

2022 DIVERSITY IN AQUATICS (DIA) CONVENTION REPORT

To the Board of Directors of New Jersey Swimming

As a part of the DIA Athlete Fellowship, I was invited by Dr. Miriam Lynch, the Executive Director of DIA, to present at this year's Diversity in Aquatics Convention. This is a three day convention held in February in St. Pete's Beach, Florida that brings together leaders of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts from all aquatics sports to share ideas and initiatives. This year was the first year that young athletes were invited to participate and present in the Convention. Because of this, the four Fellows (Francesca Callejas [myself], Sam Brabeck, Diya Ackerman-Vallala, and Emily Yoon) were the only young athletes in attendance. The theme of this year's Convention is "Co-Creating Equitable Aquatic Spaces: From Talk to Action." Thank you to New Jersey Swimming for sponsoring my attendance to the 2022 DIA Convention.

Diversity in Aquatics & Diversity in Aquatics Athlete Fellowship

Diversity in Aquatics Mission—“To educate, promote, and support swimming, water safety, and healthy aquatics activities for vulnerable populations.”

DIVERSITY IN AQUATICS ANTI-RACISM ATHLETE FELLOWSHIP

MISSION STATEMENT

The Diversity in Aquatics' Anti-Racism Athlete Fellowship is committed to fostering a more inclusive environment for diverse individuals, who share a love for aquatics. We, the Athlete Fellows, acknowledge the long and painful history of underrepresented groups and traditionally marginalized groups in aquatics. Through education and conversation, we will advocate for water safety and drowning prevention, create a safe space that encourages listening, introspection, and truth; and propose long-term solutions to issues of diversity and inclusion in aquatics.

VISION STATEMENT

To facilitate meaningful conversation, advocate for growth in diversity and inclusion, and promote social change in aquatics.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Our plans for the future include a Water Safety Day blueprint, a Minority College Athlete Recruitment panel discussion, and a Black Hair Care series. Keep an eye out for our projects in the future!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us on Instagram!
@diaathletefellows

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

We offer training sessions for aquatic communities and for those athletes who are interested in applying for the Fellowship. Our workshops, in-person or via Zoom, teach individuals the importance of supportive conversation, introspection, and inclusivity.

CORE VALUES

Listen, Educate, Advocate, Discuss (LEAD)



DIA Fellows' Presentations

The Fellows hosted two sessions: “DIA Fellows and their Community Involvement” and “Equitable Athletic Spaces: From the Athlete.”

“DIA Fellows and their Community Involvement” focused on the Fellowship itself and what the Fellows have planned for its future. This presentation took a Q&A format, in which our moderator, Stephanie Elam, CNN Worldwide Correspondent and a DIA Executive Board Member, asked me and the other Fellows questions to help us share more about the Fellowship’s goals. The floor was then opened to attendees of the session for questions. This session had around 15- 20 attendees.

“Equitable Athletic Spaces: From the Athlete” spotlighted the changes that the Fellows, as athletes in their respective aquatic sports, hoped to see in order to continue supporting athletes. We started this session with a “Think-Pair-Share” activity, in which each of the attendees took a moment to think individually about a question, then pair up with another

attendee to share their thoughts, then share their thoughts with the whole group. The question we asked was: What would you like to know from us, as athletes, that will help you to create a more equitable environment in your community? We spent most of this session focusing on how aquatic sports coaches can support an athlete's mental health, particularly on issues surrounding the athlete's identity. We emphasized that in order to create an equitable space for athletes, the athlete must feel that *every* part of their identity is welcomed to be expressed on the pool deck. This session had around 10- 15 attendees.

DIA Fellows' Award

At the 2022 Diversity in Aquatics Convention, the DIA Fellows were awarded the "Dr. Shaun Anderson President's Award." Dr. Shaun Anderson is the Co-Founder of DIA. "This award is voted on by the Board of Directors and President of Diversity In Aquatics to recognize outstanding service and leadership within the organization." It is awarded to the "person or organization that exhibits the highest ideals of diversity and inclusion in all their Aquatic Practices."

Connections from Convention

Schuyler Bailar—“the first transgender athlete to compete in any sport on an NCAA Division 1 men’s team” | Schuyler spoke at a special lunch during the Convention, where he shared his story as a transgender athlete. I was able to connect with him after this event. He is willing and excited to work with NJS on an event in the future.

Leeland Brown III— USA Swimming DEI Program Director | As the DEI Program Director, Leeland was interested in hearing what the athletes need and wanted to see change in their sport. He attended both of the DIA Fellows' sessions. He connected with me and Fellows after our first session to talk about our individual DEI efforts and initiatives in our respective LSCs and communities. He is willing and excited to work with NJS on an event in the future.

Allyson Fisher— Founder, President, and CEO of Sea Scope Incorporated | Allyson was excited to speak with the Fellows as a resource to exchange ideas about interactive events that could be held.

G. Nadine Johnson-Jesioneck— Executive Director, Boston Elite Swim Team | I have met Nadine many times prior to the Convention but was never able to meet with her in person. After the Convention, Nadine and I connected, and she shared her resources and blueprints for her Water Safety Days.

Cullen Jones— 3x USA Olympian, World Record Holder, and a DIA Executive Board Member | Cullen Jones moderated the Fellows' second session “Equitable Athletic Spaces: From the Athlete.” He is willing and excited to work with NJS on an event in the future.

Conclusions

The 2022 DIA Convention was an extremely valuable experience. On the behalf of NJS, I was able to make numerous connections with Convention attendees that are willing to work with us in the future on events that will bring greater focus and attention to the issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

I value the chance that you have given me to attend this Convention, which has allowed for the inclusion of the voices of young aquatic athletes in these spaces. This would not be possible without your continued support. I appreciate this opportunity to be a part of the New Jersey Swimming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and I am excited to continue modeling its mission in the work that I do.

Francesca Anne Callejas
New Jersey Swimming DEI Athlete Events Chair |
NJS DEI Executive Board Member |
Diversity in Aquatics Anti-Racism Fellow
njswimmingdei@gmail.com