

TAKING ROOT: THE ROUTE OF THE BROADCAST JOURNALISM
CURRICULUM AT THE MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

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ABSTRACT

When broadcasting emerged as a new field, it ushered in a period of exploration for industry professionals as well as journalism educators. Such was the backdrop for the Missouri School of Journalism in the 1930s when journalism educators sought to incorporate broadcast journalism into the print curriculum. The proponents of the project faced a tough journey. To legitimize education for radio and then television, they needed the expertise of the industry and the approval of the university, both of which had different goals. This study examines the role that educators at Missouri assumed in persuading these two larger institutions of the creation and development of a broadcast journalism curriculum, from 1936 to 1971. Findings are evaluated using the theory of sociological institutionalism. Theoretical significance is enriched by the introduction of the parabolic model to explain how the broadcast journalism educators presented their case for the incorporation of a new medium and why their rhetoric worked.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In a media landscape fully occupied by print news, broadcasting entered as a newcomer in the 1920s. The Progressive Era of the early twentieth century had done much to imbue the values of order and advancement to many sectors of American society.¹ This was certainly the case for newspapers, which articulated its nascent role and identity in society as a profession, along with organizational norms and educational institutions to vouch for it. Thus, print journalism existed for several centuries before the establishment of a formal education program. Not so with broadcasting. It did not have the equivalent time in experimentation and development. Radio arrived, underwent transformation in the hands of radio amateur operators to the centerpiece of living room furniture, and captured the attention of families that sat around the radio to hear magic emanating from the airwaves. The motto of broadcasting could have well been “veni, vidi, vici”—except that the older medium of newspaper was watching closely over the younger and very popular medium. High expectations were in order, and in this environment, universities began to consider the inclusion of broadcasting in their curricula. But what challenges did broadcast journalism educators encounter in persuading universities to create a curriculum in broadcast journalism? Most of the available literature focuses on the rise of traditional journalism education for print, but when it comes to education for broadcasting, there is dead air. This study seeks to address this blank page in the history of journalism education by uncovering the origins of

¹ David Goldberg, *Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

broadcast journalism curricula in universities. More specifically, it looks at how the early proponents of broadcast journalism at a large public university, the University of Missouri, justified reasons for creating a broadcast journalism curriculum and what reactions this evoked from the industry and the university.

Researching the origins of a phenomenon is valuable because the story of how a modern establishment came into existence can illuminate its path of development. A study on the rise of institutions is ideally informed by considering human decisions since actions of individuals over time give rise to the creation of institutions.² In this way, new actions are anchored in the performance of the past, with anticipation of future directions. Furthermore, an origin is not a fixed point in time but instead consists of many developments that culminate in a common theme and is then demarcated as an origin. It is why this study on origins traces historical developments. The research is a historical investigation on journalism education's creation of the broadcast journalism curriculum; however, elements of historical sociology are also applied because the research involves the narrative of agency (i.e., persons or groups involved) and structures (i.e., cultural milieus). Agents participate in the decision-making process, but not all weigh equally in the power relationship. In fact, people's actions are bound by influences outside their locus of control. This recurring theme fits into the theory of institutionalism, particularly the path dependence model, which indicates that the established power has an interest to maintain its influence by putting a check on the rise of subsequent developments.³ Major decisions, like most things in life, do not occur overnight; they come about through

² Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–57.

³ Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

reflecting, discussing, testing, and continual refining. Thus, it is worthwhile to research the decisions that created the broadcast journalism curriculum because a concept forms in the context of many factors. Society is complex, and multiple influences come into play simultaneously, without the option of isolating certain factors.⁴ Such a complex explanation requires a close examination of the interaction between people who are embedded in various segments of society.

Within media, it is interesting that print news had the luxury to develop over the centuries, whereas broadcasting had to accelerate its adoption and integration into existing journalistic institutions. Similar to the political history of democracies in which older democracies are intrinsically different from newer democracies due to their longer history, the difference in time trajectory between the two media is expected to affect the developmental results of the newcomer. Certainly, the structure of the journalistic profession was in place when broadcasting set foot on the media landscape. But in a rush to be operating at an already established level of expectations, broadcasters had to make decisions quickly and negotiate their way into societal and institutional acceptance. The objective of this study is to investigate the serious consideration of broadcast journalism education that began in the mid-1930s⁵ and developed over the subsequent decades. To aim toward this goal, the research is organized in the following way: First, the study examines the origins of broadcast curriculum from a macro-level perspective, especially the rise of broadcasting in context of general American history in the 1930s and 1940s.

⁴ George Steinmetz, "Critical Realism and Historical Sociology: A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no.1 (1998): 170–86.

⁵ Sydney Head and Leo Martin, "Broadcasting and Higher Education: A New Era," *Journal of Broadcasting* 1 (1956–57), 39–46.

The meso-level of analysis then involves a literature review of journalism education and broadcast journalism. Finally, the micro-level explores a specific historical example—in this case, the formation of the broadcast journalism curriculum at the Missouri School of Journalism. By revealing findings gradually, like peeling an onion layer by layer, this study suggests perspectives at each level and eventually enables a synthesis of parts to understand the whole.

At the macro-level, the study examines the emergence of broadcasting in its original context to illuminate prevalent social perceptions of the time and the historical circumstances that led to the establishment of this communication field. Cultural values of a particular time are of utmost importance in studying the rise of broadcasting because institutions are part of a culture rather than separate from it.⁶ Thus, developments unfold in relation to an era's accepted norms and practices, and human agents are bound by overarching structures of power within cultural, political, and economic forces. This understanding sheds light on what limitations broadcasters faced and why development followed a certain path instead of another. Also, the examination of general journalistic developments during this period serves to clearly identify the culture of the broadcast industry. In these ways, the macro-level is bifurcated into the general societal context and then the occupational context. However, the analysis remains broad in scope because the intention is to understand how differing perspectives in society and the journalism industry played out in the discussion on education.

More specifically at the meso-level, the study of origins is enhanced by understanding journalism education in general, which began with the print curriculum.

⁶ Hall and Taylor, "Three New Institutionalisms."

This topic has been well researched, and the literature⁷ has proliferated for nearly a century, because that is how long colleges and universities have offered journalism courses. Upon wading through relevant literature, one recurring lacuna is that the discussion usually stops where the story of the broadcasting journalism curriculum should begin. Since one purpose of this study is to explore why there was an interest in establishing broadcast journalism education, it is useful to determine possible ways to address the “why” question. For one, people can create an institution because they have visions to improve a society or a system. This process involves looking inward to assess what works and what does not at the point when the vision is formed. Another way to explain the rationale of origins is to explore the desire to create consensus and order. Thus, the study first describes elements of disorder and then identifies distinguishing features of the relevant groups, or actors, involved in the discussion. The latter aspect implies the creation of an in-group, which can lead to exclusion (usually indirect, but not always) of persons who do not neatly fit into the categorization. The group members find it necessary to identify differences from others to form a unique identity and strengthen the influence of their particular field.⁸ Also, describing a disorder or imbalance in the system has the effect of helping to avoid conflict, which is positive because most

⁷ Everett Dennis, “Journalism Education,” *Presstime* Special Report (1983), 4–5; Everett Dennis, “Whatever Happened to Marse Robert’s Dream?” *Gannett Center Journal* 2 no. 2 (1988): 2–22; Paul Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, 1960); Head and Martin, “Broadcasting and Higher Education”; Joseph Pulitzer, “The College of Journalism,” *North American Review* 178, no. 5 (1904): 641–80; Wilbur Schramm, “Education of Journalism: Vocational, General, or Professional?” *Journalism Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1947): 9–18; Leslie Smith, “Education for Broadcasting: 1929–1963,” *Journal of Broadcasting* 8, no. 4 (1964): 383–98.

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field,” in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, eds. R. Benson and E. Neveu (Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 29–47.

institutions would likely see the benefit of smoother operations. Any element that creates disorder distracts from the intended focus.

At this point, it is necessary to elucidate the meaning of “broadcast journalism,” as used in this research. Journalism education in the early twentieth century was still trying to find its place in academia, so how could universities begin to address the novelty of broadcasting? A glance at the radio program types of the era reveals how the nature of broadcasting contributed to the problem of legitimacy. From 1932 to 1934, around 60 percent of radio programming on network stations was devoted to music.⁹ When contrasting this percentage to news broadcasts, which constituted merely 1.4 percent to 1.5 percent of total airtime, it is clear that broadcasting could not be said in the same breath as journalism. Local, private stations generally lacked resources compared to network stations, so they also lacked solid news operations for radio. Since broadcasting was not primarily used for the dissemination of news in the 1930s, it was impossible to include broadcasting in a journalism curriculum. The entertainment focus of radio programs meant that radio employees only had to be familiar with contemporary culture and technical skills related to the airing of programs. Thus, whereas the term *broadcast* refers to a mode of communication in which speech or music is communicated via radio technology,¹⁰ *journalism* specifies the production of information presented as news and includes the contemporary journalistic practices associated with reporting. Additional details of the situation are described in chapter 2, but this study identifies “broadcast

⁹ Herman Hettinger, “Broadcasting in the United States,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 177 no. 1 (1935): 1–14.

¹⁰ Laurens Whittemore, “The Development of Radio,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 142 (1929): 1–7.

journalism curriculum” as university instruction with an aim toward teaching students to practice broadcast journalism by using relevant technologies.

The micro-level analysis regarding broadcast journalism curriculum delves into the details of the Missouri School of Journalism’s actions. Whereas the two other analysis levels are directly supported by numerous perspectives from the literature, this narrower phase of research must be informed mainly by primary sources. The nature of the Missouri School of Journalism is interesting because it was established as the world’s first free-standing journalism school. While the profession of journalism began crystallizing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, many universities offered courses in journalism, but nothing was formally organized into an official school until Missouri did so in 1908.¹¹ Subsequent journalism programs established at other universities tended to be under the administration of a school of arts and sciences.¹² This structure does not offer leverage to the journalism program because the program is dependent on the decisions of an administration that may or may not be favorable to journalism education. Because the Missouri School of Journalism was a free-standing school, its relative autonomy implies the greatest possible level of influence in curricular direction. This situation allowed for broadcast journalism to be created as a sequence and eventually a department. Such a study provides a detailed examination of the process involved for broadcast journalism to be accepted, first from classes to a sequence and then from a sequence to a department.

¹¹ Betty Winfield, “Emerging Professionalism and Modernity,” in *Journalism 1908* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 1–16.

¹² Dennis, “Journalism Education.”

One of the main contentions of journalism education has been between how much the program of study should be theoretical and how much it should be practical.¹³ In this regard, the Missouri School of Journalism provides yet another interesting case, because the “Missouri Method” of education ostensibly combines practice and theory. This strategy falls into the middle-of-the-road approach rather than an extreme, and thus the model can offer applications to other institutions seeking to establish or revamp a journalism program.

In sum, there is intrinsic merit in studying the rise of broadcast journalism education because the origins reveal a more comprehensive understanding of the medium and its placement in a historical time frame. Thus, the research not only adds to knowledge about the development of media and the interaction of various interest groups but also offers up potential applications in the modern media landscape. The organization of research in the aforementioned ways will address the purpose of research and further refine the research question. The following chapter presents the necessary background information to explore how broadcast journalism educators staked a claim to their rightful place in university curricula.

¹³ James G. Stovall, “The Practitioners,” in *Makers of the Media Mind*, ed. William D. Sloan (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

It was a splash that could be heard over the radio airwaves. In the early 1920s, broadcasting arrived on a new communication territory teeming with opportunity and separated technologically from the Old World of print. But the link was not severed yet, as the old medium of print hovered over the new medium of broadcasting taking its first steps. At first, broadcasting acquiesced to the dependent relationship but began balking when restrictions mounted against its development.¹⁴ Now fast-forward several decades to the 1960s and 1970s. The number of TV sets in each household steadily climbed, accounting for around 90 percent of the U.S. population in the 1960s.¹⁵ As the number and type of programs proliferated, the audience's total viewing time increased, and there arose an outcry from various groups regarding the negative effects of television on society. In this era known for demonstrations and questioning of traditional ways of life, research programs began to study media effects. Meanwhile, demand for broadcast instruction grew, resulting in the creation of broadcasting sequences and departments in universities.¹⁶

At the Missouri School of Journalism, where the first broadcast classes were offered in 1936 and the broadcast department was established in 1971, the movement had

¹⁴ Theodore Streibert and Fulton Lewis, Jr., "Radio as a News Medium," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 213, no. 1 (1941): 54–61.

¹⁵ TVhistory (n.d.). *Number of TV Households in America*. Retrieved April 19, 2011, from http://www.tvhistory.tv/Annual_TV_Households_50-78.JPG

¹⁶ Robert Blanchard and William Christ, *Media Education and the Liberal Arts: A Blueprint for the New Professionalism* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993).

come full circle: from broadcasting having close ties with print, to consciously making efforts toward separation, and then eventually seeking to bridge the divide and return to cohesion. This was the situation of broadcasting education in the 1970s. But from 1936 to 1971—a span of more than 30 years—what discussions took place? What took so long for a formal program to appear? Before tracing this journey through the use of primary documents, it is helpful to understand the context at the beginning: at the juncture of the rise of journalistic professionalization and the rise of journalism education.

In the era of mass dailies in the late 1800s, the plight of journalists resembled the shelf life of newspapers: used and tossed quickly aside. Editors held a disproportionate amount of power over reporters and could fire them on a whim. These “cruel,” “ruthless,” and “slave driver” editors induced much occupational stress among their workers, and this was only exacerbated by journalists themselves whose lives revolved around smoking, drinking, and other nightlife activities.¹⁷ The majority of news workers faced precarious occupational circumstances: “Many of journalism’s beginners failed because they had no training. When given an assignment, they were expected to know what to do and were fired if they failed.”¹⁸ So one of the values of journalism education would be to empower workers with knowledge so they could save themselves from the ferocity of their workplaces. The move toward educating news workers represented the effort to professionalize the news industry. For journalism leaders such as Joseph Pulitzer, education seemed to be the only way to solve the problem of training newbies: “Nobody in a newspaper office has the time or the inclination to teach a raw reporter the things he

¹⁷ Fred Fedler, *Lessons from the Past: Journalists’ Lives and Work, 1850–1950* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 2000).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

ought to know before taking up even the humblest work of the journalist.”¹⁹ He saw education as an antidote to the sorry state of journalism.

But not everyone viewed university education as the best way to train journalists. One such naysayer was George W. Ochs, publisher of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, who claimed that a high degree of specialization would be detrimental to a career in journalism:

Experience has proved that men of the highest specialized education are unfitted for the diversified duties of the editor....The reader will inquire wherein the journalist differs from the scholar. The difference is radical. The editor must be a scholar, but the scholar may not be an editor.²⁰

The initial resistance toward affiliation with the ivory towers was because of the nature of academia: that it elaborates on ideas whereas journalism values succinctness. A sense of pride was a factor, too, because newspaper editors said that “newsgatherers, like poets, are special dispensations of heaven.”²¹ In other words, journalists—at least those who had jobs—considered themselves a special group of people, and in turn, membership was limited. Their purpose of defense would be to fend off any encroachments to their industry by people who think that journalism should be more organized or professionalized. However, this did not dispel society’s low regard of journalists’ characteristics and work habits, and the prevailing mission to “domesticate the unruly class” won out when journalism education became a reality at the turn of twentieth-

¹⁹ Pulitzer, “The College of Journalism,” 647.

²⁰ George W. Ochs, “Journalism,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 28 (1906): 52–3.

²¹ Eugene Camp, *Journalists: Born or Made?* Paper presented at University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School, 27 March 1888, 7.

century America.²² The shift was partly made possible by philanthropists such as Joseph Pulitzer, who donated money for the startup of the School of Journalism at Columbia University with the expressed hope that education will create a “class distinction between the fit and the unfit.”²³ Another impetus came from the strong conviction of press associations in Midwestern land-grant universities, as in the case of Missouri.²⁴ More than a corrective to journalism, their vision was to lead an effort to lift the occupation’s status.

The belief that anyone or anything could be improved with just the right amount of structure was prevalent in the first several decades of 1900s America, an era of relative optimism and progress.²⁵ This was the context for the rise of journalism education, and education’s main purpose to uplift society was closely aligned with Progressive values of the time. The thinking of the nineteenth century that journalists are born and not made²⁶ fell out of favor with the Progressive notion of democratizing society, which made it possible for people to extricate themselves from the station of their birth and re-create their social standing through education. Rather than the idea that people are born predisposed to certain professions because they had inherited skills from their family members, the belief was that the mind is impressionable. This trend of thought harkens

²² James W. Carey, “Some Personal Notes on U.S. Journalism Education,” *Journalism* 1, no. 1 (2000): 12–23.

²³ Pulitzer, “The College of Journalism,” 650.

²⁴ Stephen Banning, “Press Clubs Champion Journalism Education,” in *Journalism 1908: Birth of a Profession*, ed. Betty Winfield (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 65–81.

²⁵ Goldberg, *Discontented America*.

²⁶ Camp, *Journalists: Born or Made?*

back to philosophy posited by Locke that the mind is a tabula rasa, or a blank slate.²⁷

Thus, the belief is that the environment is more important than nature, so the way to rectify social ills is through institutions such as universities.

In fact, the effort to professionalize journalism through education has roots from the mid-nineteenth century. The Civil War demonstrated that the press fulfilled an important role in society by publishing news of events and family members fighting in the war as well as discussion on the political future of the nation.²⁸ Following the war, former general Robert E. Lee became president of Washington College (later to be known as Washington and Lee University) and instituted technical journalism courses in the academic curriculum in 1869 so that Southern youth could use the press to address postwar problems.²⁹ Lee's death the following year led to the demise of the startup curriculum. Other universities in America experimented with journalism education in later years, resulting in the rise of two main models by the early 1900s—one provided by the newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer, who believed that journalism education should be focused on the liberal arts, and the other advocated by Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, who instead believed in vocational training for journalists.³⁰ Once journalism education finally surfaced in colleges, the issue of “whether or not it should exist” turned into “how it should educate.”

²⁷ Marvin Perry et al. “Social Thought,” in *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society*, 9th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009).

²⁸ Hazel Dickens-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in the 19th Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

²⁹ Winfield, “Emerging Professionalism and Modernity.”

³⁰ Paul Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism*; Marion Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880–1950* (New York: Longman, 1991).

Opinions on what journalism education should look like were as varied as the number of actors involved in discussions. The general divisions can be understood as vocational, general education, and professional.³¹ The success of vocational education is measured by the track record of placing graduates in key positions, general education is evaluated by strengthened ties to a liberal arts curriculum, and professional education is measured by students learning knowledge specific to a profession. The literature shows that no one advocated for strictly one approach to journalism education, but some people clearly preferred one approach over another. In “Education for Journalism,” the *Iowa Publisher* stated in 1937 that although vocational skills are not the end goal, “experience is just as important because real-life experiences help motivate, orient the work with personal experience, winnow out students not suited for the profession, and save their disappointment in later years.”³² This was a more practical approach to journalism education. On the other hand, the American Society of Newspaper Editors in the 1930s argued that technical skills can be taught at a newspaper, so journalism education should focus more on the liberal arts.³³ In the quest to professionalize the field, journalism educators also looked to medical schools and law schools to identify overarching characteristics of professional schools’ curricula.

To gauge how one can know when professionalization has been reached, it is necessary to understand the concept of professionalization and standards. Wilbur Schramm³⁴ identified five aspects professional schools have in common: (a) knowledge

³¹ Schramm, “Education of Journalism.”

³² “Education for Journalism,” *The Iowa Publisher* 9, no. 4 (1937): 8.

³³ Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism*.

³⁴ Schramm, “Education of Journalism.”

special to a profession, (b) a supervised practicum for students to apply the knowledge they gain in the classrooms, (c) students' knowledge tested by examiners outside the school, (d) development of ethical responsibility to the public, and (e) close cooperation with practicing members of the field. According to this categorization, journalism would meet all criteria except for a test on the knowledge relevant to the profession, because in America, journalists do not have to take entrance exams. So journalism cannot be placed on the same level of professionalization as medicine or law. But should journalism be beholden to externally imposed criteria? As Durkheimian thought indicates, the formation of identity can be an active or a reactive response,³⁵ which means that members of a group can find ways to legitimize their roles in society. This is what journalists have done. For example, members of the Missouri Press Association during this time often referred to themselves as professionals.³⁶ Acting on this belief, they likened their field to socially approved professions such as medicine and ministry, encouraged the field's development of training and education, and proposed a code of ethics. The purpose of organization was to lead to enhanced occupational prestige. A second criterion of professionalization has been the organization of work practices. In this way, the establishment of routine practices and the division of labor that arose with the penny press of the 1830s and the mass daily papers of Hearst and Pulitzer's era reflected growing professionalization.³⁷ Yet another definition of the concept involves

³⁵ Michael Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in Journalism," *Journalism* 2, no. 2 (2001): 149–70.

³⁶ Stephen Banning, "The Cradle of Professional Journalistic Education in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Media History Monographs* 4 (2000), <http://www.scripps.ohiou.edu/mediahistory/mhmjour4-1.htm>; Banning, "Press Clubs."

³⁷ Dennis, "Marse Robert's Dream."

the development of standards, educational demands, and ideas about social roles.³⁸ The evaluation of these conceptual definitions used in the literature shows that the overall theme of professionalization concerns organization—that is, organization of people, practices, and thoughts.

The impetus to professionalization in journalism is attributed to the urbanization of American society.³⁹ When people move from rural communities to large and diverse urban areas, they find fewer shared values and history. Thus, standards of professionalization aim for a more cohesive way of organizing contrasting visions. By the mid-nineteenth century as journalism became the vehicle to influence the masses, it served as the glue to hold society together. Like family, church, or school, journalism identified social values and encouraged people to perform accepted cultural roles in their environment.⁴⁰ The analogy can be extended to the polity of a nation as well. By providing a forum for society, journalism creates a public sphere, a notion associated with Jürgen Habermas.⁴¹ This concept holds a dualistic role of promoting union and separation simultaneously. On one hand, the public sphere allows for the discussion and exchange of ideas, but on the other hand, it leads to the separation of people into subgroups because they are able to identify common values through meeting. Both of these functions are possible in a democracy. Because journalism facilitates these processes, Willard Bleyer, founder of University of Wisconsin’s journalism school, stated

³⁸ Winfield, “Emerging Professionalism and Modernity.”

³⁹ Banning, “Press Clubs.”

⁴⁰ Dennis, “Marse Robert’s Dream.”

⁴¹ John H. McManus, “The Commercialization of News,” in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, eds. K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2009), 218–33.

in 1921 that a journalist can potentially pose a threat to the “success of our democracy.”⁴² In this way, professionalization of journalism was linked to the good of democracy; education and better organization are needed to uplift the role of journalists. This thought is reflected in Schramm’s statement: “The fact that society demands less of the men who minister through news to its knowledge and attitudes is one of the great and dangerous inconsistencies that give shape to the twentieth century.”⁴³

The twentieth century can perhaps be identified as the renaissance period of media. Newspapers had wider circulations than ever before, and this fact did not escape the attention of publishers such as George W. Ochs in 1906: “At the beginning of 1800 there was one newspaper for every 26,450 inhabitants; to-day there is one for every 3,500.”⁴⁴ Aided by urbanization, the modern-day conception of the newspaper had arrived by the 1890s. The publishers of the mass dailies were aiming to expand their readership. To do this, they made changes to the layout of the papers for ease of reading and allowed for the publication of sensational stories (what is known as “yellow journalism”).⁴⁵ Since larger circulations corresponded to influence on larger segments of the public, people increasingly became concerned about the press and its practices and began raising questions on how they could rein in journalism gone wild. This is the context in which journalism curricula were seriously discussed throughout America, leading to the establishment of the first journalism schools and departments. Circulation

⁴² Carolyn Bronstein and Stephen Vaughn, “Willard G. Bleyer and the Relevance of Journalism Education,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Monograph* 166 (1998): 16.

⁴³ Schramm, “Education of Journalism,” 9.

⁴⁴ Ochs, “Journalism.”

⁴⁵ Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism*.

and advertising continued to soar in the Roaring 20s along with consumer demand, and new high-rise buildings in the metropolitan areas attested to the golden age of the newspaper.⁴⁶ Newspapers reigned supreme, but then came radio.

Initially, the medium seemed to be relatively harmless. After all, the radio sputtered static sounds, and various broadcast signals interfered with each another to cause “disorder in the airwaves.”⁴⁷ But unlike the decentralized, hands-off communications approach to development that the U.S. government used for print,⁴⁸ government for the first time became actively involved in the administration and regulation of broadcasting. The origin of political control can be traced to World War I when the U.S. Navy purchased the Marconi radio network from Great Britain to facilitate military communications. Radio control was still in government hands following the war, and due to the scarcity in the available radio spectrum, the government possessed authority to issue licenses.⁴⁹ Within just several years though, the airwaves demonstrated potential for broadcasting. The Radio Corporation of America created the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1926, and William Paley created the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1927, thus marking the debut of the powerful U.S. network broadcasting system.⁵⁰ For newspapers, radio seemed to provide a good venue to

⁴⁶ George Douglas, *The Golden Age of the Newspaper* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 232.

⁴⁷ Michele Hilmes, *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States*, 2d ed. (New York: Thomson, 2007).

⁴⁸ Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Hilmes, *Only Connect*.

further publicize the papers, and some of them owned radio stations for this purpose.⁵¹ The networks did not yet have the capabilities for news operations, so newspapers and press associations began directly supplying news to radio stations for broadcasts in the late 1920s.⁵² However, the press retracted its cooperation when realizing that newspaper personnel were doing all the reporting work and radio was thriving without contributing equivalent journalistic efforts. The press had seriously underestimated the potential of radio,⁵³ and it took steps toward defense by strengthening itself through internal developments. For example, instead of looking askance at photography, newspapers found that incorporating visual elements would add interest to news stories. The photos complemented newspapers well, and “the photography revolution...provided a boost—a zest and vitality—that was very much needed in the face of brisk competition from radio and news magazines.”⁵⁴ Now the press considered that the new medium out to destroy print instead was radio, which continued to become an increasingly popular medium. It was radio’s era to shine, and newspapers were not going to pass the baton of supremacy to radio without a struggle.⁵⁵

As radio quickly developed into its own force and showed potential to usurp the speed of print, the press considered broadcasting a parasite. Events such as the

⁵¹ Erik Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Vol. 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁵² Gwenyth Jackaway, “America’s Press–Radio War,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 14, no. 3: 299–314.

⁵³ Randall Patnode, *Friend, Foe, or Freeloader? Cooperation and Competition Between Newspapers and Radio in the Early 1920s*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago, IL.

⁵⁴ Douglas, *The Golden Age of the Newspaper*, 232.

⁵⁵ Jackaway, “America’s Press–Radio War.”

presidential elections of 1928 and the kidnapping of Lindbergh's baby reinforced the dangers of radio's ability to disseminate news faster than print.⁵⁶ In an era when getting the news first ("the scoop") was highly valued in news, the situation was not tolerable. Thus, the press pressured broadcasters to sign the Biltmore Agreement, which called for the networks to stop any news gathering and completely rely on five-minute news bulletins from the newly created Press Radio Bureau wire service.⁵⁷ The plan's purpose was to place a check on radio's influence and minimize broadcasting's competition with the press. The press "attacked" radio on three fronts: (a) political, in which lobbying groups criticized the commercial model of radio networks; (b) economic, whereby newspapers threatened to stop publishing radio program listings; and (c) legal actions following close surveillance of the networks for any possible violations.⁵⁸ These were known as the press-radio wars, and they culminated in 1933 with a victory for the newspapers.

The press victory was short-lived, however, because demand for broadcast news continued to grow.⁵⁹ Radio already had a taste of dabbling in news, and it was not going away anytime soon. The arrangements had put independent radio stations at more of a disadvantage than the networks, so they started up the Transradio Press Service in 1934 to share news-gathering tasks as a cooperative. Since other wire services did not want to lose out on the available business opportunity, International News Service (INS) and United Press (UP) went against Biltmore stipulations and resumed service to radio in

⁵⁶ Jackaway, "America's Press-Radio War."

⁵⁷ Streibert and Lewis, "Radio as a News Medium."

⁵⁸ Jackaway, "America's Press-Radio War."

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

1935. Finally, the Associated Press also ignored the arrangement in 1939.⁶⁰ As if these actions were not sufficient, advertisers naturally flocked to radio, where audience sizes grew with the sale of each radio set. All forces were in line to negate the intentions of the Biltmore Agreement until it was chipped away into nonexistence.

With support of news resources, fewer restrictions, and audience sizes that could not be ignored, broadcasting reached a bolder sense of purpose. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) carved out an identity apart from the role imposed on the field by the press. In 1939, the group voted and adopted a code of standards, including those related to the responsibility of broadcast journalists to the public not to avoid the coverage of controversial topics.⁶¹ This was in reaction to the accusations lodged by the press for a number of years. NAB's research director, Paul Peter, claimed, "Contrary to the belief of some, increased news broadcasts have not cut down newspaper circulation, but have, as a matter of record, resulted in an increase. *Editor and Publisher* has frequently referred to this."⁶² Although circulations may not have been affected, other literature shows that advertising clearly favored broadcasting over the press: "While newspaper advertising expenditures dropped from a high of \$800,000,000 in 1929 to between \$450,000,000 and \$500,000,000 in the period of 1932-1934, radio doubled its 1929 volume of \$40,000,000."⁶³ In other words, the press-radio competition was not

⁶⁰ Jackaway, "America's Press-Radio War."

⁶¹ "The New Broadcasting Code," *New York Times*, 13 July 1939, 18.

⁶² Paul Peter, "The American Listener in 1941," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 213, no. 1 (1947): 7.

⁶³ Streibert and Lewis, "Radio as a News Medium," 58.

only for the attention of the audience but also for the monetary remuneration corresponding to audience size.

While these battles waged on in the industry, journalism schools and programs around the country focused their curricula on print. In the beginning years of radio, news was not the main focus of broadcasting,⁶⁴ so it took a while for discussions of broadcast journalism curricula to emerge. But as radio was used to broadcast more news, journalism schools and programs considered whether to incorporate broadcast journalism education, and if so, how. They faced several challenges. Whenever there is an introduction of a new medium or practice, the concept of journalism must also change,⁶⁵ but most universities had fledgling programs and were trying to find a place for print journalism, no less a new medium, in the academy. Because the idea of radio was so novel, journalism educators did not see the need for different curricular needs between broadcasting and print.⁶⁶ The on-air presentation certainly was not part of print journalism, so there arose questions of what to do with broadcasting's extra features. In the meantime, most early broadcast classes combined broadcast news instruction with print and placed performance and voice training in the speech or theater department.⁶⁷ The second obstacle was the search for broadcast instructors. Since the medium was so new, it was difficult to find someone with broadcast-specific experience. Most broadcasters lacked professional training to begin with and simply made up the rules as

⁶⁴ Hettinger, "Broadcasting in the United States."

⁶⁵ Barbie Zelizer, "Journalism and the Academy," in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, eds. K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2009), 29–41.

⁶⁶ "Education for Broadcasting: A Panel Discussion," *Journal of Broadcasting* 4, no. 4 (1960): 285–305.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Smith, "Education for Broadcasting."

they went along.⁶⁸ Third, technical resources were lacking for teaching broadcasting. Setting up a broadcast facility required much more capital investment than establishing print programs. Also, since the radio airwaves were characterized by scarcity, the Federal Communications Commission was miserly with license allowances. Even if a university had obtained a license, the power was so low that broadcasts could not even be heard locally. Such was the case of University of Colorado's KFAJ, which was at first assigned 1000 watts but was relegated to 100 watts the next year.⁶⁹ In addition, educational institutions did not fall into the category of privileged and commercial "General Order 40" stations, so these small, nonprofit stations had their licenses challenged every three months in addition to having to settle for the least desirable broadcast times.⁷⁰ Besides having a hard enough time getting a journalism curriculum accepted by universities, educators had to face compounding challenges that did not bode well for the realization of their vision to train future broadcast journalists. The complications involved with the procurement of a license and station made most institutions turn away from the venture with distaste.

Nevertheless, it was impossible for journalism educators to ignore developments in broadcasting, because radios continued to clamor for people's attention. Despite many obstacles, broadcasting managed to make an entrance into university curricula. The first formal broadcast program appeared at the University of Southern California in 1929.⁷¹ In

⁶⁸ "Professional Education," *Journal of Broadcasting* 4, no. 4 (1960): 283–84.

⁶⁹ Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting*, 173.

⁷⁰ Hilmes, *Only Connect*; The "General Order 40" policy was formulated by the Federal Radio Commission to try reducing radio signal traffic on the airwaves by rearranging channel assignments. This allocation privileged powerful stations located in select large cities to the disadvantage of smaller, rural stations.

⁷¹ Smith, "Education for Broadcasting."

addition, large Midwestern land-grant universities took an early interest in broadcasting, in line with their founding through the Morrill Act of 1862 and their utilitarian purpose of serving the public through practical/vocational education.⁷² In general, a handful of universities, using different approaches, experimented with broadcast journalism education. However, the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II pushed back the discussion of curriculum for a more appropriate time.

Wartime sentiments ignited renewed interest in journalism and democracy. For example, the NAB identified radio broadcasts with patriotism by juxtaposing the American radio audience with listeners in Germany whose options were limited by what their government permitted: “I am the beginning and end of every radio consideration, for I am the American radio listener!”⁷³ Associating journalism with democratic broadcasts invoked a sense of the public sphere in which people can shape society through discussions. This type of rhetoric set the stage for journalism education to come to the forefront after World War II. Indeed, the idea of broadcast journalism curricula reappeared with a heightened sense of urgency following the war.⁷⁴ As radio gained acceptance as a valuable and legitimate medium, the second sibling of broadcasting arrived: television. As audiences and production for broadcasting continued to increase, demand for broadcast journalism instruction also grew, leading to the official creation of

⁷² Vesey, 1965, in Kevin Lerner, *Chalk-Stained Wretches: The Origins of Journalism Education in the U.S. in the Era of University Reform, Professionalization, and the Progressive Movement*, Rutgers University.

⁷³ Peter, “The American Listener in 1941.”

⁷⁴ “Professional Education,” *Journal of Broadcasting*.

sequences and departments at many universities offering such classes in the 1960s and the 1970s.⁷⁵

For university decision makers who were exploring the option to adopt broadcasting into the curriculum, uncertainty about the new medium was not their only concern. Just as print journalists had opposed the development of journalism education, so too did broadcasters in the industry show doubt and opposition about the venture. There always had existed historical conflict of visions between educational interests and commercial interests.⁷⁶ Universities generally operated nonprofit stations and believed their work was a natural extension of their mission to educate.⁷⁷ They also touted their service to the public by saying they were broadcasting agriculture and weather information for the greater good of the community.⁷⁸ On the other hand, commercial broadcasters had “cold horror at the use of the word ‘education,’ and an impatient distrust of programs likely to be tarred with that brush” because they perceived that an educational program would not hold the interests of the general audience.⁷⁹ Eventually, commercial radio was favored over nonprofits in the broadcast field because, following World War II, there was a distinct wariness of centralized power and broadcasters believed that using a commercial model would help distance themselves from

⁷⁵ Blanchard and Christ, *Media Education and the Liberal Arts*.

⁷⁶ Barnouw, *History of Broadcasting*.

⁷⁷ Tim Vos, “A Cultural Explanation for Early Broadcast Policy: Professionalism, Voluntarism, and U.S. Broadcast Networks,” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 54, no. 2 (2010): 179–93.

⁷⁸ Angell, “The Scope of Educational Objectives in Broadcasting,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 14, no. 6 (1941): 334–45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 344.

government control.⁸⁰ These two groups had different views of the “public service” concept, which made it difficult to reconcile education with entertainment.

By the 1960s, however, strained relations between the journalism industry and universities loosened as broadcasters and educators became more comfortable in their respective roles and participated in discussions.⁸¹ By forming similar objectives, they could work toward the same goals that would be beneficial to the needs of both broadcast journalism students and the field. The NAB proceeded to identify problems of broadcast journalism education, remarked that broadcasters have “an opportunity to integrate what the past has split apart,” and exhorted members of the industry to work more closely with journalism schools.⁸² And for the first time, the Association for Education in Journalism’s Council on Radio and Television Journalism⁸³ in 1960 hammered out standards for broadcast journalism education. These five criteria included the following: (1) a 4-year curriculum with a foundation of a liberal arts education, (2) an understanding of broadcast history and issues, (3) professional training in the techniques of broadcasting, (4) experienced teachers with adequate professional experience, and (5) adequate equipment for realistic training. This general blueprint was important because it articulated the common understanding of how universities should train broadcast journalism students and what industry should expect of graduates. Although this resolution was more than 20 years in the making since the first broadcast journalism

⁸⁰ Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

⁸¹ Head and Martin, “Broadcasting and Higher Education.”

⁸² “Education for Broadcasting,” 1960.

⁸³ Council on Radio and Television Journalism, “Standards for Broadcast Journalism Education,” *Journal of Broadcasting* 5 (1960): 161–64.

curricula appeared, the time line fits into the typical context of educational programs. During the formative stages of a program, people are usually focused on current professional practices and needs (i.e., what needs attention immediately), whereas after establishment, they can focus on contributing new conceptions to the field.⁸⁴ This also exemplifies the dual role of education: a corrective to journalism and then preparation for journalism.⁸⁵ It is through ongoing discussions that a curriculum can reach the second stage of preparing rather than reacting.

Currently, various models of journalism education exist. The main types are independent journalism schools, separate departments within a college of the liberal arts, and communication research institutes.⁸⁶ Each model charts a different course, but it is important to acknowledge the structure of an institution, because this affects how the school relates to the industry and makes decisions. The research for this study is on an independent journalism school: the Missouri School of Journalism. It serves as a good case study because, as Dennis points out, a free-standing journalism school has more freedom than “journalism schools lodged in liberal arts colleges.”⁸⁷ The relative freedom that an independent institution has can reveal the overall support and resistance it faced in the formation of a broadcast journalism curriculum. Thus, the research question this paper seeks to address is as follows: *How did proponents of broadcast journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism persuade the university to create a curriculum, and why were their reasons effective in bringing about the desired result?*

⁸⁴ Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism*.

⁸⁵ Beate Josephi, “Journalism Education,” in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2009), 42–56.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Dennis, “Journalism Education,” 5.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical and Methodological Approach

This project is a historical research that uses elements of sociological institutionalism⁸⁸ to explain how and why a curriculum was created within an institution. The emphasis of interest is on understanding the “why;” but to reach this knowledge, it is imperative to trace the “how.” In other words, an examination of the processes will lead to an explanation. Therefore, this research is an inductive work whereby observations and patterns lead to a theoretical model that overarches the scope of the study.

Focusing on a public university such as the University of Missouri holds a research benefit in that the decision making involves various stakeholders of public interest. The existence of diverse views sets up the scenario for conflicting visions. Public universities are political institutions because actors represent the public interest and have responsibility to various constituencies. In addition to having a large number of stakeholders, public universities are beholden to more regulations by government than private institutions and are subject to closer scrutiny by the press.⁸⁹ Discussions that ensue from the clash of ideas add depth to the analysis.

The process for this research uses discussions about broadcast journalism education. In universities where broadcast courses focused on skills-based techniques, the curriculum never reached legitimacy within the journalism department. This is to be

⁸⁸ Hall and Taylor, “Three New Institutionalisms”; Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

⁸⁹ James Duderstadt, *Fire, Ready, Aim! University Decision Making During an Era of Rapid Change*. Paper presented to the Glion Colloquium II, La Jolla, CA.
<http://milproj.dc.umich.edu/publications/decision/download/decision.pdf>.

expected, because journalism is ideally more than technical aspects. On the other hand, the Missouri School of Journalism in later years would seek to integrate broadcasting into its journalism curriculum, and the discussions arising from that consideration provide the subject of analysis.

Since the focus is on the Missouri School of Journalism, communication regarding curriculum is found in written records kept by the University of Missouri Archives Center. The units of analyses include correspondence, speeches, meeting minutes, internal memos, and news article clippings. To better understand these documents, the research method utilized is textual analysis. This method requires close observation of context, such as identities of the sender and receiver of the correspondence and the document's purpose.⁹⁰ Understanding the context leads to distilling the most likely explanation regarding the discourse. In addition, textual analysis is appropriate to use in a socio-historical study because it is a research method that considers texts as "a window into human experience,"⁹¹ which further helps to identify the proper social context for discussions between constituents whose affiliations and backgrounds lead to differing perspectives.

When researching origins, the challenge is to demarcate the beginning and the ending of the imaginary origin line. These lines are fluid and apt to change, depending on the aspects the research seeks to examine. Because the Missouri School of Journalism first offered broadcast journalism classes in 1938, the time frame of this project spans from a few years before 1936 through a few years after 1970, when the department of

⁹⁰ Alan McGee, "A Beginner's Guide to Textual Analysis," *Metro*, 138–49.

⁹¹ H. Russell Bernard and Gery Ryan, *Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*, <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~kmacd/IDSC10/Readings/text%20analysis/text%20analysis.pdf>

broadcasting was formally established. The literature helps to lead into and out of the time frame of interest to provide sufficient context.

Another benefit arising from this research is that the case of the Missouri School of Journalism can shed light on broadcast journalism education curricula developed at other universities around the same era. In researching the viability of such a curriculum, it is likely that decision makers at Missouri looked at how other schools were handling the issue.

Viewpoints are likely to differ among faculty, university decision makers, and the industry. Thus, the process of analysis consists of identifying all the actors involved in the situation, the internal and external pressures they faced, and their motivations for and against creating the program. This knowledge is useful because it also provides a near-comprehensive picture of broadcast journalism's early development. The intersection of all these forces in a public university's decision-making processes results in situations of high complexity, and by examining the most complex case, the study facilitates the application of knowledge to institutions with simpler infrastructures.

Since this is a historical work, primary sources inform the research. Based on the units of analyses, the texts can be categorized as (a) those produced by internal people for internal use (e.g., meeting minutes, internal memos, some correspondence); (b) those produced by internal people for external use (e.g., some correspondence, speeches); and (c) those produced by external people for external use (e.g., news article clippings). Conducting a comparison of these primary sources will provide a basis for research reliability. The second stage of reliability is then comparing the primary sources with the

secondary sources to evaluate whether the information matches. After this method is systematically applied to texts, data are then synthesized in narrative form.

As chapter 2 has shown, journalism is reflective of the public sphere of discourse it is trying to foster. Tensions have always existed between educators and industry professionals over standards and ideal types of training. When it comes to broadcast journalism curriculum, the study on the Missouri School of Journalism is expected to show similar issues. Applying sociological institutionalism to research can help unearth the origins of curriculum creation and provide insight into the discussions that arose in this process.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis

When broadcast journalism education appeared, it immediately found itself caught in the middle between industry and university. Whereas the newly formed broadcast industry focused on production, the university emphasized the teaching and research of theoretical concepts appropriate for higher education. So, flanked on two sides by these organizations of authority, the proponents of broadcast journalism education had to straddle the divide between differing objectives. As the Federal Radio Education Committee stated in 1944, the challenge was for broadcast journalism curriculum to assert leadership and establish standards that would “win the respect of both educators and broadcasters.”⁹² But to achieve this goal, it was not enough for them to merely coexist midway between the divergent tracks. For success in legitimacy, they also had to form a bridge between the two large institutions so that both could contribute value to future developments in the curriculum and aid its longevity. This was a tall order, as precedent had already been established on the two sides.

However, certain circumstances proved to be propitious in the situation. For one, the broadcast industry was young, still experimenting, and had been battling to find its own identity in a journalism field dominated by print.⁹³ Meanwhile in the university, the novelty of journalism education for print hardly had a chance to settle, and not too comfortably at that, since supporters of journalism programs and schools had struggled to

⁹² Federal Radio Education Committee, “A Statement on Standards for College Courses in Radiobroadcasting,” November 1944, p. 1 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

⁹³ See chapter 2 on the press–radio wars; Jackaway, “America’s Press–Radio War.”

even get a print curriculum accepted by universities.⁹⁴ So although the broadcast industry and the journalism schools had achieved some level of authority, they were still new compared to print journalism and the university, respectively. This fact is significant in two ways: one, in that the struggles were so recent that members could identify with difficult experiences; and two, their modus operandi had not been firmly entrenched yet and so the broadcast industry and journalism schools were open to cooperating with new actors in the communications field. In sociological terms, this situation demonstrates that since their path dependence was in the formative stage, their path had not yet solidified and was thus amenable to change. So at the outset, broadcast journalism educators found a modicum of acceptance by journalism schools and the broadcast industry.

Before journalism educators took an interest in how to fulfill educational needs in broadcast journalism, broadcast industry professionals had already been experimenting for a decade with radio stations and the creation of the commercial networks of NBC in 1926 and CBS in 1927.⁹⁵ So the industry's experiences provided a foundational guideline for educators. Meanwhile, the rapid development of broadcasting caught the attention of journalism programs and schools, and they were not opposed to broadening their existing curriculum by introducing broadcasting courses. Where proponents of broadcast journalism curriculum met challenges, however, was in trying to convince university officials—people who were generally not experienced in media—that broadcast journalism curriculum merited consideration in the existing programs or schools. As noted in chapter 2, the request to add or incorporate broadcasting to a school or

⁹⁴ See chapter 2 on the formation of journalism programs and schools; Carey, "U.S. Journalism Education"; Pulitzer, "The College of Journalism."

⁹⁵ Hilmes, *Only Connect*.

department, which already held dubious legitimacy in a university, did not show much promise. The difficulty was further compounded by the unordinary expense required to set up a broadcasting facility, and this during the Great Depression in the United States, when universities struggled to fund already established departments. So for broadcast journalism curricula to find legitimacy, universities' approval of them was at stake.

The Theoretical Model

The present state of broadcast journalism curriculum at the University of Missouri shows that the School of Journalism eventually succeeded in obtaining university support for the curriculum. In fact, having a university-owned commercial television station catapulted the school to leadership in the field of broadcast journalism. But as the research question posits, how did proponents talk about the curriculum to convince the university? And why were their reasons effective in persuading the university? This study attributes the successful acceptance of the curriculum to broadcast journalism educators serving a role that in visual form resembles the vertex of a parabola.

As the following analysis shows, the goal for broadcast journalism educators was to find acceptance in the university. However, the university had many areas to focus on for the smooth operations of the institution, and communication with the broadcast industry was not its most important concern or familiar knowledge area. The broadcast industry, on the other hand, was occupied with producing content for public consumption, and its time was devoted to exploring the potential of the new broadcast medium and trying to earn profits. Besides inherent time limitations, neither entity was familiar or particularly interested in what the other was doing. Thus, for broadcast journalism

educators to make a good case for the change in curriculum, they had to gather practical information from experienced industry leaders, assess what would be important for their own purposes, and then show the connection of pertinent data to university officials in terms they could understand (see figure 1). Since the events in curriculum development show that participants in the discussion were tied to the interests of their respective field, the study uses the theory of sociological institutionalism to make sense of their interactions. That is, regardless of individual differences that members of a group may have, the participants in the discussion (known in sociological terms as “actors”) are speaking as the voice of the institution and are bound by the restrictions placed on them by that institution.⁹⁶ The analysis of primary sources demonstrates the application of this parabolic model by focusing on how the educators convinced university decision makers to take the plunge and form a broadcast journalism curriculum.

In addition, because the full acceptance of curricular development could not be rushed, it became incumbent on broadcast journalism educators to show successful results after the university approved of development based on their recommendations. Thus, once the university gave a nod to the establishment of a broadcasting station, the final step was for the broadcast educators to show that all the benefits they claimed to be possible were realized and were in line with the university’s expectations. The last part of the analysis illustrates this situation, resulting in the completion of the persuasive process for a broadcast journalism curriculum.

⁹⁶ Paul Ingram and Karen Clary, “The Choice-Within-Constraints New Institutionalism and Implications for Sociology,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 525–46.

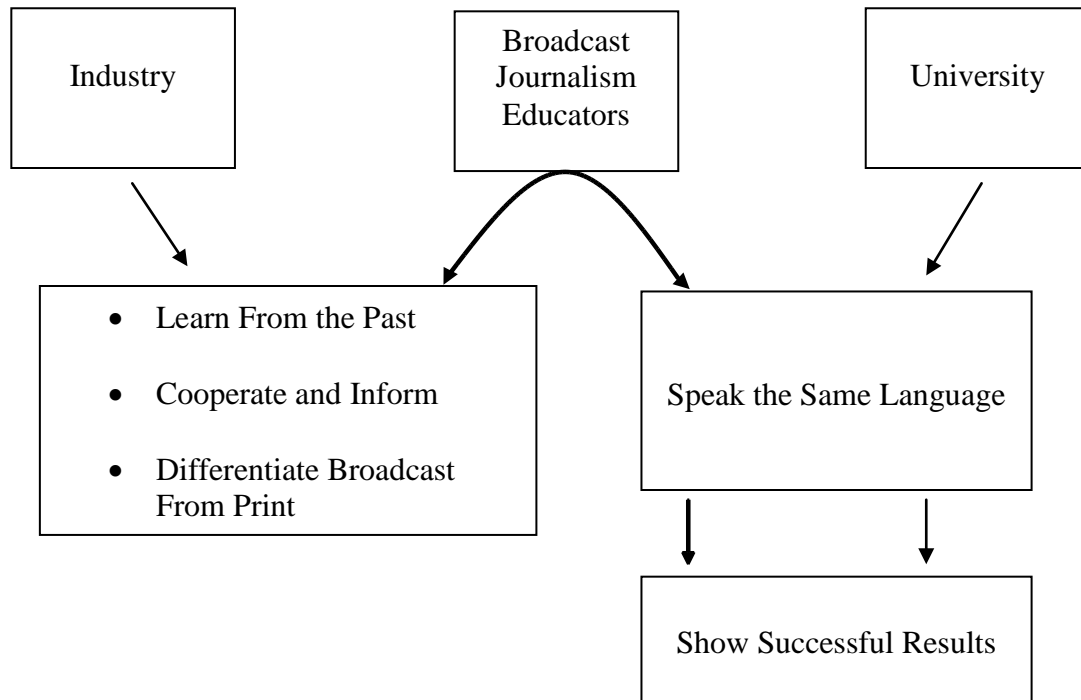


Figure 1: The Parabolic Model

Before Missouri Took Up Broadcasting

In the early 1930s, broadcast classes had yet to surface at the Missouri School of Journalism. However, the school possessed authority in print journalism curriculum. Correspondence of this era confirms Missouri’s leadership in journalism education, because administrators from various universities asked the journalism dean for thoughts and models of instruction. In one such letter in November 1930, associate dean Frank Martin pointed out the practical bent of Missouri’s journalism curriculum in referring to the *Columbia Missourian*, a commercial newspaper that emphasized professional training:

You will note that none of these publications are student publications and that in doing the work for which they receive credit, the students are under the direct supervision of members of faculty in each of the departments.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Frank Martin, letter to Enoch Grehan of University of Kentucky–Lexington, 28 November 1930 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 1, FF13).

Martin's reference to a "laboratory method" also reflects the scientific leaning of the university to empirically analyze processes and facilitate student learning through trial and error. The dean's use of scientific description for journalism was in line with the zeitgeist of knowledge during the era and addressed the rigor that universities expected of academic curricula.

In addition to professionally oriented courses, the school provided conceptual journalism classes, as evidenced in Frank Martin's correspondence to Mr. Lawrence Murphy of Urbana, Illinois, in August 1934:

I would like to see the nonprofessional courses as non-professional as possible. I mean by that courses that would give the Junior College and High School students a thorough survey of the newspaper field in such a manner as to enable them to know whether or not they really want to go into journalism.⁹⁸

This type of argument was congruent with the university's penchant for nontechnical, survey courses for incoming students. The second interesting element is that the courses would serve as self-tests for students to determine whether they wanted to devote their academic years and the rest of their lives to journalism. By offering a principles course, the journalism school not only provided academic flexibility for students but also taught them about the state of newspapers in America, which would be aligned with the university's objective to prepare students to maximize their participation in a democracy. Thus, the Missouri School of Journalism possessed qualities acceptable to both universities and industry instead of predominantly leaning toward one side over another.

While corresponding with other universities, journalism schools actively established relations with contemporary practitioners. In March 1931, Frank Luther Mott

⁹⁸ Frank Martin, letter to Lawrence Murphy of Urbana, IL, 29 August 1934 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 1, FF13).

was the director of the University of Iowa's School of Journalism who would later become dean of the Missouri School of Journalism⁹⁹ and work on developing a broadcast curriculum. He wrote to Mr. Joyce Swan of the *Register & Tribune-Capital* of Des Moines about a project the journalism school was embarking on to examine the characteristics of 75 newspaper men working in daily papers throughout Iowa and analyze what skills and personalities they possessed to succeed in the news industry. Mott referred to his desire to “establish some scientific tests in the matter” so that students can “analyze their own aptitudes, and if they are not fitted for newspaper work, to convince themselves by our tests that they should keep away from that field.”¹⁰⁰ The future dean of the Missouri School of Journalism demonstrated interest in systematic research by conducting the survey. His letter also reiterated a historical understanding of journalists; that he was in search of personal characteristics most conducive for journalism work resonated with the prevalent belief of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that journalists are born and not made.¹⁰¹

Thus, while being rooted in historical perspectives, journalism educators looked to new ideas as broadcasting became more prominently situated in the media landscape. In the 1935 convention of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, educators hashed out ideas about radio instruction. One realization was that the traditional definition of *journalism* needed to be expanded to more accurately describe the plethora

⁹⁹ Earl English, *Journalism Education at the University of Missouri–Columbia* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth, 1988).

¹⁰⁰ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Mr. Joyce Swan of *Register & Tribune–Capital* of Des Moines, 16 March 1931 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 1, FF13).

¹⁰¹ Eugene Camp, *Journalists: Born or Made?*; see chapter 2 for discussion on the topic.

of media: “journalism embraces a great deal more than the daily and weekly press.”¹⁰²

That broadcasting necessitates a change in the fundamental definition of news was a clear demonstration of newfound legitimacy, because it emphasized the realization that elements of broadcasting are different from the press. A representative from the University of Washington said the school would wait for more developments in broadcasting and meanwhile advise “students in this field to take work in musical appreciation; dramatic writing in the drama department; and special speech courses.” This remark shows that journalism educators sought cooperation with other departments to address this difference. They could not find qualified instructors to teach classes because the medium was so new. The industry was in the experimental stage, and there did not yet exist a general consensus on what broadcasting involved. Although professors were not certain how to incorporate radio in their current curriculum, they noted that it would be helpful to identify aspects that differentiate broadcasting from other media. This indicates progress and preparation for further identification of radio’s unique needs and offers strong reasons to convince universities that broadcast journalism education deserved a place in academia. The uniqueness of the medium required different instructional needs from the press, and standards and ethics were integral parts of university parlance, so there was opportunity for the university to play a role in forming a broadcast journalism curriculum.

By corresponding with professionals from the news industry and even other academic departments, journalism educators strengthened ties with them and gained

¹⁰² J. Edward Gerald, letter to members of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, 14 March 1936 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder “Radio 1937–42”), comment made by John Drewry of Georgia.

knowledge so the school could encourage or discourage students from entering the challenging field of work. However, the path most commonly taken by educators was to wait for further developments in broadcasting, as expressed by Professor Mabee from Colorado:

Let's wait. A few schools here and there over the country may well pioneer in offering instruction in radio art and technique, but most of them, in my opinion, should await developments before attempting to do so. Though radio undoubtedly is here to stay, I'm not at all sure that it has yet found itself.¹⁰³

The suggestion to wait on broadcast journalism curriculum was consistent with the university's tendency to monitor development, observe and study, discuss, wait for results, and evaluate findings. In this way, journalism educators were opting for the scientific approach in making decisions and thus speaking the language that university officials could understand. Fully studying a plan and deliberately executing a decision would set the stage for an easier discussion between them and the university administrators later when the opportunity would arise.

In 1936, though, Missouri took the first step toward developing a broadcast journalism curriculum when it joined forces with KFRU, a radio station in Columbia owned by the *St. Louis Star* newspaper. This cooperation was in conjunction with the creation of the first broadcasting course at the journalism school.

Missouri's Hand at Radio Broadcasting

When starting to offer students news broadcasting experience through the KFRU radio station in the fall of 1936, the journalism school swiftly executed a plan of action to

¹⁰³ J. Edward Gerald, letter to members of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, 14 March 1936 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder "Radio 1937-42"), comment made by Z. F. Mabee of Colorado.

provide practical training. Responding to an inquiry from the State University of Iowa regarding broadcast classes at Missouri, Dean Frank Martin explained that broadcast journalism educators at Missouri “confine our instruction to purely professional training in this one phase.”¹⁰⁴ Since the commercial station operated professionally and for public audiences of Columbia, Missouri, the school did not have the option to design the class to fit its educational needs. The limitations of the circumstance led the school to naturally follow the practical approach, but in line with the professional approach that it had taken earlier with the print curriculum, thereby traversing a familiar path. Following a path previously vouched by the university helped ensure the likelihood of success. In addition, the educators’ actions were congruent with the university’s tendency to proceed step by step, as indicated in the description of “one phase.” The mention of the beginning stage also indicates the School of Journalism’s desire to expand on the broadcast curriculum in the future.

The “News Broadcasting” class first appeared in the University of Missouri’s Catalog of Courses for the second semester of 1936. Cooperating with KFRU radio staff, the journalism school administered a voice test for broadcast students to determine their individual ability for on-air work.¹⁰⁵ This action shows that educators established the testing and evaluation of student work in radio. In addition, a course description document from 1940 further demonstrates attempts toward organization. It describes the logistics of the course generally but also identifies two possible training routes for students. One skill for radio mentioned was “writing good copy,” for which “talent may

¹⁰⁴ Frank Martin, letter to Mr. Clay Harshbarger of the State University of Iowa’s Department of Speech, 5 April 1937 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder “Radio 1937–42”).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

be acquired.” The second path was “announcing,” which requires “a native ability which cannot be easily developed.”¹⁰⁶ The concept of a journalist being born with a special set of skills harkened back to historical perspective of the profession, and the school retained that belief. However, since a powerful element of education is its ability to teach students possessing different types of skills and backgrounds, university courses such as this provided a democratizing role by identifying separate roles and division of tasks within a field that differently skilled persons can fulfill.

The educators also sought more opportunities to enrich the experience of students interested in the broadcast journalism field. One such method was to connect with industry leaders. This was exemplified in the 1940 correspondence to the manager of WDAF radio, requesting that he accept the honor of sharing his broadcast experiences at Missouri’s annual Journalism Week. Frank Martin wrote to H. Dean Fitzer, asking him to address the following:

how much emphasis you place upon news broadcasts, their source, how and by whom the news is prepared, and what particular qualities are required by those responsible for the preparation and announcement of news.¹⁰⁷

This letter shows that the journalism school reached out to news professionals to gain a better understanding of broadcast industry trends. By learning the qualities generally perceived by broadcasters to be important, the educators could prepare students for real-life work situations. Furthermore, visits from experienced industry leaders could help convince university officials of the significance of the broadcasting field.

¹⁰⁶ University of Missouri’s School of Journalism, “News Broadcasting,” 1940 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 3, Folder “Journ. Course Content of 1940”).

¹⁰⁷ Frank Martin, letter to H. Dean Fitzer, manager of station WDAF in Kansas City, 2 May 1940 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 2, Folder “F General Corres”).

Getting involved in broadcast work gave the journalism school a glimpse into the challenges associated with broadcast journalism. One difficulty was that broadcast journalists in the broadcast industry struggled for legitimacy in their own field, because entertainment was prioritized over news.¹⁰⁸ To overcome this identity crisis due to exclusion from the group, the broadcasters' solution was to seek strength in numbers. Just as the Missouri School of Journalism reached out to them, so too did they seek help from the school. In February 1939, a radio manager from Joplin, Missouri, wrote to the journalism school about the possibility of forming a state association of radio news broadcasters. After checking with an alumnus working in radio, Dean Frank Martin expressed doubt about the sufficient number of personnel to organize and said, "there are some twenty radio stations in Missouri, but only a relative handful which conduct news departments in a systemized fashion."¹⁰⁹ Industry personnel were trying to organize themselves but lacked the number of professionally trained people to do so. The radio station manager's contact of the journalism school suggests that broadcast journalists looked at the Missouri School of Journalism as a possible link between stations. This exchange demonstrates that the industry considered journalism schools key players in the broadcast industry that could facilitate communication among personnel, some of whom were recently placed alumni. The industry's calling on journalism schools further gave a nod to the journalism school's intrinsic value, which in turn could boost legitimacy regarding the university's perspective of the broadcast educators. As evidenced by the

¹⁰⁸ According to Hettinger, "Broadcasting in the United States," news broadcasts constituted 1.4 to 1.5 percent of radio airtime in the mid-1930s; see chapter 2 of this study.

¹⁰⁹ Frank Martin, letter to Tom Aden of WMBH radio station in Joplin, 7 February 1939 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder "Radio 1937-42").

haphazard and inconsistent practices of radio broadcasting at the time, the lack of standards in the industry emphasized the need for educators to overcome this gap through curriculum development that instilled a sense of professionalization among broadcasters. The failed attempt at organization could also hold value for journalism schools, to view the status quo as showing the need to train more professionals for broadcasting.

Perhaps taking heed of this opportunity, the Missouri School of Journalism took action the following year. For the first time since establishing the broadcast news course, the school sought to expand course offerings for students interested in broadcast journalism. The chance came when the Speech and Dramatic Art Department at Missouri formed in 1940 by branching out from the English Department. Acting Journalism Dean J. Edward Gerald explained to the Speech Department faculty that “the demand for these [radio] courses originated in the School of Journalism.”¹¹⁰ The request was successful, as evidenced by the Catalog of Courses, which listed three broadcast classes beginning the fall semester of 1942: “News Processing” (previously “News Broadcasting,”), “Newscasting” (offered by the Speech Department), and “Radio and Promotional Advertising.” These courses reflected the organization that the school imposed earlier between writing copy and announcing, as well as the growing realization that advertising is an integral part of broadcasting.

But the arrangement with KFRU and the increased number of classes merely whetted the educators’ appetite for more. Their dream was for the Missouri School of Journalism to have a radio station of its own so it could offer the students full and independent access to the resources of a radio station. In this regard, the school set out to

¹¹⁰ J. Edward Gerald, letter to faculty of MU Speech Department, 22 January 1942 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder “Radio 1937–42”).

investigate other universities that had successfully established radio stations. In 1943, Frank Luther Mott, dean of journalism, with the help of C. E. Lively from the College of Agriculture, gained permission from MU president Frederick Middlebush to take up a one-year investigation on broadcasting curricula in universities.¹¹¹ What they found was that there were as many organizational choices as there were schools that offered broadcasting courses. For example, the University of Illinois–Urbana did not broadcast commercial programs on its radio airwaves; instead, the schools of journalism, music, and speech contributed to broadcasting rather than having separate and direct control.¹¹² The University of Kansas–Lawrence also relied regularly on the School of Fine Arts for broadcasts of a music program, whereas Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science oversaw broadcasting for the university.¹¹³

Upon concluding the nationwide investigation in 1944, there also began discussions within the University of Missouri regarding how a radio station might be beneficial to the academic community. The departments involved were the College of Agriculture, the College of Engineering, the Department of Speech, and the School of Journalism. They seemed to unanimously express, “We all want radio!” But with its popularity came some internal tensions as to whose domain radio should rightfully belong. Chairman Lively of the College of Agriculture asserted that it needed radio the most: “Perhaps no school or college on the campus would benefit more from a 5000-watt

¹¹¹ Frank Luther Mott and C. E. Lively, letter to President Frederick Middlebush, 16 October 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

¹¹² Frank Schooley of the WILL radio station, letter to Frank Luther Mott, 8 August 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

¹¹³ W. Lowell Treaster of Kansas State College, letter to Frank Luther Mott, 4 October 1943 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

university station than the College of Agriculture. This division serves the entire state in a way and with a directness that characterizes no other college on campus.”¹¹⁴ Being that agriculture was the dominant industry in the state of Missouri, the College of Agriculture also operated an agricultural extension service and saw its role in the region and state as important disseminators of information to farmers who typically lived in isolated areas. Furthermore, Lively said that transportation had been cut since World War I and that broadcasting information about agriculture and the economy was more pressing than ever because farmers were not able to convene in person. Meanwhile, Dean Harry Curtis in the College of Engineering envisioned a radio station that would allow the university to inform the community of timely information on technological developments and further attract the interest of potential applicants to the university. For the Department of Speech, Dr. Aly presented an endorsed speech by Dean Curtis that “Although we believe that the professional aspects of radio should be administered in the School of Journalism, we believe also that many of the supporting courses should properly be taught in the Department of speech [sic] within the College of Arts and Sciences.”¹¹⁵ The School of Journalism responded that the University of Missouri lagged behind other schools and predicted that the postwar years would be characterized by a journalism revolution. However, it bemoaned the fact that Missouri was not equipped with sufficient resources to face the change and that “this handicap is likely to be increasingly serious in the course of postwar radio development.”¹¹⁶ Conversation about radio domain quickly subsided,

¹¹⁴ Frank Luther Mott, letter to President Frederick Middlebush, 23 October 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4 Box 3).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Frank Luther Mott, letter to President Frederick Middlebush, 23 October 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4 Box 3).

with the School of Journalism taking responsibility for most of the courses. By 1950, the joint curriculum option of the School of Journalism with the Speech Department seemed to have been ruled out, although there was still a regular exchange of students. When Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism wrote to ask Frank Luther Mott about the setup in Missouri, Mott responded,

We [the journalism school] confine our own contributions to news and advertising in these fields...We send many of our students to that department [Speech Department]. We used to have a joint curriculum with them, but it seems to work out better when we have charge of the entire program of a student and send him over to Speech for what he seems to need.¹¹⁷

Besides presenting individual departments' rationale for a university radio station, these dialogues provide a glimpse of the sometimes competing interests. Most important, they demonstrate that the departments used an argument of public service to persuade university administrators of the value of a radio station. The fact that benefits of broadcasting can extend beyond the university's borders to the citizens of the state would be persuasive reasoning for a land-grant institution such as Missouri.¹¹⁸ In conducting a study on the opinions of various departments, the journalism school marshaled evidence and presented it to the university officials in a way they could understand and empathize with; in other words, the broadcast journalism educators appealed to university decision makers of the public service mission of the land-grant university. Also, the unanimous support of the academic community would make for a convincing argument. Not least, making the process easier is just one step to more effective persuasion. By collecting

¹¹⁷ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Professor Roscoe Ellard of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, 27 October 1950 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3).

¹¹⁸ Refer to the discussion in chapter 2 on the utilitarian qualities of land grant colleges.

opinions from various university departments on the usefulness of radio, it cannot be overlooked that the educators presented an organized and readily prepared research document at the university's disposal for consideration. However, the research would need to continue, along with the wait, because the equipment and resources for broadcasting were simply not available during World War II.

Before the war, the Radio News Committee of the NAB continued to exhort broadcasters to live up to their duty to the public. It acknowledged that "wide public acceptance of radio, particularly since 1938, imposes a tremendous responsibility on the industry" and suggested that broadcasters increase the quantity and quality of news.¹¹⁹ In terms of research, the committee urged radio newsrooms to begin close scrutiny of internal operation and reflect on what elements could be improved. Upon return from the war, they were ready to resume discussions.

The war had changed everything, and this extended to broadcasting as well. During World War II, broadcast journalism had gained ground as an efficient way of communication because it could provide news faster than print. Edward R. Murrow's radio broadcasts across the Atlantic demonstrated that speed of news delivery was of the utmost importance in a crisis.¹²⁰ The advantage of radio had not gone unnoticed by universities. In the 1930s when radio was rapidly gaining popularity, entertainment had made up the majority of broadcasting, so there was a sense that broadcasting was frivolous and not serious enough to merit a place in academia. Following the war,

¹¹⁹ National Association of Broadcasters, *Radio News Recommendations*, 17 September 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹²⁰ Stanley Cloud and Lynn Olson, *The Murrow Boys: Pioneers on the Frontier of Broadcast Journalism* (New York: Mariner Books, 1996).

however, the usefulness of the medium was convincing to a land-grant college such as Missouri because it would fit in with the aim of public service.¹²¹ The war had also changed U.S. culture because, while the American troops fought for democracy abroad, the folks at home rallied to fight for democracy through intensified patriotism, voluntary self-rationing, and victory gardens. After the war, the desire for freedom lingered, and this resonated well for broadcast journalists who were struggling to extricate themselves from the constrictive grip of newspapers.

Thus, whereas the first obstacle for broadcast journalists was the struggle for legitimacy in their own field, the second obstacle was radio control by the press. Since the beginnings of broadcast journalism, press influence was evident in the operation of radio stations. Continuing from the Biltmore Agreement of 1933, which forbid radio broadcast journalists to do independent reporting,¹²² broadcasting personnel practiced “rip and read” operations—that is, radio professionals ripped news bulletins from wires of press services or newspapers and simply read them over the airwaves. Broadcast journalists after the war began to question how “professional” radio broadcasters were if they depended entirely on press content. Their solution to address this distasteful practice was to recommend professionalization in the following ways.

The first step taken by the broadcast journalists was to gather forces and instill broadcasters with pride in their profession through change in terminology, something that would differentiate them from print journalists. In 1945, the NAB issued a statement to urge industry professionals to continue professionalization:

¹²¹ See chapter 2 for more on land-grant colleges.

¹²² See chapter 2 for details on the Biltmore Agreement.

The NAB Radio News Committee recommends that the phrase “processing of news” be discontinued in reference to broadcasting. This recommendation is made because the word “processing” implies a superficial editing or rewriting of news supplied by press associations and does not recognize the independent gathering of news from all sources and the writing of original news programs, which are the proper goals of radio news reporting. The phrase “radio news reporting” adequately describes the entire procedure of gathering, writing and presenting news on the air.¹²³

By emphasizing the independent role of broadcast journalism, its practitioners could carve an identity for themselves and begin a trajectory that not only evaded overlap of print news but also contributed uniquely and actively to the news process. Taking this action would serve to distinguish the work of broadcast journalists from their print colleagues. In this way, professionalization for the industry meant moving away from dependency on the press and phasing out the “rip and read” practice. As the industry began to professionalize, this strengthened the position of broadcast journalism educators, because the professionalization of the industry could convince university officials of broadcasting’s legitimacy and the need for continued curricular development. The new goal of independent reporting required the cooperation of both industry professionals and broadcast educators.

It was only a few years prior to this scenario that the first broadcast courses were subsumed under the print curriculum at the Missouri School of Journalism. This is evidenced in correspondence between a prospective student and Frank Luther Mott:

In your position as Dean of the journalism school which, to me and many others in this country, represents the epitome of instruction in that field, you should be able to advise me capably as to the merits and demerits of entering work in the field of radio rather than the newspaper...

¹²³ National Association of Broadcasters, *Radio News Recommendations*, 17 September 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

To this, Mott wrote about the promising growth of radio in the future and Missouri's standing in curriculum offerings:

I have to confess that our own radio work at the present time is not very satisfactory, in view of the fact that we do not have a station of our own. Measures looking toward a University of Missouri station have recently been taken, however, and I have little doubt that the University will have its own facilities as soon as construction is possible after the war. Many of the standard journalism courses are easily adaptable to radio work. I refer to newswriting, reporting, copyreading, editorial writing, feature writing, etc.¹²⁴

This response provides salient insight into how Missouri's journalism dean viewed broadcasting curriculum as compatible with print news at the time. Just two years later, in 1946, Mott would modify his view in a correspondence with the president of *The Evening Bulletin* of Philadelphia. He explained that Missouri focused on writing news for broadcasting instead of presentation and that broadcasting had even made a positive impact on print journalism: "I think that the chief effort of radio on the form of newspaper stories has been to break down the formula for the old and often cumbersome lead."¹²⁵ His description revealed the realization that broadcasting should have a different writing style than print. This was reflected in the curriculum, because the next academic year, the journalism school expanded from offering just one broadcast course to three courses: radio news, radio news processing, and newscasting.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Private James Files, 10 November 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4 Box 3, FF61).

¹²⁵ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Mr. Robert McLean of *The Evening Bulletin* of Philadelphia, 25 September 1946 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4 Box 3).

¹²⁶ University of Missouri's Catalog of Courses, 1947.

Second, the NAB encouraged professionalization “through establishment and expansion of local news divisions.”¹²⁷ Dean Frank Luther Mott jumped on this recommendation at the Missouri School of Journalism in December 1946. Professor Edward Lambert recalled that Mott asked him to talk with the local KFRU radio station about the possibility of the journalism school providing carbons for the morning radio newscasts in exchange for using station facilities. Lambert said that in 1946, KFRU was owned by the *St. Louis Star* and “its news operations was strictly rip and read. Meanwhile, the journalism school had absolutely no radio facilities, not even a recorder.”¹²⁸ The conversation with the KFRU station manager, Mahlon Aldridge, was encouraging, and Aldridge even offered to turn the whole news operation over to the School of Journalism if Lambert would assume full responsibilities as news director. Mott accepted the arrangement immediately, and thus began radio’s local coverage of Columbia. This action expanded the broadcast course offerings at the university and led to Missouri’s accrediting of a new broadcast sequence in the fall of 1947 by the American Council of Education for Journalism.¹²⁹ Local news coverage developed after the deal with KFRU, in which both the community and the university could benefit by working together.

Third, for the first time since the emergence of broadcasting, industry professionals actively sought to align their vision with journalism educators’ mission. Organized associations and committees sprang up to address the professionalization issue in broadcast journalism. In December 1944, the NAB formally organized the Council on

¹²⁷ National Association of Broadcasters, *Radio News Recommendations*, 17 September 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹²⁸ Edward Lambert, letter to Dean Roy Fisher of the Missouri School of Journalism, 3 September 1971 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF13).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Radio Journalism through joint action with the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism. The purposes of the Council were to make improvements to radio practices and establish minimum standards for broadcast journalism education.¹³⁰ The group met in New York City in January 1945 and immediately published a set of standards that included these elements: (a) strong general education, even suggesting that the major portion of academic work be general education; (b) knowledge of radio and its relation to society; (c) professional training in techniques of broadcasting; (d) instructors with relevant education and teaching experience; and (e) adequate equipment and facilities to practice broadcasting.¹³¹ The establishment of standards demonstrates first steps toward professionalization of the broadcast industry. After nearly two decades in which the practice of radio broadcasting was shrouded in mystery, the communication lines were opened at last between educators and industry leaders.

At about the same time, the Federal Radio Education Committee issued a statement in November 1944. Composed of industry professionals and university faculty, the members agreed upon statements that were then distributed to all schools dealing with broadcasting. They pointed out the need to limit the scope of instruction throughout the country: “personnel needed to operate American radio is not large and it would, therefore, be unfortunate, if too many colleges should undertake professional radio training.”¹³² By pointing out the status quo of small newsrooms, members were articulating to the

¹³⁰ “NAB Backs Council on Air Journalism,” *Broadcasting Magazine*, 25 December 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

¹³¹ Council on Radio Journalism, *Standards for Education for Radio Journalism*, 1 October 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹³² Federal Radio Education Committee, “A Statement on Standards for College Courses in Radiobroadcasting,” November 1944, p. 1 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

educators the reality of the situation and the limitations of the industry's future growth. The members also identified three minimum standards for instruction, which included competent teachers, proper equipment, and better organization of courses. Broadcast journalists and educators both decried the situation whereby journalism instructors experienced in print were attempting to impose some of the practices of print on broadcast journalism courses, thus continuing the historical path of relegating broadcasting practices to press influence. They also noted how conceptual learning provided no preparation for students for a career in broadcast journalism if they were not able to practice in realistic conditions, and there was agreement that educators simply needed to join together and figure out how to best train students so they could be a boon to the industry rather than perpetuators of mediocre practices. In sum, the process of identifying aspects of broadcast journalism education revealed their assessment of the existing curricula and their desire to see better organization in what schools should be expected to provide in instruction. A year later, they followed up by announcing that the circulation of standards had led to successful incorporation into curricula and that these statements "are proving helpful in establishing courses in radio newswriting and broadcasting."¹³³ The quantity of information exchanged between journalism schools and industry leaders illustrates that they communicated via organizations such as the Council on Radio Journalism and the Federal Radio Education Committee to draw up educational standards. By joining forces, the groups could identify values common to the majority and then transfer the ideas to the university, phrased in curricular goals familiar in a university setting.

¹³³ Federal Radio Education Committee, "Directory of College Radio Courses," 1 November 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

As for the Council on Radio Journalism, it sent correspondence to journalism schools, detailing an internship opportunity for broadcast faculty to learn more about broadcasting and make important connections with industry leaders.¹³⁴ To such a request, Frank Luther Mott replied that the Missouri School of Journalism would not hire someone who lacked knowledge or experience.¹³⁵ The response demonstrated school pride regarding the possession of competent instructors. This was the type of attitude and sense of preparation that would lead the journalism school to initiate a serious and consistent request to university administrators about addressing the needs of a broadcast journalism curriculum.

The mission to serve the public was deep in the University of Missouri's roots as a Midwestern land-grant university.¹³⁶ Thus, as broadcasting played an increasingly important role in society, broadcast journalism educators talked with various groups about what would provide the most favorable public service to audiences. At first, the ideal arrangement was considered to be close cooperation with print journalists. Contemporary conflicts in industry relations had shown broadcast educators that print possessed power in numbers and in historical roots. Knowing that print journalists were interested in defending their authoritative position vis-à-vis broadcasters, broadcast journalism educators treaded softly in their quest to obtain a university station. In correspondence to President Middlebush in 1944, Frank Luther Mott and C. E. Lively culminated their fact-finding project by recommending a non-commercial station over a

¹³⁴ Council on Radio Journalism, letter to Frank Luther Mott, 3 April 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹³⁵ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Council on Radio Journalism, 7 April 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹³⁶ See chapter 2 on land-grant colleges.

commercial station. Their objections to the latter were that a commercial station would compete with newspapers in the state for advertising revenue, and besides, advertising is not appropriate for educational programs.¹³⁷ There was fear of stirring up historic tensions because influence in the journalism industry had belonged to the press. This stance demonstrates the school's strong inhibitions about offending the press because it operated the *Columbia Missourian*, a commercial newspaper, and needed the press for continued support of its print curriculum. The situation also reflected the accommodating nature of the journalism school so that their activities did not interfere with the interests of print. Beholden to an interest group, the school had to walk gingerly in trying to blaze a new path in broadcast journalism. Missouri's preference for a non-commercial station was further vouched by correspondence with other schools, a report to the Federal Radio Education Committee, and the testimony of the National Association of State Universities' radio broadcasting committee. Communication with various agencies confirmed Missouri's belief that a non-commercial station would be most beneficial for its needs. Therefore, by acknowledging the history of the broadcast industry, the School of Journalism assumed the role of helping the university successfully navigate through sometimes sensitive historical issues or avoid complications altogether.

Gradually differing from past practices, though, the press began expressing support for the independence of nonprofit radio stations as those found in universities. In January 1945, a *Washington Post* column positively acknowledged the FCC's decision to reserve FM radio channels for education. It noted the new broadcasting opportunities for educators and alerted them to be on guard against a less desirable alternative:

¹³⁷ Frank Luther Mott and C. E. Lively, letter to President Frederick Middlebush, 16 October 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

Once equipment has been manufactured and put into the hands of the public on any considerable scale, it will not be easy to turn back. At this juncture we have a virtually clean slate and a magnificent chance to make radio a powerful instrument of the democratic process.¹³⁸

This type of support coming from a prominent newspaper held fortuitous meaning for the development of broadcasting and its legitimacy. The reference to a “clean slate” provided universities with encouragement to fully seize the opportunities opened up by the FCC’s administrative rulings. It was an argument that journalism schools could use to convince the university that the time was appropriate for participating in broadcast curricular development.

However, Missouri could not yet fund a radio station, so it continued to use KFRU facilities to train students. Since it was standard practice for broadcasters to rely on newspaper reports to fill newscasts, the journalism students depended on the university’s *Columbia Missourian* paper instead of doing original reporting.¹³⁹

Meanwhile in 1949, the ownership of the KFRU station changed hands from the *St. Louis Star* to the local competitor paper, the *Columbia Daily Tribune*. The article in the *Tribune* announced the change as “another major step toward closer integration of the newspaper and the radio station.”¹⁴⁰ This was consistent with Dean Frank Martin’s earlier evaluation of newspapers regarding radio: “The newspapers have accepted this auxiliary method of news dissemination [news broadcasting], and are now operating their own stations or co-

¹³⁸ *The Washington Post*, “Radio Assignments,” 20 January 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

¹³⁹ University of Missouri’s School of Journalism, “News Broadcasting,” 1940 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 3, Folder “Journ. Course Content of 1940”).

¹⁴⁰ *Columbia Daily Tribune*, “KFRU News Broadcasts at Tribune,” 24 June 1949 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 2, FF22).

operating with leased stations.”¹⁴¹ This statement shows that it was a typical arrangement among newspapers to own radio stations. Although the arrangement did not restrict the existing broadcast courses, the school was still in the historic grip of newspapers. Bound by lack of resources on one hand¹⁴² and the lack of complete autonomy on the other, broadcast educators sought to cut loose. They eyed an alternative option.

Eyeing the Visual Medium

Sometimes, impassioned insistence sparks interpersonal conflicts, and that is just what happened at Missouri. In 1950, the School of Journalism’s Earl English vociferously claimed that the university needed to obtain a television station rather than an AM radio station. Disagreement came from Thomas A. Brady, vice president of the Extradivisional Administration, who wrote to MU President Middlebush:

Earl is completely loco on the subject and has pressed the Adult Education Committee for support....I don’t believe there is any point in arguing this with Earl at this time. I think we should go ahead with our plans...”¹⁴³

Plans eventually did not materialize and all considerations went back to Square One...with the exception of the journalism school’s determination to obtain a television station.

As can be seen by Earl English’s suggestion, the School of Journalism was persistent in the selection of broadcasting facilities for the university. Instead of seeking a

¹⁴¹ Frank Martin, letter to President Frederick Middlebush, 14 October 1936 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 75, FF2).

¹⁴² Dean Frank Luther Mott mentioned the limitations placed on journalism curriculum because of a lack of equipment in a letter to Professor John Casey of the University of Oklahoma, 21 May 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF61).

¹⁴³ Thomas A. Brady, letter to Frederick Middlebush, 1 August 1950 (MU Archives, C:1/51/4, Box 2, FF6).

radio station, it set its sights on establishing a television station. And instead of arguing for the advantages of a non-commercial station, it considered that a commercial station would be the only viable option for the university. Television was booming in postwar American life. The aforementioned correspondences in this study show that journalism faculty members decried the University of Missouri's lag in obtaining a radio station. Now here was a chance for them to get in the forefront of a revolution in electronic technology. For more than a decade, the Missouri School of Journalism had maintained close relations with the KFRU radio station in Columbia. Since KFRU was a commercial station, this experience undoubtedly predisposed the university to a commercial model. In addition, there was no television station in Columbia at that time. Having a television station would fill a gap in the status quo and not involve the university in a sticky situation of directly competing with a radio station that had provided support to the journalism school all those years. In line with an approach favorable to the university, the educators referred to historical lessons, conferred with others, and continued to conduct research on broadcasting developments.

Past attempts to enter broadcasting had not been exactly kind to educational institutions.¹⁴⁴ A survey shows that from 1921 until 1936, the FCC granted 202 broadcast licenses to universities throughout the United States, of which only 38 remained intact in 1937, because the environment was not propitious to educational stations that were not in the business to seek profits from their ventures.¹⁴⁵ Experimentation with radio at the University of Missouri was also short-lived and used solely for military training in radio

¹⁴⁴ See the discussion in chapter 2 about challenges that universities faced in broadcasting.

¹⁴⁵ S. E. Frost, Jr. *Education's Own Stations: The History of Broadcast Licenses Issued to Educational Institutions* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

communications. Although the FCC gave it two experimental licenses and one amateur license, the university let them all expire by 1927.¹⁴⁶ In 1951, however, President Middlebush showed openness to the idea of a television station, so he appointed Lester Cox to serve as a member of the MU Board of Curators¹⁴⁷ and the chairman of the Board's Committee on Radio and TV. Cox was an experienced broadcaster from Springfield, Missouri, so in his new role, he frequently spoke on behalf of the university to organizations regarding the possibility of a television station. He argued that historic failures of most university radio stations could be attributed to their non-commercial status and operations. In his testimony to the FCC, he said:

Too much of anything, whether it be good, bad or indifferent, gluts the individual. This applies to education, religion, or straight commercial broadcasts. One eminent [sic] clergyman once said that if he even thought Heaven was to be one continuous church service, he had strong doubts as to whether he desired to go there. The same argument applies to a television station attempting to televise educational programs....In the training of doctors in the medical schools throughout the country, the students not only gain experience and knowledge by practicing on cadavers, but also by actual practice on live patients in the hospitals and clinics. The same situation should apply to the students training for jobs in the growing television industry.¹⁴⁸

This statement suggests that instead of insulating students from real-life situations, universities would better fulfill their missions by teaching students in the appropriate context. The analogies of the clergyman and the doctor indicate that Cox might have been

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 222–23; The University of Missouri course catalogs from 1924 through 1926 show a “Radio Communications” course offered for students enrolled in the Military Science and Techniques program.

¹⁴⁷ The Board of Curators, according to descriptions of the FCC, is “the governing body of the University of Missouri and is analogous with the Board of Regents of Board of Trustees which govern other colleges and universities”; Charles Wayland (attorney), “Written Testimony of Lester E. Cox Before the FCC,” 24 September 1951 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 37, FF6).

¹⁴⁸ Charles Wayland (attorney), “Written Testimony of Lester E. Cox Before the FCC,” 24 September 1951 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 37, FF6).

familiar with the historical comparisons of a journalism school to professional schools of medicine and theology.¹⁴⁹ And by speaking about commercial stations in this manner, he resumed the conversation that universities had about the professionalization of journalism.

Cox also spoke to the university community in October 1952 about historic disadvantages encountered by university radio stations and what lessons could be gleaned from these experiences when seeking a license for a television station. One of the problems that non-commercial stations faced was that they “did not command large enough audiences to make their continued existence of sufficient importance to warrant the continued expenditure of educational funds.”¹⁵⁰ However, this discussion shows that through analysis of past attempts, the university could overcome obstacles by eliminating the problematic option. Edward Lambert, head of Missouri’s broadcast journalism sequence, also encouraged more learning from the past but specifically addressed “educational administrators,” whom he described as “lagging in the utilization of the potential powers of television as an educational medium, just as they lagged in the use of radio until its educational power was strangled in apathy.”¹⁵¹ The message from proponents of broadcast journalism education was clear, and the message they used to persuade the university was the desire to not repeat the past’s failures. It also led Missouri down the same path of owning a commercial news organization, as was the case with the *Columbia Missourian*. That venture had brought renown to the school, so the educators

¹⁴⁹ Schramm, “Education of Journalism.”

¹⁵⁰ University of Missouri’s Office of Public Information, Press Release No. 4919, 29 September 1952 (MU Archives, UW: 4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

¹⁵¹ University of Missouri’s Office of Public Information, Press Release No. 4834, 25 July 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF34).

could point to the past's successes to persuade the university that owning a commercial television station would be the best decision.

However, discussion of the past also brought up a history of antagonism between the industry and the university and created some suspicion, especially for the latter group, which had lost ground in the battle for a favorable radio spectrum. In various locations throughout the nation, Cox spoke to audiences about the benefit of operating a commercial station. Following one such presentation, the Association of Governing Boards of the State Universities and Allied Institutions wrote him that the speech was well received and the only criticism from some members of the audience was that Cox was perpetuating "propaganda on behalf of commercial broadcasters" so that universities could fail in the operation of non-commercial stations and leave the field wide open to them.¹⁵² He responded seriously to the feedback by saying he simply did not wish that "any educational institution...throw away its chance for television."¹⁵³ This statement showed his understanding that the time was ideal for universities to obtain a television license and that they should take action before the opportunities were closed off to them.

Despite being a former broadcaster, Cox also expressed distrust of commercial broadcasters. He referred to his experience of advising other institutions and warned President Middlebush that "when broadcasters get to the point where they have plenty of business they forget about education." He advised that if any broadcasters express desire for cooperation, it is best to wait and require more specifics from them, such as how

¹⁵² Edgar W. Smith and Richard H. Plock, letter to Lester Cox, 8 October 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

¹⁵³ Lester Cox, letter to Richard H. Plock, 14 October 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

much airtime is guaranteed and what specific times are offered for programs.¹⁵⁴ Another correspondence between Cox and Middlebush exhibited disbelief at the broadcasters' opposition to the university owning a television station:

I can well understand why the broadcasters might have some reason for objecting to just an ordinary college, or possibly a public school system having a broadcasting station, but for the Land Grant Colleges, it would seem perfectly normal to me.¹⁵⁵

Having an experienced broadcaster guiding the university was a boon to Missouri, because a man such as Lester Cox possessed insider knowledge of the industry and thus knew how to communicate with the actors who had a stake in the process. Using this skill, he was able to allay possible misgivings of the university in the sometimes treacherous process.

Similar to the quest for a radio station, the search for a television station included discussions among universities. Frank Luther Mott of the journalism school believed that a commercial station would be the best option for Missouri, as he explained to Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in 1950: "We think laboratory work on a commercial station affords better training than work on a University owned station, because our students will work in commercial stations."¹⁵⁶ The belief was that broadcast journalism education should be practical so that students could practice journalism in a realistic setting and have a chance to get a good job upon graduation. In describing the possible advantages of a commercial station, this was rhetoric that educators could use to try persuading the university.

¹⁵⁴ Lester Cox, letter to Frederick Middlebush, 22 January 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

¹⁵⁵ Lester Cox, letter to Frederick Middlebush, 21 November 1951 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 37, FF6).

¹⁵⁶ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Professor Roscoe Ellard of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, 27 October 1950 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3).

Meanwhile, research continued to keep educators up-to-date with broadcasting issues. Mott began attending meetings such as the American Council on Education's Television Conference and updated Lester Cox on the discussions.¹⁵⁷ Other universities were on a similar track to obtain a commercial station, so President Middlebush also attended meetings that discussed educational television stations. In a conference hosted by Mayor Joseph Darst of St. Louis, Middlebush met with Cornell University's College of Engineering and shared the experience of competing with commercial broadcasters for a television channel.¹⁵⁸ In addition, he closely followed the discussions of the day regarding educational television, such as the one given by FCC Chairman Paul A. Walker to the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities:

That such a medium with its tremendous educational potentialities should be completely allocated to commercial exploitation seems unthinkable both in terms of the historic role which education has assumed in our society and the record of AM broadcasting where no special reservation was made for education.¹⁵⁹

These interactions show that through letters, meetings, and close following of materials, journalism school educators and the MU president armed themselves with knowledge so they could go to bat for the university when it came time to request a broadcast license and build a station. It was preparation of this manner and close communication with various actors that led the university to effectively make a decision. By putting a finger on the pulse of broadcasting developments, the educators could gather information to

¹⁵⁷ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Lester Cox, 25 June 1951 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 37, FF6).

¹⁵⁸ Cornell University's College of Engineering, letter to Frederick Middlebush, 21 February 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF34).

¹⁵⁹ Paul A. Walker, "Educational Television," address to the 66th annual meeting of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C., 13 November 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 52, FF2).

convince the university that the broadcast industry could use some help in attaining professionalization.

Furthermore, Lester Cox emphasized the significance of a commercial station:

It would be a travesty on education to have students devote a large portion of their college education to television and have them find when they seek employment that because of their haphazard training they were actually only qualified to start at the bottom of a commercially operated station.¹⁶⁰

This statement connected well to the mission of the university to equip its graduates to succeed in the workplace. The School of Journalism and the Board of Curators were on the same page on this issue, but they slightly differed in opinion about optimal programming for a university-owned television station. At the aforementioned meeting, Cox expressed his belief that few people would be interested in listening to educational programs and advocated that education stations be operated on a commercial basis so that program schedules would be mixed well with entertainment programs, which “plain, every-day American citizens in all walks of life have demonstrated they enjoy.”¹⁶¹ As for Professor Edward Lambert, he looked at a commercial station as a means to an end: “...a commercial operation such as ours is the only feasible answer to the need for securing funds to operate an educational station.” Lambert wrote to the president of a teachers association that although the University of Missouri would operate a commercial television station, it would most likely air more educational programs than most non-commercial stations.¹⁶² The journalism educators decided to consider the commercial

¹⁶⁰ University of Missouri’s Office of Public Information, Press Release No. 4919, 29 September 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

¹⁶¹ Howard Frazier, *Description of Facilities, Market Data and Plan of Operation of the University of Missouri Commercial Television Station KOMU-TV*, 18 February 1953 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 2).

¹⁶² Edward Lambert, letter to President Russell Dineen of the Wilmington Teachers Association, 12 March 1953 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF15).

station to be in name only, which expresses the wish that the pursuit of quality programming would not preclude public interest.

The Board of Curators had been listening to the discussion about the benefits of a commercial television station for the University of Missouri when the FCC reserved Channel 8 as a non-commercial station in April 1951. News of this allocation gave impetus for the Board to act. The members identified objectives of the television station as follows: (a) that the station be a credit to the university, (b) that it be financially self-sustaining, and (c) that it broadcast programs of public interest.¹⁶³ Based on these goals, the value of the station would partly depend on the quality of programming, which is linked to the consideration of a public good. In addition, airing programs of “public interest” required the station to possess enough funds to make interesting programs available, which meant there were no alternatives to a non-commercial model if the station wanted to be financially independent. Because the Board members articulated these desired objectives, they were able to systematically evaluate their interests against potential results. The group’s decision-making process shows realization that the project’s success depended on balancing the need between financial and non-financial considerations.

To come to some terms with opposing values of financial and utilitarian issues in broadcasting, the university initiated further research. And for determining financial viability of a commercial station, the university hired consultants. The consultants’ report described that Missouri had lower-than-average income compared to the rest of the nation, and although disposable income is the standard indicator of television growth, the

¹⁶³ Charles Wayland (attorney), “Written Testimony of Lester E. Cox Before the FCC,” 24 September 1951 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 37, FF6).

number of television sets would undoubtedly grow in the following years, regardless of income.¹⁶⁴ This formal investigation addressed the university's research on predicting potential station revenue and factors to consider when establishing a station, which would be useful information in making a major decision. For potential use of the station, the university carried out research across various academic departments to see how they proposed to utilize television broadcasting, similar to when the university explored the possibility of creating a radio station. By conducting this type of research, the university could better comprehend the scope of the needs and potential use, thereby possessing a convincing rationale to support the acquisition of a television station.

Armed with knowledge and an experienced broadcaster, Lester Cox, to do the bidding, the University of Missouri initiated a request to the FCC for a commercial license. At first, the university sought a half-commercial and half-educational license to compromise between the type of institution and the goal to operate a commercial station. The FCC would not accept a half-and-half situation, so the Board of Curators then pushed for a full commercial license.¹⁶⁵ This attempt was successful, and the university received the permit in January 1953.

However, now with the license in hand to operate KOMU-TV, progress stalled. Professor Ed Lambert wrote a candid note to a broadcasting colleague, Doug Tillett, with some frustration:

...this television operation is still so nebulous that I am having difficulty getting President Middlebush to let me have much of a staff before the station goes into operation. Naturally, you know and I know that the biggest job is done prior to the actual opening of the station, but it is

¹⁶⁴ Howard Frazier, "Proposed VHF TV Station in Columbia, Missouri," report from Television and Radio Management Consultants, 21 May 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF14).

¹⁶⁵ Board of Curators' Cards, C-Oct.-15-51, p. 5868 (MU Archives, Board of Curators' Cards).

extremely difficult sometimes to impress that on a person who has never worked in radio and television.¹⁶⁶

This situation illustrates the difficulty of working with university officials who were not particularly familiar with a vocational field, but it also reflects the reality that in a public university setting, the actors must work with all constituents to achieve a goal. In fact, these examples point out that President Middlebush was proactive in trying to secure a television station. The journalism school encountered a few bumps in the road in trying to convince university officials of the value of a broadcast journalism curriculum.

Negotiations were an inevitable part of coming up with an agreeable solution, and the educators communicated strategically by making their rhetoric match the university's values of public service and penchant for establishing standards.

As the date approached the opening of a television station, some commercial media organizations showed some opposition to the idea of the university operating a commercial station, as evidenced by Ed Lambert's candid personal correspondence stating "The TRIBUNE and KFRU are harpooning us at every turn, but then we expected that."¹⁶⁷ However, some industry professionals showed support of the university's plan. For example, Sol Taishoff of *Broadcasting-Telecasting* magazine visited the campus during 1953 Missouri Journalism Week and stated in his speech: "Though your checking account may not be vast, you do have a constantly replenished reservoir of fresh imagination."¹⁶⁸ He encouraged the university's venture and expressed his belief that the

¹⁶⁶ Edward Lambert, letter to Doug Tillett, 7 February 1953 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF15).

¹⁶⁷ Edward Lambert, personal letter to Don (last name not provided), 30 June 1953 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF16).

¹⁶⁸ University of Missouri's Office of Public Information, Press Release No. 5493, 30 April 1953 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF32).

university could overcome limitations of financial situations by the entrance every year of new students bringing with them new and creative ideas. This shows that industry leaders acknowledged the university as an ideal place for experimentation and testing of new ideas, which is one necessary ingredient for a field to develop effectively. The stakes were high for success of the station, because as a consultant wrote to George Kapel, soon-to-be-manager of KOMU, there was a realization that “whatever was done with television news, coming from the University station, it would have to be far better than average.”¹⁶⁹ All eyes were looking toward the television station but also toward the university because it was setting a precedent by establishing one of the first commercial stations owned by a university. So in the midst of all hopes, exhortations, and oppositions, KOMU began broadcasting in December 1953 (see exhibit 1 in the Appendix showing the KOMU dedication in 1954).

Living the Reality

The broadcast educators’ dream of obtaining a university television station had been realized. Next came the inevitable challenges associated with ensuring the venture’s success. Since they had full access to an independent station for training students, it became incumbent on them to demonstrate to university officials the benefits they had described during the planning and research stage.

Within six months of operation, the journalism school found advantages in programming and advertising using a commercial model, and the faculty assumed a leadership role by discussing the school’s broadcasting experiences with various groups.

¹⁶⁹ Howard Frazier of Television & Radio Management Consultants, letter to George Kapel, 2 July 1953 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 2, FF8).

Professor Milton Gross published an article in the *Broadcasting–Telecasting* magazine in 1954, touting the benefits of local TV station programming, saying that it can “help you produce good local shows, improve your community relations and increase your profits.”¹⁷⁰ The particular project was a successful fashion show put on by university students and sponsored by local businesses. He recommended that others run a similar program. The publication of this article simultaneously established Missouri as a leader in broadcasting and fulfilled a public service mission by advocating for closer relations between the university and the town. In addition, Edward Lambert wrote to Lester Cox in June 1954 that he was confident the station “will not only break even but will be making money by January 1.”¹⁷¹ The letter was uplifting, with Lambert sharing success stories of how some businesses have seen a 400-percent increase in sales simply by advertising on television. These situations gave support to the claim that a commercial venture would benefit both businesses and the station as well as bring esteem to the University of Missouri for setting a precedent for other universities. Commercial success was vital to the legitimacy of the station, because as Cox stated of the plans, “Our intention at the University of Missouri is that all funds above operating expense be plowed back into the production or programs.”¹⁷² This would fulfill the university’s goal of the station being self-sustaining and independent from other interests, thereby increasing the chance of maintaining journalistic standards taught at the journalism school.

¹⁷⁰ Milton Gross, “Stylish Style Show at Bargain Expense,” *Broadcasting Telecasting* 7 June 1954, p. 75 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF68).

¹⁷¹ Edward Lambert, letter to Lester Cox, 7 June 1954 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF2).

¹⁷² University of Missouri’s Office of Public Information, Press Release No. 4919, 4 October 1952 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF1).

But by the time the KOMU-TV station had gained wide acknowledgment in university circles, some predictions of the station's financial success had not come true. In July 1955, Donald Brown of the University of Illinois–Urbana wrote Edward Lambert to inquire if he would give a talk at a session of the Association for Education in Journalism, suggesting the title “What We Have Learned About Teaching Television at Missouri.”¹⁷³ Lambert accepted enthusiastically, not because of continued uplifting stories as the first year but because he wanted to share “the whole problem of integrating television into a Journalism curriculum.” He added, “It is a real problem, believe me.” Some difficulties described in the speech included running a TV station in a town that is not large enough to support operations, conflicting goals of a self-sustaining station and educational programming, relying on a student workforce in a professional broadcast station, and trying to find instructors who were skilled in practice and teaching. However, the challenges did not faze his belief in the intrinsic value of a commercial broadcast station:

All of us recall back in 1939 when our soldiers were trained with dummy guns and [a] wooden cannon. They were not, however, qualified to tangle with the Axis until they had been drilled with real weapons. Neither are our students capable of stepping into professional television positions until they've had the opportunity to learn video under realistic conditions.¹⁷⁴

The speaking invitation offered a chance for Lambert to personally unburden the stresses associated with operating the new station, but the sharing of difficulties also provided a good example for those interested in establishing a television station so they could learn

¹⁷³ Edward Lambert, “What We Have Learned About Teaching Television at the University of Missouri,” speech presented to the Association for Education in Journalism, no date but c. 1955 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 2, FF15).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

what to expect during the startup phase. This experience is consistent with a university's function to disseminate knowledge.

Since the journalism school started operating KOMU-TV, its broadcast journalism program also gained legitimacy and prestige among industry leaders. Such was the case with the Missouri Broadcasters Association, which in 1954 had passed a resolution to investigate the new television station and question its contribution to the public interest. However, as Lambert explained to MU President Elmer Ellis in October 1956, the group reversed its critique of the station and instead extended a membership invitation to Missouri, even offering to help train students through internships.¹⁷⁵ This action represented a nod of approval for the university's work on the station and a new path for industry professionals to develop better relations with educators. In this regard, the journalism school was seeking acceptance not only from the university but also from the industry. Both institutions had already established a familiar course of practice or thought, but through educators' continual attempts to connect the two sides, the paths of both modified and bent ever so slightly to accommodate the present and future conditions of broadcast journalism.

While maintaining relations with professional broadcasters, the School of Journalism faced mixed receptions from the industry. Although universities exhibited enthusiasm for Missouri's model of broadcast journalism and asked for advice, industry professionals sometimes kept the educators on their toes. At a speech given in Columbia, Missouri, President Dick Cheverton of the Radio–Television News Directors Association

¹⁷⁵ Edward Lambert, letter to President Elmer Ellis, 8 October 1956 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF2).

recounted how he drove from Michigan to Washington, D.C., and was appalled by the lackluster quality of newscasts and dearth of local news coverage:

The sameness and ambiguity of the newscasts were frightening. It was as if some giant machine were compressing the day's news into capsules that had no more individuality than aspirin tablets.¹⁷⁶

This reflected the reality of broadcast journalism, which also presented a conflicted predicament to journalism schools. The teaching of standards was not always compatible with the teaching of skills. Whereas the school sought to teach students concepts and legitimize itself in the university, it also had responsibility to prepare students for actual newsroom practices that were not yet professionalized in terms of the ideal aspects of journalistic reporting. In other words, the broadcast educators were again caught in the middle of the differing visions between industry and university. The industry's less-than-ideal status quo also reflected negatively on educators, as indicated by Cheverton's vision that "colleges and universities should now design radio and television news sequences with the same loving care and attention given to print sequences." He specifically pointed out the need to keep the sequence in a journalism program or school instead of having sequences in a field outside of journalism, such as the speech department; to not subjugate the broadcast journalism curriculum under a print news department that has little knowledge of broadcasting; and to move toward fully equipping broadcast studios. Using these strong exhortations, Cheverton sought to galvanize the broadcast journalism educators into taking proactive steps.

The customary role for industry was to provide oversight on education, but as the journalism school continued operating the station and developing its broadcast journalism

¹⁷⁶ Dick Cheverton, speech given in Columbia, Missouri, 4 November 1961 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF3).

curriculum, this role was sometimes overturned. In a correspondence to the new MU president, John Weaver, Edward Lambert informed him that the NAB in 1961 seriously considered setting up a research center at the Missouri School of Journalism. Lester Cox of the Board of Curators believed that Missouri was the best equipped to step up to the role. However, the NAB committee decided against the proposal. Lambert recalled the conversation with NBC vice president Hugh Beville:

He told me in complete candor in an off the record statement that some of his committee members were hesitant about placing the center in a university. The only conclusion to be drawn was that they were fearful that some of the findings might not be favorable to broadcasting.¹⁷⁷

This statement demonstrates that industry leaders perceived standards posited by the journalism educators as a formidable and sometimes an unrealistic challenge that could be detrimental to industry operations. A sense of caution existed between the two sides. The industry sought to keep a check on educational developments in broadcast journalism, but universities also exerted a watchdog role on the industry.

Yet another example of the role reversal is evidenced in 1960, when Dean Earl English of the journalism school wrote to MU President Ellis that KMOX radio station in St. Louis asked whether Ed Lambert could work as its part-time consultant. English believed this arrangement would be beneficial for the closer relationship between the industry and the university. Whereas the university in the past had hired consultants to give expertise to new ventures, now the industry invited faculty to assume the leadership role. This action acknowledges the professional contributions made by broadcast journalism educators, which in turn served to elevate their legitimacy from the university's perspective.

¹⁷⁷ Edward Lambert, letter to MU President John Weaver, 26 January 1970 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF19).

On the other hand, there remained some feelings of rivalry between KOMU-TV and the local Columbia newspaper. Lester Cox wrote to President Ellis in response to a *Columbia Daily Tribune* editorial in 1960 that accused KOMU-TV of not serving the public good while taking taxpayers' money. Consistent with a historical feud, the press attacked broadcasters by critically questioning their motives. Because the university focused its effects on the success of the commercial television station, it had changed some of its original stance on more academic concepts of standards, and the press did not forgo the chance to point this out to its competitor. Cox replied that "many newspapers like to bring challenges to the public thinking" and that they let "editorial policy be on the same level as their cash register."¹⁷⁸ After dispelling the accusation, he defended the operations of the station and reiterated principles and the *raison d'être* of the station. The method of defending oneself with a statement of standards¹⁷⁹ demonstrates the established professionalization of the broadcast journalism industry. Although the broadcasting field was historically subsumed to the all-authoritative press, it had found independence and could take pride in its practices.

With increased pride, broadcast educators became sensitive to the perceived image of KOMU-TV. When *Look* magazine published an article on Missouri's broadcast journalism program in 1958, Glenn Griswold, manager of the TV station, wrote to President Ellis to clarify a point. The article described that the station was run by "undergraduate students," and Griswold claimed that this word choice rendered an

¹⁷⁸ Lester Cox, letter to MU President Elmer Ellis, 9 September 1960 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF3).

¹⁷⁹ In a letter to President Ellis on September 9, 1960, Lester Cox wrote: "my contention is 'We are as big as we are right, and as little as we are wrong.' Our prime motive in the beginning was to have a University station which would promote the interests of the university in as large a territory as possible, and to also use it as a teaching instrument of the school." (MU Archives, UW:4/0/7, Box 38, FF3).

unprofessional air to the station and jeopardized its status with potential advertisers. Therefore, he requested elimination of any references to undergraduates directing the operations and the power to approve all future press releases regarding the station.¹⁸⁰ This reaction shows that broadcast educators were not only concerned about accuracy of all information pieces but also wanted their university station to be seen on the same professional footing as a typical commercial station. Although the station was affiliated with the university and was primarily responsible for providing a training ground for broadcast journalism students, educators were concerned about how the station might be portrayed in the industry because any image of the university would ultimately reflect positively or negatively on the educators.

The industry professionals continued to convene with broadcast educators to monitor the development of broadcasting. Whereas the feud with the press had spurred broadcasters to seek professionalization and differentiate themselves from print practices (i.e., “news reporting” rather than “news processing”), they now saw the pendulum of independence swing a bit too far from print. The NAB convened at the University of Missouri to discuss broadcast journalism in 1960. President Harold Fellows spoke about the push among some broadcasters to popularize the term “Fifth Estate” to refer to their field, and he stated that the Fifth Estate does not exist but is instead a part of the Fourth Estate.¹⁸¹ This reflects broadcasters’ efforts toward integration with print. They had already gained the long-sought approval from the press and made strides in articulating practices unique to the broadcast industry. Coming full circle, the broadcasters

¹⁸⁰ Glenn Griswold, letter to MU President Elmer Ellis, 10 December 1958 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF35).

¹⁸¹ “Education for Broadcasting,” 1960.

emphasized that all media modalities belong to journalism. Their re-evaluation had the effect of shifting their vision from where they were at the time to where they would like to be in the future.

Although broadcast educators could reaffirm broadcasting's increased standing in the field of journalism, KOMU-TV was plagued by financial problems that corresponded to other challenges. For example, Ed Lambert wrote to President Ellis about the high rate of personnel turnover at the station. He mentioned in 1957 that he lost 40 percent of full-time staff in just a year because other stations pay more,¹⁸² including "the fifth salesman that we have lost because of salary in a period of fifteen months."¹⁸³ This correspondence points to internal complications of owning a broadcast station, because it is a costly enterprise. Due to financial hardships, the station faced disadvantages in hiring and retaining professional staff. In addition, sometimes money issues translated to lack of leverage in negotiations. When Lambert contacted NBC to request an increase in KOMU-TV's hourly rate for programming, the network sought the usage of the station's morning hours in exchange for no line cost fees. The broadcast educators ruminated over the decision but felt they had to concede to network interests on the matter.¹⁸⁴

Despite the challenges faced at the station, the broadcast journalism curriculum at Missouri was starting to settle more comfortably into the core journalism curriculum through the 1960s. This is evidenced by the journalism school continuing to expand its

¹⁸² Edward Lambert, letter to MU President Elmer Ellis, 28 February 1957 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF2).

¹⁸³ Edward Lambert, letter to MU President Elmer Ellis, 1 March 1957 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF2).

¹⁸⁴ Edward Lambert, letter to MU president Elmer Ellis, 2 April 1957 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF2).

broadcast course offerings; correspondingly, the number of students interested in broadcast journalism classes increased, and the alumni base was getting stronger. In 1966, the *Radio-Television Daily* listed fifteen names of the nation's top network journalists, and all of them happened to be alumni of the Missouri School of Journalism. The article concluded, "So who else is from Missouri?"¹⁸⁵ Despite this type of achievement, the university in 1971 considered disowning the KOMU-TV station because of the station's continuing financial struggles. In 1960, an engineer had submitted a report to the Board of Curators that the station needed to continually make improvements such as upgrades in power and antenna height. One rationale the engineer gave for this improvement was the historical lesson of stations being relegated to undesirable frequencies when they failed to make improvements on facilities.¹⁸⁶ Then nearly a decade passed and the station was still not able to carry out the necessary improvements. Finally, the chancellor for the University of Missouri systems sent a draft of recommendations to MU president John Weaver, focusing on the deteriorating condition of the KOMU-TV station and firmly stating that the "station must now be updated if it is to be retained."¹⁸⁷ The draft also detailed that, according to an engineering consultant, the estimated cost of renovations was approximately \$1 million since the tower and antenna were beyond a state of repair.

The situation with KOMU-TV worsened in 1969, and the station was trying to put out fires, literally and figuratively. There was an actual fire at the KOMU station in the spring and the near loss of its FCC license because of "failure to meet minimal equipment

¹⁸⁵ "See-Saw Scene," *Radio-Television Daily*, 7 March 1966 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2 Box 1, FF3).

¹⁸⁶ George M. Lohnes, "Report on Evaluation of Improvements in KOMU-TV Facilities," October 1960 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/1, Box 17, FF17).

¹⁸⁷ John W. Schwada, letter to MU President John Weaver, 2 December 1968 (MU Archives, UW:4/0/3, Box 6, FF21).

standards.”¹⁸⁸ Not least, Chancellor John Schwada and MU President John Weaver exchanged some tense correspondences throughout the year.¹⁸⁹ In October 1970, the conflict over the possibility of KOMU’s sale was resolved when Chancellor Schwada wrote to President Weaver about the findings of consultants who evaluated the broadcast program. After reviewing all the alternatives, the consultants announced that continued operation of the station would be the best solution.¹⁹⁰ The School of Journalism and the Department of Speech also submitted “Summary of Position” papers to give their evaluation of the station. The division’s papers generally acknowledged that without a commercial station to provide realistic training for students, the university would be deprived of learning about public reactions to news stories. The consultants also commented that because of KOMU’s presence, program quality was higher compared to other similar stations. This investigation demonstrated the university’s willingness to consider alternative options by weighing various possibilities. It also confirmed the fact that some concepts were simply not replicable in classrooms, so KOMU held innate value for broadcast journalism instruction.

The results of this evaluation provided the impetus to re-organize the journalism school. As soon as this resolution passed, Ed Lambert wrote to Dean Roy Fisher in April 1971 regarding his vision for the journalism school. To aim toward “major efficiency,”

¹⁸⁸ School of Journalism, “Radio–Television Sequence” report distributed to broadcast journalism faculty, 5 March 1970 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 2, FF27).

¹⁸⁹ These letters of conflict date from December 2, 1968, to September 30, 1970, and can be found at MU Archives, UW:4/0/3, Box 6.

¹⁹⁰ John W. Schwada, letter to MU President John Weaver and “A Re-Evaluation of the Educational Mission of Broadcast Facilities for the University of Missouri–Columbia, 2 October 1970 (MU Archives, C:1/16/1, Box 3, FF14).

Lambert suggested that several sequences be consolidated into a single department.¹⁹¹ This seemed to be the ideal time because the broadcast curriculum had expanded enough, the university confirmed its commitment to KOMU, and the university radio station was in planning stages for the coming year.¹⁹² In December 1971, the Missouri School of Journalism received approval from the university to organize itself into three departments of editorial, advertising, and broadcasting. It was an official organizational structure that upgraded the sequence into its own department and in turn acknowledged the professionalization of the broadcast journalism industry. Thus, after many struggles and discussions, the dream to legitimize broadcast journalism into the mainstream School of Journalism was realized.

¹⁹¹ Edward Lambert, letter to Dean Fisher, 20 April 1971 (MU Archives, C:11/6/2, Box 1, FF13).

¹⁹² The KBIA radio station (noncommercial) was established at the University of Missouri–Columbia in 1972, after obtaining a license from the FCC in 1968; Columbia Missourian, “University to Get FM Radio Station,” March 1, 1968 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 1).

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Unlike the popular reception that radios received in American society, education for radio found a lukewarm response in academic circles. The proposal to establish a broadcast journalism curriculum was the subject of intense consideration among many universities, but only a few eventually carried out their plans. The educators at the Missouri School of Journalism succeeded in convincing the university; the journey began in 1936 and spanned several decades until establishment at last in 1971. Focusing on this successful case, the study began by examining how broadcast journalism educators at Missouri communicated to assert the legitimacy of the new program. Primary documents such as correspondences, reports, testimonies, and speeches served to document their method of persuasion. Since the events showed that participants in the discussion were strongly rooted to their field, this study used sociological institutionalism to organize the characteristics of their interactions with other constituents. The study further informed this exploration by examining why the educators' rhetoric resulted in the broadcast journalism curriculum gaining full legitimacy by 1971, with the establishment of a department. The findings point out that for successful acceptance of a broadcast journalism curriculum, the journalism school had to serve as the mediator between the industry and the university, helping to draw out ideas and concerns from one institution and transferring them to another.

As the new medium of radio appeared and expanded rapidly in society, journalism schools were occupied with developing a print curriculum and waited for the

new broadcast industry to blaze the trail in the profession. When the dust settled from this rapid and somewhat haphazard trail creation, broadcast journalists saw themselves left out of the main loop of the broadcasters and instead bound to their print counterparts. A rescue was in order, and they turned some of their cries for help toward journalism schools. Meanwhile, journalism schools had also looked toward the industry with interest and could not help but wonder how to incorporate the medium in their curriculum. Would the venerable and cautious university—with little interest or experience in broadcasting—be persuaded to listen to the broadcast journalists? The educators took up the challenge of initiating dialogues with university officials; they thought it was worth a try.

Operational Linkage

Although industry had broken ground through experimentation, the road to success was long and treacherous due to journalism schools' uncertain standing in universities. After all, schools grew alongside developments in broadcasting but were not part of the broadcast industry. Nor were schools completely part of universities, because they were simply different creatures compared to their more scholarly domains. Furthermore, schools had only begun to take their first steps in curriculum development. Being youthful did not imbue them with enough authority to be convincing as legitimate institutions. In these ways, the broadcast educators ended up being caught in the middle of two more powerful institutions, and their solution to overcoming a possible stalemate can be addressed by the first part of the research question: *How did proponents of broadcast journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism persuade the university to*

create a curriculum? To gain legitimacy, they convinced the factions using three main techniques.

First, the analysis has shown that broadcast journalists looked at the recent past's antagonism between press and broadcasting. The broadcast educators heeded historical lessons and took care to not stir up old conflicts. Based on their knowledge of previous tensions, the educators at Missouri advised university officials to establish a non-commercial radio station. The decision lingered and was shelved during World War II, while the journalism school arranged with a local commercial radio station to begin providing broadcast instruction. The educators immediately noticed the broadcast practices of rip and read instead of reporting. They expressed dissatisfaction with practices that were influenced by historic control of broadcasting by the press. So when talks about curriculum resumed in the late 1940s with an eye toward television, broadcast educators changed their perspective after considering the disadvantages of current broadcast practices and the university's own failed history of entering broadcasting in the 1920s. Instead of tiptoeing around commercial interests, they urged bold entry into commercial territory to compete on the same level because they reasoned that it would ensure the financial success and independence of the television station, thus providing better instructional opportunities for students. By considering the history of the industry as well as the university, the broadcast educators understood the industry's needs and convinced university decision makers by conveying these ideas in terms they could best understand.

The second technique used by the broadcast journalism educators was cooperation and exchange of information with the industry. This was necessary so educators could

understand work practices and help the industry in its attempt to professionalize the broadcast field. The solution was to forge links between radio stations and their personnel and to begin teaching standards to the next generation of broadcast journalists. This plan of action resonated with the university because research was its familiar parlance, and by opening up discussions, the educators provided a role for the university to play; it is easier to persuade when an actor feels needed and useful. In addition, the educators pointed out a lack of standards in the broadcast journalism industry that resulted in lower quality of programming. The formulation of standards was the university's domain, so the educators convinced the decision makers by offering the university to take on what it does well. Persuading also comes much easier if the actors can use talents and skills to contribute to the success of a project.

The third technique of persuasion was differentiating broadcast journalism from print journalism. To do this, the broadcast journalists led the way in changing terminology and exhorting others in the industry to improve the quality and quantity of news. Taking this role of leadership made it easier for the broadcast educators to make a case to the university that broadcast journalism should have a separate curriculum from print because the elements of the practice are fundamentally different. Through meetings and the distribution of relevant documents, the industry and the educators joined forces to analyze and identify the uniqueness of broadcasting. The educators also made way for acceptance of the new curriculum by expanding the definition of journalism and inviting industry leaders to present speeches at the university.

So through continued organization within the industry, pursuit of independent reporting, and even identification of skills that differentiated broadcast journalists from

print journalists, the broadcast journalists were able to connect with university administrators and explain the curriculum's benefits. The university then allowed the journalism school to expand the number of broadcasting courses so it could create a broadcast journalism sequence in 1947. It also led to the establishment of a commercial television station in 1953. But once the television station was in full operation, there came another test for broadcasters to see if all that they persuaded would be realized for the university.

The challenges were so numerous that sometimes the mere happiness of having obtained an independent television station kept them going. The university-owned station was hammered with financial woes, so their finances were typically in the red and employees continually left for better pay. Accusations flew in from commercial news organizations that the university was contaminated by traditional broadcast practices that aim to gain audiences by using what is popular instead of seeking to fulfill public service. Finally, the station almost had its FCC license revoked because of substantial deterioration of the facilities. However, the broadcast journalism educators joined forces with the industry, alumni, and other academic departments to again persuade the university about the benefits of retaining the station. In other words, they used the tactic of cooperation and organization to argue that the university should not lose hope in the venture. The effort to persuade was again successful. When the educators overcame this second battle over the maintenance of the university station, they quickly seized upon the opportunity to firmly establish the legitimacy of the broadcast journalism curriculum at the journalism school by making the sequence into a department in 1971.

Theoretical Linkage

The sociological theory of institutionalism suggests that the decisions and actions of an institution are predictable because actors within a particular institution typically choose to traverse a path that others have tested previously. Following an already established path is advantageous because it offers convenience and efficiency in decision making. However, it can also restrict the choices of future paths, a pattern that is evident in responses to new technologies, according to sociologist Paul Starr:

For better or worse, once the twig was bent, the tree started to grow in a particular direction—private interest accumulated, ideological defenses developed, and what was once an open question became a hardened institutional reality.¹⁹³

The challenge of this path entrenchment is that once a new idea or actor arrives, the institution exhibits exclusionary tendencies. Persistence of this pattern has the potential to blindside the institution to advantageous developments outside its familiar realm and thus leads to a withering of the institution's effectiveness and ultimately its legitimacy.

As in other universities, broadcast journalism educators at Missouri encountered this challenge when trying to convince the university to develop a curriculum that reflects developments in the industry. Analysis has shown that they were ultimately successful in their goal. So the ensuing issue this study addressed was why an institution might be persuaded to veer from the originally intended path-dependent line of the future. The second part of the research question is relevant here: *Why were these reasons [of persuasion] effective in bringing about the desired result?* The parabolic model serves to explain the phenomenon.

¹⁹³ Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

The main theoretical significance rests with the broadcast journalism educators because they convinced the two more powerful constituents. The effect that these educators had on the interaction is that they mediated between the divergent visions and goals of the two sides. In illustrative form (see figure 1 in chapter 4), the result of their efforts resembles a parabola. From the center point (or the vertex, as is known in terms of a parabola), they connected the two institutions by drawing ideas from one and conveying them to the other. The result of the model's effect on path dependence can be seen in figure 2, whereby the model created a juncture point and the institutional paths began tilting ever so slightly toward each other as opposed to progressing in the straight path that was anticipated. The force of the educators' argument was strong enough that the distance of the lines was gradually minimized until they reached a common point of understanding.

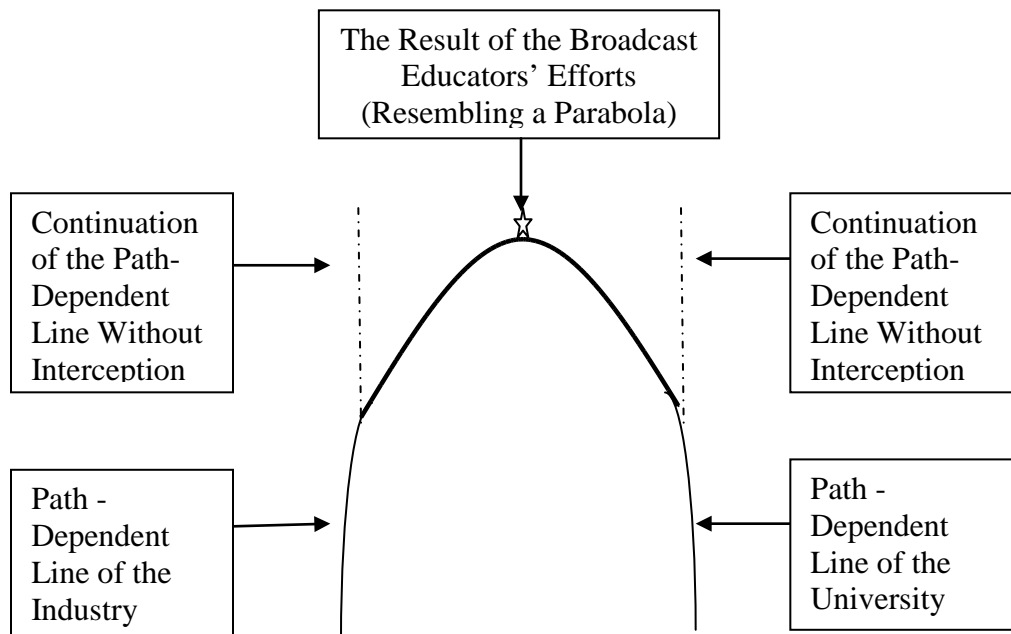


Figure 2: The Parabolic Model's Effect on Path Dependence

The parabolic model holds explanatory power. For one, it suggests that a mutualistic relationship is important to strengthening the legitimacy of all actors. Some struggles cannot be overcome alone, because it is difficult to identify with the experiences and historical background of another. That is when an actor with less vested roots can serve to mediate some differences in terms that are acceptable to all. In the present study, this actor was the broadcast educators who were newcomers relative to the more established industry and the university. The push-and-pull forces exerted by individual institutions endowed clarity to each institution's objectives. By being enlightened of internal and external stakes, all sides could then find common ground and set the once-divergent paths toward each other. Like a parabola, the lines had to approach from both sides; it would not be sufficient or realistic for one institution to do all the legwork, because the built-in defenses of an established institution do not permit a situation of complete sacrifice and no yielding from the other side. As this study has shown, each institution had its own contributions to make. By joining forces, the actors were able to increase professionalization of the broadcast journalism field. The development of standards was acceptable to all actors to reach their goals: The industry sought to liberate itself from the grips of the press and be acknowledged as an independent entity, even apart from broadcasters not involved in journalism; the university sought to impose some type of order and ethics on the not-so-docile journalism field; and the responsibility of training future broadcast journalists provided the educators with a sense of mission, responsibility, and a reason for existence. Thus, a mutualistic relationship was beneficial to all actors, because aiming for professionalization together strengthened individual legitimacy. Had they not joined forces and tried to modify the

path toward further development, they likely would have derailed the process. It was beneficial to have the cooperation of many diverse parts, because with different skills, they each had a role to play in the larger scheme. Although the costs were high and the time was in short supply, a mutualistic relationship served to emphasize that cooperation would be beneficial to all actors involved in the process. The parabolic model provides a solid explanation for why the incorporation of broadcast journalism curriculum was successful.

Another way that the parabolic model holds explanatory power is through conceptual linkage of path dependence in institutionalism theory. In sociological terms, the parabolic model helps to identify a constitutive moment whereby future path development goes one direction rather than down other possible trajectories. By using the terms of discussion in ways resonant to institutions' understanding, the broadcast journalism educators persuaded the university to incorporate new ideas into its system. As discussed, success of the university coming together with the industry endowed the broadcast journalism educators with legitimacy because these actors were instrumental in opening up channels of communication and leading toward continual development in broadcasting. In other words, the parabolic model provides a catalyst for change in a path-dependent system. It marks the creation of something new. This development is a good indicator of the health of the system to be open to changes. However, a new beginning does not mean that history is thrown out—on the contrary. As figure 2 shows, the parabolic model uses the existing foundations of the past to build up to change, rather than jettison the path-dependent lines of the past. The model contributes to the theory of institutionalism because it has the strength to modify potential directions of a path.

Evaluation of the Literature

The annals of broadcast journalism history have been well laid out by other researchers, and this study has encountered some of these ideas along the way. As the Missouri School of Journalism is embedded in the general culture of journalism schools by its nature as an institution, it is inevitable that the school shares commonalities with other institutions experimenting with broadcast journalism curricula. But since the focus of most literature was not on the incorporation of broadcast journalism curriculum into the print curriculum, this study aimed to reconcile the arguments found in the literature and evaluate them in the specific context of Missouri's experience.

One major instigator for the idea of the Missouri School of Journalism, according to Stephen Banning,¹⁹⁴ was the Missouri Press Association in the late 1800s and early 1900s. A few decades later when the school was considering the formation and development of a broadcast journalism curriculum, it did not yet have a similar professional organization to guide the way and vouch for its legitimacy. In fact, as noted in the findings from primary documents, broadcast journalists throughout the state approached the Missouri School of Journalism to request contacts of stations and explore the possibility of convening formally. This was the case in 1939, when Dean Frank Martin responded to a radio manager in Joplin, Missouri, that the radio stations in Missouri were rather disparate in their practices.¹⁹⁵ However, this is not to discount the role of professional associations in helping to develop the curriculum, because around the same time, the NAB stepped up to leadership through the creation of standards for

¹⁹⁴ Banning, "Press Clubs."

¹⁹⁵ Frank Martin, letter to Tom Aden of WMBH radio station in Joplin, 7 February 1939 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder "Radio 1937-42").

professionals.¹⁹⁶ Just a few years later in 1945, it announced ways to professionalize the broadcast industry by differentiating itself from the press.¹⁹⁷ These situations show a similar path in the story of broadcast curricular development as noted by Banning, because professional associations and other committees actively sought the involvement of educators to professionalize the industry. The difference in the outcome results from the fact that Banning focused his work on the early development of print curriculum, and this study extended the time line further and found a slight change in the direction of influence. Banning attributed the increase in professionalization and organization to state press associations due to the urbanization of American society. The findings from this study acknowledged continuation of urbanization in America, but it also showed that the sphere of influence was expanded to a wider geographic network by the 1930s and 1940s. So whereas Banning highlighted state associations' influence on the development of print journalism curriculum, this study pointed out the prominence of national associations in the development of broadcast journalism curriculum. In this way, urbanization can still be considered one of the main factors for the impetus for organization, but as the world "gets smaller" (i.e., as technology allows easier and more frequent connections among people who are geographically distant), the expansion in the sphere of influence figures prominently in the explanation for the rise of modern institutions.

A similar expansion in concept is necessary when new technology is introduced in society, according to Barbie Zelizer.¹⁹⁸ The analysis of this study has shown that

¹⁹⁶ "The New Broadcasting Code," *New York Times*.

¹⁹⁷ National Association of Broadcasters, *Radio News Recommendations*, 17 September 1945 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3, FF69).

¹⁹⁸ Zelizer, "Journalism and the Academy."

journalism educators discussed this exact issue in meetings as early as 1935.¹⁹⁹ They realized that the definition of *journalism* relating to print insufficiently represented the new media landscape. That they should advocate for the revision to the concept of journalism points out that broadcasting was not yet incorporated into the traditional concept of journalism related to the print medium. By the 1960s, however, national associations argued that contrary to what some broadcasters advocated, broadcasting should not be considered a “Fifth Estate” but instead remain as part of the “Fourth Estate.” The broadcasters’ acceptance of their field as falling under the categorization of journalism showed that the definition of *journalism* had expanded to accommodate the various platforms. Once the concept became more inclusionary, broadcasters could truly consider themselves journalists. Thus, as Zelizer noted, the concept of journalism undergoes change with the acceptance of a new medium for practicing journalism. This ultimately signals the field’s legitimacy in society.

As this study has argued, the development of an education curriculum is an integral component of professionalization. Because practical instruction provides valuable training for students to carry out future work in the field, universities have owned broadcast facilities. When radios first emerged as a viable broadcast medium, universities looked favorably on non-commercial stations to fulfill their mission to educate, according to Tim Vos.²⁰⁰ Likewise, James Angell noted that commercial radio stations wanted nothing to do with educational institutions.²⁰¹ This was the setting for

¹⁹⁹ J. Edward Gerald, letter to members of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, 14 March 1936 (MU Archives, C:11/1/3, Box 4, Folder “Radio 1937–42”), comment made by John Drewry of Georgia.

²⁰⁰ Vos, “A Cultural Explanation for Early Broadcast Policy.”

²⁰¹ Angell, “Educational Objectives in Broadcasting,”

universities' initial consideration of the broadcast curriculum. However, a shift in thinking became evident as time passed. Whereas universities in former times considered a non-commercial station to be most appropriate, institutions like the University of Missouri later sought to create commercial stations, with the conviction that training students in a commercial station would afford the most resemblance to a real-life industry setting. First by default through the arrangement with KFRU for radio broadcasting, Missouri used a commercial station for teaching students, and later by deliberate decision, it sought to operate a commercial television in line with its historical preference for practical instruction. This phenomenon serves to reinforce the move away from the belief of the late 1800s as expressed by Eugene Camp²⁰² that journalists are born and not made. However, James Carey's description that journalism education in universities served to "domesticate the unruly class"²⁰³ had not altogether disappeared, as journalism educators continued to assume a didactic role. This idea is in line with institutionalism theory because journalism educators are institutionally located in the university and therefore take on roles relevant to that environment. Even when the University of Missouri considered operating a commercial station, which was historically deemed antithetical to education, the educators adapted their rhetoric so that proposals would be congruous with university goals of improvement through structure and education.

Educational needs and public needs are sometimes at odds, and the Missouri School of Journalism had to be cognizant of this dichotomy to persuade the university, a land-grant institution. Laurence Vesey explained that Midwestern land-grant colleges had

²⁰² Camp, *Journalists: Born or Made?*

²⁰³ Carey, "U.S. Journalism Education."

a utilitarian purpose to serve general public interests and needs.²⁰⁴ Because the University of Missouri was one such institution, practical courses and a commercial station were not in direct contrast to its goals and perceived role in society. Rather, it served a dual purpose of serving the students and the overall community in which it was located. As this study has shown, journalism educators found the dual-purpose argument effective in pointing out to the university the benefits of developing a broadcast journalism curriculum. Therefore, the university was able to step away from stringently associating an academic curriculum with theoretical knowledge and consider how the broadcasting field with a more utilitarian bent could serve the public. The needs of the general public and students do not always intersect, but at least educators had these arguments available at their disposal to persuade the university to develop a curriculum.

The main theoretical underpinning for this study was the theory of institutionalism, with a particular focus on path dependence. One argument made by Paul Starr is that established institutions have an interest in hindering the development of new institutions.²⁰⁵ A survey of the print journalism industry's reception of broadcasting supports this idea. However, findings of this study show that journalism educators at Missouri did not become entangled in bitter disputes over the incorporation of broadcast journalism into the existing journalism curriculum. If the print educators and broadcast educators at the Missouri School of Journalism had been divisive, that would not have been favorable to journalism instruction's standing as a whole in the university. In comparison to deep journalistic roots held by the press through the centuries, journalism schools were relative newcomers to universities, so the press–radio conflict that had

²⁰⁴ Vesey, 1965, as cited in Lerner, *Chalk-Stained Wretches*.

²⁰⁵ Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

played out in the industry did not rage with full force in the university. Therefore, this study suggests that a check on power is most effective if the new institution is deemed to have enough similar functions as an established institution that it risks usurping its power. In this case, the broadcast journalism educators looked to the industry to guide the development of a curriculum. So not until the newcomers identify their unique role can they claim professionalization in a field; it is important to consider how profound the historical roots of that institution is. In line with Starr's point, this study showed that the behavior of institutions is self-protective (to the point of hindering another's development) by attempting to exert some constraints on the other. However, this study qualified this institutional tendency with the argument that one aspect to consider in the applicability of the theory of path dependence is the historical depth of that institution. A new institution has increased chances for success if the established institution is not firmly entrenched in its history and if it can help the older institution envision what might be by communicating in rhetoric familiar to that field.

Once the new institution finally breaks through institutional barriers, the next step after persuasion is to show successful results from its development. Paul Dressel and Beate Josephi both outlined a developmental path whereby the first stage is focusing on current needs and the second stage is contributing actively to the field by preparing for the future.²⁰⁶ The case of Missouri has shown that journalism educators at first reacted to the changes in the media landscape, but as demonstrated in the parabolic model, they were able to chart the direction of the broadcast journalism curriculum when they successfully linked and connected understanding between the industry and the university.

²⁰⁶ Dressel, *Liberal Education and Journalism*; Josephi, "Journalism Education."

Taking the steps of the parabolic model helped endow their goals with legitimacy and anticipate future needs.

Significance and Paving the Way for the Future

Addressing the how and the why of Missouri's broadcast journalism curriculum has revealed at least two major points of theoretical significance. One aim of this study was to develop a better understanding of how a particular theory informs a phenomenon. Because this research focused on actors' behaviors and effects on the creation and development of institutions, the theory of sociological institutionalism provided the foundational understanding for the interactions. Like most journalism educators around the country, those at the Missouri School of Journalism proceeded slowly by sampling various ideas. This uncertainty is evidenced by the journalism dean suggesting that it will be sufficient for broadcast journalism instruction to replicate the print curriculum, with the reason that at the core, all journalism is the same.²⁰⁷ The process of path dependence is evident here, almost to the point of dismissing further thought on the curriculum based on the convenience of doing things the way they always did. Thus, these first steps of curricular development at Missouri reinforce institutionalism theory. Later when the university decided to operate a commercial television station,²⁰⁸ this again acknowledged the path familiar to the university, of which attention was put on practical training and the notions of providing public service through broadcast programs. Examples supporting the theory abound in the analysis of primary sources.

²⁰⁷ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Private James Files, 10 November 1944 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4 Box 3, FF61).

²⁰⁸ Frank Luther Mott, letter to Professor Roscoe Ellard of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, 27 October 1950 (MU Archives, C:11/1/4, Box 3).

Building on institutionalism, however, this study contributed a model that further refines the theory. In particular, the research showed how and why a new actor can find legitimacy in the midst of entrenched thoughts and practices. The parabolic model served to “illuminate small-scale processes”²⁰⁹ that are involved in convening two divergent tracks of path dependence. Analysis of the rhetoric used in many of the national meetings demonstrated the applicability of the model because broadcast educators participated in these discussions and returned to universities with pertinent information that they then conveyed in an effective way (i.e., in line with university values) to suggest that a change is needed in the curriculum. Also, through correspondence with other journalism programs and identification of differences between the broadcast medium and print, the educators were able to identify their unique functions for university officials. This increased their legitimacy in the views of the university and helped them achieve their goal to exist and possess some level of authority to independently determine their future path.

Besides these theoretical contributions, this study has also shed light on the consideration of broadcast journalism curriculum by other universities. This is significant because it acknowledges the fact that nothing exists in a vacuum and that the journey to create and develop a curriculum required the contribution of different ideas and people. The study also laid out a historical development of broadcast journalism education to understand challenges faced by actors of the industry, university, and journalism programs and schools. The confluence of these entities at a specific time in history suggests the complexities inherent in the analysis of journalism curricula.

²⁰⁹ Personal communication, Victoria Johnson, July 27, 2011.

The significance of this socio-historical study is far-reaching, but this does not allow for the ignorance of limitations. One limitation in working with historical issues is that research is mostly dependent on written records of the past. It was fortuitous that an archives collection was available for this study, which enabled a more comprehensive construction of discussions and events that transpired. However, an archive may not contain all the pieces of a puzzle, and it is inevitable for some old records to never make it to an organized collection. Even with access to records, a historical researcher must accept the information with the understanding that written communication cannot reveal the whole situation. Thus, it is necessary to work within the bounds of resources that are available.

Since the focus was on the discussions and results at the Missouri School of Journalism, another limitation is the challenge of overcoming applicability to only a specific case. However, the study transcends this limitation because it provides a window on broadcast journalism curriculum models explored by other universities. Through individual correspondences and group meetings, journalism educators from various universities shared information about their institutions' approaches to broadcasting. Their exchanges showed that experimentation was common to all and method was common to none. In trying to grapple with new issues arising from a new medium, the schools offered advice to one another, and the result was a unique imprint of a curriculum based on the desires and perceived needs of individual institutions. In addition, because the University of Missouri is a large public university with a free-standing journalism school, it exhibits a high level of complexity because, by virtue of being a public institution, it is

beholden to a large number of interests outside the university.²¹⁰ Thus, the myriad challenges that Missouri incurred are likely to run the gamut of experiences faced by all other schools.

On the other side of the limitation spectrum, the extensive time range of this study could restrict the consideration given to minutiae of examples. Corresponding to this, there is risk that some significant events may be overlooked in the analysis. However, making a methodological choice between a larger scope and a smaller scope of study naturally leads to this dilemma, and decisions must be made with such understanding. By looking at patterns occurring through a lengthy period of time, this study was better able to test the applicability of the main theory and build a model. Rather than hone in on a specific time frame, the large overview enabled the development of a model that has increased applicability to other situations.

Related to the advantage of this applicability, the study can provide a comparative perspective for future work on other institutions. An analysis of this type might test the usefulness of the theoretical model in explaining phenomena. Even when the focus is shifted from an institution to a medium, research can examine the relevance this case has for modern-day journalism technology. As online news calls for reconsideration among more traditional models of journalism, so far as to threaten their very existence, it may be interesting to see how this affects existing curricula and whether the parabolic model designed to explain traditional mediums of television, radio, and print can hold up to a shake-up in the technological revolution. Yet another avenue of research can focus on the decisions of regulatory entities such as the FCC. This study provides an explanation for why the University of Missouri decided to apply for a commercial station license, but the

²¹⁰ Duderstadt, *Fire, Ready, Aim!*

reason the FCC began granting commercial licenses to universities was beyond the scope of the research. Not least, this study examined the professionalization of journalism via education. Future work can explore other elements of professionalization, because including multiple strands of influence can continue to strengthen knowledge of the journalistic field. Through the understanding of the past, explanations can suggest practical uses for contemporary phenomena and lead to future developments...or dare we say paths?

APPENDIX

Exhibit 1

Dedication of University of Missouri's KOMU-TV Station, 1954



Note: This is a photo of the key players in establishing the KOMU-TV station (from left to right): President Frederick Middlebush, Governor of Missouri Phil Donnelly, Board of Curators Member Lester Cox, and Professor Edward Lambert.

Source: Courtesy of the University of Missouri Archives, C:1/141/8, FF74.

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