

WTJU Strategic Framework 2021-2024

Adopted June 2021

Why WTJU?

Even as our society becomes more technologically connected, we remain socially atomized. Yet as human beings, we all hunger to live in a genuine community, sustained by real human connections.

During this last pandemic year, WTJU provided human connection to people who felt isolated. We helped people feel grounded when nothing felt stable. We provided musical refuge to people who felt lost in an emotional wilderness.

WTJU has an extraordinary capacity to help people feel heard, to feel a sense of belonging, and to experience beauty. These are core human needs, and at its best, WTJU serves them remarkably well. Nurturing our community with music is why WTJU exists. We make our community feel like home.

As an educational community radio station, WTJU mission is necessarily more expansive than an ordinary organization or University department. We steward diverse music, culture, voices, and connections in our community. We help our community to become stronger and more resilient. We serve as a conduit of engagement between the University and surrounding communities – extending UVA's educational mission outward and bringing the community into UVA.

Our value proposition is that we offer our audience unique, diverse, personal, local, and relevant music and cultural experiences. WTJU helps people connect with our community in a way that is not replicable.

We are emerging from the pandemic with a fresh recognition of the value of community media and new opportunities to serve our University and surrounding communities. This is a moment for WTJU to renew itself as a critical resource rooted in inclusive excellence:

- To build and nurture relationships with and responsiveness to new audiences -- to be of, by, and for the whole community we serve;
- To adapt and evolve our infrastructure and better integrate platforms to remain relevant to our audiences;
- To build on a base of achievements and growth in platforms, programs, and impact; and
- To grow as a trusted resource for unique, relevant content rooted in the place and people we serve.

What is WTJU?

On-air since 1957, WTJU began as a student organization and educational radio station at UVA centered around classical music. By the early 1970s, WTJU had expanded its programming to include a broad and eclectic variety of music, including classical, jazz, rock, folk, and more. Generations of DJs passed through and were shaped by their experiences at WTJU.

In the mid-1990s, WTJU hired its first paid staff member and shifted from predominantly student broadcasting to a university/community hybrid model. Students remained involved in all WTJU departments to varying degrees, though most on-air hosts were non-student community and University members by the early 2000s.

During the 2010s, WTJU expanded its operations from a single radio station to a broad-based non-profit media organization with multiple programs:

- **WTJU 91.1 FM**, our multi-genre community radio station
- **WXTJ 100.1 FM**, our student-run, freeform radio station
- **Virginia Audio Collective**, our community & university podcast network
- **CharlottesvilleClassical.org**, our local classical music site and 24/7 audio stream
- **Educational Programs**, including camps, internships, lifetime learning, and more
- **Live Event Series**, including Freefall Music Festival, Offbeat Roadhouse, and more

Today, WTJU is a Special Academic Unit at the University of Virginia, reporting to the Office of the Vice Provost for the Arts. Our staffing includes 6.2 FTE paid staff members and approximately 300 volunteers.

While WTJU has grown in multiple ways, on-air radio broadcasting remains our flagship programming. On-air hosts remain all volunteer and include University students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. WXTJ and each of WTJU's four primary departments (Classical, Jazz, Folk, Rock) are headed by volunteer leadership.

Who we reach now

WTJU's primary audience consists of music lovers and curious seekers with a connection to UVA and/or Charlottesville.

Listeners are concentrated in Charlottesville and Albemarle County – particularly the “urban ring” suburbs -- though with a substantial minority living in outlying counties or beyond WTJU's FM signal area.

Demographically, our audience is similar to that of other public radio stations. WTJU's audience includes men and women in roughly equal numbers with a median age in their 50s. WTJU listeners are predominantly white and earn middle class household incomes. The single biggest predictor for listening to WTJU is education level, with bachelor's and advanced degrees strongly correlated with WTJU listening.

Core values

WTJU has identified several core values around which we base our operations and decision-making:

- **Diverse** music
- **Unique** content
- **Personal** connection
- **Local** rootedness
- **Passionate & knowledgeable** hosts/curators
- **Non-commercial** presentation
- **Relevant** to our community

Mission

WTJU enriches the culture of Virginia and extends the educational mission of UVA by bringing together diverse individuals and communities through exceptional music and conversation.

Vision

As the first FM college radio station in Virginia, WTJU was built to provide a unique music service to UVA and the Charlottesville community. Since its founding, WTJU has been permeated by a free-spirited ethos of innovation and experimentation, sustained by generations of WTJU hosts.

As WTJU looks toward its future, we would do well to maintain that ethos of innovation and experimentation – not just in our content, but also in our technology, organization, education & engagement, and off-air programming. Building on WTJU's achievements over the last decade and recognizing ongoing changes in the media landscape, we must continue to reimagine what “radio” will mean in the years to come.

Borrowing from the University's strategic plan, WTJU should strive not simply to be great, but also to be good. Excellence in music curation, radio broadcasting, podcasts, concerts, and educational programs are all necessary, but they are not sufficient. We must strive for equity in our operations and nurture a culture of inclusivity that embraces the full spectrum of human attributes. We must nurture relationships and expand involvement, such that WTJU consistently creates programming that is of, by, and for the communities we serve.

In pursuing these aims, WTJU will serve as a model of what a public media organization can be – a convener and nourisher of a music-loving community in which everyone feels a sense of belonging, connection, and meaning.

As a premiere source of music, WTJU will enrich the lives of people of all backgrounds, deepen aesthetic enjoyment, and increase the pleasure of living in a culturally diverse and thriving community.

As a hub of media creation, WTJU will contribute to human flourishing and community building, helping people connect with and understand one another and providing the means to actively participate in the cultural life of our community.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Grow and diversify our audience.

Goals:

1. Attract more black and brown listeners and participants, such that WTJU's on-air talent and audience better reflect the demographics of our community.
2. Attract more younger adults and families as listeners and participants, such that WTJU serves our community across all generations.

Priority 2: Forge better connections.

Goals:

1. Integrate WTJU's programs (radio, podcast, events, education, etc.) with shared promotions and co-programming in order to better meet audience needs.
2. Assess and improve WTJU's on-air interstitials (PSAs, promos, etc.) to better serve community needs.

Priority 3: Develop our infrastructure.

Goals:

1. Develop a new website with contemporary functionality that reflects WTJU's current operations and priorities.
2. Invest in broadcast and production infrastructure systems to maintain maximum up-time and facilitate creative radio work.
3. Assess and pilot ideas for more in-person engagement and live music opportunities at WTJU Stage and elsewhere in the community.
4. Assess and pilot ideas for new audio programming platforms / streams.

Priority 4: Continue to grow.

Goals:

1. Strengthen sustainer, mid-tier, and major donor giving.
2. Strengthen alumni engagement.
3. Grow WTJU's business underwriting program.

2021-22: One-Year Action Plan

FY22 Action Items for Priority 1, Goal 1 (More black & brown listeners & participants):

1. Identify areas in which WTJU can diversify its programming. Identify appropriate stakeholders and develop listening opportunities; comprehensively analyze WTJU's programming, including what airs on WTJU, when, and why.

-- *Outcome:* Produce a report that informs future programming decisions and resource allocation.

2. Recruit and support more black and brown hosts as WTJU on-air programmers.

Draw on existing partnerships and cultivate new ones to develop and execute a plan for new programming hosted, produced, and led by voices new-to-WTJU.

-- *Outcome:* New on-air programming to launch by the end of FY22.

FY22 Action Items for Priority 1, Goal 2 (More young adults & families):

1. Develop and pilot a weekend in-person engagement program. Develop a plan for regular in-person gatherings on weekend mornings targeted at younger adults and families, to include the "COVID Arts Time Capsule" project in the works.

-- *Outcome:* Pilot the plan and assess results

2. Assess the feasibility of a teen-centered on-air engagement program. Working with music instructors, WTJU hosts, and other potential partners, assess community interest in bringing teenage guest co-hosts and live performers onto WTJU shows.

-- *Outcome:* Assessment is produced

FY22 Action Items for Priority 2, Goal 1 (Better integrate programs):

1. Develop and carry out a marketing, promotion, and co-programming plan to better integrate WTJU, WXTJ, podcast collective, events, educational programs, and CharlottesvilleClassical.org into a more cohesive whole.

-- *Outcome:* More of our audience and potential audience knows about more of our on-air and off-air programs, reducing barriers to listening

2. Plan and carry out training program for WXTJ hosts to be fully trained in "WTJU-style" radio hosting. Pilot with 10-15 WXTJ hosts in 2021-22 academic year.

-- *Outcome:* Cross-training between stations, more students available to host on WTJU shows, and a richer educational experience for students doing radio.

FY22 Action Items for Priority 2, Goal 2 (Interstitials):

1. Assess the major issues facing our community and what would make our community better. Consult with stakeholders throughout the University and

community as a whole, and identify ways in which WTJU could focus its PSAs and Promos to make more impact on these community needs. Include an assessment of WTJU's capacity (current and potential) to generate this ongoing interstitial content.

-- *Outcome*: An assessment to inform changes to our interstitial programming strategy in FY23.

FY22 Action Items for Priority 3, Goal 1 (New website):

1. Convene a group of WTJU stakeholders to identify design, content, and audience goals for a new WTJU website.

-- *Outcome*: A collection of input to inform the website redevelopment

2. Contract with a web developer and work with them to develop a new site at WTJU.net.

-- *Outcome*: New site launches with much fanfare, jubilation, and promotion

FY22 Action Items for Priority 3, Goal 2 (Other tech infrastructure):

1. Implement plan for IP systems for broadcast. Complete the installation of server and other components at Carter Mountain, O-Hill, and WTJU studios to deliver audio over IP to our broadcast site on Carter Mountain.

-- *Outcomes*: 1) Redundant audio streams connecting WTJU studios to Carter Mountain; 2) RDS encoding of WTJU's FM signal to enable real-time display of metadata on RDS-enabled radios

2. Install Audio Switcher to enable bypassing WTJU's on-air studio console. This will enable direct-to-air broadcast from the downstairs studio, automation stream, etc.

-- *Outcomes*: 1) Better redundancy and ability to respond to tech problems in the air studio; 2) Improved accessibility for disabled hosts using the first-floor studio

3. Redesign Production Studio for improved sound quality, user experience, and aesthetics.

-- *Outcomes*: Redesign is completed.

FY22 Action Items for Priority 3, Goal 3 (More engagement at WTJU stage):

No specific action items in FY22

FY22 Action Items for Priority 3, Goal 4 (New audio streams):

No specific action items in FY22

FY22 Action Items for Priority 4, Goal 1 (Strengthen giving programs):

1. Strengthen sustainer program. Develop and carry out a communications plan to push sustainer giving (i.e. monthly recurring with no end date).

-- *Outcome*: More listeners know about sustainer giving and become sustainers

2. Strengthen mid-tier and major donor giving. Develop a case of WTJU's current funding priorities. Create and carry out a schedule of calling and meeting with mid-tier and major donors.

-- *Outcome*: More engagement with donors, more donors upgrading to mid-tier and major giving.

FY22 Action Items for Priority 4, Goal 2 (Alumni engagement):

1. Strengthen alumni engagement. Develop and carry out a plan for alumni-centered events, reunions activities, and regular communications.

-- *Outcome*: More WTJU alums come back into the fold

FY22 Action Items for Priority 4, Goal 3 (Underwriting):

1. Strengthen WTJU's business underwriting program. Carry out station plan for bringing new clients on board as WTJU underwriters.

-- *Outcome*: More underwriting revenue