Then & Now

Quite the Bandwidth

WKNC has a long history of serving as the campus go-to for a good tune.

The first student radio station launched on campus at NC State in the 1920s as WLAC. Fast forward through different call letters and a leap from AM to FM in 1966, and you arrive at one of the campus’ longest-standing institutions, WKNC.

Located at 88.1 on the dial, WKNC is a source of campus news. Student government candidates have debated policy before over its airwaves. It’s even home to Wolfpack baseball and women’s basketball.

But what students and other listeners within a 50-mile radius, thanks to the power of WKNC’s 25,000 watts, have always wanted is music. And the music has changed, say, since the 1950s, when “Campus Beat” played top-30 hits. Or even the 1960s, when WKNC delivered top-40 tunes along with, according to the 1969 Agromeck, “jazz, progressive rock, news features and educational material that left no doubt in anyone’s mind that experimentation was the rule and conformity was taboo.”

Indie rock vibes are strong today as WKNC plays bands like Culture Abuse and the Illuminati Hotties on “Daytime Rock,” one of WKNC’s 30 shows, each specializing in genres, including hip-hop, R&B and metal. The lineup of 60 student disc jockeys includes DJ Emotionally Unavailable, The Saw and Lil Yahtzee.

As for the call letters’ meaning? One legend has it standing for “We Know North Carolina.” “One hundred percent false,” says Jamie Lynn Gilbert, associate director of student media and the station’s adviser. “It means nothing.”

ON THE WEB: wknc.org