

# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLANNING DOCUMENT

An invitation for collaboration among the SOM community of students, faculty, and staff.

August 2020

## Background

The DePaul University School of Music (SOM) met in three student, faculty, and staff forums during summer 2020 to begin to create a comprehensive plan for addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within our academic, professional and social spaces. In these forums, our students bravely shared their feelings and realities of systemic racism within the SOM. We heard their concerns and recognized we must find a way forward together to create an environment within the SOM that allows everyone to feel welcome and be their authentic selves while in the school. During the group discussions, all were encouraged to shift our attention away from defending decisions of the past and systems of the past, opening ourselves to the ways said decisions and systems are both problematic and in need of correctives. We acknowledge that said systems and decisions were designed and made as well as directed and coordinated by individuals with privilege, favoring some while marginalizing others, and, regardless of intentions, can be improved to more adequately and equitably serve and address our community.

As an outcome of the forums, the Executive Committee of the SOM identified four initial areas of focus for our collective efforts: Curriculum, Community, Equity, and Education. Outlined in this document are broad statements of our commitments in each of these areas that will guide our work moving forward. Some items are short-term and may be accomplished in the coming academic year. Others are long-term and may take more than one year to accomplish. Many of the statements fit within more than one area as all of our work is related. We recognize the work has just begun and will need to be ongoing. We will continue to schedule regular student, faculty, and staff forums to further share ideas and concerns and collaborate on finding solutions. We are dedicated to sharing regular updates to outline our continuing progress towards these commitments.

## THE FOUR AREAS OF DEI: CURRICULUM, COMMUNITY, EQUITY, AND EDUCATION

### Curriculum

Curricular changes take short- and long-term approaches.

Short-term goals include:

- Advise students about course offerings within the SOM and across the university curriculum that incorporate Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as well as other historically marginalized groups such as women and LGBTQ communities. Communicate clearly to students about the availability of coursework that addresses the broader historical and cultural issues that frame music scenes and the music we perform.
- Encourage faculty across the curriculum to begin to adopt more inclusive and broader range of repertory and communicate resources available at the university and within musical fields to facilitate faculty access to teaching materials that support an anti-racist agenda and more diverse course content.
- Program works for our performing ensembles to include more diverse composers and a wider range of musical viewpoints.

Long-term goals include:

- Revise the music core curriculum that serves as the foundation of our undergraduate programs. During Winter Quarter 2020, a musical studies taskforce was formed to begin the process of an overarching curricular review of the music theory, history, aural training, and group piano programs. These four programs are part of the core music curriculum for all SOM students.
- Rethink how the curriculum centers on musical traditions. Historically, these programs have been rooted in Western classical norms of performance and practice. As such, the voices of one tradition have often reduced the space for the voices of other traditions and people.

- Complete the work set forth in the Quality of Instruction Grant. The musical studies task force received a Quality of Instruction grant from the university in spring 2020 that will provide funding for initiatives throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. This grant will help to support the following:
  - Curricular mapping of all four programs within the core
  - A series of invited speakers that explores the ways that these programs can be more reflective of DEI within musical studies
  - Revisions of the curricular structures (materials, student learning outcomes, course scheduling and contact time, pedagogical practice)
- Engage faculty in the process of curricular change. DePaul's Faculty Handbook mandates that curriculum is the purview of the faculty as a part of faculty governance. Any faculty member (regardless of status) can submit curricular proposals that address specific courses or overarching curricular design/programs. The School of Music Curriculum Committee, composed of full-time faculty from different departments, reviews new and revised courses and curriculum proposals. All full-time faculty review, discuss, and vote on proposals at the annual Curriculum Forum.
- Examine opportunities to revise programs to allow for double majors and space for students to take more coursework on diverse musical traditions and in support of an anti-racist agenda. One issue facing SOM students is that our degree programs allow for relatively few electives.

## Community

- The exploration of community and its importance to DEI includes examining the ways that the SOM can better interact within three primary areas: The City of Chicago, the DePaul campus community, and the School of Music community.
- The City of Chicago is a vast community that includes schools, community centers, cultural organizations, health care centers, and residences.
  - A student worker has been hired and tasked with identifying schools that are seeking volunteers to assist with music education programs. Opportunities for SOM students and faculty are being sought out for everything from individual

coaching/teaching, guest conducting and clinics, co-teaching, and facilitating learning experiences for students who do not have access to music education programs.

- Additionally, opportunities to provide musical experiences within community centers, nursing homes, and other organizations will be sought out and made available to any SOM student/faculty/staff member who is interested in this type of service.
- The Community Music Division of the SOM will continue its outreach efforts to schools across the City of Chicago in addition to partnering with other community outreach organizations via its consortiums and networks with a continued focus on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- On the DePaul campus, the Student Government representative from the SOM has begun to seek out ways to bring the SOM performances into university spaces that typically do not house our performances. The importance of building bridges throughout campus has been noted as a key task.
- Within the SOM, a committee will be formed this fall to look at ways to create opportunities and performances where students who are pursuing degrees in music education, sound recording technology, performing arts management, and the bachelor of arts degree can showcase their musicianship as part of interactive experiences and pre/post lectures highlighting the many ways that a performance is the product of the work of multiple professionals in all of the fields of study that are supported in the SOM.
- The SOM is a steering committee member for the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI), funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which aims to build a robust Chicago-area training pathway for talented student musicians from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Some of SOM's performance faculty also teach in this program. As part of SOM's ongoing support for this organization, we provide space for meetings, information sessions, and performances, as well as financial support for students who graduate from this program and are admitted to DePaul.
- The SOM will also seek out ways to bring audience members into our concert halls who typically do not attend our performances. We will work with local schools and community

groups to offer access to performances, as soon as public performances can resume on campus.

## Equity

- Continue process of decentralized budgeting for academic areas, with authority from department chairs to allocate funding for guest speakers, masterclasses, and programming across all areas in a way that is equitable.
- Analysis is under way to assess how practice rooms, rehearsal, classroom, and performance spaces are allocated using enrollment data to ensure all spaces are used as efficiently as possible. The goal of the analysis is to ensure that all programs are given the space-related resources that they need to learn and grow.
- Additionally, the SOM invested in a new room reservation tool that will be rolled out to faculty and students in early fall 2020, providing more transparency around the use of spaces and helping to maintain overall space efficiency.
- Beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year, student employment positions will be posted via University Student Employment job board to provide more transparency around hiring processes and increase applicant pools. We will set goals for increasing diversity among student employees and utilize university resources for management and student employment training on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Staff have developed a checklist and vetting process in order to actively engage with vendors to find out what they are doing to support causes pertaining to DEI. Part of this process will include examining a current inventory of vendors to determine what changes should be made, identifying opportunities to engage with BIPOC and minority-owned vendors in the future, and advocating to central areas of the university (Purchasing, Compliance) to ensure that this activity is happening university-wide.
- When committee assignments are finalized for the year ahead, a list of all committees and assignments will be distributed to all faculty, staff, and students.
- During the process of proposing budget for Fiscal Year 2022, SOM will advocate for an administrative position dedicated to DEI concerns.

## Education

Education, here, focuses on expanding the faculty and staff's understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the School of Music, university, and the music profession. This takes short and long-term approaches.

Short-term actionable items for faculty and staff:

- Faculty have been charged with identifying ways to meet learning objectives with revised or expanded approaches that are not at all insensitive, racist, sexist, or otherwise problematic and irresponsible. To do so, they have been tasked with considering the materials and methods they use to teach and expanding beyond the so-called canon in their approach to illuminate concepts, theories, and practice in their respective area. We will create a framework for facilitating conversations with students, faculty, and staff around what our mission and collective role is as a 21<sup>st</sup> century School of Music and how that articulates with the larger [Mission](#) of DePaul University. In doing so, some faculty members may be empowered to expand beyond and break from the historical and relatively narrow “student/mentor” pedagogical framework which supports a strict adherence to teaching only the concepts they learned from their teacher, and the teacher before them which can create a practice of carrying a racist system forward to the next generation.
- Faculty working within SOM committees connected to curriculum, resource allocation, policies, programming (concert, guest artists, artists/ensembles in residence, etc.), and attendant issues connected to the school as a whole, will be asked to discuss the role of a 21<sup>st</sup> century SOM and the 21<sup>st</sup> century musician and how said role is inherently about *more than the notes*.
- Resources to help advance anti-racist work in our SOM music community and beyond have been shared with faculty and staff so that they may further educate themselves about racism in music and systemic racism more broadly, among other issues and historical complexities in music, the business of music, and schools of music. We will continue to share resources. Among them are the following:

- [Chamber Music America/Black Lives Matter](#)
- [DePaul University Library Anti-Racism Guide](#)

Medium and long-term actionable items for faculty and staff education:

- SOM will require ongoing anti-racism training of all faculty and staff, starting with a staff workshop in early fall 2020 in partnership with local experts in this area. Budget has been allocated for this area moving forward so that these offerings can potentially be rolled out to the entire faculty.
- Anti-racism training will develop strategies and skills that teach us to both listen to and hear students, each other as faculty and staff, and recommendations and studies generated by committees formed to specifically to study these issues, including the recently formed standing university committee on diversity, and to our DEI colleagues and representatives.
- Faculty will be asked to consider incorporating a university diversity statement in their syllabi and implement this through their teaching. DePaul's Teaching Commons provides a sample statements from the President's Diversity Advisory Council on [their website on syllabus design](#).
- In our teaching as faculty, we should strive to:
  - Teach and prepare students to have success in their field **and** in the world, an inclusive and diverse world.
  - Recognize that students come to DePaul to study with us and to develop the tools for success **and** to be a part of an urbane, culturally-rich, inclusive community. They come for the community and the Mission of DePaul. As of the 2019-2020 academic year, 20% of SOM students are first generation students. Some are BIPOC and most, if not all, expect that their education will be culturally responsive, culturally sensitive, and inclusive in every aspect. Our teaching should reflect the [mission of the university](#).
  - Respond to the needs of our students – their specific challenges and 21<sup>st</sup> century burdens – and update our pedagogical practices and teaching philosophies accordingly.

- Illuminate theoretical concepts, program repertoire, and teach methods mindful of not only the messages those selections send to our students, but also the historical and cultural connections imbedded and embodied in the world's music that we teach. In so doing, we confirm the many ways that our work as educators and artists advances beyond mere negotiations of sound and space, representing more than “notes, chords, and theory”. For further insight, particularly as it relates to jazz, see [here](#).
- Teach in a culturally responsive manner and use the resources available to us, including but not limited to our Music Education faculty and students, to better understand what that means if we don't know.

Medium- and long-term actionable items to assist our students:

- Be transparent about decisions and processes with respect to our SOM community. This includes the allocation of resources, programming of repertoire, and curriculum.
- Expand the lens of governance and information distribution to allow students to better understand how the institutional system works in order to potentially affect change. This potentially includes SOM representatives to the Student Government Association, a SOM student organization with broad program representation and a faculty advisor, our SOM Diversity Advocate (Dr. Esparza), and Faculty Council DEI Committee Representative (Dr. Kelly-McHale), among other approaches.
- Continually reflect on the ways these four components (Curriculum, Community, Equity, and Education) articulate with both our university and SOM Mission Statements, and are embodied in our policies, procedures, and practices and making said workings visible and obvious to the SOM community.

*All beginnings are somewhat strange; but we must have patience, and little by little, we shall find things, which at first were obscure, becoming clearer.” — St. Vincent de Paul*