

***University** – is a generic title that also includes colleges, school systems, and state agencies.

Will your station survive in its present university reporting structure with the ever-increasing need to raise dollars to sustain and grow a public station? Since two-thirds of the public radio stations are owned by universities, it is important to review the strengths and weaknesses of each of the possible reporting structures. Where does a station fit within a university structure in a way that benefits both the university and the station?

Survey

In USA's 2008 - 2009 survey sent to university-licensed stations, **71% of station managers said they report to a "Vice President" or higher (Chancellor or Provost)**. Those station managers reporting to a "Vice President" or higher included **57% reporting to a "Vice President"** with varied titles (Sr. VP, Associate VP, Assistant VP, and Executive VP), **7% reporting to a Chancellor** (Vice Chancellor, Assistant Vice Chancellor), and **7% reporting to a Provost** (Associate Provost). Of the remaining managers responding to the USA survey, 18% said they reported to a Dean, 9% reported to a Director (School), and 4% reported to a Department Chair.

University Office Titles

Although it is important to keep in mind that job titles can have varied definitions and responsibilities, here are examples of university office titles to which a station may report and examples of ways in which these title-holders may view the value and measurement on a station. Included are the percentages of station managers reporting to each university office.

- **Chancellor - Sometimes called a President or Rector. (7%)** The head administrator of the university. Usually his or her primary function is to raise money and if state-funded, to lobby for tax-based support. This reporting structure moves the station closest to the power within the university – the Trustees or the Board of Regents. **This reporting structure reflects the**

university's recognition of the importance of public stations. The average tenure of the head university administrator is about five years. When the top administrator changes, reporting structure modifications often follow. New top administrators often bring their upper administrative personnel with them, so when there is a President or Chancellor change, the VP's and Provost often change within the next two years. In contemporary hiring practices, the university trend is to move away from academicians and move toward individuals with political, fundraising, and CEO experience. Therefore, this position is usually highly political. Like other top administrators, the Chancellor's **measurement is more outward-focused** and is usually more likely to value public service, life-long learning, and arts and cultural awareness.

- **Provost or Executive Vice President (7%)** – Often second in command behind the Chancellor or President and the person actually running the internal affairs of the university. This reporting structure moves the station closer to the power within the university – the Trustees or the Board of Regents. **This reporting structure reflects the university's recognition of the importance of public stations.** Again, the Provost's **measurement is more outward-focused** and therefore more likely to value public service, life-long learning, and arts cultural awareness.
- **Vice President (57%)** – *Examples Academic Affairs, Outreach and Public Service, or Budget & Planning* - **The majority of public stations report to a person at the VP level. This reporting structure reflects the university's recognition of the importance of public stations.** Reporting to the VP of budget and finance is often advantageous as he or she is in better control of university money and budgets. Also, if you are doing any expansion, your proposals will have to go through them for approval anyway. The Vice President's **measurement is more outward-focused** and is usually more likely to value public service, life-long learning, and arts cultural awareness.

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**University
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- **Dean (18%)** – Reporting to a Dean is usually better than reporting to a department or school. In particular the Dean of Arts and Science is often excellent at protecting firewall issues such as “freedom of speech” and buffering against upper administration attempts at influencing programming content. Of course, practically speaking, if a station must report to a Dean, it is probably best to report to the Dean with the largest fiscal budget. During budget-cut times, the university is less likely to cut an academic Dean’s budget. It will be protected more than other areas because STUDENTS and student training are a university priority. The academic areas are usually the first to receive new moneys in better times. A Deans’ **measurement is inward focused** and is usually not centered on public service, but more likely to place value on life-long learning, and the arts and culture especially if it is the Dean of Arts & Sciences.
- **School (9%)** – *Example Journalism & Broadcasting & Public Relations* – This reporting level is slightly broader than a department but is still defined by training and educating students. One positive for this structure is that there is usually an understanding of news integrity and firewall issues and more appreciation for public service programming. Still, the school’s **measurement is inward-focused** and is usually more centered on student training than on public service and arts and cultural awareness.
- **Department Head (4%) - Example #1 - Communications Department** - Generically speaking, a station’s primary focus is public service, and public service is not usually the primary concern of a department. The department’s main concern is usually focused on TRAINING STUDENTS, so a department’s performance **measurement of success focuses on how many students are involved** with the station and how many hours of training students received? (Prior to 1970, university-licensed public stations were called “educational stations” and were primarily used as training laboratories for students. Most stations then were under a department structure.) **Example #2 - University Public Relations (PR) Department** – Though the PR department usually has a

broader licensee interest, this reporting structure tends to lead to more station news firewall breach attempts. Often, the primary question by administrators from PR departments is what has the station done for the university lately? The PR department is paid to promote the university, so their station measurement will focus on how often the station has promoted the university. Again, this department's **measurement is inward-focused** and is usually not centered on public service, life-long learning, or the arts and cultural awareness.

An Efficient Reporting Structure

An efficient university reporting structure is one that results in an effective line of communications between station management and the FCC broadcast license holder. The license holder is usually the governing body (board of regents, board of trustees, or school board). **The university's administration and governing body should recognize that the FCC licenses the station to serve the community's interests and needs** on a daily basis and therefore utilize broad outward-focused performance measurement criteria that define the station's importance and influence its success within the university and throughout the community.

The reporting structure should allow the station management, the university administration, and the governing body to have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities and a commitment to the mission of the station and university. The reporting structure should effectively enhance cooperation between the station and the university as both strive to fulfill their mutual as well as separate missions.

By placing a station high on the administrative reporting ladder, the university is broadening the station's focus which improves the station's ability to surpass university performance measurements. Since top-level administrators are more likely to embrace public service as an important station focus, they are also more likely to understand the importance of the station to the university.

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A station's performance can be measured by several university focuses (Academics, Research, Outreach, & Public Service) and **it is the responsibility of the station management to interpret the station's mission and accomplishments into paradigms valued by the university.** Also, it is the responsibility of university administrators to be cognizant of the broad contributions the station provides to the different areas of university importance.

It is useful to compare your station's reporting chain of command to those of the Athletic Department, the Alumni Association, and/or the University Foundation. These university entities are usually recognized as broad-based outward-focused units representing the university as a whole and providing outreach and services to external communities. Your station should be recognized equally with these entities and in many cases the outreach your station provides far exceeds the external contacts resulting from the others.