



# **MAINTAINING CULTURE THROUGH CRISIS: ENERGIZED, ENGAGED, EXCITED**

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# NO/LIMITED CONTROL

- Global course of the virus
- Decisions of government officials
- Science (and specifically how it relates to singing)
- Conflicts in our students lives
- Conflicts in OUR personal lives



# CONTROL

## 1. The culture of our program

- Students experience?
- What does our program value?

## 2. The perception of our program in the eyes of administrators/public

- perception = reality

## 3. Our response to conflict



# CULTURE > EVENTS



## Culture

1. The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization; the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people

## Event

1. Something that happens

# 1. YOUR SHARED CULTURE

- Assessing your Values/Culture
  - What is the culture of your program?
    - Do your students share these beliefs?
    - Are they involved in leadership and direction of the program?
  - Why are your students in the program?
    - What do they like about their choir?
    - What hooked them?
    - Why do they come back?
    - Are they looking forward to something?
    - Do they feel important?
  - How do they sound?
    - Are you recording?
    - Are you asking for feedback?
  - Critical step
    - Choose and develop opportunities that enhance your strengths and support your long term goals
    - No one size fits all



# BUILDING CULTURE

- A. Empower students
- B. Connect students
- C. Recruit students

# A. EMPOWERING STUDENTS DURING A CRISIS

What is it that your students want out of your group at this time ?

- <https://youtu.be/hlQsXPBEVvI>
- Other ways to empower students
- Choral officers / Choral Council
- Section leaders
- Student conductors
- Social media directors
- Social coordinators

Participation in auditions

Periodic discussion of goals

- Why keep it a secret?
- Plan/consider something requiring larger numbers

Utilize future music educators



# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

The very act of involving students in decision making process during a crisis helps to create a sense of ownership and loyalty



## B. CONNECT STUDENTS

What do you enjoy the most about being in a choir?	Friendships	Singing, in general	Travel	Other
University Singers (non auditioned group with minimal extra-rehearsal activities)	32%	87%	8%	0%
Polyphonics (auditioned group with frequent extra-rehearsal activities)	51%	89%	29%	6%

# RETENTION = GROWTH

## Term to term retention rate

- University Singers: 75%
- Polyphonics: 96%



# PRACTICAL WAYS TO CONNECT STUDENTS (EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC)

Remember the old adage: talk less sing/get more

## Hybrid models

- A few singers in person (facetime with a student virtually)
- Mentorship groups

## Compliment hat

## Socially Distant Retreats

- What could this look like?

## Quartet/Octet groups

- Musical
- Extra curricular

## Student investment in concert process

- Narration and research
- Program order
- Student's choice
- Cameo performances

Discussion topics (musical, non-musical)

Group presentations

# 3. RECRUIT STUDENTS

Why think about recruiting at a time like this?

- . If you aren't growing, you are shrinking
- . What happens when we come out of this?
- . Why do you do what you do?
- . Relax: recruitment and building culture feed each other



What do you enjoy the most about being in a choir?	Friendships	Singing	Travel
University Singers	32%	87%	8%
Polyphonics	50%	89%	29%

If asked, would you be <u>enthusiastic</u> about recruiting for your choirs	Yes	Maybe	No
University Singers	39%	52%	9%
Polyphonics	54%	41%	6%

	Teacher recruitment	Student recruitment	Advertisement
How did you first get involved in choir?	7%	25%	0%
How did you first get involved in choir at this institution?	NA	20%	14%

- Student to Student > Teacher to Student

# PRACTICAL WAYS TO RECRUIT FOR YOUR CHOIR (EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC)

## Virtual “hang out times” with current members

- No commitment

## Create a relationship with your feeder program

- Do you have resources to help them?
- Invite them to collaborate with you
- Invite them to virtual concerts
- Student mentor system (one to one is often the most powerful)

## Embrace social media

- Have your students play a role
- Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/others?

## If you create something, distribute it

- Don't forget to announce you are hiring everywhere you go!

## “Bring a Friend to Choir”

- Could this be even easier virtually?

## Think beyond T-shirts

- Bags/Car Stickers/Jackets
- Could this be your new uniform for the year?
- Starbucks Model



# SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (THERE ARE MANY, MANY MORE!)

## Choral Journal Articles

**Choral Music in the Junior High/Middle School: Choir Wants You! Recruitment:** Cara Sedburry

**Mega-Church Mega-Choir:** Tim Sharp

**Boychoirs: Recruitment for Boychoirs:** Tom Sibley, Andrew Riffey and Randall Wolfe

**Show Choirs: Show Choir Competition and the Impact on Male Recruitment:** Doran Johnson, Ken Thomas

**Cute No Longer, Thanks Be to God: Building and Maintaining a Choir of Children:** Richard Webster

**Retention Strategies for Two-Year College Choirs:** Alice Cavanaugh

## Other Articles

**"It's Like a Whole Bunch of Me!": The Perceived Values and Benefits of the Seattle Girls' Choir Experience:** Sarah J. Bartolome

Journal of Research in Music Education

**Minority Recruitment: The Relationship between High School Students' Perceptions about Music Participation and Recruitment Strategies:** Linda M. Walker and Donald L. Hamann

Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education



## 2. PERCEPTION OF YOUR PROGRAM

As artists, are advocacy arguments often focus on the emotional, when administrators often focus on the numbers

Use the emotional to fuel your numbers



# GOALS, GOALS, GOALS

- Virtual concert
  - Can be fancy
  - Can be simple
  - Don't let technology scare you
  - Example
- Future concert
- Connecting in new ways
  - Zoom exchanges
- Continue to plan travel, events, etc.
  - It is even MORE important during this time
- What goals do your students want to achieve?



# 3. YOUR RESPONSE (THE MOST IMPORTANT PART)

Language is important

- Are you full of “cant’s” or “can’s”
- Does your language inspire hope
  - “New Normal”?
  - Building A Bridge

Attitude reflects leadership

How do you react publicly when disappointment strikes

- Do you shift gears easily?
- Do you have a contingency plan?
- Are you sharing your plan with students?

# 3. YOUR RESPONSE

## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

What has the COVID-19 crisis taught you?

- About what you truly value
- Process or product?
- Strengths of your students
- Your strengths

Silver linings

- Will you carry anything from this period into “normal” times?
- How are you better prepared to handle adversity?