

WJCT, INC.
PROGRAM PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

We believe that the goal of WJCT is to provide a diverse and high quality program service which is distinctive and responsive to the needs and interests of the many communities served by WJCT.

Our principal aim is to reach many different audiences. WJCT programming seeks to broaden the experiences and horizons of all viewers throughout our coverage area. The Board of Trustees is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to operate as WJCT and sets broad policy guidelines and programming objectives.

The Board of Trustees does not create programs or approve schedules for WJCT, Inc. These are the responsibilities of the General Manager/CEO and the programming staff, whose performance is reviewed by the Board of Trustees in terms of the objectives and guidelines which it has established.

The following is a general statement of those objectives and guidelines.

GENERAL PROGRAMMING

The Opportunity

Public broadcasting possesses the unique potential of a mass medium whose program content is not limited by the requirement to compete constantly for maximum audiences. We are able to put excellence ahead of acceptability, to broadcast not just the popular but also the profound, and to serve as the community's cutting edge by experimenting with new concepts in the world of the arts and ideas.

In addition, public broadcasting can broadcast special programs and events which might not otherwise be available to audiences in our coverage area.

Program Quality

We are committed to providing the highest quality programs that serve a wide variety of educational, informational, cultural, and entertainment needs and interests. This goal of program quality encompasses a host of considerations, including but not limited to excellence, creativity, artistry, accuracy, balance, fairness, timeliness, innovation, boldness, thoroughness, credibility, and technical virtuosity. Program quality must also be evaluated based on the program's ability to stimulate, enlighten, educate, inform, challenge, entertain, and amuse.

Diversity

We are committed to promoting diversity--diversity of program topics, producers, viewpoints, and funders -- in the belief that the public interest is best served by exposure to a wide variety of subjects and sources of information.

Program diversity furthers the goals of a democratic society by providing public access to the full range of ideas, information, and viewpoints required to make informed judgments about the issues of our time. The diversity of public television producers and funders helps to assure a wide variety of program subjects and approaches, providing a bulwark against program domination by any single point of view.

The goal of diversity also requires continuing efforts to assure that public broadcasting programs fully reflect the pluralism of our society, including, for example, appropriate representation of women and minorities.

Good Taste In Programming

Innovation in programming may occasionally raise questions of taste and propriety. We will exercise care to insure that programs dealing with novel or controversial themes reflect an integrity of purpose, without blatant disregard for the tastes and morals of the community.

It is the policy of WJCT to adhere to all current program content ratings guidelines and to provide content advisories, when warranted.

Program Production

We are committed to producing the highest quality public broadcasting for local, regional, national, and international audiences.

Acquired Programs

In addition, we provide a window on the world for our local audience, by broadcasting selected programs acquired from a wide variety of programming sources.

Non-Commercialism

Our programs will not promote the sale of goods or services for profit and shall be devoid of material, which recommends one product or service over another similar product or service.

We will not permit any transmission to be used for the sale of outside products or services, except that viewers may be informed as to companion materials supplemental to the educational objectives of the program.

Solicitation of funds is not permitted, except in the instance of generating support for the station.

In accordance with the requirements of the Federal Communications Commission, the sources of funding for programs shall be identified on-air in a manner which complies with the current WJCT, Inc. underwriting policy.

Non-Sectarianism

We shall not transmit any programs, which propose or imply acceptance or rejection of any religious belief or dogma.

SPECIAL AUDIENCE PROGRAMMING

The Responsibility

We will continually strive to be mindful of the interests and concerns of ethnic minorities and other special audiences. We will make a concerted effort to integrate the views and interests of these groups with special needs into our programming.

Pluralism in Programming

Public Broadcasting, however, will not be truly public if programs are conceived as exclusive messages intended only for certain audiences. We can best serve our many audiences through the presentation of a wide variety of subjects and viewpoints within our regular program schedule.

Not a Public Pulpit

We believe that public broadcasting should never allow itself to be used as a public pulpit to promote the interests of any special group or cause, however worthy. The time and space generally available in other media, including cable television, are more appropriate vehicles than public television, for members of the community who, wish to reach the public with special messages or programs.

CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

The Objectives: A Better Informed Citizenry

We will not duplicate the many daily news programs broadcast by commercial television stations, but rather we will supplement and complement them with more in-depth analysis and more detailed discussion of local, regional, national, and international affairs.

A better informed citizenry through discussion of important issues is one of the most basic objectives of current affairs programming. Public broadcasting must take full advantage of its special opportunity to illuminate and explain public issues.

Accuracy

Our policy is to assure that program content is presented accurately and in context. Accuracy is insured by monitoring program content through a chain of responsibility from Producer to Senior Management to General Manager/CEO.

Objectivity and Fairness

Maximum objectivity is one of our single most important goals. Commentary, points of view, or opinion will be identified as such. WJCT reporters and interviewers will not express personal opinions on public affairs matters. We will endeavor to air programs that contain a fair and accurate presentation of facts. WJCT has "Guidelines on Journalistic Standards and Practices" on file (Attachment A), which ensure adherence to these policies.

Balance

Every attempt will be made to identify important areas of public debate, and to provide all significant parties to a controversy an opportunity to participate in current events programs. Fairness and balance will always be the station's objective in such programming.

However, the reasonable limits to the length of most programs are such that there will be occasions when fairness and balance must be achieved over time, rather than within a single program. In those instances where it is impossible to give adequate attention to differing sides on one given broadcast, every effort will be made to present these points of view in subsequent broadcasts.

A Forum for Issues and Candidates

Public broadcasting's programming flexibility provides it with the opportunity to broadcast important special events and to provide time for the presentation of political candidates and issues. Programs transmitted by WJCT shall never propose acceptance or rejection of any political belief, party or candidate.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WJCT

Audience Feedback

We are strongly committed to providing ways for viewers, listeners, critics, and others to express opinions or present information about programs or the topics addressed in those programs. We actively encourage audience feedback and respond to inquiries.

Financial Support

As the very heart of public broadcasting is the concept of voluntary public participation in the financial support of the station. Federal funds pay only a small percentage of our annual operating costs. Support from corporations and foundations underwrites only a portion of our program schedule.

Therefore, we must aggressively seek the financial support of our audiences. It is only through the broad-based financial participation of our own audience that we can maintain the independence, flexibility, and professionalism required to serve the community successfully.

Program Underwriting

We will accept no financial support which is conditional upon editorial control or review of specific program content. However, we will aggressively seek financial support for general programming. Federal Communications Commission requirements mandate that specific program content must be the station's responsibility.

Ascertainment and Community Feedback

Ascertainment of the community's needs and interests is an on-going and important activity of WJCT. Management and staff make numerous contacts with community institutions and individuals, ascertaining the community's needs and interests.

The WJCT Community Advisory Board, selected to represent the public interest, is wide and diverse in its representation, and organized in an active committee framework.

The WJCT communications staff also conducts ascertainment to determine community interests and needs.

In addition, the WJCT staff involved in acquiring, producing and scheduling programs regularly monitors these mechanisms to insure community interests and needs are considered carefully in the decision-making process.

Educational and Community Outreach

We will strive, whenever appropriate, to augment WJCT programming by undertaking educational and community outreach activities aimed at specially selected groups and/or individuals. Such activities will increase awareness of WJCT programs and increase the station's participation in and awareness of community issues. Educational and community outreach efforts allow the station to go beyond the WJCT basic program service and form new, long-term partnerships based on common community interests.

EDITORIAL INTEGRITY

Our reputation for quality reflects the public's trust in the editorial integrity of our programs. To maintain that trust, we are responsible for shielding the programming process from political pressure or improper influence from program funders or other sources.

The WJCT Board of Trustees has been entrusted with operating an independent public broadcasting service on behalf of the viewing/listening public. That trusteeship carries with it the obligation to ensure the responsible application by professional practitioners of a free and independent decision-making process, which is ultimately accountable to the needs and interests of all citizens.

Program decisions will be based on editorial criteria, and not based on either funding considerations or overt influence from individuals or groups with vested interests. To ensure this, the WJCT Board of Trustees has unanimously adopted the “Statement of Principles of Editorial Integrity in Public Broadcasting” (Attachment B).

CONCLUSION

Because public broadcasting is a dynamic institution, which is subject to on-going growth and development, the WJCT “Program Principles, Objectives and Policies” will be reviewed as necessary in order to insure that they reflect the range of concerns of the Board of Trustees.

A variety of considerations are involved in the programming of WJCT. Judgments concerning the appropriateness of programming for the WJCT schedule involve both editorial and non-editorial considerations. The final decision as to whether a program is included in the schedule relates to the professional judgment of WJCT management, which must ensure that the program meets the WJCT “Program Principles, Objectives and Policies.”