

**TEXAS STUDENT MEDIA APPLICATION FORM  
STATION MANAGER OF KVRX RADIO**

Term of Office: June 1, 2019 - May 31, 2020

This application and supporting materials must be submitted to the TSM Business Office (via hard copy to room HSM 3.200 or via PDF emailed to serpas@austin.utexas.edu) by **Monday, April 29, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.**

This position is due to be appointed at the TSM Board meeting scheduled for **Friday, May 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.**

Please plan to attend and discuss your application with the Operating Trustees.

**Applicant Information**

Ethan Smith

Name

ELS 65

UT EID

KVRX ROCKS @UTEXAS.

Email Address

EDU

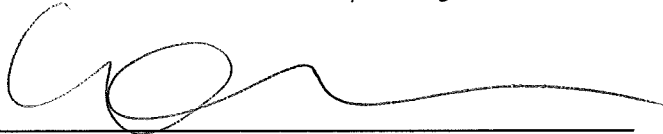
MUSIC / HIDD

Major

**Applicant Attestation / Authorization for Release of Information**

1. I am currently enrolled as a UT-Austin student.
2. By the start of my term of office, I will (if an undergraduate) have completed 12 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 2.0 or (if a graduate student) have completed 9 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 3.0.
3. I agree to demonstrate an understanding of media law and FCC regulations by passing an exam prepared by the Broadcast Adviser prior to taking position.
4. My application has been approved by at least 30% of the participants in the KVRX staff approval voting process.

I certify that to the best of my ability I have given true and accurate information concerning my scholastic and experience qualifications, and hereby grant permission for the Office of the Director, Texas Student Media, to verify said information. Further, I understand that this information will be provided to the TSM Board of Operating Trustees and will become part of the public record of TSM.



Signature of Applicant

4-24-19

Date

**It is recommended that you include supporting materials such as:**

A résumé

Your record of experience with KVRX (list positions and dates)

A letter outlining your qualifications, goals, plans for the position

Letters of recommendation

ETHAN SMITH

## QUALIFICATIONS, GOALS, AND PLANS FOR STATION MANAGER POSITION

### 1. QUALIFICATIONS

#### ***KVRX (2003-2008, 2018-2019)***

KVRX on-air DJ (5.5 years, 2004-2008, 2018-2019).

Served as Music Director (1 year, '07-'08)

Served as Host of Local Live (2 years, approx. '04-'06)

Local Live/Production Volunteer (6 years, '03-'08, '18-'19)

Hosted numerous specialty shows (Psych Rock, Krautrock, Close Enough for Jazz)

#### ***OTHER APPLICABLE EXPERIENCE***

BA in Music, UT-Austin (c/o 2008)

Current HDO major (est. graduation date, Spring 2020)

Intern at Misra Records (Later Dead Oceans, a member of the Secretly Group) (2 years)

Booker / Live Sound @ Club 1808 (now Dozen St / Full Circle Bar) (5+ years)

ESCAPES Festival -- responsibilities including securing a venue, permitting, booking, promotion, running sound, and stage managing. At its apex ESCAPES would include over 100 bands per year (2008-current)

I have recorded my own band and engineered sessions for other musicians

I have recorded in studios as a session musician

I have toured nationally in many bands across genres, including gigs at college radio stations across the country (12 tours total)

I am a returning student entering my 7th year with KVRX. I have been in the production department that entire time, held a senior staff position at KVRX (Music Director). Additionally I followed my dream pursuing music after college. It was in deciding to run for station manager I came to the realization that ***I am perhaps the most qualified person to ever run for this position.***

## 2. GOALS AND PLANS AS STATION MANAGER

My overall goal for KVRX is for it to simply be what it is: **a great college radio station**. The nature of KVRX as a student-run organization means that it has inherently low institutional knowledge. This has affected the loss of great practices from the past regarding how departments are run, and also means many great ideas of current students are likely to be lost in the future. Not everything about this set-up constitutes a problem - it gives new generations of students the opportunity to imagine KVRX as they see it -- but certainly it could be an improvement to arm future students with as much relevant information as possible. **Many of the issues I wish to address facing the station today have likely existed since before the current batch of students ever stepped on campus.** My experience with KVRX during a different era would be a great asset to the station and my disposition is to look for lasting ways to improve the station for the future.

### PRIORITY INITIATIVES:

#### KVRX HISTORY PROJECT

I want to go back and get as much information about the station as possible, with a focus on how things were done and how changes were decided on. I think this would be a fun project -- there is a lot of minutia that would be interesting to the average DJ. It would be my intent that all future staffs contribute to this project. The point of the project is to help future staffs make better more informed decisions in the future.

#### LIBRARY EXPANSION

My first experience at KVRX was during the era where the station moved from the basement next to Burdine to its current location. When the move happened, our library expanded. The difference between a library which can expand and one which cannot is noticeable to me, though I suspect to an average DJ it would look like just "the way things have always been." What is the point of rotating new music if it doesn't go anywhere? What is the point of being proactive with labels about gathering new music to review, and to what extent should this be pursued? I would like to prioritize expanding the Texas music and the music that comes out of our own production department (which does not exist online). The library serves as a great archive, and the value of a recording made in our production department is often not fully realized until years later, when it becomes apparent we have exclusive early recordings of an artist whose career has taken off. If possible, I would move the vinyl stacks to a different room on the same floor of the HSM and create a vinyl waylay station in the booth to try and have at least some of the vinyl more accessible to DJs to actually play.

#### PURCHASE OF PROFESSIONAL MASTERING EQUIPMENT

Mastering is the much mysticized final step in the audio process. As digital programs progressed, so called "faux mastering" was invented, which can be done easily using ProTools.

However, there is a reason why mastering engineers still exist as a well-paid profession, and that is because the process of mastering itself is inherently musical, which is something that computers are limited in their ability to mimic. Real mastering equipment is quite expensive, and thus it is very difficult to get hands-on experience with in the real world. The KVRX production department has historically been set up in such a way where there is always one person in charge (the person who runs the board during Local Live.) This was the case in 2003 when I first became a member of the production department and is true today. The purchase of mastering equipment would effectively clear this logjam, giving as many KVRXers as were interested the ability to develop professional engineering skills. KVRX also has an almost unlimited supply of back-catalogue which could be mastered. Since it is so hard to gain experience with the equipment, to be able to master records is an incredibly valuable skill on the job market.

### **RESURRECTION OF THE LOCAL LIVE / KVRX PRODUCTION WEBSITE**

If you want to make a broadcast advisors skin crawl in only 2 words, I suggest you try the words "website redesign." The KVRX website has been redesigned numerous times, and each time it is costly and it is questionable if it leads to a superior product. In particular, there was one website design during my first tenure that I believe led to a grave error: the demolition of the Local Live website. It was not meant to happen, and I inquired at the time at length about when it was going to be put back up, but it never happened. The Local Live website had pages which drove massive amounts of traffic for a college radio station -- I believe the Devendra Banhart page alone had over 500,000 views. In addition it was a colorful, living history documenting the work of the production department, and the volunteers who passed through its halls. As station manager I would bring back this website, as a separate standalone website which would hopefully never be subject to demolition during a website redesign again. I have been informed that much of the data of the old website may be recoverable.

### **MINOR INITIATIVES:**

#### **PURCHASE OF AUDIOPHILE STEREO EQUIPMENT FOR DEEP LISTENING**

If this is not something we can find in a budget, I think this would make a great rallying cause for a fundraiser. The KVRX Librarians have been running a series of listening sessions open only to KVRX DJs. It's about the music and it's to me one thing that is very on message for what KVRX is about. I don't want to see this programming get lost, and I think the purchase of a true audiophile stereo, along with amending the job description for the Librarian to include this series, would go a long way towards making it a permanent addition to the KVRX universe.

#### **REINTRODUCTION OF THE PRODUCTION OF AUDIO RECORDINGS FOR LOCAL LIVE**

This stopped many years ago, but is actually quite simple and not time consuming. Had we been doing this for the past 10 years, we would have 500 CDs of sets of local bands. The work of the production department constitutes an amazing primary source and they are our proprietary recordings. The value of these recordings is not immediately obvious, but we know from the past that many bands that play Local Live go on to have careers, and there is a cache to being credited with working with famous artists early in their career.

### **WEBSITE TWEAK -- TOPLESS 39**

I would ask the webmaster to include the entire topless 39 on our weekly charts which publish on the website. I would also ask to create this as a searchable archive. This is well modeled on the KEXP website and should not be too hard to do.

### **BOOTH TWEAKS**

We should buy an attenuator for the speakers in the booth. This will keep them from ever blowing out again, ultimately saving money. We also need to do something about the Mac in the booth. Maybe it's as simple as more RAM, maybe we need to make sure we are regularly cleaning it of audio files DJs create of their entire show. Let's make sure our podcasting workflow is optimally streamlined, and possibly included in the website.

### **REINITIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL CLUBS FOR GIVEAWAYS**

For many years, being a KVRX DJ was enough to get you into shows for free 7 nights a week. KVRX had relationships with local clubs - by giving away their tickets on air it entitled us to 5 guest list passes on any show.

### **REINTRODUCE CORKBOARDS WITH POLAROIDS AND FLIERS**

It's incredibly helpful in a station of 200 people to be able to look at a Polaroid and get someone's name that you forgot. It's nice to be able to see a flier for a show or opportunity as well.

### **EXPLORE GETTING KVRX EXCLUSIVE MATERIAL ON SPOTIFY**

Even if there is not access to the general public, I want KVRX DJs to easily be able to access recordings from our production department to be played live on air.

## **3. PROGRAMMING FOR THE YEAR**

### **KVRX FEST**

The concept of KVRX FEST is great for many reasons. In a station of 200 people I think it's amazing to have a large scale art project that can involve so many people. This being said, the future of KVRX FEST is a decision I would consider important enough to be made by the entire staff. It may be that the zeitgeist of the station is that there will be a high interest in doing FEST again, however it may also be that there is a desire to some other large scale art project in some way, or a desire to return to core functions. Because it is such a commitment of resources, I feel strongly that this decision needs to be made by the group.

### **SPEAKER SERIES AT GENERAL MEETINGS**

This would be face time with potential employers / internships and extremely educational. KVRX has a massive pull within the Austin music community. We can utilize it in this way.

## **24 HOUR SHOW**

Visual component, ambient at late hours. Permitted for on UT Campus, perhaps in art building.

## **SXSW**

UT will once again be on spring break for SXSW, which provides for the opportunity to do another large scale show during this time, with a different model than Fest.

## **THREE BY FIVE**

Reintroduce 3x5, the recording of bands in the production studio during spring break.

## **LIVE REMOTE BROADCAST SHOW**

## **BOOKING PHILOSOPHY**

KVRXs basic booking should revolve around rotating genres and rotating venues (and house shows), with a heavy emphasis on 18+ or all ages shows. Shows that simply meet this criteria have a place in the KVRX booking scheme. However, I would like to see shows that go beyond this throughout the year. I would like to give booking interns the opportunity to put together one show of their own.

## **STRENGTHS:**

**Music Industry Experience** -- experience across different facets of the music industry as well as radio -- label, venue, production, festival

**Unique Institutional Knowledge** -- having been a KVRXer from 2003-2008 I bring a unique understanding of what this station has been as well as what it is. This directionality informs my view of what the station could or should look like in the future.

**Listening Skills** -- A main reason I am applying for station manager is to try and get things done via executive function that I could not as a station member. I have had many of these ideas for years, however even if I was listened to, it was not enough to get the ideas to the implementation stage. This having been my experience, the flip side of the coin is I am very interested in listening to the ideas of others, and seeing what good ideas we can get all the way to implementation.

**Cheerleading** -- This should go for anyone applying for this position, but I would not be here if I had not found a home at KVRX. I think it's an awesome, incredible organization, and an awesome, incredible opportunity to be a part of. I'll shout it from the highest mountain top. Although clearly in my proposals there remain things I would like to see done, I think this year's staff has done a great job overall, and KVRX Fest is both a major undertaking a very exciting addition to the slate of programming that the station does. I can't think of a better organization to rep, and I can fulfill that role as Station Manager.

## **OTHER:**

**Staff Selection** -- Because this is a student organization at a public university, I would weigh seniority in any decision I would make selecting staff. Another major factor I would weigh is willingness to take on a mentorship relationship with an intern. Finally, passion. If there is someone who wants to put the time in and do the work, I will do my very best to put that person

in a position to succeed, if not as a department director, then in some other way. I will be asking for advice in choosing my staff, because I think things are just better for the people who don't get picked that way, and I think it keeps them in the fold better. Although there are certain constraints, I want anyone who desires to participate to be able to do that as much as possible, and that certainly includes those who run for staff positions who are not selected.

**New Staff Positions** -- I would like to create a position called **Communications Director**. This person's primary function is to be able to field all questions and inquiries from our 200 volunteers and get back to them within a business day. This way inquiries and ideas do not get lost and things get finished. No idea is too small or too big for this person, and the existence of this person would let all volunteers know that there is someone they can feel comfortable approaching about anything. Additional duties could fill out this role, such as spearheading the KVRX History Project.

Additionally I would like to create a **Post-Production Director**, who would be the point person to make sure every recording in the production department reached its final destination on the internet and in the library. This person could potentially also be responsible for video content getting where it needs to go.

**Looking to the Future** -- KVRX should explore the possibility and cost of setting up a Studio B DJ booth, possibly in the storage room in the basement. The station is twice the size of 10 years ago, when all DJs had 2 hour shows. A few DJs had 1 hour shows, but all in all the ability to be on-air is what the station is all about, and a second DJ booth would allow us to double that capacity. We are at the point now where some DJs have just 30 minute shows, this would allow the station to continue growing.

The role of the Broadcast Advisor should be assessed for expansion. The broadcast advisor covers both KVRX and TSM, which is over 500 people, yet it is a 20 hour per week position.

**From:** Terry Lickona [tlickona@klru.org](mailto:tlickona@klru.org)  
**Subject:** Ethan Smith / KVRX Station Manager  
**Date:** April 28, 2019 at 3:46 PM  
**To:** [serpas@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:serpas@austin.utexas.edu), [gerald.johnson@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:gerald.johnson@austin.utexas.edu)

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Hi, Frank & Gerald....

I'm writing in support of Ethan Smith for the station manager position at KVRX. Although I've been the executive producer of Austin City Limits for many years, my background was in radio (including KUT), so I know a thing or two about it, and I am a fan of KVRX's programming.

I've known Ethan for maybe 5 years through a mutual acquaintance. Among other things, I know that he has a passion for music and radio, and has done many things in the music world from performing to recording and touring. Not to mention he has great tastes (and very eclectic). He's great at dealing with people of all backgrounds and personalities. He is very goal-oriented, and when given an opportunity he will take the ball and run with it and do a really great job. He sets the bar high and expects others to reach it (or at least try). I think he is ready for a challenge like this, and can do good things for KVRX.

I am happy to discuss further if you would like to give me a call. Thanks for what you do, and keep up the good work!

best,  
TERRY

Terry Lickona  
executive producer  
AUSTIN CITY LIMITS  
[tlickona@klru.org](mailto:tlickona@klru.org)  
(512) 422-8480



**From:** Owen McNally neuronoid@rocketmail.com  
**Subject:** letter of recommendation:Ethan Smith as Station Manager  
**Date:** April 29, 2019 at 7:49 AM  
**To:** Serpas, Frank R serpas@austin.utexas.edu, gerald.johnson@utexas.edu

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OM

Hello ,

I am writing to unreservedly recommend Ethan Smith for KVRX Station Manager.

I've known him for quite some time, and think he'd be more than competent and helpful.

I have known quite a few Station Managers over the years. Most were reasonably good at it, and kept the ship afloat. There's alot of responsibilities for a student to balance. Only rarely have I met any managers who could see beyond the immediate term and short term demands to envision how scrappy, passionate, resilient KVRX can really live up to it's potential.

Ethan Smith is that person, in my opinion.

He is as passionate about music as they come in Austin. He lives and breathes music and the communities that form around it. Many of us romanticize various music scenes and pop-culture eras of the past, but Ethan tries hard to make that heady romance of creativity, good times and belonging happen *now*. This unabashed and infectious enthusiasm is why he's been able to cajole hundreds of musicians into playing shows for his Escapes series over the years, The guy wants musicians and fans to embrace what's going on, to support each other, to seek out rare golden moments of inspired performances, and to glean as much enjoyment as possible from the rest.

I'm convinced he would bring this contagious passion to KVRX as Station Manager. He should quite adept at the day-to-day business, but I think there's a good chance of him being the one that pushes KVRX to be what it can be.

Regards,

Owen McNally

**From:** Stephanie Bonham bonhamerrific@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Recommendation for Ethan Smith  
**Date:** April 29, 2019 at 11:51 AM  
**To:** serpas@austin.utexas.edu  
**Cc:** gerald.johnson@austin.utexas.edu



Dear Frank Serpas,

It is my pleasure to recommend Ethan Smith for the position of KVRX station manager. When first met Ethan during my time as a KVRX DJ from 2005-2008, it was immediately clear to me that Ethan is passionate about both student radio and music. I believe that Ethan brings much experience and expertise that make him an excellent candidate for the position.

I know Ethan to be a hard and determined worker, as well as an experienced and enigmatic organizer. He is experienced in networking, booking, and music production. Ethan has a demonstrated love of student radio at UT, and I am confident he will work together with the TSM Board in the station's best interest.

Ethan is currently working towards his degree in Human Dimensions of Organizations, which will also make the position a great learning experience for him as a UT student, and provide opportunity for him to put learning in to practice.

Recently, Ethan shared with me some of the ideas he has for KVRX - including storage and listening equipments improvements for the library, and bringing back the local live website. I believe that Ethan's many years of experience at KVRX will offer a unique perspective and ability to guide the organization toward long-term goals that will continue benefit students for years to come.

Additionally, I would be happy to speak with you by phone if you have any particular questions I can answer. I can be reached by cell phone at 512-587-6119.

Warm Regards,  
Stephanie Bonham  
KVRX Station Manager 2007-2008