

Warren J. Baker Endowment

for Excellence in Project-Based Learning

Robert D. Koob Endowment *for Student Success*

FINAL REPORT

Final reports will be published on the Cal Poly Digital Commons website(<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu>).

- I. **Project Title:** 25 Under 25 Fest
- II. **Project Completion Date:** May 21, 2018
- III. **Student(s), Department(s), and Major(s)**
 - (1) Michael Frank, College of Liberal Arts, Journalism Department, Journalism Major
- IV. **Faculty Advisor and Department:** Jane Lehr, Women's and Gender Studies
- V. **Cooperating Industry, Agency, Non-Profit, or University Organization(s)**
 - a. ARTS Obispo
 - b. Cal Poly College of Liberal Arts
- VI. **Executive Summary**
 - a. The 25 Under 25 Fest was a student-organized, student-run, two-day film festival in San Luis Obispo that was dedicated to giving young California filmmakers a platform to show their work. The festival highlighted 25 filmmakers under the age of 25 that made films less than 25 minutes long. It was open to all young people within the state of California, which is the center of American film. With over 160 submissions, a team of 30 judges whittled it down to the best of the best. In cooperation with ARTS Obispo, we worked with over 15 sponsors to raise over \$15,000 for the festival. The festival was held at the historic Palm Theater in May in downtown San Luis Obispo, one of the last truly independent cinemas left in the state. 25 Under 25 was a new type of film festival that was focused on youth, independence, and beginnings. We produced an environment that encouraged youth art, innovative ideas, and lasting connections between young filmmakers. Simply put, we were and still are a film festival for young people making short films

VII. Major Accomplishments

- (1) Selling over 300 tickets total for the 4 sessions of films. We completely sold out our 1st session, filling up the Palm Theater to capacity. The overwhelming majority of patrons were students, which was amazing to see the outpouring of student-to-student support.
- (2) Raising over \$15,000 through sponsorships and grants. It was a long road, but we managed to secure enough money to put on an incredible festival, including giving away cash prizes to the best three films of the weekend.
- (3) Receiving over 160 submissions from around the country. At the festival, we had over 10 schools represented, including a dozen films from Cal Poly. For a first-year event, it was a very pleasant surprise to see how the news of our festival spread throughout the state.

VIII. Expenditure of Funds

- a. **\$2,000:** Rental of the Palm Theater. It was \$1,000 per day to reserve the biggest theater at the Palm, and the festival was over the course of two days.
- b. **\$500:** Printing of materials. In order to spread the word around campus and around San Luis Obispo, we printed flyers, posters, pamphlets, as well as online advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. This money was used to advertise the festival digitally and physically. We even put up large posters inside and outside of the Palm so that regular patrons would see our festival. Due to this advertising, we sold over 300 tickets in total. It was a rousing success, and I couldn't be more thankful.

IX. Impact on Student Learning

- a. Through 25 Under 25, we wanted to show young people what they can truly accomplish. After each session, there was a flood of youth support. I received countless messages through social media about the impact the festival had on students. People that had only bought one ticket to the first session ended up coming to each and every event. Students were able to inspire other students. Cal Poly students were able to see what is possible, even at our young age. Several Cal Poly students were able to show their films, and be alongside others in film schools from around the state. It was truly astonishing.
- b. Due to our format of question-and-answer periods after every single film, patrons were able to ask about the filmmaking process, techniques, and creations they had just seen. After each session, patrons could interact with filmmakers, learning all they could about how they made these fantastic films. It was a chance to learn about "how to make a movie" for film-lovers and casual film-goers. Additionally, it gave the filmmakers themselves a chance to show their work. For many of these young moviemakers, it was the first time they were showing their films. In almost every case, this was the most amount of people that had seen their work, as we had about 80 people at each session. It also gave the filmmakers a chance to explain their inspirations, their methods, their performances, and their passions.
- c. Due to the low cost of attending the festival, it was many people's first film festivals. Festivals are expensive events, but we charged folks less than \$10 to witness some of the greatest student films in the country. It was accessible for all. You didn't need to know loads about film, just needed to want to learn and want to support others. This was a big reason we sold so many tickets. It was affordable, even less than seeing a full-length feature film.

- d. Finally, and possibly most importantly, the films we showed had overarching themes of diversity and inclusion. We had films about immigration, deportation, homosexuality, Alzheimer's, teen pregnancy, poverty, depression, anxiety, loss, love, life, and death. Our filmmakers were diverse, as well, coming from several countries and over a dozen schools. The representation shown in the films and the filmmakers was inspiring and important. It could be felt in every session throughout the theater. Real experiences were being shown. Real feelings were highlighted. These young filmmakers tackled very intense subjects and it showed the impact that young artists and art in general can have on an audience and on a community. It showed that film is for everyone.