

## **The 10 Keys to Eliminate SENIORITIS for good in our Choral Program**

Senioritis can destroy a choir. When our supposed role models become lazy, unreliable, and defiant, our program suffers.

Fortunately, this is something that is within our control! Believe it or not, we have created the ability for our students to act this way AND we have the ability to change their behavior. A change in culture will change senioritis.

We must remember these senioritis-suffering students didn't join choir thinking it was the golden ticket to get into college. Students chose to partake and continue in our elective because they wanted to. So why should their acceptance into college impact their attitude?

There is no reason why a student whose next journey is about to begin cannot be taught to maximize their current experience.

In any successful high school choral program, the seniors should be the most vested students in the program, not the ones that negatively impact our ensemble with their ego, laziness, and poor attitude.

If we want our seniors to become the role models and pillars of our program each and every year, we need to create their trajectory from the moment they enter the program; we should even think about the way in which they will continue as alumni.

The best way to eliminate senioritis begins with the concept that every student who enters our program has the opportunity to improve, evolve, contribute, and give-back over the course of four years.

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### **1. Ensure every student feels welcomed from day 1, and is encouraged to stick with the program throughout their entire high school career**

Every student, regardless of talent or dedication has the basic human need to feel included. By welcoming everyone, our strongest singers right off the bat will learn the value of teamwork. Choir should not be "survival of the fittest", where only the bold few continue each and every year.

### **2. Ensure every student sees a path for personal growth throughout our program**

When all students, from their initial entrance into choir, see the potential for continuous growth in their skills, opportunities, and leadership, there becomes a universal potential to be vested. That opportunity will set the foundation that over the course of time, hard work, both musically and organizationally, is rewarded; as a result, all students will be likely to show appreciation as they conclude their final months of their high school career.

### **3. Ensure every student in the entire choir is thought of and treated as an individual**

When every student is given the opportunity to create their own path, we now have the opportunity to recognize them for their uniqueness and their contribution within our program. Students will be recognized for both musical and non-musical contributions such as "best baker", someone who decorates the room, "the most thoughtful", the student who gives a group pep talk, a section leader, etc. Students who feel important are far less likely to want to let down the group when the end is near.

### **4. Ensure every upperclassmen learns to support the path of the younger students**

When all students are capable of growing through the program, the older students will want the younger students to experience that same joy. Upperclassmen will quickly learn to become role models and supporters of the students who will one day be filling their shoes. This will make the final months of choir a period of transition from current leaders (upperclassmen), to the leaders for the following year.

### **5. Ensure every student is recognized more for their improvement than their final product**

We are all works in progress. When students learn that there is always another level to grow, they will not become complacent and egoic as they reach the end of our program; they will want to maximize their experience, and may even begin to figure out how they will continue their journey beyond our program.

## **6. Ensure our performances embrace tradition and involve our full ensemble**

When concerts exhibit a sense of tradition, students in the program quickly learn to understand the value and impact on both the community and our alumni. As they propel through the program, many will start to envision themselves as alumni who come back. The traditions in a Spring concert help seniors to view their final semester as an honor, rather than a holding pen before college.

## **7. Ensure every officer is carefully chosen for being a role model**

Officers must be role models who set the tone for an ensemble. If role models are respected by their peers for what they bring to the choir, they will continue to set the tone until the very last day of class. When leaders are chosen strictly by vote rather than a high-quality process, we end up with leaders who can end up bringing down the choir in the final months of school. Great leaders will give pep talks, keep the morale high, keep the ensemble organized, and lead by example every day.

## **8. Ensure every tradition is rooted in positivity**

Choir tradition must be positive and unifying. Hazing activities and activities that divide (seniors picking on underclassmen, or having a certain area in the room only for seniors) are sure-fire ways to create snobbery that will end up perpetuating senioritis.

## **9. Ensure most seniors have roles that give back to the ensemble**

Roles do not always need to be designated. The concept of giving back is what we should be instilling. When underclassmen feel as if the seniors are there to help them, the choir becomes cohesive. When seniors feel looked-up-to by the underclassmen as a result of their efforts, they will demonstrate positive behaviors, rather than negative, attention-seeking behaviors that are aimed at impressing those same students.

## **10. Ensure every senior is recognized for their unique contribution**

When seniors graduate, they need to feel recognized for who they are. When all students in the choir see each senior being recognized, they start to think about their own legacy. This isn't about giving out false awards; this is about recognizing each graduating member for who they truly are.

### ***Last words:***

*I wrote a recent blog post that is available on my website entitled [Choir Senioritis? – 11 Ways To Minimize the Symptoms](#), which addresses ways to deal with the symptoms of senioritis, as it is occurring. These concepts minimize the damage but don't solve the annual occurrence.*

*Senioritis can be eliminated through a series of long-term choices within our choral program. This PDF gives you the tools to make senioritis an illness of the past.*