



## Follow-up Diversity Survey Results November 2023

Many thanks to all of you who took the time to participate in the follow-up diversity survey after the retreat. About two thirds of us participated, with 41 respondents in total.

For context, along with the survey results we want to offer the DEIA Statement and Goals posted on our website. They were drafted by the Diversity Committee and approved by the board in the spring of 2023.

### **DEIA Statement and Goals**

Since our inception, Women's Voices Chorus has been committed to diversity. As a group of musicians who strive to perform music by and for women, it is part of our mission to lift up the voices of those who have long gone unheard. We have created a community that is diverse in age, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic position, and ability. However, true racial diversity has eluded us; we are a primarily White community.

Therefore, the Diversity Committee's overarching goal is to create an environment where all singers, including singers who do not identify as White, feel truly welcome and able to belong in Women's Voices Chorus, without disproportionate effort on the part of any individual singer.

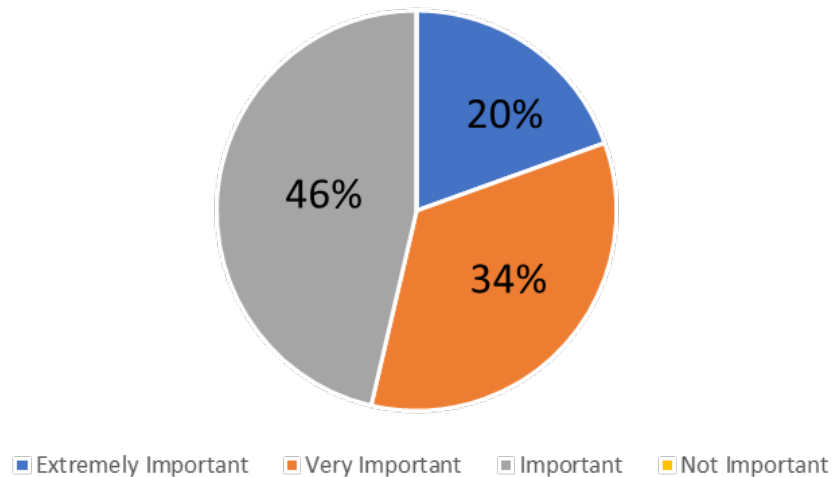
To achieve this aim, we specify three subgoals:

- To raise awareness regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our choir
- To try to discover aspects of White culture in WVC that may seem to be self-evidently right ways of operating to the majority, but that may keep minoritized singers from feeling at home
- To suggest to the board and then help to implement adjustments that we believe will help all singers feel able to belong without disproportionate effort

## The results of the survey, by question:

### How important is DEIA work for you?

41 responses



### Have you experienced anything in the WVC culture that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you imagine might make someone feel so? If so, please explain if you can.

28 responses

6 respondents said nothing has made them uncomfortable and/or there is nothing they could imagine might make others uncomfortable.

Several people mentioned that the chorus culture is dominated by people who have been there a long time, saying the chorus is like a club that's hard to break into, or that there's a core membership with people coming and going around the edges. Maybe people are nice on the first day but then revert to just chatting to people they have known for a long time. One person also said that for a while they felt that a few particular people didn't want to hear what they had to say because they were young, though that feeling has faded. But there was also some affirmation in these comments that the overall culture was welcoming; one person said that when they felt isolated it was because they themselves were reserved.

2 respondents said they had heard members of the chorus describe microaggressions or other behaviors that made them uncomfortable.

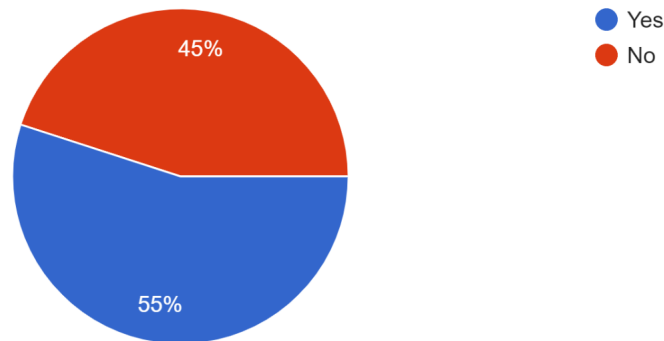
There were also a number of unique specific comments. See paraphrases below, with a few direct quotations:

- Wearing opaque socks/hose seems antiquated; no dangle earrings seems unnecessary.
- We are "a bit obsessed with blend."

- Being referred to as sisters may be hard for some more reserved people.
- “Sometimes I feel awkward, sad, and embarrassed that we appear so monolithically white.”
- This is a group of white people with niche interests. I probably wouldn’t feel at home here if I had been raised other than I was. “It is because I am part of the dominant population represented in this choir that I feel I can easily participate in relative anonymity and comfort.”
- Sometimes I don’t understand the musical terminology (e.g., “audiate” and “declension”) when it is used without being explained and am worried people will think less of me if I ask about it.
- “Help is there, but it has to be asked for.”
- The biggest potential for people to feel uncomfortable in rehearsal is “in discussions about the history and meaning of pieces with basis or backgrounds in other cultures.”

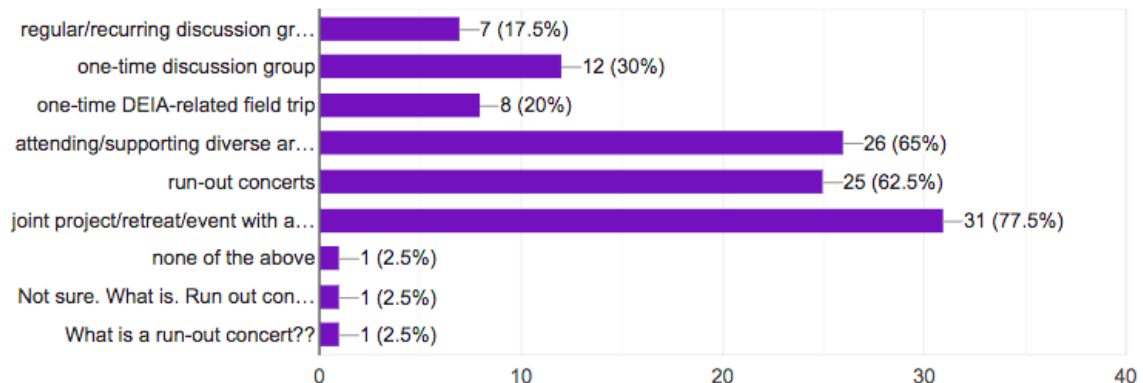
**Have you or an audience member you know about ever missed a WVC concert or event because they could not get parking, or our venue was difficult for them to access?**

**40 responses**



**In which of these DEIA initiatives would you be interested in participating?**

**40 responses**



**Please share your additional ideas for raising awareness re: DEIA issues within the choir.**

**13 responses**

Several people mentioned that we could send out links to reading materials, podcasts, videos, etc. in announcements. People could choose whether to read them, but this would at least remind members that we as a group care about DEIA.

Several people said they liked the activity at the retreat—the script and small group discussions. One said we should do something similar at every retreat, maybe a half hour.

Two people mentioned singing for or with local organizations that work with the underserved, like the Ronald McDonald House, prison, homeless shelter, retirement community, whatever people in the chorus are already passionate about, to connect to the community. Could also do community service wearing our t-shirts.

Other ideas:

- “Discuss our songs with the group.”
- Wear WVC t-shirts out and about.
- Do an activity to demonstrate the ways in which we are diverse that may not be clear on the surface, such as inviting people to write something that might be different about them on a slip of paper and then sharing them with the group, so they are anonymous.
- Make sure there is a way to address any DEIA issues/concerns that arise such as microaggressions or behavior that makes people uncomfortable.  
\*Note: this exists! See the [link on the website](#) in the members only section.

**Please share your additional ideas for increasing diversity in WVC.**

**17 responses**

4 people mentioned that joint projects with groups different from us would be a good idea.

2 people said we should perform in and patronize minority-owned businesses.

Other thoughts:

- Do a fundraiser for another choir already doing this work and doing it well, e.g. [Tonality](#) “If we can't create the same demographics of diversity and inclusion, we can at least support folks who are!”
- Invite a clinician, such as Alexander Lloyd Blake.
- Recognizing that representation is important, think in the future about hiring a leader from a minoritized group.
- Post on social media about our diversity efforts, including [Mary Lycan's papers](#) about women composers.

- Learn (at least) one multi-voice piece per concert by ear, choosing pieces from places where that kind of learning is common.
- Make it easy for the public to give contact info so we can follow up with them.
- Our efforts will be most effective if we establish relationships with community groups first.
- Ask current members from minoritized groups to bring a friend.
- Recognize that many current members have limited bandwidth when adding new activities.
- When minoritized people come to sing with us or audition but do not stay, we should find out why.
- Reconnect with NCCU jazz ensemble and Leonora Helm Hammonds.

**Please list any contacts/organizations to which we should send info about concerts and auditions, especially organizations that would bring more diversity to our mailing list.**

### **10 responses**

Multiple people mentioned choral directors at public schools and universities (esp. NCCU), as well as Black churches (St. Paul's AME) and Latino churches.

Other thoughts:

- Engage with PORCH and Compass Center.
- UNC, Duke, and continuing care retirement community employee forums.
- Service Leagues.

Choral groups for collaborations:

<https://www.tgmchorus.org/>

<https://trianglejapanclub.org/triangle-choir-club-2/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TaiYinChoir/>

**Please list businesses run by minoritized people who we can patronize for printing, catering, T-shirts, space rental, or other things we might need.**

### **7 responses**

Here's a list of 100+ black-owned food businesses in the Triangle:

[https://www.lifewithchrishonda.com/post/black-owned-restaurants-food-trucks-and-food-markets-in-the-triangle?fbclid=IwAR0nygBw0EC\\_MnAf6y8gCpo\\_ElIMk3gQP-faEhQgmErxC794SZi5-J0oMqM](https://www.lifewithchrishonda.com/post/black-owned-restaurants-food-trucks-and-food-markets-in-the-triangle?fbclid=IwAR0nygBw0EC_MnAf6y8gCpo_ElIMk3gQP-faEhQgmErxC794SZi5-J0oMqM)

Could post a request on the Chapel Hill Carrboro Foodies group on facebook.

1. Discover Durham Black Owned Businesses -

<https://www.discoverdurham.com/community-culture/black-history/black-owned-businesses/>

2. Best of the Bull - <http://bestofthebull.com/12-black-owned-businesses-in-durham-every-local-should-know/>

3. WRAL's list - <https://www.wral.com/looking-to-support-triangle-area-black-owned-businesses-here-is-a-list/19126559/>

MedDeli  
Vimala

Black owned businesses in orange county -  
[https://orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14099/BlackOwnedBusinessesFlier\\_v6?bidId=](https://orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14099/BlackOwnedBusinessesFlier_v6?bidId=)

Perhaps there are other documents available for the diversity committee to review and make recommendations to the Board.

Check local Chamber of Commerce sites for lists of black-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, etc.

**Please share ideas for venues where WVC could perform or hold retreats or listening parties that would make us more accessible to minoritized audiences and members.**

### **8 responses**

2 people said not churches.

Other ideas:

- Durham Public Library
- Participate in themed days at museums
- Eno River Universalist Unitarian Fellowship
- Write to the Black Business Alliance of the NC chamber of commerce  
<https://www.carolinachamber.org/blackbusinessalliance/>
- Could write to the women's networking group of the local chamber for women-owned businesses
- Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, where WVC had a run-out concert once before

**What else would you like us to know, either about yourself or about DEIA efforts in the choir?**

### **15 responses**

13 people said they appreciate and/or support the committee's work, with comments ranging from a simple "I appreciate these efforts!" to more specific comments such as "I appreciate the dedicated work of the committee and the willingness of WVC members to approach DEIA ideas with open minds and hearts (at least it seems to me that this is so), engaging in respectful, insightful, and meaningful conversations that help us better understand one another and the challenges we are working together to overcome."

Some more specific comments, quoted:

- "Thank you for all of your hard work to make our group more representative of our community. I feel the reasons for our lack of diversity are complex and perhaps not limited to the enthusiasm of our members for more diversity. I hope the choral identity of our choir will not change in order to make the group more appealing to under-represented groups. I've been wondering how the makeup of our group compares to other area choirs with a similar repertoire."

- “It would help if you could communicate more about specific DEIA efforts and what specifically you are trying to achieve; is the goal to create a welcoming environment for all-comers or to change the group to appeal to others? Do we have reason to believe we are not appealing to some group? Shouldn’t we focus on if we are happy with who we are and if not, consider making necessary changes? Better communication of the goals with the group would be appreciated.” \*Note: The short statement of our goals at the top of this document is on our website, and a longer list of more practical diversity-based goals for the chorus was emailed to members on the day of the retreat, October 21, 2023.
- “This choir is the most homogenous two hours I spend throughout my week. I still feel the need to give disclaimers to my friends and family who come to our concerts that this is true, especially asking some of them to enter places where they might not see themselves represented.”
- “As a woman in a heavily male-dominated tech field, I strongly relate to WVCs mission to promote music by and for women - a traditionally underrepresented group in the music field. While there is always more to do and more areas to focus on, we also need to celebrate our accomplishments in that area.”
- “I fully support these efforts, but hope the chorus understands that there are many personal reasons why some members may not actively engage in the process (childcare, work, eldercare, other commitments/responsibilities).”
- “Go to public, and perhaps even private, schools, so we can help influence what students hear and learn to appreciate.”