

Illinois State University

## ISU ReD: Research and eData

---

REDI (Representing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Report

Music

---

4-2022

### REDI Report, April 2022

School Of Music  
*Illinois State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/somredi>

---

#### Recommended Citation

School Of Music, "REDI Report, April 2022" (2022). *REDI (Representing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Report*. 1.

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/somredi/1>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Music at ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in REDI (Representing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Report by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact [ISUReD@ilstu.edu](mailto:ISUReD@ilstu.edu).

# REDI REPORT

School of Music | REDI (Representing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

## Upcoming REDI Committee Listening Session for Music Students:

“Topic: Furthering a Sense of Belonging in the School of Music”

Music students are invited to meet with several members of the REDI Committee for a listening session. We are here to listen to your ideas, thoughts, and concerns on the stated topic. All information will remain confidential.

April 19th, 11:00 a.m.,  
Centennial West 313B

## Prefer to share anonymously or through written words?

Use this QR code [or link](#) to be directed to a form where you can share your thoughts, ideas, and concerns as they relate to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and a sense of belonging in the department. Form submissions will only be seen by REDI Committee members.



## Dr. Kimberly Loeffert addresses SOM Faculty/Staff in February

The School of Music was pleased to welcome Dr. Kimberly Loeffert to campus in February. Dr. Loeffert is a music theorist, saxophonist, and Faculty Fellow for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at Oklahoma State University. A member of the H2 Saxophone Quartet, Dr.

Loeffert performed with the ensemble at this year’s RED NOTE New Music Festival. She also addressed School of Music faculty, sharing recent DEI initiatives at OSU, which include: planning and promoting



Dr. Kimberly Goddard Loeffert

workshops for faculty on implicit bias, inclusive pedagogy, and other DEI topics; establishing a DEI speaker series; partnering with the OSU Department of Psychology to provide more mental health services for music students; establishing an in-house food pantry for music students stocked through donations; and hosting listening sessions for students, faculty and staff. In her presentation, Dr. Loeffert encouraged faculty to consider syllabi language that includes pronouns, DEI and accessibility statements, and a land acknowledgement. Dr. Loeffert also shared her approach to attendance policies, which she reframes as “accountability policies.” Referencing Paul Gorski (author and equity education leader), Dr. Loeffert further encouraged faculty members to carefully reflect on the “four curricula of equity pedagogy” as they build their courses:

## Highlights: Bringing Diverse Voices to the School of Music in 2021-2022

Guests Fifth Element Education: Hip Hop Pedagogy Residency (Dr. Rachel Grimsby, host)

Recital Celebrating Latin American History Month (performances by music faculty)

Guests Nicholas Prosin and AErQueen: Non-binary Students in the Music Classroom (Dr. Rachel Grimsby, host)

Walking With My Ancestors: Slave Dungeons of Ghana (Dr. Oforiwaa Aduonum, performer/producer)

Recital Celebrating Black History Month (performances by music faculty)

Guest Isaac Casal: Cello Recital of Latin American Music (Dr. Cora Swenson Lee, host)

Guest Ivana Francisi: Piano Recital of Music by Women Composers (Dr. Glenn Block and Dr. Tuyen Tonnu, hosts)

Guest Radhika Satish: Carnatic music demonstration (Dr. Anne Dervin, host)

would understand. “Classical music can be rigid,” she said, “but there is wiggle room if you find it.” The [Classically Black](#) podcast, which is a weekly, one-hour conversation between Ms. Brown and friend/co-founder Dalanie Harris, was created specifically to make classical music more approachable to listeners who are not classically trained. 174 episodes later, their podcast has led to invitations to present their vision across the country, including with the Sphinx Organization, the LA Philharmonic, and the Manhattan School of Music. Another theme that

- The official curriculum (syllabus, assignments, etc)
- The explicit curriculum (the content that is purposefully taught)
- The implicit or hidden curriculum (the values and ideas that are taught implicitly)
- The null curriculum (the values and ideas that are taught by what is omitted from the explicit curriculum)

The School of Music appreciates Dr. Loeffert’s willingness to share her ideas and experiences with our department.

### *ISU Alumna and Co-Founder of “Classically Black” visits the School of Music in March*

The School of Music and viola professor Dr. Katherine Lewis were pleased to welcome ISU alumna Kathryn Brown to campus for a two-day residency. Since graduating from ISU with a Bachelor of Music Education degree in 2015, Ms. Brown has made a name for herself as a co-founder of the successful and acclaimed “Classically Black” podcast. In addition to leading a master class with the viola studio and working with String Project students, Ms. Brown gave two presentations. One theme that emerged during her visit was Ms. Brown’s vision to change the way music professionals talk about classical music. Ms. Brown reflected that in her own personal life, she noticed she would talk about classical music in a different way than she talked about other styles of music, such as gospel and popular music. She decided she wanted to “level the playing field,” and talk about classical music more colloquially, in a way people who are not in the field



Alumna Kathryn Brown  
(BMEd '15)

## Meet your SOM REDI Committee

Dr. Oforiwa Aduonum

Dr. Rachel Hockenberry

Prof. John Koch

Dr. Cora Swenson Lee

Dr. Anne McNamara

Dr. Adriana Ransom

Dr. Cindy Ropp

Dr. Justin Vickers



was clear throughout Ms. Brown's visit is her curiosity and unabashed willingness to try new things. "Cultivate your interests and passions, and start with who you know. You have a network; there is someone you know that will help you." Ms. Brown noted the positive impact of her involvement in Registered Student Organizations while she was a student, including ISU's American String Teachers Association Student Chapter, ISU's Interdenominational Youth Choir, and Sigma Gamma Rho at the Eastman School of Music. Her curiosity and initiative have led her to not only co-found "Classically Black" and the [International Society for Black Musicians](#), but also to pursue presenting at an ethnomusicology conference, be published in a scholarly journal, and explore many other interests from promoting a vegan diet to learning French.

### *Faculty Self-Report Progress on EDI Initiatives*

The REDI Committee recently invited School of Music faculty to participate in a survey to measure how faculty members' approach to EDI in the classroom and research may have evolved over the last few years. For the purposes of the survey, "diverse" or "diversity" referred to individuals representing a variety of gender, ethnicity, racial, and sexual orientation identities. Nineteen faculty members completed the survey. The data collected indicates that faculty have more actively sought to individually study, present, and teach works by underrepresented composers and authors compared to

five years ago. 82% of faculty respondents indicate that they have more actively sought to individually study works by underrepresented composers and authors in their own research and learning compared to five years ago; additionally, 95% of faculty respondents indicate they have more actively sought to include works by underrepresented composers and authors in their classes compared to five years ago. When showing or recommending examples of performers/performances to students, 68% of faculty respondents indicated that they more intentionally seek to showcase diverse performers compared to five years ago. 50% of faculty respondents also indicated that they more intentionally seek to invite guests from diverse backgrounds to campus to work with students in their classes. When asked whether faculty feel the School is actively and adequately discussing and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, 56% agreed that it is; 17% of respondents disagreed, and 28% of respondents were neutral. 44% of faculty respondents felt the School is actively and adequately discussing and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion with regard to its admission process specifically; 17% disagreed, and 39% of faculty respondents were neutral. The final question on the survey asked whether faculty believe the School is actively and adequately discussing and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in its general departmental policies. 53% of faculty respondents indicated that it is; 18% disagreed, and 29% were neutral. The REDI

Committee thanks all faculty who contributed to this survey, and has taken note of the individual comments and suggestions that faculty shared.

## Student Feature: Mariah Vance and “City Called Heaven”

---

Meet Mariah Vance, Bachelor of Science in Music major at Illinois State University. Mariah gave a stunning performance of the traditional spiritual “City Called Heaven” with Belle Voix (Dr. Mark Grizzard, conductor) at the March 20th Choral Ensembles concert. The REDI Committee asked Mariah to share her background as well as her thoughts about this performance.

### **Q. What is your musical background?**

**A.** I began my musical journey at the age of 3 years old. I started singing in various church choirs in the Chicagoland area. Next, I started volunteering at various nursing homes and restaurants to share my gift and love of music. In 2008 I was featured on The Clarice Mason Show and in 2009 performed on the center stage at the Forest Park Kid Summer Festival. With my passion for music I continued singing in high school, joining the top performing acapella groups. I was often chosen to sing the National Anthem at various sporting events throughout my high school experience. Most notably in 2017, I was selected as senior soloist to represent Glenbard East high school for the Illinois ACDA fall convention. There I performed with the jazz band for their spring jazz concert. In addition I was one of few students selected for the All-State Musician at Illinois Music Education Conference, the only African American female to represent my high school. As a student here at Illinois State, I became an alto singer and co-director for the Interdenominational Youth Choir (IYC) from 2018- 2022.



Student Mariah Vance

### **Q. What are some of your musical sources of inspiration?**

**A.** My father has been my inspiration throughout my life. As a pianist himself, he has been my backbone in encouraging me to share my gift with others. He shared his love of music with me from an early age, providing me with a love for all genres of music such as jazz, gospel, and soul. My family’s constant love and support throughout my performances has taught me that I can do all things and I am worthy of every opportunity given, no matter how big or small. Another inspiration was the great Ella Fitzgerald. People judged her for having an “old soul” with the type of music she sung as well as how she looked, but she rose above it all and made a true name for herself.

### **Q. What did it mean to you to have the opportunity to perform this solo with Belle Voix?**

**A.** Performing my solo with Belle Voix meant the world to me. I took it as both an honor and a privilege. Since being enrolled here at ISU, I’ve attended at least 30+ concerts and found it rare for a black student to perform as a soloist. This opportunity allowed both my peers and non-black culture an opportunity to

see and experience a true feeling of gospel music and everything that comes with it. Gospel music depicts a soulfulness of storytelling, struggles we face and ultimately trusting God to make it through. When African Americans were in bondage, singing gospel sometimes was their only hope to endure whatever obstacle they faced. Music is not just about the music but also the feeling it gives someone.

**Q. What helped you prepare for this moment?**

A. To prepare for this moment I practiced, prayed, and tried to remain humble for this opportunity. I sang "City Called Heaven" in high school at the age of 15 and have always wanted another chance to express the song differently. My director at the time didn't allow me to add my own expression of the song and I basically had to stick to how it was written. I am so grateful that Dr. Grizzard allowed me the opportunity to put my own spin on the song and make it my own. I feel "City Called Heaven" is a beautifully written piece and my presentation of it, allowed the audience to feel the message of the song.

*Micro-grant opportunity for  
BIPOC music students!*

**LIFT Music Fund**

Awards given monthly: Due on the 15th  
of each month at 11:59 p.m. EST

<https://www.liftmusicfund.org/apply>

Teacher recommendation required

*Faculty Feature: Two Professors Diversify Their Studio Repertoire*

“So much vocal music studied is that of Schubert, Schumann, Handel, Haydn, Brahms, Mendelssohn, etc. You see the pattern: Deceased white male European composers....I realized that there are SOOOO many underrepresented composers that are writing and publishing AMAZING vocal music. Some composers were brought to me by students; others I searched for, discovering so much valuable and meaningful music that deserved study and performing. When I taught the Vocal Literature course in spring 2021, I began to assemble my own Powerpoint of contemporary underrepresented composers, including ISU graduates such as Dennis Tobenski. Last year I added this requirement to my voice syllabi: "Until recently the music world has generally ignored music by underrepresented composers, including, but not limited to female composers, composers of color, and LGBTQ+ composers. Each semester you must choose two underrepresented composers for graduate level (one underrepresented composer for undergrads) and one of their pieces to study and perform in your lessons and voice jury." My students gave very positive responses about adding this requirement to my syllabi and my discoveries continue!”

*- Professor John Koch, Voice*

“The ISU Viola Studio is excited to have their first post-COVID themed studio recital this semester with a performance on April 21 at 11AM in the CPA of "Music by Underrepresented Composers." Past studio recital themes have centered around the work of a specific composer, region, or style in order to give the students a wider understanding of the repertoire along with its technical and musical challenges. Often these themes have been chosen to offer students a deeper understanding of the contributions of women and minority composers. Past themes have included general themes such as "Music by Women Composers," "Music from Spain and South America," or very specific themes such as "The Viola Music of

Lillian Fuchs” and “Music of our Heritage” (where students chose a piece written by a composer that shared all or part of their ethnicity). This year’s recital features works by a variety of composers of diverse backgrounds, styles, and eras. As is typical for these performances, several are ISU studio premieres including William Grant Still’s *Carmela* and the *Three Pieces for Viola and Piano Op. 26* by Luise Adolpha Le Beau. ”

-Dr. Katherine Lewis, Viola

If you are seeking to diversify your studio repertoire, the REDI Committee suggests visiting this database from the DePauw University library: <https://libguides.depauw.edu/diversifyingyourrep>

---

## Current Considerations of the REDI Committee

---

The REDI Committee has met monthly throughout the academic year. Here are some topics that are currently under discussion:

- Recognizing a need to review School of Music audition/admission practices through an EDI lens
- Continuing discussions on relevant curricular updates (from sequences to course content)
- Considering how to recognize faculty/staff EDI efforts, including in the ASPT evaluation process
- Working to establish timelines and benchmarks to assess our progress as a School
- Considering further amendments to Student Perceptions of Teaching Performance forms that reflect EDI in the classroom
- Considering initiatives that will enhance or further support peer-to-peer student mentorship, junior faculty mentorship, and colleague-to-colleague mentorship on EDI topics
- Being accessible a resource to the Music Student Multicultural Association (RSO)
- Developing a database of easily accessible resources, such as: exterior scholarship opportunities for students, professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, teaching resources with EDI considerations, and resources for diversifying repertoire and curriculum
- Drafting/Providing inclusive language that faculty can use in syllabi

## REDI Reads & Resources:

---

We are all familiar with the adage "a rising tide lifts all boats," but how might that mentality be applied to issues of equity? This article by Cory Collins from "Learning for Justice" uses the framework of the curb-cut effect, and examines how advocating for the most underserved within our schools can greatly benefit the entire population. This quick read can help reframe the conversation around advocating for marginalized populations in our own communities.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2021/the-curbcut-effect-and-championing-equity>

*Submitted by Dr. Cora Swenson Lee*

*Do you have something to share for the next REDI REPORT?*

Use [this link](#) or QR code to share a story, idea, success, or resource on a future publication.

Anticipated 2022-23  
REDI Report publication  
schedule: October,  
December, February, April

