

Summary of the Internal and External Review Team Reports
WSIU-TV, WUSI-TV, WSIU-FM
Fall 2007

The following summarizes the findings of the internal and external review teams that conducted reviews during the Fall semester of 2007.

The External Review Team stated:

WSIU is a leader among small sized University public radio and television stations. WSIU is renowned nationally for the quality of its programming, for outstanding local community outreach, and for the enviable track record of earning grants in support of educational services and capital infrastructure. WSIU is deeply valued locally by audiences, by the students whose practical experience at the stations maximizes their job prospects in broadcast media, by faculty within the College's school of Radio and Television, by the Interim Dean of the College, and by Friends' support organization. WSIU is an extraordinary training ground for broadcast media students. Current interns and graduates who have secured work in broadcast media laud the "hands on" experience and special attention provided by the WSIU professional staff.

Despite (this), WSIU's future is in jeopardy, threatened by a chronic and worsening shortage of resources. The lack of operating funds threatens to undermine the station's public service and educational missions. An obsolete and decaying infrastructure threatens the stations' broadcast reliability and their ability to produce programming and teach students.

The Reports listed many strengths and examples of successful efforts that have contributed to the entire Southern Illinois region. Strengths include:

- Administrative support
- Dedicated and committed staff
- Commitment to community service
- Delivery of educational opportunities classrooms and homes
- Southern Illinois Radio Information Services (SIRIS) serves approximately 1000 visually impaired individuals
- Partnership with several other academic units on campus in a variety of programming and services
- 150 hours of local television programming annually
- WSIU-FM programs including *Morning Conversations*, *Point of Law*, *In the Author's Voice and Radio Voices*, *Reading Baseball*, *Scholastic Hi-Q*, *River Region Evening News* and *Celtic Connections*
- Increase in membership support
- Student learning opportunities
- Staff mentoring of students

Based upon these and other valuable contributions to the University and community by WSIU, several recommendations are made to overcome the current difficulties in maintaining this essential component of the University.

- **Facilities:** The program is housed in a facility designed and built in the 1960's. Given the highly technical aspect of this service, the facilities have become seriously outdated and inadequate for the program. The staff is separated in a variety of locations throughout the Communications Building. They are also located in other facilities. Upgrade to digital technology and security are two major issues that need to be addressed. The University Administration should understand these difficulties and the serious consequences that will result if improved facilities are not provided.
- Develop a strategic plan that utilizes the facilitation services of one of the national public broadcasting organizations. Recognize the increased competition of other forms of information technology.
- Key staff positions should be filled as soon as possible. The staff has decreased from 53 full-time staff to 33 full-time staff in the past 15 years. Current staff is sometimes filling positions for which they are not prepared.
- Increase fiscal support from the University. Pursue more underwriting for programs while increasing support from private sources through grants and donations. Encourage the Friends Board to continue their efforts and engage their support more fully in fund development.
- WSIU-FM should identify itself more frequently as a public service from the campus of Southern Illinois University. WSIU can be a strong promoter and image of the SIUC campus.
- Give increased tenure and promotion to faculty members based upon their contributions to the broadcasting system.
- Consider placing WSIU Broadcasting under the control of the SIU Board of Trustees, President, Chancellor or Provost in order to provide the status that the operation deserves and allow it to address the regional needs. If this reorganization were to occur, care must be given to avoid detaching WSIU from the related academic units.