Good evening Mr. Tommy,
 I hope you are well. This is Sarah-Grace Thompson, the senior athlete rep for Georgia Swimming. I am reaching out to you in hopes of scheduling a meeting between you and our athlete committee.
 The past few weeks have brought attention to the issues of police brutality and racial injustices in our nation, and it has provided us with an opportunity to evaluate where we stand and act as an LSC. The athlete committee would love to speak with you about how we can improve Georgia Swimming and its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion programs. Would you be available for a zoom discussion in the next week or so?

 Thank you for all the work that you do for our LSC. You are greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Sarah-Grace

...

﻿Hello DEI Committee Members,

I hope you all are well. I apologize for my delay over the past few weeks.

I created a google doc which outlined the discussion from our past meeting, and I’ve linked it here.

 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jhfqRYDkYlEpayej0dxjVjnCL2mxo86ZZBg7JukxzPI/edit>

Feel free to edit it as you see fit! I would like to share the approved version with our Board of Directors to both educate and gain their support.

Since our discussion, the Athlete Committee has been discussing ways in which we can better support DEI. We feel that adding a DEI Rep position to our Athlete Committee would better equip us to serve our minority athletes. We would love to schedule a zoom meeting with you to gain your input on how we can implement this position into our election cycle.

Let us know what days would work best for you all in the next two weeks. Looking forward to another great discussion!

Thanks,

Sarah-Grace Thompson

Senior Athlete Rep

**DEI and Athlete Committee Discussion Notes**

Monday June 29th

**DEI Committee Members:**

Coach Tommie Jackson, Coach Zeddie Perry, Coach Tim DeMott

**Athlete Committee Members:**

Henry Bethel and Sarah-Grace Thompson

**Struggles the DEI Committee faces:**

* Active for elections, but not very active in-between
* Swim meets or diversity meets are often planned, but they end up cancelled because too few swimmers are registered. (poor communication about the meet within the LSC, hard to promote and gain attendance, a missed opportunity for our athletes)
* Poor communication between the DEI Committee and the LSC/clubs (Ex: when sending information about DEI camps, clubs were left off the list or did not receive the proper information)
* Many swim teams(like areas in our state) are segregated. It becomes difficult to maintain diversity within a team, especially one with strong cliques. (Ex: retaining black athletes is difficult on an all white/mostly white team)
* Black coaches are often not given credibility by their peers. (Ex: approached on the pool deck by another coach who offers their assistance- questions the ability of the coach and undermines his/her credibility)
* Current DEI Summit has standards(IMX scores used) which limits the ability of some athletes to attend.
* COVID has placed a financial burden on many clubs with minority athletes which may lead to athletes leaving the sport or loss of clubs.
* **Lack of National Support:** “Make a Splash”/ USAS Foundation was created with the goal of promoting diversity in the sport and providing more children the opportunity to learn to swim. However, USAS provides very little funding for the program, and the percent of black athletes in our sport has remained at 1% (no program can be considered successful if it makes zero progress).

**Goals of the DEI Committee:**

* Have better communication and more support from the BOD and LSC
* Continue to send athletes and coaches to DEI National camps (an incredible networking and educational opportunity for our athletes and coaches)
* For minority communities to see swimming as an option in sport. (Foster more diversity and create more opportunities for minority athletes)
* Success with a Diversity meet or DEI Camp in the LSC

**How can we better support the DEI Committee’s goals as athlete reps?**

* Communicate! Have more frequent and transparent discussions with the DEI Committee.
* Listen! A key to Allyship is listening to our minority athletes and learning about their experiences. We can only better ourselves and our LSC if we are knowledgeable of our mistakes/areas in which we fall short.
* Add a DEI Position to the Athlete Committee. (Could be nominated by DEI Committee, would give more athletes a voice and be beneficial in making key decisions for our athletes)

**Ideas for how to better support/promote DEI in Georgia Swimming:**

* Promote a Diversity Meet! This could be a weekend event- an opportunity for us to come together as an LSC to learn about and support DEI.
* Create a DEI LSC Camp! This would be a great opportunity for our athletes and coaches- a way to encourage and build leadership. (Athletes created a leadership summit this year, could help with the planning of a DEI camp)
* Better DEI education within the LSC. Change will come when athletes treat each other with respect and form valuable relationships with a diverse group of friends. This promotes great team culture and helps with retention! (possible sensitivity training? education through social media?)