

FAQs for Community Members Concerned with the end of Mind Over Matters on KEXP

The following are some questions that members of our community have posed to KEXP staff regarding our decision to launch new programs in the 6-9AM weekend time slot.

When, why and how did KEXP decide to cancel Mind Over Matters?

Because *Mind Over Matters* has occupied such a unique space on our airwaves -- being the only program focused on general public affairs rather than focused on delivering our nonprofit mission of enriching lives by championing music and discovery -- the question of whether or not to continue to produce and air *Mind Over Matters* is something that our radio programming staff has evaluated for some time.

As one might expect at a station like KEXP, various staff members come up with ideas for new shows and formats from time to time, and sometimes these ideas are converted into specific proposals. As a rule, radio programming concepts and ideas are evaluated for mission-fit, potential impact, and alignment with the general feedback we receive from listeners every day of the year through listener surveys, direct feedback to DJs and producers, and feedback through our Guest Services, Donor Services, and Community Programs staff. In this case, a package of program proposals was put together by our staff that we believed reflected an advancement of our mission, and a deeper commitment to members of our community who had been under-invited in the past.

The final decision was made in early September to move ahead with a programming change that would require *Mind Over Matters* to be cancelled. The program's host/producers were then informed of the decision the following week, at which point we asked them to be part of planning how to move forward with communicating this transition to the listeners and the community. We have pursued this strategy with the intention of providing the *M.O.M.* producers, hosts and contributors a three-month timeline to help ease the transition prior to the end of the program on KEXP.

Who made the decision to cancel Mind Over Matters? Who decides what shows air?

KEXP's Senior Programming staff, led by Chief Content Officer Kevin Cole, makes all decisions about which shows to air and when, including the decision to develop and air new programs in the 6-9AM weekend slot and the resulting cancelation of *Mind Over Matters*. These decisions are also evaluated by KEXP's Executive Team, including KEXP Executive Director Tom Mara. When evaluating programming, our staff take into account general community feedback through survey collection, audience use data, direct feedback to our DJs and producers, Guest Services, Donor Services, and Community Programs staff, and alignment with our mission to enrich your life by championing music and discovery. We also ask how programming impacts our three constituent groups: music lovers, artists and Seattle's music and culture ecosystem. In this case, we bring to the air youth-led music programming; a public affairs program exploring issues in our music ecosystem; and a new specialty show for music lovers to explore, all of which more directly uphold our music mission and more directly serve our three constituencies.

Was this decision made by the KEXP Board of Directors? Did they vote on it?

No. The KEXP Board was informed of the decision to develop new programs, and the resulting cancelation of *Mind Over Matters*, but they did not vote on this programming decision.

Where was the community input to this community station's decision? Were you trying to keep it a secret?

We have heard from dozens of listeners in the community about how this programming choice will impact them. We deeply and sincerely value this feedback, and will use it to inform decision-making and communication with audiences in the future. The feedback expressing disappointment in this choice is not a surprise, and is indeed a reflection of the great work that the *Mind Over Matters* crew have done over the years.

We always welcome comments and feedback from the community on all of KEXP's programming. On a daily basis, KEXP DJs receive hundreds of emails with comments, suggestions, and criticisms of our programming. Our guest services team, Community Programs staff, and tour docents interact with dozens of listeners per day, who share questions and comments on a regular basis. We employ a full-time Outreach Coordinator to build relationships with groups and individuals whose perspectives have historically been overlooked or under-invited in our programming and in media generally. We also conduct regular surveys to evaluate various programs and services, including radio programming, tour program, live in-studios, and education programs like Mastering the Hustle and Audioasis Youth Initiative. In all, we collect tens of thousands of pieces of feedback on our programming from community members throughout the year. This feedback helps our staff make their choices about how our radio programming can best achieve our mission and serve our audience, including choices about which shows to air and when.

Decisions that are made which might impact the future employment of KEXP staff members are by their nature very sensitive. When this decision was final, the people who were most impacted - the part-time staff members charged with producing and hosting *Mind Over Matters* - were informed first. We invited those staff members to participate in deciding how we should tell the rest of the staff, volunteers, and the public about these programming changes, provided them with information about the resources KEXP would be making available to ease the transition, and asked them what they'd like to do next with their work. We have pursued this strategy with the intention of providing *M.O.M.* contributors, producers, and hosts a three-month timeline to help ease the transition prior to the end of the program on KEXP.

Why did you make this change now?

We made this decision because we feel there's an opportunity to have more impact in the community with new programming that aligns with our mission and we're now in a position to invest more resources in our public affairs programming. This includes: increased staff to produce features, interviews, music-focused commentary and online offerings that explore the intersections of music and culture with politics, activism, identity, health and wellness, history, news and more; a new team focusing on community partnership and education which will enable youth to get hands-on experience creating local radio programming and allow more community involvement in public affairs programs; and a larger digital team to create online music experiences.

Was this decision made to save money, or to get more money for KEXP?

No. The new programming will cost significantly more than it cost to produce *Mind Over Matters*. We are deepening an investment in community programming, and developing that programming in alignment with our mission to enrich your life by championing music and discovery.

Programming decisions are based on mission alignment and potential public service impact, not what might be most compelling for raising funds. After those decisions are made, we craft our fundraising strategy around the services and programs that our programming staff develop.

Is KEXP doing away with public interest and public affairs programming?

No. In fact, we will be deepening and focusing our investment in public affairs programming, and featuring even more diverse and varied community voices within that programming. Currently, there are between 1.5 and 2.5 hours of locally produced public interest and public affairs programs that air on *Mind Over Matters* each weekend, along with 3.5 to 4.5 hours of non-local, syndicated programming. The new schedule will include 3 hours of locally-produced public interest programming, including a one-hour show produced by local youth as a component of our KEXP Youth DJs education program, and a two-hour show focused on public affairs from a music and culture perspective.

Our new public affairs program will be in large part composed of contributions from diverse communities, sharing stories and perspectives in their own words, and informed by their own experiences. This programming will be produced by a new full-time staff member, a position which will be added this fall. This position will oversee the production process and work closely with KEXP's Outreach Coordinator to ensure that community voices continue to be represented in the new public affairs program. Further, we will be making a deeper investment in traditional broadcast and digital distribution of public affairs programming, and creating more connections between our public affairs format programming and our curated music programming. We will post the public affairs producer position for public recruitment the week of October 8th.

KEXP regularly uses music to address topics of public importance, with special programming features typically scheduled several days per month, including our *Music Heals* series, highlighting issues like mental illness, substance use disorders, living with cancer, and overcoming grief. Additionally, in the past year, we've also dedicated substantial time in our programming to celebrate immigrant rights and LGBTQIA+ rights, and participated in celebrations of various communities including Black History Month, Juneteenth, Mexican Independence Day and more. This work has been carried out through active collaboration with diverse communities, and coordinated and produced primarily by our Outreach Coordinator. The common thread in this programming is that we use music to illuminate, inform, and inspire our listeners' understanding of cultural, social, and political conversations taking place in our communities.

Finally, we firmly believe that championship of music - and specifically local music and music created by independent and emerging artists - is in and of itself a service in the public interest. We exist as a nonprofit not simply to operate a public radio station, but to advocate for and advance the cause of music and musicians as vital contributors to our quality of life. That belief that music makes our lives better - particularly music from new and emerging artists - drives our programming choices on the air and off.

Is KEXP prioritizing music over politics, news and information?

KEXP's mission is to enrich your life by championing music and discovery, and inspired by that mission we pursue our work with music at the center. However, we will not shy away from discussions of intersections between current events and politics, power, equity, and justice -- in

fact we use the lens of music and culture to illuminate and explore new dimensions to these discussions and hopefully draw more people into them. Music and politics are not mutually exclusive. Current events nearly always have a nexus with art and culture. Our mission compels us to think deeply about the ways music and art inform and carry forward political and social movements, and our new programming will engage in that very conversation.

Did outside agencies, organizations, or individuals request or suggest that KEXP cancel *Mind Over Matters*?

No. The decision to develop new programming was rooted in a desire to best achieve our mission to enrich lives championing music and discovery through our radio programming. Canceling *Mind Over Matters* was not the result of pressure from outside agencies, organizations, or individuals.

Does KEXP staff or Board make this choice because they have a bias against the opinions expressed on M.O.M. and the syndicated programming run on M.O.M.?

The decision to remove *Mind Over Matters* from our programming schedule had nothing to do with the quality of the program, or the views that were expressed on the program or its segments. It had everything to do with a desire to create programming that was more aligned with KEXP's nonprofit mission to enrich lives by championing music and discovery.

What will happen to *Mind Over Matters* now? What will happen to *Sustainability Segment*? *Eat the Airwaves*? *Community Forum*?

We think *Mind Over Matters* is a high-quality radio program. We want to see the work of the *Mind Over Matters* crew continue, and in fact are currently in conversation with the program leads about how that can happen. It could be that some segments could be picked up by another radio station or platform. In that case, we will proactively help the existing audience find the new broadcast location of these segments using KEXP promotional resources, including air time, promotional spots, and digital promotion.

What is KEXP doing to help ease this transition for *Mind Over Matters* and the contributors?

We strongly believe that the producers and hosts of *Mind Over Matters* create work that is important and high-quality, and hope that it can continue on a platform with a better mission-fit. We've been in conversation with the program leads for the past couple of weeks. In that time, we've made clear our desire to make available the following resources:

- Studio time and other production resources for production of segments of the program.
- Assistance with seeking new broadcast or online distribution
- Promotional resources (air time, promo spots, digital ads) directing *M.O.M.* audience to the new broadcast or online locations of *M.O.M.* segments.
- Resource page at KEXP.ORG listing ways listeners can still hear syndicated portions of *M.O.M.* (Counterspin, the Bioneers, Alternative Radio, etc.), including other community radio stations carrying these types of programs.
- Archiving of past *M.O.M.* segments on KEXP.ORG
- Creating a mailing list for *M.O.M.* audience to keep connected with *M.O.M.* contributors in the future.

**Does KEXP comply with the transparency requirements of a community broadcaster?
Are the board minutes available for viewing?**

KEXP is committed to maintaining open records, and open board meetings, as required by law. We maintain a web page at KEXP.ORG/about/cpb that contains our compliance documents, as well as a public file that is on premises at 472 1st Ave N and available for public viewing. The public file is not required to hold Board minutes, although we choose to include minutes of KEXP Board meetings in the KEXP public file. Information about how to arrange access to the public file is also on the compliance page.

What is the pay or salary of board members and higher paid employees at KEXP?

KEXP Board Members are volunteers who receive no compensation for their work with KEXP. As required by law, the salaries of the highest-compensated individuals at KEXP are included in our annual 990 filing, available on our website at KEXP.ORG/about/cpb. For each role at KEXP, we evaluate salary data from comparable positions in our market, internal parity and equity, and individual experience and performance to make compensation decisions.

Who controls KEXP 90.3-FM?

KEXP 90.3 FM is licensed to Friends of KEXP, an independent 501c3 non-profit arts organization with a mission to enrich your life by championing music and discovery. Friends of KEXP took over the FCC broadcast license for the station from the University of Washington in 2014. This nonprofit organization is governed by a Board of Directors, who are ultimately responsible for the financial health of the organization, hiring the organization's chief executive, and determining strategic priorities in order to meet the organization's mission. Programming decisions for 90.3-FM are controlled by KEXP's radio programming staff. The largest share of our operating budget comes from donations from over 18,000 individual donors, with a median donation of \$120 per year. More information about KEXP is available on our website at KEXP.ORG/about.

Why should I support KEXP if you're taking my favorite show (or only show I listen to) off the air?

There are many wonderful nonprofit organizations, including nonprofit broadcasters, arts organizations and media organizations, who are doing great work in our community and are worthy of your philanthropic support. We believe that donors should support the organizations doing work they believe in. It's very possible that some segments of *Mind Over Matters* could be picked up by other nonprofit broadcasters, and we encourage you to explore supporting these broadcasters if they are doing work you value. We value your contribution as a donor, and if this decision means you will no longer be a donor, we are sorry to lose your support. If you would like to adjust or cancel an ongoing monthly donation to KEXP, you can do so by contacting donorservices@kexp.org.