



Vision Statement for NATS
Prepared by Sarah Holman
NATS Past International Region Governor
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I submit this vision statement in full humility and deep appreciation for the ongoing commitment that NATS has to its vision and mission. “Transforming lives through the power of singing,” the central tenet of our vision as the National Association of Teachers of Singing, realizes itself at deeper levels as we proceed through our careers. It is not just a lofty phrase but a reality for NATS, encapsulating the very heartbeat of our artistic expression as singers and teachers. It would be an immense responsibility and privilege to continue the pursuit of this vision serving as President-Elect. Robust and committed service leadership throughout the organization is constantly guiding us forward in the mission of NATS “to advance excellence in singing through teaching, performance, scholarship, and research.” Our national board has inspired us all, leading with deft responsiveness to the realities of a changing culture, strategic planning, and rigorous personal commitment. NATS has been a constant partner in my professional life, and I care deeply about this organization, its members, and our students as supported by my service. If chosen to be the next President-Elect of NATS, I will work closely with the current leadership, staff, and new Executive Director to be responsive to you, our members and the needs of your chapters and regions fully engaging our strategic plan with fiscal responsibility.

As a passionate singer and voice teacher, I have experienced the many benefits of being an involved NATS member in every area of my artistic and professional life. Networking, global connections, performance opportunities, collaboration, pedagogical breadth, vast global repertoires, mentoring, auditions, encouragement of research, philanthropy, continuing education, and friendships are *some* of the many benefits that have enriched my experience as a NATS member. Paramount to my vision for NATS is to foster a dynamic, vibrant, and welcoming community that represents our members and their students while creating access to these benefits in leadership, musical style, voice training, and research. Our membership is globally diverse, representing the United States, Canada, and eight International Chapters. It includes independent teachers, collegiate teachers, collaborative pianists, and other voice professionals. We have made considerable strides creating a culture of belonging that I will diligently work to maintain in the present uncertainties of our society. Assessing our structures and procedures, considering new proposals from the board, acknowledging current service

in meaningful ways, and securing funding that opens opportunity to all members will be part of that work. As a first-generation college graduate, I have not forgotten the financial and cultural challenges I faced as I began my musical journey. Patient instruction, persistent mentoring, and a gentle welcoming introduced me to what a life in singing could be. Each of us as singing-teaching artists can more fully offer this to others by embracing the vision and mission of NATS. My first opportunity of service within our organization was on the board of the Chicago Chapter where a group of committed NATS members were putting into action our vision and mission long before we formally wrote them down. It was there that I began to learn the depth, breadth, and intricacies of NATS as I served in various positions.

Appointed the first Governor of the International Region in 2021, I laid a solid foundation that developed positive and lasting relationships with voice professionals around the world and facilitated the establishment of eight new NATS chapters: South Korea, Hong Kong, South Africa, India, Ibero-American, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Taiwan, and Mainland China. The establishment and growth of the International Region has advanced the standing of NATS as the preferred organization for voice professionals throughout the world. The International Region development significantly increased our organizational capacity with new memberships, innovative management practices, additional financial resources, and created new avenues of access. Most importantly, the development of the International Region has brought vibrant, new colleagues that are eager to engage and experience all that NATS has to offer, and soon the International Region will begin to develop its first student chapters (SNATS), paving the way for the next generation of teaching artists around the world.

In my two and a half terms as Governor of the Central Region, I invested deeply in membership growth with success. Working in conjunction with district and chapter leaders, new membership dramatically increased while retaining current members. This increase and stabilization of the Central Region brought new structures for leadership, opened doors for service, and increased contributed revenue. This increased revenue allowed us to serve our membership well, facilitating our region involvement in the very first cycle of the National Student Auditions, providing substantial prizes, support for young teachers to travel to NATS Conferences and Workshops, and the development of SNATS Chapters. Creating a foundational culture of performance classes lead to our own Central Region conference with teacher presentations and SNATS Chapter student poster presentations. Subsequent governors have continued to improve these initial efforts leading with integrity and artistic excellence.

I see enormous scope and potential in the objectives and actions of our current strategic plan which revolve around membership, organizational structure, management, and financial resources. Given that this strategic plan was the first in the history of NATS, there is much to be celebrated, learned, and adjusted as we move forward. It is important that we revise our events and programs as necessary based on the needs of our membership. Significant changes in NATS come with opportunity and challenge. The recent sale of our physical office dramatically moves our organization to now rely on virtual connections more than ever. Now is the time for NATS to embrace fully

connecting around the globe virtually while merging with in-person events as we did this year with the NSA. The re-organization of the office staff and the addition of new personnel have helped streamline our collective work as we prepare to engage a new Executive Director. It is imperative that we recognize in these structural and geographic changes the challenges that still impede access for members and it is incumbent on all of us to take what we have learned through our I.D.E.A. initiatives and continue to create welcoming spaces where all members can belong. As we grow our membership and philanthropic activities within, and more significantly, beyond our membership, I will work with the Director of Development, Advancement Committee, and Region Development Liaisons to provide training and create a network of fundraising communication support to assist with determining grant writing feasibility appropriate to chapters and regions.

I recognize the potential challenges and conflicts that loom in our current socio-political environment. We simultaneously live with advancement and devastation, connection and alienation, accessibility and discrimination at an historically critical moment where we have the highest levels of isolation, anxiety, depression, and fear in modern times. I remain undaunted in the pursuit of the noble vision of NATS “to transform lives through the power of singing.” I bring a unique perspective that builds on exciting new international relationships with significant organizational knowledge from committee, chapter, and region levels that provide vision and consistency in this unique time of transition with strategic, long-range, and resourceful experiences. If elected to the position of President-Elect, I will champion our mission “to advance excellence in singing through teaching, performance, scholarship, and research” and embody an unwavering commitment to our values of supporting voice professionals within the studio, classroom, clinic, and performance venue, providing committed leadership to achieve our mission and vision, advancing ethical principles and practice in our profession, celebrating and recognizing the value and efforts of all, and encouraging individual skills and creativity.

I am appreciative of the opportunity to be considered for the position of President-Elect of NATS. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to write this vision statement, and I am grateful for the time and commitment from each of you to engage in this process. I hope that you will resonate with the vision I have shared and be able to see in it a bright future for the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Respectfully submitted,
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