

Role and Responsibilities of AIRS Theme Leaders and Sub-theme Leaders

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Background – In 2012, the AIRS Steering Committee identified a need for clarification of the roles of AIRS Theme Leaders and Sub-Theme Leaders. Mary Gick started the ball rolling with her thoughts, and Annabel Cohen agreed to complete a draft. It should be said at the outset that the roles of the Theme and Sub-Theme leaders follow from the AIRS Organizational Chart. Whereas the Director is responsible for all of AIRS, the Theme Leaders are responsible for their respective themes, and the Sub-theme leaders are responsible for their respective sub-themes. A premise for the following is that the overall goal of AIRS is to understand the cultural, universal, and individual influences on singing, laying a theoretical foundation for and providing evidence of ways in which singing can benefit society, so as to ultimately influence policy development that may benefit society through fostering of singing activities and training. The responsibilities of these positions are demanding. In some cases, positions have been shared (at least nominally).

Role and Responsibilities of AIRS Theme Leaders

- I. One primary role of the Theme leader is to take responsibility for the entire Theme. This means that the Theme leader aspires to:
 - appreciate and embrace the milestones for the Theme (the Leader may have been instrumental in formulating the milestones)
 - understand and foster the connection between the Theme and the overall goal of AIRS
 - provide intellectual leadership as well as practical advice to the sub-theme leaders and all the team members with the aim of emphasizing, encouraging, monitoring, and achieving these goals of the Theme (and its sub-themes and AIRS); this may entail encouraging and facilitating joint participation from sub-theme leaders and/or other sub-theme members in projects geared towards milestone completion, while focusing the Theme members on the Theme's Big Question:
 - Theme 1 – How does singing develop in every human?
 - Theme 2 – How should singing be taught and used to teach?
 - Theme 3 – How does singing impact well-being?(Answers are expected by Year 7, and preliminary answers will appear in the AIRS tri-volume series currently in the planning stages).
 - serve as a conduit between the Theme and: the Director, the Steering Committee, the other two Themes, and other committees of AIRS; as an example, this may entail providing a regular (quarterly) a Theme update at meetings of the Steering Committee; this requires being apprised of progress towards and challenges in achieving Theme goals and milestones via communication with Sub-Theme Leaders and Theme members and/or consultation of member quarterly reports understand and facilitate relations with AIRS community partners and stakeholders (in some cases with or encourage activity of Sub-Theme leader). Community partners have formal agreements with AIRS to work together

on projects of mutual interest. The community partners have committed to contribute to AIRS (typically in-kind) with the purpose of obtaining data of interest, or of creating an activity through which AIRS may obtain data of interest. The Theme Leaders need to be aware of the interests of Community Partners relevant to their Theme, and then try to include representation of these partners in the research plans for the Themes. Doing so can also offer real-world opportunities for students. The Theme Leaders may also develop new Partnerships for their Theme (and for AIRS). Stakeholder relations are less formal, and without a written agreement of terms, but are no less important. The Stakeholder is any group that can benefit from knowledge of AIRS research or that can guide AIRS researchers in the identification of important real-world problems that AIRS might solve. It is noted that AIRS has established Policy 7 on student liaison positions with partners and stakeholders. One of the goals of the Theme Leader would be to see that students in the Theme are taking on these positions.

- See that funds for students are well distributed to the sub-themes of the particular Theme with the joint goal of providing students educational/research opportunities in the name of advancing the goals of the Theme (including the goals of the Sub-themes).

II. A second primary role of the Theme leader is that of serving as a member of the Steering Committee which meets monthly by videoconference. This Committee oversees the day-to-day activities of AIRS, develops and reviews policy and sets deadlines and scheduling of all AIRS activities. The Theme Leaders share with the Director the responsibility for AIRS.. It is these four persons (The Director and the Three Theme Leaders supported by the Project Manager) who overview all activities of AIRS. As mentioned above: The Theme Leader is the conduit between the Theme and the AIRS Project as a whole, or between the Theme and the Steering Committee, the Theme and the Director, and the Theme and the other two Themes. The Theme Leader therefore in addition to thoroughly understanding and championing the goals of his or her particular Theme, ideally should have an interest in the other two Themes of AIRS, or, at least, strive to understand, appreciate and consider interrelationships among all three Themes while representing his or her particular theme. As a member of the Steering Committee, the Theme leader is best placed to see the potential for synergies with the other Themes and encouraging and facilitating their implementation through connecting with their Sub-Themes.

III. A third role of the Theme Leaders is to serve on the Review Committee for Student Funding Applications. Theme leaders also plan and participate in the Annual Meeting. Planning activities include participating in decisions on conference location and accommodation, as well as program content. Participation at the meeting involves attending talks and posters, presenting the annual update of the theme at the Conference opening plenary session, and providing leadership for future work in the theme as well as connecting to other themes.

IV. A fourth role of the Theme Leaders at the present time is to take responsibility for a planned edited volume (*Advances in Interdisciplinary Research in Singing*) representing singing from the perspective of the theme, with sections from each sub-theme and contributions from each of the AIRS members associated with the Theme (which may well include student co-authors) of the sub-themes. Assuming that one book will be devoted to each of the Themes, the Theme Leader would be a co-editor of the entire book; however, being named as editor from a publication standpoint would depend on responsibilities taken, as defined by criteria agreed on by the Policy and Planning Committee or a Publications Committee. Student support to assist with this endeavor may be requested by the Theme leader (capped at \$1000 for the current year). Particular duties assigned to the student assistant would be up to the discretion of the Theme Leader within the constraints that the student would benefit from the experience, gain knowledge about AIRS, and increase the efficiency of the Theme Leader in meeting the objectives of the Theme Leader role. Such tasks assigned to the student might include communications with Sub-theme leaders regarding progress on submission of abstracts, author biographies, draft chapters, provision of deadlines; checking for redundancy within submissions across sub-themes, sending doodle polls for Theme meetings, assuring that information needed by the Theme members is posted in appropriate places on the AIRS web-site, and so on.

Role and Responsibilities of AIRS Sub-theme Leaders

I. One primary role of the Sub-Theme leader is to take responsibility for the entire Sub-Theme. This means that the Theme leader aspires to:

- appreciate and embrace the milestones for the Sub-Theme (the Sub-Theme Leader may have been instrumental in formulating the milestones)
- understand and foster the connection between the Sub-Theme and the overall goals of the Theme and AIRS; provide intellectual leadership as well as practical advice to the Sub-Theme team members with the aim of achieving the goals of the sub-Theme in the context of the Theme and AIRS in general; this may entail facilitating and encouraging joint participation from sub-theme members in AIRS projects geared towards milestone completion, while focusing the Sub-theme on the Sub-themes key questions:
 - 1.1 How does perception influence development of singing
 - 1.2 What are the multimodal (visual, kinesthetic in addition to auditory) concomitants of the development of singing
 - 1.3 What does the AIRS test battery of singing skills inform us about the role of culture, age, gender, language, musical training on the development of singing
 - 2.1 How is singing acquired naturally?
 - 2.2 How does training accelerate improvement in singing outcomes (individually or in choral settings)
 - 2.3 How can the use of singing improve learning of other skills, behaviors, or subject matter
 - 3.1 Can singing improve cultural understanding as a kind of well-being, and if so, how?
 - 3.2 Can singing improve intergenerational understanding, and can intergenerational singing activities improve well-being, and if so, how? (see also 2.3)
 - 3.3 What are the direct benefits of singing to mental and physical health and how do they arise?
- serve as a conduit between the Sub-theme and: the Theme, the two other Sub-Themes for the Theme, the Director, the Steering Committee, the other two Themes and their sub-Themes, and other committees of AIRS; as an example, this may entail responding to requests from the Theme Leader for Sub-Theme updates, which requires being apprised of progress towards and challenges in achieving Sub-Theme goals and milestones via communication with Sub-Theme members and/or consultation of member quarterly reports understand and facilitate relations with AIRS community partners and stakeholders relevant to the Sub-Theme. Community partners have formal agreements with AIRS to work together on projects of mutual interest. The community partners have committed to contribute to AIRS (typically in-kind) with the purpose of obtaining data of

interest, or of creating an activity through which AIRS may obtain data of interest. The Sub-Theme Leaders need to be aware of the interests of Community Partners relevant to their Sub-Theme, and then try to include representation of these partners in the research plans for the Sub-Theme. Doing so can also offer real-world opportunities for students. The Sub-Theme Leaders may also develop new Partnerships for their Sub-Theme (and for the Theme and AIRS). Stakeholder relations are less formal, and without a written agreement of terms, but are no less important. The Stakeholder is any group that can benefit from knowledge of AIRS research or that can guide AIRS researchers in the identification of important real-world problems that AIRS might solve. It is noted that AIRS has established Policy 7 on student liaison positions with partners and stakeholders. One of the goals of the Sub-Theme Leader would be to see that students in the Sub-Theme are taking on these positions.

- submit an annual report for the sub-theme detailing progress toward milestones
- See that funds for students are well distributed to the sub-theme with the joint goal of providing students educational/research opportunities in the name of advancing the goals of the sub-theme.

II. A second primary role of the Sub-Theme leader is to serve as a member of the Policy and Planning Committee which meets at least twice annually by videoconference and once live at the Annual Meeting. This body votes on policy, reports on and evaluates progress, discusses new directions, and represents all facets of the project.

III. A third role of the Sub-Theme Leader entails involvement in the Annual Meeting the Sub-Theme Leader: in the morning opening plenary session, the Sub-theme Leader briefly overviews the progress of the Sub-theme for the Year. The Sub-Theme Leader should see that at least one student applies for funding to attend the annual meeting, and should encourage as many students and team members to attend and participate in the meeting. Sub-Theme Leaders may be asked to join the Student-Funding Review Committee or other Committees needing broad representation of AIRS.

IV. A fourth role of the Sub-Theme Leader at the present time is to serve as Editor (or co-editor) for a section of the planned edited volume *Interdisciplinary Research on Singing* representing singing from the perspective of the theme with sections from each sub-theme and contributions from each of the AIRS members (which may well include student co-authors) of the sub-themes. Assuming that the book will be devoted to the Theme, the Sub-Theme Leader would be a co-editor of the entire book; however, being named as editor from a publication standpoint would depend on responsibilities taken, as defined by criteria agreed on by the Policy and Planning Committee or a Publications Committee. Student support to assist with this endeavor may be requested by the Sub-Theme leader (capped at \$1000 for the current year). The student would be expected to assist in obtaining abstracts, biographies, drafts of papers, and assist in general with

manuscript co-ordination and routine editorial work (e.g., checking references, or overall style, helping persons whose first language may not be English).