

One of the things I love about the College Music Society is our ability to adapt and respond to the ever-changing landscape in music and music education. As our organization focuses on serving the faculty and students in music schools worldwide, it has become increasingly clear that we must continue examining our embedded systemic structures to align our messaging to our students and community with our values. At this point, there is little doubt that the last ten years have seen a dramatic change in the general sense of well-being within our society with ongoing stress from the COVID pandemic, political polarization, a national racial reckoning, the #MeToo movement, and rise in online lifestyles that can lead to loneliness. I believe this aspect of viewing our communities with the honest lens of the world around us is the mark of the contemporary relevant organization. The College Music Society is uniquely poised to address these challenges and continually frame the work to come.

Two years ago, during the 2022 CMS National Conference in Long Beach, CA, I vividly recall standing around a table with many of our CMS leaders—mostly junior faculty and relatively new to academia. We discussed the great weight we felt while supporting our students, realizing that we were some of the folks students would come to for support and connection. Some were seeing mental health issues, and some were dealing with racial prejudices or struggles around gender and sexual identity. Regardless, we all acknowledged that we were carrying a higher load in this area than in recent years, and we felt wholly unprepared, unsupported, and exhausted. Likely, this is an experience you may recognize and agree that our role as community builders and in human support is a universal part of what it means to be in music and education. I believe that with concerted conversation, strategic planning, and constant diligence, we can significantly impact our ability to support our communities.

I would like to recognize and thank the previous work of our members on the “Musicians’ Health Committee.” As president of CMS, I am retooling this committee to expand and focus on the intersection of wellness, belonging, and embodiment and our pedagogical practices. I’m excited to introduce you to the new committee!

- Shawn Copeland, (Chair), Former University of Idaho, mBODYed, CEO
- Eva Casado Ariza, University of Miami
- Elizabeth Alexander, UT Martin
- Andrew Hunt, Office of Student Success, Florida State University School of Music
- Mihoko Watanabe, Ball State

From Shawn:

I am excited to join CMS as Chair of the Health, Access, and Well-Being Committee.

We chose this name because we wanted to widen the committee's scope and this area in general. We often approach this work as fixing or adapting something that isn't working. We wanted to move away from changing the status quo and dream of something new. What if instead of teaching injury prevention, we taught in a manner that developed a healthy, whole-body, embodied approach to the practice of making music? Rather than adapting a system to accommodate those with disabilities, what if we presented learning opportunities that provided a variety of sensory inputs? We believe we can develop philosophies in the classroom and in practice that cultivate curiosity, belonging, and embodiment from the beginning.

I'm excited about this committee's work and would love to invite you to join the conversation!

BC



Brian Kai Chin
President, College Music Society