

Diversity Statement for WMUK-FM | September 2021

Why diversity is important to our public media work.

WMUK-FM is licensed to Western Michigan University (WMU). As part of WMU's commitment to diversity, the Station annually provides a report on our internal diversity, as well as our efforts to reach an increasingly diverse audience with our reporting and programming. We also believe this is also an extension of our licensee's educational mission, as well as the Station's core mission of creating a more informed public.

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

As of 30 September 2021, WMUK is comprised of ten (10) full-time employees and two (2) part-time employees. Within the Station unit, 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 six (6) news interns between 1 October 2020 and 30 September 2021 – of this group three were white females, two were black males, and one was a white male. Of this group, four interns were paid, and two (summer interns) were non-paid.

With regard to our governance, there are eight (8) Board of Trustees of Western Michigan University. Of these eight, two are minority female trustees (one Asian-American, one African-American). Another trustee is a Native-American male. WMUK's governance also includes the University President, who is an African-American male.

WMUK and WMU seek to reach diverse candidate pools as part of our employment outreach. This includes posting to minority job banks, both locally and nationally, when full-time employment opportunities become available.

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

WMUK-FM continues its outreach to diverse communities through local coverage and community engagement. This includes on-air reporting and interviews by staff with people reflecting the diversity of our community.

As was the case in 2020, our efforts were somewhat limited due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. However our coverage of issues impacting diverse constituencies continued apace in 2021. One of our reporters covered allegations by some Western Michigan University graduates of racial discrimination within our licensee's School of Music jazz program. Also, WMUK's arts feature correspondent provided multiple segments on focusing on how minorities use art to reflect their experiences.

The Station also produced and aired a series of recorded conversations with prominent members of the black community in Kalamazoo (WMUK's city of license) by Earlene McMichael, our NPR *Morning Edition* host and reporter. These interviews largely aired in February 2020 and ranged from a discussion with the Executive Director of the *Society for History and Racial Equity* ... to a classically trained musician of African-American and Indigenous descent who is working to expand opportunities for musical education to more minority children in our area.

Further, a locally-hosted music and arts program ("*Let's Hear It*") carried a number of interviews on topics of importance to minority listeners, which aired on our sister station *Classical WMUK* (WKDS 89.9 FM and 102.1 FM HD2). A number of these interviews were with visiting guest or local minority artists who discussed their works or upcoming concerts on-air, as well as their efforts to promote diversity within their art forms.

Since our format change in early 2020, WMUK continues to provide significantly more coverage of news-related issues that impact a diverse cross section of listeners across various socioeconomic backgrounds represented in our service area, both in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation issues and more.

Our diversity plans for the coming year (FY 2022 | October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

- For on-air operations, in FY2022 WMUK will hire a new News Director and Technical Operations Assistant/Producer. Our intent is to conduct a wide dissemination search for both positions, reaching as many qualified minority candidates as possible – in keeping with the equal employment / affirmative action policies of Western Michigan University.
- Under the new News Director, we will reassess our strategic news objectives, with an eye towards enhanced outreach and reprioritization of coverage. This work will help to inform the shape of our coverage, particularly regarding issues surrounding diversity.
- As additional employment opportunities arise, the Station will continue to recruit and interview qualified minority staff, as well as students seeking to participate in our paid and unpaid News internship programs.
- WMUK's unified content unit will continue the Station's commitment to covering issues affecting diverse communities across our region, through locally-produced programming. We will do this in part through an additional 0.5 FTE reporting position.
- Our content team will also continue our efforts to produce 2-3 significant features and/or interviews on the diversity issues relevant to the communities of West Michigan.
- As COVID-19 pandemic conditions allow, WMUK will continue to collaborate with organizations that promote diversity through participation in diversity-themed events.