

## Letter of Intent

Once I dived into swimming, I never looked back. Although the year round practices for the past ten years require daily resilience, the competitive yet fun and fulfilling atmosphere at the highest stages of the sport leave me coming back for more(Age Group State parades and Zones team bonding activities anyone?). From six years old till now, I'm proud to achieve some of the highest state honors:

- ARSI Swimmer of the Year (2x)
- ARSI State Champion(15...and counting)
- 2024-2025 Arkansas Activities Association 4A All-State

My swimming success and leadership have constantly reinforced each other, ever since I was a developmental swimmer. The fundamentals of embracing the pain in practice, racing hard, and demonstrating strong sportsmanship became not just the basis for sustained growth and positive work ethic but also for how I contribute to a winning team culture. I like to think that the work I do is noticed and reciprocated by my teammates and competitors.

Sometimes, it is depressing to see how little the broader community understands about our swimming community. For instance, when recruiting peers to join the high school swim team, I learned for the first time that there was a stigma surrounding boys wearing speedos. I myself a speedo wearer could not understand the reservations of my peers. In the end, it took active promotion, continuous follow-up, and gradual nudges toward the sign-up sheet. Who knows, just maybe, they could become the next Michael Phelps, if even just a conference-level contributor.

By becoming a leader, not just in the pool, but in the classroom and community can I help swimming gain the attention it deserves. That has been a constant motivator over the past few years when my leadership journey really took flight. From National Junior Honor Society Treasurer to Student Council Representative, every position has given me a platform to be a representative for the sport.

A particularly pivotal experience was my challenges in founding Pulaski Academy's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter as a freshman in high school. Despite limited administrative support, doubtful peers, and uncooperative teachers, my dedication never wavered, and constant promotion has enabled the club to reach fifty members today.

Additionally, I have been a consistent volunteer at the Central Arkansas Library System, particularly at the teaching garden at Hillary Clinton Children's Library. There I translated physical labor into organic, healthy produce for disadvantaged communities. These experiences over the course of my leadership journey are true testaments to my willingness to serve.

My interest in sports analytics and storytelling could enhance current ARSI projects and/or create new ones within the capacity and budget of the organization. Some first steps would be increasing transparency, athlete engagement, and access to opportunities through (a) making the athlete newsletter more accessible, (b) utilizing graphic design software such as Canva, Adobe, Capcut to create sophisticated promotional materials for social media platforms.

**Daniel Chen, 2/1/2026**