

Introducing: LaTonja Lee, Committee Chair on NYSATA Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Molloy College Assistant Athletic Trainer

LaTonja Lee is an assistant athletic trainer at Molloy College and the NYSATA Diversity and Inclusion committee chair. As an assistant athletic trainer, she is directly responsible for the care and well-being of women's tennis, Molloy's volleyball, men's basketball, and women's lacrosse teams.

As the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, LaTonja works to advocate and promote the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the Athletic Training profession. The committee aspires to cultivate initiatives to encourage community service and outreach, facilitate mentorship and execute forward progress while introducing students to the profession.

In her first year, Lee spearheaded multiple successful initiatives to encourage diversity in athletic training. This first was a sponsorship from Girl Scouts of Nassau County, collaborating with Pretty Girls Sweat. Together, the three organizations presented a Women in Athletic Training Workshop and fitness education program that more than 40 girls aged 7 – 17 attended. They were put through a five-station interactive rotation designed to educate them on rehabilitation, taping and orthopedic injury, nutrition, concussion awareness, an AT education.

Her second project took place during National Athletic Training Month in March. She introduced a video compilation on multiple social media platforms that featured athletic trainers, coaches, and athletes from all levels of competition with the purpose of increasing awareness of cultural competency and ethnic representation in the sports realm. Lastly, Lee has worked with the committee to create a brochure to be distributed to secondary schools that educates on advocacy and diversity within athletic training.

Lee's passion for advocacy and diversity within the athletic training profession is personal. Growing up and throughout her career, she remembers being the only person of color in the room. Her passion grew out of a desire to see that change.

"Diversity matters in this profession because it allows people to be recognized individually and represented as a whole. It enhances culture and creates innovation," said Lee. "Sports are universal. Having diverse members of a sports medicine staff fosters inclusion, compassion, empathy, and respectful interaction with different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, genders, identity, sexual orientation, and nationality."

Looking forward, Lee is excited to continue advancing the work done by the committee and to implement new initiatives, outreach, and opportunities for the community.