

Diversity Statement for WMUK 102.1 FM | September 2019

Why diversity is important to our public media work.

As part of Western Michigan University's (WMU) commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, WMUK 102.1 FM continues to report on the diverse voices, cultures and backgrounds of communities across our region. As WMUK's audience becomes increasingly more diverse, we believe that our reporting and programming should reflect this growth. We also believe this is also an extension of our licensee's mission to foster a public that is learner-centered, discovery-driven, and globally engaged.

We principally do this by providing coverage of topics and cultural programming that explore diversity, furthering the Station's core mission of creating a more informed public.

The extent to which our staff and governance reflect such diversity.

WMUK's staff continues to reflect our goal towards greater diversity. Within the Station itself, the General Manager is an African-American male, the Corporate Support and Major Giving Manager is an Indian-American female, and one part-time employee is an African-American female. Additionally, there were five news interns between 1 October 2018 and 30 September 2019 – of this group two were white females, and one was an African-American female.

With regard to our governance, there are eight (8) Board of Trustees of Western Michigan University (the license holders for WMUK 102.1 FM). Of these eight, two are minority female trustees (one Asian-American, one African-American). Additionally, WMUK's governance includes the President of the University, who is an African-American male.

Progress we've made to increase our diversity in the last 2-3 years.

In the past 2-3 years, WMUK has continued its outreach to diverse communities through both local reporting, and also through community engagement by staff. Specifically within the past year, WMUK's reporting to the African-American community continued apace, including interviews and features covering entrepreneurship in Kalamazoo's Northside neighborhood, Black Wall Street Kalamazoo, and Black Women in Business; as well as interviews with the heads of the Douglass Center, the local NAACP, and other leaders within this community.

Additionally, our reporting covered issues affecting the LGBTQ community, including possible effects of new federal guidelines for transgender students at WMU, a review of a Queer Theatre Kalamazoo production, and an interview with the executive director of Equality Michigan.

The array of diverse communities that we covered included other walks of life, such as a feature on a local business that employs young people with criminal convictions, a discussion on a film

series sponsored by the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan, and a panel discussion on efforts to expand local philanthropy among women and minorities.

We've also committed to station-wide strategic planning changes that have reshaped our newsroom, in an effort to provide better coverage of local issues. Some of these changes were based on an independent consulting study by a public media journalism expert. The outcome of this has been the consolidation of our on-air arts production staff and our News department, into a unified content team.

While this strategic planning process accelerated in the past year, one result was that WMUK began to shift priorities for our newsroom. This was also to partially account for a temporary reduction in the number of reporters available (due to staff attrition). One consequence of this was that WMUK was not able to produce the targeted 2-3 feature segments on diversity issues and experiences facing Indian-Americans (per our prior year's Diversity goal).

However, the Station did participate in an increased number of events targeting diverse communities, including the WMU International Festival, the hosting of international journalists from Africa and Asia via Colleagues International (and the U.S. State Department), and station staff introducing the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' Black Refractions exhibition event series.

Finally, WMUK's diversity continued to be reflected in the wide array of Latin-American, jazz, folk and classical music offered, which together constitutes more than 160 hours of music each week on WMUK's two program streams.

Our diversity plans for the coming year (FY 2020 | October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)

- WMUK's new unified content unit will continue the Station's commitment to covering issues affecting diverse communities across our region, through locally-produced programming. This includes increased efforts by Station staff to ascertain community needs via local community organizations. This work will help to inform the shape of our coverage, particularly regarding issues surrounding diversity.
- Our content team will also focus on an initiative to produce 2-3 feature segments and/or interviews on the diversity issues relevant to the arts community of Southwest Michigan and/or Northern Indiana.
- WMUK will continue to collaborate with organizations that promote diversity through sponsorships of local festivals and/or participation in other diversity-themed events.
- Finally, the Station will continue to recruit and interview qualified minority staff where employment opportunities exist, as well as students for our News internship program.