

A photograph of the WAMU building, a multi-story brick structure with a prominent curved glass facade. The building features a green mansard-style roof with several antennas. The "WAMU" logo is visible on the upper part of the brickwork, and "AMERICAN UNIVERSITY" is visible on the lower part. The sky is clear and blue.

May 2021

WAMU

Task Force on Culture

RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT

Presented to WAMU's Leadership Team:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WAMU is the source of news and information for nearly a million listeners in the greater Washington, D.C. area. As the leading public radio station for NPR in the region, WAMU produces regular and special programming on national and local events that impact the area. Consistently providing accurate, relevant information in multiple formats (on-air, on-line and on-demand) requires a workforce that is skilled, motivated, creative, and committed. To help ensure that WAMU employees are being supported, American University (AU), which holds the license for WAMU, hired Justice and Sustainability Associates (JSA) to conduct a workforce culture assessment.

JSA conducted a series of one-on-one and small group interviews with current and former WAMU staff, WAMU and AU leadership and external stakeholders. Additionally, JSA reviewed past reports and assessments to identify trends. Once JSA completed its analysis, the findings were shared with WAMU staff, WAMU and AU leadership and the external stakeholders who participated in the data collection process to validate the findings.

While data collection and analysis were taking place, the WAMU Task Force on Workplace Culture was formed as part of the station's Framework for Action efforts. The charge of the Task Force was to review the information and make recommendations that would improve the WAMU employee experience.

WAMU Task Force on Workplace Culture

The Task Force was made up of WAMU employees from every major department and each level of the station (staff, managers, and senior leaders). It was important that the Task Force represent the diverse perspectives at the station and be an inclusive, collaborative body. When the Task Force convened in October 2020, it was charged with the following:

- Discuss, set goals, and develop recommendations for improving WAMU's workplace with additional items added at the direction of the Co-Chairs.
- Review organizational assessments and develop a current-state snapshot of the organizational health of WAMU, including reviewing all aspects of organizational life that impacts culture (i.e., organizational structure, strategy creation, practices, policies, workflow).
- Develop recommendations for advancing and resourcing WAMU's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
- Develop recommendations for building stronger and more effective collaboration and connections between AU and WAMU.
- Develop recommendations for pathways and tools for staff development and better mechanisms for supporting staff.
- Draft a Statement of Principles for WAMU.

More details on the Task Force’s methodology and processes will be provided in the full report.

Overview of Statement of Principles and Recommendations

After conducting a thematic analysis, the Task Force developed a foundational Statement of Principles and recommendations that focused on the following three areas of WAMU’s Culture:

Cross-Collaboration &
Communication

AU-WAMU Connection

DEI

Once the Task Force drafted the Statement of Principles and the recommendations, listening sessions were held to get feedback and input from WAMU employees, select members of AU leadership and a cohort from the Community Council. The feedback and input were incorporated into the final recommendations which are presented in this report.

Overview: Statement of Principles

The Statement of Principles is expected to inform the behaviors and decisions, at all levels of WAMU. To develop the Principles, a Task Force subcommittee asked two foundational questions: *What do we owe each other?* *What do we owe our audience?* Answering those key questions led to the following proposed Principles and ideas on how to embody the Principles each day at WAMU.

**Our
Proposed
Principles**

- Community
- Culture
- Equity and Inclusion
- Innovation
- Serving our Audience
- Ethical Standards

WAMU 88.5

How do we live these principles?

- Reflect principles in our decision-making, interactions with each other, planning of initiatives, and day-to-day work.
- Publish principles publicly. Share written principles during on-boarding process, on station intranet and encourage staff to display them in work area. When you see a behavior that is counter to the values reflected in the principles, speak up!
- Reflected in the recommendations made by the Task Force.
- Implementation of Task Force recommendations are the first step in bringing the principles to life.

WAMU 88.5

Overview: Recommendations

Below are the draft recommendations for the three focus areas: Cross Collaboration & Communication, the AU-WAMU Connection and DEI. More details about the recommendations and the specific goals for each one is in the full report.

AU-WAMU Connection	Cross-Collaboration & Communications	DEI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage cross-campus expertise to educate WAMU staff on issues that affect them (i.e., benefits, policies, etc.) • Partner with AU schools that align with WAMU's work to strengthen the AU-WAMU bond • Share space for AU events and host AU supporters to create more engagement between WAMU and AU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create standardized frameworks/processes for all projects and initiatives • Leverage existing systems for increased cross-departmental information-sharing • Launch new WAMU intranet to improve cross-departmental collaboration • Develop standards of communication for top-down, bottom-up and peer-to-peer information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand-up DEI Steering Committee to support implementation of DEI recommendations • Review and strengthen existing activities or recommend new activities that will improve diversity, equity and inclusion practices throughout WAMU • Suggested sub-committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Inclusive Recruitment ◦ Onboarding & Mentoring ◦ Performance ◦ DEI Culture ◦ External Stakeholders

The primary purpose of the Task Force's recommendations is to improve the individual and collective workplace experiences at WAMU.

Implementation

While the Task Force was not asked to oversee Implementation, Task Force members thought it would be beneficial to offer recommendations to help ensure a successful Implementation process. To achieve the goal of an improved WAMU employee experience, the Task Force is offering the following overarching recommendations:

- Provide tools and support to managers and staff to evaluate current workloads and prioritize projects and deliverables.
- Senior and mid-level managers must work collaboratively to ensure workloads and deliverables are viable in a regular 35-hour work week. Where this is not possible, consideration needs to be given to the staffing and resources of the department; and
- The organization must develop and implement mechanisms for accountability at every level (staff, mid-management, senior management) for “living” the statement of principles as well as the workplace culture changes outlined by the recommendations in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONCLUSION

The WAMU Task Force is pleased to present this final report, which details the proposed includes all of the proposed goals and recommendations. Once the report is approved by the Leadership Team, the Task Force’s work will end, and the work of the Implementation Team will begin. As was repeatedly stated during the Listening Sessions, WAMU’s collective experiences will determine the station’s ultimate success!

Members of the Task Force

Task Force Co-Chairs

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The logo for WAMU 88.5 is displayed on a square background with a diagonal split. The left half is a lighter orange, and the right half is a darker orange. The text "WAMU" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font, positioned in the upper half. Below it, the frequency "88.5" is also in a white, sans-serif font, with the decimal point clearly visible.

WAMU
88.5

FINAL REPORT ON TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The WAMU Task Force is pleased to present this final report, which details all the proposed goals and recommendations. Once the report is approved by the Leadership Team, the Task Force's work will end, and the work of the Implementation Team will begin. As stated during the Listening Sessions, WAMU's collective experiences will determine the station's ultimate success.

Task Force Methodology and Processes

The Task Force convened in October 2020 with 13 members, including three co-chairs who would partner with JSA to develop the weekly agendas for the full group. The Task Force reported on progress and recommendations to WAMU leadership and staff. One of the main communication vehicles for reporting was the inclusion of a Task Force progress update in the weekly "Framework for Action Progress Update." Updates about the Task Force's work was written collaboratively by Task Force co-chairs.

Weekly Meetings

The members of WAMU's workplace Task Force met for the first time on Friday, October 9, 2020 and then met weekly through May 7. Each Task Force meeting was facilitated by JSA.

Best Practices for teams were set at the start of every meeting and included the following:



Focus on Possibilities, not Problems

Ground Rules:

- Task Force members will engage in a facilitated discussion, which allows for the voicing of different opinions and holds everyone in the room responsible for a successful collaborative process to the maximum extent possible.

- Each member of the Task Force takes responsibility for attending regularly scheduled meetings, reading distributed materials, and promoting the overall success of the Task Force.
- Each member of the Task Force agrees to reach decisions by consensus to the maximum extent possible with the guidance of the Task Force Co-Chairs and impartial facilitation.
- Task force members are aware of the limited time in the meetings and therefore commit to expressing themselves succinctly in order to allow time for others to share their thoughts and opinion.
- Confidentiality: To create a safe space for dialogue, members are expected to keep individual comments and group deliberations confidential.

Task Force Meeting Focus

JSA guided the weekly discussions to deepen the collective understanding of:

- Analysis of WAMU's culture through the lens of organizational culture theory and concepts: artifacts (what is easily seen); espoused values (the norms of the organization), and assumptions (conscious and unconscious assumptions that drive the organization).
- Shared individual experiences of what is working and what needs to improve regarding WAMU's workplace culture.
- Identifying the most important opportunities for change from the JSA Assessment report and the Task Force's analysis work.
- Review of how to implement change, so the recommendations have staying power and are successful for the organization.
- Aligning on what activities and structures would ultimately support improving WAMU's workplace culture in the near and long term.

Development of Recommendations

After analyzing the input from the staff assessment conducted by JSA in the fall of 2020 and undertaking the methodology described in this report to further augment and refine the themes that the assessment uncovered, the Task Force developed recommendations focused on three aspects of our workplace culture. These three categories are:

- Cross-Collaboration/Communications (internally, within and across departments).
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- AU-WAMU Connection (communication and collaboration between the station and the University).

In addition, the Task Force was tasked with developing a Statement of Principles for the organization, which could serve as a guiding framework for our ideal workplace culture. Sub-Committees were formed to develop the initial draft recommendations in each category and each Task Force member was asked to volunteer to serve on one of the sub-committees.

Upon developing the initial set of draft recommendations, the sub-committees presented them to the co-chairs for input and then to the Task Force as a whole. The full Task Force was given

an opportunity to provide input on each set of recommendations during group discussions and then in writing.

Listening Sessions

Sub-committee members used that input to develop their second draft, which was shared with station leadership, AU stakeholders, a cohort of Community Council members, and the entire staff at Listening Sessions conducted in April and May 2021. Staff and stakeholders were given an opportunity to provide input at the listening sessions as well as in writing in the week following the session they attended.

Overview of Task Force goals and recommendations

An overview of the goals and recommendations are below:

- Eradicate unconscious biases, foster a culture of inclusion, and prevent discrimination from affecting the hiring process to embrace diversity and create an inclusive environment at WAMU. To meet the goal, it has been suggested that a WAMU-specific onboarding process be created, as well as a mentorship program for employee retention, empowerment, growth, and development.
- Improve the overall employee experience at WAMU by investing in professional development and identifying opportunities to improve retention, especially among minority staff members. To meet the goal, the Task Force has proposed steps to increase staff diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). That would include a greater DEI focus employee responsibilities and job postings. It also was recommended that diversity be increased in the roster of external stakeholders including business partners, corporate sponsors and audiences (broadcast and digital).
- Foster greater collaboration across the station. To meet the goal, the Task Force has recommended strengthening and formalizing systems for cross-departmental project work. The systems would improve communication and focus on creating a centralized location to access organizational information, tools, and metrics. It is recommended that the systems extend to AU for better collaboration between AU and WAMU and to clarify the relationship between the two for stakeholders.
- Additionally, the Task Force drafted a Statement of Principles to guide decision-making and daily interactions in service of an improved workplace culture and shared understanding of how staff will relate to each other.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

A statement of principles embodies an organization's values, vision, and shared narrative. The statement acknowledges the qualities that have enabled past successes and creates a foundation for future successes. In other words: it's what an organization aspires to be when it's at its absolute best!

What makes a Statement of Principles successful?

A Statement of Principles must be clear and simple to be effective. Leaders need to promote the Principles at every turn and in every decision. All employees should integrate the Principles into every aspect of their work-life.

To underscore the importance of applying the Principles, each one in WAMU's Statement of Principles is followed by corresponding "I will" statements that illustrate how staff will put these values into daily practices.

Developing the Statement of Principles

A Task Force subcommittee researched examples of Statements of Principles and guiding values throughout the media landscape, including other public radio stations, legacy print organizations, and new online media entities. The key findings were used to develop WAMU's Statement of Principles.

At WAMU our principles are a common set of core values that guide us both as an organization and as individuals. We use these statements to govern our daily work and conduct. Two guiding questions frame every principle:

What do we owe each other?

What do we owe our audience?

WAMU'S Statement of Principles

Community

WAMU strives to build a healthy workplace culture where employees are committed to strengthening internal ties through cross-team collaboration, consistent and transparent communication, a mutually beneficial relationship between the station and American University, and an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in every aspect of our work.

Our work is driven by the support of our audience and donors. Serving our communities is the cornerstone of everything we create and share; we are committed to engaging all facets of our community. We are a media organization in service of the community; our work serves as an agent for informing audiences and building connections throughout our region and beyond.

I will work to build healthy relationships within WAMU and throughout the community it serves, including our members and donors.

I will work to bring new voices and perspectives to WAMU.

I will recognize that the playing field is not often even for everyone and will work to find ways to level the playing field and meet my colleagues where they are and support them.

I will acknowledge that representation alone is not enough and will work to ensure that the needs of my colleagues are heard and taken into account.

Culture

We believe the success of workplace culture centers on the contributions of a diverse staff with individual lived experiences. Our workplace culture is budding with kindness, positive support for one another and empathy, while encouraging open dialogue and diversity of thought. We commit to acting with integrity – in our work, in the way we treat each other and in how we engage with the public.

We value the creativity and contributions of all staff members and recognize that the best ideas are the product of a healthy, collaborative environment.

I will foster a culture of kindness, honesty, and collaboration.

I will acknowledge that my colleagues may have different perspectives and life experiences that influence their worldview.

I will solicit different viewpoints, engage in open dialogue, and make an effort to understand perspectives that vary from mine.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The region that we serve is rich and diverse, and we strive to build a workplace that reflects and honors those differences. Differences in lived experiences and diversity of thought inevitably

lead to different approaches in communication and how conflict is resolved. We commit to engaging in open and productive dialogue aimed at finding just and equitable solutions.

One of the key tenets of an equitable and inclusive workplace is respect, not only toward one another, but to our sources as well as our donors. Our words matter and our actions have consequences; centering every interaction in respect is the foundation to ensuring a healthy and productive workplace.

I will not tolerate or participate in racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism or discrimination of any kind.

I will recognize that conflict is inherent in human interaction and will engage with my colleagues respectfully and in good faith.

I will keep an open mind and consider different perspectives.

I will respect my colleagues and their lived experiences.

Commitment to audience

We cannot exist without our listeners and readers and all of our work is guided by prioritizing service to the community. We commit to fully engaging with audiences and earning their trust and loyalty. We strive to be responsive to the interests and needs of the community. We welcome input from our audiences and must have strong connections in the communities we serve.

We are a platform for amplifying people's voices — including those of people who are often ignored. We are committed to serving diverse audiences and finding new ways to elevate under-represented voices and share the stories of under-served communities. Our work should not only inform, but also be a resource to our audience.

I will prioritize serving, engaging with and elevating the voices of our various audiences and their needs.

I will commit to building strong connections in the community.

I will not betray the trust that our current audiences have in WAMU and will work to earn the trust and loyalty of new and diverse audiences.

Innovation

We aim to be a new kind of public media organization; one that embraces its 60-year legacy while building upon it, serving new audiences in new ways. While we take pride in the legacy we have created over several decades, we are invested in creating a future that acknowledges past mistakes and commits to doing better and reaching new heights.

This includes creating content that's relevant and fresh, and sharing it in modern ways; embracing innovation and change, rather than shying away from it.

I will be open to doing work in new and transformational ways.

Ethical Standards

Transparency, respect, fairness, accuracy, and integrity are integral to our workplace. As a public media organization, we are dedicated to editorial independence in our journalism.

These values guide all our work: our approach to the content we create, our presence on social media, our engagement with our audiences and donors, and how we show up for each other every day.

I will protect the editorial independence of WAMU's journalism.

I will do my job with accuracy, transparency, and fairness.

Living these Principles

These principles are more than text that live on a website. They are at the forefront of all of our decision-making, a gut-check during times of confusion, and a tool for shaping our behavior. They are meant to be lived in our interactions with one another, and to be a guiding document on which we center all of our work and goals. We will exhibit that individual accountability both informally and through the Performance Management Process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE AU-WAMU CONNECTION

The assessment revealed that the connection between WAMU and AU was a great source of staff misunderstanding, limited collaboration, and missed opportunities for both WAMU and AU. The Task Force's recommendations are designed to accomplish the following goals:

- Resolve misunderstandings among WAMU and AU staff about the relationship between the two entities through information and education, expanding collaborative workflows, exchanging mutually beneficial services to improve efficiency for both units.
- Align mutual goals to better harness each other's unique expertise and resources.
- Create and expand partnerships with AU schools and institutes to coordinate efforts across the shared goal of engaging with the region.

WAMU-AU Relationship Statement

As a starting point, a Task Force sub-committee drafted a relationship statement to help capture the goals and a vision for a successful and impactful relationship between WAMU and AU. To the Task Force's knowledge, this is the first time that this has been done. There is a collective belief on the Task Force that the relationship statement will serve as foundation for a mutually beneficial relationship. The statement is as follows:

WAMU's mission and service to the community makes it an integral and valued department of American University. The University provides critical operating support and expertise to WAMU, which is editorially independent and, like some other university units, is responsible for generating revenue to support its operations. A healthy relationship between the University and WAMU is essential to achieving our shared strategic goals. WAMU and AU are committed to productive and collaborative workflows; leveraging each other's expertise; building partnerships together in the Washington region; and increasing WAMU's presence on campus.

The Task Force believes this statement captures the essential components of shared experiences with AU and an alignment on common goals. It draws on the concept that a positive relationship with AU greatly benefits both AU and WAMU. The intent of the statement was to set a shared context for how WAMU and AU relate to and work with one another. It is also seen by the Task Force as a path to remedy documented historic challenges and transform those challenges into opportunities for all.

Goals for the Recommendations on improving the AU-WAMU Connection

The Task Force framed the recommendations to achieve the following goals:

- Educating WAMU staff about the benefits of the AU-WAMU relationship.

- Leveraging expertise across the campus by building collaborative workflows, which also would increase efficiency.
- Building partnerships with key schools and institutes focused on the Washington Region; and
- Engaging staff and supporters on campus.

Action steps to improve WAMU Connection

The Task Force is proposing the following first-step actions and on-going work to meet the recommendation goals.

Educate WAMU Staff on the relationship with AU and the benefits that flow from being an AU staff member.

The Task Force believes that a key part of rectifying historic misunderstandings and misconceptions among WAMU staff about the relationship with AU is through education and information efforts. This work is intended to serve as a foundation to support the other recommendations because a common understanding among the workforce will help set the stage for collaborative and positive workflows going forward.

WAMU and AU must continue to educate staff on the relationship between WAMU and AU and what it means for each staff member. WAMU is a department of the University so WAMU staff are recipients of AU benefits. That is a key financial advantage for staff and for WAMU as a whole. The University's scale and size enable WAMU's budget and payroll to be about a 1/3 larger than it would be otherwise. WAMU staff also enjoy a competitive benefits' package that is rare across both public and private media. To achieve a greater understanding among staff, the following steps must be taken:

- Inform new employees about the AU-WAMU relationship, as part of the onboarding materials and educate current staff through informational documents, like FAQ's, as well as interactive presentations like department show- and-tells and hold quarterly policy-and-procedure trainings. The Task Force sees these as responsibilities of part of the WAMU HR Director role and the WAMU Business Administration Team.
- WAMU needs to do better a job of informing all constituencies about the AU relationship. This includes informing WAMU's audiences and donors in materials like WAMU's annual report about the services AU provides to WAMU to support the station's mission and the value of those services. The Task Force recognizes WAMU's annual report is principally a fundraising tool, but donors often share similar confusion about the AU-relationship with WAMU. So, the station owes it to the audience to be clear about the relationship. It is also recommended that, given the

information in the report and its public availability, all staff receive a copy of the report and be given time to read it by their managers. This is seen as responsibilities of the Development, Marketing and Engagement and Business teams, who already collaborate to produce this report.

- The Task Force believes that the WAMU HR Team should work with the AU HR team to ensure that new employee offer letters make clear that staff are subject to and must adhere to all University policies and procedures and provide links to these materials. The Task Force discovered numerous occasions where there was confusion about the relationship with AU and information about institutional policies was not clearly communicated from the critical first interaction between a prospective employee, WAMU and AU. The Task Force sees this as a responsibility of the WAMU HR Director.

Each of the items above should be maintained and improved during implementation so there is progressive development and further educating and informing WAMU staff, as well as other campus constituencies. In addition to the above information, the Task Force suggests a continuation of the following:

- Providing regular trainings and updates, such as HR training (i.e., FLSA) or policy trainings (i.e., intellectual property) from relevant AU stakeholders or experts. The Task Force sees this as a responsibility of the WAMU Chief of Staff, the HR Director and the WAMU Business Administration team.
- Including a section about WAMU's relationship with AU in the station's annual report and adapt the information over time as questions are raised by readers or new information becomes available. The Task Force sees this as the responsibility of the Development, Marketing and Engagement and Business teams.
- Improving, through feedback and collaboration, offer letters and onboarding materials so that new WAMU staff start their employment with a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between WAMU and AU. The Task Force sees this as a key responsibility of the WAMU HR Director and the University HR department.

Leverage expertise across campus by building collaborative workflows.

Through its work, the Task Force found that WAMU and AU have limited collaborative workflows that provide mutually beneficial opportunities to harness each other's expertise and offerings. From the Task Force's perspective, WAMU needs to leverage the expertise across campus by forming cross-campus relationships through learning experiences that give greater meaning to how WAMU and AU interact daily. Examples of beneficial workflows are with AU

HR, especially benefits education and other personnel policy trainings; legal support, especially in key areas of the station's work such as intellectual property; and, in the station's finance and business areas where strong partnerships exist but could be expanded to other teams to facilitate better business planning throughout the station. The Task Force has identified the following first-step actions to support those efforts:

- WAMU departments with existing AU relationships should offer interactions to teach regular staff about the collaborative relationship, so the collaboration can be nurtured. For example, AU HR could put together a training and timeline on hiring procedures and protocols to share with WAMU managers. Also, the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) could train staff on when and how to ask for legal advice. The Task Force believes the WAMU Chief of Staff and Associate General Manager should be responsible for setting up those regular interactions, ideally on a quarterly basis, but bi-annually would serve needs in the immediate future.
- WAMU should schedule regular lunch-and-learns or show-and-tell sessions to facilitate knowledge exchanges. This would give WAMU employees the opportunity to learn more about AU, and AU the opportunity to connect with WAMU staff. The Task Force believes the WAMU Chief of Staff, Associate General Manager and Business team should be responsible for setting up the regular interactions and opportunities for WAMU staff.
- WAMU staff would greatly benefit from a cross campus mentorship program, where the WAMU HR Director, working with AU HR, would set up a formal program and facilitate connections between WAMU staff and AU staff so that each could act as mentors or mentees.

Each of the items above should be maintained and improved so there is a progressive deepening and nurturing of the relationships that are being built and developed. Suggestions for maintaining the relationship between WAMU and AU include:

- Continuing regular show-and-tells or lunch-and-learn sessions where a forum is provided for WAMU and AU employees to interact and learn about one another. The Task Force believes this should be an on-going responsibility of the WAMU Chief of Staff, as well as all Department Leads at WAMU.
- WAMU hosting "Meet the Dean" events when possible or WAMU staff attending such events when offered by AU so that WAMU and AU employees can engage with one another. Such events could lead to meaningful relationships and partnerships. The Task Force believes this should be a responsibility of WAMU's Chief of Staff, who

can act as an ambassador to the AU community. AU's Senior staff should be responsible for helping to facilitate and promote those interactions as well.

- WAMU staff attending AU events as often as possible to engage with faculty, staff and students. Cross-pollinating existing campus activities is likely to lead to better relationships and a greater understanding of one another. The Task Force believes this should be the responsibility of the Chief of Staff to facilitate a calendar and provide regular updates on events so WAMU staff are encouraged to attend.

Build partnerships with key schools and institutes focused on the Washington region.

The Task Force has found that both AU and WAMU share similar strategic goals: to deepen their connection and services to the Washington region. Both AU and WAMU bring distinct strengths for achieving the mutual objective. The Task Force believes AU and WAMU will benefit greatly by focusing their energies on building mutually beneficial partnerships across campus, starting with obvious schools such as the School of Communications, Kogod School of Business, Washington College of Law, and the Sine Institute to further their shared strategic goal of building a stronger relationship with the Washington, D.C. region. The Task Force has identified the following first-step actions to help begin these efforts:

- The AU Community is anxious to engage more with WAMU. WAMU should harness this opportunity and offer tours of WAMU to the AU Community at least twice yearly. This would allow for the employees to meet one another, and for AU staff to learn more about the work WAMU produces. The Task Force believes this should be the responsibility of the WAMU Chief of Staff.
- WAMU should deepen its understanding of AU's areas of expertise and AU should learn about WAMU areas of expertise. The Task Force proposes that WAMU utilize AU experts for staff lunch-and-learns; and that AU work with WAMU to add WAMU experts to AU's catalog. That would require a cross-collaboration responsibility among all WAMU's divisions and the University's central offices and schools.
- WAMU is an incredible opportunity for on-the-job learning in a complex business environment for AU students. WAMU should make more regular use of the Federal Work Study program to provide opportunities for AU students to work at WAMU by training and preparing WAMU Managers for this program. These efforts should be the responsibility of the WAMU HR Director and WAMU Business team.
- WAMU should harness the same energy the audiences have around the 'thank you' and premium gifts by providing similar WAMU swag to key AU partners. That would

help the station build rapport and engagement with potential, as well as existing, partners. The Task Force believes those efforts should be the responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement and Business teams.

- WAMU should help its audiences better understand the WAMU-AU connection by asking AU Cabinet or Board members to record messages that thank WAMU supporters and audiences for listening. The messages would air during the regular campaigns as done with other thank you messages from the station. The Task Force believes it should be a joint responsibility of the WAMU Chief of Staff and the Membership team.

Each of the suggestions above should be maintained and development so existing relationships are deepened while new ones are forged. Specifically, the Task Force believes WAMU should focus on:

- Maintaining and gradually expanding Federal Work Study opportunities so WAMU builds connections across the AU campus. The Task Force sees this as an on-going responsibility of the WAMU Business team.
- WAMU should continue providing ‘thank you’ gifts as part of the partnerships that are developed. That would be an on-going responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement team and the WAMU HR Director.
- The invitations, recordings and on-air ‘thank you’ messages from WAMU’s campus partners would be a meaningful linkage to help audiences understand the symbiotic relationship between WAMU and AU. The Task Force sees this as the responsibility of the WAMU’s Chief of Staff and Membership team.

Engage staff and supporters on campus.

The Task Force found that WAMU and AU do not utilize each other’s space to help engage staff and each other’s supporters in exciting and new ways. We believe doing so helps underpin many of the other recommendations above in a perceptible and very visual way. As first steps, we recommend:

- WAMU should annually host at least one off-site event on AU’s campus to build linkages and demonstrate that WAMU is part of the campus. We see this as a responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement team and the WAMU Chief of Staff.

- WAMU should seek ways to partner with AU events, and AU Campus and Guest Services by developing a streamlined space use process that encourages AU to use WAMU's facilities when available and helps WAMU consider campus event space, alongside external venues, for our events while scouting locations; we can use campus space for our events when possible and appropriate. We believe this should be a responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement Team which manages Events for the station.

Following from the above first steps, we believe on going work to support this goal includes the following:

- WAMU should learn the AU Events workflow so we can make best use of campus space. The Task Force believe this is a responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement team.
- WAMU needs to reconceptualize WAMU staff retreats by using campus space for these functions. The Task Force believes this is a responsibility of the Marketing and Engagement team as well as individual managers across the station when planning these kinds of functions.
- WAMU should build a stronger relationship with AU staff in the 4401 Connecticut Avenue building by hosting a bi-annual meet and greet event with AU's Communications and Marketing and Development and Alumni Relations colleagues in WAMU's lower-level community room. The Task Force believes this should be the responsibility of the WAMU Chief of Staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CROSS COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

One of the most frequent refrains from the WAMU staff listening sessions was a desire for improved communications within the station, with a particular emphasis on breaking down the ‘silos’ that separate staff working in different departments. This desire formed the basis for the Cross-Collaboration and Communication recommendations.

Goals for the Recommendations

The recommendations center around four main themes: a need to strengthen cross-departmental work for more effective collaboration; a desire to increase understanding about roles and reporting structures; improving and normalizing communication norms within the organization; and the need to consolidate around a smaller set of shared information platforms.

Create a standardized framework for implementing major projects and initiatives that span departments.

WAMU staff includes many successful collaborators gifted at navigating the station’s multi-departmental structure to achieve their goals. However, one shouldn’t have to be exceptionally gifted or a seasoned employee in order to advance the work of the organization. To this end, the Task Force recommends the convening of a representative working group composed of station stakeholders from the content, marketing, underwriting, membership, business administration and technology departments in the next six months. The group would be tasked with the creation of a shared document that outlines a standardized process or basic set of expectations for those looking to collaborate across departments.

Addressed in this document would be:

- An outline of minimum requirements needed for requests made on specific departments.
- Recommended timelines for common requests like graphic design elements, broadcast promos or web page design.
- Lists of stakeholders who need to be consulted or otherwise made aware of major initiatives before they get the green light.

Also crucial is a requirement that major department-spanning projects have a clearly defined project manager whose responsibility it is to implement this framework. Leadership and project managers who will participate in making decisions on a project should be clear at the outset and communicated to and respected by all parties involved. Project managers should be further supported by relevant training

resources available to station employees, and those should be outlined in the above framework.

Improve cross-departmental communication systems.

WAMU already employs several powerful tools for disseminating information across the station, but many of them are underutilized, their utility is poorly understood, or they appear to conflict with one another. We want to take this opportunity to improve the use of these systems.

- **Make better use of the WAMYou Newsletter.**

This newsletter, produced by the marketing department, already includes much of the information that station staff have identified as being poorly communicated by station leadership, such as new hire introductions, departmental happenings, major organizational changes, the results of staff surveys and more. Yet fewer than half (42% as of the latest newsletter as of this writing) of staff even open the email, much less read it to completion.

Our recommendation is for marketing to draft communication to emphasize the wealth of information already in the newsletter and to outline the process for how station stakeholders can utilize it to disseminate badly needed information. Our hope is that it might decrease this information gap.

- **Consolidate around one digital platform for the sharing and storing of information that spans departments.**

The station utilizes a myriad of technology platforms to get its work done: Sharepoint/OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, network drives and so on. While this allows teams to tailor the platforms they use to their specific requirements (and the Task Force does not recommend taking away that flexibility) it does create confusion when communicating across teams.

To this end, the Task Force calls on station stakeholders to identify one digital platform and architecture to use for sharing documents across teams. This chosen system would provide greater accessibility to documents that multiple departments need and use. The Task Force further urges the development and distribution of documentation about how to effectively utilize the agreed-upon platform. Staff also have signaled an interest in regular, on-going trainings to maintain base level understanding of functionality.

- **Make sure the intranet is as useful as we believe it can be.**

A new digital workplace system is in the works to replace the existing WAMU intranet. Currently it's set for a soft launch in summer of 2021 with projections of a full launch in the fall. It's imperative that this platform is embraced appropriately because it can address many of the complaints identified in the listening sessions and by the taskforce.

The Task Force makes the following suggestions to the product owners of the intranet, which will include an HR director still to be hired, ahead of its launch:

- Assign designated stakeholders from each department to keep their information updated and accurate in a timely manner.
- Include a place to notify staff when a position becomes vacant.
- Keep the organizational chart and staff directory updated.
- Use this platform to notify staff of important upcoming events, survey results and other information currently confined to email.
- Have the HR department keep staff profiles updated to reflect current work schedules and job descriptions.
- Include on- and off-boarding procedures and the employee manual.

Build and refine an internal communications culture.

We recognize that the standards for communication across the station are not uniform. These gaps are often the source of many other problems recognized by the Task Force and should themselves be addressed on two fronts: top-down communication and peer-to-peer.

Suggest to HR that the following topics be included in manager trainings if they are not already:

- How to have open and honest conversations with staff.
- Managing team workload in a 35-hour week (time management at team and individual employee level).
- How to center the necessary DEI work and other Task Force recommendations in day-to-day work.
- Fostering a culture of listening and avoiding one-way communication.
- Avoiding the creation and reinforcement of negativity.

The Task Force also recommends that HR consider conducting a staff engagement survey to touch on the following:

- Feedback on how internal changes are communicated, such as staff departures and reorganizations, as well as suggestions for improvement.

- Communication norms for phone calls, Slack, video conferencing, etc.
- Degree to which work communication is intruding on outside working hours during work from home and hybrid work arrangements.
- What information sharing is missing.

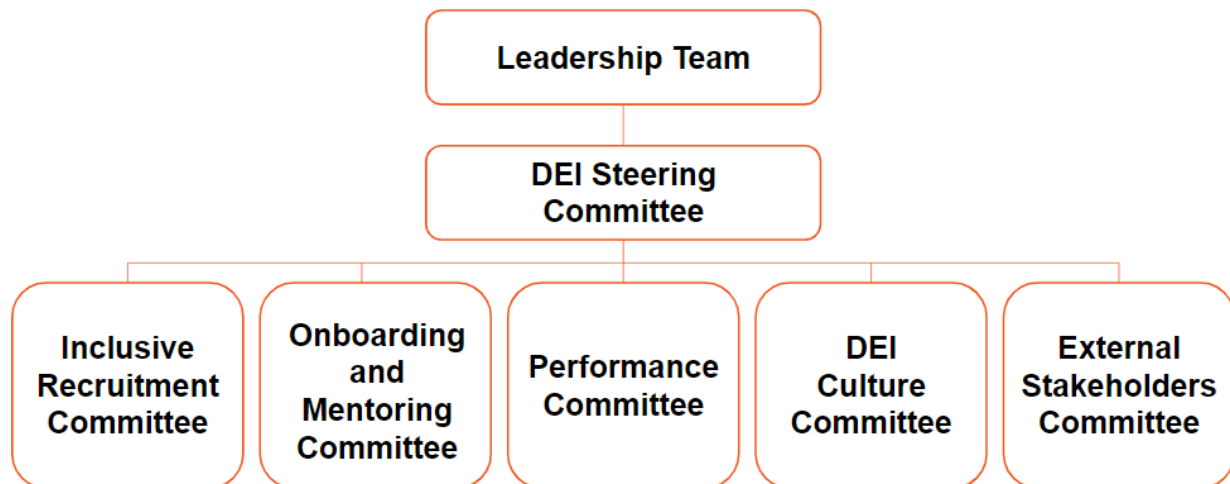
Upon review and approval, the survey results are encouraged to be shared with staff and recommendations be presented to leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GREATER DEI

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is the work of the entire organization. It requires a sustained, ongoing commitment. The Task Force has created a clear set of recommendations that would get the ball rolling and set WAMU up for sustained success. During this process, a Task Force sub-group learned of several initiatives from AU HR that are aligned with the following recommendations. The foundation has been laid for collaboration with the University's HR team on tailoring these efforts to WAMU's workplace.

Establish a Network of DEI Committees

To integrate promotion of DEI into all aspects of the WAMU workforce, the Task Force recommends the establishment of a network of DEI committees. Participation in these committees would fall within regular working hours. The following is the proposed network structure:



DEI Steering Committee

The steering committee would oversee the five DEI satellite committees and liaise with leadership to promote, maintain, and further the DEI-related needs of the station. The steering committee would assess and subsequently approve, reject, or amend recommendations brought by satellite committees, then present them to leadership. The steering committee would also assess recommendations from Leadership and bring them to the satellites.

Composition

Recommendations for the composition of this committee include:

- Membership: two co-chairs and five additional members, each of whom would chair a Satellite Committee.

- Members would be nominated by staff (self-nomination acceptable) and elected for terms of two years. Leadership team members are not eligible for nomination.
- Members would be expected to dedicate 2-4 hours per month to committee responsibilities, within regular working hours.

DEI Satellite Committees

The satellites would oversee their respective topics, starting with the guidelines from the Task Force and Implementation Team. Over time, they would submit progress reports, concerns, updates, and any additional recommendations to the steering committee.

Composition

Recommendations for the composition of these committees include:

- Membership: chair (member of the steering committee) and four to ten additional members of staff, including one Leadership Team member. Members would be voluntary staff.
- Members would be expected to dedicate 2-4 hours per month to committee responsibilities within regular working hours.

Inclusive Recruitment Committee

The inclusive recruitment committee would work to eradicate biases, conscious and unconscious, in decision-making at WAMU, foster a culture of inclusivity, prevent discrimination in the hiring process, and create an atmosphere that encourages and welcomes diverse candidates and representation.

Inclusive Recruitment Committee Goals

The goals of the inclusive recruitment committee would be to:

- Create inclusive job description standards that encourage diverse candidates to apply.
- Create a targeted recruitment plan for job advertisement placement.
- Work as Diversity Advocates, the appointed voices for diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence in each stage of the search process to ensure it is in line with best practices for hiring.
- Conduct interview training for staff and standardize the interview process with a set of defined questions and metrics for reviewing.
- Create an interview checklist of questions and review standards to ensure consistency in the interview process and afford each candidate the same opportunities to demonstrate their qualifications.

- Ensure that the newly developed inclusive hiring protocol be adopted by all departments and reviewed annually.
- Train hiring managers on equitable pay practices.
- Align WAMU job descriptions and pay bands within AU's Job Architecture structure, providing clarity on salary, title and career advancement opportunities.

Onboarding and Mentoring Committee

The onboarding & mentoring committee's responsibilities would be to improve equity and inclusion by creating a WAMU-specific onboarding process, and to improve retention of diverse staffers by creating a mentoring program.

This satellite committee would be responsible for crafting a WAMU-specific training program for new employees, in addition to the AU orientation that already exists. The WAMU Landscape Training would cover WAMU history, public media history/landscape, the AU-WAMU relationship, WAMU departments and their functions, WAMU's funding model, and where to find WAMU-specific information. Current WAMU employees will also receive this training so everybody has equal footing.

This committee is also responsible for implementing a mentorship program that's specific to WAMU, using the turnkey solution that already exists through AU's Human Resources Department. This would allow the station to embrace a mentoring culture. Unlike supervisory relationships that focus on the employee's performance, mentoring relationships seek to improve the development of all employees with a focus on their growth based on performance feedback. Mentors can also increase exposure by presenting new possibilities, opening doors, and introducing mentees to people and opportunities around the station.

As time goes on, both the onboarding and mentoring programs would need to be refined and updated to maintain relevance and optimize value. The committee would also be responsible for maintaining metrics on these programs and reporting those findings to staff.

Performance Committee

This committee would work to assess the overall employee experience within WAMU, identify opportunities to make the performance review process more equitable, improve employee retention, and create professional development pathways.

Performance Committee Recommendations

The goals of the Performance Committee would be to:

- Use AU's multi-rater review process for constructive feedback from colleagues, including peers, supervisors and direct reports.
- Calibrate performance standards for PMP reviews, ensuring all staff members are evaluated consistently.
- Create an offboarding checklist.
- Create a WAMU-specific exit interview process.

DEI Culture Committee

This committee would oversee the integration of DEI work into all employees' job responsibilities and promote an inclusive workplace environment in three specific areas: DEI Service at WAMU, Service in the Community, and Earbuds. It would also facilitate the successful completion of DEI performance goals and ensure that all staff members have a DEI action plan.

DEI Service at WAMU

DEI service at WAMU would be bound by the following guidelines:

- Employee responsibility: 1 to 3 hours per month commitment within regular work hours.
- List of opportunities would be created, updated, and provided to employees by the committee.
- Employees could request an activity outside of the list, to be approved by committee.

Examples of DEI Service at WAMU include:

- Membership on Steering or Satellite committee.
- Participation in DEI-related training (outside of AU mandatory trainings).
- Lead of DEI-related book club.
- Take on responsibility for department birthday cards, going-away parties.

Service in the Community

Service in the community would be bound by the following guidelines:

- Employee responsibility: 1 day per year commitment to community service outside of WAMU, treated as regular workday, and run by the committee.
- The committee would coordinate with outside organizations (e.g. Miriam's Kitchen, Capital Area Food Bank) and schedule 4 opportunities per the year for employees to choose from.

Earbuds

Earbuds would remain a separate committee under the purview of the DEI culture committee. Taking part in Earbuds would be bound by the following guidelines:

- The committee would plan 6 WAMU social events per year.
- Attendance at events is not mandatory but encouraged to promote inclusivity within the station.

External Stakeholder Committee

The external stakeholder satellite committee would increase diversity in our external partnerships across all departments' areas of responsibility. This committee would work with individual departments to facilitate inclusive processes. The committee would be responsible for maintaining metrics and sharing those metrics with staff. Recommended action steps include:

- Creating an inclusive RFP process to source diverse vendors, suppliers and external service providers.
- Creating an inclusive Corporate Sponsorship rate card.
- Creating an advisory committee to recommend and review both special and ongoing programming.
- Creating a plan for authentic community engagement events.
- Implementing source auditing, using established-but-suspended framework.

NEXT STEPS: IMPLEMENTATION

Following the approval of the Task Force's recommendations by the Leadership Team, recommendations will be sequenced on a timeline. Some recommendations may be implemented within the short-term (3-6 months) and others may require 18 to 24 months for full implementation. The approved recommendations will all need to be appropriately phased sequenced and resourced in advance of implementation.

Implementation will be guided by JSA, Dawnita Altieri (WAMU'S Chief of Staff and one of the Task Force co-chairs), Mike Scher (a Task Force member and co-chair of the subcommittee on the AU-WAMU Connection), and a yet-to-be named team from across WAMU. The implementation work will be supported by a newly created Project Manager position who will be dedicated to moving the recommendations forward and coordinating with the team regularly.

The implementation team will encourage different perspectives and collaboration during the process to move the recommendations forward. Implementation, staffing and additional details are still being determined. However, leadership will continue to inform the staff as more information becomes available.

CONCLUSION

During the summer of 2020, WAMU faced a moment of reckoning like much of the media industry and the nation. There was an exodus of women-of-color, allegations of discrimination and racism, and inappropriate behavior that had not been curtailed. The culture had become what some described as “toxic” and “mentally unhealthy.” Following the departure of the General Manager and calls for accountability and change by the staff, the station undertook efforts to transform its workplace culture. In addition to efforts made by HR to provide training on a variety of policy and management functionalities to the entire staff, a Task Force (composed of members of staff representing every department and various demographics at the station) was formed in October 2020 to put forth recommendations on improving the organization’s workplace culture.

This report is the culmination of 7 months of work by the WAMU Workplace Culture Transformation Task Force. With the support of JSA, the Task Force applied Organization Development and Change Management methodology to develop the recommendations in this report. The recommendations are intended to solve long-standing workflow shortcomings and address tensions that have stymied collaboration and communication at the station.

The successful implementation and long-term sustainability of these recommendations are dependent on these efforts being centered in all work at WAMU. They should be prioritized in employee schedules and workflows. In some cases, that may mean de-prioritizing certain projects or tasks or revising timelines to make it possible for staff to undertake this work in the 35-hour work week. Above all, it’s important that staff at every level have accountability for embracing the Statement of Principles and embody the workplace culture changes that these recommendations are designed to create.

These recommendations are a first step. It will take a sustained effort by leadership and every member of staff to implement these recommendations. Some of the changes envisioned within these recommendations are incremental and long-term, while others can bring about dramatic changes in a short period of time. In the end, however, the success of these recommendations will rely on how the recommendations are embodied and internalized by everyone at WAMU.

