NORTHWEST SCHOOL of WOODEN BOATBUILDING

BOAT BUILDING • MARINE SYSTEMS

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 SCHOOL YEAR

October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Cooper Rooks

Marine Systems Instructor
Class of 2024
cooper.rooks@nwswb.edu

From an early age, Cooper's life centered around boats. Growing up in an active sailing community on Bainbridge Island led to 35 years of racing and cruising sailboats on the Salish Sea, Inside Passage, and up and down the west coast. He has delivered boats to and from Alaska, from Seattle to Auckland NZ, around Vancouver Island, and to the San Francisco Bay Area. Many of these trips showed him what happens when systems are not properly designed and installed with safety standards in mind. His work experience in a glass-casting foundry for nearly a decade fed his passion for problem-solving systems and fabrication. He enrolled as a student in the Marine Systems program during a sabbatical from being a middle school communications teacher. He graduated with an even deeper love for boats and the systems that keep them operating safely and efficiently.

Orrin Webb

Boatbuilding Instructor
Class of 2024
orrin.webb@nwswb.edu

Orrin's path to boatbuilding was shaped by a lifelong passion for working with his hands. Before finding wooden boats, he built custom homes; worked with timber framing, cabinetry, and furniture, and honed his skills in high-end residential construction and finish carpentry — all of which deepened his appreciation for materials, structure, and craftsmanship. That wide-ranging experience eventually led him to NWSWB, where he found a natural home in the blend of tradition, artistry, and technical challenge that wooden boats demand. As an instructor, Orrin is passionate about helping students grow, not just as builders but as makers, cultivating both skill and creative confidence. He brings curiosity, care, and a deep respect for the craft into the classroom and encourages students to do the same.

MISSION

To teach and preserve boatbuilding and marine systems skills while developing the individual as a craftsperson.

STAFF & BOARD

Board of Directors *

Richard Schwarz, President; CEO of SAFE Boats International

Kathleen Brooker, Vice President; Historic Preservation Consultant

Michael Delagarza, Treasurer, Alum 2004; Business Manager, Champion Video Productions

Bob Hartman, Secretary, Alum 2020; Retired Attorney with the United States Environmental Protection Agency

Lynn Schwarz, Board Member; Retired Executive Coordinator in the biotech industry

Jane Guiltinan, Board Member; Retired Dean of Naturopathic Medicine at Bastyr University

Stephen Gale, Board Member, Alum 1996; Former NWSWB Instructor, Haven Boatworks Co-founder

Bill Shain, Board Member; Retired Biomedical Research Scientist

David Blessing, Board Member Emeritus, Alum 2003; Nuclear Power Engineering Consultant

Sonja Mathews, Board Member Emeritus; Management Consultant and Retired Senior Executive

Instructional Staff *

Ace Spragg, Education Director

Sean Koomen, Boatbuilding Program Advisor

Tucker Piontek, Boatbuilding Lead Instructor

Bruce Blatchley, Boatbuilding Instructor

Korey Ruben, Boatbuilding Instructor

Orrin Webb, Boatbuilding Instructor

Kevin Ritz, Marine Systems Program Advisor

Evan Bailly, Marine Systems Lead Instructor

Cooper Rooks, Marine Systems Instructor

Mia Niikkonen, Prothero Intern

Jeff Matthews, Prothero Intern

Additional Staff *

Christina Ruben, Interim Executive Director

Matt Stubbs, Chief Financial Officer

Jim Argites, Operations Manager

Heidi Blehm, Compliance Manager

Piper Howeth, Facilities Crew Member

Beverly Moore, Librarian

Kristin Potter, Admissions Manager

Katie Whalen, Financial Aid Officer & Title IV Coordinator

Lauren Minnerly, Student Services Manager

Rita Frangione, Veteran Specialist

Aurthur Minnerly, Facilities Manager

Maude Richards, Administrative Assistant

LETTER FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a season of change here at the Boat School. As I reflect on my 10 years here, I realize that change is nothing new. And that's a good thing—a lesson I learned while working alongside Betsy Davis during her tenure as Executive Director when she helped grow the campus, evolve our programs, and adapt to changes in the maritime industry and the bigger world around us.

During that time, our campus changed in important ways. We connected our campus and welcomed a longstanding favorite to the community by bringing Ajax Cafe into the fold, and invested in student housing by acquiring the seven waterfront cottages next to it—expanding the campus to eight acres. We constructed a new seawall to keep our historic waterfront buildings strong and stable, and added rooftop solar to reduce our environmental impact and energy costs. Our programs evolved, too. We consolidated traditional and modern approaches into a single Boatbuilding program and developed a nationally recognized Marine Systems program, earning designation as a 2024 Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration. We grew our scholarship program dramatically, helping more students access maritime trades training. We also completed the demanding accreditation renewal process (twice!). Somewhere in the middle of all that, we made it through the challenging COVID years and came out stronger.

But Betsy's greatest gift to the school was helping us build the team and the infrastructure to keep the school thriving after her 2025 retirement. I am grateful for Betsy as she continues in her role as a mentor to me, and officially as Strategic Development Advisor, to ensure a smooth transition as I serve as interim ED.

This year at the Boat School has been pivotal for the instructors too, as Sean Koomen and Kevin Ritz transitioned from program leads to program advisors—serving as mentors to Tucker Piontek and Evan Bailly, their hand-picked successors. This is a seamless way to raise up new leaders while preserving what is most effective about our curriculum, culture, and operating model.

What's next? Getting our message out to the world. If you follow the Boat School on social media, you have probably noticed that we've changed up our strategy, with more videos and a focus on storytelling through the voices of our students, instructors, and alumni. As a result, in just 6 months, we've welcomed almost 8,500 new followers and generated 1.2M views — all showing impressive engagement and all at a fraction of the cost of paid ads.

These stories help tomorrow's students imagine themselves in the shop, and stepping into the futures they can build from learning these skills. This interest translates to more inquiries about admissions and a shorter time between a student's first engagement and decision to attend. Interest is so strong right now that we're thrilled to be flirting with a waitlist for the 2026 school year.

We all know the world is changing fast. The nature of work is shifting in ways that are real and that touch every industry and community. We hear a lot about AI, about automation, about which skills will matter and which ones will not, about what the future will hold. This is good for us. People are thirsty for the learning this school offers. I have never felt more certain that what we do here — teaching people to use their hands, their minds, and their judgment in the real world — is exactly what's needed in this moment. The world will always need people who can look at a problem, pick up a tool, and solve it. People who know how things actually work. People who have been trained not just to think but also to *do*.

So, yes, a season of change, but just one of many in the ongoing evolution of the Boat School. What hasn't changed—and won't—is the foundation of this school: teaching real, relevant skills and developing creative, capable, hands-on problem solvers.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

I am thrilled to serve as the new Board President of the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding as we celebrate 45 years teaching and preserving craftsmanship – and preparing students to take their place in the maritime workforce.

As CEO of SAFE Boats International from 2017 to 2025, the biggest challenge we faced was finding qualified people to build our boats. NWSWB's role in training the next generation of skilled workers for the maritime trades is what got me involved as a board member in 2019 and why SAFE Boats went on to become a sponsor of the Boat School.

I saw firsthand the benefit of a Boat School education when we hired our first Marine Systems graduate at SAFE Boats. With other new hires, we were having to do a lot of on-the-job training, developing our own training programs for particular skillsets. With the Boat School graduate, none of that was necessary. He had experience with electrical, plumbing, propulsion, and other things we were specifically hiring for. He knew how to think and plan, how to solve problems, how to work as part of a team – and, frankly, how to show up on time and get things done. I'm 100% comfortable advocating for the relevance of Boat School training in the maritime workforce.

Getting students into active yards on field trips is another way we help them connect what they're learning in the classroom and shops to real-world projects, and shows students the scale and scope of what's possible in the marine trades.

In the months ahead, I look forward to working with the Boat School staff and Board to deepen our connection to employers, sponsors, and members of our Program Advisory Committee to ensure that Boat School training remains relevant to the evolving needs of the industry and fulfilling to each student who commits to these demanding and life-changing programs.

Thank you for being part of the Boat School community as we continue our efforts to provide the best possible learning environment for our students now and for generations to come.

This report covers the school's activities for the 2025 school year: October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025.

PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION & JOB PREPAREDNESS

NWSWB programs are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Career Schools and Colleges (www.accsc.org) and are licensed by the State of Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (www.wtb.wa.gov).

FAST FACTS: CLASS OF 2025

- Students came from 15 states
- There was 1 international student (Canada)
- 50% of students came from within Washington state
- The average age of all students was 30 years old

CLASS OF 2025 DEMOGRAPHICS

Total enrolled: 50
Boatbuilding students: 27
Marine Systems students: 23
Ages: 17-59
Military Veterans: 9

Gender breakdown over all programs:

Men: 41 (82%)
Women: 7 (14%)
Non-binary/third gender: 2 (4%)

Gender breakdown per program:

Boatbuilding students: 27
- Men: 22 (81%)
- Women: 4 (15%)
- Non-binary/third gender: 1 (4%)

Marine Systems students: 23
- Men: 19 (83%)
- Women: 3 (13%)
- Non-binary/third gender: 1 (4%)

CLASS OF 2025

A selection of businesses where students found employment:

ACI Boats — Port Townsend, WA
Big Drop Boat Works — Moab, UT
Brooklin Boat Yard — Brooklin, ME
Haven Boatworks — Port Townsend, WA
Holdfast Marine — Bellingham, WA
NWSWB — Port Hadlock, WA
Monkey Fist Marine — Seattle, WA
Schooner Creek Boat Works — Portland, OR
Northwest Maritime — Port Townsend, WA
Port Townsend Shiprights Co-Op — Port Townsend, WA
Port of Port Townsend, WA — Port Townsend, WA
Rocking the Boat — Bronx, New York
S3 Maritime — Seattle, WA
SAFE Boats International — Bremerton, WA

Some of our graduates went on to start their own businesses, six students continued at NWSWB in the Marine Systems program, and several others are continuing their education in other institutions.

> *"The notes I took in Boat School are probably the most important notes I've ever taken. A lot of knowledge in boatbuilding is unwritten. You can't find it on the internet."*
>
> *— Kent Wisner, Class of 2025*

Trevor Gazes
Marine Systems Program
SAFE Boats International
Bremerton, WA

Oliver Lardner
Boatbuilding Program
Brooklin Boat Yard
Brooklin, ME

Patrick Dailey
Boatbuilding &
Marine Systems Programs
Haven Boatworks
Port Townsend, WA

Anabelle Yeston
Boatbuilding Program
Big Drop Boatworks
Moab, UT

Sequoia Jacobson
Boatbuilding Program
Rocking the Boat
Bronx, NY

DJ Rodriguez
Boatbuilding &
Marine Systems Programs
Monkey Fist Marine
Seattle, WA

WHERE DID THE CLASS OF 2025 COME FROM?

Alaska	2
California	4
Colorado	1
Connecticut	1
Georgia	1

Hawaii	2
Indiana	1
Maine	2
Montana	2
Nevada	1

Oregon	2
Texas	1
Utah	3
Virginia	1
Washington	25
Canada	1

PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING CRAFTSMANSHIP

A signature characteristic of the Boat School is the range of projects that students work on as boatbuilders and marine systems technicians. Each new build brings a unique set of challenges for students to tackle. Instructors model the problem solving that is an essential skill set of workers entering the trades.

THE TWINS PROJECT: HANDS-ON STUDY IN CONTRASTS

The Twins build encapsulates the entire Boatbuilding curriculum under one roof. The project entails building two 26' daysailers side-by-side, one using traditional construction methods and materials, the other using modern construction methods and materials. Students in the class of 2025 focused on the hulls of both boats. Students in the 2026 class will be working on the topsides. Launched in collaboration with nationally recognized boat designers from the east and west coasts, it's the ultimate learning experience for new boatbuilders. In addition to designing one of the boats for the Twins build, the renowned Brooklin Boat Yard enrolled one of their new employees, Oliver Lardner, at NWSWB so he could participate in the build and accelerate his development as a boatbuilder.

MARINE SYSTEMS WORK ON THE LOBSTER BOAT

Iain Rainey had no experience with boats or engines when he applied for the NWSWB 2025 Marine Systems program but he was strangely obsessed with boats and he came up with a practical idea. If he learned to install, maintain, and troubleshoot marine systems — electrical, propulsion, steering, hydraulic, plumbing, heating, and all the rest — he'd have a career. He'd also have the skills to maintain his own boat and be safe on the water and he could live aboard if he chose to do that someday. By the end of 2025, Iain was a Boat School graduate, installing systems on a 30-foot Lobster Boat as part of his 6-month Prothero Internship at NWSWB, looking forward to a career at one of the local boatyards, and owner of a Morgan 30 race-cruiser he now has the skills to maintain.

BRINGING VITALITY TO OUR COMMUNITY

The Boat School brings vitality to the local community by preparing the next generation of boatbuilders and systems technicians for living-wage employment in the marine trades, and by contributing to initiatives supporting the common good.

Connecting with Employers

The Boat School supports local businesses by preparing students for work in the marine trades. A huge shout-out to Snow and Company, a Seattle shipbuilder known for custom workboats, research vessels, and marine fabrication projects, for inviting Marine Systems and Boatbuilding students into their shops. Getting students into active yards like Snow and Company helps connect what they're learning in the classroom and shops to real-world projects. These connections and pathways lead to strong employment opportunities after graduation. Snow and Company is named for founder and owner Brett Snow, a NWSWB alum (Class of 1986)!

Growing Capacity through Recompete Funding

A $35M grant from the Federal Government's Recompete program was awarded to Jefferson and Clallam counties to provide training and career opportunities in high-wage, in-demand jobs on the North Olympic Peninsula. The Boat School received $1M in Recompete funds, enabling us to increase capacity and expand awareness of opportunities for people to train for living-wage work in the marine trades and related fields. During 2025, the school used Recompete funds to procure additional state-of-the-art equipment for hands-on training, and hire and train additional instructors to accommodate more students while preserving a small student-to-teacher ratio.

Investing in Clean Energy Generates Cost Savings

The school's investment in clean energy now includes 164 solar panels on the Hammond Shop and Marine Systems Building (in 2022) and solar panels on our two waterfront buildings (in 2024). The installation of 81 Silfab SIL-500HM 500-watt solar modules and 8 Tesla Powerwall 3 Battery/Inverter units is generating additional savings now and into the future.

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Preserving Craftsmanship and Ensuring Relevance

NWSWB has established an independent Program Advisory Committee as a means to provide an external review of its programs. The Committee meets at least twice a year and is composed of appropriately qualified representatives external to the institution (i.e., non-school employees) who can provide a meaningful review of the school's programs and supporting resources and materials. We are proud to have broad representation, resulting in energetic discussions and practical suggestions for improvement.

Boatbuilding

Joel Arrington; Boatshop Manager, Northwest Maritime

Eron Berg; Executive Director, Port of Port Townsend

Chris Bergnoli, Jeff Galey, Chris Sanok; Member-Owners, Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op

Ethan Cook; Shipwright

Brandon Davis; Owner, Turn Point Design

Jim Franken; Naval Architect, James J. Franken, Inc.

Stephen Gale; Former Owner/Manager, Haven Boatworks

Leo Golden; Owner and Shipwright, Tally Ho, Sampson Boat Co.

Blaise Holly; Owner/Shipwright, Haven Boatworks

David King; Former Mayor of Port Townsend, Retired CFO, Townsend Bay Marine

Dieter Liobner; Editor-at-Large, Professional Boatbuilder Magazine

David Jackson; Marine Surveyor, Pacific Rim Marine Surveyors

Patrick Mahon; Marine Surveyor

Dan Newland; President, Pegasus Aeromarine Inc.

Peter Proctor; GM, Jenson Motor Boat

Gordon Sanstad; Boatbuilder, Former Boatbuilding Instructor, Seattle Central Community College

Heron Scott; Lease and Contracts Administrator, Port of Port Townsend

Marine Systems

Marc Adams; Factory Field Rep-Pacific NW, Dometic

Ann Avary; Director, Northwest Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing & Technology

Steve Bamesberger; Marine Systems Manufacturer's Rep, Jack Park Co.

John Mark Barrett; Marine Systems Manufacturer's Rep, Imtra Corp.

Chris Bergnoli and Chris Sanok; Member-Owners, Port Townsend Shipwrihts Co-Op

Cort Corino; Service Manager, Jefferson Beach Yacht Sales

Ethan Cook; Shipwright

Sarah Fisken; Marine Operations Specialist, Washington Sea Grant, retired

Luis Gonzalez and Kevin Lind; Suzuki Marine

Charlie Johnson, PE; President, JTB Marine Corporation

Dieter Liobner; Editor-at-Large, Professional Boatbuilder Magazine

Scott McEniry; Director of Sales & Marketing at Sea-Dog Line

Jake McFadin; Lead Electrician and Project Manager, Schooner Creek Boat Works

Gordon Sanstad; Boatbuilder and former Boatbuilding Instructor, Seattle Central Community College

Jagen Twichell; Factory Field Rep, Derema Group

Steffen Brown; Project Manager, ACI Boats

Al Thomason; Founder/Engineer, Wakespeed

FINANCIALS

NWSWB successfully completed another year with a net positive result and substantial growth of assets. Tuition revenue grew significantly, and overall revenue increased markedly, outpacing growth in operating expenses. Strong contributions from individuals, businesses, foundations, and government drove this result. Approximately 75% of the school's overall expenses went directly to programs, 18% to Administration, and 7% to Fundraising.

OPERATING REVENUE

	9/30/2025	9/30/2024	9/30/2023	9/30/2022	9/30/2021	9/30/2020
Tuition	1,178,224	902,724	1,158,521	866,643	329,266	564,144
Donations	2,566,889	1,677,802	973,085	1,195,422	1,441,372	1,633,597
Boat Projects	209,300	166,136	121,231	44,131	71,525	22,607
Retail Sales and Rental Income	150,312	149,269	87,357	56,676	37,286	45,278
In-Kind Revenue	49,455	101,066	66,463	9,995	117,616	4,000
Federal investment Tax Credit	66,387	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**4,220,567**	**2,996,997**	**2,406,657**	**2,172,867**	**1,997,065**	**2,269,626**

OPERATING EXPENSE

Program Service	1,870,282	1,394,475	1,372,663	1,288,164	973,076	783,797
Administration	457,812	339,626	360,452	390,962	247,308	280,137
Fundraising	181,220	95,061	133,067	104,941	93,467	119,038
Other - Rental Property	-	13,523	-	14,007	15,828	7,665
Total	**2,509,314**	**1,842,685**	**1,866,182**	**1,798,074**	**1,329,679**	**1,190,637**
Change in net assets from Operating Activities	**1,711,253**	**1,154,312**	**540,475**	**374,793**	**667,386**	**1,078,989**

OTHER REVENUE AND EXPENSE

Amortization	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation	(208,504)	(184,250)	(174,256)	(140,328)	(120,163)	(91,105)
Interest Expense	(108,837)	(130,025)	(118,855)	(60,472)	(120,700)	(56,595)
Total Other Revenue and Expense	**(317,341)**	**(314,275)**	**(293,111)**	**(200,800)**	**(240,863)**	**(147,700)**
Total Change in Net Assets	**1,393,912**	**840,037**	**247,364**	**173,993**	**426,523**	**931,289**
Net Assets - beginning of year	**4,435,256**	**3,595,219**	**3,347,855**	**3,173,862**	**2,747,339**	**1,816,050**
Net Assets - end of year	**5,829,168**	**4,435,256**	**3,595,219**	**3,347,855**	**3,173,862**	**2,747,339**

The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding engaged Aiken & Sanders, Inc. PS to conduct an independent audit of our financial statements for the year ending September 30, 2025. They reported an unmodified opinion over our financial statements. If interested, please email Christina Ruben (christina@nwswb.edu) for a copy of these independently audited financial statements.

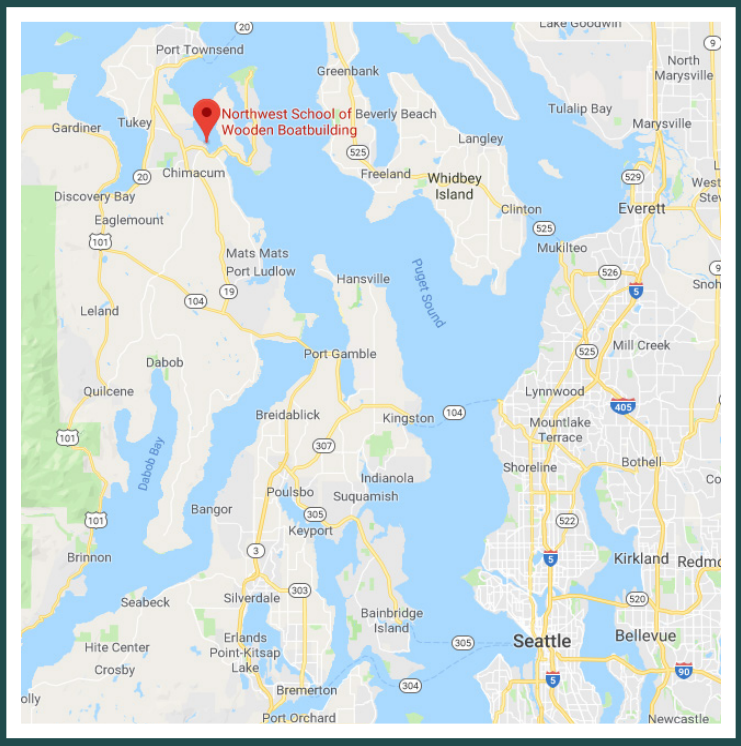
Platinum Transparency 2026

Candid.

NWSWB is deeply committed to non-profit transparency and accountability and has achieved the Candid Platinum Transparency 2026 Seal as a demonstration of that commitment. Candid is the world's largest source of information about non-profit organizations (the Candid database contains a profile for every tax-exempt nonprofit registered with the IRS) and a leader in advancing transparency in the non-profit sector. To be awarded the Candid logo, NWSWB provided all requested information on the non-profit profile page. You can search for information about any non-profit at www.candid.org.

WHERE WE ARE

Learn about all that's happening at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding by signing up to receive our free monthly e-newsletter on our website at www.nwswb.edu. You can also join in for a free tour at the school by meeting at the Office at 3:30 pm on the First Friday of each month.



NORTH WEST SCHOOL of WOODEN BOAT BUILDING

BOAT BUILDING • MARINE SYSTEMS

Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding
Port Hadlock Heritage Campus
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The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) is a recognized accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education. Learn more at www.accsc.org.

ACCSC
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

The School is also licensed under the Private Vocational Schools Act, Chapter 28C.10 RCW of Washington State. www.wtb.wa.gov

The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution. Tax ID 91-1122839.