

LA SALLE SWIM DIVE ALUMNI, PARENTS & FRIENDS TO MAKE EFFORT TO SAVE PROGRAM

After a very positive and productive dialogue with La Salle University President, Colleen Hanycz, Athletic Director, Brian Baptiste, and Board of Trustees Chair Bill Matthews we are pleased to announce that we have a pathway to restore La Salle men's swimming and diving. The path forward will sustain the tradition, excellence, development, and character that La Salle swimming and diving has provided to hundreds of La Salle men's alumni.

"The La Salle swimming & diving community has shown great passion, pride, and a commitment to the men's program. The willingness of the group to lead this effort shows a drive and determination to preserve the program. It may serve as an example for similar groups across the country, of the engagement needed to ensure sustainable, championship experiences for the sport of swimming" said La Salle University Athletic Director Brian Baptiste.

This announcement follows the successful reinstatement of men's and women's swimming at the College of William & Mary and follows several weeks of active engagement between alumni, former head coach Jamie Platt and the La Salle administration. That engagement, according to CSCAA Executive Director Greg Earhart, has been key to the process.

"All too often we see decision-makers make a decision and then close their ears to a community that is ready, eager, and able to support these teams," Earhart explained. "The La Salle alumni have been and will continue to be instrumental, but I also have to give a lot of credit to Brian [Baptiste, Athletic Director]."

Shortly after the announcement, Earhart reached out to La Salle to investigate possible solutions. "I have to give a lot of credit to Brian. When faced with a difficult decision, we often see leaders make short-term cuts that have long-lasting impacts. Worse, many lack the humility to even consider solutions. Brian took the time to listen, asked difficult questions, and ultimately, see the opportunities instead of obstacles."

Jamie Platt, who coached La Salle from 2002 to 2020 and is now Executive Director of Middle Atlantic Swimming expressed optimism. "Few programs get a second chance at life like this." The team, he explains, is important not just to the University to all of Middle Atlantic Swimming, an organization of 11,000+ registered swimmers. "Fewer still get the opportunity to control their destiny so it is important for us to deliver on this commitment."

Reinstatement of the program hinges on achieving short- and long-term fundraising objectives. The first milestone of \$300,000 will sustain the men's operating expenses through 2024. This will provide the athletic department immediate fiscal relief while also providing alumni the time to fund a \$2.3 million endowment. This would fully endow the team's operating costs in perpetuity.

Not surprisingly, in a sport that races against the clock organizers are looking to accelerate that timeline. In just six short weeks the organizers' grass-roots efforts have secured nearly \$500,000 in pledges. Now, with the support of the administration, they feel they can accelerate the timeline and have set a goal of securing the total by April 21, 2021.

It is a goal that Brian Quinn, La Salle's Senior Director of Development for Athletics feels is achievable. "Many of our graduates go onto successful careers, but what has really struck me

during this process is how many attribute their success to their swimming and diving experience, and how eager they are to ensure these experiences continue.”

To make a pledge, visit www.savelasalleswimminganddiving.com. Pledges will be collected through the Athletic Development Office at La Salle University after the completion of the goal.

Alumni should reach out to their decade captain for more information.

1950s George Haggerty
1970s Ralph Ehinger
1980s Royal Cole
1990s Dan Morrissy
2000s Sean Connors-McBride
2010s Cameron Cabrera

If you would have additional questions or would like to get involved in this effort please email savelasalleswimanddive@gmail.com