

Report prepared and submitted to the Region 4 Management Team by Donnetta Hawkins and Emily Sartain, on behalf of the Region 4 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Submitted 3/6/21

#### Team Meetings:

The DEI team met via Zoom on January 21, January 28, and February 18.

January 21: Regular monthly meeting, organized our presentation for the Singing Summit, discussion of the upcoming regional event featuring Tenacious, made a plan to reach out to Tenacious to ask which regional songs would be used and if the DEI team could work with them.

January 28: Special called meeting to put final touches on our presentation for the Singing Summit

February 18: Regular monthly meeting, discussed email follow-up from February 7 RMT meeting, made a plan to reach out to Kim Wonders to ask if DEI team can assist with regional event in April, discussed status of demographic survey pilot. Two of three choruses asked to pilot the survey have responded positively; we made a plan to reach out in a different way to the third in order to determine our next steps. (Notes: We heard back from the third chorus after this meeting, so we now have three choruses ready to pilot the survey. We also heard back from Kim, declining our assistance with the regional event in April.)

#### Other Business:

On January 30, the DEI committee members introduced themselves to attendees at the regional Singing Summit. We also reminded members of the Region 4 DEI statement that was adopted by the RMT in July 2020. We invited those interested in joining the DEI to contact to make their interest known and we expressed our desire to support members and chapters who have DEI committees and those who desire to start a DEI committee. We appreciate that the RMT devoted time in a general session for this, and we request to have the opportunity for DEI education in future regional events.

On February 4, the DEI committee met with Sue Pelley and Marsha Leistner via Zoom. We discussed that there had been a breakdown in communication between the RMT and the DEI committee regarding the RMT's review of the evaluation of regional songs document. The DEI committee was particularly concerned that an event that involved singing regional songs was scheduled without prior review and discussion of the aforementioned document. Consequently, the inclusion of the song *We Are Family* in an upcoming regional event was disconcerting. Sue communicated with us that the RMT would be discussing that issue, along with the scope, structure, and guidelines of the DEI committee, at a meeting on February 7. We asked to be included in the portion of the February 7 meeting that was related to the DEI committee, but that request was denied by Sue.

The DEI committee was told that an apology was given to Tenacious as they felt caught in the middle of the RMT and DEI. The DEI committee expressed concern that the apology was not made as a joint effort of the RMT and DEI committee, so we were not privy to what was said on our behalf. Further, the breakdown in communication between DEI and RMT and the problem that arose with Tenacious was not solely on DEI, but a shared problem culminating from many factors already mentioned.

The DEI committee remains concerned with the inclusion of *We Are Family* as a regional song, given that there is a strong warning written in the [notes for this song](#) in the Song Evaluation Database. We request that the RMT review the notes made by the international team and the notes in the DEI committee's song review document and revisit the issue of using this song as a regional song.

After the RMT's February 7 meeting, Sue asked us to provide feedback as to what we see as the goals and mission of the regional DEI team. We provided the following to Sue on February 17:

<https://sai-region4.org/diversity>

As Harmony Heartland Region 4, we are ready to fearlessly use our voices to speak out against discrimination and injustice. We know doing this will require the hard work, trust, respect, and commitment of all our members.

As singers and artists, as barbershoppers and Sweet Adelines, it is time to do more than merely acknowledge our history of appropriation and institutional discrimination. In order to work toward these necessary changes, we resolve to the following:

- We firmly believe that Black Lives Matter.
- We are willing and eager to engage in difficult conversations in order to better hear the voices of BIPOC and to implement changes where they are needed.
- We are committed to removing songs from our regional repertoire that have music and lyrics rooted in systems of oppression. We will encourage our member choruses to do the same.

- We will continue to make strides toward more inclusive language in our educational materials and presentations at regional events.
- We will extend our culture of belonging to all BIPOC members, current and future, as well as those in other marginalized communities- including, but not limited to, our LGBTQIA+ singers and friends. We want everyone who sings on our risers or sits in our audiences to feel welcomed and included.

Our region welcomes women and those of other marginalized genders to sing with us. No matter your age, race, cultural or ethnic background, sexual orientation, religious belief, size, gender identity, or voice part- there is a place for you in Harmony Heartland Region 4.

You can reach the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of Region 4 at:  
[safe@sai-region4.org](mailto:safe@sai-region4.org) or [HHR4.di@gmail.com](mailto:HHR4.di@gmail.com).

All emails will be treated with confidentiality and care.

*"I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better." ~ Maya Angelou*

## NEED TO: DEFINE THE GOALS AND MISSION OF THE DEI COMMITTEE & OUTLINE OUR TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Tasks/Responsibilities:

- We believe the time is now to actively and with a determined purpose, bring about the necessary changes to be an inclusive 21st century organization.
- Use the Region 4 DEI statement (as adopted by the RMT) to guide and inform all work performed as a committee.

- Work as a liaison between SAI's DEI taskforce and the region, ensuring that the RMT and other committees have access to resources from International and are aware of policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Consult with the RMT and other committees, making recommendations to ensure that Region 4 is a welcoming environment for members, guests, and audiences from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and people of varied religious beliefs.
- In advance of publication, review written communication, forms, educational materials, and other documents for bias, making recommendations to the RMT and other committees when necessary for inclusive language.
- Review songs in the Region 4 repertoire, making recommendations to the RMT when necessary for removal of those with music or lyrics rooted in systems of oppression.
- Provide educational opportunities for the members of Region 4 that encourage all to examine SAI's history, current environment, and future aspirations, with the goal of acknowledging and eliminating racism and oppression while promoting a more inclusive future.
- Provide support to chapter DEI teams.
- Gather and maintain demographic and other survey data for Region 4, in order to measure change over time and effectiveness of DEI efforts.
- Monitor and keep confidential communication sent to the [safe@sai-region4.org](mailto:safe@sai-region4.org) email address.