

Committee Name: Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Chair: Jeff Commings

Minutes recorded by: Chris Campbell

Session #2

Date of meeting: 4/2/2025

Time of meeting: 8 pm EST

Actions Taken:

1. None.

Number of Committee Members Present: 6 Absent: 2	Guests: 0
Present: Jeff Commings (Chair), Chris Campbell (Vice Chair), Vicki Shu, Lucila Davies, Mary Jurey, Megan Shovlin, Kenny Brisbin (Ex Officio—VP Community Services)	
Absent: Laura Dennison, Sharon Snyder, Daniel Paulling (Ex Officio—National Office)	

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 pm EDT.

1. The meeting minutes from the Committee meeting, held February 5, 2025, were approved by an email vote prior to this meeting.
2. Per Jeff's request from the February meeting, Committee members brought forth ideas for possible sites that that could benefit from and possibly support USMS programming. Discussion points were as follows:
 1. Sharon sent in her inputs ahead of time, as she was unable to make this meeting. She is a resident of New York City, where Mayor Eric Adams has announced a \$1 billion program called "Let's Swim NYC." This initiative is aimed at expanding aquatics programming in all 5 Boroughs, including construction of new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities.
 2. Chris noted existing pools supporting USA Swimming programs east of St. Paul, MN (a new facility at Skyview Middle School in Oakdale, MN, Oak-Land Middle School in Lake Elmo, MN), as well as new facilities in Mountain View, CA (Rengstorff Park Aquatic Center), and Mason City, IA (Mason City High School), as well as aquatic facilities that make use of prior USA Olympic Trials tanks—the existing Hulbert Aquatic Center in Fargo, ND, and the under construction V3 Sport facility in north Minneapolis, MN. There is an existing USMS Program that is quite successful in Mountain View already, but the new second facility could afford opportunities for program growth and expansion. Mason City used to have robust Masters programming, and the facility and staff exist to reestablish this, and the enthusiasm is already in place. The facilities on the east side of St. Paul, as well as the tremendous facility in Fargo, suffer from over-subscription. Education and advocacy would be helpful. The V3 Sport facility, once open, represents a unique opportunity for growth, and USMS member Martha Arradondo is already involved.

3. Both Mary and Luci, who live in the LA metro area, note that there are USA Swimming Programs in underserved communities such as Hawthorn and Echo Park. Parents seem to want in as well. However, this is more of an ALTS as a topping stone issue, and should be pursued aggressively. Mary suggests a Swim with a Scholar approach. Much in the manner of a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, this will involve mentoring and outreach. Luci notes that it may be easier to work with with LA County and LA City, given administrative and staffing concerns that may come with standing up a Masters Program. She notes that there are often policies and insurance concerns that impact availability. USMS Programming needs advocacy and advice from professional organizations that come with their own staff and policies. As a matter of best practices, a strong selling point for USMS Programming is when a prospective club presents itself to public organizations with staff, policies, and operational infrastructure already in place.
4. Vicki notes that there just aren't enough facilities in Oakland, CA that are suitable, and many that do fit the bill have not been reopened to the public in the wake of the pandemic. It's not so much that more teams are needed, but more pool time and space is needed for those programs that already exist.
5. Jeff notes that there are many public pools in Tucson, AZ. However, many are not open during the summer months—it gets very hot, and many of these facilities do not cool the water. Water temperatures of 87 degrees and higher are not conducive to supporting competitive aquatic programs. There are some pools that are open year round. However, these are associated with country clubs and other private institutions. Hence availability is an issue.
6. Megan points out that facility availability in and around Atlanta, GA is also an issue, and the issues noted above dog efforts there as well.

These concerns are an ongoing topic of discussion at the USMS Board level.

3. Jeff notes that the drive to establish D&I Chairs in all LMSCs continues to be a primary goal of this Committee's efforts in 2025. Currently, 15 LMSCs have D&I chairs/committees. Given that this effort began less than 3 years ago, progress is pretty good. However, some LMSCs still require better rationale as to why they need D&I leadership at their level, as well as a roadmap of how to get there. Jeff is proposing a peer to peer webinar featuring LMSC D&I Chairs discussing best practices, the benefits of pursuing D&I goals, as well as experiences related to the set up of the position. Vicki has agreed to lead a small subcommittee to develop the content and structure of this webinar.
4. Jeff is concerned about an apparent drop off in diversity numbers in National Level competition. We wish to understand what is behind this, and if this is similarly reflected at the local level. The Committee agrees that USMS needs more diversity data to facilitate pattern recognition and analysis when addressing this. Again, the Committee would like to see a more robust diversity survey associated with member registration. Jeff suggested a post-Nationals survey which includes optional inputs for ethnicity, income levels, competitive experience levels, as well as an explanation of why such data is being requested and how it will be used. The Committee believes that the problem cannot be solved if we lack the data to define it clearly. As a follow on to this concern, Jeff wants the Committee to think about the sorts of events that draw in a more diverse crowd and foster more

diversity. Such activities may include no cost novice meets, HBCU-themed programming support, as well as ALTS programming and adult swimming clinics.

Jeff provided an update for the committee of the recent USMS board meeting in March. The board revised some board policies that were due for review, including guidelines and requirements for board elections. One of the guidelines that was added to the election guidelines was the requirement that potential candidates only need to attend one previous annual meeting and/or serve on an LMSC board.

The board also discussed the upcoming Zone meetings that will give LMSCs an update on board initiatives. Jeff said many zones are still working on setting up dates for the meetings, which are likely to happen before the July 4 holiday.

Vicki asked about the board's work on recruiting potential candidates, mentioning her lengthy work in finding a replacement for her as the Pacific LMSC D&I chair. Kenny said the board members are discussing ways to have outgoing board members do more work to find candidates, though no procedures are set.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 EDT.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2025.