April 24, 1992

TO: President’s Council
    Planning Council
    Deans’ Council
    GSA President
    ASUNM President
    Staff Council President
    KUNM Task Force
    KUNM General Manager
    KUNM Staff
    KUNM Radio Board

FROM: Paul G. Risser, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Future Directions and Organization of KUNM-FM

As you know, the University of New Mexico is comprehensively evaluating many of its programs to ensure that each is of high quality and continues to meet the mission of the institution in the context of the UNM 2000 Plan. KUNM-FM has been included in this evaluation process, and the KUNM-FM Task Force recently completed its report which has been reviewed by the KUNM Radio Board and others. In addition, the radio station has been the subject of several previous internal reviews and I have also sought advice from knowledgeable professionals both locally and elsewhere in the United States.

It is my judgment that significant changes must be made if KUNM-FM is to meet its mission as set forth by the Board of Regents and if the radio station is to meet the high-quality expectations of other parts of the University.

The attached discussion notes that though KUNM-FM does provide some strong programming, the radio station does not always meet the expectation of high-quality production and it has not demonstrated sufficient benefit from its role in an academic institution. Moreover, the current organizational structure has led to some paralysis in developing dynamic programming and has tended to contribute to continuing and unnecessary contention that does not reflect well on the University.

The attached draft document is my preliminary recommendation to the Board of Regents. Please provide any advice and suggestions to me by May 8, 1992, so that a final recommendation can be completed.

Thanks.

PGR: mb
Attachment
cc: Regent Siegfried Hecker, Chair, Academic Affairs Committee
DRAFT
Revision of KUNM-FM

Introduction

KUNM-FM is the University's FM radio station, licensed from the Federal Communications Commission to the Board of Regents as a non-commercial educational radio facility, whose purpose as defined by law is to serve in the public interest, convenience and necessity. Over the years, KUNM-FM has served the radio community, frequently with high-quality programming. However, throughout the past fourteen years there has been significant controversy about the role, programming, and administrative structure of the radio station. In 1988 there was a lawsuit, and the conditions of the settlement resulted in many of the current organizational arrangements which have subsequently proven to be unsatisfactory. In this 1988 legal settlement, however, the Regents retained the power to exercise their discretion as licensee, under the Communications Act of 1934, to control or alter any aspect of KUNM's programming or operations to serve the public interest.

The current KUNM-FM structure has not resulted in a dynamic radio station with uniformly high-quality programming, there has been little involvement of KUNM-FM in the academic mission of the University, and the administrative and advisory structure has led to a series of impasses with virtually no constructive actions being taken. Therefore, the purpose of this memorandum is to recommend to the Board of Regents that certain changes be made in the organization of KUNM-FM. Making these changes involves: clarifying the mission of the radio station; stating the radio station's role in the University, community and statewide listening area; explaining the characteristics of the station's programming; and prescribing the
administrative structure for KUNM-FM. Many of these recommendations are patterned after successful radio stations elsewhere, on the recommendations of the KUNM Task Force, and from discussions with professionals in public radio. If the Regents accept these recommendations, new bylaws that codify these changes will be written and provided to the Board of Regents for its approval.

Mission of KUNM-FM

In 1988, the Regents adopted a mission statement with the following goals for KUNM-FM:

1. Serve the people in KUNM's listening area by providing a variety of high-quality programming that serves diverse interests, particularly programming that might not be available on commercial radio stations, including but not limited to:
   a. Providing programming, information and informed commentary including the arts, the sciences and culture generally;
   b. Presenting information and discussion of significant issues facing society, thereby contributing to the development of an informed citizenry;
   c. Conveying the diverse cultural richness of our society, and by presenting it, making it known to the present generation and also preserving it for future generations;
   d. Developing diverse local programming;
   e. Encouraging listeners to enrich their lives through music and the arts, and encouraging new insights concerning life's experiences and the relationships between individuals, society and our cultural milieu.

2. Comprise an integral component of the University's academic mission, including but not limited to the following:
   a. Encouragement of creative initiatives from all sectors of the University;
b. Scholarly and cultural activities such as broadcasting of lectures, recitals and other appropriate forms of faculty, staff and student expression;

c. Opportunity for experience in public radio station programming and operations.

3. Maintain a high standard of quality in content, presentation and technical competence.

Although KUNM began as a student radio station, it has been transformed by the development of its own programming and its affiliation with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and National Public Radio. KUNM-FM should now continue to serve as a component of the University's academic mission, as outlined in the Regents' Policy, but its primary purpose will be that of service to the public at large.

Programming

KUNM-FM programming will follow the general guidelines embedded in the Board of Regents' Mission Statement. In particular, KUNM-FM will:

"Serve the people in KUNM's listening area by providing a variety of high-quality programming that serves diverse interests, particularly programming that might not be available on commercial radio stations . . ."

"Comprise an integral component of the University's academic mission . . ."

"Maintain a high standard of quality in content, presentation and technical competence."
In meeting this mission, KUNM-FM programming must seek to balance the need for some overall program coherence with the opportunity to provide the community with exciting, non-traditional programs of high intellectual and artistic content and presentation. Of particular importance is the need to recognize and serve the rich cultural nature of the listening area and of New Mexico.

KUNM-FM offers several National Public Radio programs of national acclaim and importance. Programs such as these meet a real need in the community and therefore should not only continue, but opportunities should be sought to increase these offerings. As a general rule, the programming in its entirety should consist of an optimum mixture and balance of national, regional, state and local sources.

Programming at KUNM-FM must have high quality as the single most important and pervasive criterion for judgement. As described below, a significant portion of the programming should reflect the qualities and the intellectual, cultural and social activities of the University. However, the primary objective of KUNM-FM is to provide the listenership with excellent public radio.

Relation to the University Academic Programs

There are myriad ways in which KUNM-FM can and should contribute to and be a part of the University's academic programs. The Board of Regents' Policy states specifically that KUNM shall encourage creative initiatives from all sectors of the University, that it shall present scholarly and cultural activities occurring at the University, and that it shall provide opportunities in public radio programming and operations. It is expected that the University
and its activities will be significantly represented in the news and the cultural and artistic programming of KUNM-FM.

As described in 1985 by an ad hoc advisory committee, "KUNM should serve as a voice of the University by translating the University's general mission of teaching, scholarship and public service to the community. In translating the University's general mission, the radio station should undertake programming that provides information of value and interest to the audience and that reflects the range of intellectual and diverse cultural activities of the University."

Moreover, "KUNM should cooperate in the establishment, development, and maintenance of programs for academic credit in relationship with academic departments to provide advanced training and experience in public broadcasting arts for students of the University. By pursuing its primary function as a public radio station, KUNM will serve as a professional resource for students rising through the affiliated departments in pursuit of professional training and as a community resource for individuals volunteering their time and creativity."

Administration and Organization

The licensed and ultimate responsibility for KUNM-FM is vested in the University Board of Regents. Responsibility for management, staffing, budgeting and final decisions on programming for the radio station are formally delegated to the University administration, specifically to the Office of the Provost. For practical purposes, the General Manager has, subject to the approval of the Provost (or designate), the primary responsibility for operating the radio station, including management, budgeting, staffing and programming.
General Manager

As noted above, the General Manager has the responsibility of operating the radio station on a day-by-day basis, including management, budgeting, staffing and programming. These responsibilities are exercised with the approval of the Provost (or designate). Major programming decisions will be made by the General Manager after consultation with the Radio Advisory Board and the Provost. The General Manager, who is an employee of the University and who enjoys all the rights and privileges of an employee, is also subject to all the applicable rules and regulations of the institution. Appointment will be made by the Provost with the advice of a search committee. As all members of the University staff, the General Manager will be evaluated on an annual basis.

Because KUNM-FM will be operating with a new organization and a clarified mission, there will be an immediate search to fill the position of General Manager. The incumbent General Manager will have the opportunity to apply and be considered for the position.

Radio Advisory Board

The Radio Advisory Board is advisory to the General Manager. It is the responsibility of the Board to advise the General Manager on such items as (a) concerns and issues from the community, (b) general directions of the programming, (c) overall performance of KUNM-FM in relation to its mission statement, (d) allocation and use of funds and resources, (e) preserving the full protection of the First Amendment for the station, and (f) other matters requested by the General Manager. As part of its responsibilities, the Board will provide written advice on any major programming changes and a copy of this advice will be provided directly to the Provost when the advice is provided to the General Manager.
The Radio Advisory Board shall consist of nine members: three members from the community, two faculty members, one staff member, two undergraduate students and one graduate student. These members shall be selected by the Provost according to the procedures described in the bylaws which provide for rotation of membership. Each member will have a manifested interest in and competence and experience concerning the operation of a public radio station and/or programming for such a station.

Staff

KUNM-FM staff are University employees. As such they have all the applicable responsibilities and enjoy the same benefits as other members of the University staff.

Students

The primary mission of KUNM-FM is to serve as an excellent public radio station. In so doing, the radio station provides an exceptional opportunity for students to learn about radio broadcasting, programming and management. Student participation will be vigorously encouraged, especially by affording learning experiences through the development and use of credit courses, provision of internships and graduate assistantships, and presenting opportunities as volunteers, student workers, and work study employees.
Volunteers

Volunteers have and should continue to contribute to the success of KUNM. Serving as a volunteer at KUNM is a privilege to be earned by successfully completing the necessary training and by providing continuing high-quality service. Volunteers will be assigned on-air responsibilities for specified periods of time to ensure that there is an on-air staff turnover for increasing access and responsiveness to changing audience needs. Work assignments for volunteers are to be determined by the General Manager. Performance will be evaluated on a biennial basis by the station management according to specified policies. Volunteers are not employees of the University and have no rights or privileges except as specified by the policies of the station and practices established by the General Manager. However, the volunteers may establish an informal organization so as to collectively represent issues to the General Manager.

Funding

As KUNM-FM moves toward its role as a strong public radio station serving the University and broader community, the funding base will change. There will be a reduction in funding from student fees, a commitment of University funds and an increase in contributions from the broader community.