



**Society
for American
Music**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025–2030



OUR MISSION AND VISION

Mission: The Society for American Music is dedicated to the study, teaching, creation, and dissemination of all musics in the Americas. As a collegial, inclusive scholarly community, we serve a wide and diverse array of academics, librarians, composers, performers, and members of the general public.

Vision: The vision of the Society for American Music is to be the preeminent catalyst for excellence in research, collaboration, and exchange on the diverse musics of the Americas. As a community of scholars, leaders, learners, and changemakers, SAM aims to nurture intellectual growth, support innovative projects, and facilitate meaningful partnerships across generations, institutions, and communities. By cultivating a robust member network and serving as a scholarly home for those dedicated to advancing music research, SAM aspires to be the leading society where American music scholarship thrives.

PRIORITIES

CONNECTION

Grow SAM's Membership Engagement and Support

SAM will serve its members by continuing to explore dynamic conference modalities that maximize connection and inclusivity, working to develop and implement engagement opportunities beyond annual conferences, continuing to support scholars via fellowships, awards, and top-tier publications related to music of the Americas, and leveraging SAM's welcoming network of peers to nurture researchers at all stages.

FOUNDATION

Strengthen SAM's Institutional Capacity

SAM will strengthen its organizational foundation by prioritizing fundraising efforts to increase staffing and program support, optimizing its governance and service opportunities, improving internal and external communication, and implementing a regular long-range planning process to ensure continued adaptability.

IMPACT

Extend SAM's Reach and Relevance

SAM will extend its relevance and reach by adapting to emerging directions in American music research and pedagogy, expanding its reputation as the original and primary forum for the study of musics of the Americas, and fostering strategic partnerships within and outside the academy.



CONNECTION

Grow SAM's Membership, Engagement, and Support



PRIORITIES

1. Celebrate and diversify SAM's welcoming network of peers, mentors, colleagues, and allies as the inclusive bedrock of its identity and values

2. Continue to explore dynamic conference modalities that maximize connection and inclusivity

3. Broaden and enrich support for scholars via our fellowships, awards, and top-tier publications

SMART GOALS

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- By August 31, 2025 the Finance Committee will circulate to the SAM Board a revised dues structure that includes at least four income-based membership tiers to be voted on at the September Board meeting, with implementation starting in the 2026 membership cycle.
 - By December 31, 2025 the Outreach Council's Committee chairs will send to SAM's Executive Committee broadly inclusive strategies for extending SAM's reach beyond its current contacts and constituencies.
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- By December 31, 2025 the SAM board will offer one online event for interested members to attend.
 - By February 15, 2026, SAM board members and the chairs of all SAM committees whose charges include publicity, website and digital forums, and communication will submit lists of possible non-conference options to keep SAM's community intact, engaged, and active between conferences.
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- By December 31, 2025 grant- and fellowship-awarding committees shall inform the development committee chair of the number of applications they have received. With this information, the board or finance committee will direct the development committee on prioritizing goals. The number of applicants for prior years will be tracked by the Secretary and reported to the board.
 - By August 31 each year, the Program Committee chair will include in their notification of acceptances 1) a sentence inviting all presenters to apply for awards for which they are eligible, 2) an invitation for students to join the SAM student forum, (3 an invitation for early career professionals to join the Forum for Early Career Professionals, and (4 for members of both groups to apply for SAM fellowships.



CONNECTION

Grow SAM's Membership,
Engagement, and Support



PRIORITIES

4. Develop meaningful membership engagement opportunities beyond the conference

5. Build clear pathways for members to participate in service opportunities and professional development to nurture researchers at all stages and career trajectories

SMART GOALS

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- By April 1 each year, the outgoing program chair will remind presenters to apply for relevant fellowships and grants.
 - By the next semiannual report, the JSAM and Bulletin editorial teams will develop a marketing strategy for driving submissions that emphasizes the unique benefits of each publication for authors and readers. This strategy will include multiple calls for submissions per year and should be assessed at least annually.
 - The JSAM Editor will provide a call for papers within each issue of the triannual SAM Bulletin.
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- By January 2026, given sufficient staff and volunteer support, SAM will offer opportunities for connection via periodic online events. The committees that comprise the Outreach Council will include suggestions for online events in their board reports. These events could highlight such things as research resources, professional development and new book talks.
 - By March 2026, the Membership and Education Committees, in conjunction with the Student Forum and Early Career Professional Forum, will pilot a SAM writing support group to engage members at a variety of career stages in support of their work.
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- By December 1, 2025 SAM will implement a transparent volunteer interest and appointment process that includes an annual open call for committee and project-based roles, a public-facing service opportunities list, and a brief interest form. The goal is to engage at least 30 new volunteers from a range of career stages, identities, and institutions.
 - By July 2026 SAM will pilot a professional development event and thereafter solicit members for suggestions for additional such events and names of volunteers who might lead them.



FOUNDATION

Strengthen SAM's Institutional Capacity



PRIORITIES

1. Strengthen SAM's organizational foundation by prioritizing fundraising efforts to increase staffing and program support

2. Optimize SAM's governance and committee structures to offer meaningful service and professional development opportunities to its members

SMART GOALS

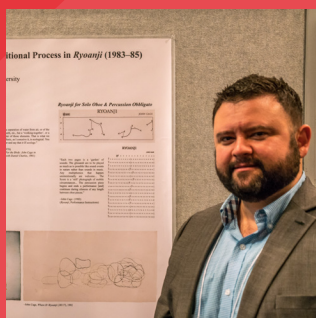
(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- The Development Committee and SAM leadership will develop a compelling case for support and launch a development campaign by March 2026 with the goal of raising \$1 Million in new funds for staffing and program support.
 - By September 1, 2026, leadership and the Development Committee will increase participation in the SAM Sustainers monthly giving program by 100%. With collaboration from the Communications Council, the campaign will include a "Why I Give" storytelling series, quarterly donor spotlights, and a year-end impact report to cultivate a culture of philanthropy and strengthen SAM's positioning for future grant applications.
 - By March 2026, the Communications Council will launch a year-round volunteer recognition initiative that includes quarterly "Volunteer Spotlights" on the website and social media, personalized thank-you messages from leadership, and acknowledging volunteers in the conference program. The goal is to acknowledge individual volunteers publicly and improve volunteer satisfaction, as measured by questions included on the annual survey.
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- By January 2026, the SAM Board, led by the Past President, will complete a comprehensive review and revision of all committee charters to clarify roles, responsibilities, and term limits. Additionally, the Board will develop a standardized transition guide for committee chairs, including key documentation templates and mentorship pairings, to be implemented for all new chair appointments starting in the 2026 service year.



FOUNDATION

Strengthen SAM's Institutional Capacity



PRIORITIES

3. Continue to enhance and improve SAM's internal and external communications

4. Streamline and regularize SAM's long-range planning process to ensure continued adaptability

SMART GOALS

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- By Fall 2025 SAM leadership will commission a comprehensive website refresh, including an updated homepage, simplified navigation and mobile optimization. A new content calendar will ensure updates at least twice per month.
 - In Fall 2025, create a SAM LinkedIn profile and begin to celebrate the accomplishments and recognition of members there with the goal of 2 member-focused posts per month by the end of 2026.
 - In society email communications, sustain a minimum 60% open rate and increase the click-through rate by 10% over 2024 benchmarks.
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- By September 2025, the LRPC will finalize and adopt an evaluation framework for reviewing and updating the Strategic Plan every five years, with annual check-ins documented each spring.



IMPACT

Extend SAM's Reach and Relevance



PRIORITIES

1. Adapt SAM's programs and capacity to respond to emerging directions in research and pedagogy

2. Expand SAM's reputation as the original and primary forum for the study of musics of the Americas

SMART GOALS

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- By March 2027, the Education Committee will begin a new initiative to expand public-facing resources for teachers of American musics.
 - By Spring 2026, all relevant SAM committees will present a committee-specific outreach plan in their semiannual reports to the Board for its consideration at the Spring 2026 Board meeting. These plans should work toward implementation by December 2026.
 - By Spring 2026, the Program Committee will add at least one "emerging area" to its annual call for papers, in addition to its traditional emphasis on the local and regional.
 - At the 2027 conference, SAM will begin a three-year pilot program allotting \$1,500 earmarked for featuring indigenous musicians local to our conference sites. After three years, the Board will collect input from the LAC chairs and Conference team to assess the success of this initiative.
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- March 2026, SAM's public relations committee will develop PR strategies reinforcing SAM's identity as an essential hub for American musics and their practitioners, providing direction to other SAM committees on how to enact this plan.



IMPACT

Extend SAM's Reach and Relevance



PRIORITIES

3. Foster active collaborations with scholarly societies within and outside the fields of musicology and music research

4. Leverage SAM's institutional standing to help members achieve meaningful and reciprocal partnerships outside the academy

SMART GOALS

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- By March 2027, SAM leadership will establish liaison partnerships with at least three other scholarly societies outside of music disciplines (e.g. American Studies) and host one joint event (in person or online) annually starting in 2028.
 - By Fall 2025, the SAM Executive Committee will appoint a coordinator to convene with representatives of peer organizations to address urgent policy issues confronting scholarly research and academic freedom.
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- The Committee for Career Diversity and Advocacy will generate resources to help SAM members engage with local musical communities (libraries, music service organizations, museums) and adapt to alternative career paths for music researchers outside academia.
 - By Fall 2025, the Board or its delegate(s) will encourage and track SAM-related or-sponsored events as part of an effort to celebrate and explore American music during the US 250 semiquincentennial.



Society for American Music

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