

# WSLR Volunteer Handbook

## What is WSLR?

WSLR is a Federal Communication Commission (F.C.C.) licensed Class-A non-commercial educational FM broadcast station operating at 100 watts on an assigned frequency of 96.5 megahertz and can also be heard on the Internet at [www.wslr.org](http://www.wslr.org). WSLR is licensed to the New College Student Association and governed by a private non-profit organization, WSLR, Inc. The studios are located in Hamilton Center on the campus of New College.

## Mission Statement of WSLR

WSLR is an innovative, listener-supported, non-profit, non-commercial FM radio station dedicated to serving the Sarasota community.

WSLR features locally produced programming and presents cultural, artistic, and political perspectives currently underrepresented in the media.

Our goal is to inform and empower listeners to play an active role in WSLR and the community. WSLR's programming promotes equality, peace, sustainability, democracy, and social and economic justice.

## **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

The operating policies of WSLR-LP FM are based on the principles of democratic decision-making, which call for treating each other with respect, fairness and dignity and encouraging creativity and personal development.

This handbook briefly outlines volunteers' rights and responsibilities. The procedures and practices outlined in this handbook may change from time to time as necessary.

Any changes in FCC or WSLR-LP FM policies will be posted on our notice/bulletin board. All WSLR-LP FM personnel are expected to read these updates on a regular basis, as station broadcasting conditions and policies will change from time to time. When necessary, revisions to the handbook will be issued.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Clear and constant communication is essential to the successful operation of the station. Volunteers are expected to check the Message Board in the studio regularly. If important calls come in when you are in the studio/office, please make sure that messages are passed on to the appropriate person.

## **Personal Information**

Each volunteer must keep their current address, telephone numbers and (if available) fax and e-mail information on file with the station. No contact information will be released to outsiders without the permission of the volunteer. This information is for internal use only.

## **Messages and Mail**

It is the volunteer's responsibility to check for messages or mail on a weekly basis. Volunteers should also regularly check the telephone answering machine for messages. Written messages should be clearly posted on the Message Board in the Studio. Any mail that arrives at WSLR-LP FM, **regardless of addressee**, is the property of WSLR.

## **Answering Listener's Questions**

Listeners may call the station asking for information about something that has been announced on the air. If the on-air volunteer who made the announcement is not available, WSLR's policy is to take a message and post it on the Message Board. **It is against WSLR's policy to give out volunteer's phone numbers or to call on-air volunteers at home or at work about announcements made during their shows.** Questions from the media should be directed to the Station Manager or Chairman of the Board.

## **Criticism**

Every volunteer has the right to discuss or criticize perceived problems within the station. However, use of a regular on-air shift to criticize station policy is inappropriate and strongly discouraged. On-air volunteers are asked to consider the station's mission and the effect on listeners of airing complaints about the equipment or facilities, or of commenting negatively about WSLR events or policies.

Personal attacks will not be tolerated. WSLR holds personally liable any volunteer who defames any individual. Liability includes, but is not limited to, any related expenses, charges, or fines. WSLR will pursue legal remedies.

Only those volunteers specifically designated by the WSLR Board of Directors are empowered to speak on behalf of the station. Speaking for the station without permission of the Board is grounds for immediate dismissal from the station.

## **Public Relations**

Volunteers must keep a clear distinction in public expression, written or oral, between an individual point of view and that of the station. Volunteers must obtain permission from the Board of Directors, or its designated agent, before writing any letter or article for publication or making any public address in which they in any way officially represent WSLR. Upon completion, such an article or address must be approved by the Board prior to publication or delivery. Volunteers may not use WSLR letterhead for correspondence that expresses a personal conclusion or point of view. Any inquiry from the media should be directed to the Station Manager or the Chairman of the Board.

## **Public Events and Political Activities**

At public events or during political activity, volunteers must make clear to others that they represent only themselves and not WSLR. This includes performing as a DJ at a club or party or on stage. By policy, the station's stance is non-partisan.

## **CONDUCT**

### **Courtesy**

On-air volunteers are expected to start and end their shows on time. Volunteers are expected to behave courteously toward everyone they encounter at the station, including phone callers. Volunteers who are on the air during times when no other volunteers are on duty are expected to answer the phone.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted on the station premises. Smoking is allowed outside the building. Please ensure that you dispose of cigarette butts properly and safely.

### **Alcohol and Drugs**

WSLR-LP FM strictly forbids the possession and/or use of any illegal substance on the premises of WSLR. WSLR strictly forbids possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages in the Studio. Furthermore, WSLR forbids possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages by the on-air volunteer in the studio, offices or during their shift at WSLR. Persons who violate any part of this policy will be subject to dismissal.

### **Housekeeping**

Volunteers must keep work areas neat and orderly. Volunteers are expected to clean up after themselves, to place litter in the proper bins, and to return equipment and materials to where they belong. **Volunteers must not store personal items in the station.**

### **Security**

A volunteer who admits anyone into the station is responsible for the conduct of whomever they admit. All WSLR volunteers are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of the station facilities and equipment. Volunteers have the right and responsibility to question any stranger on the premises. Volunteers have the right to ask anyone to leave immediately if they are disruptive, threatening, or behaving suspiciously.

The station doors will be locked at all times when the station is unattended. All volunteers must uphold the station key policy.

### **Key Policy**

The Station Manager is responsible for the distribution and collection of all station keys, will determine which keys are appropriate for whom and will distribute them accordingly. The Station Manager must explicitly approve the issuing of keys to volunteers and keep a log of keys issued and those who have access to the studio.

**(Insert Organizational Chart and Roles and Responsibilities)**

## **STAFFING GUIDELINES**

### Statement of Equal Opportunity

Station positions are open to all students and community members, regardless of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, or physical disability.

### General Staffing

The station's programming positions turn over every year (or semester if necessary). That is, a programmer who has held a particular position with the station for a year/semester must re-apply for that position the following year/semester. Incumbency does not necessarily ensure that a position will automatically be awarded in successive semesters, since the station will actively solicit applications for all positions each year/semester. If a more qualified person emerges from the pool of new applications, preference will naturally be given to the better applicant. The station manager has the ultimate authority over all personnel matters.

### Staffing Procedures

WSLR-FM plans to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, an operational demand that requires approximately 80 volunteers. Therefore, staffing is a very important function of the station's management team, requiring a program of constant recruitment, training and supervision.

The station manager and program director shall advertise vacant staff positions via the station Web site and recruiting announcements on WSLR-FM. Additionally, the station shall recruit potential talent by notifying various campus organizations and community organizations.

To apply for a programming position at the station, an official application form should be filled out and submitted. Other supporting materials such as portfolios, air checks and resume tapes are encouraged. Since the station is committed to training novice staff members, no previous broadcasting experience is necessary.

Deadlines for submitting applications will be set by the station manager and will be broadcast on-air throughout the day and posted on the website. All applicants must be notified of their acceptance or rejection by letter or e-mail no later than two weeks past the application deadline.

### Code of Ethics

WSLR-FM's code of ethics is based upon the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics and covers the following criteria of professional conduct as applicable to the operation of the station. You should know and understand these ethical guidelines and keep them in mind as you execute your duties at the station.

- Public Trust

Professional broadcasters should recognize that their first obligation is to the public.

- Integrity

Professional broadcasters should maintain integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience.

- Accountability

Professional broadcasters should recognize that they are accountable for their actions to the public, the profession and themselves.

- Truth

When covering news, broadcast journalists should pursue truth aggressively and present the news accurately, in context and as completely as possible.

- Fairness

Broadcast journalists and public affairs personnel should present the news fairly and impartially, placing primary value on significance and relevance.

- Independence

Broadcast journalists should defend the independence of all journalists from those seeking influence or control over news content. In addition, students in student media should support and do the same for all student media organizations.

- Professionalism

Volunteers/staff are expected to be professional and strive toward excellence in all on-air duties as prescribed by the management of the station

All WSLR staff and programmers are subject to semester performance evaluations by the station manager and program director. Persons holding staff positions with the station can be removed from their jobs at any time for insubordination, non-performance of duty, non-collegiality, ineffective administration, and /or inappropriate use of administrative authority. A dismissed staff member may appeal her/his case directly to the chair of the WSLR Board.

WSLR holds all staff members to the highest standards of professional conduct while working on the air or in any aspect of representing the station. Each member of the station's staff should know and understand the policies reflected in this manual. Ignorance is never an acceptable excuse for violating station, University or federal policies and procedures.

### Grounds for a Warning:

Persons committing infractions that impair normal station operations and/or programming objectives will be given a written warning by the program director or station manager. A written warning indicates that a staff member's conduct does not meet expectations and that the person will be given an opportunity to improve her/his conduct or s/he will be removed from the staff. The program director will keep a written

record of the violation that includes the staff member's name, the date and time the violation occurred and the reason for the warning.

Such infractions include, but are not limited to:

- Missing a scheduled show or assigned task.
- Unauthorized use of station equipment.
- Missing, without Program Director approval, regular staff meetings.
- Failure to comply with a reasonable request from a station executive.
- Having food or beverages in an unauthorized area.
- Failure to follow prescribed play list or station formatics.
- Any other action deemed unprofessional by the program director or station manager.

Grounds for automatic suspension and possible termination:

Again, staff members are expected to uphold WSLR's federal, state and campus legal and policy obligations, which are a necessary part of our daily operations and our role as a member of the University community. The following infractions will constitute immediate suspension and possible termination (to be determined by the station program director and manager):

- Repeat of any action for which a staff member has received a prior written warning.
- Smoking in facilities.
- Failure to complete the transmitter and program logs.
- Not following the program log.
- The broadcast of obscene, indecent or profane language, including lyrics found in music not officially designated as part of the station format by the program director or music director.
- Failure to comply with campus, state or federal regulations (especially rules and regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission).
- Stealing WSLR property or the malicious destruction of station or college property.
- Possession or consumption of alcohol in or around any WSLR facility.
- Possession, use or being under the influence of any illegal substance.
- Accessing information on station computing facilities that violate University computer use policies.
- Allowing access or use of station facilities to anyone not authorized by a department director, the program director or station manager.
- Violation of campus, state and federal regulations applying to the Internet.