



# Repertoire & Resources

## Collegiate Choirs Coordinator



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### **The Choral Network Nexus: Building Connections and Support in Higher Education**

by Jenny Bent

As a young professional stepping into the classroom for the first time, I vividly recall the whirlwind of emotions—excitement, nervousness, and a deep desire to succeed. However, I was also confronted with an unexpected feeling of loneliness. Suddenly, without the safety net of my mentors and fellow students, I grappled with a sense of isolation, an experience I would later learn often accompanies our profession. In the collegiate choral field, many of us find ourselves as the only person, or one of a few, within our institutions doing what we do.

Over the years, I have come to see that the American Choral Directors Association serves as so much more than a source to find repertoire and resources. It is a bridge that connects choral professionals across institutions. The challenges we face as choral directors are often universal, and ACDA creates opportunities for us to share our experiences and grow together.

We support one another, celebrate triumphs, and learn from each other's victories and setbacks. ACDA becomes our community, our sounding board, and our source of inspiration, offering a platform for networking and mentorship.

In my first year as Collegiate Choirs Coordinator, our Repertoire and Resources area has focused on enhancing and strengthening connections with our professional community by striving to better understand and address the needs of our diverse membership. In September 2023, our team launched a survey to gain insight into the current landscape of collegiate choral education. Your feedback provided information about who ACDA is engaging within our collegiate community, the platforms and resources most frequently accessed, and key areas of interest. The results of this survey directly shaped our initiatives and priorities for the year. (View survey results at: <https://choralnet.org/archives/acda-news/collegiate-choirs-survey-results>)

The survey results highlight ACDA's pressing need to connect with students, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the pivotal role student chapters play in bridging this gap, our Collegiate Student Activities team, under the leadership of Dr. Ryan Beeken and Dr. Elizabeth Swanson, has been diligently working to simplify the process of establishing new student chapters and to improve communication between existing chapters and the broader ACDA support network. To facilitate these initiatives, ACDA is developing a comprehensive manual with practical guidance for student chapters. Additionally, we are



designing a more accessible and user-friendly student experience for the 2025 National Conference, featuring content tailored to student interests, a schedule that highlights potentially engaging and valuable sessions, and abundant networking opportunities.

In direct response to survey feedback, Collegiate R&R is also working to provide meaningful and readily accessible online content by curating a series of short videos that we hope will be informative and motivational. These videos will be delivered directly to you in ACDA's weekly Wednesday emails and available for future reference on the National ACDA website.

The ACDA Collegiate Choirs team is dedicated to providing a welcoming and supportive space for choral directors across a wide range of collegiate programs. Last year we expanded our team by welcoming Dr. Brandon Elliott into the newly established position of 2-Year College Choirs Chair. His addition has brought valuable new perspectives, enhancing our ability to connect with students at this critical stage of their educational journey and address their unique curricular needs and interests. Additionally, our Student Activities team is exploring creative alternative membership pathways for students enrolled in smaller music programs that may not have the numbers or resources to establish their own chapter. Moreover, recognizing the evolving framework of collegiate degree programs, our team has better aligned the 2025 National Conference Student Conducting Masterclass eligibility with current program structures and has worked to eliminate potential application barriers.

As our Collegiate R&R team looks to the future, we also remain steadfast in our commitment to providing the repertoire and resources for which ACDA is renowned and trusted. Following this introduction, you will read an article by Dr. Caron Daley, which offers strategies and repertoire suggestions for conductors of non-major and open-enrollment collegiate choirs, helping all students, regardless of their major or prior experience, to participate in meaningful and engaging choral experiences. Next, Dr. Brandon Elliott offers methods for building community within 2-year college choral programs. Finally, the article by Dr. Ryan Beeken and Dr. Elizabeth Swanson highlights the inspiring insights and practices of three nationally recognized

student chapters.

As conductors, we motivate and inspire our students every day—it is a fundamental element of our skill set. But we also have the power to support, uplift, and motivate one another. In conclusion, I offer one charge to our members: Be that person! Consider taking perhaps five minutes each day to go beyond merely “liking” a post on social media. If you have a running list of people you have been meaning to contact, that is an excellent place to start! A text, email, or even a handwritten note can be tremendously impactful. Whether it is a message of appreciation to a former mentor, a compliment to a colleague whose performance moved you, a note of thanks to that person who helped you start your career, or words of support to somebody just entering our professional field, your gesture can brighten someone's day and help them know they belong and are seen within our vast (and sometimes lonely) collegiate community. As we continue our collective journey, may we find inspiration and encouragement through the power of connection that defines our work in collegiate choral education.

### 4-Year College & University Choirs



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**Count Me In:  
Elevating the All-Campus Collegiate Choir**  
by Caron Daley

Collegiate-level singers participate in choirs for a host of academic and personal reasons. Some are degree-seeking and fulfilling course requirements. Others sing for enjoyment, community connection, professional preparation as conductors and educators, or to create balance within their daily schedules. This article places a special spotlight on all-campus choirs, defined as any ensemble that engages students from majors across the university.