and federal laws. This might include rules on student privacy, liability protection, and other important legal considerations.
- **Compliance with District and State Regulations:** The manual highlights the necessity of ensuring that student leaders are aware of district policies, state regulations, and legal obligations regarding financial oversight and the use of student body funds.

5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

- **Inclusive Leadership Practices:** The 2024 manual highlights the importance of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in ASB leadership. Student leaders are trained to be more inclusive, ensuring that all student voices are heard and represented, particularly those from marginalized or underrepresented groups.
- **Fair Distribution of Resources:** Part of the training involves ensuring that student leaders are conscious of how funds and resources are distributed among various clubs and activities, with a focus on fairness and equity.

6. Professional Development Opportunities

- **External Training and Workshops:** The 2024 manual suggests that student leaders participate in external workshops, conferences, and other development opportunities to gain further skills in areas like leadership, financial management, and ethics.
- **Mentorship and Peer Support:** There is also a recommendation that ASB advisors (teachers or staff members who guide student leaders) offer mentoring and support to new student leaders. Peer mentorship programs can help newer leaders learn from experienced students, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the ASB.

7. Practical Experience and Hands-On Learning

- **Simulation and Role-Playing Exercises:** To ensure that student leaders are fully prepared for the challenges they may face, the training includes role-playing exercises and simulations. These activities allow students to practice managing budgets, running meetings, making decisions under pressure, and navigating challenging situations in a controlled environment.
- **Real-World Applications:** Student leaders are given the chance to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, such as organizing events, creating budgets, or leading student council meetings. This hands-on experience helps reinforce the concepts they learn in training and prepares them for leadership responsibilities.

Overall Goal of the Training Section:

The primary goal of the **Training for Student Leaders** section in the 2024 FCMAT ASB Manual is to **equip student leaders with the necessary tools to manage funds responsibly, make ethical decisions, and lead effectively.** It underscores the idea that student leadership is not only about organizing events and representing the student body, but also about being responsible stewards of the financial and organizational resources entrusted to them.

The manual's emphasis on financial literacy, ethical decision-making, and leadership development ensures that ASB leaders are prepared to navigate complex situations and contribute positively to their school communities. This training is seen as crucial for fostering **accountability, integrity, and long-term success** for both the student leaders and the student body they serve.

**DOWNLOAD THE FULL MANUAL
ON OUR CADA NEWS SITE:
CADANEWS.ORG**



MINDFUL MOMENT WITH MORTY

JILL MORTENSEN

RIPON HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR & INDEPENDENT STUDIES COORDINATOR | YOGA CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR

Mindful Moment with Morty: Starting the Year Strong! No Impostors Allowed!

Stepping into the role of an activities director is no small feat. It's a position that demands creativity, resilience, and a deep commitment to student engagement. Yet, it's common for new and even seasoned directors to grapple with impostor syndrome, the nagging feeling of not being "good enough" or fearing being exposed as a fraud.

But here's the truth: if you're in this role, it's because you have what it takes. Grit, dedication, and a genuine desire to make a difference are the foundations of success in this position. While the learning curve can be steep, remember that growth comes from embracing challenges, not avoiding them. To help maintain a positive mindset throughout your journey, consider these three strategies:

1. Prioritize Self-Care

The demands of the role can be overwhelming, making self-care essential. Regular physical activity, mindfulness practices, and hobbies can significantly reduce stress and prevent burnout. Simple techniques like the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding method or scheduling dedicated "worry time" can help manage anxiety effectively.

2. Embrace the Power of "No"

Saying "no" is not a sign of weakness but a strategic decision to focus on what truly matters. By setting boundaries, you conserve energy for initiatives that align with your goals and values. Remember, every thoughtful "no" creates space for a more impactful "yes."

3. Build Your Support Network

The role can sometimes feel isolating, but you're not alone. Connecting with fellow activities directors through forums like the California Association of Directors of Activities (CADA) can provide invaluable support and resources. CADA offers programs such as the New Activities Directors Institute, designed to elevate your skills and connect you with seasoned professionals. Additionally, the CADA Resource Library is a treasure trove of leadership lessons, templates, and tools to help you run your activities program effectively.

Remember, impostor syndrome thrives in silence. By acknowledging your feelings, seeking support, and focusing on your growth, you can overcome self-doubt and lead with confidence. You've got this.

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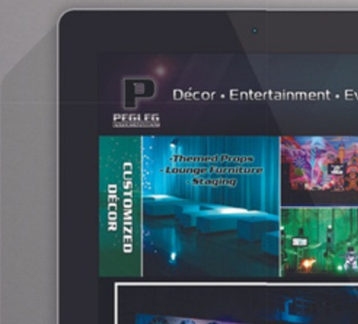
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CAMP Deadline:
Applications Due April 10, 2026

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Ride Exclusive 2 hrs

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CADA APPOINTS JOE MCMAHON AS INAUGURAL CIF REPRESENTATIVE UNDER NEW SIX-YEAR POLICY

PAUL CHYLINSKI

PCHYLINSKI@CADABOARD.ORG



In a move designed to strengthen the longstanding relationship between student leadership and athletics, the CADA Board has adopted Policy 13.9, which formally defines the role, responsibilities, and term of the CADA/CIF Representative. This updated policy brings clarity and structure to a critical position that serves as a conduit between the California Association of Directors of Activities (CADA) and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).

A Six-Year Term with Purpose

Under Policy 13.9, the CADA/CIF Representative is appointed by the Board to a six-year term, with a single-term limit. A new representative will be appointed at the end of the fifth year of a six-year term, creating a built-in one-year overlap for mentorship and transition. This structure is designed to foster institutional knowledge and strengthen the connection between CIF and CADA, ensuring that the voices of Activity Directors are heard at the state level.

Introducing Joe McMahon

To launch this initiative, the CADA Board has appointed Joe McMahon, current CADA Past President, as the inaugural representative under the new system. McMahon's leadership experience and deep involvement in CADA's mission make him the ideal person to establish this newly formalized role and create lasting partnerships with CIF leadership.

Honoring Past Leadership

While this is the first time the position has been formally structured, it is important to recognize the dedication of those who held this role before. Todd Arrowsmith (Area E), Debi Weiss (Area E / Past CADA President), Geniel Moon (Area F / Past CADA President), and Bonnie Bagheri (Area G / Past CADA President) all previously served as liaisons to CIF in various capacities. Their advocacy laid the groundwork for this evolution. The new policy builds on their efforts by creating a consistent system of communication, representation, and mentorship moving forward.

Responsibilities and Qualifications

The role is open to those with high school experience and includes the following responsibilities:

- Attend one CADA Board Meeting annually, as designated by the Board President
- Contribute regularly to the CADA Newsletter
- Ensure CIF Section reports are shared with CADA Area Councils
- Submit formal reports at each Board meeting
- Help coordinate CIF presentations at student conferences in each Area
- Collaborate with the Convention Team to provide a CIF-focused session at the State Convention
- Attend all State CIF Meetings as CADA's official representative

Expenses Covered

CADA will cover related travel and participation expenses, subject to Board approval, to ensure the representative can fully engage in their duties.

A Strategic Step Forward

Policy 13.9 represents a milestone in CADA's growth as an organization. It ensures that our involvement with CIF is not only consistent but meaningful, centering student voice, school culture, and collaborative leadership in every conversation.

With thanks to those who served before and excitement for what lies ahead, CADA proudly welcomes this new chapter of representation and leadership.



HUMANS OF CADA: JIM NYBERG PAUL CHYLINSKI

PCHYLINSKI@CADABOARD.ORG

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

Jim's story begins in the small Swedish town of Kingsburg, California, where he was born on June 15, 1948. Even from a young age, it was clear Jim was meant to lead and connect. He was up at 4:30 every morning delivering newspapers, earned his Eagle Scout rank in eighth grade, and became his high school's Drum Major while balancing student council, sports, and music. That early involvement planted the seeds for a lifetime devoted to co-curricular activities.

He carried that passion into college at Reedley and Fresno State, majoring in English and setting his sights on the classroom. That dream turned into a 22-year teaching career at Tulare Western High School, where he became Activities Director in 1979. Just one year later, in 1980, Jim attended his first CADA conference in San Diego. That was the beginning of something special, for Jim and for all of us who've had the privilege of working with him over the years.

Jim didn't just attend CADA events; he built them. He joined the Camp Steering Committee in 1986, working alongside other Past Presidents Jack Ziegler (Area A), Bob Martin (Area C), John Gibson (Area C), and Stu Shaffer (Area G), as well as Hall of Famer Toosje Lamareaux (Area A/H). Their leadership and camaraderie helped shape the direction and heart of the committee and the organization. Jim became a staple of Area C (eventually its coordinator) and climbed the leadership ladder to Vice President in 2000 and President in 2002, where he hosted the unforgettable Abracadabra Conference in Reno. He's attended nearly every CADA convention consecutively since 1980, missing only a couple due to unforeseen circumstances—and has left his fingerprints on every one he's been a part of.

And if you've ever watched a Jack Moore Award video or the Convention Wrap-Up, chances are the soothing, enthusiastic voiceover guiding you through those moments belonged to Jim. That's why so many of us also know him as "The Voice of CADA." He's been the backstage emcee more times than we can count, steady, comforting, and always ready with a perfectly timed pun.

Jim's contributions have been recognized in all the official ways: the Warren Shull Award, induction into the CADA Hall of Fame, and in 2010, the Jack Moore Award, CADA's highest honor. But even those don't quite capture the full picture. Because Jim's real legacy isn't in awards. It's in how he makes people feel.



"Jim Nyberg doesn't just represent the spirit of CADA, he helped shape it."

Ask anyone who's been part of CADA for a while, and they'll tell you about Jim's warmth, his mentorship, and the way he makes every person in the room feel seen and valued. He's the guy who'll dance with you at the convention social, then turn around and offer you the best leadership advice you've ever heard. He's what every Activities Director hopes to be: deeply kind, endlessly creative, and joyfully dedicated.

Outside of CADA, Jim's proudest role is that of father and grandfather. He's a devoted dad to Carin, Eric, and Jillian, and a proud grandfather to five energetic grandsons. In the late '80s, while dressed as a singing chicken at the Tulare County Fair, Jim met Jody Durant, a Visalia elementary teacher. Yes, love at first "peck." Their relationship has been a source of light and laughter ever since, with Jody and Jim becoming a dynamic duo in the CADA family.

Since retiring from Exeter Union High School in 2007, Jim may have slowed his pace a bit, but not his passion. These days, you'll find him living life with the same joy and intention he brought to every convention and conference hallway, dancing, reading a good book on his Kindle, and tending to his backyard, which features a carefully crafted putting green. While he's recently had to let go of golfing due to a shoulder injury, he continues to channel his energy into the things and people he loves most.

Jim Nyberg doesn't just represent the spirit of CADA, he helped shape it. His legacy lives on in the thousands of students he inspired, the advisors he mentored, and the friends he's made along the way. Jim is also part of some legendary traveling social circles, including "The Real Men of CADA" with Todd Arrowsmith (Area E), Verne Johnson (Area A), and myself (Paul Chylinski, Area F). He's also one of the founding members of the "Somerset 8," a beloved group that includes Past Presidents Cindy Bader (Area B) and Monica Anderson (Area D), as well as our amazing and supportive spouses, Jody Nyberg, Bill Meagher, Kevin Anderson, and my wife, Pamela Chylinski. The Somerset 8 has celebrated birthdays, weddings, and retirements together for over 35 years, from New Orleans to Austin, from San Diego to Outingdale in Somerset. These deep, lasting friendships all began at CADA and stand as a testament to the lifelong bonds this organization helps create. We thank you, Jim, not just for what you've done, but for who you are. And we're all better for knowing you.

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SECRET STAFF SPIRIT WEEK: A CREATIVE WAY TO FOSTER SCHOOL SPIRIT

CORISSA STOBING

SAN LEANDRO HIGH SCHOOL

Before Winter Break, San Leandro High staff launched a unique and exciting initiative: Secret Staff Spirit Week! Designed to engage students and model a vibrant school culture, the week was filled with mystery, themed outfits, and a contagious sense of fun that brought the community closer together.

Each day, staff members arrived dressed to match a secret theme. Themes ranged from Pajama Day and Sports Day to the ever-entertaining "Anything But a Cup" Day, where teachers drank from unconventional vessels like flower vases and measuring jugs. Staff Spirit Week was not shared with students, leaving them to wonder what was happening with their teachers and why they were all wearing pajamas. Participating staff members entered a raffle, which included prizes from the school's leadership team. This simple gesture incentivized participation and recognized team members' efforts and creativity.

The impact on students was remarkable. Each morning, they eagerly anticipated the new theme, and by midweek, many students figured out the spirit days and started showing up in outfits, too. The buzz in the hallways was electric, making the school environment feel more welcoming and dynamic. This enthusiasm set the tone for the students' upcoming Spirit Week, offering them a preview of how much fun active participation can be.



At its core, Secret Staff Spirit Week was about more than costumes. It served as an opportunity to lead by example, showing students that school spirit is about embracing creativity, teamwork, and pride in the shared community. By stepping out of their comfort zones and having fun, staff demonstrated how small actions can foster a sense of belonging and joy.

The staff's enthusiasm and commitment to the initiative made a lasting impression on students and colleagues. The following week, it's the students' turn, and there is confidence that they will bring the same energy and excitement observed during the staff's spirited display. These efforts create an engaging, inspiring, and unforgettable school culture.

California Association of Student Leaders **2026 State Conference** Ontario, CA

MS: April 16-18, 2026

HS: April 18-20, 2026

LEARN MORE

[@CASLFAN](https://cada1.org/CASL)





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- Discount for New Activities Director Institute
- CADA Newsletter
- CADA Snapshots (Weekly tips sent to your email)
- Access to CADA Member-only events:
 - CADA Summer Leadership Camps
 - CASL State Conference
- CADA Member Directory Access
- 40% Discount @ Hope Univ. for Admin Credential
- Recognition opportunities
- Volunteer/Leadership Opportunities





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Robert Frost "The Road Not Taken"

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" conveys the themes of choice, individuality, and reflection. The poem describes a traveler faced with two diverging paths in a forest. The traveler chooses the less-traveled path, which makes "all the difference," though the poem's tone leaves room for ambiguity about whether the choice was better or simply different.

The Road Not Taken

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Lessons for the Activities Directors

As you start to on board your new student leaders, or watch those that have been in your program for years look towards graduation, this could be a fantastic moment to share the lessons that Robert Frost's poem gives us.

Key Messages for all Students:

1. **Embrace Individuality:** Encourage your student leaders to forge their own paths and trust their unique instincts and aspirations.
2. **Acknowledge the Weight of Choices:** Emphasize that choices shape their journeys, but no single decision will define their entire future.
3. **Reflect on Growth:** Inspire them to look back on their years in school as a collection of moments and decisions that have helped them grow.

Inspiring Message for Seniors:

As you prepare to graduate, consider the paths ahead. Much like the traveler in Frost's poem, you'll face choices that may feel daunting. Remember that there's no "wrong" road—only opportunities to learn and grow. Whether you follow a well-trodden path or carve your own, it's the courage to decide and commit that will shape your future. Trust your instincts, embrace the unknown, and know that every step forward is a step toward discovering who you are meant to become.

REGIONAL/AREA EVENTS

1-DAY TRAININGS FOR BOTH STUDENTS & ADVISORS



AREA A COORDINATOR

Jessica Banchieri
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www.cada1.org/areaA

Sept 20, 2025

Northern California Advisor
Conference
Elk Grove, CA

Sept 30, 2025

Sacramento Area High School
Student Conference
Woodland, CA

Oct 1, 2025

Sacramento Area Middle School
Student Conference
Woodland, CA

April 28, 2026

Modesto Leadership Conference
Modesto, CA



AREA B COORDINATOR

Laura Saldaña
areaB@cada1.org
www.cada1.org/areaB

Sept 9, 2025

South Bay - NewB Advisor
Conference
Campbell, CA

Sept 10, 2025

East Bay - NewB Advisor
Conference
Castro Valley, CA

Oct 13, 2025

Bay Area Student Conference
South San Francisco, CA



AREA C COORDINATOR

Shawna Sousa
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www.cada1.org/areaC

Oct 6, 2025

Central Valley Student
Conference
Madera, CA

Dec 2, 2025

Central Valley Advisor
Conference
Clovis, CA



WHAT'S MY AREA?

**CADA is divided into 7 Areas (A-G)
by county in California and 1 Area
(H).**

Area A: Del Norte, Siskiyou,
Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Glenn,
Tehama, Modoc, Lassen, Colusa,
Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Nevada, Yuba,
Butte, Yolo, Sacramento, Placer, El
Dorado, San Joaquin, Stanislaus,
Contra Costa, Tuolumne, Amador,
Alpine, Mono, Calaveras

Area B: Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma,
Napa, Solano, Marin, San Francisco,
San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Clara

Area C: Mariposa, Madera, Merced,
Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, Inyo

Area D: Santa Cruz, Monterey, San
Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa
Barbara, Ventura

Area E: Los Angeles County

Area F: San Bernardino, Riverside,
Orange

Area G: San Diego, Imperial

Area H: Members outside the state
of California



AREA D COORDINATOR

Christy Hertsch
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www.cada1.org/areaD

Sept 14-15, 2025

Central Coast Advisor Retreat
Avila Beach, CA

Nov 6, 2025

South Central Coast Student
Conference
Ventura, CA

Nov 18, 2025

North Central Coast Student
Conference
Salinas, CA



Area E Coordinator

Ruth Simonds
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August 23, 2025

Los Angeles Region Advisor
Conference
South Pasadena, CA

October 21, 2025

Los Angeles Region Student
Conference
Pasadena, CA



Area F Coordinator

Dinah Greene
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www.cada1.org/areaF

Sept 10, 2025

Inland Empire/Orange County
Advisor Conference
Temecula, CA

Oct 13, 2025

Inland Empire Middle School
Conference
Perris, CA

Nov 17, 2025

Disneyland High School Student
Conference
Anaheim, CA



Area G Coordinator

Valerie Tapia
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www.cada1.org/areaG

Oct 13, 2025

San Diego Region Student
Conference
San Diego, CA

Nov 19, 2025

San Diego Region Advisor
Conference
San Diego, CA

CADA FINANCIAL RECAP 2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR ERIN TOBIAS

ETOBIAS@CADABOARD.ORG

Our school year is off to an exciting start, and CADA has remained active with a surge in memberships and record-breaking program sellouts. Over the past year, our areas served 13,032 students and advisors at local conferences, 1,961 advisors at the state convention, 1,843 attendees at the CASL conference, and 1,831 students at camp. Excluding LDD, MAA, and NADI figures, this brings our total to 18,667 registrations, each one requiring your time, paperwork, and approval. We recognize the effort that it takes.

Thanks to our collective dedication, we're able to provide meaningful learning experiences, excellent member services, and high-quality program content. Our strong financial standing, supported by smart planning and responsible practices, has helped us maintain service even during challenges like last year's wildfires in Areas D and E, which led to canceled conferences and events.

We're better together and are able to support each other because of your continued commitment. Thank you, CADA, and cheers to a new year filled with unlimited opportunity and growth.



- Camp Income
- Association Income
- CASL Income
- LDD Income
- Area Income
- Convention Income

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15 CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS THAT BELONG ON YOUR BUCKET LIST

PAUL CHYLINSKI

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California isn't just a state; it's an epic tapestry of coastlines, mountains, deserts, and stories written in stone, redwoods, and ocean mist. Across its 280 state parks, you'll find ancient forests, wildflower deserts, Gold Rush ghost towns, and secret beaches where history whispers through the waves. Whether you're chasing adventure, peace, or a new perspective, California's State Parks offer some of the richest, most unforgettable experiences, sure there is Yosemite, Joshua Tree, Pinnacles, Muir Woods, Tahoe...but there is so much more that covers the Golden State.

Here's a journey through 15 of the best, and the incredible tales that make them even more magical.

Coastal Parks

1. Crystal Cove State Park (Orange County)

In the 1930s-40s, families built makeshift beach cottages here, living rent-free in a hidden seaside village until the state acquired the land. Many of those colorful cottages have been restored and can now be rented! Fun Fact: Crystal Cove's beaches were featured in classic movies like *Beaches* (1988).

2. Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve (San Diego)

Home to the ultra-rare Torrey pine tree. Indigenous Kumeyaay people considered the trees sacred and used them to find hidden springs. Fun Fact: It's one of only two places in the world where Torrey pines naturally grow!

3. Point Lobos State Natural Reserve (Monterey County)

Called the "crown jewel" of California's parks, Point Lobos inspired painters and photographers like Ansel Adams. It's where rugged coastline, turquoise water, and ancient cypress trees collide. Fun Fact: Early whalers and abalone fishermen once lived in small cabins here; some remain!

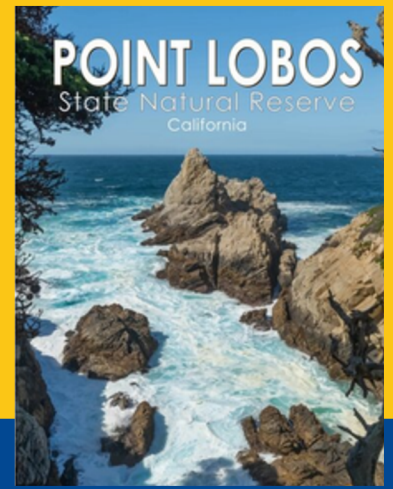
Mountain Parks

4. Big Basin Redwoods State Park (Santa Cruz Mountains)

California's first state park (founded in 1902). Despite catastrophic fire damage in 2020, ancient redwoods are regenerating, a symbol of resilience and hope. Fun Fact: Some redwoods here are over 2,000 years old!

5. Mount Tamalpais State Park (Marin County)

The birthplace of mountain biking in the 1970s. Riders modified old bikes (nicknamed "clunkers") to race downhill. Fun Fact: You can see San Francisco, Mount Diablo, and even the Sierra Nevada from the summit on a clear day.



6. Castle Crags State Park (Shasta County)

Named for towering granite spires that resemble medieval castles. Legend says the Wintu tribe believed the crags were inhabited by powerful spirits. Fun Fact: Some spires shoot 6,000 feet into the air!

Desert Parks

7. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (San Diego County)

Named for explorer Juan Bautista de Anza and "borrego" (Spanish for bighorn sheep). Famous for dramatic superblooms after rainy winters. Fun Fact: Over 130 giant metal sculptures, including dinosaurs and dragons, are hidden across the desert landscape.

8. Red Rock Canyon State Park (Kern County)

A filming location for old Western movies! Towering red cliffs and vivid desert colors made it a Hollywood favorite. Fun Fact: The park contains prehistoric fossils dating back millions of years.

Historic Parks

9. Bodie State Historic Park (Eastern Sierra)

A genuine ghost town from the 1800s gold rush, left almost exactly as it was abandoned. Fun Fact: Park staff regularly receive stolen artifacts mailed back by people **who claim they were "cursed" after taking souvenirs.**

10. Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (Tulare County)

Founded in 1908 by African Americans led by Colonel Allen Allensworth, this town was intended to be a self-sufficient, thriving community free from racial discrimination. Fun Fact: It's the only California town founded, financed, and governed by African Americans during that era.



11. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park (San Diego County)

Preserves the early days of San Diego when it was a Mexican pueblo. Historic buildings, blacksmith shops, and saloons bring the 1800s back to life. Fun Fact: The haunted Whaley House, said to be one of America's most haunted places, is nearby.

Hidden Gems

12. Jug Handle State Natural Reserve (Mendocino County)

Features a rare "ecological staircase", five distinct terraces formed over thousands of years. Fun Fact: Each step has its own ecosystem, from lush forests to grassy meadows to barren "pygmy forests" with tiny, ancient trees.

13. Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve (Mono County)

Mono Lake's bizarre, otherworldly limestone towers ("tufas") formed underwater and now rise above the surface. Fun Fact: The lake is saltier than the ocean and attracts millions of migratory birds.

14. McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park (Shasta County)

Teddy Roosevelt called Burney Falls the "eighth wonder of the world." Water pours down from springs inside the rock, even in drought years. Fun Fact: The falls drop 129 feet year-round, fed by underground volcanic springs.

15. Montaña de Oro State Park (San Luis Obispo County)

"Mountain of Gold" refers to the yellow wildflowers blanketing hillsides in spring. Rugged cliffs and hidden beaches make it a coastal secret. Fun Fact: It's less crowded than nearby Pismo Beach but just as spectacular.

These 15 parks mix iconic landmarks, cultural heritage sites, dramatic wilderness, and secret spots most people have never heard of, giving your readers a perfect blend of the famous and the hidden California.

California's State Parks are more than pretty places; they are living storytellers, guardians of history, and protectors of natural wonders. From desert blooms that appear like miracles to century-old poems carved into immigration station walls, each park holds pieces of who we are and where we've been. Whether you're exploring the misty cliffs of Point Lobos or wandering the sun-bleached streets of Bodie, you're not just visiting a park, you're stepping into a story still being written.

So pack your hiking boots, your camera, and a little sense of wonder, there's a whole state waiting for you to discover it.



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**California Association of
Directors of Activities**

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2025

Aug 23, 2025	Los Angeles Region Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area E
Sept 9, 2025	South Bay - NewB Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area B
Sept 10, 2025	East Bay - NewB Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area B
Sept 10, 2025	Inland Empire/Orange County Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area F
Sept 14, 2025	Central Coast Advisor Retreat - Hosted by Area D
Sept 20, 2025	Northern California Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area A
Sept 30, 2025	Sacramento Area HS Student Conference - Hosted by Area A
Oct 1, 2025	Sacramento Area MS Student Conference - Hosted by Area A
Oct 6, 2025	Central Valley Student Conference - Hosted by Area C
Oct 13, 2025	Bay Area Student Conference - Hosted by Area B
Oct 13, 2025	Inland Empire Middle School Conference Hosted by Area F
Oct 13, 2025	San Diego Region Student Conference Hosted by Area G
Oct 21, 2025	Los Angeles Region Student Conference - Hosted by Area E
Nov 6, 2025	South Central Coast Student Conference - Hosted by Area D
Nov 17, 2025	Disneyland High School Student Conference Hosted by Area F
Nov 18, 2025	North Central Coast Student Conference - Hosted by Area D
Nov 19, 2025	San Diego Region Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area G
Dec 2, 2025	Central Valley Advisor Conference - Hosted by Area C

2026

March 4-6, 2026	2026 CADA State Convention - Reno, NV
April 16 - 18, 2026	CASL MS Student Conference - Ontario, CA
April 18-20, 2026	CASL HS Student Conference - Ontario, CA
April 28, 2026	Modesto Leadership Conference - Hosted by Area A
July 2026	CADA Leadership Camps - UC Santa Barbara
July 2026	New Activities Director Institute - UC Santa Barbara