

Report Submission - ID: 17Admin20

Author(s):

Ray Ekness

Unit of Analysis ID Number: 28

Sector: Integrated Communications

Division : Integrated Communications

Unit for Assessment: Broadcast Media Center, includes administration, KUFM and Public TV

State the mission, objectives, and primary functions of this unit. : The Broadcast Media Center includes KUFM-FM Montana Public Radio and KUFM-TV MontanaPBS and delivers on public broadcasting's mission of education, public safety and civic leadership. These two media outlets are public services of the University of Montana and are beloved by the citizens of Montana.

Montana Public Radio enriches the mind and spirit, inspires a lifetime of learning and connects communities through access to exceptional programming. Established as a student training facility in the 1960s, MTPR has grown into an educational media network serving all of western and central Montana with news, entertainment, music and information.

MTPR is a National Public Radio affiliate with local news reporters in Missoula, the Flathead and Helena along with UM student interns. Local news and music producers create 50% of the weekly program content. MTPR presents an eclectic mix of educational, entertainment, music programs including classical, jazz, folk, and the longest running, locally produced children's radio program in the country. MTPR also broadcasts national favorites like NPR's *Morning Edition*, *This American Life* and *Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me*.

KUFM-TV began a partnership with sister station KUSM-TV in Bozeman to form MontanaPBS in 1996. The now statewide service shares diverse stories, connects citizens, discovers common ground and celebrates the independent spirit and beauty of Montana. In addition to national programs like *Nova*, *American Experience* and *PBS Newshour*, local producers create uniquely Montana programs such as *Backroads of Montana*, *C.M. Russell and the American West* and *Glacier Park's Night of the Grizzlies*.

Identify the primary users of the unit.: MTPR and MTPBS serve citizens of Montana from every socioeconomic and educational level, race and background in rural and urban communities across our vast state. Students, faculty staff and alumni of all MUS campuses as well as the general public, government agencies and many more use these services daily.

MTPR broadcasts to 500,000 Montanans in western and central Montana, with an estimated 70,000 listeners weekly. MTPR's 7,200 members provide the station with 72% of its annual operating funds.

MTPR transmitters serve Missoula, Hamilton, Polson, Kalispell, Libby, Whitefish, Swan Lake, Butte, Helena, Dillon and Great Falls. MTPR is the No. 1-rated radio station in the Missoula/Bitterroot radio

market and No. 3 in the Kalispell/Flathead area. The award-winning MTPR.org website served two million page visits in the past year.

Listeners can access MTPR digital content via streaming and podcast downloads. MTPR news stories are featured on select NPR national broadcasts as well as daily on the NPROne app.

MTPBS is a collaboration between MSU and UM and serves the entire state, with viewers in over 400 communities via over-the-air broadcast, cable and satellite TV. MTPBS has over 10,000 members and sponsors who provide 68% of the station's financial support.

The service provides five on-air channels including MTPBS-HD, PBS Kids, PBS-Create, PBS-World and TVMT, the legislative access channel for state government. TVMT is now being operated by MTPBS and adds to the civic leadership mission. MTPBS programming is also available through the Montanapbs.org website and the PBS app.

Submit Organizational Chart : [17Admin20_SubmitOrganizationalChart_1002101055.pdf](#)

Complete the FTE Detail Excel spreadsheet provided in the link below.:

[17Admin20_CompletetheFTEDetailExcelspreadsheetprovidedinthelinkbelow_1002101055.pdf](#)

Using the space below, address any issues with your FTE Detail Sheet.: The BMC has no issues with the FTE Detail Sheet.

Finance: Budget and Financial Planning,Purchasing/Procurement,Accounts Payable

Research: Pre-award,Post-award

Human Resources: Employee Training,Employee Hiring (recruitment through on-boarding),Payroll Processing

Communications: Marketing and Communications,Website Maintenance/Development,Social Media,Event Planning

Development: Fundraising

Information Technology: Application Development/maintenance,Provide unit with server and desktop support.

Criteria 1. - Bullet 1.: The BMC enacts the UM2020 Strategic Plan's values of leadership, engagement, sustainability and diversity every day and has done so for the entirety of MTPR's and MTPBS's existence. No other media service in Montana provides thoughtful, educational content featuring global perspectives and diverse viewpoints like MTPR and MTPBS. These services are also a place where constructive, respectful conversations take place furthering discussions on issues affecting people and communities around Montana and the world.

From distinguished faculty and researchers providing discussion and analysis to music faculty and students giving live performances, the BMC brings UM's amazing community of the mind to the air. UM students report on Montana news and file stories online as well as produce music programs, live

broadcasts and assist with fundraising and marketing. The BMC showcases the talent of UM and fosters the next generation of journalists.

MTPR and MTPBS showcase diverse perspectives by broadcasting and frequently producing content for *National Native News*, *Indigenous Expressions* and *POV*. The stories of differently-abled children are featured on the *Kids Like You and Me* series on the locally-produced and longest-running children's radio program in the country, *The Pea Green Boat*, helping foster empathy, compassion and acceptance through personal stories.

MTPR and MTPBS producers are leaders in their fields and have won numerous awards for their work from the Montana Broadcasters Association, Greater Montana Foundation and regional Emmy Awards. Listeners and viewers expect well rounded, engaging content delivered by UM's trusted public media services; and MTPR and MTPBS deliver every day.

Criteria 1. - Bullet 2.: MTPR and MTPBS are the only public broadcasting services in western Montana and statewide respectively. Listeners and viewers expect high-quality, local stories and programs in addition to broader perspective from national and international offerings. NPR, PBS and locally produced programs have real costs that are expensive. Any reduction of resources would have a major negative impact on viewers and listeners. Currently, 17% of MTPR's budget and about 32% of MTPBS-Missoula's budget comes from University funds.

Reductions of UM resources would force cuts to purchased programs or local producers. Cutting programs would decrease the options for educational and enriching content, and cutting positions for local producers would severely hinder the ability to share important Montana stories and news. Remaining relevant in Montana requires high quality local productions. With fewer producers, stations will have less content about and for Montanans. Montana content is a known motivator for listeners and viewers to support the stations financially. Eliminating engineering positions would threaten the technical delivery of services. If fundraising staff is cut, the expertise to maximize individual giving and corporate support opportunities are lost.

The BMC has dealt with base budget cuts for the past five years and worked hard to increase funds from listeners and viewers and maximize efficiencies in our operations. If additional cuts are to come, Montanans of all ages who rely on this high quality free public service will be affected negatively by potentially losing access to BMC's hallmark educational, entertaining and informative programming.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 1.: MTPR and MTPBS engage with faculty, students, staff and alumni; the BMC expects that demand to continue to grow.

UM students train with professionals in the MTPR newsroom, audio production department and with MTPBS producers. Recently more students have been hired and their work showcased on local and national broadcasts.

Music School students, faculty and guests perform live on-air in MTPR studios. Theatre and dance performances are highlighted on the weekly *Front Row Center* program. MTPR has worked with theatre students and faculty on radio plays that have been popular with listeners. *The Write Question*, the weekly show about western literature, profiles writers from campus and around the West and consults with the Creative Writing program.

UM professors are featured as political analysts during election and legislative coverage. Professors from many other UM departments provide analysis on issues in the news. Many UM staff members volunteer at the station.

MTPR and MTPBS host outreach events both on and off campus such as a community conversation with Professor Anya Jabour on her work as a historical adviser to the PBS program *Mercy Street* hosted by MTPBS.

The BMC proudly states on-air that MTPR and MTPBS are services of the University of Montana. UM is the bedrock upon which these beloved public media services have grown. UM reaps broad goodwill by being known as the home of this educational and informative content, available to all Montanans regardless of their age, income or proximity to a UM campus.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 2.: MTPR and MTPBS have grown into regional and statewide networks at the behest of and with the partnership of the audience and UM. The demand for public broadcasting has never been higher in Montana. Listeners and viewers are increasingly turning to these trusted sources for news and educational content. Financial contributions to the services have increased as a result of this demand.

MTPR is rated No. 1 overall in the Missoula/Bitterroot market that includes 27 radio stations (source: Eastlan Ratings). From the Fall 2015 to Spring 2017 ratings periods, MTPR's total audience share grew by 10.5%. MTPR pulls a phenomenal 27% share for morning news (the next highest station ranks 8.5%). MTPR fundraising for FY17 totaled \$1,584,686, up from \$1,189,261 in FY14—an increase of 25%.

MTPR's website mtp.org has grown to over two million page views in the past year--up 100% over the prior year. The number of web users topped 600,000, up 105% year over year. On-demand users increased 17.4%. More than 10,000 listeners subscribe to MTPR's weekly e-Newsletter and follow MTPR on Facebook—better than other stations this size.

In FY17, MTPBS viewers donated \$1,813,708 up from \$1,290,895 in FY14, which is a 29% increase. MTPBS ratings continue to hold steady with national averages and spike during MontanaPBS productions.

The impact of this public service outreach program of UM is vitally important to Montana's rural communities that receive their only free, over-the-air access to public broadcasting through MTPR and MTPBS.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 1.: MTPR and MTPBS producers create award-winning local programs and quality news content that are aired by national outlets and stations while winning state, regional and national awards.

In 2017, NPR selected three MTPR news staffers for competitive national training programs. Nicky Ouellet was one of six reporters to be selected out of 110 national applicants for *Next Generation Radio* training. Corin Cates-Carney received a fellowship in New York about reporting on state and local fiscal issues. Rachel Cramer was selected for a reporting fellowship with the *GroundTruth* Project.

NPR frequently solicits stories from MTPR news staffers and students for national broadcasts. In the last year, MTPR pieces on politics, wildfires, environmental and healthcare issues have been broadcast nationwide, sharing Montana perspectives and issues with the country.

MTPR received the non-commercial radio program of the year award for the past four years honoring Bakken news coverage, the music program *Musician's Spotlight* and the in-depth environmental series *Threshold*. The radio website mtp.org received the MBA best website award in 2017.

In the last five years, MTPBS programs have been nominated for MBA/GMF awards and regional Emmy Awards. A number of MTPBS productions including *Concussion: Answers in the Blood* featuring UM faculty research have been distributed nationally.

Quality MTPR and MTPBS local programs and national offerings continue to educate, entertain and keep Montanans safe and informed, meeting critical needs for the state's population. Listeners and viewers demand the highest quality programming and financially support award-winning broadcasts to ensure future quality programs.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 2.: The expertise of BMC's professional broadcast staff benefits many campus departments. BMC staff members including Sally Mauk, John Twiggs and Ray Ekness engage with students by teaching journalism, radio, television production and documentary classes at the School of Journalism. *The Write Question* hosts Cherie Newman and Sarah Aronson frequently visit creative writing classes.

BMC engineers work with the Journalism School and consult regularly on technical issues in Don Anderson Hall. Joe Brown repairs their equipment and facilities. BMC technical director Saxon Holbrook helped connect Don Anderson Hall to the MTPR and MTPBS studios to better utilize facilities across campus.

Anne Hosler participates on panels for the UM Student Alumni Association. MTPBS producer Anna Rau was selected as part of a *PBS Newshour* grant to work with Sentinel High School and their broadcast journalism class. She meets weekly with the students and their teacher to coordinate coverage for the *Newshour* website. BMC staff accountant Sue Ginn improves her fiscal skills by attending workshops and trainings several times per year. MTPR development director Linda Talbott received certification in major giving in the past year. The BMC staff has participated in a variety of public media national conferences.

The BMC hosts UM Staff Ambassadors each year teaching them about public broadcasting on campus and in Montana as well as giving them a tour of BMC facilities. BMC staffers engage with students and the campus community at journalism job fairs, student employment fairs, Welcome Feast, volunteer fairs and other UM events.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 3.: MTPR and MTPBS are a reliable source for award-winning, local, in-depth and well-researched investigative programs and news coverage. The stations meet the highest standards of journalism with trustworthy, balanced and inclusive coverage.

MTPR news coverage has received state, regional and national journalism awards from the Montana Broadcasters Association and the Edward R. Murrow Awards from the Radio Television Digital News Association. Both MTPR's website and the *Threshold* podcast won a 2017 MBA "E.B. Craney Best Award." *Musician's Spotlight* won MBA awards in 2015 and 2016.

MTPR produces creative and enlightening programs like *The Write Question* featuring conversations with western authors, and *Musician's Spotlight* highlighting outstanding local and national musical talent. The *Pea Green Boat* entertains and educates children of all ages and the podcast/program *Threshold* took an in-depth look at bison in the West. *Threshold* has been the most popular online offering with more than 60,000 downloads and growing.

MTPBS creates many award-winning programs including the travelogue series *Backroads of Montana, For This and Future Generations* telling the story of Montana's constitutional convention and a historic look at Butte's favorite amusement park in *Remembering the Columbia Gardens*.

MTPBS also produces investigate documentaries that looked into the science of medical marijuana, investigated electricity deregulation in Montana, and showed how state tax dollars are spent.

Glacier Park's Night of the Grizzlies, a documentary on the 1967 bear-mauling deaths, produced the highest ratings ever for any MontanaPBS documentary and was one of many programs distributed nationally through PBS.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 4.: Education is a core value of MTPR and MTPBS. Training and mentoring the next generation of professional broadcasters offers educational opportunities for UM students and enriches the service for viewers and listeners.

KUFM Radio was originally a student training station until the mid-1980s when the Broadcast Media Center was created; but the training continues. Over the past 30 years, BMC staff members have taught courses in the School of Journalism.

The news department regularly trains UM interns to write, report, anchor newscasts and post to the MTPR website. Their work has been featured nationally on NPR news programs. Students experience the real-world workings of a newsroom and gain a head start in their professional careers.

Interns also work with television producers for programs such as *Backroads of Montana* and documentaries like *Barns in Montana* and *C.M. Russell and the American West*. Students capture video and interviews during election coverage, act as fact checkers during candidate debates and produce local short features that air on MTPBS.

MTPBS uses journalism faculty as producers for debates and election coverage and members of UM's history and political science departments as analysts. MTPR's development department trains students from all campus departments in marketing, fundraising, on-air production and event management.

MTPR and MTPBS air many student-produced programs including *MontanaPBS Newsbrief*, *Business: Made in Montana* and the annual student documentary. The BMC is proud to be an outlet for this award-winning UM student work that provides vital experience for students as they embark on their careers post graduation.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 1.: MTPR revenue comes from a variety of sources including state direct, state indirect, federal grants, individual donors, non-federal grants, capital grants/gifts and others. Expenses include programs, delivery, management, staff, fundraising and depreciation.

MTPR revenue for FY13 was \$2,842,055 with expenses of \$2,530,158 and a net gain contingency of \$311,897.

FY14 revenue for MTPR totaled \$2,211,606 against expenses of \$2,297,750 for a net loss of \$86,144.

FY15 revenue for MTPR was \$2,408,317 with expenses of \$2,412,903 and a net loss of \$4,586.

MTPR revenue for FY16 was \$2,606,374 against expenses of \$2,360,208 for a net gain contingency of \$246,166.

FY17 numbers have not been officially audited. MTPR set an all-time high for combined members and sponsors.

The largest part of KUFM-TV/MTPBS revenue comes from the agreement with KUSM-TV Bozeman and the Friends of MontanaPBS. KUFM-TV receives approximately 20% of funds raised. Expenses include personnel costs and capital expenses for program production.

In FY13, MTPBS revenue was \$231,128 with expenses of \$253,288 for a net loss of \$22,160.

MTPBS revenue in FY14 was \$208,094 against expenses of \$144,802 for a net gain contingency of \$63,292.

In FY15, MTPBS revenue totaled \$241,441 with expenses of \$179,931 for a net gain contingency of \$61,610.

In FY16, MTPBS revenue was \$270,703 against expenses of \$219,444 for a net gain contingency of \$51,258.

MTPBS revenue in FY17 totaled \$292,898 with expenses of \$339,782 for a net loss of \$46,883.

BMC General Fund expenses include personnel costs for administration, radio and television as well as operational funds which have been reduced for years and zeroed out last year.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 2.: From FY14 through FY17, the BMC received cuts to the BMC base state appropriation. A receptionist (0.75 FTE) was eliminated in FY14. Also in FY14, the operations budget of \$23,909 was cut.

A portion of MTPR's fundraising director was eliminated from UM funds in FY15. The 0.42 FTE portion of the salary (\$33,380) was moved to a listener support account.

The same thing happened with a TV producer in FY16 as 0.71 FTE of the salary (\$41,777) was moved to alternative funds. The remaining operations budget of \$5,000 was eliminated in FY 16.

The biggest cuts came in FY17 with the elimination of one FTE and an overall 2.5% budget cut totaling \$76,593. That year, the BMC has also had to fund a retirement payout of \$52,000.

For FY18, the MTPBS operations director line of \$51,697 was eliminated. The BMC operations budget was re-established for FY18 at only \$10,000.

From FY14-FY17 the BMC has absorbed more than \$300,000 in cuts from UM cash appropriations. Some staff resources have been shifted to generate more fundraising revenue from listeners and viewers to meet basic operations. There are down-the-chain impacts to our customer service capability, to marketing efforts and to general daily operation of the stations. The move of personnel costs to viewer and listener gift revenue has also slowed growth in new technology, infrastructure upgrades and innovation in programs and program delivery. Any additional cuts could radically change the on-air offerings, which would then diminish revenue growth from viewer and listener support.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 3.: Collaboration with campus units strengthens BMC productions by involving experts in their fields in many programs. MTPBS' *Concussion: Answers in the Blood*, highlighted work being done by UM researchers and aired here and around the country in 2015-16.

MTPBS airs student productions including *Business: Made in Montana* and the annual student documentary. Journalism students work as production assistants for MTPBS election coverage, documentaries and on-air fundraising.

Student journalists report, write, anchor and post Montana news to the MTPR website during *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*.

MTPR presents UM School of Music faculty and students performances on *Live From Studio B*. Other campus music and arts events are highlighted on the weekly broadcast *Front Row Center* and the twice-weekly *Performing Arts Calendar*.

The Write Question host Sarah Aronson consults with writing faculty and graduate students about new books and authors.

News programs *Capitol Talk* and *Campaign Beat* feature UM political science Professor Rob Saldin along with journalists Chuck Johnson and Sally Mauk in discussion of the week in politics during election and legislative seasons. BMC hosts political science students from UM's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha during candidate debates on MTPR and MTPBS.

The BMC has a lean staff that provides exemplary local program content at a much higher rate than most other rural public media services. MTPR staff create about 50% of the stations programs every week. MTPBS has a strong and growing repertoire of Montana content, and increases its local relevance by partnering with Montana-focused independent producers.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 4.: The BMC is an example of a very successful partnership between UM and station members. Viewers and listeners match and exceed the university appropriation to invest in news, information, education, culture, arts, music, humanities and more. They call-in during TV and radio pledge drives and contribute to the success of great Montana-made programs and for the continuation of outstanding national programs. Corporate sponsors make donations for on-air underwriting announcements that show their support of public media.

MTPR listeners and corporate members make up 72% of the total operating budget. Cash and in-kind contributions from UM total 17% and a federal Corporation for Public Broadcasting grant makes up the final 11%.

MTPBS-Missoula viewers, corporate members and the Friends of MontanaPBS contribute 68% of the total operating budget. Contributions from the UM, MSU and CPB grants make up the remaining 32% of the budget.

The BMC receives grants from various sources for program and infrastructure costs. For example, MTPR received a matching grant for \$234,000 from the Murdock Charitable Trust for radio transmitter upgrades in MTPR's listening area. MTPR and MTPBS routinely received grants from the Greater Montana Foundation and Humanities Montana for costs associated with Montana-made programs such as *Backroads of Montana*, *The Write Question* and election coverage, among others.

While MTPR and MTPBS receive a majority of funding from outside sources, UM funding is the bedrock upon which these services are built, and the solid platform from which we leverage external funding.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 1.: The BMC aligns with UM's Strategic Vision in the areas of innovation and creativity, openness, impact and partnerships.

MTPR and MTPBS produce programs with impact for our state that are creative, innovative and Montana-specific, that promote civic engagement, connect us to each other, spark curiosity and discovery and reflect the independent spirit of Montanans.

The BMC, from its inception, has had a commitment to provide relevant content produced for and by the citizens of our state. Most comparably sized public media services across the nation have a much lower percentage of locally produced content and function mostly as a pass through portal for national offerings.

The BMC works to expand its audience with innovative and relevant local programs, and creates broad access to this content in our vast rural state with new delivery methods such as apps, podcasts and on-demand options. MTPR streams the service online, partnered with the award-winning podcast *Threshold* and plans for new Montana-specific podcasts on entrepreneurship and research. MTPBS local content is available on demand and full national offerings are now on the new *MTPBS-Passport*, member portal.

The BMC has formed partnerships that increase our understanding of the West and our unique cultures and issues with groups on and off campus, in local communities and around the state, region and nation. For example, MTPR trades reporting efforts with sources such as the *Inside Energy* western regional collaborative, and MTPBS partners with independent video productions, such as *Indian Relay*, which showcased tribal horse racing culture in Montana.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 2.: MTPR and MTPBS are specialized, highly technical, year-round services. There are no other UM services or departments that do what the BMC does. The stations are lean operations, in both financial and staff metrics. Recent UM funding cuts have stressed the station's staffing, with upper level division heads increasingly taking on basic operational tasks.

One of the great strengths of the BMC is collaboration and partnership. In recent years MTPR spearheaded a news-sharing relationship with Yellowstone Public Radio, the public radio service from MSU-Billings that serves eastern Montana. Initially MTPR just offered our news content to the smaller YPR newsroom. As YPR has added more reporters, MTPR now serves as the lead editorial aggregator for what is developing into a strong, statewide public news service. MTPR and MTPBS also partner with the UM School of Journalism to air student and faculty reporting and feature programs.

By necessity, the BMC has the only on-campus expertise in broadcast engineering for vital radio and TV signals and specific skills in broadcast operations. When there are problems, stations need to get back on-the-air as soon as possible, at any time of the day or night, and can't wait in queue for broader campus engineering or IT resources. The BMC and the School of Journalism also share one broadcast engineer position working half time for both units which increases efficiency and reduces cost.

The BMC has always welcomed hundreds of community volunteers each year, who help produce content, support projects and operations, and assist with fundraising efforts.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 3.: MTPR and MTPBS aspire to create more varied Montana programming, re-establish fundamental and lost staff positions and meet audience expectations for direct-to-consumer content delivery.

News continues to be the core of MTPR's lineup and the source of most new listeners and donors. MTPR's audience continues to request dedicated reporters for the communities of Great Falls, Butte and Dillon. MTPR has been asked to collaborate in regional reporting efforts on specific projects such as energy or climate change but has been unable to commit resources.

The BMC functions without a chief financial officer, a marketing director, a grants officer, a major/planned giving officer, an outreach manager, a TV operations director, one or more pledge producers and a receptionist. These are fundamental positions for the majority of other public stations of

our size across the nation. Productivity, program content and fundraising would all benefit from investment in these positions.

MTPBS would like to expand Montana television programming into lifestyle and culture areas where they are currently lacking and increase its public affairs reporting capacity.

To meet community expectations in the 21st century, the BMC must invest in infrastructure such as archiving and subscription services that will give listeners and viewers the ability to use more MTPR and MTPBS content on their own schedules.

These positions, program ideas and innovative delivery methods will allow MTPR and MTPBS to grow and attract new and different audiences that will lead to increased revenues from listeners and viewers.