By Richard Ruchman

Black announcers and the Board of Directors of WRTC announced a settlement of their dispute over the station’s new programming policy after the blacks sat in at the studio for four hours. While the sit-in went on, negotiators for both sides hammered out the agreement on scheduling “black experience” programming.

Under the settlement, the station will give black announcers from 11:00 P.M. on each night of the week for “black experience” programming and from noon-3 on Saturday and Sunday. The content of the shows and the announcers will be determined by the black announcers.

The station had originally planned to give the black announcers from 11:00 P.M. on, every night plus an hour and half of “jazz-rock,” also known as soul, to the afternoon. The programming would have been determined by an assistant program director, who would not have necessarily been black.

Reginald Martin, '74, said the sit-in began to protest WRTC’s board of directors’ reply to the Trinity Coalition of Blacks’ (TCB) statement which appeared in yesterday’s TRIPOD. In that statement, TCB said it felt the board was trying “to deny any and all efforts by black people for adequate Black programming.”

Their reply to the TCB the station directors said, “...we have made no attempt to stifle the creativity of any programmer... we attempt to provide a broad spectrum of programs for the education and enjoyment of the community as a whole.” Martin said eight black announcers took part in the action after a meeting “prior to the action.” He would not say when the meeting took place.

He said the group blocked the studio so no one could enter. The group did not interfere with announcers who had already started their broadcasts, he said. Addled that had the announcers left the studio they would not have been allowed to return.

Broadcasting was delayed for about half-an-hour before an announcer was able to slip into the studio and sign on the station, sources disclosed.

The station’s board of directors—Charles Ward, ’74, acting station manager; Timothy Tillson, ’74, director of programming; and Ridgely Evers, ’75, director of development—met with the demonstrators, along with Mohammed Jibrell, assistant dean for community life, and J. Ronald Spencer, dean for community life.

According to all sources, there was no sense of confrontation during the negotiations themselves.

Spencer said he believed both sides accepted the agreement willingly and in good faith.

He said that the “sit-in” Tuesday morning never reached crisis proportions. He said that while he was at the station “nobody came close in bring their temps, although what he termed a vigorous discussion took place.

Spencer said that the Black Experience Programmers had a “sincere commitment to providing programming to the black community in Hartford” which he agreed was lacking. He also said that the WRTC management were “anxious” to see this type of programming take place but they were just as concerned with other types of listeners.

Spencer said the basic issue was not whether or not there should be the type of programming that the blacks wanted but, “what proportions would be considered a fair shake.”

Spencer said that he tried to keep out of the controversy as much as he could, because it was his policy to let college organizations work out their own internal disagreements. He said the WRTC-TCB controversy would “be best resolved by

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people who knew something about radio." Spencer also said that both groups realized the need for a loyalist to WRTC and its welfare and that both parties resolved to work towards that goal.

The original position of the Board of Directors according to Martin, was that blocks of time would be allocated by the station for certain kinds of programming. For example, at one p.m. each day, everyone would play rock and roll. At three o'clock each day, there would be folk. Martin said he understood the blocks of time and the announcers would be determined by the board.

He said the black announcers opposed this idea. He explained they wanted to slate their own announcers at the time of their choice—6:30 p.m. to 3 a.m.—seven days a week.

Ward, the acting station manager, asserted however, the board did not intend to limit the black announcers. He said the station directors wanted an assistant program director of jazz—who would probably be black, he said—who would program the time for "Programming from the Black Experience.

The Board's desire to have a representative from the black announcers was opposed by the blacks because it would create more tensions on the staff and would create a symbolic barrier between black experience announcers and other staff members.

Ward said he felt a liaison between the blacks and the board would increase communication.

Ward said the black announcers finally decided to accept the idea and will name a representative soon.

"Black experience" programming will be handled by the black announcers, according to Martin. He said they will decide who will broadcast what kind of music in each slot of "black experience" time and the board will have no say in this area.

The blacks offered the board a plan for scheduling under which the board would control all programming until 9:30 p.m. At 9:30, the black announcers would present an hour and a half of jazz-rock radio also known as soul and jazz from 11:00 p.m. on. Martin explained the black announcers will try to provide "a smooth musical transition.

The board of directors rejected the plan, however, because it would have forced the station to push a public affairs slot back by a half-hour.

He asserted this would have put the station in conflict with FCC regulations. He added this would be dangerous because many groups are trying to use the college band—which is currently filled.

Martin, a participant in the sit-in, said, "What happened today was extremely positive. After deliberating for four hours everyone agreed a settlement should be reached and we look towards a feeling of unity was reached between blacks and whites.

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Spencer remarked, "Both sides were responsible enough to keep negotiating in good faith until an agreement had been reached.

Jibrell attributed the confrontation to poor communication on both sides and termed the mood at the discussions "frustrating.

One point continuously stressed by the blacks in their desire to be a part of WRTC was that blacks were attempting to control the station as "quite absurd. Almost all students get together to rectify race problems, racial problems are the others."

He repeated that black programmers say the call letters WRTC "with pride.

One group uninvolved in the events and settlement today was the white announcers who make up the bulk of the WRTC staff.

Commenting on the settlement, Jim Wilson, 24, a white announcer on the radio staff, termed the settlement "ridiculous. I think the percentage of black DJ's and black students at Trinity is not equal to the percentage of the listening audience and needs of station.

He added, "I don't think blacks having most of the prime serves the interests of Trinity College.

Just how common this sentiment is will be measured Thursday night at 7:30 at an all-staff meeting in Wean Lounge. Chuck Ward explained the board acted without white opinion because "We felt we had to deal with the problem. To drag it out would have made things more difficult."

He said the white announcers gave him no feedback at a meeting last Wednesday when the original plan was set aside a "Black Experience" slot from 11:00 p.m. on. It was announced.

Martin conceded a de facto segregation in the new programming schedule. Under the blacks rejected plan, Sunday night would have been left open for white programmers of jazz. But under the schedule agreed to today only blacks will broadcast during "black experience" time.

Ruth Ward and Martin seem to feel that the issue has been put to rest. The two seem united in their feeling that "the whole thing's settled."

Ward said the staff of WRTC could implement the blacks' demands, but he was not content with the settlement.

One aspect of this issue that seems uncontested from any side in the need for black programming. According to Martin there is an isolated black community in throngs with a population ranging between 50,000 and 90,000. He said that while there are certain stations in the area which have inordinate numbers to black, such as WKND, no one provides them with a potential filler of this gap. "People who listen to WRTC in the black community could enjoy it and be educated," he said.

He is joined in this feeling by the Board of Directors, Mohamed Jibrel, and white announcers.

Jim Wilson said, "Nobody thinks there shouldn't be black programming.

Let's get it out the open there has been some pressure between black announcers at WRTC and the station's board of directors over questions of who will determine what will go on the air and what times certain shows will be on.

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