



WRAS Details GSU-GPB Contract, Requests Meeting with President Becker

GSU-GPB agreement allows for auto-renewal, shared time negotiations and more

(ATLANTA) - While students, alumni and the community have joined together in an effort to fight the GPB takeover of WRAS daytime programming, the staff of the station have spent the past few days reviewing the contract in detail. After taking this time to look it over, we stand firmly in our opposition to this agreement and now better understand the implications of the deal. Below are a few points from the contract - along with clarification on a few points - that motivate our strengthened opposition:

- It should be clarified that the \$150,000 payment to GSU by GPB is, in fact, not a payment for the agreement. Since GSU and GPB are legally prohibited from paying each other for the deal, this sum of money should be understood as reimbursement for the costs of operation and the dollar amount is limited to \$150,000 maximum by FCC regulations.
- Though described by GSU administration as a '2-year trial period,' the wording of the contract calls for an *automatic* renewal every 2 years until 2020, switching over to 8-year automatic renewals from 2020 to 2064. This wording contradicts how it was presented to staff at the initial announcement meeting.
- Termination of the agreement by either party can occur in one of four ways: "Programming would be contrary to the public interest, convenience and necessity," breach of contract/violation of laws and regulations by GPB, daytime programming doesn't have a "substantial amount" of NPR/APM/PRI content, or "for convenience." Each of these has varying ways in which they will be executed.
- While GPB must identify GSU as the FCC licensee for WRAS, GPB is *not* required to mention Album 88 at all or discuss the evening programming and HD2/online stream. Further, GSU is guaranteed one 10 second PSA per hour on WRAS during GPB programming and two 10 second PSAs per day to be broadcast across GPB radio stations in Georgia. None of these PSAs are required to pertain to Album 88 or music programming by students and only is required to represent GSU.
- GPB will broadcast a weekly half-hour 'Student Music Program' on analog signal that will feature "a mix of music with background information and interviews that will feature performers, producers and business people in the music industry." We as a staff must note that this program, being touted as a key benefit of the deal, will be replacing over 100 hours of our own daily student-curated music programming on 88.5 FM. Further, this deal will destroy our nationwide relationships within the music industry, making it hard to foresee said individuals' involvement in the GPB program.
- Section 5 (f) describes the proposed internship opportunities with GPB, calling for a "reasonable amount of opportunity" and failing to discuss details. Further, it allows for GSU to hire an 'Academic Coordinator' that would oversee these internships at the station - inserting a permanent non-student into the station for the first time in our history.
- Upon the execution of the agreement, GSU and GPB are allowed to begin negotiations for a shared time arrangement. This means that - pending FCC approval - GSU would no longer be the sole FCC licensee. Rather, GSU and GPB would both be license holders for the 88.5 FM signal. Such an arrangement would give GPB legal authority for half of the station's airtime (rather than acting as a lessee) and such negotiations would not prohibit large monetary compensation to GSU from GPB if a shared time deal was reached.

Such points of detail, especially the latter one, greatly enhance concern by WRAS staff over this agreement. Not only is 100 hours of student programming being removed from our analog 88.5 FM in exchange for internships/30 minute student music program "opportunities" but all of these changes were made without allowing any student input. While we understand the reasons for secrecy around 'high

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stakes negotiations' and respect GSU as the FCC licensee, failure to include students in the decision casts the administration as deaf to student voices. When a similar deal was proposed to WREK by GPB back in 2007, the students of the station were allowed to have a say in negotiations and eventually rejected the offer. The opportunities within this deal are insufficient to the opportunities that come with running an actual 100,000-watt, highly respected radio station. In our eyes, radio as it has been, involves an analog FM signal (referred to as 88.5 FM) - not an HD2 station (referred to as 88.5-2 FM) or an online stream - and believe such a signal builds a community unlike that of streaming.

Going forward, WRAS staff continues to review our options regarding this deal while also continuing to pursue our programming mission. Working in coordination with various other student organizations - as well as the pool of alumni and listeners - we encourage an open and respectful dialogue about the impact of these changes. WRAS publicly requests a meeting by next Tuesday (5/20/14) with GSU President Mark Becker along with Ms. Teya Ryan from GPB to discuss the details of this agreement and answer questions we may have. Staff has yet to receive any direct communications from either party and we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these changes with the two central individuals behind them.

WRAS Atlanta Album 88 is the 100,000-watt student-run voice of Georgia State University. Operating from downtown Atlanta since 1971, WRAS has made a name for itself by consistently breaking new artists such as R.E.M., Deerhunter and Outkast. On May 6, 2014 WRAS staff were informed of a deal made unilaterally between GSU and GPB that will replace WRAS programming with GPB news programming from 5 AM to 7 PM daily. Allowing for zero student input in the decision, WRAS staff and a growing chorus of alumni and supporters have expressed strong opposition to the deal and the administration's disregard for students.

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