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A Vision for Pacifica Radio:

Creating a Network for the 21st Century

Strategic Five Year Plan -- April 1997

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Part One: PREDICAMENT

by Dick Bunce, Deputy Executive Director for Planning and Development,
Pacifica Radio

Mission Statement, Pacifica Foundation, 1946: "To promote cultural diversity and pluralistic community expression...To contribute to a lasting understanding between individuals of all nations, races, creeds and colors...To promote freedom of the press and serve as a forum for various viewpoints...To maintain an independent funding base."

Introduction

In the half century since the Pacifica Foundation was incorporated, the varying worlds of radio, including both public and commercial broadcasting, have undergone multiple transformations. The present time and the onrushing future appear no less dynamic in opportunities and risks for Pacifica Radio. Patricia Scott, Executive Director of Pacifica, believes that we stand at an "unmarked crossroads" in the life of our network, "where a failure of the will necessary to make investments in our franchise could trigger the beginning of our demise. Imagination and a new sense of purpose in Pacifica can make us a national force, actively involved in defining the course of electronic journalism, not being passively defined by it." Challenging the network to address improved methods of impacting political discourse and culture, Scott and the other members of Pacifica's leadership in 1996 committed extensive time, energy and resources to strategic planning, seeking to take measure of Pacifica's exact circumstances, and to identify the existing options, opportunities and resources, as well as the impediments.

The resulting Plan endeavors to identify our historic role, our vision for the future, our organizational values and operating assumptions, our shared goals – and the process needed to make our intentions a reality. The Plan asserts Pacifica's claim to an important place in the future of public radio and aligned

media. A good understanding of the plan requires some preliminary consideration of the present context of Pacifica operations – a context that should make clear our urgency to develop a strategy for the future.

The Crisis of Democratic Communications

The rise of media trusts in the past few decades has dramatically shifted the context for Pacifica Radio's broadcast operations. Media trusts are definable basically as the massive corporate concentrations, now with newly globalized holdings, that have nearly engulfed the media industry. Today there are five global, vertically integrated media empires dominating the information and entertainment economies: News Corporation, Disney, Time-Warner, Viacom and TCI. Similar firms with global ambitions include General Electric (owner of NBC), Westinghouse (owner of CBS), Sony, Seagrams (owner of MCA) and the European giants Philips, Havas and Bertelsmann.¹ These conglomerates' effect has been to reduce public broadcasting generally and Pacifica Radio specifically to the media equivalent of mom-and-pop corner stores in a world of Wal-Marts and Costcos, or more to the point, media "craft shop" outposts in a marketplace clotted with infotainment factories. While this isolates Pacifica institutionally, the expansion of media trusts simultaneously illuminates the distinctiveness of Pacifica's mission and programming, revealing anew the significance of Pacifica's work to an increasingly threatened democratic process. What sets Pacifica apart could – if developed effectively – increase both the audience and the demand for Pacifica's programming.

Marginalizing Political Journalism

Financed by advertising solely for the pursuit of profit, this relatively recent concentration of ownership has fundamentally transformed US journalism, reducing it to a dreary cacophony of crime, mayhem, and sundry disaster stories mingled with pointless celebrity worship and undisguised hawking of products ranging from sneakers to congressional candidates. Journalism is being tabloidized by media trusts, because tabloid product draws a more profitable audience. As Ted Turner, founder of Cable News Network (acquired in 1996 by Time-Warner) explained, "The more complex, the more forward-looking the story...the smaller the ratings are."² "Journalism, real journalism, is not profitable" – and is not currently the object of investment by the media trusts, since the "market has little apparent interest in serious journalism."³ i

The media trusts are interested in infotainment, specifically:

Hard news reporting has been eroded by the growing opinion-shaping power of the punditry. The 60-second sound bite, already a concession to corporate media imperatives, is now down to 9 seconds. Serious political information is increasingly absent from mainstream news broadcasts, which are dominated by subjects such as the O.J. trial. Opinions of wealthy celebrity employees of media companies fill slots previously devoted to hard news. Public interest journalism is being overwhelmed and marginalized by entertainment and tabloidization in the information marketplace.ⁱⁱ

Compounding this was the elimination in the late 1980s of the Fairness Doctrine –which required attention to diverse viewpoints on controversial issues. Erasing Fairness and the trusts' takeover of journalism has meant that tabloidization has re-cast the nature of news, information and public affairs in daily newspapers, television and radio. Consequently, the chief information fare now provided to Americans – particularly on broadcast media, the

primary "information source" of Americans -- "is a deception that distorts reality and undermines people's faith in government, their sense of community, and the notion of shared social responsibility."ⁱⁱⁱ

The Assault on the Public Sphere

By restricting the flow of information essential to political discourse and citizen participation, media trusts imperil democracy. Paradoxically, this alarming predicament is not the subject of public debate today over communication policy. Congressional concern, dominated by extremists, is "whether the only vestiges of nonprofit broadcasting should be eliminated so that we may have a thoroughly market-driven system."^{iv}

In 1994 Republicans took over both Houses of Congress and immediately targeted Pacifica Radio as the wedge issue to undermine Congressional support for public broadcasting. In the House, Republican Members from Colorado (Joel Hefley) and Illinois (Phil Crane and John Porter) -- where Pacifica owns no radio stations -- used spurious charges of "hate broadcasting" as a tactic to cut off Corporation for Public Broadcasting Funds to Pacifica. In the Senate, South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler (also from a state without Pacifica Radio) sought to revive witch-hunting tactics against Pacifica and to drive a wedge between Pacifica and two other key institutions in public radio -- NPR and CPB. Earlier Bob Dole, as Senate Majority Leader, singled out Pacifica for criticism at the annual Public Radio Conference, admonishing CPB to clean house and reign in Pacifica's broadcasts. Dole's aide Jim Whittinghill rationalized his boss's call for CPB censorship arguing that "freedom of speech doesn't apply because we are able to put conditions on grants of federal money, the same as we do with farmers." The Republican leadership's moves in 1995 to eliminate federal funding of public broadcasting was in part a reward to Christian broadcasters ^v, many of whom took credit for the election of the 104th Congress.^{vi}

Reactionaries have succeeded in framing the issue. Their effort is predicated on crushing journalistic autonomy and having a feeble journalism that kowtows to the interests not only of the media owners and advertisers, but the wealthy and powerful in general.... This explains why conservatives are so obsessed with smashing, or at least intimidating, nonprofit and noncommercial broadcasting. They realize full well that the marketplace implicitly censors journalism to keep it within a range they consider acceptable. Conservatives live in fear of a journalism not constrained by profit imperatives and commercial support.^{vii}

The message is abundantly clear: Independent journalism is an endangered species in American media; public media -- potentially the most significant practitioner of independent journalism -- is under siege for that very independence. The corollary message should also be clear: it is unlikely that federal dollars will ever fuel Pacifica's growth -- or that of other public broadcasters -- and "we will have to work very hard if the federal appropriation is to keep pace with inflation." ^{viii} The conservative agenda calls for a disinvestment in public media and public information.

The Commercial Imperative

If public funding is eliminated, chances are the dominant players in public radio -- NPR, PRI and their satellite-driven franchise stations -- will replace federal support with commercial support. The entire system -- except for Pacifica -- is already preparing to survive without a federal subsidy by

becoming more explicitly commercial – and more restricted to an upper income target audience.

Except for Pacifica, the conditions of public radio's existence – especially the terms governing the making of the prime time programs distributed by NPR and PRI – require strict conformity to the norms of expression deemed proper by the corporations that sustain their programming.

As NPR CEO Delano Lewis continues to collaborate with the media trusts, notably with TCI subsidiary Liberty Media's CEO Peter Barton, and with Bell Atlantic, and as PBS's v-p cuts deals with producers from NBC and Paramount Pictures, commercialization becomes audible and visible throughout the continuum of financing, management and program development.

Today NPR's and PRI's regularly scheduled news and information programs exist at the pleasure of their corporate underwriters; increasingly global conglomerates like Archer Daniels Midland (NPR News) and GE (PRI's Marketplace) are paying the overwhelming cost of program development and production. Public radio – except for Pacifica – appears to be proceeding dangerously along what Bill Moyers calls "the slippery slope to serfdom, where we wind up the stepchild of industry: ruled by the iron imperative of commercialism, in hock to the lowest common denominator, our decisions of what to produce and program determined not by educational or cultural needs but by the size of our back-end deals."ix

The Media Trust Paradox: New Opportunities for Public Media

By diminishing the supply of informational programming – Pacifica's and public radio's stock-in-trade – the commercial trusts have paradoxically increased audience demand for Pacifica and other public radio services. As audiences experience the declining number of authentic news sources, public radio becomes the natural place to turn to, and not solely for radio listeners, but for all media users. Public information, reliable investigative journalism, democratic debate, social and political intelligence, and cultural programming excellence are the essential franchise of Pacifica Radio, and to varying degrees, of public radio generally. This is particularly true of locally produced, locally focused programming, a central component of Pacifica stations, less characteristic of the rest of public radio.

Public radio may have a fresh opportunity to define its market niche and to control it. Could we be on the verge of public radio becoming a growth industry? Chris Farrell, a major on-air economist thinks so.x Remarkable growth in public radio audiences nationwide is associated with all-news formats, which have increased among the 450 public stations, to the extent that they now dominate music formats, both jazz and classical. From San Francisco to Boston, dramatic audience gains have been registered by public stations converting to all-information broadcasting.xi

Significantly, Christian radio has become another powerful public affairs media source, as the Christian Right has aggressively addressed this opening in the communications system. When the FCC dropped the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, Christian broadcasters were relieved of their legal responsibility to cover diverse viewpoints on controversial issues. In their place, many added or expanded broadcast attacks on abortion clinics, attacks on gun control efforts, and support of fundamentalist political candidates. This deliberate transformation of "religious broadcasting" was not widely reported beyond the

growing circles of Christian Right listeners. The Christian Right has pursued radio licenses wherever any remained available. Based for the most part in rural America, these radio ministries have extended their reach through KU Band satellite technology and translators (authorized by the FCC), until they now penetrate most suburban areas. Their success in attracting listener support and advertisers (two of every three Christian stations are commercial ^{xii}) has built wealth for them – after some 10 years of work – sufficient to step up purchases of major urban market licenses. They now number one out of every ten US radio stations.^{xiii} At present there are nearly three religious radio stations for every "public" radio station. In terms of listener support and growth, religious right radio has so far proven more successful than the community radio movement ever was. They have done so by using radio to build a political force, a community, a national movement – a strategy originally invented by community radio pioneers.

Emerging Commercial Competition

The opportunity is ours. Today people spend more time with radio than any other medium – television, newspapers, magazines, computers or the internet. Americans twelve and older spend 44% of their total media time with radio, Monday through Friday, 6AM to 6PM.^{xiv} Not only is radio the dominant medium, it is dominant in information, news and opinion formation. If public radio and Christian radio have the information field to themselves for the present, it is unlikely the media trusts will abandon it indefinitely. In all likelihood, at the turn of the century, if not before, a number of new commercial, informational audio services will be inaugurated. These commercial services, startups from the media trusts, will have theoretically unlimited financial backing, and with that, the ability to compete cutthroat-style. CNN-Time-Warner is offering audio services, AP Radio is developing a 24-hour news service, and Westinghouse-CBS piloted a "listening post" format on a San Francisco commercial station featuring 5 minute in-depth stories across the board.^{xv} While these commercial forces will not obliterate the Pacifica franchise, nor that of public radio generally, they will appeal in varying degrees to our current and prospective audiences

Part Two: PACIFICA ASSETS

Protecting and Growing Pacifica Radio

Institutional isolation, the marginalizing of authentic investigative and critical journalism, political assaults on Pacifica, the looming withdrawal of federal funding, emerging competition – these are the external challenges facing Pacifica. We are mindful also of internal challenges that have mounted in the wake of changes in programming and establishing organizational accountability. Informed by our listening community, our staff, and our history, Pacifica's leadership is making decisions that will determine whether Pacifica Radio prospers or withers in the coming decade. We are distinguishing fact from fiction, the real from the romantic about the services we provide and how those services are best delivered. We believe Pacifica holds substantial resources, and faces potent – if also difficult – opportunities. But there are real impediments to Pacifica's growth that derive from the limitations of anarchic or bureaucratic systems that are simply dysfunctional in today's fierce competition. One barrier to our growth has been our own inability to fix

ineffective and change unsustainable aspects of Pacifica Radio's programming, financing, and basic operations.

Pacifica's forward direction is also the key to public radio's future: "Focus on serving a significant audience with a valued public service."^{xvi} Our response may not prove to be, of course, the same response as the rest of public radio. To consider our response, the Pacifica Board of Directors and management in 1996 engaged in a strategic planning process. The resulting Strategic Plan is designed to secure for our communications organization a future worthy of the original Pacifica vision and of our half-century of achievement.

An inventory of Pacifica's existing resources provides an impressive list of systems, capacities and assets from which we can determine our future. That inventory, not at all incidentally, testifies impressively to the acumen of Pacifica's leadership over several generations in steadily growing despite chronically limited financial straits.

The Pacifica Franchise: A Signature Mission and Programming with Vision

Pacifica was founded just after World War II by a number of visionary women and men who were disturbed by the way radio had been used, on all sides, to stir the passions of war, and who were excited by the idea of using the medium to promote peace and community. "The potent communicative instrument of radio broadcasting had never been used in the serious service of these problems," wrote Eleanor McKinney, Pacifica's first Program Director, "nor had radio ever been able to provide an atmosphere of freedom and diversity which would attract serious writers, artists, thinkers."

Lewis Hill and the founders who put Pacifica on the air sought to create an independent, noncommercial radio in the service of peace, social and racial justice, and the arts. Pacifica has pioneered the use of radio as a forum to ignite the democratic spirit.

The freedom which Pacifica does truly enjoy exists because the network is financially independent of commercial imperatives that define virtually all other broadcast organizations. Pacifica accepts no underwriting, and its singularity in this has made it the odd fellow of public broadcasting. The leading scholar of public broadcasting, Ralph Engelman, defines the Pacifica franchise this way:

Of even greater importance is Pacifica's continuing role as a model of an institution fostering political discourse and cultural expression independent of both the state and the corporation. Pacifica Radio, which sparked a heterogeneous public broadcasting movement after World War II, remains unique in its commitment to sustain an independent, critical, and oppositional public sphere on the broadcast spectrum.^{xvii}

Widely acknowledged as the conscience of public broadcasting, Pacifica's stations have long produced a rich current of programming, thereby making it safe for mainstream public radio to show more independence and more courage in their subject matter and their journalistic approach. Critical commentary and editorial point of view on public radio owe what vigor they have in part to the persistent presence of Pacifica's unwavering insistence on exercising the fullest possible First Amendment rights and responsibilities. This practice has clearly broadened the acceptable range of discourse on public radio, thereby strengthening its mandate as an indispensable medium for communicating the dissent requisite to a democracy.

As "Radio with Vision," Pacifica is almost alone in steadily bringing to a mass audience those uniquely articulate, visionary voices who have proven to be catalysts in overcoming powerlessness, and inspiring thoughtful involvement. From Cornell West to Helen Caldicott to Noam Chomsky, no other radio broadcaster has so built its reputation on bringing the ideas and analyses of the country's most important intellectuals, activists and writers to a broad audience. In the words of public radio scholar Jeffrey Land, Pacifica is an embarrassment of riches ... it is apparent that for the past forty five years the network has presented more programs on germane political issues, more detailed analysis of every variety of emerging social movement, more live performances of contemporary musical, poetic, and dramatic compositions, and more educational and public affairs shows than any other institution of American broadcasting.xviii

Five Major Market Radio Stations

Pacifica has continuously held its station licenses in five of the top ten media markets. KPFK in Los Angeles has the strongest FM signal anywhere in the United States. KPFA is the strongest FM signal in Northern California. WBAI in New York transmits from the premier location in its metro area, the Empire State Building. Pacifica owns the land and studio and office facilities in Berkeley, Los Angeles and Houston, as well as the transmission tower and property in Berkeley. The market value of the five licenses alone exceeds 100 million dollars.

Weekly Audience of Over One Million Listeners

Pacifica's five owned and operated stations' signals reach 22% of American radio homes. Pacifica programming draws an audience of 708,300 listeners each week xix, and the 55 affiliate stations broadcasting Pacifica National Programming add an estimated 500,000 - 1,000,000.xx

Other major resources include:

- Active Donor Base of Over 75,000
- Potentially Reaching One in Five Americans
- National Radio Production Capacity
- National Distribution: Affiliate and Subscriber Station Network of Fifty-five Stations in Thirty-Six States Carrying Pacifica Programming
- KU Satellite Network Distributing Pacifica Network News, National and Local Programming
- Non-Broadcast Distribution Capacity
- World Wide Web Audio-casting
- Pacifica Program Archive (Half Century Program Collection) Tape Distribution

Part Three: PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING: AN OVERVIEW

Remarks by Jack O'Dell, Chair, Pacifica Board of Directors
January 26, 1997, Board of Directors Meeting
Galveston, TX

The creation of this Strategic Five Year Plan began with asking the question: How can we at Pacifica dramatically build-up our listening audience? and What does the approaching new century/millennium mean in terms of challenge to our Pacifica mission? In our attempt to answer these questions, so vital to the life of the organization, a series of governance board/staff retreats were held in different signal areas over the past year. Our station managers remained on the front line of this process. The regular monthly conference calls of the National Executive Committee kept the strategic planning process at the top of its agenda. Task forces in different areas of work were formed. As we sought to gather our collective experience, we solicited the insights of our local station advisory board in the signal area communities.

On each occasion, we talked frankly about problems and difficulties confronting us as well as strengths, and debated the possibilities of change. Our purpose is to enhance Pacifica's role as a professional broadcast network in the public radio community and help us remain on the cutting edge of radio in the 21st century. The Strategic Plan represent the continuity of that tradition that has made Pacifica a recognized pioneer in alternative radio since 1949.

It will be noted, the Strategic Plan outlines general goals and objectives in eight areas: national programming, governance, financial resources, technology, national infrastructure, local stations, communications marketing, and organization culture. For example, in the area of governance, Pacifica's goals are to: maintain a diverse governance board, including a composition fifty percent of color; ensure board effectiveness through a functioning committee system that is operational; ensure the organization uses its resources to fund this plan; ensure programming is in keeping with the Pacifica mission and serves the educational and cultural needs of local communities.

One of the salient features of the Pacifica Strategic Plan is that it is placed in a realistic context. Both the new possibilities and new urgencies for organizational change are put forward in a concise analysis, which serves as the introduction, by our Deputy Executive Director, Dick Bunce. Clearly, the new urgencies are from the growing centralization of corporate power in the commercial media industry and increased activity of right-wing conservative organizations in their use of radio and other media to promote their agenda.

The Pacifica Plan envisions better service to our more than fifty affiliate stations nationwide. It also proposed to put serious resources behind the plan by launching a major gifts campaign to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary (two years from now). Consistent with our Pacifica mission, the implementation of this Strategic Plan will strengthen all sectors of the social change movements.

Latinos struggling to change conditions in the Maquiladores along the Texas border; civil rights activists in Birmingham organizing to remove toxic waste dumps from the community and stop the "privatization" of local public bus service; Asian American youth confronting police brutality and harassment in New York; a renewed vitality among the labor unions in the struggle for economic success; these are among the constituencies Pacifica Radio serves.

Having had the opportunity to critique this plan, as part of the planning process, our local station personnel now have the mandate to develop local strategic plans and priorities within the parameters our Pacifica plan provides.

The captain of our team effort that created this Strategic Five Year Plan is our colleague and sister, Patricia Scott. The vision, energy and leadership Pat continues to give Pacifica has played a huge part in bringing us to this point.

For all of us, strategic planning continues to be a journey of discovery. We have discussed assets and potential yes, but above all we have discovered what trust, mutual respect and teamwork (as values) can accomplish when actively applied to creative work. This is a valuable discovery for us in Pacifica. I know we've come a mighty long way! As for the fruits of this continuing journey, we are reminded of the words of promise in the song, "The Best Is Yet To Come". Whether we've been on the governance board for twenty years or just got connected to Pacifica twenty days ago, we all share this legacy of hope.

With the adoption of the Strategic Five Year Plan, we cross the threshold into the implementation phase. Needless to say, this journey has not been a painless one. To the contrary, a number of unpleasant experience have crossed our path along the way – from character assassination, slander and misrepresentation to physical threats. Nor do we lay claim to having achieved the lofty heights of perfection in the results of our work. Yet all of our efforts directed toward organization change and improvement must, of necessity, embody an element of the prophetic, so that history will judge that we had the vision to see and the courage to act responsibly in a time of profound alienation in our nation and terrible deprivation in most of the world.

In this implementation phase of the Strategic Plan therefore, we will together make the same purposeful, cautious but bold attempt to identify and adopt the wisest, most constructive course of action for carrying out the plan in the interest of a stronger, healthier Pacifica organization. This can inspire the best in each of us. It is the means available to us today, by which we keep faith with the revolutionary purpose we inherit from the founders of Pacifica, as a sacred trust.

Since this significant moment is taking place during the months in which Martin Luther King's birthday is celebrated, it is perhaps appropriate to call attention to his last book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*. From the vantage point of our historical responsibility in the public broadcasting profession, and out of the travails and successes of our experiences, we at Pacifica have fashioned our response to that enduring question. We intentionally choose to go in the direction of building the enlightened community.

We offer this Strategic Five Year Plan as a testament to that commitment.

RESOLUTION: The PACIFICA FOUNDATION's Strategic Five Year Plan

Mission Statement, Pacifica Foundation, 1946: "To promote cultural diversity and pluralistic community expression...To contribute to a lasting understanding between individuals of all nations, races, creeds and colors...To promote freedom of the press and serve as a forum for various viewpoints...To maintain an independent funding base."

Planning Process

The Pacifica Board and staff have met in retreat three times to discuss the future they would like to see for the Foundation as a whole, and the most promising ways to achieve that future. In March 1996 the group defined the impact Pacifica wants to have, identified the key elements necessary to achieve that impact, and examined the Foundation's current position. Board and staff task forces subsequently discussed specific initiatives conducive to moving the organization forward. These initiatives were reviewed by the entire group in June, when core elements of the shared vision and ensuing plan were discussed in the context of establishing priorities. In August the Administrative Council met to propose precise goals and to clarify basic strategies for achieving those goals. These recommendations were presented at the September retreat. Shortly thereafter, the Board met and requested the recommendations be presented to local staff, volunteers and local advisory boards for comment prior to formal discussion and action on the plan by the Board in January 1997. Within the framework of the resulting Pacifica strategic plan, local stations will then create their own plans and priorities.

Guiding Principles for Planning

In elucidating goals and specifying immediate objectives, the Board and staff discussed the shared principles which informed their decision making. Foremost among these principles: Pacifica's mission and goals will determine the activities and the priorities that will be supported. In keeping with its inherent strengths, Pacifica will establish a realistic standard of success, will plan strategically, and will use SCA revenue to invest in the future. While Pacifica shares a commitment to at least five strong local stations and their local communities, the strategic investment will not necessarily be equally divided among those stations.

Resolution: Goals and Objectives

Board and staff recommitted to Pacifica's original mission and -- recognizing the new problems inherent in both the contemporary world of media and the internal problems accrued during the past fifty years -- resolved to see Pacifica evolve to the best present methods of implementing that mission. Goals represent the long range vision of success in specific areas. Objectives are here defined as the paths, more measurable to attaining those goals.

We therefore resolve to:

- Provide news, public affairs and cultural programming of a quality to inspire and mobilize listeners toward positive social change.
- Reach the largest possible audience.
- Attract and retain: new listeners, skilled staff, talented volunteers, board members engaged by the mission, leaders in effective social change movements, individual donors, and fellow professionals in broadcasting.
- Maintain financial resources sufficient to support these objectives while maintaining independent programming.
- Obtain these objectives by attaining maximum prudent growth (audience and financial) through stabilizing and building on a fully funded plan with a sound financial base. Local and national programming will be shaped to this endeavor. A reasonable resource development strategy will be formed to assist in the recruiting, training and retaining of capable staff and volunteers. A professional level of competence will be developed throughout Pacifica, as will fully up-to-date physical facilities and new technology.

Strategies

Strategies are here defined as the most important initiatives for the organization to undertake in order to attain its goals. The Pacifica Board and staff have specified three inter-related strategies as primary: (1) improving the quality of air sound (measured by content that reflects the Pacifica mission, production values that are listener-friendly, and technical professionalism, essential in a time of proliferating technical excellence); (2) developing professional management, organizational structures and support systems; (3) increasing substantially Pacifica's financial resources.

National Infrastructure

The primary goal established by board and staff is to develop and maintain national staff and systems adequate to effectively serve Pacifica stations and units. The objectives to attain this goal can be identified as two fundamental categories: people and finance. In the first category, people: our objectives are to hire adequate staff to serve Pacifica (including staff capable of advising and supporting local stations in problem-solving); to develop and maintain a healthy working environment and efficient systems in compliance with federal and state labor laws; to computerize record-keeping; and to access professional expertise as needed. In terms of finance: our objectives are to develop and maintain an integrated financial management system efficient both in exchanging accurate and timely information between the finance office and the local units, and in sustaining the necessary time, knowledge and skills to inform management decision-making.

Local Stations

The goals established by Board and staff are for each station to achieve or exceed basic minimum standards to improve air sound and build audience consistent with Pacifica's mission. The objective areas are: (1) the facilities, including the physical plants which are to be upgraded and maintained at a professional level; (2) the equipment and technology which are to be upgraded to digital with continually improving air sound; (3) staffing levels, with optimal staff to support the five year plan to be assured, and volunteer talents both off and on air to be utilized; (4) fundraising, wherein all sources of revenue not conflicting with Pacifica's mission and values are to be developed and maximized, with an emphasis on implementing and maintaining major and planned giving programs.

Each local station must develop its own strategic plan in the context of the overall Pacifica Strategic Plan.

National Programming

The goal of national programming is to produce and present mission driven signature programming aimed at providing increased audience and revenue to the local stations. The objectives are (1) to expand the programming available to Pacifica's stations, (2) to maintain a regular national news program, (3) to make the Pacifica archive self-sustaining, (4) to make full use nationally of the talent and the human resources currently available in the organization.

Governance

The goal is to develop a system of governance that strikes the right balance between local community input, clear national vision, and governance leadership in order to follow through on the broader goals of the strategic plan. Effective governance is key to the Board's ability to provide 50th anniversary campaign leadership that can articulate the mission and vision of Pacifica Radio and its future.

The objectives to meet this goal are: (1) Strengthen the national Board of Directors by (a) selecting members with needed skills, commitment, and resources, and who reflect the perspectives of Pacifica's five station communities; (b) maintaining a Board with 50 percent people of color; (c) requiring the Board to consist of an equal number of Directors nominated by local advisory boards, Directors elected by the governing Board from the five signal areas, and at-large Directors elected by the governing Board; and (d) ensuring the effectiveness of Board organization using a working committee system, including a Board Development Committee, so that the Board will attract skilled and capable people to serve Pacifica's mission. (2) Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Pacifica's multiple overlapping boards; (3) Assert the governing Board's responsibility to oversee the integrity of each local station; (4) Reaffirm that all voluntary boards should be accountable to the mission and strategic plan of the organization, and be comprised of at least 50 percent people of color; (5) Establish a council of chairs of local advisory boards which will be regularly convened to provide better coordination of organizational agendas.

Fundraising

The goal is ensure adequate financial resources to support Pacifica's mission and achieve the components of this plan consistent with Pacifica's policy of maintaining independence. The objective is to create a national programming

endowment and capital and operating funds to upgrade local stations according to their strategic plans.

Technology

The goal is to utilize cutting edge technology to enhance Pacifica's ability to deliver programs and build audience and to manage information and communications. The objectives are: (1) to use technology to increase Pacifica's audience, for example through fully realized audio transmission on-line; (2) to stay informed of new technological developments of potential use to Pacifica; (3) to ensure the availability of skilled staff capable of initiating and maintaining technological advances; (4) to fully exploit, consistent with Pacifica's mission, the Internet's capabilities for promotion, marketing, and revenue production; (5) to upgrade and integrate Pacifica's financial management and human resources software and systems throughout the Foundation; (6) to develop the ability to efficiently transfer all data and audio throughout Pacifica.

Communications And Marketing

The goal is to promote Pacifica programming, activities, image and values. The objectives are to supply staff expertise to develop and implement a communications and marketing plan and to access community relations resources from staff, volunteers and/or consultants.

Organizational Culture And Communications

The goal is to create a shared vision, reflecting our highest common denominator, that will prove inspiring to everyone connected with Pacifica. Within that vision our objectives will be: (1) to articulate and maintain at all levels of Pacifica clearly defined roles of mutual respect and authority in our working relationships; and (2) to establish and maintain a physically, mentally and emotionally healthy work culture.

Pacifica's Priorities

The five essential precepts determined by the Board and staff to guide Pacifica's development are: (1) to consider what is best for Pacifica as a single and entire network; (2) to concentrate resources where there is optimal potential (in terms of audience and finance) for return; (3) to balance investment based on each station's specific needs; (4) to bring equipment, technology, staff, and facilities at every operating unit up to at least a minimum broadcast and administrative standard (to be defined); (5) to exploit economies of scale.

Predicated on these five precepts, Pacifica proposes as its primary strategy a multi-million dollar 50th Anniversary Campaign to build a programming endowment and to provide capital and operating funds to upgrade local stations per their strategic plans. This campaign, meeting the five precepts, will be shaped as a unified fundraising effort to benefit the entire system.

1997 Strategic Operating Plan

The 1997 Strategic Operating Plan proposes investment in those activities conducive to researching, launching and supporting the 50th Anniversary Campaign. Additionally, the plan proposes specific initiatives to build audience locally and nationally:

- Develop for each station specific local strategies and priorities.
- Hire a 50th Anniversary Campaign/Major Gifts Director.
- Hire a Communications Director/consultant to design and implement the communications plan.
- Establish local readiness criteria, including basic minimum standards.
- Conduct a readiness assessment for the campaign, involving boards and staff.
- Prepare the Board for national leadership of the campaign.
- Build national financial management systems that can track gifts and activities.
- Establish a Donor Database to support goals, allocations, expected resources and contingencies.
- Professionalize personnel systems, in keeping with federal and state law.
- Strengthen Pacifica infrastructure by hiring at least a .5 time staff member, Deputy Director or clerical support.
- Add to the KU schedule with national programming.
- Rebuild the Archives in accordance with the feasibility study; upgrade systems; use the web site to increase Archive sales.
- Establish programming on the Internet.
- Hire 1/4 time technologist to analyze trends, and to recommend and coordinate new technology systems for Pacifica.

Appendix: List of Planning Participants

Led by Barbara Miller, Senior Consultant from the Support Center of New York, Pacifica's Strategic Planning took place in 1996-97 at several specially scheduled Board-and-Staff retreats, public meetings of the Board of Directors, phone conferences by Board-and-Staff Task Forces, and Administrative Council meetings*, as follows:

March 8 -10, 1996 in Los Angeles, CA
 June 19 - 23, 1996 in Washington, D.C.
 August 18 - 20, 1996* in Berkeley, CA
 September 25 - 29, 1996 in New York, NY
 January 24 - 26, 1997 in Galveston, TX

Participants:

Pacifica Foundation Board of Directors

Jack O'Dell, Chair
Director of International Affairs, Rainbow Coalition Vancouver,
British Columbia, Canada

Cecelia McCall, Ph.D. - Vice Chair
Professor of Sociology, City University of New York, Baruch
College
New York, NY

Roberta Brooks, Secretary
Staff - Hon. Ron Dellums, US Congress Oakland, CA

Hon. June Makela, Treasurer
School Board Member, Borough of Manhattan
New York, NY

David Acosta
Certified Public Accountant
Houston, TX

David Assmann
Public Outreach, San Francisco Recycling Program
San Francisco, CA

Alexis Gonzales
Labor Organizer - Local 2 Hotel and Restaurant Employees
Union
San Francisco, CA

Charlotte Holloman
Political Consultant
Washington, DC

Ambrose Lane
Minister and Consultant (term expired 8.96)
Washington, DC

Frank Millspaugh
Executive Director, Film Video Arts
New York, NY

Charles McClung
Attorney-at-Law (Alternate Board Member)
Laguna Niguel, CA

Dorothy Nasatir
Activist (Alternate Board Member)
Canoga Park, CA

Michael Palmer
Real Estate Broker (Alternate Board Member)

Houston, TX

Loretta Ross (joined Board 9.96)
Executive Director, Center for Human Rights Education
Atlanta, GA

Roger Scarborough
Attorney-at-Law
Houston, TX

Adrien Zubrin
Fundraiser (Alternate Board Member, began 9.96)
Washington, DC

Pacifica Foundation Administrative Council

National Staff:

Pat Scott Executive Director
Berkeley, CA

Dick Bunce
Deputy Executive Director for
Planning & Development
Berkeley, CA

Gail Christian
Director, National Programming North Hollywood, CA

Sandra Rosas Controller
North Hollywood, CA

Julie Drizin
Bureau Chief, PNN/Democracy Now
(non-member)
Washington, DC

Mary Tilson
Station Relations Director (non-member)
Berkeley, CA

Pamela Burton
Director, Pacifica Radio Archives (non-member)
North Hollywood, CA

Station Managers:

Garland Ganter
General Manager, KPFT
Houston, TX

Marci Lockwood
General Manager, KPFA
Berkeley, CA

Mark Schubb
General Manager, KPFK

North Hollywood, CA

Valerie Van Isler
General Manager, WBAI
New York, NY

Bessie Wash
General Manager, WPFW
Washington, DC

Louis Hankins
Acting General Manager
(April -July, 1996), WPFW
Washington, DC

Endnotes

i Robert McChesney, "The Global Struggle for Democratic Communications," Monthly Review, June-July 1996. [Back](#)

ii Don Hazen, "Ten Powerful Trends Transforming Our Media World," in Media and Democracy, Don Hazen and Larry Smith, eds., Institute for Alternative Journalism, San Francisco, 1996. The corporate lock on print and broadcast media has led to a generalized destruction of journalism and alienation of the public from the media. As Robert McChesney has written: "By defining the news as being based on specific events or on the activities of official sources, the news media neglect coverage of long-term social issues that dominate society. Moreover by sanitizing coverage and depriving it of ideological content, the news ma[kes] public affairs increasingly obtuse, confusing and boring. The excitement once associated with politics [i]s now found only in coverage of crime, sports and celebrities. This depoliticization has been marked by a general decline in political knowledge, lower voter turnouts, and a range of legitimate political debate far narrower than the historical standard, or than that in other nations." From Philanthropy Must Answer Market's Attack on Journalism... forthcoming. And leading mainstream journalists agree. Former Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein writes: "We are being dominated by a global journalistic culture that has little to do with the truth or reality or context. The result of the misuse and abuse of free expression in Western democracies actually disempowers people by making them more cynical about public life." And Reuven Frank, former head of NBC News was quoted: "It is daily becoming more obvious that the biggest threat to a free press and the circulation of ideas is the steady absorption of newspapers, television, networks and other vehicles of information into enormous corporations that know how to turn knowledge into profit - but are not equally committed to inquiry or debate or to the First Amendment." [Back](#)

iii Hazen, *ibid.* [Back](#)

iv Robert McChesney, "Public Broadcasting in the Age of Communications Revolution," Monthly Review, December 1995. [Back](#)

v It has been argued that Christian stations, currently confined to less choice frequencies than most public broadcasters, would be able to buy out vast numbers of weakened public stations suddenly thrust on the market because of CPB cuts. Gingrich has actually outlined just such buyouts for the press,

and cynically proclaimed "Rush Limbaugh is public radio." [Back](#)

vi Katharine Q. Seelye, "Radio Host Tells G.O.P. Not to Trust the Press," New York Times (National Edition), 12.12.94. [Back](#)

vii McChesney, "Public Broadcasting..." *ibid.* The threats and intimidation have lately also come from the trusts. In 1996 Disney-ABC attorneys threatened Pacifica with an expensive nuisance suit for broadcasting excerpts (provided by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) of ABC's NYC talk show host Bob Grant's shockingly racist diatribes. [Back](#)

viii Stephen Salyer, Keynote Address, Public Radio Development Conference, San Diego, CA July 15, 1994. Not only is there missing a coalition of advocates in Congress for increasing the public investment in public broadcasting, there is disagreement over the best use of existing support levels. The Twentieth Century Fund blue-ribbon panel recommended a fundamental re-structuring of federal support: "The best role for the federal government is not to support local stations, except under very unusual circumstances, but to provide key resources for critical national programming which has become the keystone of building public broadcasting and public service." *Current*, 8.9.93, p.1ff. [Back](#)

ix Bill Moyers, *Current*, 7.8.96. [Back](#)

x Chris Farrell, "What the New Economy of the 21st Century Means for Public Radio," Keynote Address to the 1996 Public Radio Development/Marketing Conference, Minneapolis, 8.2.96. [Back](#)

xi Salyer, *ibid.* KQED/San Francisco and WBUR/Boston, a former Pacifica affiliate, are prominent examples cited. [Back](#)

xii Al Savitsky, "Ear on America," *Media Studies Journal*, Summer 1993. [Back](#)

xiii *Ibid.* [Back](#)

xiv "Media Targetting 2000", reported in Arbitron's Radio Market Reports, Summer 1996. [Back](#)

xv Salyer, *ibid.* [Back](#)

xvi D. Giovannoni. [Back](#)

xvii Ralph Engelman, *Public Radio and Television in America*, Sage, 1996. [Back](#)

xviii Jeffrey Richard Land, *Active Radio: Pacifica's Brash Experiment*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Univ. of Oregon, 1994. [Back](#)

xix Source: Radio Research Consortium, Winter 1996 Toplines, Arbitron Radio Audience Estimates; and AudiGraphics, Audience Research Analysis of proprietary radio listening data prepared by The Arbitron Co., separate reports for Pacifica stations. [Back](#)

xx Only estimates are available because audience information for affiliate stations is proprietary and not available to Pacifica. [Back](#)



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