Senate must not act Sunday

Acting before student body has a chance to reach consensus about KTRU crisis is rash

We are disappointed in our elected student leaders.

On Friday, many college presidents and the Student Association president met with Vice President for Student Affairs Zenaido Camacho and worked out a proposed revision of operating policies for KTRU in an effort to expedite KTRU going on the air.

A draft of this revision was given to those who attended a KTRU organizational meeting Saturday at 3 p.m.

The presidents did not consult their constituents before they went into negotiations with the administration. They did not even let students know that they were meeting to write a proposal to revise KTRU policies.

It took KTRU 30 years to evolve to what it is today. There’s no reason to rush a resolution to this major conflict in three days.

The college presidents have no clear idea what student opinion on KTRU is and have made minimal effort to figure it out. They are allowing themselves to be railroaded into negotiations with the university on the university’s terms. We think college presidents need to realize that they have the power to say no to the administration.

Many students have not decided what they think about the KTRU shutdown, and forcing a new operating policy onto the station before student opinion can be organized and collected is unacceptable.

Furthermore, but secondarily, the operating policies outlined in this proposal contain some serious flaws. Yet it seems like the presidents intend to pass this policy at the special Student Association meeting called for 10 p.m. tomorrow night — a meeting that had not been announced on the SA listserv by 11:45 p.m. the night before the meeting.

The SA Senate must not approve any policy at its special meeting Sunday night.

The presidents at the meeting Saturday said this draft was supported by seven of the eight college presidents and SA President Lindsay Boistard. Brown College President Timothy Wertenbaker was in the process of resigning and did not participate in the negotiations.

This policy states that the vice president for Student Affairs — through the General Manager, a member of the Student Affairs staff — can remove the KTRU station manager at any time if, in his opinion, the manager is not “properly ensuring compliance with applicable law or University or station policies.”

In effect, your college presidents have green-lighted a shutdown on Camacho’s authority much like the one that happened Thursday. They have said it’s OK for the university to remove a student leader elected by the student body if “in their opinion” he or she isn’t following “university policy.” We would like to point out that university policy can mean anything, and can be changed, unilaterally, by the administration. Of course, since the university is the holder of the FCC license, they should be able to suspend a station manager who is breaking the law until the problem is worked out. But vague wording that allows a single person — the VPSA — to remove a station manager on the basis of his opinion is outrageous.

This is not the only problem with the policy. The proposed advisory committee structure gives the university substantial room to manipulate the membership of the committee so that the members can best serve university — not necessarily student — interests, for example.

Our student representatives need to further discuss this problem with the students. The student body should call for the SA Senate to not act on this proposal at its special meeting tomorrow night and to wait until next semester before approving any proposal. With final exams approaching, no meaningful conversation can be completed before January.

If they do act, we are afraid of what could happen: The college presidents have, by and large, agreed to this policy. They are almost half the voting members of the senate. If this unreasonable policy is agreed to by a majority of the senate tomorrow night, they have spoken as representatives of the student body before the student body can raise its voice above a whisper.

Then, the students of KTRU, if they reject a patently unacceptable proposal, will seem like they are belligerently refusing to negotiate with the student body. The administration has been loudly complaining throughout this entire process that KTRU refuses to be accountable, and this will make it appear that they are. However, we see serious problems in the policy and believe that KTRU should also.

College presidents: No emergency cabinet meetings can, at this point, allow you to properly gauge student opinion. Your constituents need time to form and voice their opinions.

Students: Sign a petition asking for a delay in making a decision on KTRU policy so that you can figure out what you think. Your college president (unless you are at Brown) has not yet heard your voice, yet he or she has already spoken on your behalf.

The Thresher will be distributing petitions at brunch Sunday and throughout the day.
At a KTRU organizational meeting at 3 p.m. today, four of the college presidents distributed a draft of a proposal for a new operating policy for KTRU. The presidents said that seven of the college presidents, the SA president, and Vice President for Student Affairs Zenaido Camacho supported this proposal. The text of the proposal they distributed is below:

**Rice University Operating Policy for KTRU-FM**

The FCC license for KTRU-FM radio is held by the Board of Trustees of the University. The policies governing the operation of the station are determined by the President of the University, according to the bylaws of KTRU. The University is committed to the concept of a university-owned, student-operated radio station with appropriate lines of accountability. The President has delegated to the Vice President for Student Affairs oversight of KTRU operations. Operating policy changes require the approval of the President.

The KTRU General Manager will be a member of the Rice staff who reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The General Manager shall oversee the station management, ensure that licensing requirements are satisfied, direct station operations within policy guidelines, and, in concert with the student management of the station, develop appropriate programming within the programming policy and/or guidelines approved by the Vice President.

The KTRU Station Manager shall be elected by the students in accordance with Student Association procedures. The Station Manager shall direct student programming under the supervision and approval of the General Manager and within the programming policy and/or guidelines approved by the Vice President. The KTRU Station Manager shall be accountable to both the Student Association and the Vice President for Student Affairs through the General Manager. The Station Manager may be removed from his/her position by the Student Association in accordance with its procedures, or by the General Manager with the approval of the Vice President for Student Affairs in the event that, in their opinion, the management of the station is not properly ensuring compliance with applicable law or University or station policies. Under such circumstances, the Vice President shall request that the Student Association appoint an Interim Station Manager to complete the term or until elections can be held.

A new KTRU Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The committee will develop programming policy and guidelines with the Vice President for Student Affairs with the approval of the President. The KTRU Advisory Committee shall consist of: 3 undergraduates (named by the President from 7 or more nominations from the SA); 1 graduate student (named by the President from 3 or more nominations from the GSA); 4 faculty or staff members from various constituencies within the University; and 1 alumnus (nominated by the Rice Alumni Association and approved by the President). Of the seven undergraduates nominated by the SA, at least two shall have experience as a past or current KTRU member, and at least one of the three undergraduate members selected by the President shall have experience as a past or current KTRU member. Two ex-officio members, the Assistant VP for Student Affairs and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs shall also be appointed. Five additional (non-voting) members shall be appointed, the KTRU General Manager, the KTRU Station Manager, the KTRU Faculty Advisor, the President of the Student Association and the President of the Graduate Student Association.

If the Station Manager does not believe that the KTRU Advisory Committee programming policies and/or guidelines accurately reflect student opinion, he/she may request that the Student Association Senate consider an appeal to the Vice President for Student Affairs.