



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.

One of my great professional joys is working with an all-campus choir. I am grateful for the incredible talent and infectious energy these students bring to the ensemble setting. Equally, I admire the efforts they take to perform with the group, including locating available ensemble opportunities; shifting class, lab, and practicum schedules; and engaging in new social and academic spaces. As I design instruction, I am eager to tune in to student's unique motivations and goals for ensemble participation in the all-campus choir. What resources, repertoire, and approaches can support their success? How might the culture of the all-campus choir promote rigor, inclusivity, and sustainability?

This summer, I took time to discuss these questions with Dr. Stephanie Tubiolo, a member of the choral faculty at Rutgers University, and Dr. Aaron Peisner, Director of Choral Activities at University of North Carolina Wilmington. Both conductors are within their

first five years of collegiate teaching and lead all-campus choirs. Tubiolo and Peisner are friends from graduate school, where all the available choirs were highly selective. On the job, the strategies they have developed are a result of careful attunement to the students, awareness of the institutional culture, and a willingness to be inventive in their choral practice. Three themes emerged in our conversation as we discussed opportunities and challenges of leading all-campus choirs: (1) serving students, (2) cultivating a distinctive ensemble identity, and (3) choosing engaging and meaningful repertoire.

Serving Students

In her work at a large, multi-campus institution, Stephanie Tubiolo stresses the importance of tailoring instruction to the reality of student schedules. For example, students at Rutgers often need to take a bus

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between classes and campuses, which can contribute to late arrivals to rehearsal. Tubiolo's approach is to welcome late-comers with applause, acknowledging their efforts to attend rehearsal and welcoming them into the space. At the choir's second weekly rehearsal, which often conflicts with students' STEM courses, Tubiolo rehearses another set of music. This keeps instructional momentum high and maximizes everyone's time, she explains. If students miss a rehearsal, she provides ample online resources and opportunities for extra help.

Aaron Peisner agrees that flexibility with attendance is important with his all-campus choir. In his work at a beach-side campus, he has sometimes observed a more carefree approach to class attendance. Continuity and re-enrollment from semester to semester have also been challenging. His answer is to design instruction around student's motivations for singing. He has noticed that skill building is satisfying for students, so he takes time to review music fundamentals in class such as score marking strategies. Focusing on skill development is empowering, he notes, and helps students to see themselves as essential contributors to the ensemble's growth and sustainability.

Both of these educators work to reduce barriers to entry into the all-campus choir. Tubiolo accepts all students who complete an official choral audition into the choir. She also holds open rehearsals for the first week of classes so prospective students can observe the ensemble in action. Peisner runs "voice placement hearings," rather than auditions. Changing the name is important, he explains. Students are making a big effort to seek us out and share their talent. Keeping the audition low key and exploratory sets a positive tone for their choral experiences.

Cultivating a Distinctive Identity

Collegiate choral programs are traditionally hierarchical in design. The top ensemble is likely is an auditioned mixed choir that is highly visible on campus and beyond. Other beginning-level or mid-level choral ensembles may be auditioned or non-auditioned and generally have fewer performing opportunities. This framework can mean that all-campus choirs are a catch-all group, lacking a unique identity or performance agenda. All-campus choirs may also attract mu-

sic majors seeking out a second ensemble, and particularly music education majors preparing to teach. The combination of music majors and non-majors can create an additional layer of complexity in terms of group identity.

Tubiolo explains that cultivating a distinct ensemble identity is essential for recruitment, visibility, and student enjoyment in the all-campus choir. It is a disservice to the students if they are perceived as the "B-Team" or "same but worse" than more advanced choirs. Ensemble identity begins with honoring the time and effort these students are taking to be in the choir, she explains. Student leadership is another powerful tool to fortifying group identity. For Tubiolo, the more she shares leadership with the students and accompanist, the more the group's identity can rise.

Peisner is focusing his post-pandemic rebuilding efforts on establishing a unique identity for the University Chorale, which was previously viewed as the "filler choir" for major works. He takes time to do non-musical activities with the group, such as team-building games and a scavenger hunt where students write a choir mission statement together. Culture recruits students, he asserts.

Engaging and Meaningful Repertoire

Tubiolo seeks to connect repertoire choices directly to the students in the ensemble. She starts each semester with a form where students can identify their musical interests, languages spoken, cultural traditions, or artistic talents. She often includes poetry and instrumental music in her programming and finds that students enjoy an interdisciplinary approach. In choosing repertoire, she is sensitive to the diverse faith traditions that are represented within the choir and tends to avoid overemphasizing sacred repertoire.

Peisner often seeks out SAB literature for his all-campus choir, and has found a trove of potential repertoire in the Georgian and Balkan choral traditions. Much of the SAB repertoire is better suited to middle school choirs, he laments. For the all-campus collegiate setting, he is seeking music that feels artistically rich but has lighter musicianship demands.

Locating suitable literature for the all-campus choir is an ever-present challenge. This June, collegiate col-

leagues across the county contributed recommended selections for all-campus choirs. That list can be found by visiting <https://acda.org/repertoire/college-and-university-choirs-repertoire> or by scanning the QR code.



Conclusion

Peisner and Tubiolo agree that the all-campus choir can be missing from the collective consciousness. If you listen to recordings of collegiate choirs online, chances are you will hear the university's flagship ensemble, not the all-campus choir. At conferences, it is often the same. Tubiolo notes that working with this level of choir also requires a unique pedagogical skill set. If we can make all-campus choirs more visible within the wider choral community, this will equip us all for greater success, she adds.

In summary, this energizing conversation revealed the depth and breadth of possibilities within the all-campus choir setting. Correspondingly, it underscored the need for greater advocacy for these types of collegiate choirs. If you lead an all-campus choir, or would like to continue the conversation, please reach out by email: daleycl@duq.edu.

establishing a cohesive and sustained community complex. However, fostering a sense of belonging and community within a choral ensemble is crucial for promoting student engagement, retention, and the program's overall success. This article explores strategies for building and maintaining a robust choral community in the context of a 2-year college. While many of these strategies might perhaps be obvious to many choral directors, it always helps to reassess how we shape culture within our choral programs.

Understanding the 2-Year College Student Demographic

Students at 2-year colleges represent various life experiences and educational backgrounds. Many students are recent high school graduates, while others are returning to education after time in the workforce or other life pursuits. This diversity extends to their musical experiences. Some students have significant choral backgrounds, while others may be encountering structured music education for the first time.

The relatively short duration of students' enrollment—often limited to one or two years, though some may stick around for several years—can complicate the process of building an enduring community within the choir. Unlike 4-year institutions, where students typically remain in the program for an extended period, 2-year colleges require choral directors to continuously adapt to a changing membership base. This fluidity can disrupt continuity and a sense of shared purpose within the ensemble.

Recruitment and Onboarding

Effective community building begins with thoughtful recruitment and onboarding processes. Directors should aim to attract a diverse group of students by actively engaging with various campus populations and ensuring that the choral program is accessible to students with different levels of musical experience. It is essential to communicate that the choir is a welcoming space for all students, regardless of their prior exposure to choral music or major.

Once students are recruited, the onboarding pro-

2-Year College Choirs



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Building a Choral Community in a 2-Year College

by Brandon Elliott

The choral program within a 2-year college environment presents distinct challenges and opportunities. Students in these institutions often come from diverse backgrounds and have varying levels of musical experience. This transient nature of enrollment can make