

Baylor University School of Music

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)
Strategic Plan**

Approved by School of Music DEIB Council, March 2023

Approved by Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity & Belonging, August 2023

***Mission:** Understanding that all people are created in God's image, the Baylor School of Music is committed to respect for the dignity of all persons. We celebrate each person as integral to a vibrant campus community; and intentionally seek to foster a welcoming space that reflects the diversity of human experience.*

The Baylor University School of Music (SOM) seeks to provide transformational experiences that prepare students for careers in music and related fields. Those experiences will influence and shape the way our students foster inclusivity in their own classrooms, workplaces, and ensembles after they graduate. The missional and guidance language of many professional music organizations in our field speak directly into issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The Council advises SOM to consider alignment, where possible, with DEIB practices of organizations our faculty present, perform, research, and serve in, and in which our students will become future contributing members.

The concept of “diversity” is broad, and encompasses but is not limited to socioeconomic background, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, nation of origin, religious affiliation, race, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation, age, and education. Music is ultimately a human experience reflecting diverse people with varied backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. As there are many contexts and interactions within our SOM community (studio and classroom environment, ensembles, competitions and awards, peer-to-peer and faculty-student interactions, guest artists, masterclasses, and residencies, etc.), our commitment to building an environment that respects and values all members of our community must be intentional and reflect progress over time.

Although aspirational language in strategic planning documents may serve as a road map to desired goals, actionable measures are essential to bringing about changes that have an impact on a community's sense of inclusion, diversity, and equity. Action plans should outline specific steps and/or timelines for achieving desired outcomes.

After review of internal university initiatives, external comparison of schools and professional music organizations, and survey data from faculty, staff, and students within the SOM, the SOM DEIB Council recommends that the SOM address DEIB matters in a more coordinated and intentional way. The formation of this council and the work underway is only a first step. The following action areas are broadly aligned with the SOM Illuminate document.

Alignment with School of Music Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan

Pillar 1: Christian Environment

Provide and promote a loving and caring Christian environment for all students, staff, and faculty; one of inclusivity, grounded in acceptance and civility, that respects differences and diversity, and values each person as an integral part of our campus community. (Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan, Spring 2023)

Mindfully welcoming people from diverse backgrounds and connecting with others in meaningful and transformative ways are foundational to who we are. As Christians, we are called to love our neighbors as

ourselves. Founded on tenets of faith, fostering a loving and caring Christian environment for all students, staff, and faculty are central to our mission.

While aspirations of inclusivity, acceptance, and civility, marked by respect for differences and diversity, coupled with expressed value for everyone in our campus community are a wonderful goal, specific actions allow us to truly live into these aspirations and foster a sense of belonging for all people. Careful review of SOM programs, traditions, curriculum, and ensemble placement processes is an important next step towards identifying areas where growth and change will occur.

Hiring Practices: Faculty and Staff Position Announcements

SOM faculty and staff need to reflect the broad range of individuals that mark a diverse community. Working to increase faculty and staff diversity must be intentional and broad. If students cannot see themselves in the mentors with whom interact, it is difficult for them to feel a part of the community.

Potential candidates will understand, from the point a position is advertised, that diversity matters in the SOM. Clear messaging that we value diversity in its many forms positively increases both the number of applicants and more importantly, the diversity of candidate pools.

Position announcements include links for candidates to learn more about the Baylor University commitment to diversity and the SOM commitment to diversity. All standard required information, the Provost's Office provides, appears in all position announcement materials.

For faculty positions:

A demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion in teaching/learning and in professional activities *is required*.

Experience teaching students of diverse backgrounds at the undergraduate and graduate levels *is preferred*.

Interested candidates should include a statement on teaching philosophy and its relationship to diversity and inclusion, including perspectives and experiences with diversity efforts, impact on teaching and learning, and potential future activities.

Search committee members are required to complete annual training sessions to ensure that university policies regarding diversity are an intentional part of the search and interview process.

Sample questions for exploring diversity in search interviews can be found here:

<https://www.baylor.edu/music/index.php?id=985651>

For Staff positions:

During interviews prospective staff members will address topics including experiences with previous diversity efforts; understanding of Baylor's and the SOM's diversity efforts; and how they see their potential role in supporting the diversity efforts of both entities.

Pillar 2: Transformational Education

Examine the curricula of all degree plans to ensure that they consist of artistic and academic content that effectively and efficiently fosters excellence and creates a passion for the unique transformative opportunities possible through a life in music. Increase 1st to 2nd Year Retention rate to >92%; Four-Year graduation rates to >65%; and Five-Year graduation rates to >75% for undergraduate majors. (Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan, Spring 2023)

The inclusion and incorporation of underrepresented composers' music in our classrooms, rehearsal spaces, and performing halls encourages and enables the school to 1) effectively and efficiently foster excellence and transformative opportunities for training the 21st century musician and 2) to develop greater diversity across the width and breadth of the SOM.

To assess the current curriculum to better reflect this broader understanding, a comprehensive review of the SOM curriculum will be undertaken by the Curriculum Committee. Identification and implementation of DEIB initiatives into curricular learning objectives and outcomes will be developed. Helping to facilitate the programming of repertoire by underrepresented composers and funding invitations to guest artists who intentionally program DEIB repertoire will further complement our curricular offerings.

In addition to curricular elements, classroom practice can be more intentional in providing a sense of belonging through inclusion of syllabus statements, DEIB focused project/assignment planning, repertoire assignments, and discussion topics. Encouraging and promoting these practices will serve our students well as we prepare them to serve diverse communities as they advance in our profession.

Pillar 3: Research and Scholarship

Increase funding for both faculty and students to develop their research toward substantive publication, presentation, or performance, and allocate additional funding for costs associated with the travel necessary to disseminate faculty research and performance. (Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan, Spring 2023)

Exploration and championing of music that is representative of a broad range of lived experiences is one way that musicians reflect upon modern culture and societal life. Programming works written by living composers and composers representing a diversity of human cultures, and voices, helps connect with diverse student populations. Diverse programming connects with both new and existing audiences in fresh ways.

Providing incentives and financial support of faculty and student research with DEIB focus, including but not limited to repertoire, performances, programming, recording, and academic inquiry, will demonstrate a commitment to DEIB in Research and Scholarship. The Dean's Office will allocate \$10,000 from FY2024 onward, as a baseline level to support faculty and student DEIB initiatives specific to performance, creative research, and educational activities in the SOM.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the School of Music Alignment with *Illuminate* Initiatives

Health

Develop relationships across Baylor fine arts and the wider Central Texas medical community to help educate the School of Music on how all aspects of physical and mental wellbeing impact creative activity. (Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan, Spring 2023)

Widely published research affirms that persons from marginalized or underrepresented populations face societal prejudices often resulting in both psychological and physical stress. Intentional cultivation of welcoming and inclusive spaces is widely associated with greater positive health and wellbeing in persons belonging to these communities.

The SOM seeks to enhance its ongoing commitment to mental health and wellness. It's current efforts in this sphere are coordinated by Dr. Lesley McAllister and supported by a major donor on the SOM's Board of Advocates. In recent years the SOM has tripled the number of annual mental health and wellness

presentations/interactions. Future planning aspires to establish enhanced opportunities for counseling services within the SOM (in coordination with the Baylor Counseling center). Access to information and referrals for students covering the broad spectrum of mental and physical health issues is the goal of our efforts in these areas of increasing concern.

Human Flourishing, Leadership, and Ethics

Develop interdisciplinary collaborations between the School of Music and other Baylor units such as the schools of Social Work and Education, the Robbins College, and the Departments of Art and Art History, Film & Digital Media, and Theatre Arts in the College of Arts & Sciences. Further develop and resource the work of the School of Music Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Council as they bring their findings and recommendations to the Dean's Office for consideration for implementation. (Semper Pro Musica Strategic Plan, Spring 2023)

Create a coordinated approach to DEIB planning, events, activities, training, and existing resources in consultation with DEIB Committees/Councils across Baylor's campus. Develop external communication of those efforts to encourage further collaboration and coordination of university resources toward DEIB efforts.