



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

— ★ ★ ★ —  
Mid-Atlantic Region

**Serena Hill LaRoche, Mid-Atlantic Region Governor**  
**Jill Terhaar Lewis, Mid-Atlantic Region Past-Governor**

**September 2023**

## **Jill Terhaar Lewis Completes Tenure as Mid-Atlantic Region Governor.**

Happy Summer! I hope you find time to have fun and recharge with loved ones this season. July 1 marked the end of my four-year tenure (two terms) as the Mid-Atlantic Region Governor. I am delighted to leave the Region in the dedicated and capable hands of Dr. Serena Hill LaRoche, our new Governor. It is my pleasure to continue to serve at her discretion to help aid in this ongoing transition. Serena has been a great Governor-Elect and crucial to the success of the Region activities.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve in this organization. I have been inspired by your excellence, creativity, and enthusiasm for your students and

your art. I take with me many new and rewarding connections and friendships that I will treasure. I encourage any members interested in forging relationships and making changes to volunteer by contacting your local and regional officers. Thank you all for your support over the years!



*Jill Terhaar Lewis receives a plaque from NATS President Diana Allen and Executive Director Allen Henderson for year of service to NATS at the end of her tenure on the National Board as the Mid-Atlantic Region Governor these past four years.*

Please welcome Dr. Serena Hill LaRoche our new Mid-Atlantic Region Governor!

## Mid-Atlantic Region Governor, Dr. Serena Hill LaRoche



*Serena Hill LaRoche, MAR Governor (provided)*

Greetings and salutations! I am so very thrilled and humbled by this opportunity to serve. Jill Terhaar Lewis has been a wonderful mentor and will continue to help with this transition. I have some mighty big shoes to fill! Thank you to those that have sent words of encouragement and offers of help. It means so very much. I am in awe of the teamwork and generosity I've witnessed. Blessings abound!

We have lots of changes and new opportunities as an organization coming this year, some of which are noted in this newsletter below and some of which will be coming very soon. I ask for patience and grace as we move forward into the year academic year!

Go NATS!

## Additional Officer Changes

Voluntary leadership is the backbone of our thriving Mid-Atlantic NATS community. Volunteerism, no matter how small or large the task, is a labor of great importance. By nurturing leaders at the chapter and regional level, we ensure the continuity of the mission of NATS and create a legacy that will inspire future members to step into leadership roles. That willingness to step up and take on responsibilities that often demand time, effort, and emotional investment speaks volumes about their dedication. Below are some of the new officers that will serve in critical roles on the regional board. Some have been on the job for many months now!

Jaelyn Surso	Mid-Atlantic Region Development Liaison
John Wesley Wright	Maryland/DC District Co-Governor
Ethan Watermeier	Maryland/DC District Co-Governor
Jennifer Seiger	North Carolina District Governor
Valerie MacPhail	South Carolina District Governor
Sarah Kim	Virginia District Governor



Thank you to all those who have answered the call to serve and who continue to serve in leadership positions all levels of governance within NATS. There are lots of ways to be involved. From service on committees, to repertoire vetting, to substitute adjudicating...we need you! If you are interested in volunteering within your district, reach out to your local leadership! The region also has many opportunities for service. We'd love to hear from you! [shilllaroche@mozart.sc.edu](mailto:shilllaroche@mozart.sc.edu).

## NATS National Board Meetings held in Florida

The NATS National Board Meetings were held at Atlantic Beach, Florida over several days at the end of June. Both Past Governor Lewis and Governor LaRoche attended the meetings held over three days. Additional MAR members in attendance included Dr. Randy Umstead, Secretary/Treasurer and DeMar Austin Neal IV, Vice President for Workshops. Reports were presented by each national officer and region governor as well as reports from each committee.

Highlights included discussion of the new International Region and the first conference of the South Africa Chapter held in Stellenbosch, South Africa in July. International Region Governor Sarah Holman is helping with this event along with the officers of the newly formed chapter. Bronwen Forbay has been instrumental in this chapter creation and is presenting at the conference. She is from South Africa and currently resides in the Mid-Atlantic Region in South Carolina.

This will be the first year that Commercial Music and Children and Youth Categories advance to the National auditions. The board discussed ways to increase involvement and to also accommodate new students and families at the chapter, region, and national auditions. The finals will take place at the NATS National Conference scheduled for June 28- July 2, 2024 in Knoxville, Tennessee.



Reminder: Deadline to submit Poster Papers for the national conference is December 1, 2023. For more information on the conference and how to submit, visit <https://www.nats.org/knoxville2024.html>.

## NATSAA Mid-Atlantic Region Preliminary



This year will mark a new NATS Artist Award (NATSAA) cycle. In total, over \$50,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded. The Mid-Atlantic Region qualifying event will take place in Boone, North Carolina at Appalachian State University, October 7-8, 2023. The live semi and final rounds will take place in January in New York City as part of the 2024 Winter Conference. The deadline to apply is September 11, 2023. For more information, please visit <https://www.nats.org/nats-artist-awards.html>.

## NATS Summer Program Auditions

Summer program auditions for 2024 are right around the corner! The NATS Summer Program Auditions (SPA) is a unified summer program audition opportunity that allows singers to submit their application and video auditions in one place to be considered for multiple programs! Interested singers pay a one-time fee to submit to up to 5 participating programs of their choice. Applications are open November 1, 2023-December 31, 2023. For more information, please visit [https://www.nats.org/Summer\\_Program\\_Auditions.html](https://www.nats.org/Summer_Program_Auditions.html)



## Mid-Atlantic Region Conference Workshop and Student Auditions

Plans for the upcoming 2024 Mid-Atlantic Region Conference and Student Auditions are underway! The 2024 conference and auditions will be in two parts. In-person events and student auditions will be held March 7-9, 2024 at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC, and will include all Classical and Spiritual Categories (HJ/AS). Virtual events and auditions will take place March 15-22 and will include all Musical Theatre and Commercial Music Categories. More information on modality of specific categories and current registration dates can be found on the MAR NATS website [www.midatlanticnats.org](http://www.midatlanticnats.org).



Hall Johnson Categories will advance to the NSA during this 2024 audition cycle. Sponsored by the Hall Johnson Collection at Rowan University, *"The [Hall Johnson] competition seeks further to promote the truth that Spirituals, like Art Songs, can be successfully performed by all people, not only by the African Americans who created them, and require only the same study that one devotes to any art song or aria."* Please visit the Hall Johnson page on the NATS website for specifics regarding this repertoire. [https://www.nats.org/Hall\\_Johnson\\_Spirituals\\_Competition.html](https://www.nats.org/Hall_Johnson_Spirituals_Competition.html)

NEW! – the 2024 audition year will mark the first time that Children and Youth Categories and Commercial Music Categories will advance to the NSA. New materials and resources for teachers, families, and adjudicators are now available on the NSA Resource Center page <https://www.nats.org/nsaresources.html#video>. 5-minute adjudicator training videos for these new categories will be available soon! Repertoire requirements for ALL categories can also be found in the NSA Categories of Entry document on the resource page as well.

NEW! – The Mid-Atlantic Region is proud to continue offering categories for adult singers with the new recommended Adult Avocational and Non-Traditional Student Categories. \*Please note that these adult categories DO NOT advance to the NSA in the 2024 audition cycle.

If you would be interested in serving on a planning committee for conference masterclasses and workshops or to serve as a substitute adjudicator, please contact [shilllaroche@mozart.sc.edu](mailto:shilllaroche@mozart.sc.edu).

## NATS I.D.E.A. Toolkit

The Mid-Atlantic Region encourages all members to complete the training modules from the NATS Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism. Below is a reprint from the webpage about the I.D.E.A. Toolkit. [https://www.nats.org/IDEA\\_Toolkit.html](https://www.nats.org/IDEA_Toolkit.html)





At its core, the National Association of Teachers of Singing is a service organization dedicated to supporting and educating its membership, which includes the essential topics of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism, and how these areas inform our work.

Designed especially for members, NATS has launched a new [I.D.E.A. toolkit](#) containing educational videos, a glossary of I.D.E.A. vocabulary, slideshow presentations, suggested readings, and more.

We want to thank Past President, Carole Blankenship for her leadership throughout the beginning of this process, our D & I Focus Group, and diversity strategist, Theresa Ruth Howard and consultant, Alejandra Valarino Boyer for their work in creating this toolkit.

**Module 1 and 2 available now! Module 3 of our I.D.E.A. Toolkit will be available soon!**

If you haven't already accessed Module 1 or 2, please take the time to view it as well:

[MODULE 1](#)

[MODULE 2](#)

**Passcode: natsideatoolkit**

[MODULE 2 LINK: https://mobballer.org/index.php/2021/12/13/nats-i-d-e-a-bootcamp-tool-kit-module-1/](https://mobballer.org/index.php/2021/12/13/nats-i-d-e-a-bootcamp-tool-kit-module-1/)

[MODULE 2 LINK: https://mobballer.org/index.php/2022/01/10/nat-i-d-e-a-bootcamp-toolkit-module-2/](https://mobballer.org/index.php/2022/01/10/nat-i-d-e-a-bootcamp-toolkit-module-2/)

Viewing this material is essential to learning about all the ways we can strive to be a more welcoming and supportive community of members who celebrate unique identities, varied backgrounds, and experiences.

Our goal in this work is to learn to recognize our biases, promote diversity, and foster a respectful, inclusive, and equitable environment within NATS where everyone can feel they belong and thrive.

## **I.D.E.A. Best Practices Guide**

Additionally, NATS offers the [I.D.E.A. Best Practices Guide](#). It provides written guidelines on how to create and maintain a welcoming and supportive community as well as a culture of diversity and inclusion. The guide shares strategies for communicating across cultures. It gives examples of how to demonstrate value and validation in community along with ways to build inclusion for all identities.

[GUIDE LINK: https://www.nats.org/Library/docs/NATS\\_IDEA\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Guide\\_Final\\_1\\_17\\_22\\_rev.pdf](https://www.nats.org/Library/docs/NATS_IDEA_Best_Practices_Guide_Final_1_17_22_rev.pdf)

[View Guide](#)

## Upcoming Content

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In the coming months, we will be working on completion of Module 3 — all about applying what we have learned in the first two modules. It is important for us to talk about how we are internalizing and applying this information to real scenarios — in our NATS activities with colleagues and in our studios with students.

**Stay tuned:** Module 3 coming soon!

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**We thank NATS D&I Focus Group members for their time, feedback, and commitment to ensuring that all voices within NATS are valued and heard in an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all.**

Alexis Davis-Hazell, Amy Yeung, Anna Lantry, Darryl Taylor, Eiji Miura, Elizabeth Benson, Elizabeth Eschen, Ellie Escher, Emily Martin, Gregory Brookes, Greta Pope, Hannah Murray, Holly Bewlay, Isai Jess Munoz, James Martin, Jeremy Blackwood, Jessica Usherwood, Joey Holland-Garcia, Jonathan Walker-Vankuren, Katherine Jolly, Katie Tupper, Kayla Gautereaux, Lily Guerrero, Loraine Sims, Marcía Porter, Marisa Naismith, Michael Preacely, Michael Walsh, Paulina Villareal, Rae-Myra Hilliard, Rebecca Pieper, Sam Handley, Stephen Ng, Sylvia Stoner, Tricia Toledo, Triniece Robinson-Martin, and San-ky Kim.