

ANNUAL REPORT

Student Media

June 5, 2007

Submitted by Bradley Wilson, coordinator of student media advising

SUMMARY

I. Programs

Perhaps most importantly, we published 153 issues of the *Technician*, including more than 1,900 stories and more than 1,500 photos, published a 272-page yearbook, published 24 issues of the *Nubian Message*, kept a radio station on the air 24 hours a day for 361 days and published a literary magazine. Because no one applied to be editor and no one was hired to be editor, *Americana* did not publish all year and was not provided a budget for the following year. Due to declining advertising income, particularly from the daily newspaper, the Student Media saw a decline in revenues of about \$57,000 or 6 percent of the overall budget.

II. Compact Plan

The student body approved the removal of the Student Media from the Student Government constitution and the creation of a Student Media Constitution that included the reform of the Student Media Board of Directors. Highlights of our summer recruitment efforts included recruitment of 230 freshmen. However, we retained only about 12 percent of those individuals, hence the focus on retention in the upcoming year.

III. Diversity

In-depth and longitudinal studies of the *Technician* show that while not racially diverse, the staff is more diverse in other ways and continues to cover the diverse array of students at NCSU fairly. The fourth Time Out for Diversity study, in conjunction with a

readership survey and focus group, showed that sources in the *Technician* and readers of the *Technician* generally feel the publication is a fair representation of campus.

IV. Staff

Scott Zekanis, our systems administrator, resigned effective June 1, 2007. We had an extremely successful year with our first graduate student and writing coach, Lee Williams. Special kudos go to Tyler Dukes, the first NCSU recipient of the prestigious Dow Jones Newspaper Fund internship with *The Wall Street Journal*. The fall 2005 and spring 2006 editions of the *Technician* received that publication's first national award, the Silver Crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

V. Recommendations

We need to maintain our reserve at at least one-fourth of operating monies, if not more, based on comparisons with peer institutions. We also need to bring the salaries of the EPA staff in line with other universities to work toward the NCSU strategic plan objective to "develop a faculty and staff of the highest quality." "Competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and a supportive and productive work environment are critical to attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and staff."

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I. PROGRAMS

Board of Directors • Thanks to a commitment from T. Greg Doucette, a student senator, a number of other Student Media alumni in the Student Senate, and our student leaders, especially *Technician* Editor Tyler Dukes, the student body passed a referendum removing the Student Media from the Student Government Constitution and approved the new Student Media Constitution. A new Board with the following composition will begin meeting next year.

Representation of the Student Media Board of Directors shall be:

1. Three student body representatives elected at-large in a student body election;
2. Three student college representatives, appointed by the dean of the college, as apportioned to the colleges in the Media policies;
3. Two faculty representatives, serving on staggered two-year terms, as apportioned to the colleges in the Media policies;
4. Three individuals not under the employ of the University providing expertise on media management qualified and selected as provided by the Media policies;
5. One representative from each media outlet chosen as provided by the Media policies, non-voting;
6. The president of the Student Body, ex-officio, non-voting;
7. The senior-most professional employee of the Student Media, ex-officio, non-voting.

Elected student members shall not be members of the Student Senate, of a Student Body Medium or any other campus-wide advisory or governance body as defined in the Documents of Policy.

College Journalism • Our students and professional staff members have continued to increase their involvement in professional and collegiate media organizations. Ties to such organizations brings positive recognition to the University and allows students to network with their peers and

prospective employers. Most notably, students were active in the College Media Advisers and Associated Collegiate Press, helping to present sessions at the national convention in St. Louis in the fall. In addition:

- Matt Moore attended a national workshop on Adobe Lightroom in Atlanta to learn how to improve our digital workflow.
- The Society for Collegiate Journalists sponsored its first campus-wide, a panel discussion about media coverage of the war in Iraq.
- Melanie Sill, executive editor of the Raleigh *News & Observer*, came in to speak to the staff Jan. 23. WHAT SHE TOLD THE STAFF: People are going to come to you for information they can't get elsewhere. We (at the N&O) are focusing a lot on reporting, investigation and telling stories in a compelling way. We're always looking for some different story, a slice of life story. (Working in the media) is very interesting work. You get to walk into people's lives and tell the world about them. You can't do that in any other profession. People would look at you funny. We try to make local connections as often as possible. We're trying to give people material they're not getting anywhere else.
- Krystal Pittman and several students in the business office attended the College Newspaper Business and Advertising Managers conference and Krystal remained active in the regional association, Southern University Newspapers.
- For the fourth year, the *Technician* editor, Tyler Dukes, attended the MSCNE04 Management Seminar for College Newspaper Editors at Grady College of Journalism and Mass communication at the University of Georgia.
- We lacked involvement in the College Broadcasters Inc., something that has been made a higher priority for next year for the WKNC student staff, especially now that the radio station has a full-time adviser.

Budget • Paralleling a decline in the economy, income declined this year, primarily in two areas, *Technician* advertising and *Agromeck* sales. Accounting for a budgeted transfer from reserve of \$80,843 for the purchase of AdPro software, the net loss for the year was approximately \$45,000. Changes in the budget process for the 2007-2008 academic year imposed by the budget office mean that reserve monies cannot be budgeted for operating expenses but only for one-time expenses. This has meant cutting about \$112,000 in the 2007-

2008 budget so it is balanced with anticipated advertising and fee income and significant cuts in personnel and projects for the upcoming year.

Americana did not publish at all this year and was not provided a budget for the following year.

Despite amazingly aggressive marketing by the yearbook staff, including one letter mailed home to all parents of graduating seniors, three "You're In the Book" postcards, numerous visits of Agromeck person to the Brickyard and other events, as well as posters and other publicity, we only sold 207 yearbooks, down for the third year in a row. We had dropped the price to \$55/book.

MEDIA	Budget income	Actual income*	Budget expenses	Actual expenses*
Agromeck	\$102,250.00	\$46,676.45	\$141,294.18	\$41,370.18
Americana	\$7,843.25	\$8,102.07	\$7,843.25	\$0
Nubian Message	\$26,832.47	\$26,441.93	\$26,832.47	\$19,472.08
Technician	\$508,533.00	\$354,322.99	\$508,533.50	\$428,621.69
Windhover	\$26,476.90	\$27,350.63	\$26,476.90	\$26,908.37
WKNC	\$54,153.25	\$60,360.15	\$67,260.90	\$50,386.44
Gen. Admin.	\$246,296.49	\$254,770.08	\$325,648.14	\$376,428.03
Total	\$998,385.35	\$781,024.30	\$1,103,996.23	\$943,186.79

* As of June 4, 2007

Professionalism • The *Technician* added a "corrections" section to its online site so that readers could find all past corrections at once. It was not consistently maintained, but was a good service to readers. Board reports from all media included violations of the Code of Ethics.

Timeliness • Our objective was to track how well students met their deadlines and to establish consequences for not meeting those deadlines. We succeeded in both regards. We tracked deadlines using official records submitted to the printer and posted these as part of the minutes of the Student Media Board each month.

- *Technician* average 75% (74% last year)
- *Agromeck* average 64%
- *Nubian Message* average 100% (100% last year)

1. The *Technician* staff met its midnight goal only 14 percent of the time in the spring of 07, up from 13 percent a year ago, down from 23 percent in the fall of 05 and down from 21 percent in the spring of 05.
2. The *Agromeck* had a bad year in terms of meeting deadlines, significantly worse than last year. The staff submitted 0 pages prior to Dec. 17 when, following the resignation of Editor Cynthia Rouf, the staff submitted 74 pages. With the hiring of Brandon Wright as editor, the staff got back on track, but remained behind. The staff turned in final pages on schedule and anticipated delivery July 30, nearly one month early. The book was 272 pages.
3. The *Windhover* was on schedule and on budget. More than 100 people attended the reception. The only deadline problem was getting the book distributed before the end of the academic year since the books are delivered so close to the end of the year.
4. The *Nubian Message*, under the leadership of Editor Keitris Weathersbe, came out on time for every single issue this academic year.

Training • We tracked the quantity, quality and usefulness of training using individual evaluation forms at each training opportunity which each media was supposed to have at least once per month.

WKNC staff members met their objectives regarding training this year with the continued use of a 50-page training and staff manual created last year and the continuation of a formal class for all incoming disc jockeys that lasted eight weeks, one night per week for one hour. General Manager Brian Ware, last year's general manager, David Nourse, and radio station adviser, Jamie Gilbert, taught this course. Twenty-seven people attended the fall class with 16 still on staff at the end of the academic year (59 percent retention). Twenty-two attended the spring class with 12 on staff at the end of the academic year (54 percent retention). That's 49 total trained and 28 new staff members retained (57 percent retention). Fewer than 28 left the staff due to graduation, etc. so we have a net gain from last year.

The staff manual created last year for the *Technician* staff last year proved to be virtually ignored this year, particularly in terms of the design section. The code of ethics, however, was used often. The copy editors, led by Tara Croft, showed remarkable improvement and use of

the NCSU Student Media *Style Guide*. Staff members were very inconsistent not only in their training but evaluation of training. Photographers ceased all training this year, quite a contrast from past years when photo editors took charge of weekly staff meetings and monthly critiques and training.

Staff members of the *Nubian Message* were also inconsistent with their training.

Agromeck staff members used their weekly staff meetings as their regular training opportunity and they were generally very informal when they were actually held. Staff members took advantage of having Lee Williams, the writing coach, in their area and used him to improve their writing.

II. COMPACT PLAN

The one item that continues to stand out in our Compact Plan – “To work with student government and student media leaders to create a true advisory board.” — was finally completed this year. In the October Leader of the Pack election, led by T. Greg Doucette in the Student Senate and Technician Editor Tyler Dukes, the student body approved a referendum to remove Student Media from the Student Government (Yes 877 (75%); No 293 (25%); Total: 1,170). That left us without a Constitution. So, we wrote a Constitution and it was approved with 86.2 percent of the vote. In addition, three students were voted in as write-in candidates to the Student Media Board of Directors, including Selby Lo, a junior in biological sciences (13.0%), John Napoli, a junior in English (9.0%), and Laura Kenny, a sophomore in political science (3.9%). Lo and Kenny are both resident advisers working for University Housing. Lo is also historian for Circle K. Napoli is an undergraduate office assistant with the NCSU Institute for Nonprofits.

Also as part of our Compact Plan initiatives, we conducted a readership survey of Technician readers and a focus group. Exactly 112 students responded to the online survey and 19 students completed the focus group. Except for comments about editing, the findings were almost completely ignored by the staff despite numerous meetings about the results, including re-hashing during budget meetings and posting of the results online.

Students...

- believe the photography and design are good.
- generally believe the coverage of the paper is adequate.
- believe the editing and writing of the paper is poor quality.
- DO notice when the design is better.

Credibility

- Conduct a thorough credibility study modeled after the UNC study to compare the credibility of the Technician to other professional papers and the Daily Tar Heel.
- Formally invite one student to participate in the budget meeting day during the spring semester. Start by inviting the people who signed up for the focus group. Have a sign-up sheet in the business office.
- Engage in more marketing to educate the campus about how the paper works and how they can have input.

Editing — the absolute highest priority

- All training in the spring semester should focus on editing for all staff members.
- Institute a day-long training workshop for all staff members before the fall semester.
- Restructure the training class for new staff members so classes focus more on entry-level skills including editing.

Other recommendations

- Decrease the number of stories that jump.
- Increase the amount of alternative copy and short reads.
- Decrease the amount of game coverage in the sports section.
- Decrease the amount of sports coverage in the paper.
- Focus more on newsworthy events and investigative features and less on fluffy features.

STAND-OUT FINDINGS FROM STAFF

At the fall retreat on Jan. 9, 2007, the staff members reviewed the findings again, and made some notes about findings that stood out in their minds.

- The staff grades the paper harder than the general readership.
- The readers view our photography as our strongest asset.
- The thing we need to work on the most is editing.
- Students are more likely to get their news from the print edition than the online edition.
- Students do depend on the Technician for campus news. They get their world and national news online.
- The paper covers too much sports, and sports is the least-read section in the paper.

Academic progress

The Board approved a new policy requiring a 2.5 grade point average for all student leaders, more stringent than and in advance of the new policy implemented at the University level requiring a 2.5 for only the top leaders. In the fall semester, we had 207 students on payroll and 29 percent of them had a 3.5 or greater. Eight had a 4.000. 127 people had greater than 3.000. However, 23 people had below a 2.000 for the semester and 14 people had a 2.000 cumulative requiring either work plans or dismissal from staff.

Recruitment

Recruited 230 incoming freshmen. Technician was the most successful at recruitment. Contacted 135 individuals as a result of their expressed interest. Twenty-three of those individuals who expressed an interest attended the Technician or WKNC class. Thirty four of those individuals who expressed an interest joined staff (15%). Twenty seven of those individuals who expressed an interest were retained (12%). We spent \$17.76 for every individual recruited. We spent \$151.35 for every individual retained. We committed 236.25 person hours to the Orientation recruitment efforts (student staff only).

Technology

Continuing to work in a technology-rich environment remained one of our goals. We upgraded any machine more than four years old and kept software current. We also increased our presence online with the creation of 88.1 Seconds of *Technician*, a cooperative effort between WKNC fm88.1 and the Technician. Every day, the *Technician* staff wrote a script from the news in the next day's paper. WKNC staffers produced a podcast that was uploaded to iTunes as well

as the *Technician* and WKNC sites. Due to budget cuts, it remains to be seen what hardware or software will be upgraded next year. We have postponed the upgrade to Adobe's Creative Suite for a year and may be unable to continue 88.1 Seconds due to lack of funding for personnel. Still, we remain committed to the concepts of convergence and to increasing our online presence.

We also worked with the emergency management folks on campus in the police department and environmental health and safety to host a campus disaster drill and to prepare to help disseminate information in the event of a campus event such as what happened at Virginia Tech late in the year.

III. DIVERSITY

The fourth Time Out for Diversity study was designed to make *Technician* staff aware of the diversity (of ages, majors, classifications, gender and race) of the sources used in news/feature, opinion and sports coverage. A profile of the staff found that the staff is

- 48% male (64% last year)
- 29% seniors (42% last year), 32% juniors (36% last year)
- 90% white (81% last year) with 1% African-Americans on staff (0% last year)
- 61% "liberal"

The take-home points from the staff analysis:

- We desperately need to recruit more conservative staff members on a campus that is probably very conservative, dominated by engineers, scientists and agriculture students. Based on these data, this should be the highest priority. This is the same priority from last year. No progress was made.
- We need more racial diversity on staff. Specifically, we need to recruit African-Americans, which comprise 1 percent of the staff but 9.1 percent of the population. No progress made.
- We need more freshmen and sophomores on staff. This will assist not only in coverage, but in retention. It appears as though significant progress was made because the pre-analysis was completed by all people in the Technician "class." However, only a few of those of who have completed the class have actually contributed content to the publication.

- Diversity within the sections needs to be considered as well. In one two-week period 64% of the columns were written by males and 93% by Caucasians. In that same period, white males wrote 100% of the sports articles.
- To that end we created a “grant” after administrators, who disagreed with us creating an endowment to fund a scholarship, vetoed a “scholarship” last year. This grant started in the fall of 2006 is for \$1,000/year for incoming freshmen or current students with fewer than 36 credit hours. It is for *Technician* staff only and is solely funded by *Technician* advertising income. Four students received the grant: Helen Dear, Saja Hindi, Peggy Boone and Colleen Forcina.

In terms of coverage, we found that the sources in the *Technician* resembled the staff – to no surprise and we developed recommendations to improve the coverage.

IV. STAFF

In terms of professional staff, the most significant news was the hiring of a graduate student and writing coach, **Lee Williams**. **Scott Zekanis**, our systems administrator for only one year, left to go to Lulu systems where he got a significant raise. **Martha Collins** is doing an awesome job in the front office despite continued frustrations. She continues to handle the payroll for 200 or so students during the course of the year and more than 100 on any given pay period. Martha also took on the responsibility of serving as the adviser to the NCSU chapter of SCJ. **Krystal Pittman** continues to keep the business staff running like a well-oiled machine despite declining revenues and increased workload. It’s particularly nice having a radio station adviser who can devote full-time to the radio station. And their participation in programs such as Habitat for Humanity, increasing emphasis on sponsorships and new benefit concerts is a testimony to her ability to devote her energies to WKNC.

Martha Collins and Krystal Pittman both received in-range salary adjustments to bring their salaries more in line with their peers on campus and in other Student Media operations.

Recognition

- The *Technician* received its first major national award for the fall 2005 and spring 2006 editions edited by Rebecca Heslin — the Silver Crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

- The 2006 *Agromeck* was nominated for a Pacemaker by the Associated Collegiate Press. Only 13 other schools were nominated nationwide for this prestigious award.
- Eight members of the 2006 *Agromeck* staff received Gold Circle awards. Nathan Bullen and William Alligood — First Place Certificate in Caption Writing for Yearbooks. Thomas Cox and William Alligood — Second Place Certificate in Organization or Greek Spreads for Yearbook. Austin Dowd and Curtiss Martin — Third Place Certificate in Yearbook Feature Presentation. William Alligood — Third Place Certificate in Yearbook Sports Action Photograph. Nick Pironio and Thomas Cox — Certificate of Merit in Yearbook Sports Spread. Cynthia Rouf — Certificate of Merit in Organization or Greek Writing for Yearbook. Daniel Joe — Certificate of Merit in Yearbook Feature Photo
- Senior photographer Rob Bradley, a senior in Communication Media Studies, placed third in the national Photo Excellence Awards sponsored by the Associated Collegiate Press.
- The Society for Collegiate Journalists inducted five new members in January of 2007: Channon Smith, program director, WKNC; Brian Ware, general manager, WKNC; Saja Hindi, deputy news editor, Technician; Kathryn Parker, features editor, Technician; and Yasmin Sadiq, account representative, Student Media business office. Martha Collins was the chapter's adviser.
- WKNC's third annual Double Barrel Benefit, which took place in February, 2006, was named by Independent Weekly as one of its favorite shows of 2006. WKNC was named best radio station by the Independent Weekly in its annual best of the Triangle awards. Tom Warton, aka Rochester, was named best DJ.

Bradley Wilson received the Carl Towley Award, the highest award given by the Journalism Education Association. He was an invited guest at the Western Association of University Publications Managers (WAUPUM) in Tuscon, Ariz. In addition, he presented sessions at the following conferences.

- Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Center for Editing Excellence, Austin, Texas (June 2006)
- North Carolina Scholastic Media Institute (June 2006)
- National College Yearbook Workshop, New Orleans (June 2006)
- Ball State University summer workshop, Muncie, Ind. (July 2006)
- Lifetouch yearbook workshops in San Jose (July 2006), Minneapolis (July 2006)
- United States Naval Academy (fall 2006)

- Taylor Publishing and North Carolina State University (September 2006)
- Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association conventions in Nashville (November 2006) and Denver (April 2007)
- College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press in St. Louis (October 2006)
- The Association of Texas Photography Instructors in Austin, Texas (February 2007)
- Southern Interscholastic Press Association in Columbia, S.C. (February 2007)

Jamie Lynn Gilbert made presentations at the College Broadcasters, Inc. convention in St. Louis and at the Broadcast Education Association convention in Las Vegas (April 2007).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

It has become more and more apparent to me during the last three years, but most especially this year, that if we're ever going to improve the quality of the *Technician*, the *Technician* staff needs an adviser that can devote time to them without having to be divided between administrative work and five other media. They need someone there during production hours to help them learn — before things go to press — what quality journalism is, everything from talking through ethical dilemmas to helping teach copy editors AP style.

The budget process was again frustrating this year. Next year we're going to re-vamp the process to include (1) more status quo budgeting (i.e. only noting changes, not re-creating the budget every year); (2) monthly reviews of the budgeted income and expenditures with lack of income having immediate effects on expenditures; (3) involving Mike Giancola earlier in the process and inviting someone from the budget office to sit in on the Board meeting when the budget is approved.

The process of hiring full-time employees continues to be far too cumbersome and time-consuming. Even though Scott resigned in May, I know we won't have his replacement before August.

We also continue to identify the below-average wages of the professional staff members when wages are compared to other Student Media our size across the nation. The wages of student staff members, particularly editors, still rank as some of the highest in college media although

some schools add perks such as tuition reimbursement that effectively make what they are paid much more than what some of our student leaders are paid. At the WAUPUM conference, the group did a comparison of salaries of peer institutions. The results, presented at the national conference, are below. NCSU ranks at the bottom, even with schools one-third our size in the mix. The average budget of the groups was \$1,361,595, not far off our budget. The average salary of student media directors was \$83,868, nearly 50 percent more than our top official. (Note: I include this, knowing it will not change during my tenure at NCSU. However, I hope my successor can benefit from this awareness.)

INSTITUTION	TITLE	2006-2007 BUDGET	SALARY
Maryland	General Manager	\$1,463,292	\$176,800
Georgia	Publisher	\$1,480,787	\$137,629
Arizona State	Director	\$1,651,329	\$116,180
Indiana	Director	\$2,237,653	\$116,135
UCLA	Media Director	\$2,000,000	\$111,743
Texas	Director	\$3,330,166	\$102,478
Pennsylvania	General Manager	\$1,305,000	\$97,750
Iowa	Publisher	\$2,268,000	\$97,400
Michigan State	General Manager	\$2,666,400	\$88,810
Kansas	General Manager	1,103,000	\$88,430
Illinois	Publisher	\$2,800,000	\$87,550
Kansas State	Director	\$1,289,769	\$86,980
UC/Berkeley	General Manager	\$950,000	\$84,084
Arizona	Director	\$1,840,000	\$79,525
Oklahoma	Director	\$1,573,654	\$78,936
SMU	Executive Director	\$636,765	\$78,474
Northwestern	General Manager	\$733,500	\$78,000
Ohio State	Manager	\$1,726,300	\$76,968
Southern California	Director	\$1,017,124	\$75,627
UCSB	Publications Manager	\$650,000	\$75,000
Oregon State	Director	\$1,051,200	\$75,000
Washington State	General Manager	\$799,390	\$74,160
Colorado State	Director	\$1,454,264	\$72,422
Washington	Director	\$1,042,866	\$72,108
Texas Tech	Director	\$1,497,048	\$66,185
Oregon	General Manager	\$1,010,501	\$65,000
Houston	Director	\$831,448	\$64,211
Alabama	Director	\$1,200,000	\$63,866
CSU/Long Beach	General Manager	\$348,000	\$60,048
CSU/Northridge	Publisher	\$398,329	\$57,600
Hawaii	Associate Director for Leadership Development	\$734,735	\$56,564
New Mexico	Business Manager	\$774,500	\$56,421
<i>N.C. State</i>	<i>Coordinator</i>	<i>\$1,067,600</i>	<i>\$48,960</i>
Average		\$1,361,595	\$83,868
Median		\$1,151,500	\$78,705