



**April 2021
For Release**

The University of Pennsylvania Glee Club, the University's first performing arts group and one of the oldest continuously running glee clubs in the United States, has announced the passing of a vote on April 9, 2021 to become fully gender-inclusive.

In addition, the University of Pennsylvania Sirens, the University's premier all-female vocal ensemble, will formally merge with Penn Glee Club, granting them full membership status. The Penn Sirens will continue performing as an SSAA subgroup within the Penn Glee Club, joining the Penn Pipers, the Club's TTBB subgroup, paying homage to the history of both groups.

The vote comes after several years of discussion and nearly a year of careful deliberation, research, and communication between both groups and their alumni, under the guidance of staff.

Jake Milner, President of the Penn Glee Club, said, "Opening membership in the Singers section to all genders is an important step in the right direction as the Penn Glee Club continues to prioritize the crucial goal of becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive space for all of our current and future members. With this vote, we better represent Penn's student body and move one step closer to fulfilling our self-proclaimed status as the unofficial musical ambassadors of the University. We're grateful for the support of many Penn staff members, our Director, Daniel Carsello, and our alumni throughout this process, and we're excited to join in song with the Penn Sirens for this exciting new chapter in the Glee Club's history."

Laurie McCall, director of Platt Student Performing Arts House, shared, "Moving away from gender-based restrictions on membership eligibility is a true reflection of our students and their full embrace of equity and access for all. Both organizations explored many scenarios before coming to their final decision together. We at Platt House are very proud of their thoughtful work."

This is not the first major change to the Penn Glee Club's gender-based membership rules. While the Club was founded as an all-male, TTBB choir, woman-identifying and non-binary-identifying students have been eligible for membership as accompanists and members of the Technical Staff and PGC Band for decades and have performed with the Club for nearly a century.

In 2018, Susanna Jaramillo became the first woman-identifying President in the Club's long history. Jaramillo ran with the intention to explore the possibility of moving to a gender-inclusive Singers section and adding sopranos and altos to the Penn Glee Club.

Jaramillo said, "Moving the Club to full gender inclusivity was the thing I wanted most when I was a member, and to see it finally realised is such an exciting thing. Every year, there would be women who would want to audition to sing, and we would always have to turn them away. The thought of no one being told they can't sing with the Glee Club on the basis of their gender from now on brings me a lot of joy. This is a huge step towards equity in the performing arts at Penn, and the knowledge that woman-identifying and trans folks can have the opportunity to perform and tour and bond with the group in ways they couldn't before is incredible. I'm really proud of the work that both Jake and Daniel and the Club as a whole have done to continue and implement this initiative. And, as an alum, I'm thrilled to be welcoming the Sirens and all future non-male-identifying singers into the PGC family."

"This historic merger ensures that the Penn Glee Club truly represents all students at the University and provides exceptional performance opportunities for all Penn students. The Penn Sirens are thrilled to be a part of the first gender-inclusive Singers class," said Marina Dauer, President of Penn Sirens. "Over the past year, we have worked closely with the Glee Club to ensure a smooth and successful transition. We hope that this decision contributes to a larger trend of inclusivity within the performing arts and the Penn community as a whole."

The Penn Glee Club's first performance as a fully gender-inclusive group will take place during the virtual Baccalaureate ceremony on Sunday, May 16th. Recruitment for new members will take place in the Fall 2021 semester and will be open to all undergraduate students.

For questions, kindly contact:

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