

Cementing Precedence Amid Volatility:  
Updating the KCPR Operations Manual

A Senior Project

presented to

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## Abstract

This paper examines and outlines the reasons needed for solidifying concrete methods in updating an operations manual for an FM radio station; in this case: KCPR. Amid a desire for increased integration with Mustang Media Group, changing media trends within the radio industry and volatility with the accuracy of guiding documents, a student at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo believed it fit to update the Operations Manual and establish further precedent in updating the operations manual. This paper addresses the steps taken to update the Operations Manual and includes specific industry research findings and commentaries from KCPR staff members on broader changes necessary and their specific application toward the updating of the Operations Manual.

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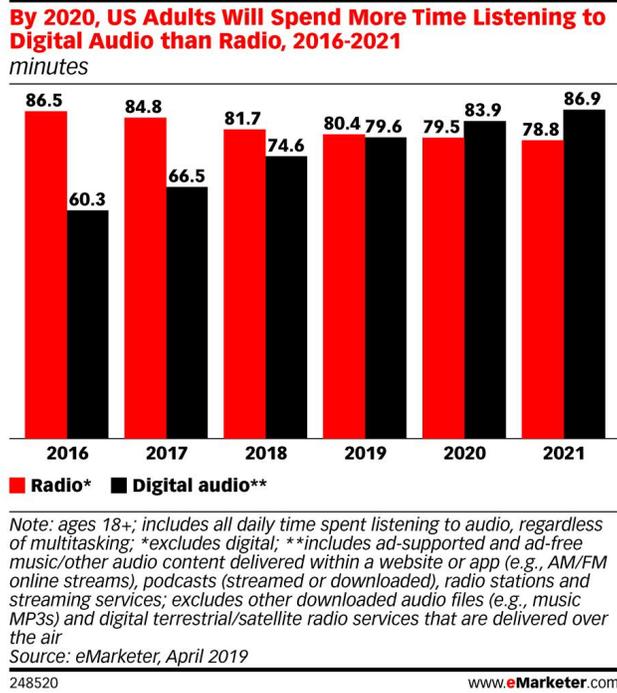


Figure 1

Mustang Media Group  
2020-21 Organizational Chart  
Revised November 11, 2020

MMG MUSTANG MEDIA GROUP

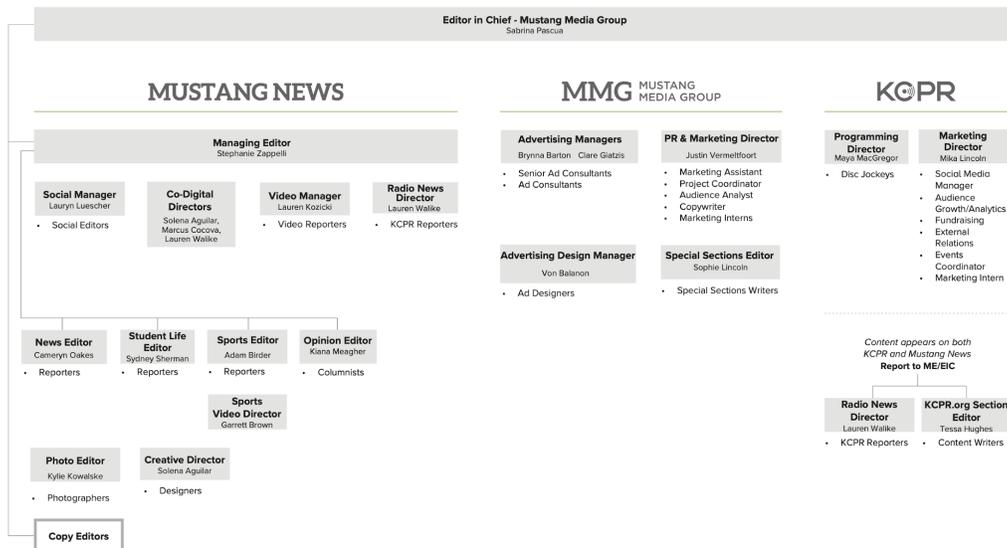


Figure 2



Zoe Arabella Boyd (She/Her/Hers)

Apr 8, 2020



The information presented in "The Infinite Dial" left me feeling optimistic about the broadly undermined future of terrestrial radio.

Although we discussed in class the tribulations that come with modern technology which would seemingly work against the classic radio, such as smart speakers, we also noted how these modern implications may work in favor of our station due to accessibility. More than 6 in 10 households have access to this voice-assisted technology, and nearly 1/3 of all smart speaker owners own 3 or more devices, a hopeful statistic in terms of expanding the potential market for listeners.

The integration of new technology is pushing the perspective of radio, yet KCPR should note that the power of classic, tried-and-true terrestrial radio should not be overlooked.

According to the report, in-car radio holds the most potential growth when compared to smartphone, tablet, and smartwatch. Most cars, no matter how old or new, enable users to connect to the terrestrial signal and engage with AM/FM programming. As of 2020, most households still have access to 1 to 3 radios.

I believe the impact of changing times and technology teeters a line of opportunity, not necessarily good or bad. I think we have to be conscious that things are changing and adapt accordingly — such as utilizing social media in an engaging way — still emphasizing the unique personality of FM college radio.

I enjoyed the announcement we had last quarter regarding how you could stream us on iHeartRadio, and we should consider finding a way to note that you can also stream us on your smart speakers.

Edited by Zoe Arabella Boyd on Apr 8, 2020 at 5:42pm

*Figure 3*

## Chapter One

### *Introduction*

#### **Statement of the Problem**

For aspiring broadcasters at this university — whether they be news reporters or disc jockeys — KCPR is where many find their first foray into radio broadcasting. The radio station has established itself institution among the Central Coast’s media landscape for producing and harboring talents across the music industry and greater media altogether: ABC News journalist David Kerley, Red Light Management chief financial officer and executive vice president Bruce Flohr, and Grammy-winner “Weird Al” Yankovic all count themselves among successful industry professionals whose roots are found in KCPR. To begin broadcasting, however, all KCPR staff members must read the Operations Manual, which offers a set of rules and regulations and guides the station’s broadcasters in their on-air and off-air performances.

While the Operations Manual counts itself as a “living document”<sup>1</sup> and indicates it may change from when a student joins the station to when a student leaves the station, a major problem that comes with this document being “alive” involves frequent rogue updates to the Operations Manual by other senior staff members. As a former KCPR staff member in both the news and music programming sections, I understand that there will be changes to the Operations Manual, but these rogue changes are done without the Journalism Department’s explicit consent, making continuity between official revisions difficult to track. This senior project, paired with the updated Operations Manual itself, aims to provide a rigid precedent on updating KCPR’s operating guidelines. In addition, this senior project will examine the reasons needed for

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<sup>1</sup> “Outro,” Chapter Eleven, *KCPR Operations Manual* (June 2021), 43, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-SDtDAd9e-DH23QsTTrZr8Ng6ID77qYS5-dPmlHymYc/>.

updating said guidelines, which will in turn provide greater direction to future KCPR staff members who seek to update the Operations Manual in the future.

### **Background of the Problem**

Updating the KCPR Operations Manual as part of my senior project was done to further align the station to the Cal Poly Journalism Department's desired integration goals for KCPR with the rest of Mustang Media Group, reestablishing the official procedures needed to update the Operations Manual, and reflecting changing radio consumption habits as accurately as possible. Many updates to the Operations Manual have often been made unofficially and without the express written approval of the journalism department. This has created extensive issues among station members and faculty when referring to the Operations Manual, as it creates confusion on what the most recently updated version of the form is, which leads to the Operations Manual lacking continuity among the immediate station community — student staff, faculty advisers and the greater Journalism Department.

Unauthorized updates to the KCPR Operations Manual can result in confusion among student staff members, who may not know what the correct procedure is for certain courses of action that may arise during their time at the station. Conflicting accounts of station guidelines prevents cohesion within KCPR, leading to potential conflict between the station, Mustang Media Group, and the greater Journalism Department.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Continuity is key toward providing a more stable Operations Manual. The purpose of updating the Operations Manual with proven research and analysis is meant to establish threads between the past, present and future members of this station. By offering industry research, alongside faculty and staff opinions on best practices for radio, modernizing the Operations

Manual can guide KCPR and all associated entities into following best practices for a changing media landscape. In addition, the updated Operations Manual will get KCPR closer to the further integration sought by the Journalism Department with Mustang Media Group and its business and editorial (Mustang News) divisions. Finally, this study and its associated by-product intends to serve as a guide to students within KCPR who wish to update the Operations Manual by offering considerations and potential factors to account for when producing further revisions for the station guidelines. After all, the Operations Manual is a “living document.”

### **Setting for the Study**

This project was completed in two parts: updating the Operations Manual and writing this study documenting how the Operations Manual got updated. This study was written alongside the updating process and completed in the aftermath of revising the Operations Manual. The updating of the Operations Manual itself was completed by me with suggestion, commentary and critique of updates by Patti Piburn and Thomas Morales, who serve as KCPR’s Faculty Adviser and Chief Operator, respectively. The updating process, which comprises the majority of the project, was conducted throughout the 2020–21 academic school year, predominantly during the Fall 2020 term. While updating the Operations Manual, consideration was given toward desired structural changes proposed by the Journalism Department to the station, industry research that will be highlighted throughout this document, previously documented staff input, and personal conversations held with the Faculty Adviser throughout the timeline of the Operations Manual’s updating. In addition, consideration was raised by both the Faculty Adviser and Chief Operator toward the changing zeitgeist and how to apply that with a revised manual.

## **Research Questions**

These research questions were created to offer guidance toward this study and its by-product (the Operations Manual) in resolving the conflicts presented in the Statement of the Problem and Background of the Problem:

1. How does KCPR update its Operations Manual to reflect the Journalism Department's desired changes?
2. Amid changing listening habits within the music industry, what needs to be considered in the Operations Manual to help KCPR maintain relevance in this time?
3. How can the Operations Manual, and this study, solidify procedures for students who wish to revise station guidelines?
4. What other factors, beyond those outlined above, should be accounted for in a revised Operations Manual?

## **Definition of Terms**

These terms are defined with the purpose of contextualizing key themes throughout this study to help guide the reader in garnering a greater understanding of the subject matters found in this paper:

Operations Manual: KCPR's official guidelines and rulebook on station policy and procedures, which every staff member must adhere to during their time in the station.

integration: Increasing cohesion between an entity within an organization. In this study's case, this refers to efforts to bring KCPR further into the greater Mustang Media Group fold.

continuity: The preceding and continuing iterations of the Operations Manual, along with the associated process of documenting lineage between aforementioned iterations and precedence for updating a document.

industry trends: Data-backed research that offers guidance on what the radio broadcasting industry is collectively doing during a given period of time.

staff members/staff: The student members (disc jockeys, news reporters) that are part of KCPR.

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter One included the problems underlying this project, the purpose of the project and its resulting study, questions that seek to be answered and key terms being defined. Chapter Two will focus on reviewing any existing literature concerning several topics: the process of updating the KCPR Operations Manual, radio trends, and a desire for further integration with Mustang Media Group. In Chapter Three will explain the methodology that was used to update the Operations Manual. In Chapter Four, this study will contextualize some of the major changes that have been implemented in the new Operations Manual. Finally, Chapter Five will offer conclusions to this study and further recommendations for any future updates.

## Chapter Two

### *Literature Review*

This literature review outlines the factors that deem it necessary to update the Operations Manual in order to provide continuity for KCPR.

#### **Continuity within the Operations Manual**

Exploring the Cal Poly Digital Commons, which documents senior projects dating back to 2009, resulted in little, if any literature from students that concerns a guided process to update the KCPR Operations Manual. General continuity for updating the Operations Manual is established in the Operations Manual's text, which states that any attempts to update the manual must be approved by the Journalism Department's Media Board.<sup>2</sup> Any relevant literature on student-led updates for the Operations Manual would only be deemed relevant from 2015 onward<sup>3</sup>, when then-business administration senior Parker Glenn assisted Faculty Adviser Patti Piburn and former KCPR Airstaff Instructor David Riveness in writing the base for today's Operations Manual. This revision came about a greater effort for station restructuring, following inappropriate comments made by KCPR on-air personalities in May 2014. These comments resulted in Dean Epperson, the College of Liberal Arts Dean at that time, to publicly indicate interest in selling the station's license.<sup>4</sup> While this piece does not indicate any concrete process for staff to update the Operations Manual, it does establish continuity in a student-updated, and student-created, Operations Manual. Other than a Google Doc by a former KCPR Program Director indicating the implementation of the Glenn-written Operations Manual,<sup>5</sup> there was no

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<sup>2</sup> The Journalism Department Media Board, or Media Board, is composed of the Cal Poly Journalism Department's full-time faculty and staff members. They oversee all of the student-run media organizations, which includes KCPR.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Warren, Mary Glick, and David Riveness, "The Evolution of KCPR: Recommendations Established by the Core Committee Aimed at Meeting the Academic Mission of Cal Poly" (March 13, 2015), 7, [https://nanopdf.com/download/recommendations-10\\_pdf](https://nanopdf.com/download/recommendations-10_pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Warren, Glick, and Riveness, "The Evolution of KCPR," 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Ella Worley, "Timeline of KCPR" (April 19, 2018), 7, [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qDnHtEL\\_D1cHi69kwFeKywUxqRP2xZr289t2vT71K1g/](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qDnHtEL_D1cHi69kwFeKywUxqRP2xZr289t2vT71K1g/).

digital footprint of any proposed or subsequent updates by KCPR staff members. The lack of continuity brings an important need to create a starting guide for future staff to update the rules for an ever-changing station.

### **Music Consumption and Industry Trends**

General trends concerning consumption of terrestrial radio indicate a steady presence of listeners. In 2018, 89 percent of those aged 12-and-up said they listened to terrestrial radio in the past week when they were surveyed.<sup>6</sup> Despite the continued prevalence radio has among the general population, literature on listening trends indicate a substantial decrease in radio listenership among those who fall in Generation Z age range,<sup>7</sup> which comprises a sizable portion of KCPR’s target demographic of college-aged listeners. These listening trends, published in 2017, highlight a 50 percentage point decrease between 2005 and 2016.<sup>8</sup> Such literature indicating declining listenership among KCPR’s target demographic would render it a necessity to reevaluate the practices dictated by station guidelines and account for listener and industry trends. In addition, the COVID–19 pandemic has likely accelerated increasing reliance on streaming services projected; in 2019, listeners were projected to consume more music on streaming services than through the radio by 2020 and 2021.<sup>9</sup>

While terrestrial radio consumption among Generation Z-aged listeners has declined over the last several years, online radio consumption has maintained steady in its listenership, even seeing some slight increases among the general population — 2019 findings found 60 percent of

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<sup>6</sup> Pew Research Center, “Audio and Podcasting Fact Sheet,” (July 9, 2019), <https://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/audio-and-podcasting/>.

<sup>7</sup> While Generation Z cutoffs vary between public research organizations, the Pew Research Center classifies someone as being in Generation Z if they were born between 1997 and 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Larry S. Miller, “Paradigm Shift: Why Radio Must Adapt to the Rise of Digital,” *Musonomics* (August 30, 2017), 10, [http://musonomics.com/musonomics\\_report\\_paradigm\\_shift\\_why\\_radio\\_must\\_adapt\\_to\\_the\\_rise\\_of\\_digital\\_08.29.2017.pdf](http://musonomics.com/musonomics_report_paradigm_shift_why_radio_must_adapt_to_the_rise_of_digital_08.29.2017.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Figure 1.

people surveyed to have consumed online radio in the last week, up 10 percentage points from 2016.<sup>10</sup> During the COVID–19 pandemic, Spotify usage in Sweden found an increase of nearly 20 percentage points of independent artists<sup>11</sup> in the country’s Top 50 chart between 2019 and 2020.<sup>12</sup> Diego Farias, CEO of music distribution company Amuse, says that “[w]hatever role radio has played in the past, the real impact [in terms of music promotion] right now is coming on social media — something completely owned by the artist.”<sup>13</sup> These conflicting statistics — steady listenership among the general population versus striking declines in radio consumption among KCPR’s core demographic versus increases in online radio consumption — require a nuanced approach to best incorporating new industry trends into the KCPR Operations Manual while still retaining the station’s core objectives as a radio station.

### **Mustang Media Group Integration**

In the Spring 2020 term, the Media Board announced further plans to restructure KCPR with the overall objective of further integrating the station with Mustang Media Group. The initial change came with the station’s 2015 restructuring, which included a rewritten Operations Manual. The 2015 changes were done “with the assumption that subsequent phases would be needed as we instituted changes,”<sup>14</sup> and the 2020 changes were considered by the Media Board to “strengthen the station’s operations.”<sup>15</sup> As a result of these changes, the proposed KCPR student leadership for 2020–2021 — myself, then-journalism junior Lauren Walike, then-journalism senior Maya MacGregor, and then-business administration junior Natalie Becker — proposed

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<sup>10</sup> Pew, “Audio and Podcasting Fact Sheet.”

<sup>11</sup> “Independent artists,” as defined by Tim Ingham in footnote No. 11, are “those both owning their own rights and using a self-releasing platform.”

<sup>12</sup> Tim Ingham, “Indie Artists Have More Power Than Ever in Sweden. Could Covid-19 Lockdown Take the Trend Global?,” *Rolling Stone* (May 20, 2020), <https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/features/indie-artists-covid-19-market-share-986695/>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Journalism Department Media Board, “FAQs for KCPR Restructuring 2020,” (Spring 2020), 1, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OZLPWrwqhAANTIK\\_yvYvLC3R1Esreua4/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OZLPWrwqhAANTIK_yvYvLC3R1Esreua4/view?usp=sharing).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

structural changes to the station's operations. Changes put forth by the proposed leadership included, but were not limited to, the General Manager position being abolished and consolidated into the remaining student leadership positions, the Program Director and Music Director positions merging, and the KCPR.org Section Editor position being paid and becoming part of KCPR student leadership.<sup>16</sup> The student leadership restructuring also warranted an update in Mustang Media Group's organizational hierarchy, which was adopted and became effective in the 2020–2021 academic year.<sup>17</sup> Among more minute proposals, these major proposals were accepted by the Media Board, thus requiring their integration into an updated KCPR Operations Manual.

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<sup>16</sup> Maya MacGregor, Lauren Walike, Natalie Becker, and Francisco Martinez, "Restructuring KCPR Proposal" (May 21, 2020), 2-6, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/111AZx29X6v84qBwxAffTvwk5sLMU91IUm3yjYII8Ro/>.

<sup>17</sup> Figure 2.

## **Chapter Three**

### *Methodology*

This chapter will briefly explain how I updated the KCPR Operations Manual through the literature consulted within the project, in addition to consultation and communication provided to me by the station's Faculty Adviser and Chief Operator.

#### **Factoring Literature into Revised Manual**

The aforementioned literature presented in Chapter Two guided my approach to updating now outdated sections of the Operations Manual, specifically those pertaining to the station's student leadership positions. These updated position descriptions and titles were crafted based on the student-led proposals put forth in the Spring 2020 term. In addition, the Media Board's desired goal of greater integration with Mustang Media Group was relayed heavily into staff descriptions and sections pertaining to the overall structural organization of KCPR. The greater incorporation of KCPR's connection to Mustang Media Group, and vice versa, furthers the wider cohesion among the station and its parent entity. In addition, with the prolonged advent of streaming services since the manual's 2015 re-publishing, it was understood that the Operations Manual needed to incorporate digital streaming services into our guidelines for being an effective disc jockey.

#### **Factoring Comments from Faculty Members**

The updated Operations Manual would not have been possible without the guidance and diligence of two faculty members: KCPR Faculty Adviser and journalism professor Patti Piburn; and KCPR Chief Operator and Journalism Department Broadcast Engineering Specialist Thomas Morales. Their constant revision of my proposed updates to the Operations Manual have assisted in my project's process. Such feedback varied in nature from both Piburn and Morales: They

offered minor typos and grammar errors,<sup>18</sup> perspectives on station issues regarding the need for substitute hosts and tightening on “evergreen” rules,<sup>19</sup> and even wider implications such as the introduction of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement in the Operations Manual.<sup>20</sup> All of these contributions from both Morales and Piburn, who will be here long after I graduate from Cal Poly, were done with the future in mind. While this greater project is meant to modernize the Operations Manual in line with current station objectives and provide guidance for future students who wish to update the manual, I believe their contributions have assisted in minimizing the work needed for the next update to take place.

### **Factoring Remarks from Staff Members**

In addition to the proposed changes by both Piburn and Morales, I looked toward previous Canvas discussion posts in the Spring 2020 Cal Poly Radio Laboratory (JOUR 320) class regarding changing industry trends. My fellow KCPR staff members offered their various insights on how KCPR, as a radio station, fits in with changing consumption habits from listeners. Many in the class echoed similar sentiments put forth by a current staff member: journalism sophomore and incoming KCPR.org Section Editor Zoe Boyd. “The integration of new technology is pushing the perspective of radio,” Boyd, a freshman at the time, writes, “yet KCPR should note that the power of classic, tried-and-true terrestrial radio should not be overlooked.”<sup>21</sup> Boyd adds that “the impact of changing times teeters a line of opportunity” in relation to incorporating new technology into a legacy media platform. This Operations Manual was written with the notion in mind that these changing times — both in what changes are being

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<sup>18</sup> Patti Piburn (KCPR faculty adviser) in discussion with the author, November 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Piburn, discussion with author, December 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Morales (KCPR chief operator) in discussion with the author December 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Figure 3: Zoe Boyd (KCPR staff member) in a message board post with JOUR 320 class, April 8, 2020.

asked of the station by the Media Board and what is changing among media consumers on a rapid basis — present a teetering line of opportunity for substantial revision.

### **Limitations**

Limitations for my methodology in updating the Operations Manual include the potential that proposed changes may not be implemented immediately. This is because some potential policy updates require further discussion among the Media Board before an appropriate decision can be made to the Operations Manual. While I was able to revise and propose updated rules that were approved by both faculty members in light of my research, a small fraction of my proposed rule changes were deemed both the Faculty Adviser and Chief Operator to meet the requirement for deliberation at a later date. These pending rule changes are out of my immediate control and prevent me from accomplishing a fully complete revision.

### **Delimitations**

Any potential hold-ups within the revised Operations Manual will be deliberated at the appropriate time by the Media Board, determining whether or not to approve or decline my proposed rule changes. By approving (or rejecting) any remaining proposed changes, the Media Board delineates my limitations, simply by doing so at a later date. This ensures a completed revision of the Operations Manual that will be adopted in time for the next cohort of KCPR disc jockeys and reporters.

## Chapter Four

### *Operations Manual Revisions*

This chapter explains some of the major changes found in the revised Operations Manual, guided by the methodology presented in Chapter Three.

#### **Increased Integration with Mustang Media Group**

Student leadership positions were greatly overhauled in the delineated changes put forth by the 2020–21 proposed KCPR leadership group and took effect during the 2020–21 academic year. The updated Operations Manual solidifies the revised student leadership positions by abolishing the General Manager position and folding the position’s duties into other student leadership positions: the Program and Music Director (PMD), Marketing Director, News Director, Social Media Manager, and KCPR.org Section Editor. These duties absorbed by other positions include, but are not limited to, being the primary liaison between Disc Jockeys and faculty members (PMD), overseeing station finances and budgeting (Marketing), and filing quarterly reports for the FCC as part of the station’s public file (News).

In addition, the Operations Manual now re-emphasizes KCPR as part of the greater Mustang Media Group fabric. This includes a statement of affiliation at the beginning of the “Station Management” section,<sup>22</sup> emphasis on KCPR student leadership also being part of Mustang Media Group leadership,<sup>23</sup> and incorporation of an organizational chart that integrates KCPR with the rest of Mustang Media Group and how the station relates to the overall media group.<sup>24</sup> By highlighting the organizational ties between KCPR and its parent group, the revised Operations Manual presents a solidified association with Mustang Media Group to staff members

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<sup>22</sup> “Station Management,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Figure 2.

and aligns Disc Jockeys and News Reporters with KCPR’s mission and Mustang Media Group’s greater mission.

### **Program Branding for Music and News**

Programming branding for music shows was also updated in the Operations Manual. This included a greater emphasis in the Operations Manual on solidifying KCPR’s music programming by creating internal descriptions for each of the station’s four “dayparts:” The Breakfast Club, The Afternoon Delight, The Comedown, and The Lounge. Each description for the respective “daypart” now incorporates what genres should be focused on during that time of day and the general mood Disc Jockeys should incorporate into their shows.<sup>25</sup> The updated Operations Manual also asks hosts to promote our ability to stream on smart speakers and tap into a growing share of consumers who get their audio content from their Amazon Alexas or Google Homes.<sup>26</sup> While studies indicate radio stations are at a unique disadvantage to streaming-only music services in the smart speaker game,<sup>27</sup> KCPR’s adoption of smart speaker technology gives the station an advantage in courting the increasing amount of listeners who use smart speakers.

Integrating our branding presence by integrating Spotify into our Disc Jockeys’ official responsibilities is another new implementation into the Operations Manual. Through Spotify crossover with any Disc Jockey’s program by uploading their weekly show as a playlist, it aims to bridge the gap between and synergize legacy media platforms with current technologies — in this case, a music streaming service with pronounced, social networking capabilities.<sup>28</sup>

Incorporating Spotify into the KCPR fold is a natural step, following a 2020 KCPR listener

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<sup>25</sup> “Dayparts,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 11.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, “Paradigm Shift,” 18-19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> “Playlisting on Spotify,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 29.

survey where many respondents called for “better Spotify playlisting” and publishing after a show’s setlist on streaming services after it airs on KCPR.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, programming descriptions for shows that fall under the News Director’s supervision were also added into the Operations Manual guidelines. These programming descriptions include shows for News programming and Talk programming, the differences between each, and what is required from them to be aired.<sup>30</sup> While the descriptions for both the News and Talk shows are less descriptive than their music counterparts, and defer to the News Director for further conversation, incorporating separate programming descriptions for each creates continuity for hosting those types of programs on KCPR.

### **Fostering Equity**

In light of social justice movements that have impacted many within the San Luis Obispo community and the rest of the world, both the Chief Operator<sup>31</sup> and Faculty Adviser<sup>32</sup> advocated for the inclusion of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement:

KCPR is proud to be the Central Coast’s alternative. To be that alternative, we’re committed to fostering a diverse station staff through outreach and inclusion. We strive to empower voices from all walks of life, especially our community’s underrepresented voices. When we build an equitable environment for all, we flourish. Radio is for everyone, so come as you are.<sup>33</sup>

By incorporating a DEI statement into the KCPR Operations Manual, we are creating a precedent for the station to stand with social justice and provide the community with a station that reflects it. Welcoming underrepresented voices to radio, and media altogether, allow us to

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<sup>29</sup> Melissa Melton, KCPR Listener Survey (2020), 19; 21, [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1F3sBImQqMr21-C\\_oQfyvC19tdZLUzQn4Gs4mA2wK2Co/](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1F3sBImQqMr21-C_oQfyvC19tdZLUzQn4Gs4mA2wK2Co/).

<sup>30</sup> “News and Talk Programming,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Morales, personal communication (December 2020).

<sup>32</sup> Piburn, personal communication (May 2021).

<sup>33</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion: Where Different Matters,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 3.

become better storytellers, broadcasters, and representatives of our community. We serve the community by incorporating members who have been systematically excluded from contributing.

In addition, the station definition of “editorializing” has been revised to be more narrow in its definition and set guidelines on what is and what is not editorializing. The updated Operations Manual now more narrowly considers providing a personal opinion on political issues or candidates to be editorializing, instead of its more extensive definition that also included voicing religious or social opinions. Updating our definition of editorializing, done with consultation from both the Faculty Adviser<sup>34</sup> and Chief Operator,<sup>35</sup> allows KCPR to make inroads in fulfilling our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement. We cannot work toward having radio for everyone while censoring underrepresented voices from saying statements like “Black lives matter” or “trans rights are human rights.”

### **Further Internal Changes**

The Operations Manual’s Governance was moved from the last page of the manual to immediately after the title page, alongside our DEI statement, to make sure our station staff is aware of how they can update the Operations Manual. While staff is expected to read the Operations Manual, burying the Operations Manual’s Governance in the back makes it more likely that it will be overlooked by KCPR members.

In light of COVID–19 pandemic, KCPR Disc Jockeys employed Zetta2Go, a remote version of the Zetta library found in Studio A and Studio B, that allows our staff to produce shows safely and remotely from home. These remote shows have demonstrated the relative ease that shows can be recorded ahead of time and from any location. Because of this, we have

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<sup>34</sup> Piburn, personal conversation (May 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Morales, personal conversation (December 2020).

elected to remove the option for Disc Jockeys to employ substitute hosts if they are unable to make their live show. According to Morales, “the concept of substitute is a holdover from when KCPR had no digital playback and no automation but had to stay on the air 24/7 with someone in the studio.”<sup>36</sup> With automation software allowing continuous broadcasting from the KCPR studios, alongside advancements in remote broadcasting capabilities, it has been viewed as an appropriate time to retire the “substitute host” concept from KCPR.

One of the more minor — yet substantial — inclusions in the revised KCPR manual is a section on pretentiousness, or rather the preferred avoidance of it. From personal experience, the station’s Disc Jockeys have harbored a reputation for coming off as snobbish music nerds who detract from the listening experience. Radio is for everyone, and pretentiousness and elitism closes the door on potential listeners within our community. Adding this small section to remind our staff to think about who they’re broadcasting to is, I hope, a small step toward a healthier station environment. In other words: “Don’t be pretentious.”<sup>37</sup> From a housekeeping standpoint, the Operations Manual includes streamlined explanations for copyright protections, station safety protocols, and Emergency Alert System tests/emergencies. Most other changes to the Operations Manual were minor; they consisted of correcting grammar, fixing typos, and standardizing typeface.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Don’t be pretentious,” *KCPR Operations Manual*, 39.

## **Chapter Five**

### *Discussions and Recommendations*

#### **Summary**

This project — updating the Operations Manual and performing this study on it — was done to bring KCPR in line with a myriad of demands from the current world: Media Board demands to facilitate greater incorporation with Mustang Media Group, creating a path for continuity between revisions, and staying in-touch with a changing media landscape. On top of these immediate issues, reflecting the Operations Manual in a changing social world was another task brought forth to think beyond KCPR and apply these initiatives toward the station.

To accomplish all these objectives and present an Operations Manual for 2021 and beyond, exploring the manual’s history and finding concrete precedence for updating the rules, adopting and considering industry trends to best fit our role as a radio station is required. To do this, we need to balance the line between the station’s terrestrial radio broadcasting roots and its modern broadcasting and streaming capabilities and allow for future updates to revise and adapt based on what is recommended by research. Beyond KCPR’s broadcasting responsibilities, KCPR, as a community institution, has to hold itself accountable in representing the community, which includes San Luis Obispo’s underrepresented voices. While including a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement, along with redefining “editorialize” to allow staff to air statements of value is just a fraction of what needs to be done by future KCPR members, it provides a launching pad for further discussions and improvement.

#### **Discussion**

Through outlining and documenting the process of updating the KCPR Operations Manual and explaining the industry research and desired changes from university officials, this

entire project and its associated works, KCPR is in good position to build off both the study and revised manual for further improvement of station management and operations by offering reasonable solutions to problems.

**Research Question No. 1: How does KCPR effectively update its Operations Manual to reflect the Journalism Department's desired changes?**

Through initial proposals and eventual approval by the Media Board, KCPR and any person associated with the station can explore and implement these changes, whether they deal with staff presentation, roles, and defining organization roles within a larger media organization. Communication between students and faculty, primarily the Chief Engineer and Faculty Adviser, is needed to reach the wanted outcomes by the latter. Achieving these outcomes, or at least making efforts to reach them, is the first step rendering the Operations Manual effective again. An effective Operations Manual brings an efficient station that is in line with the station's mission.

**Research Question No. 2: Amid changing listening habits within the music industry, what needs to be considered in the Operations Manual to help KCPR maintain relevance in this time?**

Media consumption habits are always changing. There is a greater increase in nontraditional methods of consuming audio content that require a keen eye on what needs to be updated inside the Operations Manual to account for best overall practices. When trends dictate best media practices, KCPR needs to be on the forefront of incorporating these practices into the station's ethos. When that is done, then there is greater room for expansion and exploration of what can be done within these new bounds of broadcasting and develop new ways to promote the station. With changing times teerting over potential opportunities,<sup>38</sup> it is in the station's best

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<sup>38</sup> Boyd, Figure 3.

interest to seize upon an evolving landscape and mold its own future for the benefit of all who are involved with KCPR. This ingrains a spirit of innovation in KCPR's daily operations that will better the station in the long-run.

**Research Question No. 3: How can the Operations Manual, and this study, solidify procedures for students who wish to revise station guidelines?**

This will be a resource for students who wish to improve upon any new measures that take effect in this updated Operations Manual. By providing a blueprint of what factors were considered in reviewing this document in this edition, those who wish to update it can build upon and improve on any of the outlined efforts here. This is meant to be a jumping point off what is going to be a legacy of student broadcasters who take advantage of an FM radio station and begin their careers. Knowing how to navigate the intricacies of changing a daunting rule book will enhance their understanding of broadcasting as a whole.

**Research Question No. 4: What other factors, beyond those outlined above, should be accounted for in a revised Operations Manual?**

Media organizations need to think beyond their role as a provider of information, entertainment, and news, and understand where they fall in their greater community. The last year, filled with protests across the nation advocating for social justice, shows that KCPR — in its role as a community institution — needs to make efforts to be more representative of its community in its reporting, programming, and hiring of staff members. While these efforts may be preliminary, the station's torchbearers must take action to encourage a greater presence to connect with the community KCPR serves.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

Upon completing this study and revising the Operations Manual, future staff members who wish to further update anything pertaining to KCPR's rules and regulations can have a grounded basis on what to expect and account for in this process. It is my hope that in future situations that may call for an update to the Operations Manual, this can be a greater collaborative effort between faculty, KCPR staff, and the Journalism Department. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Operations Manual is a "living document,"<sup>39</sup> and should be treated as such. I know firsthand that KCPR is an ever-changing body, with its makeup and ethos varying vastly depending on who is in the station. Democratizing the revision process among the greater station will, in my opinion, create a healthier environment for the station and unify the station in achieving the station's outlined mission.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the combined efforts of performing this study and updating the Operations Manual, there is now concrete precedence for future students to revise and look at should the document ever need an update due to changing circumstances — media consumption trends, greater social obligations, and undiscovered problems. Updating the KCPR Operations Manual was a necessity to help ensure the station's survival as it goes through a pandemic and major structural upheaval. For KCPR's staff, faculty, and listeners, the Operations Manual is meant to assist in creating a station that goes beyond broadcasting in creating community. Through research and consultation, the KCPR Operation Manual provides the foundation for the San Luis Obispo community to have a world-class broadcasting outlet with the future always in mind.

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<sup>39</sup> "Outro," *KCPR Operations Manual*, 43.

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