

SNATS Chapters and the Uncharted Territory of the Independent Studio

By Nicholas Perna, Vice President for Outreach

A student NATS (SNATS) chapter is an organization of students that can meet, hold events and discussions, participate, practice, and learn more about voice teaching as a profession. Any associate or full member of NATS in good standing may act as an advisor for a SNATS chapter. Co-advisors are also welcome. — nats.org

One of my duties as vice president for outreach for NATS is to serve as coordinator for SNATS chapters. As an independent teacher you may be saying to yourself, “but I thought SNATS chapters were just for universities, what does this have to do with me, the busy independent studio owner?” It could potentially mean a great deal to you and your business. Before you shrug off the idea of SNATS and leave it to universities, let’s chat.



Nicholas Perna

As NATS members, I believe we all have a responsibility to mentor the next generation of voice teachers. If we do not invest in our young potential teachers, the organization does not have a future. As of a recent membership report, independent teachers outnumber college and university teachers by around 400 members. Yet, SNATS chapters are roughly 99% located in academic institutions. This means there is an untapped mentorship opportunity for SNATS chapters and student members to exist within independent studios or within a metro area/community.

A few notes as they relate to SNATS and student membership.

- A SNATS chapter only needs an advisor, who must be a full or associate member of NATS, and five students to start a chapter.
- Members of the chapter do not have to pay national dues or be student members of NATS but are eligible to do so to take advantage of more member benefits.
- If members want to join NATS as a student member, those dues are currently \$46 annually.
- There are SNATS chapters that already exist outside of the academy. One example is SNATS Boston.
- Organizing a chapter makes those students eligible to apply for SNATS grants.



Certainly, in your teaching, you are always mentoring the next generation of singers, but what about the next generation of voice teachers? Have you considered the possibility of a multi-teacher studio? One potential obstacle is to find new teachers who you believe you can trust to become an integral part of your business. What if you had been fostering growth in your young singers who you believe might be potential voice teachers through direct mentoring of advising a SNATS chapter for your independent studio? Starting a SNATS chapter within your own studio could be a fertile training ground to help raise the next generation of teachers for your multi-teacher studio.

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There could be further benefits in watching your students develop their own initiatives in their chapter. It could bring you an awareness of the sorts of topics that interest your students.

The students could lead an initiative to have a guest artist or teacher to share with chapter members and potentially with other students in your studio. Using a SNATS grant, there could be shared expenses between the studio and the SNATS chapter in funding a guest clinician. Or possibly, the SNATS chapter you advise and another SNATS chapter from an independent studio could swap teachers for a pair of online classes and help fund your time with mutual SNATS grants for each chapter. Most importantly, any SNATS chapter provides greater access to the network of experts within the whole NATS community.

Finally, if I can be of any help getting your chapter started or can provide assistance with any aspect of SNATS chapters, student NATS membership, or if I can help your existing SNATS chapter be aware of SNATS grants or all the wonderful mentoring opportunities we provide through NATS, please contact me at vpoutreach@nats.org. I am thrilled to assist you as we all inspire the next generation of voice pedagogues.

Dr. Nicholas Perna is associate professor of voice and voice pedagogy at Mississippi College. He is vice president for outreach for the National Association of Teachers of Singing (2022-2024). Perna is president of the Mississippi Chapter, and treasurer for the Southern Region. He is a Presser Music Foundation awardee and currently a voice research associate at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. His primary research areas are laryngeal manipulation and singing voice acoustics. Perna has presented research on four continents at notable events such as the International Congress of Voice Teachers, the Voice Foundation's Annual Symposium on the Care of the Professional Voice, and NATS national conferences. Publications include articles in *Journal of Singing*, *Journal of Voice*, and *VOICEprints*. He has served on the faculty of Donald G. Miller's *Singing Voice Science Workshop*, and the *New England Conservatory Acoustic Vocal Pedagogy Workshop*. He is the creator and co-host of the [VocalFri Podcast](#), your weekly dash of voice science, pedagogy, and pop culture.

2023 Van L. Lawrence Fellowship

Application Deadline: Nov. 15, 2022

The **Van L. Lawrence Fellowship** was created to honor Van L. Lawrence, M.D. for his outstanding contribution to voice, and particularly to recognize the importance of the interdisciplinary education he fostered among laryngologists and singing teachers. The Fellowship is a joint award from the Voice Foundation and the Foundation Heritage Fund of the NATS Endowment.

Candidates for the Van L. Lawrence Fellowship shall be:

1. A member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing who is actively engaged in teaching.
2. The Fellowship shall be awarded to candidates who have demonstrated excellence in their professions as singing teachers, and who have shown interest in and knowledge of voice science.

Members of NATS wishing to apply for the fellowship should write a letter of intent to The Voice Foundation along with your CV — combined into one PDF. Include the area and methods of your proposed study plan. E-mail: office@voicefoundation.org

- a. Current application of scientific knowledge in the studio;
- b. The area of intended study and/or research project **and the study plan and methods**;
- c. How the Fellowship and research project will benefit your teaching;
- d. NATS Chapter to which you belong;
- e. A detailed curriculum vita.

The fellowship will be awarded at the next Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice

May 31– June 4, 2023, in Philadelphia

For more information, contact The Voice Foundation at 215-735-7999 or email office@voicefoundation.org.

Visit nats.org for complete application instructions.



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