

August 19, 2020

Greetings Fellow Choral Conductors,

In response to the BLM movement and the national discourse about racism in the United States, Illinois, and the choral field, the IL-ACDA Board of Directors has created the Diversity Initiatives Committee to help address issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The charter reads: “The mission of the Diversity Initiatives Committee of the Illinois Choral Directors Association is to foster diversity and inclusivity in our Illinois state membership, ensembles, and repertoire through active engagement with underrepresented choral musicians and potential choral participants. We will bring about a broader definition of choral excellence both as result of this inclusivity and in order to maintain our relevance and expand both the reach and impact of our profession and its musical scope within Illinois.”

The current members of the committee are Keshena Cisneros-Watson, Eric Esparza (Chair), Keith Hampton, Grace Jeong, Cristian Larios, Richard Nunley, and Charles Taylor. As the work of the committee continues, all voices will be welcome to join the conversation. If you have a heightened interest in the work of this committee and/or particular expertise that you wish to offer, please email me (Eric Esparza) at eesparz7@depaul.edu.

The Diversity Initiatives Committee (DIC) plans to update the statewide membership about the status of projects and other committee business in quarterly emails such as this one, but may reach out to address specific timely issues as needed. The committee has met four times since its creation and has already begun work on a number of initiatives, some of which are outlined below. We look forward to doing the vital and challenging work with which we have been charged alongside the statewide membership of IL-ACDA.

DEI ZOOM FORUMS

The Diversity Initiatives Committee will be hosting a number of Zoom Forums on various topics throughout the year, beginning with our first forum this **Tuesday, August 25, 2020, 4:00pm-6:00pm CST** (<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/98636499312>). At this forum we will introduce the team, develop a set of reflection questions to assess our inclusivity as educators, and solicit feedback from attendees about what topics they would like to see addressed in future forums.

ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES

In response the current national discussion of racism, the DIC and the IL-ACDA Board suggests the following resources.

Social Justice Standards

Principle Writer Emily Chiariello

https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT_Social_Justice_Standards_0.pdf

The Score: An Urban Music Education Podcast

Eric Jimenez & Justin McLean

<https://podthescore.buzzsprout.com/>

Teaching with Respect: Inclusive Pedagogy for Choral Directors

Stephen Sieck

<https://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Respect-Inclusive-Pedagogy-Directors/dp/1495097668>

Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own

Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Begin_Again/UMLYDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

100 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice

Corinne Shutack

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>

13th (film)

Ava DuVernay (director)

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80091741>

White Fragility

Robin DiAngelo

<https://www.amazon.com/White-Fragility-People-About-Racism/dp/0807047414>

How to Be an Antiracist

Ibram X. Kendi

<https://www.ibramxkendi.com/how-to-be-an-antiracist-1>

IL-ACDA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

While we most often use IL-ACDA to share information and encourage one another, discussion can sometimes turn hurtful or abusive in the absence of guidelines. We are developing social media guidelines for IL-ACDA to protect our members from hate speech.

DEI EDUCATION

We are discussing training sessions for IL-ACDA members by DEI professionals that will address the recognition and nullification of biases, what appropriation and tokenism are and how to avoid them, and ways every educator can privately self-reflect on ways to make their teaching more inclusive and equitable.

EXPERT WEBINARS

While educators seek to celebrate all genres of choral music, we are developing expert-led webinars that will focus on particular styles (gospel, spiritual, country-specific, language-specific, etc.).

IL-ACDA WEBPAGE TAB

We will be adding a Diversity Initiatives tab to our website that will serve as a repository for resources, updated information, ongoing projects, and a place to promote the work of BIPOC conductors, educators, musicians, and composers.

FESTIVALS

Develop intra-state festivals that bring together the diverse singers from across Illinois to share music, culture, and fellowship. We also seek to revive and redevelop the multicultural honor choir from ACDA's past to suit the musicians of today and tomorrow.

These are just some of the many ideas being considered, and you can learn more about all of them at the August 25th DIC Forum. We look forward to hearing your ideas and learning alongside you the ways we can make IL-ACDA a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization.

Best Wishes,
Eric Esparza
Chair, IL-ACDA Diversity Initiatives Committee