



2018 USA-SWIMMING LEADERSHIP SUMMIT OKS ATTENDEES REPORT

Oklahoma Swimming Attendees

Athletes: Abby Oliphant, Erin Carter and Annie Kramer

Coach: Ali Baker

Abby Oliphant:

I would like to start off by thanking the OKS BoD for giving me this amazing opportunity, I can tell you it was an experience that I will never forget with people I plan to keep in contact with. Throughout the entire weekend we were encouraged by the staff, swimmers from across the country, and our own color teams (the Olympic ring colors) to figure out what type of leaders we are and how to communicate with others no matter what type of leader they may be and help change the swimming world and everything outside of it to become a better place.

Friday, April 20th, Whenever Erin and I got to the IAH Airport we got off our plane and went to baggage claim, while we were looking for our bags a lady from the Leadership Summit approached us, checked us in, and asked about our flight. Once we got on the bus to head to the hotel, there were roughly 15 people on it with us, we all started to talk and tell our names and where we were from and then continued on to the hotel for about forty-five minutes. We safely got to the hotel with no traffic and we checked in to begin our experience, we dropped our bags in our rooms and went back downstairs to the Marriott Grand Pavilion Foyer where there was already a few people, so we went and sat at their table and started mingling. After 3 hours quickly flew by with laughs and friendships being formed we had to go get ready to go to the Dad's Swim Team Facility for practice. During practice, we were given a fun warmup and our workouts with the color team lead coaches and the coaches there to participate in the Summit. After practice we were taught the USA Swimming team cheer and continued to use it a lot of times throughout the

weekend, next we headed back to the hotel for dinner and the opening ceremony. We were told to sit at the tables with the covers that matched our color team, I was yellow, so I sat at the yellow table and started talking and getting to know people that I would continue to grow with as a person for the next two days and hopefully much longer. During dinner, the current CEO of USA Swimming, Tim Hinchey, talked to us about our values and talked to us about how we were making history since this was the first time a Summit planned for athletes by athletes has happened. After dinner we stayed at our tables and started our first workshop which was Values Clarification, we were given workbooks with a ton of information in them regarding everything we'd be going over. During this workshop we were asked to pick our five most important and 3 least important "core values" from a list that had about thirty then we started to identify ourselves with our behaviors by talking about things we always do, never do, and should do they asked us to connect our behaviors with our core values to see what we can work on to help us achieve them.

After that we broke into our color teams and made a team banner that will be shown at USAS Convention every team came up with their own values and made their banner based on that, one of the really cool thing about the banners is that every team had everyone trace one of their hands and write their name in it and their number one core value and no one discussed it everyone just did it.

We were also told to pick a team song my team, yellow, and after throwing around a ton of options we picked Walking on Sunshine by Katrina & the Waves. Then it was time for bed, so I met with my roommate from New York, Niagara Swimming LSC, and we went upstairs and got ready for bed check.

Saturday, April 21st, our day started at 6:15 am with breakfast then traveling to the University of Houston for practice and to spend the day, during practice we were mixed in together with all the different teams and did our two-hour practice which was a lot of fun for us. After practice we got a second breakfast from McAlester's and started our Strengths Leadership course, during the course we talked about our leadership experience and talked more about who we are as people to discover what kind of leaders we are, we learned that there are four domains of leadership strength which include Executing, Influencing, Relationship Building, and Strategic Thinking everyone has a little bit of all of these leadership qualities but one that is more dominant than the others. We mixed color groups again and went into groups based on what you felt your leadership strength was, Annie, Erin, and I all ended up in Strategic Thinking with the traits of questioning, logic focused, objective, skeptical, and challenging. As we started the groups we had to talk about what our strengths, weaknesses, and how we'll be able to improve our leadership and as we started sharing these with the other group's everyone started to realize that they also had qualities of the other groups. After that, we took a Leadership Summit

picture with everyone in it then ate lunch and we went into USA Swimming Governance and the Athlete Voice which was led by Athlete Executive Committee members Van Donkersgoed and Ceallach Gibbons. During that we discussed our LSC's, Zones, and how important the athlete's voices are, then Maggie Vail talked to us about Safe Sport Education and a little bit about Diversity and Inclusion and why they are important. The next topic was Peer Leadership meaning leading among our peers to help everyone grow and become leaders they told us that you first have to build a foundation, create a vision, then communicate your vision to everyone, we also talked about how we would use our athlete's voice and how we will impact change, most people said they'd use their voice to help encourage their peers to get more involved in their clubs and LSC. After our long day of meetings we still had another practice, another meeting, and more socializing, During practice that night we got to do Mark Webber's (he retired from swimming after the 2016 Olympic Trials) warmup which was a ton of drylands outside where we were all able to have fun and joke around. After that we went into our colors teams to talk about our practice that night which was all relays, we talked about who would do what relays, made up a team cheer, and picked team captains to lead our in water warm up. We did our relays and that was probably the best practice we had all weekend everyone came together and was cheering, and laughing, and their might've been a lot of DQ's if there had been officials. After practice, we got off the bus to go back to the hotel for dinner and had another meeting about reflecting on everything we had learned that day. For dinner we sat with our LSC's and then sat with them throughout the meeting and made a roadmap for success, we talked about planning another LSC wide practice day with a leadership meeting after where we could talk about everything we had learned at the Summit to share it with other athletes. After dinner we took another group picture after that we had been told room checks would be at 9:15 pm, it was quickly changed to 11:00 pm after some people started chanting because we had been told that it would be at 11:00 pm, then we had ice cream and started our 2 hours of social time. Some people just went up to their rooms but I stayed downstairs and talked to the people that I had met on the first day, we were the last people in the room so the five of us helped the staff deflate the all the blow up stuff like balls, volleyball nets, and chairs so that they could be packed up since it was the last night. We got up into our rooms about five minutes before bed check, got ready for bed, and packed our luggage because Sunday was a very busy day and we wouldn't have time.

Sunday, April 22nd, today we got to sleep in because breakfast wasn't until 7:00 am, we ate breakfast at tables with people no matter their team color then after we talked about Servant Leadership which means to serve others, build a community, being able to heal and empathize with people. Someone from the

Gulf LSC BoD talked to us about Hurricane Harvey and how it impacted his club and Gulf Swimming then a girl named Annie on the Gulf Athlete Committee talked about how the Athlete Committee made up t-shirts for them to sell to help raise money for people who lost their house or just needed help getting back on their feet. The LSC BoD had agreed to match however much money they made, and they still had about 300 shirts to sell and a lot of people bought them on Sunday. After that we did our service project with Rise Against Hunger we were able to package a little over 40,000 meals in just an hour, it was an amazing thing to be a part of because we finished that knowing we actually did make a difference in someone's life by giving them a meal. We finished the service project and talked a little more about servant leadership then we had our closing ceremony where we went into our color teams for one last time my team leader had a giant ball of yellow yarn and told us all that we'd share what we learned the most and what we'd take back to our LSC then we'd hold the string then throw the ball to someone across the circle. Whenever the yarn was thrown to me I said "I want to be able to take everything that I learned back to my LSC to share with the athletes so that more people will want to get involved and become leaders" once everyone had gone he asked us what we made and everyone answered "a web" he told us "no, it's your connections that you have and the friends you've made and the people you'll always be able to talk to when you need help, it's a new family branch". After we were done in our small groups everyone in my group wrote down their social media on a piece of paper and took a picture of it so that we were all able to stay in contact. We were all told to get into a big circle and they turned the lights off and said we were going to go around the room with the microphone and say one word to describe the weekend and what we learned and after we said our word we put our phone up with the flashlight on, people were saying things like "friendship" "determination" and so many different things then after we were all standing in a room lit by only the windows and our flashlights then everyone started chanting "USA" and we had finished the camp. Erin and I were on the first bus out which left fifteen minutes after the end so we rushed to find our luggage, take pictures, and say our goodbyes then we got on the bus for our forty-five minute drive to the airport and we checked in at our terminal, we decided to eat lunch at a restaurant in the airport and get a drink from Starbucks since we had two hours to kill, by the time we had finished eating and got back to the gate a few minutes before boarding started. We got on the plane and we flew home, we got back to Will Rogers World Airport about ten minutes earlier than we were supposed to then, we went to baggage claim and met Erin's parents, and then we parted ways so I could go upstairs and meet with my dad.

I would just like to thank you again for choosing me and trusting me to go and represent Oklahoma Swimming it was such an honor and I hope that I get to do it again in the future!

Respectfully,
Abby Oliphant

2018 USA Swimming Leadership Summit

I, along with Coach Ali Baker, Abby Oliphant, and Erin Carter attended the 2018 USA Swimming Leadership Summit on Friday, April 20th through Sunday, April 22nd in Houston Texas. I am extremely thankful for OKS allowing me to attend an event like this one. A year ago the leadership summit started out as an idea on paper and after an exceptional amount of planning from USA swimming, the athlete AEC leaders and Forward Progress they produced an amazing learning experience for the 120 athlete and 56 coach attendees.

Friday we arrived at the hotel for lunch and check in. Shortly after we traveled to the Dad's Club Swim Team Pool for our first practice of the weekend. Five lead coaches led the practices for all 120 athletes. After practice we traveled back to the hotel for dinner and Opening ceremonies. After dinner we started session I of Forwards Progress' Athletic Consulting. Session I consisted of "values clarification" where the coaches and athletes learned more about their personality type, ranked our top 5 core values, and learned about inconsistencies in our behaviors with our core values. From this session I learned my strengths and weaknesses. I also learned that in order to lead efficiently I need to work with people who compliment my weaknesses and meet the needs of people I lead. Additionally, we discussed how personality types, introvert or extrovert, should never be used as a crutch. Each side of the spectrum has their strengths and it is equally possible to be a great leader.

Saturday began with breakfast and traveling to the University of Houston for day two. At morning practice the athletes learned how to be a leader in the pool through the lead coaches' creative workouts and drills. After practice, the athletes ate a second breakfast and then began Session II of the Forward Progress Athletics Consulting. This session was based off of "strength based leadership." We learned how to develop our authentic leadership style, understand our strengths and weaknesses, and how to work with other diverse leadership styles. I learned that I was a "strategic thinking" leader. The athlete consultants did a great job of keeping the athlete's attention by breaking up into groups, playing games, and taking time to reflect.

We ate lunch and started Session III which was run by the leaders of the AEC. The AEC leaders discussed USA Swimming's governance and the importance of the Athlete's voice in LSC participation.

Session IV was led by Safe Sport's Maggie Vail. She talked about the Athlete's voice in value based initiatives. Her goals were to teach the athletes how to respectfully and maturely work alongside the adults in every LSC. She taught the athletes the importance of patience, as responsibilities increase with time and trust; as well as, she taught us the importance of asking questions, listening and being consistent.

Session V consisted of strategies to lead your peers, led by Forward Progress. We learned the importance of creating, communicating, and staying true to your vision. We also learned how to effectively communicate with your peers through constructive criticisms and praise. Shortly after Session V the athletes had practice number two where we split into teams and learned the power of teamwork through lots of fun relays! After practice everyone went back to the hotel for dinner and session VI where we took time to reflect on what we learned and began to develop our goals. Forward Progress discussed the power of S.M.A.R.T goals to clearly define and

produce effective goals. During this session we sat in groups with our LSC where we discussed on how to bring back the things we learned to OKS.

Sunday began with breakfast and Session VII where Forward Progress discussed servant leadership. Gulf Coast Swimming also shared their servant based leadership success stories with everyone. All the coaches and athletes then partnered with Rise Against Hunger for a community service project. In about 75 minutes we packaged over 40,000 meals for people in need. The service project was organized and set up very efficiently and being competitive athletes we got a lot accomplished together. After the service project, Forward Progress led our final reflection, where we broke out into groups and collectively shared our takeaways from the weekend. The main thing I learned this weekend, aside from more about myself and my leadership strengths and weaknesses, was how to effectively be a leader and efficiently work with other people who have different leadership strengths than me. Throughout the weekend leaders of the Summit continually encourage positive thinking and enjoying the process as we all learned and grew as leaders.

Returning home from the Leadership Summit I plan to use my athlete voice by spreading what I have learned to other athletes in our LSC. I plan to continue and strengthen communication through our social media presence. I also plan to implement community service activities into my own club and will encourage athletes on other clubs to do the same. Along with that, our main idea for accomplishing our goal of spreading and strengthening the leadership in our LSC is; at the conclusion of the next LSC practice day in September we can host a mini- one day- leadership camp where we can summarize what we learned this weekend through similar activities and presentations in efforts to build the other swimmers in the LSC as leaders for the future. With planning, I think this is a great opportunity and an attainable goal for our LSC. My self, Coach Ali, Erin, Abby, and the other athlete reps are excited to work alongside the BOD in planning the logistics for this opportunity to improve the base of the future leadership in Oklahoma Swimming. This will take advance planning, but we have the ability to do it if we start early.

Again, I thank OKS for allowing me the opportunity to attend the 2018 Leadership Summit. It was an amazing experience, I learned a lot, grew as a leader, and met a lot people. I can't wait to begin spreading my new knowledge to the rest of the swimmers in the LSC!

- Annie Kramer JR Athlete Rep

Attending the Inaugural 2018 Leadership Summit by USA Swimming was a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget. I very much appreciate Oklahoma Swimming choosing me to attend. Thank you! It was also great to be there with 3 of our athletes. I am excited to continue to work with Annie, Abby and Erin on bringing this leadership and our ideas to the LSC.

This summit was invigorating and inspiring. First thing on the agenda after arriving and lunch was a practice session. This was great for the athletes who had likely been traveling all day to get practice in as well as swim with and get to know the other athletes. I found as a great ice breaker in getting to know the swimmers as well as coaches.

Tim Hinchey, USA Swimming President & CEO, opened the summit and welcomed us. He spoke about this summit being “for the athletes, by the athletes.” He challenged us to learn about leadership and finding our voice.

My takeaways from this weeked:

1. There are opportunities for athletes to make changes in their LSC and for coaches to be the support system.
2. Coaches from many LCS's are looking to not only improvement their local swim community but also willing to help athletes become leaders.
3. Work on creating the partnership between the LSC and athlete's leadership projects.
4. Central theme was to teach the athletes how to be empowered and find there voices.
5. Finding our values and where they align within our leadership is important.
6. For my personal coaching I will be:
 - a. Focusing on building relationships by focusing on what they know/who they are.
 - b. Coaching individually in a team environment.
 - c. After each practice having swimmers rate how they did, personal reflection.
7. I want to implement a service project within my club, also to encourage other clubs and the LSC to do the same. It's not as complicated as I thought it would be to do.

Main takeaway for our LCS, the girls and I would like to work with our current Athlete Reps in creating our own leadership clinic. Our goal is to incorporate this clinic with the LSC practices. We want to (as we learned over the weekend) to build leadership within our LSC from the bottom up.

This 48 hours of such an inspiring workshops, I have learned a lot about my leadership, and how to help others become leaders and find their voice. I truly appreciate this amazing experience and what it has taught me. I also love seeing the excitement it has inspired our athletes to do too. Thanks again for allowing me to represent Oklahoma Swimming at this event. I am excited to continue to spread what I have learned with our LSC coaches and swimmers.

- Ali Baker

I am so incredibly grateful to have been chosen to go to the 2018 Leadership Summit. It truly was like nothing I have ever experienced.

The first day began very early, at around 4 a.m. Once I was at the airport and met up with Abby, things went smoothly. I had been nervous about meeting people for a while, even the girls from Oklahoma, just because I didn't know them well. However, I had no reason to be worried. When we arrived at the (huge and beautiful) hotel, we were some of the earliest swimmers. This was a blessing in disguise, because it meant we made one giant lunch table and quickly formed friendships that have lasted beyond the weekend.

The first practice meant splitting up into groups based on our time intervals, which meant meeting more new people, which I was slowly growing accustomed to. After practice, we began the real Summit part of the trip with opening ceremonies. Yet again, we were split into groups, this time the ones we would continue to pair up with. From here on, I was often used as a spokesperson for our group ideas, which in turn helped me find my voice in the group.

Saturday began with a quick breakfast and morning practice at the University of Houston (fantastic facilities). Then the Summit. Once more we split up, only this time it was based on what type of leader we were: Relationship Building, Executing, Influencing, and Strategic Thinking. Sharing ideas with like-minded individuals was incredible. Later, we rejoined as our group from the night before and shared some of the things we had heard or learned. We had many speakers, from Safe Sport to the athletes that had first introduced the idea of the Leadership Summit to the USA Swimming board. That was especially impactful to me, as it showed how much effect a group of high schoolers could have on its next generation of athlete leaders.

Then we had practice. Leading up to then, many of us were feeling drowsy. We had gotten very little sleep and had been kept focused and well-fed. However, the practice was one of my favorite parts of the whole weekend. In our groups, we formed a variety of different relays and raced against the other 4 teams. My team may not have been the fastest, but the amount of positivity, encouragement, laughter, and joy we had was astounding.

Back at the hotel, we ate dinner with those from our LSC. Up until then, we hadn't had much time to communicate, but during the meeting we were encouraged to work together in forming goals for our LSC. Abby, Annie, and I bounced ideas around and got advice from Ali on how we might improve them. These will be listed below.

Finally, Sunday morning rolled around. Our service project was not only constructive but very fun and rewarding. The closing ceremonies wrapped up everything that we had done over the past two days, and suddenly the weekend was over.

The Summit was absolutely incredible. My biggest takeaways were:

- Small talk isn't scary. For so long, I've been comfortable with speaking in front of people, but never to them. The Summit showed me how easy it is to strike up a conversation and spread your influence.

- Don't just leave your comfort zone, forget it ever existed. Interacting with so many people gave me a range of different ideas and opinions. Doing the things I may have hesitated to do anywhere else made the experience something I'll never forget.
- Even as someone who is not the fastest swimmer, you have a voice in your community. Although we split into time intervals, there was no shame in not being the fastest. We were all peers. Among the swimmers in Oklahoma, this is something that needs to be remembered.
- Even as someone who is not on the top of the leadership totem pole, you have a voice. As athletes, we assume our ideas don't matter to the "higher-ups" of USA Swimming. The Summit disproved that entirely, as the entire weekend was the idea of a team of then-high school swimmers who brought the idea to the board.
- Positivity, positivity, positivity. This is something my team and Oklahoma as a whole have seemed to struggle with for a while. However, surrounded by pure encouragement and support, I felt happier in and out of the water than I have in a long time. This attitude is something I know I can bring back to my pool. If it takes one negative voice to drag the mood down, I hope to be the positive one that makes up the difference.
- Better communication means more stuff gets done. All it took was ten minutes of the four Oklahoma reps collaborating for us to understand each team a little better. Once we got talking, the ideas kept flowing.
- Finally, on a specific level, the main idea formed for increased athlete leadership in Oklahoma: a mini Leadership Summit. Our idea falls along the lines of last year's LSC-wide practice in Stillwater, only this time, we will share some of the ideas and tips we learned in Houston. We can use some of the same tactics, such as identifying what type of leader everyone is, creating tangible goals, and creating communication pathways for all of us. We will likely need the help of the LSC to finetune the plan, but all of us are optimistic for it.

I would like to thank you, Paul Thompson, and the rest of the OKS board for sending me with the others to Houston for such an impactful event. It's not something I take lightly and it's not something I'll forget. Now I just hope to share some of what I've learned with others in the LSC.

Thank you,
Erin Carter