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WFIU's Strategic Plan

by Will Murphy, WFIU Station Operations Director

WFIU has just completed a new strategic plan, and now we begin the task of implementation. The plan is guided by four primary aspirations: to lead with compelling content; to reflect the unique interests and character of our region; to connect our region to the world; and to excel in all we do.

We've taken as a guiding principle one of the tenets of NPR's first mission statement, drafted in 1970 by Bill Siemering, NPR's first director of programming. It is still essential to what we do:

“National Public Radio will serve the individual: it will promote personal growth; it will regard the individual differences among [people] with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness.”



Will Murphy speaks to longtime WFIU members at the insider lunch in Columbus

Technologies and tastes have changed since those words were written 45 years ago, but respect, civility, balance, and fairness have remained constants at WFIU, and are perhaps more

precious and necessary now than they were in the 1970s.

Part of our plan involves a greater involvement in the communities we serve, and we recently took a first step in that direction. We held meetings in Bloomington, Terre Haute, and Columbus with some long-time listeners, to get their feedback on how we might improve our service to south-central Indiana. We hope to build on those meetings, and we value the comments and suggestions we received.

You can find the full strategic plan on our website: wfiu.org.

(Cover photo: WFIU Program Director John Bailey admires the vintage WFIU and NPR gear worn by Ron Moon to the Terre Haute insider lunch. Moon says he's been tuning in and donating since before WFIU installed its 95.1 FM translator.)



Mission

As public media from Indiana University, WFIU's mission is to engage and create community with thoughtful, intelligent, relevant content that inspires, informs, enriches, and entertains.

Founding

"National Public Radio will serve the individual: it will promote personal growth; it will regard the individual differences among [people] with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness."

(Siemering, 1970)

Aspirations

Embedded in our mission are four aspirations:

- **Leading** with Compelling Content
- **Reflecting** the Unique Interests & Character of Our Region
- **Connecting** Our Region to the World
- **Excelling** in All We Do

Vision

If we succeed in mission, reach our aspirations and uphold our values, we will be a vital, sustainable organization. We will:

- Maintain a vibrant, thriving and loyal audience
- Provide a best-in-class audience experience across platforms
- Advance as a leading source for news, information, and cultural programming in our region
- Continually improve and innovate as a station

All while affirming and implementing our Code of Integrity.

Strategic Direction

Leading with Compelling Content

WFIU is first and foremost a provider of high-quality content. Without this focus, we will drift. With it front of mind, we begin with the following strategic objectives.

- Provide content, activity and a "sound" that is thoughtful, intelligent, and relevant to our audience
- Collaborate across our region for content that reflects the best of Indiana's arts, culture, and life

Reflecting the Unique Interests & Character of Our Region

In a digital age, WFIU must be more than a connection to NPR. Our connection to the region and reflection of its interests is what makes us relevant, vital and sustainable as a station. As such, we must not simply talk to, but must engage with, develop and listen to our audience, as described in the following objectives.

- Engage audience and expand relevance through location, relationships, and community presence
- Maintain a vibrant, thriving and loyal audience – advanced via thoughtful efforts and evaluation
- Ensure that WFIU is a critical part of our region and our region is a critical part of the station

Connecting Our Region to the World

Just as WFIU reflects our region and its interests, we also connect our region to the world and the world to our region – as described in the objectives that follow.

- Maximize our reach and audience across our region as a multi-format, multi-platform station
- Expand the station's reach beyond our region by emphasizing relationships, syndication and digital opportunities

Excelling in All We Do

Indiana University holds excellence as its cornerstone principle. As a unit of IU, WFIU holds excellence equally dear. We recognize that its pursuit is critical to our mission. As such we must have the standards and systems in place to ensure excellence as described in the objectives that follow.

- Ensure a consistent, seamless audience experience on par with the best that public media has to offer
- Cultivate a culture within WFIU that breaks down silos, stretches all to raise the bar, encourages innovation and creativity, and fosters pride
- Ensure financial health and resource stability for the station



wfiu.org
Strategic Direction

Introduction

On January 5, 1922, Indiana University (IU) physics professor Rolla Roy Ramsey conducted a demonstration of “wireless telephony” for a group of 75 students and faculty. Ramsey’s experiments sparked the first calls for a radio station on campus. Broadcasts began in 1937 with a series of eclectic 15-minute music and discussion segments, and in 1944 the IU Board of Trustees issued a proclamation that “it would be desirable and practicable for Indiana University to own and operate a frequency modulation [fm] noncommercial educational broadcast station.” Finally, September 1950 brought the first licensed broadcast of WFIU across the Bloomington airwaves. In the decades following, WFIU has grown to become a touchstone of lifelong learning not just within the University but reaching far beyond it. The aspirations first expressed nearly 100 years ago are still with us today in the opportunity to connect people to each other, their community and the world through the medium of sound – a medium with warmth and intimacy.

Core Principles

Because a plan must be able to address all the opportunities that may arise in the life of an organization, we turn to our founding, mission, aspirations, and vision as our guide – the through line for all that we do. To borrow from Provost Robel’s 2015 State of the Campus address, this plan is intended “to be an argument for the power and efficacy of our collective work, for the whole being more than the sum of its parts, for the importance both of durable principles and of reinvention. It is intended to be a call to pride in our collective mission, and to our powers of generative thinking.”

Founding

“National Public Radio will serve the individual: it will promote personal growth; it will regard the individual differences among [people] with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness.”¹

Mission

As public media from Indiana University, WFIU’s mission is to engage and create community with thoughtful, intelligent, relevant content that inspires, informs, enriches, and entertains.

¹ Siemering, William H., “National Public Radio Purposes”, 1970. Early in 1970, Bill Siemering — one of the organizers of National Public Radio and later its first program director — put together a “mission statement” for NPR. The statement supported NPR’s request for aid from CPB and went on to define the network’s first daily program, *All Things Considered*, which debuted May 3, 1971. (<http://current.org/2012/05/national-public-radio-purposes/>)

Aspirations

Embedded in our mission are four aspirations, each reflecting our values:

- **Leading** with Compelling Content
- **Reflecting** the Unique Interests & Character of Our Region ²
- **Connecting** Our Region to the World
- **Excelling** in All We Do

Vision

If we succeed in mission, reach our aspirations and uphold our values, we will be a vital, sustainable organization. We will:

- Maintain a vibrant, thriving and loyal audience ³
- Provide a best-in-class audience experience across platforms
- Advance as a leading source for news, information, and cultural programming in our region
- Continually improve and innovate as a station

All while affirming and implementing our Code of Integrity ⁴.

Goals & Strategies

Leading with Compelling Content

WFIU is first and foremost a provider of high-quality content that inspires, informs, enriches, and entertains. Without this focus, we will drift. With it front of mind, we begin with the following strategic objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide content, activity and a “sound” that is thoughtful, intelligent, and relevant to our audience

- A. Continue to develop signature programming that is compelling for our audience
- B. Nurture a stable of trusted, consistent, professional hosts
- C. Support a robust newsroom that offers significant short- and long-form reportage and conversation
- D. Use content-focused events to augment, enhance, develop, and share our original and acquired programming

OBJECTIVE 2: Collaborate across our region for content that reflects the best of Indiana’s arts, culture, and life

- A. Develop key relationships within Indiana University, resulting in the following:
 - A healthy and regular stream of unique local content
 - A professional lab for students to create content, honing production and presentation skills
 - A partner in sharing IU expertise nationally
 - New and exciting platforms for content distribution
- B. Develop additional community partnerships to create content aligned with strategic priorities
- C. Explore strategically beneficial partnerships among Indiana’s public media entities

² Further defined in Objective 8 of this plan, “**Our Community**” our “**Our Region**” is the area anchored by Indiana University from Indianapolis south.

³ Throughout this document you will see a deliberate use of “audience” rather than “listener.” This reflects ALL the ways we serve our region and the ways in which individuals can interact with WFIU.

⁴ See <http://indianapublicmedia.org/about/publicinfo/public-media-code-integrity/>

Reflecting the Unique Interests & Character of Our Region

In a digital age, WFIU must be more than a connection to NPR. Our connection to the region and reflection of its interests is what makes us relevant, vital and sustainable as a station. As such, we must not simply talk to, but must engage with, develop and listen to our audience, as described in the following objectives.

OBJECTIVE 3: Engage audience and expand relevance through location, relationships, and community presence

- A. Target our geographic strategy as public media from Indiana University, emphasizing the region from Indianapolis south
- B. Emphasize community and audience activity in targeted locales, treating them as “centers of gravity” within our broadcast region
- C. Develop partnerships in key population centers that deepen audience engagement across our region
- D. Maintaining an active and visible presence in our communities through a variety of activities (e.g., events, staff presentations, displays)

OBJECTIVE 4: Maintain a vibrant, thriving and loyal audience – advanced via thoughtful goals and evaluation

- A. Set concrete audience goals with annual work plans to achieve targets and systems for evaluating progress
- B. Maximize station awareness so that anyone in our targeted region is aware of us and our brand
- C. Build our presence in key population centers so that anyone with an interest in WFIU has the opportunity to personally connect with the station
- D. Deepen audience relationships to entice the casual listener to become a loyal listener, and persuade the loyal to become member/donors

OBJECTIVE 5: Ensure that WFIU is a critical part of our region and our region is a critical part of the station

- A. Create content with a sense of place that reflects the culture and sensibilities of our region
- B. Encourage audience feedback, both quantitative and qualitative, and let it inform decision-making where appropriate
- C. Continue to engage our Community Advisory Board – serving WFIU while reflecting the diverse needs/interests of the region as:
 - An ambassador and advocate for WFIU in our region
 - A model for volunteer and donor engagement in WFIU
 - A partner in gathering audience perspectives and feedback
 - A group of trusted advisors in support of specific goals and strategies
 - A testing ground for new ideas, policies, and endeavors as WFIU continues to adapt and grow

Connecting Our Region to the World

Just as WFIU reflects our region and its interests, we also connect our region to the world and the world to our region – as described in the objectives that follow.

OBJECTIVE 6: Maximize our reach and audience across our region as a multi-format, multi-platform station

- A. Develop music-centered and news/information streams that align with regional interests and national public media practices
 - Broadcast of one or more streams by market as supported by data and thoughtfully planned implementation
 - Enhanced marketing of both streams for expanded reach and assured success – broadcast and digital
- B. Explore greater alignment of translator service with our geographic strategy, key population centers, and desired engagement within each
- C. Promote a sense of connection among those who engage with WFIU primarily or entirely online – around our region, nation, and world

OBJECTIVE 7: Expand the station's reach beyond our region by emphasizing relationships, syndication and digital opportunities

- A. Expand syndication so that we can extend our reach, and the University's mission beyond our region, across the nation
 - Deepen current syndicator relationships and explore new ones in order to expand our reach across public media
 - Increase internal emphasis on syndication by expanding staff time allocated to it
- B. Fully embrace a multi-platform approach that makes the most of our content and ensures an effective response to changing technology
 - Incorporate a multi-platform mindset into the planning and development of all WFIU content
 - Ensure a digital experience that meets the standards of our audio brand

Excelling in All We Do

Indiana University holds excellence as its cornerstone principle. As a unit of IU, WFIU holds excellence equally dear. We recognize that its pursuit is critical to our mission. As such we must have the standards and systems in place to ensure excellence as described in the objectives that follow.

OBJECTIVE 8: Ensure a consistent, seamless audience experience on par with the best that public media has to offer

- A. Develop and implement station-wide standards and aspirations for high-quality content and production values across all platforms
- B. Develop and implement program-level standards and aspirations
- C. Ensure consistent implementation of those standards by embracing continuous improvement, training, evaluation and accountability

OBJECTIVE 9: Cultivate a culture within WFIU that breaks down silos, stretches all to raise the bar, encourages innovation and creativity, and fosters pride

- A. Develop leadership and planning norms that ensure WFIU works in concert with all departments of RTVS
- B. Instill a culture of innovation and continuous improvement throughout the station using annual work plans, staff evaluation and training, clear communication of expectations, constructive criticism, data-based decision making, and accountability to reinforce the impact of such a culture
- C. Implement a matrix / team approach that aligns content and key operations across platforms – reinforcing standards of excellence, ensuring coordination and maximizing content reach
- D. Organize our physical work environment to facilitate and reinforce these cultural shifts

OBJECTIVE 10: Ensure financial health and resource stability for the station

- A. Continually work to improve station efficiency
- B. Expand the influx of non-Indiana University income streams (e.g., syndication)
- C. Commit to strategic capital upgrades and investments as prudent and practicable and to ensure an effective response to changing technology
- D. Continually update member and development processes in response to audience, digital opportunities and industry norms
- E. Increase station capacity in syndication, engineering and digital content in order to succeed in meeting plan goals
- F. Expand our use of interns and volunteers as a resource to the station, a connection within our communities, and an opportunity to educate
- G. Redesign the RTVS organizational chart in support of this and prior objectives

Appendix: The Origin of Our Values

Readers of this document should recognize WFIU's values in each of the following (especially as highlighted in **bold**), and in doing so, understand that the station is part of a network, profession and community of practice with shared values and aspirations.

Public Media Code of Integrity

Public broadcasters have adopted shared principles to strengthen the **trust** and **integrity** that communities expect of valued public service institutions.

Public media organizations contribute to a strong **civil society** and active **community** life, provide access to knowledge and culture, extend education, and offer varied viewpoints and sensibilities. The freedom of public media professionals to make editorial decisions without undue influence is essential. It is rooted in America's commitment to **free speech** and a **free press**. It is reflected in the unique and critical media roles that federal, state, and local leaders have encouraged and respected across the years. It is affirmed by the courts. Trust is equally fundamental. Public media organizations create and reinforce trust through rigorous, voluntary standards for the integrity of programming and services, fundraising, community interactions, and organizational governance. These standards of integrity apply to all the content public media organizations produce and present, regardless of subject matter, including news, science, history, information, music, arts, and culture. These standards apply across all public media channels and platforms – broadcasting, online, social media, print, media devices, and in-person events. Public media, individually and collectively:

- Contribute to communities' civic, educational, and cultural life by presenting a range of **ideas** and cultures and offering a robust forum for **discussion and debate**.
- Commit to **accuracy** and **integrity** in the pursuit of facts about events, issues, and important matters that affect communities and people's lives.
- Pursue **fairness** and **responsiveness** in content and services, with particular attention to reflecting **diversity** of demography, culture, and beliefs.
- Aim for **transparency** in newsgathering, reporting, and other content creation and share the reasons for important editorial and programming choices.
- Protect the editorial process from the fact and appearance of undue influence, exercising care in seeking and accepting funds and setting careful boundaries between contributors and content creators.
- Encourage understanding of fundraising operations and practices, acknowledge program sponsors, and disclose content-related terms of sponsor support.
- Maintain **respectful** and **accountable** relationships with individual and organizational contributors.
- Seek editorial **partnerships** and **collaborations** to enhance capacity, perspective, timeliness, and relevance and apply public media standards to these arrangements.
- Expect employees to uphold public media's integrity in their personal as well as their professional lives, understanding that employee actions, even when "off the clock," affect **trust, integrity, credibility, and impartiality**.
- Promote the **common good**, the **public interest**, and these commitments to integrity and trustworthiness in organizational governance, leadership, and management.

The Public Media Code of Integrity was developed by the Affinity Group Coalition and the Station Resource Group, collectively representing public television and radio stations and service organizations from across the country, with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (<http://www.codeofintegrity.org>).

Ratified by both the WFIU and WTIU Community Advisory Boards in December 2013. (<http://indianapublicmedia.org/about/publicinfo/public-media-code-integrity/>)

NPR Guiding Principles – excerpts

This is NPR. And these are the standards we will uphold.

NPR is at its core a news organization. Our news content, whether on the radio, on the web, or in any other form, must attain the highest quality and strengthen our credibility. We take pride in our craft. Our journalism is as accurate, fair and complete as possible. Our journalists conduct their work with honesty and respect, and they strive to be both independent and impartial in their efforts. Our methods are transparent and we will be accountable for all we do. We hold those who serve and influence the public to a high standard when we report about their actions. We must ask no less of ourselves. Journalism is a daily process of painting an ever truer picture of the world. Every step of this process – from reporting to editing to presenting information – may either strengthen or erode the public's trust in us. We work hard to be worthy of that trust and to protect it. These principles are intended to guide our journalism, both as it is performed and as it is perceived, to help us earn and keep the confidence of the public. The principles exist not only to answer questions, but more importantly, to raise them. By regularly discussing and debating how these principles apply to our work, we will produce journalism worthy of NPR's name and the public we serve.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Accuracy | • Completeness | • Independence | • Transparency | • Respect |
| • Fairness | • Honesty | • Impartiality | • Accountability | • Excellence |

We will fulfill the high standard we owe the public if we hold true to our principles. Doing so requires that we embrace complexity and continually think through difficult decisions. While these principles reinforce each other, they also are often in tension. In all situations, we balance them against one another, striving to honor our mission. This statement is intended not only to serve as a guide, but also to provoke ongoing discussion and deliberation – the keys to any ethical decision-making process. It should both test and strengthen the moral compass that guides each of us in our work. It aims to foster a culture that compels and empowers us to exercise our consciences each day. We believe it is our shared responsibility to live up to these principles.

Full document available at <http://ethics.npr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/NPR-Guiding-Principles-2.22.2012-Final-Edition.pdf>.