Program Group Conference Call
Monday, September 30, 2019
1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

In Attendance:
Hilary Dow Ward - Sewanee Summer Music Festival (LEADER)
Kimberly McLemore - Nashville Symphony, Accelerando
Angelica Durrell - INTEMPO
James Hall - Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative
Ahmad Mayes - Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
Jerrod Price - Cleveland Institute of Music
Stanford Thompson - Play On Philly

MINUTES

1. Hilary Dow Ward greets the group and thanks everyone for joining.
2. Proposed Mission is read: NIMAN is a collection of organizations across the United States who are committed to various local and national DEI projects that are aimed at mentoring classical musicians of color and helping advance their careers. NIMAN will encourage the development of new programs that member organizations wish to create and find ways to connect existing initiatives to a national cohort of students. Where it makes sense for NIMAN to lead an initiative, the association will serve as a national convener.
3. Bridge visits - "NIMAN Bridge Visits" connecting and empowering faculty, parents, students and alumni with one another in order to share information about summer camps and conservatories.
    i. Kimberly McLemore: Having a comprehensive place to have summer opportunities is a valuable resource - Internet2 could potentially serve in this capacity.
    ii. Hilary Dow Ward: It is important to have an opportunity to discuss all of the various avenues that students can learn about (music management, librarian).
    iii. Angelica Durrell : It will be very important to talk to students, families, and faculty members about why NIMAN is needed.
        1. Creating universal information to be disseminated so that there is buy-in from all involved.
    iv. Kimberly McLemore: NIMAN using technology to do lessons or masterclasses could also be a resource.
4. Establishing a "Point of Contact"
    a. Hilary Dow Ward: It is a game changer to have a specific person to contact.
    b. Angelica Durrell: We also should work to establish an amount of time for return contact to the student or parents that can be published within the marketing materials across the board.

      c.   Hilary Dow Ward: Having a "best practices" established makes a big difference because students and faculty are often busy.

      d.   Angelica Durrell: A lot of these questions could be resolved with a FAQ.

      e.   Kimberly McLemore: Having the person (possibly use NIMAN alumni) help when students are visiting so that parents and students know what to expect and feel supported.

5. What happens when the student joins?

      a.   Kimberly McLemore: A student had a negative cultural festival experience this past summer, and as a result, a set of guidelines were established to prevent this from happening in the future:

            i.   Having cultural competency or anti-bullying training for students and staff

           ii.   Finding ways to help train students ahead of this happening and discussing what consequences will be for those kinds of behaviors.

          iii.   Supporting students ahead of time gives them the confidence to speak up about what has happened if it DOES happen.

      b.   Jerrod Price: In his experience, a Black Student Union was established and it has made a big difference.

            i.   Are there ways that organizations could establish groups like this or new groups be established and supported so that students are comfortable?

      c.   Angelica Durrell: Possibly issuing an institutional survey before an institution can join so that we can find out if there are support systems in place, and if not, finding ways to create those support systems upon joining.

      d.   Stanford Thompson: We need to establish standards within the institutions

            i.   It needs to be very clear that these supports must be in place to help prevent those behaviors and to help students of color.

           ii.   A set of standards of best practice must be in place institutionally to participate.

      e.   Kimberly McLemore: Is there anyone that already has cultural mechanisms in place that we could use the framework so we don't reinvent the wheel?

      f.   Hilary Dow Ward: Sewanee Summer Music Festival, as an example has taken the following steps

            i.   Diversifying staff - most diverse staff that there ever has been

                1.   Students saw diversity in every level - managers, RAs

           ii.   Residence life staff/proctors received diversity cultural training

          iii.   Staff received cultural training and Title IX training

          iv.   Making an extra and specific effort to support students of color

      g.   Ahmad Mayes:The El Sistema program makes an effort to support students of color, and it could be a program to look at, as well.

      h.   Stanford Thompson: It would be helpful to create an idea list of what this should look like

6. Budgetary Considerations

      a.   Hilary Dow Ward: What is the directive on what this should look like from a budgetary standpoint?

      b.   Stanford Thompson: At this moment, we aren't establishing pledges, but are providing the framework of cost.

            i.   Last February, participating organizations discussed how they thought it would be helpful to get students on campus a few years before they would attend and having every kid be matched with the appropriate summer opportunity.

        ii.   On the national level, it would be preferred to have students go to a conservatory to attend a rehearsal, sit in on a masterclass, attend a cultural event.

               1.   Universities then could participate

               2.   Students would be matched to the schools

      iii.   NIMAN would provide the framework of saying "this is what we want you to do", and then NIMAN would help cover travel costs for those who are in financial need, but students would perhaps pay for other parts.

c.   James Hall: Housing and travel are probably the biggest barrier in students being able to participate in this.

d.   Ahmad Mayes: How do we concentrate the resources to have the biggest impact?

        i.   School visits - getting students across the country and giving them the opportunity to be on the college campuses

        ii.   Students associated with HBCU already make some of these visits where they get on the bus and visit these schools and make it a real experience for younger students

e.   Stanford Thompson: Would it make sense for these students to travel as a cohort, starting as sophomores, and do these visits over a number of years?

        i.   They would be able to share what they're learning and where they are with the application process, as well as build relationships.

f.   Hilary Dow Ward: This is already an established process for some charter schools.

g.   Ahmad Mayes: How can this experience be personalized and customized for each student, but also have it be a group experience - both are important, valid experiences, but is one more important than the other?

h.   Hilary Dow Ward: Another consideration is should these visits be during regular auditions time or have a special time for them?

i.   Jerrod Price - It might be complicated, regionally, to have a cohort, but it would be really great from a community standpoint to have a cohort

        i.   It might be complicated to have them visit a lot of schools

        ii.   Parents - two thirds of parents are not involved in music, but find ways to get parent support

               1.   Mentorship

               2.   Guidance

               3.   Training

j.   Hilary Dow Ward: We try to educate parents on what their summer program experience so they know exactly what to expect.

        i.   Students who start coming to visit as freshman have the best results, statistically. They can then come back for a second visit by their junior year with one or two prospective schools in mind, then back for a final visit by their senior year

k.   Ahmad Mayes: One challenge - fitting this into a student's schedule can be a challenge from a variety of angles - there are a variety of conflicts that could come up.

        i.   We should be sure to consider and include some less intensive ideas as well

        ii.   Find ways to make the process accessible

l.   Hilary Dow Ward: What if some of these schools come to visit summer festivals for a few days? It could be an opportunity to start making connections with a staff or faculty member of these conservatories.

    m. Kimberly McLemore: It is really important that students and parents making visits to these universities so that there is a personalized experience.

    n. Hilary Dow Ward: Having schools come to summer programs could establish the contact to help students decide what schools they want to visit in person.

    o. Jerrod Price: Some institutions already do a college discussion panel.

        i. Having a college panel discussion with school profiles so that students have that opportunity.

        ii. This is a helpful practice and most schools are willing to do it.

7. Summer programs - how they can provide prepare for orientation, college preparation, and visits?

    a. Kimberly McLemore: A lot of conversation is around students being prepared for the audition, but financial support is just as important.

        i. Discussing having a separate visit aside from the festival or program to introduce students to the cultural to help them feel more comfortable to help them decide if it's a program they really want to do

    b. Ahmad Mayes: NIMAN could be a matchmaker that provides uniform audition requirements so that students would only have to submit one recording to one place

        i. NIMAN could serve as a communication hub that makes it easier to access these summer festivals

        ii. Possibly have different classifications if it's too difficult to have one set of requirements

    c. Hilary Dow Ward: iIt is also very expensive for students to apply for multiple programs.

        i. Applying to multiple schools can end up costing students and families hundreds of dollars.

        ii. This might be a potential tie in to technological partnerships.

    d. Stanford Thompson: We have the unique opportunity to put out what will best support these students.

        i. Possibility of asking for some of these fees to go away

        ii. Asking for more attention and insider information can be gained when you ask for the students to be given the same amount of access

    e. Ahmad Mayes: Some potential roadblocks:

        i. People are not always looking to make improvements in this arena

        ii. Are there ways to engage faculty directly, both at conservatories, musicians within orchestras, festivals - to try to coax out those who can and will be advocates for people of color?

        iii. It could help re-shape the culture of institutions to have these teachers and mentors take on this role.

8. Programming for different ages in programs

    a. Involving students aged 6-9 years old

    b. Helping students plan and prioritize school visits

9. Designing the database of information for summer programs and school visits

    a. Ideas

        i. Ahmad Mayes: It would be beneficial for students to be able to do a side by side comparisons of institutions and summer programs.

            1. Duration

            2. Focus of the camp costs

        ii. Hilary Dow Ward: How could a student fill out a profile so that programs can see that information and vice versa? What would you want to see about a student?

   iii. Ahmad Mayes: It help if there could be a portal to post a video of the student playing

   iv. Hilary Dow Ward: There may be a portal so that students can continue to upload a video as they continue learning and improving.

 b. Ahmad Mayes: What to include?

   i. Establish a human network - who has the student studied with, and provide access to the teacher to discuss how the student did.

 c. Kimberly McLemore: Is there a find a way to include the teachers and people who work with the student at festivals or in lessons to serve as a mentor and continue adding information into the database

 d. Stanford Thompson: what information would you want to see if you could open up a database and learn about a student?

   i. James Hall: Learning how long they've played and who they've studied with.

   ii. Kimberly McLemore: A database of alumni so that alumni can help as students learn more about schools and have them become mentors.

    1. Have the student be able pare down what they want to see in the school so they can make the best decisions (what's offered at the school, types of support, programs).

    2. Have people for the students to help make them comfortable.

 e. Hilary Dow Ward: There are several established sites that could help serve as a jumping off point for designing this.

10. More information and action points will be sent out over the next few weeks.

Next Meeting on October 9, 2019 from 9:00-10:30 AM CST