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The Association  
of  
College and University  
Broadcasting Stations

February 6, 1933

**SPECIAL BULLETIN**

TO MEMBERS  
of

THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BROADCASTING STATIONS  
(and educational officials cooperating with the Association)

Some weeks ago your executive secretary contacted eight men in the field of educational radio work and asked that each supply a five hundred word article dealing with educational radio work in the past five years.

It was asked that, in these discussions, problems considered of paramount interest be listed for a series of eight bulletins to be released to the members of the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations.

We take pleasure at this time in releasing the first of this series, an article entitled, "THE NEEDS OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING," prepared especially for the Association by DR. F. H. LUMLEY, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, RADIO DIVISION, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS.

Since these men, prominent in the field of education by radio, are giving their time and energies to this special series, station managers and program directors throughout the entire country will find some very valuable material in these articles.

As the articles are released from this office, please drop notes of appreciation to the men presenting them.

Very truly yours,

*T. M. Beaird*

T. M. Beaird, Executive Secretary

THE NEEDS OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING

F. H. Lumley  
Ohio State University

There are at the present time several deficiencies in the functioning of educational broadcasting in the United States. Conditions which handicap further development of radio as an educational medium are: (1) lack of adequate publicity for educational programs; (2) lack of balance and appropriateness in the presentation of educational programs; (3) lack of syndicated educational features, either available by wire transmission or recordings; (4) lack of adequate remuneration for educational talent; (5) lack of development of listener organizations.

The average listener is now in a state of hopeless confusion as far as knowledge of programs, educational or otherwise, is concerned. The listings of the newspapers are inadequate and tantalizing. Other special listings put out by educational stations, organizations, and departments of commercial stations are necessarily limited in scope. A unified program information service is needed. I hope the time will come when educational programs will be listed in regional program bulletins, and listeners will subscribe to such a service. The programs will be given not only by time of day, but classified under subject matter as well. The listener who wants to hear a talk on economics will not have to search diligently for mention of such a talk in among countless other program listings.

Program balance is an expression which the listener has learned to forget. By this I mean that sequences of programs now bear little if any relation to one another. Therefore groups of programs should be intrinsically related within certain periods of time. The least time for which programs may be balanced should be one hour, and two hours is preferable. No one would think of going down town to a movie which lasted only 15 minutes, nor can the radio listener be expected to stay home to listen to a 15-minute program which comes in the middle of the evening. We must build programs which the listener will prefer to other types of educational offerings or entertainment. This can only be done if the programs are of exceptional interest or form a coordinated presentation of sufficient length to justify the

effort of listening. My suggestion in this regard is that stations sponsor economics hours, psychology hours, government hours, and science hours. These hours could consist of several talks interspersed with music to permit relaxation. A round table method, dialogue, or dramatization might be used for the sake of variety. But it is essential that these talks or round tables appeal to the same type of listener. One talk should not be on business research, another on sanitation, and a third on music appreciation. It is quite likely that the listener who wants to hear one will not want to hear the other two. The talks should treat similar topics or take up different phases of the same topic. For example, three talks might be devoted to the problem of illumination. One talk could describe the different types of illumination under which we work and methods of measuring illumination. A second talk could discuss the history of illumination and the development of devices for producing artificial light. A third talk might take up the effect on health of good and poor lighting.

It is clear that in a specialized society, such as the one in which we exist, there is no longer need for each station to preserve its local identity by giving exclusively local programs. Programs will be improved when some means of making more extensive use of single programs is developed. At present this can be done in two ways, either by transmitting such programs by means of wire from one station to another, or by recording them and distributing the records. As an advance in educational broadcasting, I foresee the careful preparation of talks or programs under unhurried conditions, the testing of these programs locally, and finally the recording of these programs for use by a large number of stations.

There is no more reason why a speaker with sufficient ability to entertain and interest his audience should go unpaid, than that he should appear on the platform without remuneration, or write a book without receiving royalties. At present, however, educational organizations have very little money to pay speakers. The preparation of a suitable talk requires a tremendous amount of work from those unfamiliar with the composition of material for broadcasting. The program is soon over without any

great rewarding response from the audience. If worthwhile material is to be presented over the radio, the speaker should be paid and not lured into broadcasting.

But even if all these conditions were satisfied, there would still be something lacking in our proposed radio Utopia. Much of our interest in affairs comes from the fact that other people are interested. We are stimulated by social competition in learning about new ideas. Take Technocracy for example. Thru the organization of listeners into discussion groups, it is possible to encourage interest in certain subjects and to make the broadcast programs more vital. In addition, these listener organizations can be of immense value in reporting to the broadcaster the results of the broadcast.

I have tried to indicate not only some of the problems which educational broadcasting faces, but to point out a few avenues to the solution of these problems. The time for action is certainly at hand, and one of the first accomplishments should be the unified program listing, lest those educational broadcasts of value, which we may now hear, slip away unnoticed.