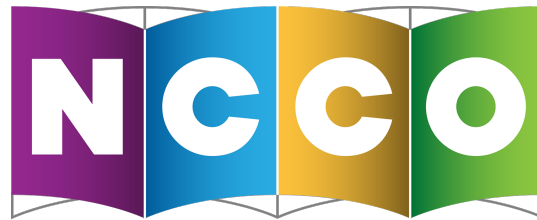


[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[View this email in your browser](#)

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE  
CHORAL ORGANIZATION

*Thursday, September 16, 2021*

## NCCO Affinity Groups

Dear Dominick,

We are very excited to begin the work of **creating and facilitating our inaugural NCCO Affinity Groups** as we build toward sustainable diversity and inclusion. Please read on for more information, and [we'd appreciate your help filling out a survey linked here and at the end of this email.](#)

As a reminder, this year, the National Board approved several additions to our NCCO constitution, including the creation of the Mission and Vision in Governance Committee, the Director of Affinity Groups, and the establishment of Affinity Groups themselves. Affinity Groups will serve a vital role in our mission in holding space for joy, culturally responsive mentorship, advocacy building, and emergent spaces of professional development for all members in our community. Moreover, as we work towards embodying our vision and mission of equity-centered practice, Affinity Groups serve as crucial stakeholders within our model of shared governance.

### Rationale:

**We believe that we have much more work to do in supporting and catalyzing the diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and disability within the choral professoriate.** According to the most recent data collected from the National Center for Education Statistics, of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2018, some 40 percent were White males; 35 percent were White females; 7 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3 percent each

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

or less of full-time faculty.[1]

Noting the exclusion of reporting for untenured and adjunct positions, trans and gender diverse folx, disabled persons, and many other identities unseen in the academy, we believe that the creation of Affinity Groups are a starting point towards building meaningful solutions and spaces that moves us towards sustainable equity and diversity within our field. **We must create spaces that honor bold conversations, dreaming, brave statements, radical thinking, and innovative solutions that will lead us to this choral future.** We believe that Affinity Groups can help us get there.

## Anticipating Potential Questions

[How do I know if an Affinity Group is for me? May I go and listen as an ally?](#)

An affinity group usually engages upon shared lived and embodied experiences. As we begin to form our inaugural Affinity Groups, stakeholders will decide, in advance, if and when they want to allow guests and, in doing so, will determine what the purpose and guidelines are for each visit.

[Do Affinity Groups promote segregation?](#)

A common misconception about Affinity Groups is that they could promote segregation or exclusion, but (1) there will be enough types of Affinity Groups available that everyone can belong to at least one group, and (2) research in this field has demonstrated the opposite.

According to this research, **Affinity Groups can aid in retention and capacity building for marginalized folx within an organization and profession because of their structures in promoting connection based around identity and profession** (Boston College Center For Work and Family, 2018).[2] To go further, one of the primary goals of our affinity groups is to provide a culturally responsive and safe structure of support to members who experience shared experiences around identity. Just as the NCCO began as a sort of Affinity Group for choral educators at the post-secondary level, the Affinity Groups within NCCO can further serve our members by creating spaces at the intersections of identity and profession. For example, colleagues may find meaning in forming a group for White allies to discuss the complexities of privilege, allyship, and their role in dismantling structural racism within our profession.

[Is participation optional? Are there Affinity Groups for everyone?](#)

**Yes! Participation in an Affinity Group is always optional and is not a mandatory component of NCCO membership.** The affinity groups will be formed to serve your needs and provide essential support at any time. Everyone in the organization is always welcome to find an affinity group that supports them. Again, we will ensure that there will be enough Affinity Groups in which everyone can belong to at least one group.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

---

[May I participate in more than one Affinity Group?](#)

Affinity groups are an optional form of support to our membership. We understand that some of us may choose not to participate for a variety of reasons. We also understand that we are all individuals that house a diverse web of identities within us. Therefore, as long as members embody the criteria for participation for the respective group, **members are welcome to participate in multiple affinity groups.**

[What Affinity Groups will there be? How will you determine what Affinity Groups exist and what their structures will be?](#)

**We will determine this together.** The Mission and Vision in Governance Committee will not decide on Affinity Groups in a top-down manner, but rather we will be facilitating the process based on responses from our membership. We will create Affinity Groups that reflect our membership so that our organization is serving your needs responsively. Each Affinity Group will determine their own structure and needs, and we will be here to support you.

## [Take the Survey](#)

This is why we are asking you to fill out our [NCCO Affinity Groups Survey](#)! We need your help. To ensure that our affinity groups are responsive to our membership's needs, **we ask that you complete this quick [survey](#) by Friday, October 1, 2021.**

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Jace Kaholokula Saplan, *Director of Affinity Groups*

Members of the Mission and Vision in Governance Committee

Dr. Elizabeth Swanson, *NCCO Vice-President*

Dr. Kellori Dower, *NCCO Interim President-Elect*

Dr. Rollo Dilworth, *Committee Member*

Dr. Jeffrey Douma, *Committee Member*

Dr. Kathy FitzGibbon, *Committee Member*

Dr. Michael McGaghie, *Committee Member*

---

*Links to references—*

1. [National Center for Education Statistics reporting on faculty diversity](#)
2. [Boston College Center for Work & Family reporting on employee resource groups](#)