

Eastern Region of NATS DE&I focus: 2020/2021 Highlights

- Added tabs for DE&I on our website- new members are directed to the website in their welcome letter/email etc. and reminders about website updates and content are regularly send to all membership.
- Developed the Eastern Region Professional Development Series through partnerships with local chapters and districts. This new program is open to ALL membership at no cost, and was focused on DE&I topics for the 2020/2021 season.
- Worked on strategies to focus DE&I on climate, curriculum, repertoire and access to leadership positions in our region, and to support and acknowledge diversity in our profession and region at all levels.
- Continued to decentralize geographical areas for hosting main regional events (regional auditions & conference, NATSAA, festivals etc.).
- Increased internal communication via email, phone, and Zoom sessions (several debrief and Q&A sessions were added to the calendar), to provide updates, training, coordination of events, marketing etc. and to increase the culture and sense of belonging.
- The NATS Strategic Plan and DE&I Tool Kit was disseminated via email and posted on website.
- Workshops, performances, lectures and presentations in our 2021 Eastern Region Conference were focused on DE&I. Among those are: "Opera, from a Sistah's Point of View", two performances + Q&A session; "Towards Decolonizing the Curriculum of the Classical Singer: Learning the Latin American and Iberian Art Song Repertoire"; "From Folk-song to Art-song: The Songs of Jean Ritchie (1922-2015) A Lecture Recital"; "The "Spirituals: The Mother Music"; "Singing Through Change: Women's Voices in Midlife, Menopause, and Beyond".
- Among the workshops/events included in the Professional Development Series and other partnerships with a DE&I focus are: "Training Transgender Performers: What They Want You To Know"; co-sponsorship of "Art Song Festival: Celebrating Black Voices"; co-sponsoring of first CCM Student Auditions at Tri-Sates Chapter/Pennsylvania District, among others.

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- Recruited members at local chapters to engage with the National Office on DE&I training and work. This will be followed up with work sessions at local and district levels on how to develop DE&I programming, outcomes, objectives, create a culture of inclusiveness, application of DE&I Tool Kit etc.
- We are planning to add CM (formerly CCM) categories for our Eastern Region Student Auditions, beginning on 2023.
- Continue PD Series focus on DE&I (i.e. Training Transgender Voices, Part II, etc.)
- Two long-term/bigger projects are currently in development: a) the creation of the Eastern Region of NATS Composers of Color Forum; b) the creation of a repository of vocal literature/repertoire by composers of color. This will serve not only our

membership and students, but also offer resources to academic programs and attend curricular design needs. This is a grant funding initiative.

Mario E. Martínez

Governor, Eastern Region of NATS