VOLUNTEER ANNOUNCERS’ PROPOSED PLAN

FOR WTJU RENEWAL

July 10, 2010

This plan was developed by a committee of music directors and a few volunteer announcers. It was endorsed by all four music departments of WTJU. Based on continued input by volunteer announcers, and other stakeholders, more details and further refinements will follow.

Introduction and Executive Summary

We are very concerned about drastic changes to WTJU that may be imminent and the process articulated thus far to implement changes. To the Office of Public Affairs’ (OPA) credit, in response to an outburst of concern about wholesale changes announced in June to be effective 5 July, OPA has initiated the town hall meeting and public forum on WTJU’s website to elicit comments. While a positive gesture, the allotted time is too short to allow for meaningful discussion of the issues and opportunity to comment by itself is not sufficient when a collaborative process is necessary. Further, we believe that a rational way to proceed is to make changes in those areas in which we can all agree need changing, such as greater student involvement, closer connections with the University Departments, more successful fundraising, increased outreach, and more effective promotion of WTJU. These changes should first be pursued and implemented, and their effectiveness evaluated before any drastic changes to programming would be considered. The needed improvements should be accomplished through an inclusive and collaborative process. The volunteer staff of WTJU seeks to partner with students and departments of the University of Virginia, the general manager and the listenership to bring about change, consistent with our station mission (see at the end of this document), that will:

1. Extend awareness of WTJU to University students, faculty, music and other academic departments and the surrounding Charlottesville community.

2. Leverage the Internet and web-streaming technologies to extend that community beyond the current range of our transmitter signal.

3. Improve fundraising above and beyond periodic marathon pledge solicitations.
4. Build on the core value of WTJU’s 53-year plus legacy as a “free-form” station that encompasses classical, jazz, folk and rock genres in a unique presentation that distinguishes us not only from commercial radio, but most non-commercial stations (even those that broadcast some combinations of those genres).

5. Develop a relationship of mutual respect and creativity among all stakeholders.

6. We recommend refining this proposed plan during the summer in an all inclusive, open process, and using the next school year to implement recommended actions and to evaluate their effectiveness.

7. Pursue excellence first.

We believe our recommendations strengthen the station’s relationships with the University and the community we serve, increase our audience and funding, attract a larger pool of both student and community volunteers, and serve the growing musical and arts scene that has resulted in Charlottesville’s continual ranking as one of the best places to live in the United States. We offer these ideas not to protect our individual shows or musical preferences; we do so because we are committed to seeing WTJU thrive in fulfilling its mission.

Proposal for a New Planning Process

In response to your invitation for recommendations from the volunteer staff on ways to improve WTJU (an opportunity many volunteers have sought for years), the volunteer announcers from all four music departments have developed a conceptual and procedural plan for moving WTJU forward by addressing the targets management presented in the meeting with the departments on Thursday, June 24. This plan is collaborative and inclusive and, we believe, has a great chance of long-term success. We have referred to the Commission on the Future of the University (COFU) report for guidance on the process for change within University organizations. We also closely reviewed the official WTJU mission statement. The goals we seek to accomplish are:

• to strengthen WTJU’s involvement with UVA students and departments, in order to enhance the student experience, to increase collaboration with UVA departments and to increase listenership;

• to strengthen WTJU’s involvement with the community (which is also expected to increase listenership);

• to increase revenue; and
• to continually improve program delivery, while maintaining programming integrity across all departments.

The last goal is a vital addition to the list outlined in the 6/24 meeting. WTJU has a great product – “original, rich, and diverse programming of music and other forms of expression, free from the direct constraints of commercial interests…offering a significant alternative to other broadcast media in the area….” (WTJU-FM mission statement, http://wtju.radio.virginia.edu/record/mission.) WTJU announcers have consistently fulfilled the station’s mission to deliver rich and diverse programming by having the freedom to create their own shows. What WTJU has lacked, however, is an effective, well-laid out plan for promoting the station. Those who listen to WTJU, as the forum comments show, do so because of our rich, diverse, and unique programming. We need to build on and promote those strengths, rather than completely revamping the station’s programming.

We strongly believe that the first step to strengthen WTJU is to better market and promote the station, which will lead to increased listenership, community involvement and, consequently, increased community contributions, underwriting and other financial support.

Management, full time staff and volunteers all want WTJU to succeed. What does success look like? WTJU is successful if it serves the University’s mission and the station’s mission effectively and honors the core values of COFU (excellence and diversity.) We recommend refining this proposed plan during the summer in an all inclusive, open process, and using the next school year to implement recommended actions and to evaluate their effectiveness.

Strengthening the station’s focus on University and community outreach should be top priorities. In addition to serving the University, this is expected to result in increased listenership, which in turn improves fundraising. These require strategic planning, as well as commitment of time, ideas and resources by all involved (OPA, station manager, fulltime station staff, volunteers and beyond.) Careful planning must be based upon thorough analysis of solid data. Consistent follow-through is needed in the following areas, also detailed earlier:

1. Broaden University involvement to include both students and departments
2. Community Involvement
3. Revenue
4. Programming Excellence and Delivery

The WTJU volunteer staff is committed to do our share in these areas. The Office of Public Affairs’, the station manager’s and WTJU’s fulltime staff’s active involvement and support are essential for success. Measures and methods for
measurement need to be developed for each of the areas. Baseline data need to be collected about current conditions. Planning and preparing effectively to strengthen the station’s focus on the University and reaching out to the community require significant commitment on behalf of all involved.

Developing Action Plans, Benchmarks and Timelines

Action plans for the four targeted areas will be developed both by WTJU music departments and by the station as a whole through collaboration, with appropriate benchmarks and timelines. The action plans will have both music department specific and station specific elements and will be coordinated accordingly. A number of excellent suggestions have already been made as part of the forum and other avenues. These will be reviewed, along with other suggestions.

Set forth below are a few preliminary ideas, developed through discussions with stakeholders, for each of the areas identified for improvement:

Increasing Student Involvement

- encouraging the formation and registration of a student organization comprised of WTJU student volunteers,
- increasing the number of student volunteers by being present at UVA events,
- arranging for course credit and stipends for student interns and others,
- increasing and revising WTJU’s web presence.

Involving UVA Departments

- pursuing relationships and shared opportunities with UVA’s Music Department,
- creating 5 minute segments between genres dedicated to airing mini shows of UVA life,
- working with departments to create 5 minute segments of UVA life.

Increasing Community Engagement
o partnering with local schools to interest young students in new media,

o students airing student performances and reaching out to high schools,

o working with community-based organizations to increase the quantity and utility of public service announcements,

o having more interviews and performances of musicians,

o pursuing relationships with established concert series such as the Tuesday Evening Concert Series, the Charlottesville and University Symphony Orchestra,

o outreach to local organizations to collaborate on creating programs,

o having a presence at community events.

**Revenue**

o improving effectiveness of on-air fund drives,

o working with the University’s Development Office to create annual gifts, endowment and other revenue streams for the station.

o developing a newsletter for donors.

**Programming Excellence and Delivery**

o developing an on-line survey to measure listener satisfaction with show content and deejay performance,

o evaluating, in an inclusive process, current program scheduling for potential near-term consistency improvements,

o creating an inclusive process to analyze programming scenarios for potential long term programming improvements,

o leveraging the Internet and web-streaming technologies to extend the current range of our transmitter signal.

Key metrics and benchmarking will be developed to measure and monitor all of these activities to evaluate progress and ensure UVA practices and standards are met.
We recommend that WTJU form committees for each specific area of concern with representatives from each of the departments, station manager, WTJU staff, etc. The committees should report their findings and recommendations, on an ongoing basis, to the larger WTJU station, with the opportunity for comment, and with written reports that will be shared. We believe that creating open, transparent, inclusive processes is essential. For the processes to be effective, the committees will need current, accurate benchmarks prepared by the WTJU staff and the station manager, setting forth, for example, the current level of student involvement, how much the community is engaged, how much professional development for announcers and volunteers is currently offered, and the total amount of fundraising from all sources.

We recognize that this process will take a significant investment of time and work, but believe the results will be of the highest possible quality.

Summary

We universally endorse an approach that focuses on the three targets OPA articulated through means that neither limit nor negatively affect the fourth target, maintaining the station's programming integrity or content. We strongly recommend to not make any major programming changes while the efforts described above are underway and have been reviewed for effectiveness. The above statements are supported by all music departments.

We will gladly work to create a complete list of suggestions for each target by including original suggestions and compiling and organizing a list of other ideas that have come from outside of the station membership. Though we have worked earnestly to be able to submit that compilation as part of our proposal, the time available to develop this proposal has been too short for us to complete the task of collating the large number of strategy suggestions.

Thank you for this opportunity to be involved in guiding the change process for WTJU.

Plan develop or reviewed by:

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WTJU’s Mission Statement
WTJU-FM is a non-commercial educational radio station licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to the Rector and Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia.

The objectives of WTJU are:

* To present original, rich, and diverse programming of music and other forms of expression free from the direct constraints of commercial interests, reflecting the broadest educational goals of the University.

* To provide the University and surrounding communities with a significant alternative to other broadcast media within the station's service area.

* To provide educational, entertaining music and public affairs programming, and information on issues and events of interest to the community.

* To serve as a communications link between the University and surrounding communities, bringing the resources of the University to its neighbors, providing opportunities for participation in the creation of programming and the experience of broadcasting, and fostering closer contact among different groups.

* To archive selected recorded material acquired or produced by WTJU.

Support for WTJU's programming comes from you, the listener. It is during our two fund drives that we offer our listeners the opportunity to pledge support for the station, ten plus days of exciting "in depth" coverage of music and special programs. The money raised during these events goes strictly to the operational support of WTJU and we thank you for it.