

For Immediate Release

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A national Minute of Silence will be held on Thursday, April 28 at 12:00 p.m. Central on college radio stations. College Broadcasters, Inc (CBI) is organizing the grassroots effort.

The goal of the Minute of Silence is to bring awareness of the deep impact that the sale of student radio stations is having on campuses and their surrounding communities. CBI, who represents over 200 student media outlets, has become increasingly alarmed at the sale of student stations.

“The recent sale of stations like KUSF at the University of San Francisco, KTRU at Rice University and WNAZ at Trevecca Nazrene University indicates that college broadcasters need to do a better job of explaining their value and purpose to the schools and communities they serve,” said Candace Walton, President of CBI. “This minute of silence is just the first step in a broader effort to make the nation aware of how critical student stations are to localism in broadcasting.”

The nationwide Minute of Silence on stations is not merely symbolic. When KTRU-FM goes silent on April 28, 2011, its license will transfer from Rice University’s student station to the University of Houston’s NPR affiliate KUHF and the silence will be real. KTRU’s signal will go off-air. The frequency will remain silent until KUHF takes over broadcasts.

The license transfer means one of Houston’s local voices will go silent and KTRU won’t be back. This loss of hyper-local programming has been seen in other markets where student stations have been sold. Too often the results are local content is replaced by programming from out-of-market sources.

KTRU is not alone. Recently, other student stations have been sold, and with them the loss of local voices and content. Texas Tech University, Trevecca Nazrene University, Augustana College, Deerfield Academy and pending sales at The University of San Francisco and Vanderbilt University are all examples of student stations transferred or being transferred to non-educational operators.

"Many Americans, including members of Congress, have complained that consolidation, voice tracking, syndication and automation have left communities without a true local radio station. Student stations are often the last locally-focused radio outlet in their community," Mark Maben, Development Director of College Broadcasters, Inc pointed out. "At a time of expressed alarm about the demise of localism in broadcasting, noncommercial stations with a high percentage of locally produced programming need to be considered open green spaces of the air that should be preserved, not bulldozed over in favor of programming from faraway sources."

"Those who have benefited from college radio, including alumni, commercial broadcasters, and the music industry must step up and call on the Federal Communications Commission to reassess what it means by localism in content. These stations are invaluable and when the frequency is gone, it will not be returned," added Walton.

The minute of silence is a first step as part of a broader effort to build awareness of the selling of student stations. College Broadcasters, Inc, will also host a variety of sessions regarding this issue at their national convention in Orlando, Florida in October 2011. There is more information available online at www.askcbi.org including an update list of stations that have been sold and transferred from student stations. Additional efforts to champion the importance of student stations will take place in the months and years ahead.

College Broadcasters Inc. represents students involved in radio, television, webcasting and other related media ventures; ensures a commitment to education and the student pursuit of excellence through active involvement in electronic media; promotes cooperative efforts between the association and other national, regional, and state media organizations; facilitates the discussion of issues related to student-operated electronic media; and other community oriented programs.

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