

Using Video to Increase Awareness of
Inclusivity for LGBTQ+ Students on University Campuses:
A Single-Site Case Study on Cal Poly

A Senior Project

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This project is focused on the use of online video in creating awareness for LGBTQ+ inclusivity. In particular, it focuses on California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, hereafter referred to simply as "Cal Poly," and the campus climate's effect on the LGBTQ+ student community. It aims to give a brief recap of Cal Poly's history in relation to its queer population, highlight the experiences of present-day students, assess what progress has been made, and provide a snapshot of the campus climate in 2016 to be used as a drawing point for future senior projects and evaluation of inclusivity progress. At a time when our country and world are becoming increasingly aware of social justice issues, it helps to add a local or university-specific perspective. In order to best capture and share this perspective, best practices and tools are needed. For a little over a decade, online video has been used as a popular way to spread information, thus it is the medium chosen for this project. The short documentary produced seeks to assess where Cal Poly has made improvement and where there is still work to be done in terms of inclusion of our LGBTQ+ community on campus.

Background of the Problem

There are several contributing factors as to why this project is a necessary endeavor. First of all, the LGBT Center, now the Pride Center, has only existed on Cal Poly's campus since 2002. YouTube, the website that normalized video content sharing, debuted in 2005. Therefore, there is only about a decade and a half in which students and scholars have been able to assess

online video's impact on marginalized communities. There is especially little research available for the specified topic of marginalized communities within university campuses. This project serves as a media artifact to be referenced in later research on the influence of video for LGBTQ+ students at Cal Poly, in the California State University (CSU) system, and for universities at large.

Second, the way that most students on Cal Poly's campus consume content is via digital media; this includes photos, infographics, gifs, social media, and video. Much of the information regarding Cal Poly's history of LGBTQ+ inclusivity is stored online, but in an somewhat inaccessible location. In order to access this type of information, students have to log onto the Kennedy Library website, go into the Digital Commons, and forage through the Mustang News Archives. While these archives are substantial (and date back 100 years all the way to 1916 when the student newspaper was called 'The Polygram'), they are not in a format that today's media consumes would seek out or find suitable. There needs to be a modern, succinct display of this information, which is why the short documentary includes a historic element for both context and comparison.

Finally, in order to track progress in inclusivity efforts and hold the university accountable, there needs to be a present-day assessment of how our LGBTQ+ students feel their identity is received on campus. This is the reason the short documentary is not only a look back at Cal Poly's history, but also includes a series of interviews with students of all grades, majors, cultural backgrounds, and identities. These interviews act as a 'snapshot' of sorts that captures the life of a student today and their opinions, experiences, and hopes in relation to Cal Poly's inclusivity.

Purpose of the Study

In the age of social media and digital communication there has been a rise in the public's awareness of social issues. Mediums like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter allow for members of society, who may not belong the dominant group, to spread their message and gain power through awareness. One of the most common methods of spreading information, which has yielded the most engagement and results, is video.

"Video is king," is a common phrase heard in today's journalism courses— both professors and those out in the field understand that more than text, more than photos, video is the key component to connecting with an audience. Video allows for diverse visual stimulation, plus auditory and graphic communication; the combination of these factors leads a deeper and more thorough emotional connection with the viewer. A viewer who has connected with a message more deeply is more likely to be propelled to take action. Therefore, it is not just companies selling products that can utilize videos, but organizations that want to create positive social change and inspire others to join their cause.

Due to the relatively new use of video in social media marketing, as opposed to TV commercials and public service announcements, the research and data on its effectiveness is limited. YouTube has only been around since 2005, and Facebook is not much older at 2004, therefore there is only a little over ten years of data to pull from when conducting research on video communication in social media. This lack of source multiplicity is not an obstacle, but rather a challenge to those who want to fill a research gap. However, to focus on all forms of video communication would require a much longer timespan and far broader scope of research. In this case, the focus is centered around video as a form of activism— not simply entertainment.

The goal is to explore video as a propellor of awareness, video as knowledge, video as a catalyst of change.

Setting for the Study

This project will be done as part of a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University located in San Luis Obispo, California. It consists of a short documentary and accompanying paper, thus fulfilling both the research and the technical skills that display a breadth of knowledge in the field of broadcast journalism. The documentary interviews will be conducted with seven current students that all identify somewhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum. The interviewees will first be asked the same five questions and then the interview will ask other relevant questions as they see fit to the interviewee and topic. The questions are designed to answer a portion of the research questions that relate to campus inclusivity efforts. The rest of the research questions will be answered through the research in existing literature and available data online. The entirety of the project is intended to provide context, assess LGBTQ+ inclusivity, serve as a media artifact for analyzing the impact of online video in social movements, and to be utilized in future Cal Poly inclusivity efforts, as well as by any other educational institution.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to explore the idea of inclusivity as a whole and in a university setting, gather empirical evidence in relation to the experience of LGBTQ+ students on Cal Poly's campus, assess the choice of video as the chosen medium for

distribution, and provide context for what is possible going forward with inclusivity efforts to ensure a positive college experience for all members of a university's student body.

1. What does inclusivity mean/look like?
2. How can you increase awareness of LGBTQ+ inclusivity on a university campus?
3. What are the best practices and tools being utilized by holistic universities?
4. How can we measure awareness and/or progress?
5. What effect do video campaigns have on awareness?
6. What are documentary best practices?

Definition of Terms

Definitions are provided for the following terms in order to simplify the process of taking in the information provided throughout this paper and the accompanying short documentary. A portion, but not all, of the terms below are also defined in the documentary itself due to time constraints that allow for other content to remain included.

All Gender Bathrooms, (noun) also known as "Unisex" or "Gender Neutral" bathrooms, refers to a bathroom that people of any gender identity may use.

Agender, (adj.) when one identifies as non-binary or not having a gender identity.

Asexual, (adj.) when one has no sexual feelings or desires.

Bisexual, (adj.) when one is sexually attracted to both men and women.

Campus Climate, (noun) referring to "the current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential." (Rankin, 2014).

Campus Climate Survey, (noun) the survey created by Pennsylvania State University professor Susan Rankin, that assess a university's current campus climate.

Gay, (adj.) when a person is homosexual, usually referring to men.

Gender Fluid, (adj.) when one's gender varies over time and in certain circumstances, can identify as as male, female, or non-binary.

Gender Identity, (noun) how individuals perceive themselves and what gender they call themselves, may be the same or different as their biological sex.

Gender Non-Conforming, (adj.) refers to people who do not follow traditional societal ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the female or male sex they were assigned at birth.

Heterosexual, (adj.) one who is sexually attracted to the opposite sex.

Homosexual, (adj.) one who is sexually attracted to the same sex.

Lesbian, (adj.) when a person is homosexual, usually referring to women.

LGBTQ+, (acronym) referring to a spectrum of gender and sexual identities, that includes but is not limited to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, etc.

LGBT Center, (noun) the original name of Cal Poly's center for the LGBTQ+ community, now the Pride Center.

Mustang Daily, (noun) the name of Cal Poly's student newspaper from 1967-2013, now called Mustang News

Mustang News, (noun) Cal Poly's student newspaper and media from 2013-present.

Pansexual, (adj.) refers to one who is not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity; attracted to the person themselves.

Pride Center, (noun) "center on Cal Poly's campus that supports and advocates for the unique academic and social needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and pansexual (LGBTQIAP) students to promote personal growth and success." (Dean of Students, 2016).

Preferred Pronouns, (noun) the pronoun(s) that a person chooses to use for themselves and how they prefer to be referred to by others.

"The P", (noun) the popular hike on Cal Poly's campus that leads to a giant, concrete letter "P", which is painted white most of the time, but often decorated for holidays or events relating to campus groups or Cal Poly as a whole.

Queer, (adj.) in the context of this paper, not used as an anti-gay slur, but rather the multi-faceted, reclaimed, revolutionary term that both refers to individuals who are attracted to many genders *and* any person who feels they personally don't fit into dominant norms.

UU seminarian Elizabeth Nguyen says, "Queer, for many folks, is about resistance—resisting dominant culture's ideas of 'normal,' rejoicing in transgression, celebrating the margins, reveling in difference, blessing ourselves."

Questioning, (adj.) refers to individuals who are unsure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Rainbow Welcome Initiative, 2012-2016).

Sexual Identity, (noun) how individuals define their sexual attraction and partners.

Transgender, (adj.) when one identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from their biological sex.

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 included both the statement background of the problem, as well as the purpose and setting of the study, and a definition of commonly-used terms. Chapter 2 will consist of a review of all relevant literature and archival resources that are both used to answer research questions and provide context in the documentary. In Chapter 3 the focus is on the methodology of the study, which includes data sources, collection, presentation, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter 4, the description of participants, the questions asked in interviews, and the data will all be analyzed in the context of both the literature findings and the original research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the short documentary and research findings. It will also provide ideas for further discussion, recommendations for future students and scholars interested in similar work, and conclude the project as a whole.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

There are many movements in currently seeking social change in our country and world, from the third wave feminists to Black Lives Matter to religious minorities, etc. In this project and paper, the research is only regarding the LGBTQ+/queer community, not any other marginalized group of people. Not only is the focus narrowed to LGBTQ+ individuals, but specifically those individuals who are currently students, managing their identity and placement on university campuses.

The literature reviewed for this paper ranges from social movement theory to political activism practices to creating LGBTQ-friendly campuses to social reconstruction through video. These articles will provide insight into the state of video as a queer student activist's tool, and go more in-depth into what it really means and takes to be a holistic and inclusive campus.

The main point of this research is to analyze it in relation to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, a historically homogenous and non-holistic university, and see how it can be applied. Cal Poly San Luis Obispo has long been known to struggle with its inclusivity efforts, and there is extensive documentation of past incidents of intolerance, and students' opinions on campus climate over time. The scholarly sources in the literature supplement and provide context for the primary sources retrieved from the Mustang News online archives. These valuable articles from Cal Poly student media will be considered along with the theories, data, and conclusions made regarding the greater topic of LGBTQ+ awareness on college campuses. With all of this information and synthesis there can be a better assessment of where Cal Poly is "at" per se, when it comes to inclusivity efforts and creating a holistic campus. The goal is to understand what has been

happening at Cal Poly in recent decades, evaluate the current campus climate, and then gauge what role video can play in creating awareness that would lead to a more accepting campus — one that not simply tolerates, but rather truly welcomes and fully protects its LGBTQ+ students.

Social Media and Social Movements

The findings of Karamat and Farooq (2016) further emphasized the role that social media, in its many forms, has played in politics, social causes, and mobilizing people. They suggest that "individuals are utilizing new media for campaigns, inspiring and assembling individuals to make desired move." One example they gave was the video of soldiers playing football with children in Iraq, which assisted in humanizing the war and creating sympathy among viewers. They promote the idea that anyone can contribute in political issues through new media and help to coordinate political exercises in our new, borderless world.

In the study done by Karahan and Roehrig (2015) they further tested the correlation of social media engagement to awareness in relation to the environment. They took twenty-two high school environmental science students, and used mixed media to introduce students to topics of awareness, such as student video projects and blog posts. The findings indicated that students' environmental awareness and perceived need for activism were improved at three different scales (personal, community, global) throughout the learning processes. Similarly, Robé, Wolfson, and Funke argue that screen theory, which is the idea that the spectacle creates the spectator, can help researchers understand activist documentary as a form of influence. They

also noted that "linking activist documentary forms with the media practices of contemporary social movements allows [for] newfound appreciation for the emancipatory role of media."

Turner (2013) argues that one's approach to Internet mobilization should be more pragmatic; it is important to not rely solely on digital communication, but rather juxtapose online and offline communication and mobilization tools for best results. He insists that "the effectiveness of online communication depends on a recursive relationship with offline mobilization." He also listed YouTube (and Facebook) as examples of new tools in spreading direct, democratic ideas. Finally, he suggested that a gap in the research may lay within how to measure the growth of the online movement footprint and its relationship with offline mobilization— this is a topic worth further exploration that can definitely be approached in the ongoing process of this project.

LGBTQ+ Representation in Education

As far as LGBTQ issues in education goes, the American Educational Research Association held a workshop in 2010 that stressed some important findings. At the workshop they had scholars with various expertise discuss the state of the knowledge, important issues unstudied or understudied, and promising trajectories for future research. They concluded that more rigorous research was needed to understand the lives and school experiences of LGBTQ students through qualitative data collection, interviews, quantitative research, and other methods.

A different study by Messinger (2009) was centered around a more action-based ideology, arguing that advocacy and policy change are more useful than simply opening up a dialogue or gaining the knowledge on its own. She claims that those most affected by

discrimination are more likely to seek policy change, and that by utilizing campus governance, faculty allies, and even, in some cases, the court system, these students were able to successfully eliminate discriminatory policies on their campus(es).

Quinn and Meiners (2009) formed a group of queer-identified teachers in Illinois to focus on LGBTQ lives in relation to visibility and inclusion on university campuses. They found that the first place prospective students go to assess a university for inclusivity is their website. A university website can provide information about how established the queer community is, and how comfortable it would be for a questioning or "out" student; one way to go about finding this out would be to look at the student code of conduct for a statement or section on gender identity discrimination. This research is valuable, however, there is a gap between what window-dressing a university does and the reality of the campus climate. A university website can be a great place to assess how established the queer community is, but the research does not account for how misleading these sights can be. Every university has a person or team whose job it is to maintain favorable public relations with prospective, current, and former students, therefore all information (including photos, videos, and other media) included on a university website must be taken with a grain of salt. Certainly more work/research could be done on the disconnect between the ideal of student life and diversity portrayed on a university homepage as opposed to the reality of the numbers.

Reece-Miller (2010) cites his own experiences as a gay man, as well as his research, which determined that over the past couple of decades, LGBTQ students are still experiencing a wide array of difficulties in the classroom, despite the strides made in education and programming. LGBTQ youth experienced more name-calling, rejection, and violence than their

heterosexual counterparts, and much of the harassment was done online due to the rise in social networking sites. Though his research pertained more to high school students, these attitudes and actions towards LGBTQ individuals carry over into higher education. He references a study that found that the more teachers and staff that are supportive of LGBTQ individuals, the greater their sense of belonging to the school community. This idea can surely be applied to Cal Poly, and would carry weight, seeing as just in the past year there was an incident of a professor discriminating against and being passive aggressive towards a gay student.

Relevant Social Theories

In Gowlett's (2015) research regarding Judith Butler's queer theory application in schools, she concluded that social norms can be broken down by finding educational moments that can disrupt the hegemonic default setting. There is not necessarily an end point, but rather the push for new ways of thinking about and approaching education that can facilitate change. Queer pedagogy is further explored at the university level in Allen's (2015) research of teaching sexualities at university. Allen also encourages "rethinking practices" and "looking for new insights," as well, which is essentially what queer theory boils down to. Queer theory is not focused solely on creating a space that is more friendly for LGBTQ students, but rather reexamining the state of education and creating innovative paths that radically change the experience of the student.

Another theory that is both useful and relevant to the topic at hand is discussed in Rebecca Tarlau's "From a Language to a Theory of Resistance: Critical Pedagogy, the Limits of 'Framing,' and Social Change" (2014). Tarlau makes three main points in her paper, but the most

applicable is her claim that "scholars of social movements and critical pedagogy are infrequently in conversation." She focuses on the disconnect between social movement theorists and educators, pushing forward the idea that if these two groups collaborated more then social movements would be strengthened. She discusses the role of informal educational projects in facilitating the inception and power of social movements, which ties back to the idea of a class project, or perhaps a video, influencing a viewer/community/university.

Tarlau says that while both of the aforementioned fields focus on processes of societal transformation, "social movement theory in the United States has been developed primarily by sociologists and political scientists while critical pedagogy is discussed almost entirely by educational scholars." This is partially because social movements organizers have more distrust of traditional, historic institutions, such as education and the idea of university, because those very institutions have not supported them in the past or provided true change at a more rapid pace. Tarlau's takeaway point is that critical pedagogues fail to move from a "language of resistance" to a theory of how people can form legitimate movements of resistance with that very language. In the creation of educational media, it is important to consider both social movement theory and the critical pedagogy that apply. A media artifact, in whatever medium, should aim to be holistic, inclusive, and informative.

Video as Activism

Regarding video's role in social reconstruction, Barakett, Saccá, and Freedan (2001) provide valuable research. The paper was published over a decade ago, but still applies in terms of incorporating video into teaching to assess its effects on student concerns. Social

reconstructionist tradition, as Freedman calls it, insists that a school must play a large role in creating a more just and equitable society; the practice focuses on "community good" and "critical intelligence," as opposed to "individual gain" and "indoctrination." He referenced tools that helped inspire students, such as banning censorship of ideas, brainstorming and collaboration, and adjusting the basis of rules for classroom interaction. Although the video being produced in the context of this senior project was not a university directive, the fact that it is student-conceptualized and executed makes it relevant to the idea of video as a form of teaching.

Finally, the current research out on online video's best practices and impact are very conclusive. According to the Pew Research Center, digital video consumption is growing and has been for almost a decade now. About two-thirds of U.S. adults now watch videos online, compared to just 40% in 2007, with 18-29 year-olds being most invested group. Seeing as the video being produced in connection with this paper is intended for a college age-level audience, this statistic is encouraging. A 2014 Pew Research Center study found that roughly 77% of adult internet users are on Facebook, while 63% use YouTube. This means that the ideal place to upload one's video is onto YouTube, but this must be supplemented with a Facebook post in order to reach your maximum viewership. The post should also be made public in order to allow all Facebook users, not just one's "friends," to share the content. Ideally, videos should be under 1-2 minutes long, according to all Journalism course curriculum at Cal Poly. The videos that are most popular in terms of views, likes, comments, and shares are those that are easier to consume. To put in other terms, the shorter your video it is, the more likely it is to go viral. However, the point of this senior project is not to create a short and sweet viral video. The intention is to

produce an informative, thoughtful, and meaningful short documentary that serves as a snapshot into the current campus climate for LGBTQ+ students at Cal Poly.

Mustang News Archives

The Cal Poly Kennedy Library website has kept track of all newspaper issues since students began writing for The Polygram, now Mustang News, back in 1916. A lot has changed in 100 years, but the most obvious difference is the advancement of technology. In today's day and age, there is only a need for a twice-a-week paper, as opposed to daily, and all content is pushed to digital first. Photos, videos, and interactive stories are easier to consume, more visually appealing, and can engage readers more successfully. Does that mean all of the decades of content stored online in the library's Digital Commons is worthless? Certainly not. In the case of this project, the student newspaper archives were extremely helpful in assessing Cal Poly's evolution of LGBTQ+ inclusivity efforts. The focus was on main events that took place for the LGBTQ+ student community, whether they were good or bad, and what that can tell us about the way the university handled and responded to their needs at the time. These archival resources provide great context for comparison to how far we have come, the pace of progress, and what issues are still being dealt with.

In 1976, the Gay Student Union, GSU, was recognized as a student club. The following year the club received a bomb threat along with KCPR. In 1981, the GSU had their first booth at the annual Poly Royal weekend. In 2000, Cal Poly had its first Pride Week and two years later Cal Poly made its biggest step yet towards LGBTQ+ inclusivity because of an infamous incident that occurred in the most visible place on campus.

In 2002, Cal Poly opened its first-ever facility on Cal Poly's campus geared toward sexual diversity, the Pride Alliance. The center was created as an offshoot of the GLBU - Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals United, which was a prominent campus club that pushed administration for more representation and resources on campus. This push came after the well-known "P Incident" from earlier in the year, in which the GLBU painted the Cal Poly "P" rainbow to celebrate Pride Week, and it was painted over with white. The "P" was painted rainbow again and the same thing occurred not once, not twice, but three times total. After this event, students pushed for a legitimate center and on National Coming Out Day in 2002, the Pride Alliance was born. In an article called "Davis speaks at LGBT Center opening," they describe the center as "located in a modular facility between the University Union and the biology building." Pat Harris, the assistant director of Student Life and Leadership at the time, said "We basically have the same setup as the Women's Center and the Multicultural Center." The grand opening reception had about 60 people, and Harris said she hoped the opening of the LGBT Center would lead to "more acceptance of the gay community on the Cal Poly campus."

Harris also spoke more on "The 'P' incident," saying that it "galvanized a lot of people separately and then as members of groups. If you look at the events involving the 'P', the homophobia associated with it was evident." She continued, "Up until the repainting of the 'P,' everyone knew that the campus climate for sexually diverse students was less than welcoming, but the 'P' incident showed how unwelcoming the climate had become and brought it to the attention of those who had the power to change it. Students, both gay and straight, organized forums focused on issues of sexual diversity and discrimination. Ultimately, they would be the wheels that put the Pride Alliance Center project in motion." President Warren Baker supported

the project and appointed Robert Detweiler, then interim vice president for Student Affairs, to head the project. "We need the center for two reasons," Detweiler said. "First, students who are confused about their sexuality can go there to talk to someone and get the resources they need. Secondly, the idea of America is to be inclusive. We are a melting pot. Maybe you don't agree with someone's sexuality, but you can accept it."

The following year, there was another homophobia-related incident that shook the LGBTQ+ and entire Cal Poly community. In 2003, Mustang Daily published an article called "GLBU Egging Investigation continues," which described the events that took place. "The GLBU booth was struck by a barrage of eggs Feb. 13 on Dexter Lawn. Members inside the booth had just completed their march through campus in celebration of Same-Sex Hand Holding Day, which was designed to display that there's a diversity of love." A 24-hour campout in front of the administration building took place following the event, which brought more awareness to the issue. The article continued, "Each visitor received a list of changes the group would like to see put into action by the next academic year. Among those changes would be to implement a Bias Response team, to adhere to and uphold the university's Zero Tolerance policy in discriminatory matters and to increase monetary support from the university to clubs and organizations that encourage diversity and multiculturalism." Eventually, two students, one from Cal Poly and one from Cuesta, confessed and were arrested after the two-month investigation.

In 2004 Cal Poly had CommUNITY Pride Week and Jon Schuppert, the student coordinator of the Pride Alliance at the time, said "The painting of the 'P' is very symbolic. We're really hoping that someone doesn't try to cover it over again." Someone did. Twice.

Along comes 2007 and the Pride Alliance is making strides— it held its first advisory committee meeting to receive input from students, faculty and staff on GLBT issues and how they affect Cal Poly. They also had their first-ever Pride Prom, which was described as "a hit" by the Mustang Daily. The article is as follows, "[Pride Prom] began as a way for the LGBT community to have a friendly venue to dance," said Daniel Pfau, an animal science sophomore and prom coordinator. "Since Tortilla Flats in downtown San Luis Obispo changed into a karaoke bar, there is no place outside of the campus for the community to socialize. A social event is really important. Since we no longer have a place to dance with the same gender, the opportunity to do that is great." Mustang Daily also interviewed "prom king" Angela Kramer, a political science sophomore and member of the ASI Board of Directors, who said that it was important to have events like this. Kramer said, "This is a moderate campus, but it's not an ignorant one." Freshman Jessica Cresci, who was also involved with pride center, said "The [LGBT] community is comfortable, but everywhere else it's kind of awkward because it's more conservative and religious than where I'm from." In 2008 students also participated in National Day of Silence, which spreads awareness of LGBT oppression and bullying. The day ended with a "breaking of the silence" and showing of "Brokeback Mountain" in the San Luis Lounge of the University Union.

The growing positivity and hope was halted when the infamous Cal Poly Crops House incident took place. The event was mostly fueled by racism, but also included homophobia language, and united minority groups from all over the university. Mustang Daily's article, "Revolt in face of racism," covered the aftermath. "When news came out about a noose, a confederate flag and allegations of a sign that read racial and gay slurs, hundreds of Cal Poly

students and faculty joined together wearing black shirts in response to the on-campus crop science house members who allegedly committed the offenses at recent weekend parties. During the hour of protest, a petition accumulated about 150 signatures for the expulsion of the students living in the crop science house and those involved with the disputed materials." The Cal Poly administration was unable to take any legal action because of the First Amendment. Provost Robert Koob said, "We learned that it's a protective element of free speech so we aren't able to take any punitive actions." Another article related to the incident, "Campus holds diversity forum in wake of student protests," said that Associated Students Inc. members, Cal Poly President Warren Baker, and student leaders collaborated to hold a forum to "provide a place students can discuss the incident, the ramifications for those involved and future issues regarding campus diversity." The Faculty and Staff of the Comparative Ethnic Studies Department and Women's and Gender Studies Department also released a statement. One excerpt reads, "We must do better. And we must not forget what happened on this campus. It must change us as individuals and as a community. In this regard, we applaud the many students who have gone to rallies, written letters, and attended meetings in order both to protest this incident and to provide direct support for students of color, GLBTQ students, and other members of our community impacted by these alleged behaviors. We must treat each other with more decency, dignity and humanity and we must work to change the practices and beliefs that contribute to these incidents."

Later in 2008, members of the Pride Center started an online, email-based counseling service for LGBTQ+ students. Cresci, the student coordinator, said, "Even though our campus isn't really hostile toward the LGBT community, it isn't the most comfortable place to come out." The service's creator, Jay Ledbetter, identified as transgender and genderqueer, and

emphasized the importance of safe spaces. In 2009, Ledbetter said, "Cal Poly is good once you have that queer connection; for a lot of students it can be a scary place, and a very homophobic." Ledbetter also said that another way Cal Poly was supporting the LGBTQ+ community was by agreeing to host the Western regional queer conference next February. The conference will hold workshops, have several speakers, and a performance component. Ledbetter added, "The Pride Center is moving onto the second floor of the UU, which I think helps send a better message to other students on campus."

In 2010, Pride week went off without a hitch. Coordinator Robert Kinports said 2010's Pride Week had "a noticeably larger turnout than previous [years]." Kinports. "Last year, more than 5,000 people attended the festival that is held at the end of the week. Even though the county is fairly conservative, it has been fairly tolerant and supportive of the LGBT community."

In 2011, Mustang Daily published an extensive article called, "Asking Cal Poly tough questions on gender and LGBTQIA." The article covered a multitude of related topics and featured interviews with student, faculty, and staff in the community. The article stated, "Sometimes members of these groups in the Cal Poly community still encounter difficulty in overcoming stereotypes and asserting their right to feel safe and accepted. Despite the many resources available to address gender and LGBTQIA issues and the positive poll results from students, faculty and staff, campus leaders said there is still work to be done." The article added that the number of students in the LGBTQIA community was lower at Cal Poly than at any of the other CSU universities. At the time, the Pride Center was pushing for increasing the number of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus—a fight that is still taking place on campus today in 2016. The article maintained that at the time there were under 300 state-maintained restrooms on

campus, according to a report by Facilities, and only 24 of them were unisex or “non-gendered” restrooms. Civil engineering sophomore Paul Armer was the housing liaison for the Pride Center, and was quoted as saying he had experiences with people refusing to sit near him or speak to him if he was wearing something that makes it clear that he was gay. However, Armer added that he was afraid of living in the dorms when he arrived at Cal Poly as a freshman, but "Campus Housing pushes for diversity and acceptance in incoming classes." He also said the Cal Poly community is actively seeking more information and more ways to be involved in the Pride Center’s efforts. According to the Pride Center website in 2011, there were 194 students and 103 faculty, staff, and Campus Housing employees who were involved in or had completed Ally Training since 2007. Armer said he had seen a huge influx of people who want to complete the training since he became involved with the Pride Center.

In 2013, Mustang Daily became Mustang News. In 2015, the Queer Student Union, also known as QSU, established itself at Cal Poly and held the university's first on-campus drag show. QSU took stances on campus-related issues, such as the UU Referendum, and held protests. This was also the year that Laverne Cox came to Campus and the year the first "Free Speech Wall Incident" took place, in which the Cal Poly Republican's display commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall became filled with islamophobic, transphobic, and racist language. This incident inspired the inception of SLO Solidarity, a group of students, faculty, staff, and community members dedicated to protecting marginalized groups, taking action against hate speech, and pressuring the Cal Poly administration to implement changes in policy that would reflect a truly progressive agenda. One SLO Solidarity organizer received a death threat in the weeks following SLO Solidarity's increased campus presence around the time of their first march, which drew

hundreds. The Cal Poly "P" was also painted over this year, but it turned out to be a miscommunication between the Pride Center and Facilities, and a lack of paperwork completed. In November of 2016, the Free Speech Wall returned and was once again filled with swastikas, racial slurs, and other bigoted remarks. In the same month, the Cal Poly Republicans also announced that the gay, alt-right comedian and icon, Milo Yiannopoulos, is being sponsored to come speak on campus at the end of January.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methods that were used to collect empirical data for the documentary. It goes over including the data sources, which include participants, the method of collection, and a presentation of the data, limitations, and delimitations that occurred in the process.

Data Sources

The sources chosen for this project are all Cal Poly students that identify somewhere on the spectrum of LGBTQIA+. There were five main questions asked, which were designed to tap into the life of what it means to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a Cal Poly Mustang who is a part of the academic and social community at the university. Other questions asked were done so in a fashion that reflected the interviewer's skills in spontaneous interviewing that were gained throughout the interviewer's four years of journalism education and practice.

The other data referenced in the documentary is from the Cal Poly Campus Climate Survey from 2014, which provides valuable statistics and other logistical data that reflect the LGBTQ+ experience of the student body, as well as faculty and staff. Figures from the Campus Climate Survey are also featured in the List of Figures preceding Chapter 1.

Participants

The LGBTQ+ participants for this project include Anthony Haddad, Austine De Los Santos, Alison O'Neill, James Hayes, Kayla Williams, Matt Klepfer, and Trevor Melody. All

seven students come from various areas of the state, different cultural backgrounds, are currently in different grades, have different majors, and are involved with a multitude of groups and organizations on campus.

Interview Design

The following questions were asked of each interview participants and served to assist with interviewer comprehension of the individuals' identity, to provide various perspectives on the Cal Poly experience through the eyes of LGBTQ+ students, and to gather ideas on how the university can improve and move forward with its inclusivity efforts:

1. How do you personally identify and what does that mean to you?
2. How has your identity/have your identities affected your worldview?
3. Do you feel that Cal Poly as a whole is inclusive of people who identify similar to you, why or why not?
4. How would you describe, in three words, the campus climate in terms of how LGBTQIA students are treated?
5. What specific things need improvement in terms of inclusivity efforts and what is Cal Poly doing right, and should build upon, in terms of creating a more holistic campus?

Data Collection

The method of data collection was interviewing seven individuals on Sunday, December 11th, 2016 and lasted between 30-45 minutes each. The interviews were filmed using a DSLR camera set up on a tripod that was rented from the Journalism Media Resource Center. The audio

collection was done using a wire-in to the DSLR camera and a single lavalier mic clipped to the individual interviewee. Participants not only answered questions from the main five on the questionnaire, but also shared related anecdotes, stories from their friends and peers, and what changes they would like to see take place at Cal Poly in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusivity efforts. There was also extensive data collection done through an in-depth reading of the final report from the Cal Poly Campus Climate Survey from 2014. Finally, there was data in the form of articles, facts, and quotes collected from student newspaper archives dating as far back as 1916.

Data Presentation

The data from the interviews, student newspaper archives, and Campus Climate survey report are all presented in the form of a short documentary. The documentary will be available for public viewing, free of charge, on YouTube. It will be uploaded to and remain on the producer and project creator's YouTube account indefinitely. The documentary will also be shared via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and on the Cal Poly Senior Project Library online database. The documentary is allowed to be screened in any classroom or event setting without a fee or a notification to the creator; seeing as it is an educational media artifact intended for spreading awareness, it is important for the content to be as accessible as possible.

Limitations

Some limitations that are worth mentioning are as follows:

1. People may not want to share their true opinions or most vulnerable stories if they know the information/documentary will be made public. Therefore, some valuable or crucial anecdotes that could contribute to the project as a whole cannot be included.
2. Due to time constraints on how long a short documentary can and should be, not all information and footage can be included in the final product.
3. The documentary will not include a member of each letter of the LGBTQIA spectrum because of scheduling issues, quarter system school constraints, and a lack of connection to anyone related to the project who could have told them about the opportunity to interview.
4. The documentary is not fully unbiased, as nothing ever can be, because certain ideas will always be consciously and subconsciously, through the frame of the interviewer/editor.
5. Due to the small sample size, not all findings can be generalized to the greater Cal Poly LGBTQ+ student community.

Delimitations

Some delimitations that are worth mentioning are as follows:

1. The interviews took place at the interviewer's house, in the living room, because it is a quiet and private space that allows the interviewee to feel comfortable. The location is also in close proximity to Cal Poly's campus and is accessible for students who lack transportation.
2. There is simply not a lot of existing literature when it comes to how online video plays an influencing role in university inclusivity efforts for their LGBTQ+ community. There is not even that much available research on video's impact on social movements and progress as a

whole, thus it was difficult to follow a non-existing set of best practices, and some conclusions made will be lacking critical comparisons.

3. The choice to only focus on LGBTQ+ inclusivity was done in order to keep the focus of the senior project narrow and clarified. While race, class, dis/ability, and other intersections of identity are crucial to a university creating a more holistic campus climate, it would have broadened the topic too much. A conversation between the project producer and advisor settled on gender and sexuality issues as the best choice for the focus of this documentary.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Chapter 4 will detail descriptions of the LGBTQ+ students who were interviewed in the study. Since the interviews took between 30-45 minutes each and were recorded using video equipment, it is nearly impossible to provide an entire summary of the interviewee's answers, thus the reader is advised to watch the accompanying documentary in-depth. Finally, the original research questions and will be looked at once again, in order to reconsider them with the new data gathered from the interview/collection process.

Description of Participating Respondents

Haddad identifies as a cisgender, Palestinian, but white-passing, gay male. He is involved with Associated Students Inc., ASI, his fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau, and SLO Solidarity. De Los Santos identifies as a lesbian woman of color. She has participated in Poly POV, a student-run play, and will also be performing in Original Women's Narratives, OWN, in the Spring. O'Neill identifies as both agender and gender fluid, being biologically a woman but identifying as a man, as well. O'Neill accepts any and all pronouns, and he has also participated in both Poly POV and OWN. James Hayes is a white, gay male, as is Klepfer. Hayes is very involved with Mustang News. Klepfer is involved with the Queer Student Union, SLO Solidarity, and ASI. Williams is a white lesbian woman who performed in OWN last year and is passionate about women in STEM. Melody is a hispanic gay man who was also involved with Journalism-related groups like Mustang News and CPTV.

Questionnaire

All questions below have been answered in the attached documentary in the appendix of this paper:

1. How do you personally identify and what does that mean to you?
2. How has your identity/have your identities affected your worldview?
3. Do you feel that Cal Poly as a whole is inclusive of people who identify similar to you, why or why not?
4. How would you describe, in three words, the campus climate in terms of how LGBTQIA students are treated?
5. What specific things need improvement in terms of inclusivity efforts and what is Cal Poly doing right, and should build upon, in terms of creating a more holistic campus?

Research Questions

1. What does inclusivity mean/look like?

- Inclusivity means treating everyone like equals, which includes the extra step of recognizing the disadvantages and specified needs of marginalized individuals, AKA: equity
- It looks like same-sex couple holding hands on campus, transgender students feeling comfortable expressing their preferred identity, people asking for others' pronouns

2. How can you increase awareness of LGBTQ+ inclusivity on a university campus?

- More performance-based activism that is monetarily and symbolically supported by the university

- A physical building that is dedicated specifically to the Cross Cultural Centers and the Women's and Gender Studies Department
- Having prominent people in the media come to campus to speak on LGBTQ+ issues
- College/Department/Major-specific forums for students within a more centralized campus community to come together and discuss relevant LGBTQ+ issues with their peers
- Normalizing LGBTQ+ identities and people through more constructive campus involvement, as opposed to urgency protests

3. What are the best practices and tools being utilized by holistic universities?

- Assuring administration is legitimately diverse, educated, and prepared to handle the issues presented to them that concern all parts of the student body, AKA: having lesbian, gay, transgender, etc. administrators who can understand the minority student community instead of white, cisgender, straight admin that can only sympathize
- Maintaining a LGBTQ-friendly option for on-campus housing in freshman dorms
- Mandatory staff and faculty training on LGBTQ+ language, issues, and bias response

4. How can we measure awareness and/or progress?

- Retention rates of minority students, faculty, and staff
- Monitoring how funds are directed towards the Cross Cultural Centers, campus clubs, and other LGBTQ+ inclusivity programming
- Archival research for context and empirical, qualitative data for comparison

5. What effect do video campaigns have on awareness?

- Videos harness the power of both images and sound to create a more holistic and engaging overall experience with the content at hand
- Video campaigns are a highly effective tool because they reach larger audience through social media sharing on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- Research from the past decade shows that the amount of video creating, posting, and sharing has risen at a rapid rate and will continue to grow in the years to come

6. What are documentary best practices?

- Remain as unbiased as possible, unless your documentary openly states its intended persuasive angle explicitly, in order to produce a piece of work that is not only entertaining, but maintains a high level of journalistic integrity
- Conduct as many interviews as possible in order to better apply your sample size to the broader population, thus adding credibility to your claims and work as a whole
- When editing a documentary, avoid as many jump cuts as possible to retain a genuine relationship between the viewer and interviewee's they consume content from... it is easy to misconstrue meaning from a participant's statement when the words themselves are altered in organization, timing, and context

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

This project was inspired by my academic and technical background in Broadcast Journalism, as well as my education in Women's and Gender Studies, and Media, Arts, and Technology. Both my major and my two minors provided me with endless opportunities to learn, grow, and gain experience in my time at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. I knew, from Day One, that I wanted to create a documentary—the perfect senior project that would force me to prove my skills in production, directing, interviewing, video editing with Adobe Premiere, and writing the accompanying paper. I also reveled in the fact that I got to incorporate social justice and feminist ideas into my final assignment that I would ever complete at this university. The process of interviewing was extensive, took longer than expected, and ended up shifting the angle of the documentary as a whole, but I believe that was for the better in the end. I sought out to see how online video can be utilized to spread awareness about LGBTQ+ inclusivity and what that meant in the hyper-localized context of Cal Poly as a university. Although I only planned for the "short documentary to be between 7-10 minutes, I found that it would be doing a disservice to the Ca Poly student body, faculty, and staff (the assumed majority viewership) to eliminate large chunks of the data, history, and anecdotes for the sake of ambiguous time constraints. The questions asked in the interview are both answered in the documentary, and as follows:

1. How do you personally identify and what does that mean to you?'
2. How has your identity/have your identities affected your worldview?

3. Do you feel that Cal Poly as a whole is inclusive of people who identify similar to you, why or why not?
4. How would you describe, in three words, the campus climate in terms of how LGBTQIA students are treated?
5. What specific things need improvement in terms of inclusivity efforts and what is Cal Poly doing right, and should build upon, in terms of creating a more holistic campus?

Discussion

The results of the interviews and final version of the documentary show clear patterns in the responses of the participants in reference to the questions asked. Each of the participants felt that Cal Poly's campus climate was not overtly homophobic, transphobic, rude, aggressive, or intolerant. Instead, all participants referenced some form of "subtle" tension, an underlying sense that they were not fully accepted or included, and a general attitude of ignorance, privilege, and apathy in relation to the student body. They insist that although strides have been made in LGBTQ+ inclusivity efforts, the pace of change is slow, and there is much more work to be done in terms of reassuring queer students that they have a place at our university. I found that the students who identified simply as "gay" or "lesbian" had a more positive outlook on the campus climate, were less aware of microaggressions, and were overall more satisfied with their Cal Poly experience as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Transgender/gender fluid individuals appear to face more discrimination, harassment, and general stress on campus as a result of their gender identity or lack thereof. All participants felt a sense of hope for Cal Poly's future and encouraged the idea of finding a core group of friends through an on-campus organization to

provide a much-needed support system. Most of the participants found Cal Poly to more "less inclusive," "more conservative," or more "uncomfortable" than the towns in which they grew up in prior to coming to San Luis Obispo. Only two out of the seven participants believed Cal Poly to be "liberal" in comparison to the areas in which they experienced their identity in their youth. Participants with religious families or that also identified as a person of color found it harder to feel accepted and included on top of their LGBTQ+ identity.

Conclusion

Overall, the entirety of the project felt successfully planned, executed, and concluded. The participants were satisfied with their interviews, the amount of qualitative and empirical data was large, and the various viewpoints/perspectives on the topic allowed for a less-biased final product. Originally, the documentary was going to be a scathing, take-no-prisoners video that would show Cal Poly's true colors. Through the research process, reading through student newspaper archives, and the legitimate interviews with my fellow Mustangs, I learned that our campus climate is not as bad as I had perceived it to be for all LGBTQ+ students. Instead, I conclude that we have made progress, albeit slow and not highly visible progress. I also learned that while gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals may feel safer on campus, there is still greater prejudice towards those whose gender identity is different than that of the one they were assigned at birth.

The next chapter for Cal Poly, in terms of LGBTQ+ inclusivity efforts, should include increased funding and programming for Pride Center events, better efforts to hire and retain

diverse faculty and staff members, more events with prominent LGBTQ+ speakers, better marketing of on-campus opportunities to LGBTQ+ students, and mandatory ally trainings for all.

Recommendations

If this project were to be altered or a similar one was attempted in the future, I would recommend attaining interviews with a more diverse spectrum of LGBTQ+ individuals. This project featured many gay cisgender men, lesbian cisgender women, and white people. The data would be more inclusive and accurate if future project producers committed to interviewing a more varied pool of students. I feel that a greater sample size than seven would also be a good idea, seeing as it is both hard and mildly unethical to draw broad-based conclusions to the larger student population of 20,000 when your interviewee count is so small.

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Appendix

"Cal Poly, Are You Listening?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFVPNg78cD8>