

Committee Name: Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Chair: Jeff Commings

Minutes recorded by: Chris Campbell

Session #2

Date of meeting: 2/7/2024

Time of meeting: 8 pm EDT

Actions Taken:

1. None

Number of committee members present: 12

Absent: 0

Guests: 1

Present: Jeff Commings (Chair), Chris Campbell (Vice Chair), Kenny Brisbin (VP Community Services, Ex Officio), Vicki Shu, Ally Sega, Laura Dennison, Lina Bot, Mary Jurey, Nadine Ford, Tim Murphy, Virgil Chancy, Lucila Davies, Michael Moore (Guest)

Not Present: Daniel Paulling (National Office, Ex Officio)

Minutes

The meeting started at 8:00pm EST

1. MSA Committee January Meeting Minutes, with one minor spelling correction to a member name.
2. MSA revised D&I Committee letter to LMSC leadership. This letter describes the position of LMSC D&I Chair/Coordinator and also describes the desired characteristics and expectations of volunteers to fill these positions. As noted in the January minutes, this position has been established in 8 LMSCs already. The letter is now ready for distribution in both Streamlines and via other distribution mechanisms. LMSC points of contact for the existing positions are being sought. Information to be supplied to Jeff at Diversity@USMastersSwimming.com.
3. A status update on last year's efforts to establishing partnering relationships with existing USA Swimming Clubs with an eye towards setting up USMS Teams associated with them, especially in areas with populations underserved by USMS.
 - a. This effort was discussed preliminarily during the October and November Committee meetings. At those times, concerns with SafeSport involvement were noted.
 - b. A subcommittee (Chris, Leann, Lucy, Mary and Virgil) met for the first time on 1/18 to begin outlining potential pitfalls/stumbling blocks to establishing USMS clubs associated with existing USA Swimming clubs, and to suggest possible workarounds and methodologies for marketing. The minutes of this meeting have been supplied to the Committee, but the salient points are that clubs are subjected to a wide variety of ownership/management structures, and a single "one size fits all" approach will not be applicable. In addition, the major stumbling block for such an effort include the availability of pool time and space, as well as that of qualified and motivated coaches and leadership personnel to sustain teams once they have been launched. It was noted that this research project should include examination of not just successful example programs, but also RECENT ones as well. A flexible marketing tool needs to be developed. Many of the Committee members were unaware that the "Club in a Box" program still exists, but is now relocated and renamed under the Club Resources tab on the USMS website. It was also noted that a USMS video describing the benefits of adding USMS Programming to existing USA Swimming clubs exists and should be located. This information should be reviewed and updated as necessary. This subcommittee will meet again prior to the next Committee meeting (date and time TBD as of this writing). Ultimately, the information gained will be passed to the National level for suggested action and follow up.

4. In response to efforts by the Elections Committee, their Chair has solicited D&I input on how to encourage more membership diversity in the application and nomination processes. Discussion points and questions included potential difficulties locating and filling out application and nomination forms, and the avoidance of being perceived as an “Good Ol’ Boy” network, which discourages new ideas and ways of thinking. This led to the larger discussion of identifying and soliciting appropriate volunteer candidates. Many members present recall being “voluntold” for their initial volunteer positions. How do we market these volunteer positions to prospective candidates as exciting, dynamic, and worthy of time and effort?

5. Discussion of USMS Transgender Policies. While D&I can offer insights and input to the process, it is not the task of this Committee to rewrite or determine policy or rules. That is under the purview of the Board of Directors and the Rules Committee. USMS once again has established a task force (with both Jeff and Kenny as members) with the aim of getting ahead of the game—being proactive rather than reactive when situations arise (e.g., Lia Thomas’ litigation to compete). It was noted that this task force is comprised of entirely new members, compared to the previous one, raising concerns about continuity of vision and knowledge base. This is an ongoing and dynamic effort, and updates and feedback will be forthcoming.

6. VP Community Services National Update from Kenny.

a. USMS President Ed Coates and the Board of Directors have issued directives and desired goals to the Vice Presidents for their committees during 2024. The National level would like e D&I to find ways to highlight the diversity of USMS membership. The scope of this effort is somewhat indeterminate in that there are so many efforts that can be undertake, some small, some that would almost be full time jobs. For instance, we could set up a subcommittee to use the heritage D&I calendar (previously supplied to the National Office) or some variant of it to highlight various groups of members for each month. This would also entail close work with the National Office on posting and publishing processes and deadlines. Jeff will seek additional details from Ed by month’s end at the next in person Board of Directors meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for March 6, 2024 at 8:00pm EST (first Wednesday of the month, per usual)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 EST.