

Candidate Number	Swimming Experience/Goals: What is your swimming participation in OKS/USA Swimming? Where have you been, where are you now and what are you working towards?	Athlete Committee Experience: Have you participated with the OKS Athlete Committee? What was your experience? What were your takeaways? Did one of our Athlete Representatives inspire you?	Leadership and Service Experience: What leadership experience do you have? Have you participated in service projects? Include experiences in swimming and/or in extracurricular activities outside of swimming.	Why do you want to be an Oklahoma Athlete Representative? What are some ideas you would like to bring forward to the Athlete Committee?	How would you support athletes to develop leadership within their OKS member club as well as within the LSC?
ARC-1	I started swimming competitively when I was in second grade. When I first started out it was entirely a social activity for me. However as I got older I just fell in love with the sport. Just recently I made my very first sectional cut in the 100 Breaststroke. It is something I have been working towards for the last three years and I was very excited to get. Currently I am working towards breaking my high school team record in the 100 Breaststroke. My goal is to do this by the end of junior year.	I have attended the LSC practice the past two years and I enjoyed it a lot. I loved talking and getting to know new people. I have been lucky enough to know two of the Athlete Representatives very well. They inspired me to be better both in and out of the water and they taught me how to be a leader. I would like to do the same for others both athletes and non-athletes.	I have been a "Buddie" to a special needs child when we hosted the Special Olympics two years in a row. I have helped the fifth and sixth graders with their swimming when the high schoolers did a joint practice with the fifth and sixth graders. I have spoken at my high school girls team meetings. I have done lots of volunteer work at food banks in the area as well as an organization that provides for low income families who are struggling. I have not had a lot of leadership roles however I did want to be on the committee. Unfortunately two other swimmers were chosen but I have continued to share my opinions with them in hopes that I can help.	I want to be an Oklahoma athlete representative because I have been a swimmer for a very long time. I love the sport and the people I have met along the way. I would like to meet even more people and become even more connected to Oklahoma swimming as well as USA swimming. One idea I have is to have more state wide events where swimmers can meet and get to know swimmers from all around the state better. They could be hosted by whatever clubs are willing. Some could even be out of the pool so that people can bond as people and friends not just swimmers.	We could figure out a way to let more people know about this amazing opportunity as well as others that are similar. We could do this by using social media or contacting other coaches. One way to support athletes within their own clubs would be to host activities that teach people to be leaders in a respectful way. We could have classes every so often that deal with common situations people run into and how to handle them in a proper way as a leader.
ARC-2	I started swimming but initially didn't enjoy it, leading to an 8-month break. Upon rejoining, I noticed improvement. Working hard, I qualified for zones at age 10, and earned 7th place in the 400. I achieved my first individual state record in the 500 the season after zones. COVID hindered my ability to attend zones at one point when I was 12. Two years later, I earned my first sectionals cut in the 1000 and have since added 5 more. I am currently aiming for a futures cut next long course season. I narrowly missed breaking a high school record in the 200IM by 0.7. This is a goal of mine for the upcoming short course season.	As a backstroker, I usually always have Griffin Craig in my heat. The first time we raced, I didn't know well, but he was super nice. He always said good luck and good job before and after a race. Over time, I began to talk to him in warm-down pools and before events. He is always really funny and super nice, which inspires me to be better for the younger generation, just as he was to me. He also physically inspires me because of his insane underwater. I used to not really care about underwaters until I realized how far they get him and how effective they are.	At school, I participate in Stuco, SMAC, and Beta Club. Additionally, I work with my clubs summer league, in a foster care neighborhood. Through my club, I engage in various service projects such as providing supplies to the homeless, organizing fundraisers for canned food, and participating in park cleanup initiatives. Working in the foster care neighborhood has been inspiring too. Many of these kids have seen a lot of instability in their home life and many are just learning to swim. I have enjoyed helping provide them a chance to be on a team together.	I aspire to be an OKS Athlete Representative because I enjoy helping others. Mental well-being, especially among swimmers, is a crucial aspect I want to focus on. Swimming, being mentally demanding, often involves anxiety, mental fatigue, and stress affecting a swimmer's mindset before a race. My goal is to foster a healthy environment where swimmers can openly discuss mental health challenges and explore solutions. This could involve ensuring access to counseling services or organizing workshops. Another significant asset I can bring to the committee is my connections. I have built relationships from all over the state and could help get people more involved. By being on Zones teams and part of OKS Multicultural meets, I have traveled a lot with Team Oklahoma and have built relationships across all of the teams.	My current club has two athlete representatives, and we hold monthly meetings. I don't know how the OKS Athlete Committee works, but I would assume there would be chances to hold meetings across clubs in a similar way. In our athlete meetings, we all get to voice our opinions and bring up ideas that anyone has. This really helps people develop into leaders and is beneficial, as everyone feels like they are being heard. I would also like to organize leadership activities for the various club teams and OKS swimming in general, such as community service projects or team-building activities.
ARC-3	Since starting club swimming in 2019, I have competed in various meets in Oklahoma, one meet in Texas, and a few meets in Kansas and started creating bigger goals. Freshman year, I struggled a lot with mental blocks and could barely finish practice. My team and my coaches continued to support me through my struggles and I was able to overcome these blocks. This year I have been able to go to practice regularly and have accomplished so many goals that I could not have imagined. I have been able to improve all of my strokes, especially my fly and breaststroke. My times have gotten better and I am proud of how far I have come. I have accomplished state cuts in almost all of the events. A times, and raced in high school swimming. I am seeing the results of my work from this season in my times. At high school state, I broke my HS team record in 50 free record. I am working towards a sectionals cut in the 50 free and working to break the 100 free school record. I am still working on being confident in my abilities and being a light for others. I also want to continue making my club and my high school team a welcoming place where everyone feels like a member of a family. I want to continue to incorporate team events and bonding with both older and younger kids to make our whole team feel like one family.	I have participated in the OKS Athlete Committee. I have had a positive experience and it has given me a chance to connect with people outside of my club. It has also allowed me to serve both my club and Oklahoma Swimming as a whole. I learned that you don't have to be the loudest in the room to have an impact and that a lot of work is put in to make the practice days, the banquet, and simple things like t-shirts work. It really showed me how much value there is to having a team around you. All of the representatives inspired me to continue working to unite people in my community and make everyone feel like they belong in Oklahoma Swimming. Griffin inspires me to put in work because the work that you do pays off. He inspires me to show up for my teammates and cheer for those around me, both in my club and not.	I have leadership experience as a representative for my club on the OKS Athlete Committee. I am also considered one of the captains of my club and I try to make sure everyone is involved and welcome on the team. I talk to the younger kids and make sure that they feel welcome. I teach swim lessons and help kids learn to swim. We start with kids that can't blow bubbles and work with them until they are capable to move to White Team. I work with kids in all levels through the whole process and it is really filling to see these kids accomplish their goals and help them along the way. I also assist with tryouts for our team. At meets, I try to cheer for all of my teammates, both in club and in high school swimming. I was a member of my class board and am very involved in student council. I attended both the District 7 Convention and the OASC State Convention, connecting with other student leaders to bring back ideas to my school. I helped set up for spirit weeks, came up with ideas for kindness weeks, and led a discussion during our kindness week about struggles and mental health. I volunteer at meets to time and help with the younger kids on my team. I have worked the Summer Reading Program, I volunteer with the parish kids as a group leader during Vacation Bible School, and I volunteer with Catholic Charities.	I want to be an Oklahoma Athlete Representative because I want to further my involvement in Oklahoma Swimming and reach people outside of my club. It would be a great learning opportunity to further my knowledge about how Oklahoma Swimming works. I want to bring a sense of greater community to Oklahoma swimming and help the athlete committee in making their clubs heard. I would like to see if we could do a service project or a day of service, maybe at a food bank, and incorporate all of the clubs through ideas from their representatives.	I would encourage the athletes to lead by example. Showing up early, cleaning up the space you sit at during meets, and being welcoming to new members of your club are simple ways to lead by example. Leadership isn't about bossing others around but rather helping them through your actions. I could help come up with ideas for team events. I would encourage athletes to take every opportunity and learn from their experiences. I would encourage the athletes to stay involved in the Athlete Committee and reach out with questions about leading events within their club and with any concerns their club might have. Social media can be a great way to connect with club members and encourage them to come to the practice days and be involved with the committee.

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ARC-4	I have been swimming competitively since I was seven years old. For that entire time I have been a member of OKS and USA Swimming. I worked hard to qualify for the zones team on several occasions. Now, I'm a sectionals swimmer, striving for my first Futures cut, hopefully this up coming year. Throughout my swimming career, I've had good years and also ones where I fought hard to overcome adversity. Whether with health or with just finding the balance between family, school, and our sport which requires a lot of time and dedication to succeed at a high level.	I have attended all of the LSC practice days since I was old enough to participate. I was impressed by all of the work accomplished by the athletes to make the events successful. I love the connection to fellow swimmers beyond my club. I have been inspired by many of the athlete reps. Some of the current and past representatives are friends of mine, and I've seen and admired their work and dedication. I've also helped the current reps with things like social media posts and planning. Others have been the older sisters of my friends. In particular, I'm inspired by the example of OKS reps like Josie Uerling and Annie Kramer who have gone on to represent OKS on National USAS committees.	I am a member of Key Club and FCCLA, both leadership clubs at my school. While these clubs provide opportunities for leadership, I also believe that leadership is something that should be lived every day. For example, when I practice with the right focus and effort, I lead by example to my teammates. I have participated in my High School teams services projects at the local food bank for the past two years. I also volunteer at swim meets when I am not competing.	I see the example set by some of the current and previous athlete reps. I want to continue to make sure the voices of our athlete members are truly heard within OKS. I have friends within my own club, but also across the LSC so I can be a fair voice to represent our athletes. I think this opportunity would be a chance to learn and grow to become a better leader in all aspects of life. I will advocate for our championship meets to continue to be exciting for us as athletes. I would like to make sure as much OKS funding as possible is available for swimmers at both the age group and senior levels. It would also be cool if OKS or one of our local clubs could host a regional or national level meet. I'd love to take part in making that possible.	I think it's important to be inclusive of different voices even when I might not fully agree with them. I would encourage athletes from all over the LSC to participate in things like our Practice Day and the OKS House of Delegates meeting. I think encouraging participation at all levels is an important first step. By encouraging participation we will have more people with more opportunities to lead within their clubs and OKS.
ARC-5	My participation in OKS/USA swimming is through club. I moved to Oklahoma in 2013 and started swimming close after. I started with my club and ever since then I've fallen in love with the sport. My freshman year took my love for the sport to a whole new level when I joined the High school swim team, where I've competed in 2 6A championships. My current goal is to make sectionals in the 100 fly and the 400 im.	I participated in a LSC practice day last fall, but besides that I have not participated with the OKS Athlete Committee. 2 of the reps that inspire me are Marrison Williams and Alexis Selden, they are perfect examples of great leaders who everyday put in extremely hard work and inspire not just me but the people around them to work harder in the pool, and be better outside of the water.	This year I really have stepped up and made myself a leader on the high school team. I helped my team this year push ourselves to being the best versions of us in and out of the water. I have done a few service projects, I helped pack food for families in need for my dad's work, and I've also helped back boxes with the swim team for our annual service project.	As an athlete rep I want to inspire people around me and help the sport I love grow. Some of my ideas is have more openness on athlete mental health, so many athletes quit their sport because they struggle with the feeling of so much pressure and stress related to their sport. As a representative I want to help spread awareness and help struggling athletes.	I would try to inspire them to lead, the fastest don't always have to be the leaders. I find that a lot of people struggle with confidence. Many people have great ideas, but fear of being bullied or made fun of when they speak up about their opinions. As a rep I would help inspire those people, and help them out to find the confidence to lead so we can have more ideas on improving the sport.

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ARC-6	<p>Over the past two years, my commitment to swimming has been nothing short of substantial. I began my journey during my freshman year with High School team and promptly joined my club team in late September. From the moment I stepped onto the pool deck, I poured every ounce of effort into refining my skills, fostering teamwork, and evolving as both a swimmer and an individual. Determined and unstoppable, I immersed myself in every available opportunity to excel in swimming, extending my participation into the summer. Despite initial setbacks in securing a spot at the state level for short course events, I persevered. It wasn't until in the final race of the last meet, that I clinched qualification in the one hundred freestyle. This pivotal achievement propelled me to my debut appearance at the state level, marking a significant milestone in my sophomore year at high school. With each passing week, my progress surged, culminating in my status as a high school state qualifier and an Oklahoma State qualifier. As I look ahead, my sights are set on continuing my swimming career at the collegiate level, ideally in my home state of Minnesota, where I aspire to balance my athletic pursuits with academic strives. My resolve to pursue excellence remains faithful, and I am committed to pushing my limits and refining my skills with every stroke in the pool. By fostering a growth mindset and embracing the guidance of mentors within the swimming community, I am composed to jump on the next chapter of my journey with strength and determination.</p>	<p>I've had the privilege of participating in the OKS Athlete Committee, particularly engaging in the event known as "Practice Day." This experience was truly unforgettable, affording me the opportunity to make connections with numerous individuals and gain insights into the profound friendships inherent in swimming, as well as the relentless dedication required for collegiate-level competition. Throughout this event, I acquired invaluable skills in team building and leadership, learning how to make bonds and inspire others within a team dynamic. Moreover, I gained proficiency in utilizing Swimcloud and effectively communicating with college coaches to attract attention to potential collegiate swimming opportunities. Among the many remarkable individuals I encountered during my time with the Athlete Committee, two individuals stand out prominently: Tyler Bell, and Griffin Craig. Their impact on my swimming journey has been profound, shaping me into the swimmer I am today. Tyler's unwavering support and guidance have been a constant source of strength, providing quality advice and a receptive ear whenever needed. Similarly, Griffin's exemplary leadership, coupled with his prowess in the pool, has served as a beacon of inspiration. Whether at high school meets, club events, or state competitions, their presence has been both reassuring and motivating. From the moment I met Tyler and Griffin, I have held them in high tongue, deeply appreciative of their contributions not only to my personal growth but also to the collective spirit of the OKS Athlete Committee. Their mentorship and friendship have left an indelible mark on my journey, for which I am forever grateful.</p>	<p>I would say I have many leadership experiences not only in school, but as well as swimming. I have participated in many school events for organizations such as NJHS and have volunteered countless times ranging from cleaning whiteboards for teachers in advisory to helping set up and run fall festivals for my past elementary schools. I of course as well have been a leader in swimming, as I try to talk and make friends with as many people as possible whenever I go to a meet, or just meet random people and talk about swimming. I not only have been a leader outside of my own club, but within my own club, I have found leadership opportunities there as well. I recently over the summer gained my lifeguarding certificate which allows me to watch and look after the little kids that attend our club. The ability over these last few months to help out whenever possible when the coaches need me to has been nothing short of amazing. The leadership opportunities that I accept and have created myself have shaped me into a leader not only within my family and friends but with everyone in my daily life.</p>	<p>I've had numerous leadership experiences, both within my school community and the realm of swimming. In school, I've actively participated in various events and organizations such as NJHS, where I've contributed to initiatives ranging from volunteering to helping set up, events to organizing school-wide activities. Whether it's assisting teachers with classroom tasks or coordinating events like fall festivals for local elementary schools, I've dedicated countless hours to serving my community. Similarly, within the swimming community, I've embraced leadership roles with enthusiasm. At meets, I make it a point to connect with fellow swimmers, fostering friendships and spreading positivity about our shared passion for the sport. Moreover, within my own swim club, I've actively sought out opportunities to lead and support others. For instance, I recently obtained my lifeguarding certification, allowing me to oversee the safety of young swimmers at our club. Being able to assist coaches and provide guidance to younger members has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. Through these varied leadership roles, I've grown as a leader, not only among my peers but also within my broader community. Whether it's lending a helping hand or taking initiative when needed, I strive to make a positive impact in all aspects of my daily life. These leadership opportunities have not only shaped me personally but have also reinforced my commitment to serving others and making a difference wherever I go.</p>	<p>To support athletes in developing leadership within their OKS member club as well as within the LSC, I would implement a comprehensive approach. This includes organizing leadership workshops in means of Zoom calls possibly and mentorship programs within the specific clubs to equip athletes with essential skills like communication and teamwork. Additionally, providing opportunities for athletes to take on leadership roles within their clubs, collaborating with coaches and officials to identify leadership potential, and recognizing and celebrating athletes' contributions would further encourage leadership qualities. Through these initiatives, athletes would gain valuable experience and confidence, enabling them to make meaningful contributions to their clubs and the broader swimming community.</p>
ARC-7	<p>I've swam for over a decade on my club team. I've competed at State Championships since I was 8, and competed at Zones for 5 years, and Sectionals for 2 years. I've won high point at state, zones, and sectionals, and right now, I'm working towards getting my first Olympic Trails cut.</p>	<p>I haven't participated in the Athlete Committee before</p>	<p>I've volunteered at the regional food bank in the backpack for kids program, I've been a part of fundraisers for my school whether it ranges from jog a thons, serving at a cafe, or running booths with fun activities. In swimming I've volunteered to help with mini meets and set up our swim clubs webpage</p>	<p>I want to be an Oklahoma Athlete Representative because I want to bring forward the importance of loving the sport as you compete. I hope to see everyone love swimming from a young age like myself and seriously pursue the sport even if it's less popular in comparison to other big sports like football or basketball. One major piece of encouragement for me was seeing the success of my older swim teammates and hearing their encouraging words. It meant a lot to me. And I think it definitely helped pushed me to improve so I could have the same level of success. So as an Oklahoma Athlete Representative, I'd like to advocate and create an environment where more kids can grow to love the sport, and be inspired to become great.</p>	<p>Through being an example and advocating for an encouraging environment. Through competition, swimmers push one another and grow as friends. Many of my friendships were through competition over the years, and for many others it was too. So encouraging friendly competition and motivating one another is a good way of leadership because it will inspire everyone to work hard and have fun competing.</p>

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ARC-8	I started swimming when I was 6 and have been swimming for 9 years. I began swimming on a club team outside of Oklahoma then, after a couple years, moved to Oklahoma and continued my swimming career. When I was 12, I was super close to a few zones' cuts, but due to the covid shut downs, I didn't make them. When I turned 13, I became even more determined to make some zones cuts. I was able to make my zones cuts and even a few sectionals cuts. I have worked, and will continue to work, extremely hard to achieve more sectionals cuts and maybe some futures cuts.	The only participation I've had with the OKS Athlete Committee was the HOD meeting. It was a lot of fun and very informative. I wasn't inspired by one specific athlete representative but I was inspired to be a thoughtful leader like them.	I've had many leadership opportunities during the last few years on my club. I often help with meets to get the younger kids used to meets and racing. I've also helped the younger kids with their technique during club offered clinics. I have also volunteered to teach Underprivileged kids to swim over the past few years.	I want to become an Oklahoma Athlete Representative in order to help better swimming in Oklahoma. I enjoy helping young new swimmers learn and love their sport. I want to be able to pass on the opportunity for swimming at a young age that I received. I would love to help develop clinics and meets for the younger kids and would really enjoy volunteering at those types of events.	I believe that its very important for athletes to be active leaders in their club as well as their LSC. Being a leader now will help them greatly in the future in many different opportunities. I feel like a good way to develop leadership in an athlete is to have them coach/mentor younger swimmers. Younger swimmers often look up to their seniors and will follow them as a leader. The more the older swimmers and younger swimmers engage, the more the older swimmers will develop their leadership skills, and the closer the team will grow.
ARC-9	I have been to futures and junior nationals and my goal one day is to get the the final place of the Olympics, it's a big goal but i had always set my goals and expectations for myself very high and I believe I can get whatever goals I put my mind to.	I have never been on the OKS Athlete Committee but I do know Amaya Olphant and she is the best role model I have ever had she pushed me to try hard even when I didn't want to and told me that if I wanted to become a star one day I could	I work on my church's student leadership team and I am a part of my schools stucco , I like to say I have always had a heart for outreach and supporting other people around me and uplifting others before myself.	I want to be a Oklahoma Athlete Representative to firstly Represent all the swimmers and to show you don't have to be on a big name club or for me a club at all to be involved in your sport. Secondly I love working with others and showing younger and older kids it doesn't matter how big or small you are you can become a rock star if you are willing to put in the work and do what it takes to get where you want to get.	I would support athletes to develop leadership throw there club by one showing them that you can be a leader even if you aren't the fastest in the room. Secondly by showing them that it's okay to have fun through your sport and the more of a positive attitude you have towards things the better results you are going to get from the work you have done.
ARC-10	I have been swimming sense I was in second grade and I am very passionate about this sport. I love being able to do it everyday with the people I love and care about. I have been working towards my goal of making sectionals for the last two years. I was working towards this goal for so long and I worked very hard to get it, it was very frustrating when I missed it my freshman year because I was working so hard for it. I finally got it this year at high school state in my two main events. Now I am working for my futures cut mainly, in the 100 back. I want to be able to go to a D1 college for swimming and have many opportunities to swim. I know these goals might be a stretch but they would be really cool to achieve and I think that I am capable of doing it if I continue to push myself everyday. My freshman year my high school team won state and that really inspired me to work even harder because I wanted to be apart of this win. Then this year we placed second and this has influenced me to work and try even harder to be able to get that win again with my team.	I have not participated in the athlete committee but I think it is something that I am very passionate and care a lot about I love swimming and I want to be able to help in anyways that I can. I want to be more involved in things that actually have an impact on Oklahoma swimming for example, I want to be able to help with the LSC practice days. I always thought these were so fun and I want to be able to to help swimmers grow closer together and make Oklahoma swimming all one big team instead of individual teams. The athlete representatives did inspire me because they showed me everything that they have been doing for it and the impact that they have made they also told me the amazing friendships. They have made through the experiences that they have been giving through this position I have seen the way that they prepared for the LSC practice days and how much they put in and that is something that I want to be a part of for the next two years.	I volunteer with my high school at the food bank once a year we also do special special Olympics annually. I really love doing Special Olympics because I get a buddy and I get to encourage them to do the thing that I love to do every day. I also always have so much fun doing these events because I get to do it with our entire team and it's so fun to do something with my team outside of swimming. I am also involved in the national charity league where I volunteer at least 12 hours a year and I go to meetings for both my class and our committee. This is help me grow so much because I've been able to volunteer in so many places that I've not heard of before, and they have made such a big impact on my life as president of my class in this organization last year, and this year I am the hospitality chair. This has taught me to be a leader in so many different ways.	I am very passionate about swimming because it is something that I've done my whole life and I want to be able to make an impact on others who also love doing this sport. I've made so many friendships through the LSC practice days and I wanna be able to help others get those same friendships from people who aren't a part of their own team I believe the friendships are so important to swimming because it makes swimming so much more fun. I want to be able to help Oklahoma swimming get closer together as one team some ideas that I have would be to have a type of clinic like once a month that helps swimmers work on technique from other coaches with other swimmers. I think this would be a great way to introduce people to many new faces and grow friendships within the state he could rotate between pools and which coaches coach, but I think this would be a great way to encourage swimmers to go out of their comfort zone and work with others.	I can relate to swimmer who are going through many things involving swimming because I've been swimming for so long that I noticed like to miss a time you've been going for or how hard it can be to continuously work hard when practice is really hard and not fun. I can also explain to them how good it feels when you finally achieve that goal and when all your hard work pays off and how the feeling is better than going through some hard practices because it is all worth It, I want to show other swimmers how they can help others that might be going through this or be able to help themselves. I would also like to show them how they can be a leader, and have an impact on their team by holding each other accountable for finishing every set encouraging them to keep pushing when it gets hard, and lastly how to help their friends and teammates, be able to support one another.

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ARC-11	<p>I started swimming on a summer league in 2017. I fell in love with the sport right away and began swimming club shortly after. I have also swam for my high school team for the past 2 years; I have qualified for and placed at the State meet both years. I got my first Sectional cut in November, and I expect to collect more in the coming weeks. I hope to continue my swimming career throughout college; I aspire to qualify for Futures within these next couple seasons!</p>	<p>In 2022, I attended the fall LSC day in Jenks, which was an awesome experience. I learned a lot from it, but the best part was the opportunity to bond with swimmers across the state, who I wouldn't typically swim with, but we were united through that experience. All of the kids there, especially the athlete reps, were very friendly and the latter helped plant the seed in my brain to consider applying for that same opportunity when I was a Junior.</p>	<p>I have had several leadership and service opportunities both in and out of swimming. Some of these include: - Active member of my church youth group leadership board for the past 3½ years - AAUW Leadership representative - Editor in chief of the school newspaper and yearbook throughout middle school - Volunteer youth camp counselor (summer 2024) - Active member of Key Club (2 years) - Volunteer at homeless shelters for holidays - Several service projects on AESC</p>	<p>I would be thrilled to be an Athlete Rep because I believe that swimming as a sport needs a bigger voice, which is something I can bring to the table. As a high school and club swimmer, one of my very favorite things to do at meets is cheer on my teammates; as a result, my voice often becomes extremely hoarse afterwards. I get teased for my exuberance and subsequent croakiness, but I love losing my voice on behalf of my team. I use my voice in many different ways, and I think it would be a valuable addition to the Athlete Committee as I work to unite Oklahoma swimmers, coaches, and parents in advocating for, supporting, and representing swim. Together we can magnify our voices for the good of many. Additionally, one of the things I love about the sport is the freedom that each athlete has to make it their own. I do not participate in most Sunday meets for religious reasons, which is sometimes a struggle when it holds me back from things I would wish to achieve. While doing this has brought its challenges, I have learned the importance and beauty of the opportunities this sport grants athletes to make decisions based on what is best for them individually. For me, that means swimming really hard to make six days a week competitive with my seven-day peers. For others, their goals, methodology, and needs look different. Some swimmers are looking to pay for college. Others just want to stay in shape. Some do it for social benefits. We all find value in different places and swimming is unique to other sports because there is a place for everyone. It's not one size (or stroke!) fits all. Whatever you want to do or get out of swimming, there is an open lane for you. I want to help other swimmers to find joy and acceptance in whatever works best for them.</p>	<p>When I had just started swimming on Summer League, there was one coach in particular who not only built my foundation of butterfly (which is now my strongest and favorite stroke) but also always made the greatest effort to congratulate me personally after my races. He was a top supporter for me early on. I was amazed that an older and really fast swimmer would notice me, follow my races, and cheer me on when I was so much younger, slower, and just plain awkward. Owen remained a fantastic role model as I grew older and in the sport, and he remains an inspiration, now as a college athlete. I would love to build on what Owen taught me. Older swimmers not only set examples, but can provide meaningful encouragement, which goes a long way in building teams and individuals. Something that has become blatantly apparent to me throughout my swimming career is that the younger kids watch and follow the older kids and coaches' examples, so the environment truly matters and must be a place in which everyone feels included and respected. I experienced this myself as I navigated switching club teams, as well as often being a younger swimmer in my practice groups, struggling to find a place where I felt like I belonged. Sometimes we don't know what to say, and we rarely realize how much a kind word can mean to someone. I'd like to help teams establish a culture of inclusivity. That starts in individual clubs, and radiates to competitions. Oklahoma swimmers support each other, regardless of team, age, or strength in the water. We can all cheer each other on and take interest in each other in and out of the water. Adding leadership classes to LSC events where we teach "every swimmer is a leader" would be a great way to do this. Perhaps the LSC could feature a few swimmers across that state in heat sheets or at the big screens at meets. That way we learn a little more about each other. Or maybe include swimmers of the month on the Instagram page. It would be really cool if senior swimmers nominated age-group, and vice versa.</p>
ARC-12	<p>I currently swim 6 days a week with my club. I started as a kid who just clicked with swimming and fortunately enough there was a team in my home town that has greatly improved my skill and will get me further in my high school and college career.</p>	<p>I am currently a sophomore representative for my team and I have attended multiple practice days. I do enjoy the fact that it connects you with other swimmers throughout the state and I learned how easy it is to make friends through a sport alone. Marissa Williams, who currently is the junior rep, has inspired me.</p>	<p>I enjoy getting involved in stuff such as Student Council. Additionally, I have helped and taken part of many school activities. When it comes to the pool, I try to set a good example for my teammates.</p>	<p>I like getting involved, more connections, and growing as a person. I believe this would give me an opportunity to learn and continue to grow my leadership skills. Additionally, I would love to try to bring more awareness to OKS. With some of my connections that I have built, I think I could bring multiple voices with recommendations or concerns.</p>	<p>I would love to see events outside of swimming as a bonding experience throughout clubs. Also, encouraging people to sign up for these positions and getting more involved with OKS.</p>

Candidate Number	Swimming Experience/Goals: What is your swimming participation in OKS/USA Swimming? Where have you been, where are you now and what are you working towards?	Athlete Committee Experience: Have you participated with the OKS Athlete Committee? What was your experience? What were your takeaways? Did one of our Athlete Representatives inspire you?	Leadership and Service Experience: What leadership experience do you have? Have you participated in service projects? Include experiences in swimming and/or in extracurricular activities outside of swimming.	Why do you want to be an Oklahoma Athlete Representative? What are some ideas you would like to bring forward to the Athlete Committee?	How would you support athletes to develop leadership within their OKS member club as well as within the LSC?
ARC-13	<p>I've been swimming competitively for about 8 years now, starting when I was around 7 years old on my club. Over the years, I've trained hard, competed in various meets, and learned so much about the sport of swim. Currently, I'm also a member of my high school swim team, which has been an amazing experience. It's been awesome to represent my school and compete alongside my peers. Being part of the high school team has added a new level of competition and camaraderie that I enjoy. As for what I'm working towards, well, I'm always striving to improve my times, technique, and overall performance in the pool. I have my sights set on qualifying for bigger meets, such as Sectionals, down the line. I'm eager to continue growing as a team member, supporting my teammates, and being a positive influence both in and out of the water. I'm passionate about swimming, and I'm excited to see where my dedication and hard work will take me in the sport.</p>	<p>No, I haven't participated in the OKS Athlete Committee before. However, I'm curious to learn more about it and what it involves. While I haven't had any direct experience with the OKS Athlete Committee, I'm always open to new opportunities and experiences that can contribute positively to my development as an athlete. I'm always looking for ways to grow and learn, both as a swimmer and as a person. So, if there's an opportunity to get involved with the OKS Athlete Committee or similar initiatives in the future, I'd consider it as a way to gain new experiences and insights.</p>	<p>I've been fortunate to have several opportunities to engage in service projects and volunteer work, both individually and alongside my family and community organizations. One significant aspect of my volunteer work has been with various organizations focused on helping those in need. For instance, I've volunteered with my mom at a Community Food Bank, Family Services, and the a Mission. These experiences involved distributing groceries, toys, and clothes, and creating overnight bags for children entering foster care. Additionally, I've volunteered with my stepmom's organization which hosts events to serve people in need. Apart from these community service activities, I've also dedicated time to volunteer with my club, where I've assisted with various tasks to support the club and its members. Through these experiences, I've developed important leadership skills such as teamwork, organization, and empathy. I've learned the value of giving back to my community and supporting those who may be facing challenges. While my leadership experiences may not have been in formal roles, I believe that my involvement in service projects and extracurricular activities, both in and out of swimming, has helped me develop as a leader and a compassionate member of my community. I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had to make a positive impact and look forward to continuing to serve and lead in the future.</p>	<p>I want to be an Oklahoma Athlete Representative because I believe I can make a difference in bridging the gap between newer and older swimmers. Having been part of the swimming community for some time now, I've noticed a disconnection between these two groups. I think it's crucial for swimmers of all ages to feel connected and supported within our community, as it not only fosters a sense of unity but also enhances the overall swimming experience. As an Athlete Representative, I would bring forward ideas to create a stronger sense of camaraderie and mentorship among swimmers. One idea I have is to organize mentorship programs pairing younger swimmers with older, more experienced ones. This could involve regular meetings, joint training sessions, or social events where swimmers can interact and learn from each other. Additionally, I believe creating opportunities for intergenerational activities and team-building exercises can help break down barriers and promote inclusivity within the swimming community. Whether it's through team outings, volunteer projects, or workshops focusing on team dynamics and communication, these initiatives can help strengthen bonds and cultivate a supportive environment for all swimmers. I would advocate for a means of open communication between swimmers of different ages and the Athlete Committee. By providing opportunities for swimmers to voice their ideas, concerns, and feedback, we can ensure that everyone feels heard and valued within the community. Overall, I'm committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment within the Oklahoma swimming community, and I believe that serving as an Athlete Representative would provide me with the opportunity to enact positive change and bring swimmers together for the betterment of our sport.</p>	<p>Supporting athletes to develop leadership within their OKS member club and within the LSC is essential for the growth and success of our swimming community. One way to support athletes in developing leadership skills within their club is by creating mentorship programs within clubs can be highly beneficial. Pairing younger athletes with more experienced swimmers who can serve as mentors not only helps younger swimmers improve their skills but also fosters leadership qualities as they learn from the example of their mentors. Providing leadership training and development opportunities for athletes within the LSC can help them build confidence, communication skills, and teamwork abilities that are important for effective leadership. By fostering a culture of mentorship, empowerment, and involvement, we can support athletes in developing strong leadership skills both within their OKS member club and within the broader LSC, ultimately strengthening our swimming community as a whole.</p>