

The MSU voice

Name

The official name for our university, as designated by the Board of Regents in 1994, is Montana State University-Bozeman. However, in most cases, we refer to ourselves as simply “Montana State University.”

If you need to clarify the university’s location, use “Montana State University at Bozeman” or “Montana State University in Bozeman” rather than adding the “dash Bozeman.”

Use the full name “Montana State University” on first reference and “MSU” after that.

MSU agencies, colleges and departments

Montana State University Extension is the largest outreach branch of Montana State University. Refer to the organization as MSU Extension (preferable) or Extension, but not the Extension Service or Cooperative Extension.

The Montana Agricultural Experiment Station is headquartered at Montana State University and directed by the College of Agriculture dean. Refer to it on first reference as the Montana Agricultural (not Agriculture) Experiment Station and thereafter by the acronym MAES. Individual research units are called research centers, e.g., the Southern Agricultural Research Center. The acronym (in this case SARC) is OK on subsequent references.

Use Montana State University (and on second reference, MSU) with the names of all research centers, colleges, academic departments, etc., e.g. The Montana State University College of Business, or the MSU Thermal Biology Institute.

Tagline

MSU’s official tagline is Mountains and Minds.

As part of the branding process, we searched extensively for new tagline possibilities. More than 250 were submitted by staff, alumni and students. After testing them with the President’s Advisory Council, students, Alumni Board, and many other groups on campus, we decided that Mountains and Minds best fit the university’s vision, strengths and personality.

We will use some of the suggested taglines, such as “Where Minds Meet the Mountains,” and “Montana State of Mind,” as slogans for advertising campaigns and other promotional activities.

Publications, Web sites and other promotional materials are not required to use the tagline. However, the tagline has a lot of recognition in the state and promotes MSU’s brand. Use the tagline and its logo version whenever you can.

Elevator speech

“Elevator speech” is a marketing term for a short description of your brand. Essentially, it’s a way of describing MSU if you had only the amount of time it takes for an elevator ride (which, in Montana, isn’t long!). You can also use it whenever you need a short description of MSU, such as in a speech, event program, directory, etc.

Montana State University is a vibrant and growing institution, where students, faculty and staff enjoy a challenging and collaborative atmosphere that encourages innovation, exploration and creativity in a spectacular Rocky Mountain setting.

You can use your own words and modify the main elevator speech as necessary depending on your target audience.

MSU's voice style

The “voice” we use in MSU publications, Web sites and other materials is based on our personality profile (see p. 3). Like MSU itself and even the town of Bozeman, our voice (just like our visual identity) is:

...simple, balanced and natural

Our tone should be casual and down-to-earth, yet reflect a quality academic environment.

...classy and academic, yet not overdone

We want to portray a university on the rise, but never be ostentatious. People appreciate MSU because it's not uptight.

...all about people

MSU and Bozeman are very caring communities. Our voice should be personal and friendly. Use stories, anecdotes and testimonials to capture MSU's people devoting themselves to their work, no matter what that may be. Think about the “work hard/play hard” philosophy.

...showcasing the unique “duality” of MSU

Capture the unique—and sometimes unusually juxtaposed—blend of qualities that define MSU and Bozeman: world-famous professors who also mountain bike to work; laid-back students who are also known for their strong work ethic; a ski community that's also a growing high-tech center. Bring to life the people, places and scenes that capture this wonderful blend of qualities, particularly the spectacular natural setting in combination with academic excellence.

MSU's voice is not

...static, stodgy and boring

While MSU has an overall classic and traditional look and feel, our voice should never be dry. We are more innovative and entrepreneurial than many universities; let that pioneering spirit shine through.

...cute, silly or gimmicky

Let our stories and successes speak for themselves.

Message key words

The following key words express the six MSU brand strengths (key messages).

- **EXCEL** in a dynamic learning environment (nationally and internationally recognized scholars and programs)
- **DISCOVER** solutions to today's and tomorrow's challenges (leading research)
- **CONNECT** in a community committed to student success (a student-centered campus)
- **CREATE** and innovate through hands-on active learning (opportunities for hands-on active learning)
- **EXPLORE** breathtaking opportunities to study and recreate (spectacular educational setting)
- **SERVE** by creating strong community relations (service to the state)

How to use these editorial tools

Use the key words and brand components as an outline for speeches and copy. (See Example #1.)

Use the brand personality and Points of Excellence to reflect MSU's look and feel. (See Example #2.)

Use the brand component descriptions and examples to initiate a call to action. (See Example #3.)

Copywriting examples

Example #1: President Gamble's speech to alumni during Homecoming 2005 (edited for space)

Welcome back to Montana State University. I'm so proud of this institution and grateful to all of you for your continuing support.

All along the Centennial Mall you'll see banners that represent what we see as our key strengths.

EXCEL: MSU scholars—faculty, students AND distinguished alumni are nationally and internationally recognized for their excellence.

The career fair taking place today attracted nearly 150 companies. You all laid the path for the students of today. Employers know that MSU grads are well-prepared and possess an excellent work ethic. And those of you who are employers, do a great job of coming home to recruit the next generation.

Lots of employers know about our excellent students, and you probably know how I like to brag about them.

Brian Brush (North Plains, Ore., graduate in architecture) \$300,000 Jack Kent Cooke graduate scholarship, one of the most sought-after awards in the nation.

Bridgid Crowley (Helena, junior in biochemistry) earned MSU's 44th Barry M. Goldwater scholarship.

The Bobcats earned the Big Sky Conference's premier award, the STERLING SAVINGS BANK PRESIDENT'S CUP for excellence in both academics and athletics.

DISCOVER: We are involved in cutting-edge research on this campus—really fantastic efforts ranging from development of anti-cancer therapies to fuel cell technology. The local economy has benefited through the growth of high-tech companies such as Ligocyte, which employs our graduates at top levels to conduct top research.

Students are involved in much of this great work. Last fall, Blake Wiedenheft, a graduate student from Fort Peck, discovered a new protein, the first of its kind found in high-temperature micro-organisms living in acidic hot springs. Blake was the lead author on a professional paper describing the protein that was recently published in the National Academy of Sciences weekly journal.

CONNECT: No doubt many of you remain connected to your alma mater because of the activities and groups that you participated in as students. Our campus now offers over 120 clubs and organizations for students who want to be involved. Faculty and staff work hard to identify at-risk students and get them involved and connected. Supporting the success of our students is our primary goal.

CREATE: How many of you found work, in part, because of the opportunities you had as a student at MSU to do hands-on work? We pride ourselves for our leading-edge new Core 2.0 program, which gives every incoming student at MSU a chance to work on a creative or research project as an undergraduate. Hands-on active learning is now the norm on this campus.

Just this week MSU and the Bozeman Fire Department earned the 2005 International Association of Fire Chiefs Fire Service Award for Excellence. Students learning GPS and mapping skills create accurate and detailed maps of new subdivisions, and the Fire Department carries the maps while on call. The information is also entered into the 911 system, making it easier to find the homes of people who need help.

EXPLORE: Surely our fantastic natural setting encouraged many of you to come to Bozeman as students, and to return for various recreational activities through the years. We are fortunate to be able to use many of these outstanding features as laboratories, allowing MSU students both fantastic recreational and educational opportunities to explore.

SERVE: Outreach is a major component of the mission of Montana State University.

Extension Offices serve all 56 counties and seven reservations.

Architecture Students built an addition to the women's shelter.

Engineers Without Borders provides potable water for schools in Kenya.

MSU serves our community, state, nation and world in many ways. We know that you also serve in many ways, and we are proud of your involvement and service.

EXCEL, DISCOVER, CONNECT, CREATE, EXPLORE and SERVE. These six words encompass the spirit of Montana State University and our alumni.

When you excel in your work, you reflect well on MSU. When you connect with your community through volunteer work and other activities, you demonstrate the character of our graduates. When you serve on various MSU advisory boards and committees, you directly benefit this institution.

I thank you for your commitment to excellence and for the support you provide Montana State University. When all the wonderful festivities are over this weekend, know that our appreciation for you continues.

Example #2: Copy for Chamber of Commerce brochure

Welcome to Montana State University.

Montana State University is a vibrant and growing institution. A land-grant university dedicated to the people of Montana, MSU is also a prominent research institution. It recruits ambitious and adventurous students who take part in top-level research and creative projects, working side-by-side with world-class faculty.

Surrounded by three mountain ranges and just 100 miles north of Yellowstone National Park, MSU offers incomparable outdoor education and recreational opportunities to a community that thrives on optimism, confidence and collaboration.

MSU students outcompete other universities on national scholarships and professional test scores.

—MSU has more prestigious Goldwater Scholarship winners than MIT, Northwestern and Yale.

—MSU accounting students ranked No. 1 in the nation on the most recent CPA certification exam.

—Nursing graduates garnered a 90 percent pass rate on the national licensing exam.

—Engineering seniors surpassed their peers in the 2005 national Fundamentals of Engineering exam with a pass rate of 86 percent compared to the national aggregate pass rate of 82 percent.

People

MSU is home to nationally and internationally recognized scholars. They include paleontology professor Jack Horner, known worldwide for his theories about dinosaur parenting; civil engineering professor Ed Adams, seen on “Good Morning America” and in People Magazine for his avalanche studies north of Bozeman; Native American scholar Henrietta Mann, who helped plan the Smithsonian’s new National Museum of the American Indian; and electrical engineering professor Steve Shaw, one of the world’s top 100 young innovators as recognized by Technology Review magazine.

Place

MSU is quickly becoming known as one of the best places in the country where students can take part in leading research and creative projects. Over the last decade, MSU’s research expenditures have nearly tripled—growing from \$30 million to \$98 million in 2005. Its research volume places it within the top 100 public research universities in the nation.

—Dozens of studies take advantage of natural outdoor laboratories in Yellowstone National Park; Glacier National Park; agricultural fields; forests, prairies and grasslands; and blue-ribbon trout streams.

—Research strengths include infectious diseases; agricultural biotechnology; wildlife, fisheries and thermal ecology; Native American studies; Western history; environmental engineering; cell biology and neuroscience; renewable energy sources.

Programs

The Bozeman campus is a friendly place, where educators and administrators get to know new students by helping them move into the residence halls each fall.

A dynamic learning environment, MSU creates new educational programs to meet changing student needs. Some of these include:

—Core 2.0, which requires every student to complete a research or creative experience under the close supervision of faculty and staff.

—The Undergraduate Scholars Program, which funds students to undertake an investigative or creative project in collaboration with a faculty mentor.

—The Center for Entrepreneurship for the New West, where students gain hands-on business experience;

—The EMPower Center that supports women and minority engineering students by providing the resources of Internet access, publications, mentoring, advising and peer networking.

—The College of Arts & Architecture offers the nation’s only master’s degree in science and natural history filmmaking.

MSU and Bozeman offer cultural opportunities both on- and off-campus with theatre (even Broadway plays), the Shakespeare in the Parks program, opera, symphony, art galleries and summer festivals. Athletics fans can find almost any sport for any season. History and geography enthusiasts can enjoy the Museum of the Rockies, ghost towns and numerous hiking trails. Bozeman was ranked No. 5 in Outside magazine’s “40 Best College Towns” in 2003, and Skiing magazine rated Bozeman the fourth top skiing town in the U.S. in September 2004.

Whether MSU students are researching microbes or human behavior, studying for a nursing exam or building a house as homework, they have the inspiration and comfort of approachable faculty mentors, a peaceful place in nearby nature to take a break, and the support of a university committed to intellectual and personal growth.

For more information about Montana State University, please visit our Web site at www.montana.edu, or call admissions for information: (406) 994-2452

Example #3: Dean's message in college newsletter

This time of year is always very special to us in the College of Agriculture as we say goodbye to students we've supported, taught and come to know personally throughout their college years. It's a bit like parenting...we send them out the door with a twinge of anxiety, yet know we've given them everything they need to succeed: from skills for the workforce to practice in decision-making and leadership, as well as friendship.

I truly believe that the MSU College of Agriculture's graduates are among the best-prepared, hardest working young citizens in Montana. They are entrepreneurial, ethical and dedicated to their professions and life ambitions. They have been exposed to the myriad of agricultural issues that we confront today. Besides that, they're just a great group of people. I hope you get to know as many of them as possible.

Employers tell us that they seek MSU graduates because our integrated teaching and research prepare students well for careers. Recruiters tell us that the work ethic of MSU graduates is second-to-none.

Yet, no one will argue that finding jobs in Montana is easy. About two-thirds of our agriculture grads find work in Montana. Still, that means some young people who want to stay in the "Last Best Place" are forced out-of-state for job opportunities. Maybe they will come back in the future.

I challenge you—our alumni and friends—to do all you can to help these students as they make their way in the world. Participate in next year's career fair to show our students the world of work. Offer internships like Langohr's Flowerland and scores of other businesses have done. Donate as you are able to our valuable scholarship fund; it truly does make a difference. Tell an MSU graduate how proud you are of him or her. And finally, when the Montana Legislature convenes next spring, tell your legislators that you value higher education. Spread the word that MSU can help the state grow, and that the education of our students is not a financial burden, but an investment in our state's economy.

Have an enjoyable spring, think rain, and please plan to attend one of our research center Field Days this summer, when you can see MSU's land-grant mission in action.

The MSU News Service leads the campus in media relations. News Service staff prepare and disseminate news and photographs about the institution, its people and its programs to newspaper, radio, television and online audiences.

It also advises faculty, staff and students on media issues and acts as a clearinghouse for all press releases and official media statements.

Writers in the news service also write for such MSU publications as Discovery, Collegian, AgLink and the annual Report on Research and Creative Activities.

The MSU News Service is responsible for the “MSU in the News” section of the university Web site, which includes news and features from across campus. News staff also produce the online publication MSU Today–News for Faculty and Staff.

The MSU News Service is also involved in the ongoing development of university media and communications objectives and policy development. We provide media specialists for the MSU Media Policy and the MSU Emergency Response Committee. We also assist in media relations and training.

Contact the MSU News director at 994-2721 or e-mail at msunews@montana.edu.

The news staff is always looking for story ideas, particularly those that exemplify one or more of the brand components and lend themselves to outstanding photography. You can assist by submitting a News Advisory Report on the Web at www.montana.edu/cpa/news/nwadvisory.html

The news group also maintains an MSU Expert List for News Media – a directory of MSU personnel organized by their expertise and specialization areas. It is provided as a resource for media organizations seeking expert information on various topics. The individual experts provided all information and have granted their permission to be contacted directly.