

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE IN SWIMMING

2016 USA Swimming Convention Report

General Chair – Iowa Swimming, Inc.

24th September 2016

Iowa Swimming Supports Swimmers, Clubs,
Coaches, Officials, Parents, and Volunteers by
providing resources for excellence

Athlete Centered - Inclusive - Dedicated - Ethical

I've tried a different format for this report than in the past years. Rather than include agendas and notes from each meeting attending, I'm going to have the office collect them all and make them available to all LSC members from the ISI website. They are also available on the USA Swimming website.

For me, this convention was very different to those I have previously attended in that we had a significant athlete presence – and they contributed at the meeting and, I believe, have got some ideas and inspiration for contributing to building success in our LSC.

My focus for this convention was LSC development, athlete engagement and financial planning. As most will now know, Iowa has achieved LEAP 2 status (with the attendant check – see the photo on the Iowa Swimming Facebook page) which, besides the money, provides the LSC with building blocks to improved governance and performance. But it doesn't end there – we need to be striving towards achieving LEAP 3 status as soon as possible as this will force us to continue to make improvements. I intend working with the vice-chairs and admin staff over the next 6 months on the road to LEAP 3. My personal goal is to achieve LEAP 3 by the 2018 convention (a stretch would be 2017 convention). There are numerous activities and initiatives already started that will help us achieve this goal.


LSC Development – There are a couple of strands we discussed at meeting and in smaller groups. For Iowa, my takeaways are:

- Improving our governance – continuing to align our policies and bylaws with best practices
- Volunteer engagement – we need to increase member participation in committees, task forces and succession planning and public recognition and celebration of our volunteers.
- Accessibility and inclusiveness – we need to extend our strategies and involvement with diversity and disability athletes. We need volunteers to take up the roles of Diversity vice-chair and disability vice-chair – not treat them as secondary duties. We came out of the Mighty-2500 meeting (the Mighty 2500 is the group of smallest LSCs - Iowa is one of them) with personal goals of reaching out to these swimmers and potential swimmers and actively promoting diversity and para-swimming events. We need assistance and support from LSC members to do this – a major step is filling the two board positions.
- Financial – our investment approach currently matches the size of our assets (CDs and savings) – but we need to be looking forward to increasing income to support our membership. We need to find alternative funding sources (fundraising through sponsorship) that will enable the LSC to continue to increase spending on development activities without increasing funding levels from membership. This is a longer term objective (we did discuss this at the strategic development workshop in Des Moines in August) but we need to form a task force initially to build out the plan. The workshops provided some suggestions and strategies for us to start with.

Athlete Development and Engagement – this to me was the most exciting and rewarding part of this convention. Our Iowa athletes were engaged and appeared excited with the opportunities. This is the first time that I'm aware of that Iowa actually had an athlete-at-large (Maria Eure) as well as our LSC athletes. They all have ideas and motivation to work with us (adults) to improve the LSC and opportunities for all athletes. We have action items from the engagement workshop including communication and mentoring. One change we will be implementing quickly is to appoint an athlete liaison for the LSC to assist the athletes in their committees, communication and operations. We (the athletes and board members) are working on plans to increase the opportunities for direct involvement of all athletes within the LSC. We should see these plans discussed by the athletes' executive committee at the forthcoming HOD. Our goal is to directly involve as many athletes as possible in the development of the LSC and provision of services to our members. One highlight to me was the chair of the USA Swimming athlete executive committee personally thanking us for supporting sending all our athlete reps to convention and for their contributions.

I appreciate the opportunity afforded to me to attend the conference representing the LSC and for the being able to learn from and contribute to the multiple discussions in which we engaged. I intend to apply the lessons learned and address our deficiencies in conjunction with the board and athletes over the next 12 months. Finally, I'd like to thank the other Iowa attendees for their enthusiasm and engagement during the hectic convention.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Phil Barnes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "P".

(Geoffrey) Phil Barnes