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FILE: PACIFICA

**PACIFICA FOUNDATION**

**BOARD/MANAGEMENT RETREAT  
SUMMARY REPORT  
JUNE 11, 1993**

**PREPARED BY: FRANK J. OMOWALE SATTERWHITE, PH.D.  
PRESIDENT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE  
EAST PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94303**

**PACIFICA FOUNDATION  
BOARD/MANAGEMENT RETREAT  
JUNE 11, 1993**

On June 11, 1993, the Pacifica Foundation held a Board/Management Retreat at the Le Montrose Suite Hotel in West Hollywood, California. The primary purpose of the retreat was to engage the board and staff in candid discussions about two key issues: community broadcasting and the Pacifica network. Twenty-two board and staff members attended the meeting which was facilitated by Omowale Satterwhite, President of the Community Development Institute.

The goals of the retreat were (a) to address various concerns about community broadcasting practices and (b) to identify strategies for strengthening the partnership between local stations and national programs. The agenda for the retreat is outlined below:

- **Opening Session:** welcome, introductions, and review of goals and agenda.
- **Community Broadcasting:** three small group sessions on community broadcasting followed by a plenary to review recommendations and develop a consensus.
- **Lunch**
- **Building A Network:** three small group sessions to discuss the Pacifica network followed by a plenary to review recommendations and develop a consensus.
- **Closing**

This document provides a summary report of the one-day retreat.

## OPENING SESSION

The retreat was convened by Mr. David Salniker, Executive Director of the Pacifica Foundation. He welcomed the group, outlined the purposes of retreat, and expressed a genuine thanks to everyone for attending the meeting.

Next, there were self-introductions by the participants who stated their names and organizational affiliations.

The facilitator then reviewed the goals, agenda and groundrules for the retreat. He stressed that it was important to use the collective experience of the entire group (i.e., all six centuries) to address the critical issues facing the organization.

## COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

The purpose of this session was to discuss community broadcasting issues and develop a consensus about how to address them. The facilitator formed three small groups which were asked to consider the following questions:

- What mechanisms can we set up to hear, determine the validity of and respond to volunteer concerns?
- What kind of standards and means of accountability can we establish for air?
- What do we mean by "access" within the responsibilities set forth in our mission?

The small groups were encouraged to have candid discussions about these issues and to record their main ideas on easel paper. Following the small group meetings, there was a general session during which each group gave an oral report. The common ideas expressed by the small groups are summarized below:

- **Public Access:** Pacifica does not operate public access stations.
- **Free Speech:** There is no free speech -- i.e., no one has the right to say anything she/he wants to say on the air; all programming must be consistent with the mission.
- **On Air:** Programming should be mission driven not volunteer driven.

- Structure: Pacifica needs a rational decision-making framework; managers/program directors need to make decisions and be provided the organizational "tools" for exercising such responsibility; volunteers are accountable to program directors;
- Quality: Volunteers need training on how to produce issued-oriented programming that reflects "all sides of an issue".
- Who's in Charge (We): The Board is in charge but delegates broad authority to staff to implement policy; the perception of the board's role needs to be changed.
- Community: The focus should be on "community of issues/ideas" rather than on specific audiences; the volunteer broadcasters are not the community.
- Alternative Radio: Pacifica is alternative radio; however, it should be defined in a proactive not a reactive way.
- Communications: There is a need to communicate the decisions of the board including the outcomes of the Board/Management Retreat.
- Volunteers: Pacifica must communicate that it values volunteers; there should be mandated volunteer meetings; there is a need to clarify expectations, set standards, provide training and develop contracts with volunteers.
- Organizational Culture: There is a need to change the perception and practice that "everyone can do their own thing".
- Audience: There is a need to develop new audiences, but only within the context of the organizational mission.
- Rights and Responsibilities: There is a need to revise the existing document.
- Process: It's important to give as much attention to process (i.e., how things are done) as to product (i.e., what is to be done).
- Bottom Line: How do we make the necessary changes and deal with the conflict?

## BUILDING A NETWORK

The purpose of this session was to identify strategies for strengthening the partnership between local stations and national programs. The facilitator formed three small groups which were asked to consider the following question:

- How does Pacifica build a partnership that stabilizes its local stations and generates growth for national programs?

The small groups were encouraged to have candid discussions about this topic and to record their main ideas on easel paper. Following the small group meetings, there was a general session during which each group gave an oral report. The common ideas expressed by the small groups are summarized below:

- Network: Pacifica is already a network; however, we need to develop a network model that is appropriate for the organization.
- Mutual Respect and Mutual Interest: There is a need for mutual respect between national programs and local stations and to develop programs based upon both a mutual interest and mutual benefit.
- National Programs (General Observations): National programs will continue to be aired by Pacifica; national programming is a "new venture" for the organization; although the "must carry" news is only 1/2 hour, people fear that more mandated programming will follow; improve communications between national program staff and local stations; empower national staff/program directors to make decisions; explore ways to provide a D.C. outlet for national programs; strengthen international programming.
- National Programs (Proposed Decision-Making Process for Airing Specials): If three of five program directors approve, the national program must be carried by all stations if requested by the national program director; if one or two stations want to air a national program, they have the option to do so; if a national program is to be aired, allow program directors to have genuine input although the final decision rests with the national staff; conduct an annual evaluation of how national and station staff are working together.
- Courage of Convictions: The board/management staff need to "stick to our decisions".

- Tensions: There are a number of reasons for the organizational tension that exists about national programs -- e.g., sabotage; fear of losing air time, protecting turf, lack of follow-through on decisions; "old baggage" that gets transferred to national staff.
- Local Stations: reaffirm the value of local programming and that the strength of Pacifica is its local stations/programs.

#### CLOSING SESSION

There was a brief discussion of the next steps in the organizational development process and a call for Pacifica to respond to the challenge.

PACIFICA CUMULATIVE AUDIENCE FIGURES 1991-1994

	WPFW	KPFT	KPFA	KPFK	WBAI
Spring, 1991	121,200	68,800	142,700	169,200	171,900
Fall, 1991	101,200	71,200	125,500	167,100	204,900
Spring, 1992	104,500	73,100	139,600	149,500	187,700
Fall, 1992	94,000	73,700	126,800	172,010	178,000
Spring, 1993	96,100	66,600	126,500	164,400	161,900
Fall, 1993	119,500	64,600	136,700	178,800	156,200
Winter, 1994 (includes only one rating period)	79,700	64,500	110,600	145,500	150,400

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