

The Monmouth Civic Chorus

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THE MONMOUTH CIVIC CHORUS
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Long Range Plan

July 2021 through June 2024

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Overview

In January 1996, the Chorus began the practice of using a formal planning process and producing long range plans on a three-year cycle. Every three years, the Monmouth Civic Chorus Board of Trustees appoints a visioning committee, typically made up of board members and non-board members.

The committee assesses the condition of the Chorus, collects input from the membership and audience, and produces a new three-year plan. Goals and objectives in each cycle are established to be in line with the Chorus vision and mission.

The core values and mission of the Chorus have changed little over time, but specific goals and objectives vary as needed from plan to plan. For example, prior goals have been set and progress has been made to grow membership, improve financial security, enhance musical excellence, offer a variety of programming, and broaden audience demographics.

Throughout each season, the MCC Board regularly measures its progress against the current plan and makes adjustments needed to stay on track. For more than 20 years, this process has enabled the Board to validate the Chorus vision and mission, set appropriate goals and objectives and take actions needed to meet those goals in the best service of its membership, audience, and community.

How This Plan Was Developed

The Long Range Planning Committee sought input from Chorus leadership, results from the audience survey after the 2020 virtual holiday concert and from Chorus members through an online survey.

a. Leadership: Board Input

Prior to the pandemic, the Board of Trustees participated in a retreat that focused on long-term goals and objectives for the Chorus. Board members identified areas of opportunity for growth within the Chorus and evaluated progress made on the goals of the 2017-21 plan.

We solicited input from the Board and the Artistic Director during the development of this plan.

b. Member Input

A survey was administered electronically to Chorus members. A total of 25 responses were collected representing approximately 30% of the membership participating during the 2020 season.

The survey asked members to assess their musical and vocal skills and their need for improvement, explore their thoughts about diversity and inclusion in MCC, and identify their desires and concerns for MCC's future.

Focus Group

The Board conducted focus groups with MCC's largest donors to solicit comments about our virtual season.

c. Audience Survey

We received online feedback from our audience who heard and watched our virtual 2020 holiday concert.

Results of the Findings

The Long Range Planning Committee identified key goals that will serve as the focus for the MCC Board during the term of this Long Range Plan. These goals relate to artistic excellence through individual member growth, expanding involvement in our local community, maximizing the use of digital tools, and considering additional support for the Board. Objectives are identified under each goal.

Implementation of Long Range Plan

The Long Range Planning Committee has developed objectives to support four strategic goals. Over the next three years, these objectives will be implemented. It will be the job of the Chorus' Board of Trustees to prioritize objectives, determine necessary action steps for each objective, and develop a three-year timeline to ensure implementation.

Our Vision

The vision of Monmouth Civic Chorus is to be the premiere community chorus, with the highest standards of artistic excellence.

Our Mission

The mission of Monmouth Civic Chorus is to offer a diverse repertoire of choral music to the community in an environment that promotes individual artistic growth and encourages mutual support and camaraderie.

Our Core Values

Our mission is informed by our commitment to the following beliefs:

- Excellence – We believe in the continuous improvement and artistic growth of each individual member and for the Chorus as a whole
- Participation – We encourage, we value and we recognize the involvement of volunteers who serve in any capacity to achieve the mission of the Chorus
- Inclusiveness – We value an environment that is welcoming and accessible to a diverse membership and audience, provides a sense of camaraderie for all who participate, and fosters a long term commitment to the Chorus
- Financial Stability – We strive to maintain a financially viable organization with integrity and transparency in all budgetary reports
- Community Engagement – We are committed to effective partnerships with other arts organizations and seek to promote choral music through partnerships in the public and private sectors
- Innovation – We are committed to performing choral music of all genres, from the classics to the contemporary, in order to attract a large and diverse audience

Goal #1: Enhance Artistic Excellence Through Individual Member Growth Within the MCC Community.

Artistic excellence continues to be of overall importance to MCC membership. Individual growth and improvement are key to this goal.

Objectives:

1. Maintain MCC artistic standards:
 - a. Reinforce our cultural norm of hard work and focus during rehearsals and performances.
 - b. Encourage self-practice using technology supplied by the music committee as well as extra rehearsals.
 - c. Receive individual feedback during each full season from the Artistic Director.
2. Expand the Mentoring Program: appoint ‘one on one’ support for new and current members as appropriate. Mentors will help members:
 - a. Develop a sense of comfort and belonging.
 - b. Discover their individual talents and ways they can volunteer and support MCC’s operations.
3. Encourage development of a “feeling of community.”
 - a. Implement a social time for members before rehearsals when appropriate while continuing after rehearsal social time.
 - b. Continue the Artistic Director’s get-to-know-you exercises during rehearsals.

Goal #2: Expand Community Involvement.

Broadening our membership and audiences to include all ages, ethnicities, and marginalized members of the local community is of paramount importance as MCC moves into the future. We need to form partnerships with community members who have varying perspectives.

Objectives:

1. Within the first year of this plan, appoint an ad hoc committee to consult with relevant expert organizations and consultants to develop strategies to broaden our appeal to the entire community.
2. Dedicate endowment funds to support efforts in building relationships with all facets of our community.
3. Appoint a Chorus member to work with the Artistic Director to design an outreach program to raise awareness of MCC at local high schools, colleges and universities for future membership and audience development.
4. Collaborate with local university and high school choirs in MCC performances.
5. Remove financial barriers to concert attendance, such as implementing reduced price or discounted tickets to targeted groups.
6. Increase the profile of our on-call singers to perform both paid and unpaid performances to a wider audience in the community year round.
7. Update and implement our ADA-compliant plan to ensure accessibility for our membership and audience.

Goal #3: Maximize Use of Digital Tools to Enhance all Aspects of MCC.

MCC has flourished during this unusual time of the Covid 19 pandemic by providing digital tools that members can use to strengthen their musicianship and learn the repertoire while allowing the Chorus to find a new online audience. These digital tools will help broaden our donor base, financial development efforts, and marketing.

Objectives:

2. Provide support to MCC members as they prepare music, including tracks for music learning and educational aids, virtual rehearsals as necessary, and feedback from the Artistic Director.
3. Continue to use digital marketing tools, such as video clips, to grow our online and in person audiences.
4. Utilize databases to measure and boost the share of donations by non-members.

Goal #4: Create External Supports for the Board.

MCC has a wonderful group of Board Members, Officers and member volunteers. With the amount of work required, help may be needed to allow the Board to focus on the Chorus' Long Range Plan and future needs and goals.

Objectives:

1. By the end of the 2021-2022 season, the Board of Trustees will appoint an ad hoc committee to explore the implementation of a well-connected Advisory Board to assist in maintaining financial stability and expanding our donor base outside of the membership and in the community.
2. The Board's officers will explore the feasibility and value of hiring administrative support to do specific tasks assigned by the Board.
3. MCC's fundraising efforts will develop and support the relationship between the Artistic Director and MCC's top donors.