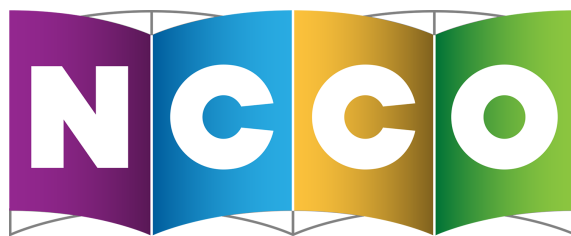


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NATIONAL COLLEGIATE  
CHORAL ORGANIZATION

*Wednesday, February 24, 2021*

## President's Update: New Year & New Energy

Hello, &lt;&lt;First Name>>,

As I write this letter to you, our NCCO members, I am reminded of your words.

During the December and January holidays, I had the opportunity to read, analyze, and reflect upon each and every one of your individual contributions to our NCCO Member Survey. You offered your ideas to us warmly, honestly, and critically. You shared your hopes for NCCO's future, your concerns and your worries, your innovations and your dreams for a better world. Together, it is both a treasure trove and the map itself... or perhaps more appropriately the compass that points us onward through the fog.

I was also inspired by the very strong response—over 35% of our active members completed the survey. While 35% may not seem like a large number, the typical response rate nationwide for membership surveys is around 12–14%, so this is indeed a significant and robust showing that speaks highly of your engagement in our organization's future, especially considering our survey's length.

So first and above all else, thank you. Your words and ideas make our future possible.

### Processing the Survey Results

After preparing the report on our survey—which we are [releasing to you today](#)—I shared the findings with the fifty members of our National Board, who were able to discuss it in our second virtual board meeting on Thursday, January 14, 2021. During this meeting—led with purpose and

humility by our Vice President Elizabeth Swanson—we engaged in both small group conversations by region and in a full body discussion about NCCO's direction, purpose, membership, conferences, and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and access.

Three takeaways soon became apparent:

1. While NCCO has a purpose as defined in our Constitution, we do not currently have a declared mission statement, visioning statement, or guiding principles. **A majority of the National Board strongly supports the articulation of statements of mission, vision, and guiding principles for NCCO.**
2. While the survey responses were mixed regarding how and when to hold our next national conference, **the National Board overwhelmingly agreed that we should have a conference (of some kind) in the Fall of 2021.**
3. Both the responses from the membership survey and the discussions of the National Board strongly confirmed **the necessity for increased support and accountability for diversity, equity, inclusivity, and access initiatives throughout all of NCCO's policies, programs, and governance.**

## Action & Next Steps: Mission

With these distillations in mind, I have done the following:

I have called upon Vice President [Elizabeth Swanson](#) to chair the **NCCO Mission, Vision & Principles Task Force**, whose charge includes:

- reviewing our current purpose;
- creating and recommending mission, vision, and guiding principles statements to the National Board for consideration;
- articulating NCCO's commitment to and accountability for diversity, equity, inclusivity, and access throughout our organization;
- integrating the principles of education, advocacy, and community into our work more broadly (as these “rose to the top” in our survey as vital to the value of an NCCO membership); and
- reviewing the Bylaws and, if appropriate, recommending changes to NCCO's governance structure, to include potentially adjustments to the Executive or National Board makeups and new standing committees.

I am grateful to the following National Board Members who have agreed to serve on this task force with our Vice President:

- Rollo Dilworth, Temple University (Philadelphia, PA)
- Jeffrey Douma, Yale University (New Haven, CT)

- Kellori Dower, Santa Ana College (Santa Ana, CA)
- Mariana Farah, University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)
- Katherine FitzGibbon, Lewis and Clark College (Portland, OR)
- Michael McGaghie, Macalester College (St. Paul, MN)
- Jace Saplan, University of Hawai'i – Mānoa (Honolulu, HI)

I have asked this task force to report back to the Executive Board by the end of March, so that we may consider their recommendations at our next virtual gathering of the National Board in May 2021.

## Action & Next Steps: Conference

I have also called upon Treasurer [Matthew Ferrell](#) to chair the **NCCO9 National Conference Strategy Task Force**, whose charge includes:

- determining the mode of delivery for our next conference (in-person, virtual, or hybrid);
- considering the viability of performance offerings;
- investigating a potential location that prioritizes affordability and access, including possible collegiate hosts;
- reviewing and recommending changes to conference fees;
- incorporating the principles of education, advocacy, and community into a conference theme;
- centering diversity, equity, inclusivity, and access as essential to our program offerings; and
- adjusting the tenor, tone, and timeline of our calls for presentation in light of all of the above.

I am grateful to the following National Board Members who have agreed to serve on this task force with our Treasurer:

- Nicolás Alberto Dosman, University of Southern Maine (Portland, ME)
- Eduardo Garcia-Novelli, Carthage College (Kenosha, WI)
- Merrin Guice Gill, Bethel University (St. Paul, MN)
- Tracey Gregg-Boothby, Rose State College (Midwest City, OK)
- Andrew Morgan, Hendrix College (Conway, AR)
- Jennifer Sengin, Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA)
- William Powell, Auburn University (Auburn, AL)

I have asked this task force to report back to the Executive Board as soon as possible, so that we can begin our conference planning post-haste. **Our hope is to share our conference details with you—date, time, location, and calls for presentation—by April 15, 2021.**

## NCCO and the Choral Commons

On January 27, [The Choral Commons](#) held a 90-minute roundtable discussion focused on **justice-centered choral advocacy, accountability, and DEI strategic planning** in our national choral organizations. NCCO Vice President, Elizabeth Swanson, participated in this discussion along with fellow national organization leaders Catherine Dehoney (Chorus America), Maria Guinand (IFCM), Mackey Spradley (NAfME), and André Thomas (ACDA). The event was hosted by The Choral Commons executive producer, Emilie Amrein and was moderated by the creative director, André de Quadros. The Choral Commons is a media platform that offers educational resources on justice-centered praxis, and incubates creative, artistic, and compassionate projects that empower choirs and singing communities to work for a just and peaceful world. We look forward to continued engagement with Emilie, André, and the community of The Choral Commons.

## Transparency: See for Yourself

I believe firmly that membership organizations must be transparent, as we serve you first and foremost. So, we are making available to you the following:

- I invite you to [read the NCCO Member Survey Report](#). I am heartened after reading your survey responses. There are so many positive suggestions and ideas contained within.
- I am optimistic after witnessing our National Board in empathetic discussion. You can [read the minutes](#) of our January 14th meeting, prepared with verve and professionalism by Former NCCO Secretary Brian Gorelick.
- I am continually humbled by the strength, resilience, and expertise of our National Board. And as they are vital to NCCO's governance, we have recently updated our website to include photographs and links to bios for all 50 of our National Board Members. [Get to know NCCO's National Board](#).

## Conclusion

This is an exciting time for the National Collegiate Choral Organization. I stand with my colleagues on the Executive Board committed to continuing our efforts for a more equitable and just choral profession in this, the second year of our most unexpected term of election.

Thank you for putting your trust in us to lead you during this time. We look forward very much to the possibility of gathering in community with you later this year.



Dominick DiOrio, President

**on behalf of the NCCO Executive Board**

Miguel Ángel Felipe, *President-Elect*

Elizabeth Swanson, *Vice President*

Matthew Ferrell, *Treasurer*

Marie Bucoy-Calavan, *Secretary*

Mark Nabholz, *Chief Editor of Publications*

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