

MEMORANDUM

To: Program Review Committee
From: Jeff Browne
Date: March 23, 2007
Re: Response to Site Visit Recommendations

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations of Frank Ragulsky, the Director of Student Media at Oregon State University, and Mary Cory, the General Manager of Daily Illini Corp. at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Ragulsky and Ms. Cory were chosen to visit because they manage and advise operations similar to Student Media at Colorado State University. OSU's unit is part of the Division of Student Affairs and contains a newspaper, a yearbook, radio and television stations, and a state high school press association. And while the Daily Illini Corp. is an independent not-for-profit entity, its offering also include a newspaper and a highly successful radio station.

Their visit last year was a positive experience for everyone involved, and their report – which was submitted just three months later – proved to be an enlightening document. As a result of their recommendations, we have made plans, both short- and long-term, to address the visions they presented in their report.

Following is a point-by-point update on where we stand with each of their recommendations and what we plan to do in each of those areas.

I. Mission

Over the past year, students at *The Rocky Mountain Collegian* and CTV, in particular, have ramped up their multi-media efforts, directly in response to the professional staff's urging to work cooperatively and to envision their future as multi-media content producers. As a result, both the *Collegian* and the CTV Web sites are much more robust than they were a year ago.

In addition, we have plans to establish a pilot multi-media project team in the near future. We had hoped to use a student-fee increase in FY08 to fund the project, but shortfalls in student fee revenue in FY07 have forced us to use FY07 revenues to fund current and future equipment replacement instead of establishing the pilot project. We do have hope, though, that students at the *Collegian* and CTV can work within existing budget limitations to further enhance their multi-media and convergence efforts.

IV. Commitment to Diversity

Led by Holly Wolcott's Diversity in the Media panel discussions – which were a part of the University's Diversity Conference in October – and by CTV's production of the

President's diversity panel discussion, we've continued to contribute to on-campus programs. In addition, Julia Sandidge has visited several high schools across the state in an effort to recruit from under-served populations. We will do more recruiting at both the national Journalism Education Association conference in April and at the Native American Journalists Association conference in June. Both conference will be in Denver.

V. Program and Services

A. The Rocky Mountain Collegian

As a challenge to the students this year, we've tried to instill in the students a sense of their responsibility as ethical content-producers. When they make decisions regarding personnel, news gathering or other journalistic processes, we have frequently required them to submit full reports of their activities and their decision-making processes. They're students, and they're humans, of course, so our students have made – and will in the future make – mistakes. We have done our best to turn those mistakes into teachable moments for them and for the rest of the University community.

Further, every medium continues to clarify and fine-tune its codes of ethics and conduct, as well as its employment policies.

B. College Avenue/Silver Spruce

In order to secure a more steady stream of revenue for *College Avenue*, we hired a Coordinator for Advertising Sales, Eric Melendez, who started on Aug. 1, 2006. Eric has worked with, and will continue to help develop sales leads for, our magazine advertising staff. Eric and Advertising Manager Kim Blumhardt continue to work on plans to integrate the newspaper sales staff into magazine sales without taking away from our most potent revenue source, the 115-year-old newspaper.

It is true that *College Avenue*, as a fledgling product, still hasn't developed a clear focus, though it has been consistent in its approach in this, its first fully functional year, complete with four issues. That is something that Jennifer Fischer and newspaper adviser Holly Wolcott will work with 07-08 editor Stephanie Gerlach is developing.

Finally, the magazine staff has finally cohered into a unit that understands the importance of promoting itself. It has begun regular distribution campaigns both on and off-campus. Those will be re-evaluated at the end of this year and adjust for next year.

C. KCSU-FM

We have developed long-range plans for replacing the radio station's equipment and moving to all-digital technology, but those plans took a hit this year when student-fee revenues fell below projections. We will still be able to "escrow" about \$20,000 for the purchase of digital equipment (the anticipated switchover can begin in summer 2008 and should be completed by summer 2010), but any other dips in student enrollment could

seriously slow down that timetable. We have requested a student-fee increase for FY08 of 45 cents per student per semester to help us keep on schedule in our move to all-digital technology.

Once we replace our aging equipment with digital equipment, KCSU-FM will be able to broadcast a multi-channel signal – KCSU A, B, and C, if you will – that could be shared with other campus units, if desired. No one, as yet, has responded to our queries.

We have applied for federal grants in the past, and we've designated Julia Sandidge as our department grant-sniffer to help us find more opportunities.

Online streaming is under fire by the recording industry, who currently is seeking permission to significantly increase both the cost of streaming – through the increase in the royalties paid – and the reporting requirements. Both would cause KCSU-FM to seriously reconsider its streaming Webcast.

D. CTV

To address immediate space needs, this past year we converted the former Student Media conference room into a newsroom for CTV. This allows the students to have a newsroom separate from the editing areas, office space and studio. The results have been more news focus for the nightly newscast the students are producing – the first nightly newscast in CTV's history.

Recruiting additional staff, though, remains a problem for CTV, partly because there isn't a great number of students in the journalism department – our main source for CTV staff – who are interested in television journalism as much as they're interested in other forms of television programming. However, as a primarily journalistic organization, CTV will remain true to its mission, and seek to add revenue sources in the future that would allow for more paid staff.

CTV will seek to do a better job of in-the-field production, too, though that requires more equipment – and more money – than currently is available.

We do have a wish that other units on campus – specifically Communications and Creative Services – would want to partner on television studio production space in order to save on equipment replacement costs. We have not had positive responses to our inquiries in that area.

VI. Communication and Promotion

The hiring of Eric Melendez has helped us focus our self-promotion in every area. Eric has begun a marketing campaign for the *Collegian*, and he also has been active in working with the marketing and promotions teams for KCSU-FM and CTV.

Next year, KCSU-FM will dedicate more of its salary money to hire students who will work solely on marketing campaigns for the station.

Now that CSU-TV has established its programming focus (something that wasn't completed until early 2007), we will seek to work with them and Communications and Creative Services to help promote the station's offerings, specifically those shows produced by CTV.

VII. Relationships Across Campus

Ongoing outside communication, education and networking efforts by directors and managers continue to be a high priority for the professional staff at Student Media.

VIII. Adequacy of Resources and Facilities

We currently are not considering a move to non-profit status, though that continues to be an intriguing model that other college media units have successfully adopted.

We have begun to explore several options on new or re-modeled space for Student Media operations. The highest priority is making KCSU-FM a more visible medium. While the Lory Student Center is an ideal location for us, and while the Collegian and CTV have main hall accessibility for the public, KCSU-FM is a difficult place to find for many people.

We will continue to talk with LSC officials about remodeled or new space for KCSU – or at least for a KCSU satellite studio – while we reconfigure our workspace here.

Further, we are in initial discussions with the Alumni Association, who desires to have some kind of student laboratory as part of its new building, which is still several years away from being built. A Student Media laboratory – be it for radio, television and/or print media – might be a fit for the new Alumni Center.

IX. Evaluation and Assessment

We will continue to review our progress annually during our May staff retreats.