

ICEAA Board of Directors Meeting  
February 10, 2022 | Zoom Virtual meeting

APPROVED MINUTES as of March 31, 2023

Voting Attendees

Tim Anderson (via Pullen proxy), Dave Brown, Rick Collins, Bob Hunt, Brent Johnstone, Jennifer Kirchhoffer, Cheryl Latimer, Alan Mayer, Arlene Minkiewicz, Cari Pullen, Christian Smart, Christina Snyder, Madeleine Teller, Kellie Wutzke

Non-voting Attendees:

Chris Anderson, Kevin Cincotta, Jenny Flanagan, Karen Mourikas, Jennifer Scheel, Sharon Burger, Megan Jones

Welcome, quorum count, introductions: Christina Snyder

Bob had a conflict that delayed his attendance and has asked Christina to serve as his proxy and run the meeting in his stead. Quorum established at 11:04 am.

Due to another scheduling conflict, 2023 Workshop Committee Chair Jennifer Scheel requested the agenda be adjusted to allow the Workshop discussion to take place first.

2023 Workshop Update Jennifer Scheel

Jennifer presents slides. Sponsorship sales continue apace, all board members are encouraged to reach out to their companies about sponsoring. Jennifer thanks the 2023 Workshop Committee for all of their hard work as we prepare for the event.

Jennifer explains the new ICEAA Cost Challenge program that will be introduced in San Antonio, where teams of 3-5 junior analysts (and their mentors) can sign up to compete in the Cost Challenge at the Workshop. Teams will be given the materials to prepare a presentation for the judges, but during the opening general session on Tuesday, we will explain the Cost Challenge and then give the teams a change, revision, or other issue to work through before giving their presentations to the judges on Wednesday, and then the winning team will be announced and awarded a \$1,000 cash prize at the closing general session on Thursday.

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Jennifer's team of Challenge Architects have all competed in and won US Government Cost Challenges previously. She hopes to release the invitation to compete by late February and then distribute the challenge to the competitors by mid-April.

Megan also introduces the OEM Forum & Networking Event (then working title was OEM Roundtable) that will take place on Monday, May 15 from 3-5pm. A subgroup of the OEM COG is planning some presentations and discussion topics for the event that all attendees, whether or not they work for/with an OEM are invited to join. Interested individuals need to indicate they want to attend the OEM Forum when they register for the Workshop.

Megan also reminds the board of the March 15 deadline for 2023 ICEAA Association Awards deadline and encourages everyone to nominate someone for an award.

Christina adds how excited she is for the Cost Challenge, saying that showing the value of ICEAA to junior estimators early will hopefully make lifelong advocates out of them. She adds her thanks and congratulations to Jennifer and her team on all their hard work on the Cost Challenge.

Rick asks if the idea for a cost challenge came from Dale Shermon and SCAF, and while challenges like this are somewhat common, SCAF has been a big inspiration. Cheryl adds that the 2023 SCAF Challenge is coming up in March and is SCAF's most popular event of the year.

Secretary Report: Arlene Minkiewicz

No comments or edits were suggested for the December 2022 minutes either in advance of the meeting or during.

**Vote:** Motion is raised to approve the December 2022 minutes. No further discussion is requested. Seconded and passed.

Treasurer Report: Madeleine Teller

Madeline presents slides. The balance sheet of assets remains constant, and all expectations for 2022 year-end financials were exceeded, with the first year of positive revenue in several years, closing out around \$7,500 in the black. With more COVID relief funds (from the

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federal Employee Retention Credit program) and a favorable workshop, we can expect a positive year in 2023 also.

Rick asks what the \$150K Workshop revenue estimate is based on; Megan explains this is about what our revenue was for the 2018 Workshop, where we had 400 attendees. Since we had around 350 attendees in Pittsburgh 2022, this seemed a reasonable post-pandemic goal compared to the almost 500 attendees we had in Tampa 2019.

Christina asks Megan if she intends to fill the administrative assistant position in 2023; Megan says she's been assessing the need throughout the year and feels confident now that the office will be fine short handed in the near term. While Workshop season is very busy, other periods are less so, and the admin position could potentially be part-time when it's reinstated. For now, between the workload cycle and the time Sharon has gained thanks to the certification exams going online, we're holding up, but are open to rehiring an admin in the future.

Christina then asks if the budget projections for 2023 include revenue from either CEBoK-S sales or upcoming software certification; Megan and Madeleine say with no way to estimate how much could be made on either program in 2023, they were not included in the projections, so any revenue from those programs will be over and above the initial estimate.

Jennifer K. asks if the projection for membership revenue should be adjusted to reflect the increased dues and those who purchased dues early ahead of the increase. Megan explains rather than basing the estimate on inflated pre-increase sales in 2022, the membership revenue estimate was calculated by taking the actual dues revenue from 2021 and then adding 60% to reflect the increased dues.

Rick mentions Mike Lionais, who is running unopposed for Canada Region Director has hopes to restart the ICEAA Canada Workshop this fall.

**Vote:** Motion is raised to approve the February 2023 treasurer's report. No further discussion is requested. Seconded and passed.

Professional Development Update

Jennifer Kirchhoffer

Jennifer presents slides with certification statistics. Jennifer notes the 65-exam backlog of folks who have signed up for but not yet taken the exams is higher than usual, and asks Sharon if she has heard any anecdotes about the exam, whether individuals are intimidated

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by it or any other reason why they might not have taken the exams they signed up for. Sharon says AFIT usually has 10-15 certification exams after their main event, but this year they only sent one. The Greater Alabama Chapter in Huntsville also usually holds a training event in the spring that draws several exams, and that is being planned for 2023. The online exam also tends to draw fewer large groups of test takers than the previous in-person model. Sharon hears from exam takers that the contracts they work on require CCEA certification from their estimators and suggests if we can find out which of these contracts are requiring certification and how to reach out to more, that would increase our numbers.

Christina asks when the most recent ICEAA Finishing School (Boot Camp) was and when the exam went online; Finishing School was in either 2018 or 2019, and the exam went online in 2020. Christina says in her experience, training for something like the exam works well when done in a group, so what can we do to encourage groups to form if there aren't mass in-person exams anymore.

Jennifer asks Kevin to confirm the exam pass rate, which she believes is around 47%. Kevin does not have recent metrics on pass rates and asks Sharon to request them from the exam software provider. Megan says she thought the target pass rate was 70%, which it is, but the pass rate is usually lower.

Rick asks Jennifer if she has personally heard from people saying they're intimidated by how difficult the exam is; she says she has, and Megan adds that she and Sharon hear it all the time. Christina recalls being intimidated by the exam when she prepared for it, and that the rumors she had heard were that the exam is very difficult, but believes that in some ways, our exam being perceived as difficult is a good thing, it shows that those who do pass truly know the material and are the experts the certification says they are. Jennifer agrees the exclusivity is good to a point, but not to frighten test takers so much that they don't even sign up.

Rick asks Kevin if the online exam is more difficult than the previous paper exam; Kevin says no, that the online exam is a better test since they removed some of the ambiguous questions from the previous iteration. When he first took the exam in 2003, he was told the pass rate was less than 50% for first-time takers, lower than 1/3 for individuals in the Washington, DC area, and that those most likely to pass were either a part of the study group or repeat takers.

Dave theorizes if more people are taking the exam in smaller groups or independently, they're less likely to pass, which will perpetuate the rumor that the exam is overly difficult. He also adds that his experience taking the exam after studying in a group at the Workshop

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was very beneficial to him, and agrees with Christina that we need to find more ways to encourage candidates to form study groups. Kevin and Rick agree.

Megan says that while she agrees with and understands the board's motivation to keep the exam exclusive with a low pass rate, the certification can't be so exclusive that nobody knows what it is or what it means, and we need to find a balance between academic rigor and the business of running the association.

Kevin reminds the board that most of the questions on the online exam are the same as those that were on the paper exam, and those questions that were changed were only changed subtly from what they have been for 10 years. Candidates now also have access to the Excel-based Scratch Pad for working out the questions, which they never had before, and the exam difficulty was not increased to accommodate the new tools the test takers have.

The plan for the 2023 Workshop has been to focus the training program on CEBoK-S, given that the CEBoK videos from the 2021 Training Summit will be available online soon, but she says she likes the idea of reintroducing the study sessions at the Workshop. Jennifer proposes making the videos available for attendees to view for free during the Workshop, Christina likes the idea and Megan says it can easily be done.

Dave suggests also making practice problems available for attendees to work through while they prepare for the exam during the Workshop also. Megan says she has some practice questions from the Finishing School as well as those on the Excel-based practice exam that's part of CEBoK 2.0. Sharon adds she could make the online calculator available for those studying at the Workshop so they can get even more familiar with it as they prepare.

Sharon suggests holding an exam date at the Workshop, still using the online exam but with a live proctor, that way there would still be a reason to take the test together. The group agrees and supports the idea. Dave says he believes holding an exam at the Workshop will encourage attendance; Christina agrees. Megan says as long as the individuals bring their own laptops, there won't be any cost to ICEAA. Sharon adds that since there will be a live proctor, individuals taking the exam at the Workshop won't need cameras or to use the AI software for proctoring, which has been a challenge for some individuals who are either uncomfortable with being filmed or their employer won't allow the software to run on their computers.

Jennifer thanks everyone for their ideas and is excited to incorporate them into her plans for the Workshop training program.

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Professional Development Update: CEBoK-S

Kevin Cincotta

Jennifer expects the CEBoK-S slides will be available for purchase by the end of February, and that the live in-person training will all be CEBoK-S modules, but that she and Kevin still have to finalize some of the details for the upcoming Software Cost Estimating Certification.

Kevin is still waiting for a few more exam questions that were promised to him and suggests the certification be named Certified Software Cost Estimator, or CSCE [Update: after Googling CSCE and finding it is already a trademarked certification credential, Jennifer, Kevin, Sharon, and Megan researched and agreed to Software Cost Estimating Certification, or SCEC, which does not yield any search results on Google]. Kevin believes the prerequisites for the SCEC should be the same as those for the CCEA.

Kevin thinks we should find qualified alpha testers to review the SCEC exam before it is made available to the public, including those who were a part of developing CEBoK-S, and then offer the first exam at the Workshop. Jennifer agrees an alpha test will be beneficial.

Eric van der Vliet is writing an article for the upcoming *ICEAA World* issue that explains CEBoK-S, ICEAA Software, and the exam, and she is writing a supplemental article about CEBoK-S and the SCEC to ensure all the necessary information about the programs is available to the membership. Jennifer adds her thanks and congratulations to Rick, Kevin, and everyone who's been involved in the CEBoK-S project over the past few years.

Professional Development Update: Freestone LMS

Jennifer Kirchoffer

Jennifer explains we have purchased a learning management system (LMS), Freestone, to be able to sell the CEBoK training videos and eventually CEBoK-S, that required an update to our membership portal software to be completed before we can fully adopt the LMS. The membership portal was released in January and we expect the LMS rollout to be finished by the end of February.

The first products that will be offered on the LMS will be the CEBoK training videos and the CEBoK-S PowerPoints (as PDFs). Megan provides a short demo of how the on-demand CEBoK videos will be offered to the membership.

Megan asks all board members to report to her any issues or errors they may come across using either the new ICEAA Portal or the Freestone LMS so that they can be addressed as quickly as possible.

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Jennifer presents the initial proposed pricing for the LMS products. For CEBoK-S, \$75 for members/\$150 for non-members for individual CEBoK-S PowerPoint files, or \$300/\$450 for all 9. For the CEBoK training videos, \$50 for members or \$200 for non-members per module [Update: after discussing pricing and comparing with similar products, Jennifer, Christina, and Megan have adjusted the pricing for the CEBoK-S files to be \$100 each for members and \$175 each for nonmembers, with all 9 selling for \$595/\$745; CEBoK videos to sell for \$75/\$150 each and \$495/\$645 for all 12 videos].

Kevin is concerned about the PDF files, once downloaded, can be used and shared without ICEAA's control. Megan says this is true and there's not much we can do to prevent it, but she will be adding password protection against copying or editing the PDFs sold.

Karen asks if the CEBoK training videos will be replacing CEBoK 2.0 or if CEBoK 2.0 will no longer be available for free to members. Jennifer says the videos are intended to supplement CEBoK 2.0, which will remain a membership benefit.

Professional Development Update: MOA with DAU

Kevin Cincotta

The board agreed to update the language in our MOA with the DAU to encourage the DAU to continue the relationship. Kevin sent our proposed language to the DAU and is waiting to hear back as to whether or not they would like to renew the MOA.

Going back to the topic of the exam difficulty, the quality of the previous paper exam was never examined, which is most commonly done by the Cronbach's alpha measurement: a correlation of performance on each question to performance on the overall exam. A "poor" question is one that high-scoring candidates tend to get wrong while low-scoring candidates tend to get right. After analyzing the PCEA and CCEA exams, Kevin found only two of 90 PCEA questions (of which an individual will answer a random 60), and just one of the 75 CCEA questions had a negative Cronbach's alpha score.

Kevin also analyzed the percentage of questions that everyone gets right or wrong; no questions were consistently answered correctly less than 10% of the time on either the PCEA or CCEA. But 24% of PCEA questions and 9% of CCEA questions were answered correctly more than 90% of the time, or "gimmies." Most of the questions on either exam are being answered correctly between 70% and 90% of the time.

Jennifer adds that another review was done to ensure all questions are thoroughly covered and their answers can be found in CEBoK 2.0.

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Kellie is startled by the 48% pass rate, concerned that it discourages candidates. Kevin says there's two ways to alter the pass rate: add more easy questions or lower the scoring threshold. Kellie wonders if moving online or individuals studying alone is causing low pass rates, or is it just that people aren't studying?

Kevin and Sharon also attest that many exams are submitted incomplete with time remaining. Why would someone not answer all the questions before time was up if they were serious about passing? We also request they fill out a survey at the end of the exam to share their thoughts on the experience and how they prepared, but the survey is voluntary and often overlooked.

Cheryl asks if practice exams are available, that individuals can take before taking the actual exam to determine how much studying they should do. Megan points out that we don't have many spare questions to make a practice exam with, only recently having enough to give a variety per exam. Kevin suggests studying the practice questions that have been added to the end of each module in CEBoK 2.0, and Kellie suggests using the Excel-format practice question tool that can be found on the main page of CEBoK 2.0. Lots of resources are available for practice.

Rick poses the possibility that people, especially since COVID, are just getting lazier, not reading instructions, not utilizing their resources. Megan and Sharon laugh that people have been ignoring their instructions for years, well before COVID.

Kellie wonders if we should conduct another Training Summit like we did in 2021 (or the 2019 Finishing School), Christina agrees.

Jennifer is encouraged by the idea of holding study sessions in advance of an in-person exam at the Workshop will yield good testing results and more feedback on the value of group study. She thanks Kevin for his analytical analysis of the questions and thinks we all can see the test is fair, maybe people aren't studying, maybe they're bad test-takers. Jennifer and Sharon had been discussing putting a waiting period between failing and re-taking the exam since frequently those who re-take right away fail similarly to their previous attempt. Sharon says it can't guarantee the individuals will study the materials more, but at least there will be more time between exams so they're less likely to memorize questions. We also inform people of their failing test score, and advice on which modules they should focus their study on before taking again. Kevin adds since the passing score is around 70% and the pass rate is around 50%, that the scores tend to fall in a bell curve, and most of those who fail the exam do so at a slim margin.



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Cheryl asks if the exam can be taken chronologically, with candidates being scored by module and allowing them feedback after each. Kevin says we could give a report to the individuals saying which modules they scored better or worse on, but they wouldn't be taking separate exams by module and getting scored that way. Dave asks if testers tend to score better on some modules than others; Kevin doesn't have that available but can look at it with the next data download.

Professional Development Update: CEBoK Module 6 Dave Brown

Dave apologizes for not having much of an update on his progress with Module 6. He has everything he needs to finish but after a few months of heavy workload, he feels ready to restart the process.

Christina thanks everyone for taking the time to have this lively and productive conversation, and that she, Jennifer, and Megan will meet offline to finalize some of the details regarding pricing and delivery.

2023-2025 Board Nominating Committee Update Rick Collins

Rick presents slides, giving an overview of the candidates collected to run for the next board term. He would have liked for more of the elections to be contested, but is happy to have identified a great group of candidates, for which he thanks the nominating committee.

Christina thanks Rick and the nominating committee for their efforts, and asks if he can share some insights or lessons learned for the election process and how to encourage more participation. Rick says he will consider and provide.

Rick shows the slate of candidates and thanks everyone online for running.

ICEAA members can still get on the ballot if they submit a petition signed by 25 active members by March 1. Rick asks if we have received any and if we normally do; Megan says we have not gotten any yet but usually get one or two candidates added to the slate via petition.

Rick questions the wisdom of allowing individuals to circumvent the nominating committee via membership petition, and suggests the board discuss amending the nomination process before the next election.

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Rick asks if we are holding the overall and regional elections at the same time; Megan says she can open the region elections shortly after the general election closes and still be able to release all of the results by May 1. Rick asks if those who don't win their general election race, are candidates allowed to run in the regional election. Megan says we have conducted the election this way before, but will check the bylaws to see if we're forbidden from splitting the election, and if so, the board may need to make a statement to allow for it. The board agrees giving the losing candidates a second chance in the regional election is a good idea for encouraging participation, easing the sting of a loss, and providing opportunities for those who have already demonstrated a willingness to lead.

[Update: Upon reviewing the bylaws, the ICEAA executive committee has found that the dictated election process does not currently allow to separate the voting periods for the general and regional elections. In the interest of encouraging participation, as well as providing additional leadership opportunities to those members who have demonstrated a willingness to volunteer, the ICEAA board makes the following provisions for the 2023-2025 election, with the intent of formally incorporating them into the bylaws at a later date:

- The election in which all members vote on the President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Professional Development, Treasurer, and Secretary will take place between March 15 and April 15, 2023
- As prescribed in the bylaws, elections for Region Directors are only voted on by members of that region, for example, those members affiliated with chapters in Region 4 will receive a separate ballot with which to vote on the candidate(s) for Region 4. However, the Region Director elections will take place after the results of the general election are determined to allow those candidates who do not win in the general election to choose to run for their region's director.
- Region Director ballots will be distributed on April 18 and voting will close on April 28.
- The results of all elections will be released to the membership on May 1 as defined in the bylaws.] FOR DISCUSSION AT MARCH MEETING

Karen says for the latest Southern California Chapter election, those candidates who did not win their races were contacted and offered volunteer positions to help keep them interested and engaged. Christina likes the idea, having done something similar when populating the Strategic Planning Committee in 2021. Rick also supports the idea.

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New Business, Plan Next Meeting & Adjourn

Christina Snyder

Christina thanks everyone for a productive and thought-provoking meeting. Bob thanks Christina for running the meeting so adeptly in his stead.

The board agrees to hold a virtual meeting March 31, 2023.

With no objections to the board meeting date or other new business, a motion to adjourn is raised, seconded, and approved. The meeting adjourns at 12:50.