

Committee Name: Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Chair: Jeff Commings

Minutes recorded by: Chris Campbell

Session #4

Date of meeting: 4/3/2024

Time of meeting: 8 pm EDT

Actions Taken:

1. None

Number of Committee Members Present: 7

Absent: 4

Guests: 2

Present: Jeff Commings (Chair), Chris Campbell (Vice Chair), Vicki Shu, Tim Murphy, Virgil Chancy, Ally Sega, Lina Bot

Guests: Michael Moore (Pacific LMSC), Megan Shovlin (Georgia LMSC D&I Chair)

Not Present: Leann Rossi, Lucila Davies, Nadine Ford, Laura Dennison, Kenny Brisbin (VP Community Services—Ex Officio), Daniel Paulling (National Office—Ex Officio)

Minutes

The meeting started at 8:00pm EDT

1. MSA Committee meeting minutes from February 2024 and March 2024.
2. The D&I Committee letter to LMSC leadership was distributed after the March meeting as expected. As noted in earlier minutes, this letter describes the position of LMSC D&I Chair/Coordinator and the desired characteristics and expectations of volunteers to fill these positions. Many members of the Committee did not receive it. This is because these Committee members are not the LMSC Chairs, nor the LMSC's D&I Chairs. Distribution of the letter to the Committee members was requested.

There were many immediate LMSC responses to this letter. Ten LMSCs confirmed that they have a D&I Chair position currently established (Pacific, Southern Pacific, Georgia, Connecticut, Minnesota, Southeastern, New England, Niagara, North Dakota, and South Texas), with two more (Virginia and Gulf) being followed up for possible confirmation. One other LMSC questioned the need for this position, noting that they had received no DE&I complaints yet. Jeff's response letter to this comment cited the nature of customer service, as described by Ally—there is a difference between having a complaint and actually raising it to management. How can an issue be resolved if it isn't upchanneled to those who can address it? For example, if the food or service in a restaurant is bad, rather than raise a complaint to the manager, patrons often just take their business elsewhere. There are the benefits learning and growth to a proactive approach in such cases. Jeff's response was not seen by many of the Committee members, and distribution of a copy of his response was requested.

LMSC points of contact for the new and existing positions are being sought. Information should be forwarded to Jeff at Diversity@USMastersSwimming.com.

3. Given the amount of DE&I information currently swirling about, and the sheer number of issues that generate discussion, the Committee sees value in hosting a roundtable discussion among LMSC D&I leadership. The question is how to do this without calling such a meeting a Peer to Peer call or a webinar, given the "quantity fatigue" associated with these sorts of meetings. Vicki expressed an interest in looking into mechanisms for setting up such a meeting.

4. The subcommittee tasked with looking into the potential for establishing partnering relationships with existing USA Swimming Clubs with an eye towards setting up USMS Teams associated with them presented their data during the March meeting. The follow on discussion at this meeting concerned the mechanisms for getting information and recommendations to the Board of Directors and the National Office for action—when and by what means. No definitive path forward was determined at this meeting, although a letter to the National Level is expected to begin being drafted within the next month.

4. Discussion of USMS competition exemptions. Jeff reported a discussion with a swimmer who, for medical reasons, is sometimes forced to wear a compression sleeve during competition. The swimmer felt that being forced to justify the need for an exemption every time felt exclusionary and noninclusive. Virgil and Chris, both officials, weighed in. Chris noted that a referee can grant an exemption on the spot, while Virgil pointed out that a process to address this is already in place (getting an exemption letter from USMS that can be presented upon demand), and for the sake of consistency in application, it should be followed. It's not that onerous. As a way of easing this process, the question was asked about flagging exemption requests in meet announcements and during the meet registration process. This discussion is ongoing.

5. There were no VP Community Services National Updates, as Kenny was unable to attend the meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for May 1, 2024 at 8:00pm EDT (first Wednesday of the month, per usual)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 EDT.