

NPR Illinois
Community Advisory Board Meeting
December 8, 2020

In attendance:

Deanie Brown, Cynthia Canary, John Carpenter, Sean Crawford, Michael Diaz, Jamie Dunn-Thomason, Randy Eccles, Bob Gallo, Monique Garcia, Nice Garcia, Mary Hansen, Bill Holland, Bethany Jaeger, Mario Jimenez, Regina Kovach, Molly Lamb, Lawrence Msall, Barbara Pesch, Adam Porter, Megan Pressnall, Richard Schuldt, Chuck Schultz, George Van Dusen, Corinne Wood, and Karen Witter

Chair Karen Witter welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting. Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

Karen Witter reported that she and Bethany had a good meeting with Chancellor Whitney and Molly Lamb. The purpose was to introduce ourselves to the Chancellor and discuss our role related to NPR Illinois and how we can be helpful. The role of the CAB as an advisory board was confirmed. Chancellor Whitney also expressed her belief that NPR Illinois should be financially self-supported.

Molly Lamb reported that the University had conducted a thorough and systematic investigation of the HR issue brought to the attention of the CAB. There were no findings, but there were some recommendations that will be pursued, working with Randy and Sean. Molly expressed their commitment in looking through an equity lens in all that they do.

Molly also reported that they will be developing a three-year transition plan to discuss with the Chancellor related to reducing NPR Illinois' reliance on University funding. Randy commented on the desire to retain some of the University funding by expanding opportunities to integrate with the academic part of the University – providing more opportunities for students, residencies, internships. Molly noted that all units within her Center took a 5% across the board cut this year.

Randy Eccles provided an overview of the NPR Budget and funding sources. He said they have been preparing for less money from the University since the budget impasse. The "Fair Tax" not passing has an impact on funding for higher ed. Randy noted that NPR Illinois has a broad funding mix.

The state appropriation is \$417,068 (18% of the budget) and covers salaries, etc.

Donated facilities and administrative support, which includes space, power, police support is \$515,965 (23% of the budget). Payments for fringe benefits – \$135,239 (6%). In-kind, UIF for gift processing, etc. \$159,670 (7%). Total University cash and non-cash contributions = 54%

The remainder comes from external sources:

Operating revenue – grants from Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Illinois state agencies \$554,520 (25%), Donations/annual giving - \$400,000 (18%) and business underwriting 3% (this has declined significantly in the last four years since John Wallenstein passed away).

Randy noted there is an opportunity for increases in business underwriting, but need to hire a staff member to maximize this.

Randy provided an overview of current staffing levels. Salaries are 35% of the budget (\$740,2224), down from over \$1,000,000 previously. \$400,000 comes from University support and the rest from external sources listed above.

Randy pointed out that reductions in state support in turn lowers the amount of the CPB grant.

Advisory Board members expressed their strong support for the value of NPR Illinois to UIS and raised a number of concerns and questions related to moving away from University funding. What is the historical perspective on State funding? How does our arrangement compare to other stations? What gap in funding will need to be filled? Are other units being asked to take similar reductions? Is there a possibility of a direct appropriation from the State of Illinois? Can we grow donations, and at what level? The role of statehouse coverage was identified as an important function of NPR Illinois.

Molly stated that they would be meeting with the office of advancement, Provost and Chancellor to develop a transition plan and would have more information to share at the March meeting. It was agreed it would be beneficial for Chancellor Whitney to attend the March meeting. It would be beneficial for Jeff Lorber, office of advancement, to attend a future meeting as well.

Randy Eccles provided an overview of how COVID is affecting all of public media, which has been significant.

Molly Lamb discussed the Advisory Board for the Center for State Policy and Leadership. She is evaluating the structure, function and diversity of membership on the advisory board and is updating the bylaws. Her intent is to have all the entities that fall under the jurisdiction of the Center to be represented on the advisory board. These include the Illinois Innocence Project, Illinois Legal and Legislative Policy, Office of Graduate Public Interns, Legislative Interns, Innovate Springfield, Office of Electronic Media, IL Institute of Public Finance. She is recommending that where there are other existing advisory boards, such as the CAB, that the board chair also serve on the advisory board for the Center.

Randy discussed staff positions. The Chief Engineer has been selected and is undergoing background check. Working on hiring a Backup Engineer. He mentioned the frustration about not being able to hire Statehouse positions, which are now on hold pending development of the three-year transition plan. The Editor position has been open since Brian Mackey went to *the 21st* program in March 2020. There has been a push to convert academic professionals to civil service positions.

Nice reported that the goal of the Winter Pledge Drive is \$150k.

Board Giving – Karen emphasized that 100% board participation is a “powerful statement” that helps in fundraising efforts.

Sean discussed news coverage – Covering COVID from news standpoint. Mary – local angle – out break at nursing home/partnering with Illinois Times. Sean, Maureen, Hannah – falls to them to cover state/Governor’s daily briefing. Producing shows every week – State Week. Capacity is limited with current staffing level. Community Voices is a new regular feature.

- Kent – doing research if we end up in a fight for Speaker position (Madigan), 30-minute documentary in the archives, 93rd ballot in 1974 fight over electing Bill Redmond to speakership.
- Bethany – Coronavirus relief and Dec.30 deadline for expenditures.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. The next meeting is March 23, 2021.