

Committee Name: Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair: Jeff Commings

Minutes recorded by: Ally Sega

Session #4

Date of meeting: 4/5/2023

Time of meeting: 8 pm EDT

Actions Taken:

1. March minutes approved.

Number of committee members present: 10 Absent: 2

Committee members present (list all, including chair and vice chair): Jeff Commings, Ally Sega, Sarah Welch, Vicki Shu, Leo Letendre, Leann Rossi, Laura Dennison, Katherine Weathers, Chris Campbell: Liaison to the National Board, Wilson Josephson: Coaches Committee Liaison, Daniel Paulling: Liaison to the National Office

Others present:

Not present: Virgil Chancy, Rook Campbell

Minutes

1. Welcome and Announcements. Jeff welcomed people to the call.
2. Leann motioned to approve the March minutes and Leo seconded the motion. All approved the minutes.
3. Jeff talked about updating the committee's strategic plan. He gave the results of the survey. First was establishing D&I roles in all 51 LMSCs. Second was upgrading the registration to include demographics. Third was working with USA Swimming to establish USMS clubs alongside established USA Clubs with high levels of minority swimmers. Fourth was growing USMS at HBCUs. Fifth was expanding or revising the USMS logo to reflect diversity as a core value. Sixth was to create "Heritage Themed" swim meets.

4. D&I in LMSC roles: Currently there are 7 LMSCs with D&I roles. Katharine is the newest in the role. She talked about remembering that the goal is to be inclusive to all the clubs and members in an LMSC. She also questioned if all the D&I Chairs/Coordinators are in the D&I Committee. Jeff confirmed the members that are on the committee and those areas that had the position, but they weren't on the national committee. He would like to get the people involved in the role a chance to communicate with each other.

Laura asked for the role description, which Jeff provided to the committee. Ally suggested that while it might seem like a good idea to ask the chairs and vice chairs, it might be better to try a bottom up approach by finding people in LMSCs that are working with diverse groups and see if they would be willing to ask their chair if they could create a position. Leann suggested that we could pick 5 areas and talk to their boards and share our experiences as the D&I Chair/Coordinator. Jeff liked this idea. Sarah suggested that working with zone relationships might be helpful and also sharing that there are resources and people willing to work with people newly looking to fill this role.

Leo suggested putting something on the forums that would suggest that members interested in creating a position should consider reaching out to their LMSC boards about volunteering themselves. Leann suggested putting an article in Swimmer Magazine. Vicki talked about writing an article about Donita and her experiences and her role in the LMSC. It was suggested that it could be made for a national audience. Daniel suggested that Streamlines for Volunteers might be a better audience. Leo, Ally, and Katharine agreed to write something up.

5. Updating the USMS database: Jeff asked what demographics we would like tracked beyond race/ethnicity, disability, etc. Vicki said that the Pacific LMSC is working on a membership questionnaire that will track some of this information. The idea for the questionnaire is to find out about the members, which is most of the membership, that don't participate in meets. The hope is that information gained from the survey will help know how to promote masters.

6. Code of Conduct: Jeff was not able to have a sub committee. He noted that the point was to create safe and inclusive environments, not just to fend off complaints. Jeff found that not many teams have codes, unlike in youth swimming. He suspects that people want to believe that adults will act like adults. Laura said that one of the LMSC board members in her area suggested that it would require lawyers and could open them up for lawsuits. Jeff questioned how much legalize there would be a code of conduct document, acknowledging that if it was signed, it would technically be legal. It was also suggested that since USMS has a code of conduct, anything a team/lmsc

would have would be redundant. Ally suggested that one reason to create a local code of conduct would be to emphasize ideas that one group would like to stress more than the more general USMS code or ideas that a local group would like to add in addition to the minimum standards that are in the rule book. Leo suggested that a group could start with the code of conduct in the rule book, and have members sign off that they have read it, understand it, and will try to abide by it. Jeff thought it could be helpful to also point out the grievance process that is in the rule book also. Katharine suggested that having a code of conduct could show new members that they are in a safe, welcoming, and professional environment.

7. Holiday Guidance: Sarah praised Rook for being a creative and great person to work with. Sarah thought that it would be helpful to get stories to use as best practices as it relates to holidays, celebrations, etc. Jeff and Sarah discussed how Heritage Meets might fall into this project.

8. Clubs with time standards: Laura brought up a club in her area that created a time standard to becoming a member, which was 5 x 100 @ 1:55. Laura expressed her frustration setting time standards for a USMS club. Laura and Ally both talked about how the description of 5 x 1:55 was vague as to whether that was once as a trial or an expectation that every set would be at that level. Ally said that she found it interesting how many people she talked to didn't know or have an accurate idea if they could do this. She also found that people who could do it still didn't always want to. They either didn't want to do a program that a significant other or friends in general weren't welcome to, or just the ethics of exclusion. Leo suggested that it didn't speak well of the coaches, and he knew ways to be inclusive in working with diverse groups of masters swimmers. Katharine said that USMS should be interested in this, because it could be a turnoff to USMS if this is a person's first experience with Masters Swimming. Sarah suggested that there are places that are discouraging slower swimmers without being upfront about time standards.

9. Transgender Task Force: It is officially done and the paper has been turned in.

10. Wilson's Coaches Committee Report: The committee is looking at the ALTS program and finding programs that are working and how to spread the information on what makes them work.

11. Chris's National Board Report: He mentioned that people are cautious about the Trans Task Force report. He also let people know that he would be at Irvine for Nationals and that he hopes to see people there. Leo asked when the next World meet was, and Chris let him know that it was this summer.

9. Wrap Up: Jeff said good luck to everyone at Nationals.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm EDT. Next meeting is May 3, 2023.