

The USFCA values diversity and inclusion within our coaching ranks. We recognize that when there is diversity at the table, when women, men, people of all colors, ethnic backgrounds, dis/ability levels and age and the LGBTQ community come together bringing their unique views, the highest quality ideas, products, and roadmaps emerge. This is the path for organizational progress and growth.

The USFCA acknowledges its long history of mostly male dominated leadership and is now committed to broadening the diversity of our leadership and membership. We have changed! We believe everyone should have an opportunity to be involved in fencing coaching no matter their make or model.

We want and need every person including women, LGBTQ individuals, people of color, different age and dis/ability level and other marginalized groups, who is a fencing coach or interested in fencing coaching to receive training and certification as fencing coaches. More trained and certified fencing coaches in the United States means more fencers and more fencing programs of higher all around quality. Greater diversity among our fencing coaches means greater diversity among our fencers.

The fencing community landscape has changed in recent years, and the USFCA has already taken some important steps to improve diversity in our leadership. We are actively engaged in reaching out to fencing communities and groups who have been traditionally excluded. Our recent efforts include:

- Two of our most important leadership committees: Certification and Accreditation Board (CAB) and the Professional Development Committee (PDC) have good to excellent representation in race and gender according to the report card ratings developed by [The Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sport](#).
- Recently, we conducted a national search for our first Executive Director and hired the most qualified and outstanding candidate, a woman. Her name is Vinnie Bradford and one of her missions is focused on USFCA efforts to diversify and include everyone who wants to learn about fencing coaching and earn their certification.
- We fully support and work closely with [WFencing](#) in their efforts to advocate for women and other marginalized groups and to promote coaching education.
- The USFCA has added Para Coaching to our list of certifications. Para Fencing Coaches can now earn their coaching certification all the way up to Fencing Master level.

Our upcoming plans include:

- Creating and implementing National Standards for Fencing Coaching Clinics. These standards include a student-centered teaching philosophy, creating a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment, and self-evaluation processes, to mention a few.

- Providing more certification opportunities through remote testing procedures in order to best meet the various needs of our members .
- Encourage professional development. For that purpose, a tracking system for continuing education hours for all member coaches is being developed.
- Eradicating the “good old boy” system associated with practical examinations through regular examiner training requirements. Additionally, the CAB will assign examiners to all prevot and master boards and candidates will not be allowed to select their own board. By 2023, the CAB will ensure that at least 33% of the examiners on examining boards are minority members (women, LBGTQ individuals, people of color, different age and dis/ability level and other marginalized groups)
- Conflict of Interest policies are being adopted and these will be applicable to all USFCA examiners, staff, and leadership.

While we have started the process, we invite you to join our efforts to diversify, to be inclusive, and to promote integrity amongst all fencing coaches.