

A Message From The President/Chair

After 16 months of searching, today I had the honor and pleasure of introducing Max Siegel as USA Track & Field's next CEO. With this announcement, the days of USATF's "leadership gap" are over. And with it comes an opportunity for all of us to recalibrate, refocus and fully devote ourselves to our respective roles in the sport we love.

The board of directors' decision to hire Max came after an extremely productive retreat held earlier this month in Denver. Collaborating with members of the USOC's own leadership team, we spent 2-plus days honing in on what the role of the board should be, how we should work together with the CEO, and what kind of leader, and leadership dynamic, will be most effective for this organization.



The board emerged from the retreat with a renewed commitment to stay at a high level of governance, a true sense of excitement over our selection of a visionary leader to be our CEO, and a unity that we have not seen since the "new" board was first formed in 2009.

I am never one to dance around a topic. The last 18 months have been challenging not just for the organization and the sport, but for the board itself. Our first CEO search, conducted last year, was long and arduous. In the interim, without a permanent CEO at the table or in the National Office, many of us across the spectrum of USATF started taking on new roles and responsibilities. To be frank, the proper role of the board, our volunteer leaders and staff got basically thrown out the window as we all stepped in until we could find our new leader.

At the board retreat, our focus was to define what success looks like in terms of USATF's governance and leadership structure. What that looks like is having the board and CEO aligned and working together on common goals. It is not the board and CEO engaged in a power struggle or a political battle for winning over "hearts and minds." One of the traits Max possesses that truly sets him apart as a leader is his ability to overcome differences and work with people instead of against them; to find the common ground of united interests. In that regard, our board is taking a page from his book.

As of today, and as we move forward, the board and our CEO are aligned in our commitment to execute this organization's strategic plan. We share a vision for the future and a level of trust that I don't think I have ever seen in my almost 30 years in this sport. That is not to say we agree on every single point. Max knows the board's strengths and weaknesses as well as anyone, and the same is true of the board and

Max. It is our shared commitment and overall vision – and again, let me say our shared trust – that will remake our organization’s future.

In short, the “old days” of board, staff and volunteers sometimes working together on the surface but often working in conflict, behind the scenes, are over.

Our athletes have set the standard of athletic excellence on the field of play, and we expect no less of them. Our board will set the same standard of excellence in terms of how to operate and govern properly and effectively. We now look to the people who make our sport “run” across the country every day – volunteers, officials, coaches and fans – to join us in building a model of professionalism that will set the standard for all NGBs within the Olympic movement.

Together, we are better. We, collectively, are USA Track & Field.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hight", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.