



TO: CPB Board of Directors

FROM: Ted A. Garcia
Board Chair
On behalf of the NETA Executive Committee

DATE: May 31, 2005

On June 19, 1985, the first public television licensee adopted the Statement of Principles of Editorial Integrity in Public Broadcasting. They also implemented policies ranging from the production of news programs to the responsibilities of the governing board. Within a year many of the nation's public television licensees took similar action.

The Statement of Principles represented an extensive project led by members of the Organization of State Broadcasting Executives and their boards, funded in part by CPB. CPB's support and participation was consistent with the responsibility, detailed in CPB's enabling statute, to *"carry out its purposes and functions and engage in its activities in ways that will most effectively assure the maximum freedom of the public telecommunications entities and systems from interference with, or control of, program content or other activities."*

The CPB board also adopted the Statement of Principles, affirming that licensees hold both the authority and the responsibility for editorial decisions that influence the services of public broadcasting in every community. Later CPB funded a similar project for radio, *Independence and Integrity II: The Updated Ethics Guide for Public Radio Journalism*.

As NETA member representatives, we believe these principles are appropriate to the issues now before CPB and this system. And we are prepared to address this in a manner that will assure the continued confidence of our communities of service. In August we will convene our annual board planning conference. The focus will be a reexamination of the Statements of Principles, launching a major effort to

assist licensees, and their boards, in examining policies and practices related to editorial integrity. This meeting will be open to all licensees, including those outside NETA membership. And we will invite the full participation of CPB, PBS, and APTS.

In the interim we ask your help – and will make a similar request of PBS and APTS.

As the only members of the public broadcasting community who have daily contact with the viewing (and listening) public, licensees are responsible for establishing and maintaining the confidence of our communities. We have the ultimate legal responsibility for issues of objectivity, and particularly of balance.

Certainly, CPB and PBS influence our ability to work with our communities, typically in a positive and supportive manner. But the current practice of talking through the press is damaging our credibility and our ability to serve. This incorrectly characterizes the public broadcasting system, undermines our local services, and does nothing to improve what we offer our viewers.

If the board of CPB perceives problems related to editorial decisions, the solutions will not be found in press statements or surreptitious studies. Instead bring them to the licensees. We have a direct relationship with our audience and we have the authority, and responsibility, to act.

On a related matter, the perception of political influence at the national level encourages the same perception in our communities. Licensees have a well-deserved reputation for hiring highly professional staff, dedicated to public service. We do so in a manner that is transparent and absent of political influence.

It is essential that our national organizations do the same. Failure to do so will jeopardize our ability to maintain this standard. For this reason we strongly urge you to conduct the search to hire a new president and CEO in a manner that is open, professional, and demonstrably above political influence.

CPB's enabling statute mandates decisions and allocation of resources based on consultation with licensees. Logically you should also seek our views regarding the role, responsibilities, and attributes of your senior executive. Such consultation strengthens the authority and respect of the president, as well as the public *appearance* of your own objectivity in filling this important position.

We encourage you to institute such a comprehensive consultation with licensees and to allocate sufficient time and resources to assure a search that will be respected by the public and by the licensee community. And we offer our full support in this effort.

Our members look forward to your response and stand ready to assist as we all go forward, together, in serving the American public.

NETA Executive Committee

Ted A. Garcia
KNME/Albuquerque

John Hesse
HoustonPBS

John King
Vermont Public Television

Julie Andersen
South Dakota Public Broadcasting

Tom Axtell
KLVX/Las Vegas

Peter Frid
New Hampshire Public Television

Deborah Onslow
WMHT/Schenectady

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP 2005

ALABAMA

Alabama PTV/Birmingham

ALASKA

KUAC/Fairbanks

KYUK/Bethel

ARIZONA

KUAT/Tucson

ARKANSAS

Arkansas ETV/Conway

CALIFORNIA

KLCS/Los Angeles

KOCE/Huntington Beach

KTEH/San Jose

FLORIDA

WBCC/Cocoa

WCEU/Daytona Beach

WFSU/Tallahassee

WGCU/Fort Myers

WLRN/Miami

WSRE/Pensacola

WUFT/Gainesville

WUSF/Tampa

WXEL/West Palm Beach

GEORGIA

Georgia Public

Broadcasting/Atlanta

WPBA/Atlanta

IDAHO

Idaho PTV/Boise

ILLINOIS

WSIU/WUSI/Carbondale

INDIANA

WNIT/Elkhart

WYIN/Merrillville

IOWA

Iowa Public Television/

Johnston

KANSAS

KOOD/Bunker Hill

KENTUCKY

Kentucky ETV/Lexington

WKYU/Bowling Green

LOUISIANA

LA Public Broadcasting/

Baton Rouge

WLAE/New Orleans

MAINE

Maine Public Broadcasting

MARYLAND

Maryland Public

Broadcasting/Owings Mills

MICHIGAN

WGVU/Grand Rapids

MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Public

Television (eff. 7/1/05)

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi PB/Jackson

MISSOURI

KCPT/Kansas City

KETC/St. Louis

KMOS/Warrensburg

KOZK/Springfield

MONTANA

Montana PBS/Bozeman

NEBRASKA

Nebraska ETV/Lincoln

NEVADA

KLVX/Las Vegas

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire PTV/

Durham

NEW JERSEY

NJN/Trenton

NEW MEXICO

KENW/Portales

KNME/Albuquerque

KRWG/Las Cruces

NEW YORK

WLIW/Long Island

WMHT/Schenectady

WNET/New York

WPBS/Watertown

NORTH CAROLINA

UNC-TV/

Research Triangle Park

NORTH DAKOTA

Prairie Public

Television/Fargo

OHIO

WOSU/Columbus

WOUB/Athens

WPTD/Dayton

OKLAHOMA

KRSC/Claamore

Oklahoma ETV/

Oklahoma City

OREGON

Oregon Public

Broadcasting/Portland

PENNSYLVANIA

WLVT/Bethlehem

WPSX/University Park

WYBE/Philadelphia

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island PBS/

Providence

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina ETV

Columbia

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Public

Television/Vermillion

TENNESSEE

WCTE/Cookeville

WKNO/Memphis

WLJT/Martin

WNPT/Nashville

WETP/Knoxville

WTCI/Chattanooga

TEXAS

KAMU/College Station

KEDT/Corpus Christi

KERA/Dallas

KLRU/Austin

KMBH/Harlingen

KNCT/Killeen

KOCV/Odessa

KTXT/Lubbock

KUHT/Houston

KWBU/Waco

UTAH

KBYU/Provo

KUED/Salt Lake City

VERMONT

Vermont PTV/Colchester

(US) VIRGIN ISLANDS

WTJX/St. Thomas

VIRGINIA

WBRA/Roanoke

WCVE/Richmond

WHRO/Norfolk

WVPT/Harrisonburg

WASHINGTON

KSPS/Spokane

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia Public

Broadcasting/Charleston

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee Public TV

Wisconsin ETV/Madison

WYOMING

Wyoming PTV/Riverton

(93 members/
96 licensees/253 stations/
45 states & USVI) 7/1/05