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**Theatrical Networking in the Context of BarnStorm**

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

THEATER ARTS

By

**Alyssa Glenn**

June 2017

The Thesis of Alyssa Glenn  
is approved:

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Theatrical Networking in the Context of BarnStorm**

**By**

**Alyssa Glenn**

In this thesis, I will clarify and examine the networking opportunities integrated into BarnStorm, UCSC's student produced Theater Company, both for BarnStorm students and the BarnStorm community at large in the 2016-2017 season. These networking opportunities focus primarily on professional and community development. I define networking as both an occasion for professional development on an individual level, and an opportunity to establish a stronger BarnStorm community; it is a tool for BarnStorm students, audiences and community members to connect with one another. Networking in the context of BarnStorm straddles the worlds of professional development, community building and personal growth. It provides students with opportunities to grow as theater practitioners and active community members. I intend to establish the necessity of social and professional networking in the context of BarnStorm. In exerting BarnStorm as both a professional and social network, students gain an opportunity to grow as artists and citizens. I will utilize Shane Dawson's *A study of the relationship between student social networks and sense of community* as the framework to explain and define the BarnStorm and UCSC Theater Arts Department networks.

As a graduate of the UCSC Theater Arts undergraduate program, I offer a perspective that serves the needs of the BarnStorm student. As an undergraduate, I

participated in BarnStorm several times, generally serving as a lighting designer or technical advisor to the administrators. Throughout my undergraduate education, I worked in the Bay Area as a lighting designer and electrician. These experiences led me to pursue an emphasis in lighting design and technical theater at UC Santa Cruz. The social actors in my network range from professors and students at UCSC to prominent Bay Area designers and technicians. My education in technical theater developed through three primary paths: classes and design work as an undergraduate, work on the UCSC Theater Arts Electrics crew, work as a freelance technician and designer. Each of these paths contributed to the social network that I have developed as both a student and worker in theater.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Gina and Blair Glenn, who have supported me tirelessly in my pursuit of higher education in a field deemed irrelevant or invaluable by so many. I thank you both for recognizing the necessity of theater artists in our world and for continuing to support my work in this industry.

A thousand “thank you’s” to the UCSC Theater Arts Department faculty and staff, including but not limited to Eric Mack, Joe Weiss, and Professors David Cuthbert, Kate Edmunds, Michael Chemers, and Brandin Barón-Nusbaum. Your collected knowledge, wisdom and passion for your work has been endlessly inspirational and valuable in my time at UCSC.

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow BarnStorm Director, Brianna Grabowski, for her limitless problem solving abilities, upbeat attitude and organizational genius. I cannot imagine a more qualified partner for this journey; it was truly a pleasure.

## **BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY**

### **Theatrical Networking as a Means of Professional Development**

My personal investment in pursuing a thesis in networking can be traced to my participation in a networking opportunity that I had in October of 2016. I attended Live Design International (LDI), a stage technology conference and tradeshow, sponsored by Electronic Theater Controls (ETC), one of the most prominent manufacturers of theatrical lighting equipment in the industry. This sponsorship allowed me to meet dozens of designers and technicians. Sponsorship recipients were paired with professional mentors that offer guidance in the year following the program.

In order to expand and build upon these connections, I received funding through the UCSC Art's Dean Fund for Excellence to travel to New York City in Spring of 2017 to speak with industry professionals about what social networking has done for their careers. I spent time with the mentors ETC paired me with, Al Crawford, Lighting Director for The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and Zakaria Al-Alami Lighting Director for Jazz at Lincoln Center – they are also the Founder and Lighting Director, respectively, for the New York based design firm Arc3Design. Additionally, I met and learned from over a dozen other New York designers and technicians. In traveling and spending more time with these designers and technicians in New York, I solidified my personal connections with them and secured my position in their social and professional networks. Having had the opportunity to network on such a large scale at LDI, and later in New York, I chose to

pursue a thesis that would explore the benefits to BarnStorm, UCSC's student produced theater company, and its students when networking is consciously integrated into the course.

Each of these professionals shared words of wisdom with me about breaking into this industry. Their advice boiled down to a primary theatrical networking strategy: "Don't be an asshole." Although profane, it is my experience that theater professionals everywhere understand and agree that inability to follow that advice will result in a very short-lived career. In exploring networking tactics throughout my time with BarnStorm, I have found that this piece of advice holds true in an educational theater setting as well. In order to create and promote a healthy and functional working environment, it is always beneficial to have a strong personal relationship with those that you are working with and to promote a strong sense of community among the cast, crew and theater personnel. "Don't be an asshole," is a first step in fostering these networks.

## **BARNSTORM: AN OVERVIEW**

In order to understand the implications of networking within BarnStorm, one must first have a thorough understanding of what BarnStorm is. An entirely student-run theater company located in the Barn Theater at UC Santa Cruz, BarnStorm's primary purpose is to provide students with more opportunities to produce theater and to give them greater ownership over the work they create. Unlike most graduate-level theater programs, BarnStorm offers its directors a unique opportunity to manage and direct a theater company from the ground up. The format of the program fluctuates based on what the directors choose to prioritize each year.

Professor David Lee Cuthbert, the faculty advisor for BarnStorm, meets with the BarnStorm directors weekly to discuss grading, conflicts that may arise, and to serve as a liaison between BarnStorm and the Theater Department if need be. He provides an institutional memory, having worked with BarnStorm since its founding year. BarnStorm Directors benefit from his willingness to step in as frequently or infrequently as they ask; this gives directors the opportunity to serve as the primary administrators for the course through every aspect of the program. They have faculty support and supervision whenever they ask for it, but generally have free rein to handle the course as they see fit.

Each group of managers offers varied interpretations on the original BarnStorm framework established by Leah Gardner and Mike McCann, the first student directors of BarnStorm. The general structure of the course remains in the realm of that which was established by its "founders" in 2004. Each of the course

requirements<sup>1</sup> are subject to change based on the desires of the new management team. The 2016-2017 course obligations stray from the original format in two ways: Maintenance and Workshop requirements. The BarnStorm Mission Statement has yet to undergo much change since its establishment in 2004. The current Mission Statement offers a condensed version of that defined by Gardner in *BarnStorm: A Handbook* (2004). The Mission Statement in its current form is:

*“BarnStorm creates opportunities for the developing artist to reclaim theatre and the theatrical process. Our aim is to integrate our perspectives into the political, social, cultural and academic climate of the UCSC campus and community. We are devoted to fostering new works of art and giving artists and audiences alike opportunities for exchange through a theatrical setting.”*

This condensed version is the statement most used by BarnStorm administrators.

The administration for the program varies; it is passed down to a new group of graduate students at the beginning of each academic year. The directorial positions include Artistic Director, Managing Director and Production Manager, mirroring positions held within professional theater companies across the country. Former BarnStorm Artistic Director, Katherine Wahlberg, describes the positions of Artistic Director and Managing Director in a professional context, “the Artistic Director traditionally handles the more ‘artsy’ side of things... the Managing Director deals with donors, the board of directors” (Wahlberg 20). The Production Manager is responsible for managing technical staff and ensuring that designs (lighting, scenic, sound) come to fruition. Generally, the Production Manager occupies an exclusively technical role, with less input on the creative aspects of the company.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed breakdown of BarnStorm course requirements, see appendix A, Fall

These tend to be more fluid within the context of BarnStorm; in his thesis, former BarnStorm Production Manager Paul Rossi explains the guidelines for the tasks that each director should take on<sup>2</sup>.

- Coordinating and planning the season (choosing which plays to produce), is shared between the three administrators.
- Managing Director: manages the budget for each quarter, head any funding efforts, communicates on behalf of the theater with any local, community or government agencies, oversees and maintains written records
- Artistic Director: Spearheads the selection process in planning the season, supervises artistic personnel and programs
- Production Manager: supervises technical personnel and equipment, ensures that designs are feasible/complete (Rossi 25)

BarnStorm 2016-2017 utilized slightly different management titles than in years past. Initially, my Co-Director, Brianna Grabowski, and I intended to use the titles Managing Director and Production Manager, respectively. As the first pair of Barn Directors with exclusively technical backgrounds, we began our tenure with a technically oriented year in mind; we intended to run the company without an Artistic Director. After the first few weeks of Fall Quarter, we learned that a theater company

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<sup>2</sup> These guidelines offer an interpretation of the responsibilities held by these titles in the professional world, adapted for the world of BarnStorm. Rossi's handbook offers a foundation for administrators to work from; the interpretation of those guidelines is in flux from year to year.

without an Artistic Director is just a venue, a skeleton of what a theater can and should be. We quickly decided to alter our titles and take on the tasks traditionally associated with the Artistic Director in addition to our other duties. I adopted the title Producing Artistic Director, while Ms. Grabowski adopted the title Managing Artistic Director; both are curated titles based on our respective work as Production Manager/Managing Director and Co-Artistic Director<sup>3</sup>. Our shared tasks as Co-Artistic Directors included: curating the season, offering guidance to directors and performers alike, and establishing and upholding the Barnstorm Mission Statement.

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<sup>3</sup> Ms. Grabowski, unlike all previous BarnStorm Directors, accepted her role as a fourth year undergraduate student, a change in practice that affected our work relationship surprisingly little. Her workload included scheduling spaces, creating and organizing our calendars, and assisting Stage Managers and Directors with organizational tasks. My work as Producing Artistic Director revolved around organizing and maintaining the technical elements of the theater, from sound and media needs to lighting design. I trained our designers and technicians, and ensured that everyone knew what goes into maintaining safe working environment.

## METHODOLOGY

I will make use of the findings and terminology in Shane Dawson's *A study of the relationship between student social networks and sense of community* to identify and examine varied aspects of the BarnStorm network. Rather than utilize these terms to analyze anonymous students and intangible graphs, I intend to adopt them as methods to define and interpret events produced by BarnStorm, evaluate student positions within the BarnStorm network, and explore the ways in which BarnStorm administrators can improve the sense of community within the course.

Dawson utilizes Social Network Analysis<sup>4</sup> (SNA) to explore the relationship between social networks and an individual's sense of community in an educational context. SNA "investigate(s) the exchange of resources between social actors and how these interactions afford the establishment of relationships within a social system... social groups and social positions" (225). The individuals exchange resources; that exchange identifies their relationship to each other by defining the communities that they belong to and the hierarchies within those communities. SNA is also used to explore the "social relationships and patterns that evolve through member interactions;" it considers the shifts in relationships and communities alike as a direct result of interactions between individual parties (225).

Rather than studying students in an online course, I intend to use Dawson's analysis and findings to explore the inner and outer workings of BarnStorm's social

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<sup>4</sup> Social Network Analysis is a technique commonly utilized in modern sociology, with its roots in early Twentieth Century sociology.

network. I apply Dawson's definition of Social Network Analysis to the worlds of both BarnStorm and the UCSC Theater Arts Department.

SNA defines relationships in the context of strong or weak social ties. Strong ties are associated with close personal relationships, like a friendship. Weak ties are associated with crossover between separate social groups or networks, connecting groups within a larger network. The strength (or lack thereof) is generally defined by the frequency and mode of communication used; more frequent communication is associated with strong ties while infrequent communication is associated with weak ties. Dawson asserts that cohesion, many ties within the social network, is essential to effective learning. Dawson explains that the development of both cohesion and strong social ties should be treated as a goal within the course in order to better share resources and information among students, defining it as "the co-construction of knowledge" (235). If the ties within the network consist primarily of social interaction, rather than educational discourse, the individuals tend to develop weak ties.

In the context of BarnStorm and UCSC Theater Arts, students that work together in BarnStorm and also have a friendship would have a strong tie. The relationship between a student that works exclusively in BarnStorm and a student that works exclusively in the Theater Department would be a weak social tie. Cohesion within the BarnStorm network promotes communication among students, which further contributes to an increased sense of belonging.

SNA further defines relationships through the exchange of social capital. Social capital refers to the “goods” exchanged between groups, what each social actor gains from their interaction with another. These goods have a broad range based on the context of the relationship. The key in this exchange is “mutual benefit,” where each social actor receives social capital from the other. Social capital exists in many more contexts, including educational, political and economical (225). A greater number of social ties promotes more opportunities for students to work with one another and to exchange social capital.

In Dawson’s study, educational exchange is of great importance and serves as a form of social capital. No social actor exists in a bubble; their networks and communities overlap. Students, for example, offer many forms of social capital to one another. Their varied backgrounds and structures of knowledge serve as goods that can be exchanged with one another. Furthermore, by examining the development and construction of the network and community, the effectiveness of practices within the classroom can be identified and reviewed. In identifying the communities and their overlap within the network, we can identify the reasons behind effective or ineffective practices. BarnStorm employs several forms of social capital; common forms of social capital exchanged include educational, personal, political, and artistic. Much like the students in Dawson’s study, BarnStorm students each offer a unique composition of social capital.

I intend to utilize these practices to examine the development and construction of the BarnStorm Network, community, and course to better identify effective or

ineffective practices for increasing the sense of community, “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (Rovail 198). Dawson’s study utilizes a mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative data to assess overall sense of community in the course. The quantitative methods include Rovai’s Classroom Community scale and SNA centrality measures “to evaluate an individual’s sense of community and their position within a social network” (Dawson 226). Qualitative methods include content analysis of the course discussion forum and student interviews. These data sets are examined using calculations of *betweenness*, *closeness* and *degrees*<sup>5</sup>, these terms identify the individual’s centrality within their network. Centrality is a measure of “how well positioned an individual is to receive and disseminate information” (227). These calculations are demonstrated through web-like graphs where actors are represented by “nodes,” the network connections between each node are represented by a “tie.” *Betweenness* is the frequency with which an actor is in the shortest path (tie) between other nodes. An actor<sup>6</sup> with high betweenness is sometimes referred to as a “gatekeeper” or “broker” because they control the flow of information within the network. *Closeness* is a measurement of the actor’s centrality, it is the degree of relationship the actor has with the entire network. The *degree* centrality is the number

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<sup>5</sup> In my analysis of BarnStorm, I primarily explore centrality, closeness and betweenness. My analysis does not include measured, quantitative data, and will therefore not make use of degrees in the context of the BarnStorm network.

<sup>6</sup> Due to the theatrical nature of our work, I use the terms student, individual and/or node rather than “actor” to avoid confusion when analyzing BarnStorm.

of connections each actor has within the network (227-228).

The study's findings assert that a greater sense of community is perceived by students that participate and interact with other students. When a student's outreach is reciprocated, their sense of community rises. Students whose outreach is not reciprocated express frustration, which minimizes their perceived sense of community. By monitoring the position within the social network and frequency or infrequency of interactions, SNA establishes a method for identifying a student's personalized needs. It offers an opportunity to provide more or less support as an educator in addition to that being provided by the social network within the class (233).

The exchange between students influences their willingness to invest more or less social capital within the network. A strong social tie between students indicates greater willingness to invest and exchange social capital. Individuals with weak ties are less likely to experience a valuable exchange of information or resources. If a student's investment is not returned, their sense of community suffers. A high investment in conjunction with a high sense of community indicates greater benefit for that student. Conversely, high investment and low sense of community indicates frustration and dissatisfaction with the course. A student's personal benefit from the network is directly linked to their "level of commitment and satisfaction" (234) and overall sense of community.

I intend to adopt these terms and findings as a means of analyzing BarnStorm. I utilize the above terms to describe the position of individuals and groups within the

BarnStorm network. In examining BarnStorm, these terms will reference relationships between students, faculty members, audience members as well as anyone that identifies as a member of the BarnStorm community. Rather than analyze the literal distance between nodes in a graph, these terms articulate the relationships between members of the BarnStorm community and identify their impact on the sense of community within the course. I make use of my centrality and betweenness in relation to both the Theater Arts Department and BarnStorm networks to identify practices that serve to increase the sense of community within the BarnStorm Network.

## **CENTRALITY AND NETWORKING WITHIN UCSC THEATER ARTS**

### **The Loading Dock: A Social and Professional Hub**

Social ties develop through many paths. Actors develop friendships during rehearsal, electricians share a story over coffee break, designers discuss their greatest inspirations. All of these serve to strengthen the ties within a theatrical network. A primary location for strengthening and exercising social ties within the UCSC Theater Arts Department is the Scene Shop Loading Dock. Students, faculty and staff alike gather at break time to rest their legs, have a cup of coffee and talk about the various events happening in the department. These face-to-face interactions are a key aspect of networking within the department, as well as in theatrical networking in general.

It is impossible to work in theater without the help of technicians, stage managers, designers, directors etc. This is as true in academic as in professional contexts. All collaborators on a project must work together to create a cohesive production. The following section explores the advantages of my betweenness in regards to the BarnStorm and UCSC Theater Arts departments. My network within UCSC Theater Arts includes strong social ties with faculty and staff, as well as with other students in the program. In working with individuals that have high centrality within the UCSC Theater Arts Network, I increase my own centrality within both Theater Arts and BarnStorm. These strong social ties have allowed me (and BarnStorm by extension) access to extensive resources and opportunities<sup>7</sup>. Access to these people, and more, on a personal and professional level, creates high centrality

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<sup>7</sup> For a list of maintenance and facilities improvements accessed as a direct result of the social ties discussed in this section, see Appendix D.

and closeness within both the BarnStorm and UCSC Theater Arts networks. In continuing to develop these relationships, BarnStorm as an institution benefits. Strong social ties with members of the Theater Arts Department that have been especially beneficial during my time as Producing Artistic Director for Barnstorm include:

Joe Weiss-- Operations Manager for UCSC Theater Arts Department: Often found on the Loading Dock, Mr. Weiss oversees all of the productions, events venues and general inner workings of the Department. To the casual passerby, Mr. Weiss seems to be an employee taking a break, getting some fresh air. Those of us embedded in the fast-paced world of the Theater Department know that in reality, Mr. Weiss' work on the Dock never ends. There he not only oversees the scene shop, but can discuss department goings on with anyone and everyone that may have a question. In discussing Barn events and issues with Mr. Weiss in this informal, social setting, I accessed information and materials that may otherwise be unavailable to BarnStorm Administrators. Many of the equipment purchases, scenic design tactics and facility renovations this year are a direct result of asking a question during a coffee break. Having engaged with Mr. Weiss in a social context, I secured my relationship with him as both friendly and professional thus allowing me to better work with him to further BarnStorm's development over the course of the year.

David Cuthbert-- Faculty Advisor for BarnStorm, Professor of Design (Scenic, Media and Lighting) at UCSC: I worked with Professor Cuthbert beginning in my freshman year, initially as his student, later on as an assistant and eventually as a fellow designer. In taking his Introduction to Lighting class, I expressed a great

interest in learning more about the process of designing a show in the UCSC Theater Department. By maintaining communication after class finished, I gained the opportunity to work with Professor Cuthbert as light board programmer during tech for the production he was lighting for the department-- *Rent* directed by Professor Danny Scheie. This led to a more personal relationship with my professor, wherein I felt more comfortable reaching out for help and advice as a designer later on in my undergraduate career. As Producing Artistic Director for BarnStorm, this personal relationship has been invaluable in communicating with Professor Cuthbert as the Faculty Advisor for the program.

Eric Mack-- Sound and Electrics Supervisor for UCSC Theater Arts: Mr. Mack is responsible for overseeing all of the sound and electrical equipment in the theaters and classrooms in theater arts. When lighting or sound designers need assistance in bringing their visions to life, Mr. Mack is there to offer guidance and support. He leads a team of students that assist him in managing the spaces and equipment; those students learn about equipment functionality and maintenance, as well as how to go about using the resources that our facilities have to offer. The training that I received as a member of the electrics crew became a valuable part of my training as a designer and technician. In working with Mr. Mack 10-20 hours per week for three years, we developed a rapport that contributes to both a friendly and productive work environment. Much like my relationship with Mr. Weiss, my relationship with Mr. Mack has resulted in many facilities renovations and equipment purchases.

UCSC Scene Shop and Electrics Crews: My time in UCSC Theater Arts as both a student and staff member allowed me to develop personal relationships with many of the students that work on staff with the scene shop, electrics and sound crews. Many of these students have a personal investment in the work that BarnStorm produces because their friends work on/perform in our productions, or they themselves began their theater careers at UCSC in BarnStorm. Because we worked together in and out of BarnStorm, I gained the opportunity to work with these students in professional as well as academic contexts, designing and maintaining various productions. My personal and professional relationships with the scene shop and electrics crews allowed me to reach out in times of need when extra hands were required to produce, assemble, build or light BarnStorm's productions.

## **PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING**

### **Using BarnStorm to further skills and connections**

Because I had the opportunity to build and develop a professional network as an undergraduate, I pursued professional design and technician work while completing my degrees. The world of professional theater relies on personal and professional networks in addition to skill and talent. Careers are made on recommendations and chance encounters. In examining past BarnStorm curricula, I saw a need for students to develop their personal and professional networks in order to pursue work in theater post-graduation. My primary tactics in giving students opportunities to develop those networks were the establishment of the Maintenance requirement, and revival of the Workshop requirement.

Maintenance and Workshops serve to strengthen not only the social ties and sense of community within the BarnStorm network, but an individual's personal and professional network as well. Students gain new skills through both requirements that serve as social capital in and out of the BarnStorm network. A student that learns how to hang and focus lights during maintenance, gains a skill that they can market as a member of the workforce. Similarly, in taking a design workshop, students gain knowledge about a new field that they can utilize professionally.

The Maintenance requirement offers students an opportunity to learn about the space in which they are working, and provides an outlet for students to make additional connections within the class network. It calls for students to get involved in the general upkeep of the theater and is intended to harbor a sense of ownership and pride amongst our students. When students are part of the process of cleaning and

maintaining the space, they are more inclined to sustain a well-kept space. This allows students, specifically those that consider themselves performers exclusively, to experience the theater more collaboratively and to value all of the work that goes into maintaining a functional theater company. This requirement promotes cohesion among the students by providing an additional outlet for students to create social ties in the BarnStorm network. In personally engaging with the maintenance of the space, the social ties are strengthened between students that would not usually do technical work and those that do it regularly. In exposing non-technical students to the work that goes into the technical elements of a production, the social ties between individuals within BarnStorm's social network grow stronger. Strengthening the social ties between these students raises their sense of community within the BarnStorm network.

Rather than provide new skills exclusively through the scope of BarnStorm's maintenance and design needs, Workshops give students the opportunity to explore new skillsets and areas without the pressure of a production. By bringing in professionals that currently work in theater, BarnStorm allows students to engage with new materials and to meet new people that they can reach out to in the future. Historically, BarnStorm Administrators included the Workshop requirement at their own discretion. They often consisted of various subjects taught by the BarnStorm administrators or undergraduate students. Alternatively, I reached out to my professional network to teach workshops, ranging from design and technical work to

practical skill development<sup>8</sup>. In developing a Workshop system that calls on theater professionals, I offer students an additional outlet to develop their skills, or to develop new ones. By attending Workshops in addition to participating in Maintenance, students gain new skills that serve to better the shows they work on and/or the work they produce outside of BarnStorm.

By reaching out to professionals that work outside of UCSC, I also provided a networking opportunity for current students to harbor professional relationships that they can take advantage of down the line. These professionals allowed students to expand their social networks; they had the opportunity to meet professionals in an intimate setting and to discuss their future in the industry. Several of the students that participated in these workshops went on to interview for jobs with those that came in to teach. Providing professional network development through the Barnstorm course raises student appreciation of the course as more than a terminal learning experience, which in turn raises the sense of community in the network.

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<sup>8</sup> For a list of BarnStorm 2016-2017 workshops, see Appendix E.

## **SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

A strong sense of community is integral to a functional and successful quarter in BarnStorm. One of the biggest challenges that BarnStorm Administrators face is the disjointed nature of the course. In producing as many as a dozen productions in a single quarter, it is difficult, if not impossible, to get everyone in the same room at the same time. There is a distinct divide among BarnStorm students: those working on “full-length” productions, and those working on “one nighter” productions. Full-length productions are formally cast from the pool of actors that auditions at the beginning of each quarter. These productions spend the quarter rehearsing and preparing for several performances, rather than a single performance. “One nighters,” as indicated by their name, have one day for their performance. They tend to be long standing groups that have performed with BarnStorm in the past; occasionally new concepts are proposed and produced.

BarnStorm “one nighters” are responsible for organizing most aspects of their productions. Their responsibilities include: managing their own rehearsal schedules, finding their own designers and directors, and choosing the content of their shows. These are all tasks that BarnStorm Administrators would oversee for a full-length production. Because so many aspects of their production are managed independently, these groups often unintentionally quarantine themselves from the rest of the BarnStorm community. They tend to view BarnStorm as a convenient venue to use for their performance, rather than a community that they belong to. Connected to the BarnStorm network by weak social ties, the groups do not feel invested in the

network. These groups generally display low centrality within the BarnStorm network because they only interact with others in regards to their own show's needs. This leads to less exchange of social capital with other students in the network, furthering their separation from the community. The deficiency of social capital in addition to weak social ties and relative lack of personal investment in BarnStorm as an institution contributes to a low sense of community among these performers.

The Maintenance, Workshop and Support Call requirements for BarnStorm all serve to increase centrality and to strengthen weak social ties within the network. Each requires students to engage with work other than their Main Job and to interact with new people in the BarnStorm network. In Maintenance and Workshops, students meet and work with cast and crew from other productions produced by BarnStorm. Support Calls provide require students not only to work alongside their peers, but to collaborate on another production entirely. By taking on jobs in new areas on a separate production, students encounter and connect with many more nodes in the BarnStorm network. These settings offer a social and productive environment where students can engage personally and professionally with one another. In building personal connections while working and learning, students develop stronger social ties and increase the cohesion in the network, increasing the overall sense of community. The increased sense of community contributes to a more successful educational environment.

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOTIVATION

Social and Political action is a major aspect of the BarnStorm Mission Statement. BarnStorm “aims to integrate our perspectives into the political, social, cultural and academic climate of the UCSC campus and community;” in curating a season that features the issues that UCSC students are passionate about, BarnStorm builds social ties with the UCSC student body.

Many BarnStorm Administrators have worked to include different perspectives and issues within the season; ultimately, it tends to be dictated by the proposals submitted. In order to direct a show in the Barn, undergraduate students must submit a written proposal one quarter in advance. There is no guarantee that the proposals submitted will reflect the BarnStorm mission statement or the issues that BarnStorm Administrators hope to address. In a professional environment, the Artistic Director is responsible for choosing scripts that reflect the company’s mission statement and artistic priorities. In BarnStorm, the Artistic Director has very little control in regards to the scripts submitted. They generally receive a handful of script submissions and choose as many as they decide to produce. BarnStorm 2016-2017 used this method for selecting our productions Fall Quarter, *Autobahn*<sup>9</sup> by Neil LaBute and *Dance Collisions: SPECTRA*<sup>10</sup>, an undergraduate dance showcase.

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<sup>9</sup> *Autobahn*, a collection of scenes and monologues that take place in cars, was well suited for the Barn. With a small pool of actors to choose from, we managed to produce a 12 character play with only four actors. The script does not address any major political or social issues, but provided an opportunity for the four students cast to work together closely on monologue and scene work.

The political climate during Fall Quarter was particularly turbulent due to the controversial 2016 Presidential Election. Upon the election of Donald Trump, BarnStorm 2016-2017 decided to take a significantly more political stance in curating Winter Quarter's season. In seeing the frustration and fear experienced by many of our students and peers, we decided to use BarnStorm as a platform for creating safe spaces on campus, and producing socially and politically motivated events.

Although *Dance Collisions: SPECTRA* made for a somewhat politically engaged Fall Quarter, I was frustrated with how few options BarnStorm Administrators have in deciding the content of the season; they are free to select any of the scripts or events proposed, but do not have a say in what scripts or events are proposed in the first place. The 2016 Election served as a catalyst in our taking more control over the content of the season. We wanted to avoid producing a show devoid of political content, like *Autobahn*. The deadline for Winter Quarter proposals had passed; however, seeing a need for a more politically engaged season in the wake of the presidential election, we decided to re-open proposals with the requirement that productions must be socially or politically motivated.

Additionally, we hosted several politically motivated events that were not proposed by undergraduates, but that we felt would serve to benefit the Barnstorm community. Our first politically engaged event took place the Friday following the

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<sup>10</sup> *Dance Collisions: SPECTRA* consisted of thirteen dance, spoken word, and performance art pieces that emphasized the choreographer or writer's point of view, ranging from sex and body positivity to identity politics, effectively reflecting social and political issues on the UCSC campus.

election, a support group and discussion forum for our students and other artists on campus. The intent was to provide an open and safe space for a productive conversation regarding steps a student artist can take in the early days of the Trump Administration. The primary goal was to reach out to students, faculty and community members that felt disenfranchised and threatened by the Trump/Pence Administration. We hoped to offer a space for discussion of solutions for both the country and individuals struggling to cope with the political atmosphere. More than half of the attendants had never been to the Barn Theater before, but felt comfortable seeking emotional support at our event. The conversation centered on the various emotions experienced by attendees, often returning to a feeling of shock and helplessness. In providing this event for our students and community, we let the UCSC student body know that BarnStorm is not only a place to seek safety and comfort, but a place to come together with other artists to create impactful work. Our network expanded to include these students and patrons, thus raising the cohesion within BarnStorm's network.

Following this event, I hoped to include more community centric events in our season where students and community members could come together not as performers, designers and technicians, but as politically engaged citizens that can lean on one another for support. I stumbled on an article<sup>11</sup> about an upcoming event for

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<sup>11</sup> Desk, BWW News. "THE GHOSTLIGHT PROJECT Will Light the Way for the Future at Stages Across the U.S.; Details on This Month's Pledge!" *BroadwayWorld.com*. BroadwayWorld.com, 06 Jan. 2017. Web. 10 May 2017.

theaters to provide an outlet for their communities, The Ghostlight Project. The concept for the event came to life at The Public Theatre in New York City and quickly grew into a nation wide event. We joined more than 700 theaters across the country in banding together and pledging to “be a light.” This event consisted of a ceremony wherein we, along with the other participating theaters, pledged to create a ‘light’ for the dark times ahead; to come together and pledge “to stand for and protect the values of inclusion, participation and compassion for everyone regardless of race, class, religion, country of origin, immigration status, (dis)ability, gender identity or sexual orientation” (Action Statement, The Ghostlight Project).

Participants brought their own light sources that shone into the darkness as we stood outside the theater making our pledge. The ceremony closed with my reading BarnStorm’s pledge, “With this Ghostlight, BarnStorm pledges to stand for and protect the values of inclusion, participation and compassion for everyone,” followed by the “lighting” of our Ghostlight, punctuated by the crowd shining their own lights at it. Participants then went into the theater where we distributed call scripts for participants to contact senators and members of congress about issues important to BarnStorm community members. We also distributed posters<sup>12</sup> for participants to fill out and put up in the lobby of the theater. At the close of the event, our pledge and

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<sup>12</sup> Posters that read “I am...I fight for...” were a major promotional material for The Ghostlight Project; thousands of eager participants filled out and submitted them to the main organizers leading up to the event. We chose to create a quarter long installation in the lobby, where audience members, performers, designers and more could share their own “I am... I fight for...” messages. We invited audience members to participate at the beginning of every show for the rest of the quarter.

Ghostlight were mounted in the lobby; they will remain there so long as BarnStorm Administrators feel the words resonate with BarnStorm's work and mission.

Additionally, we participated in a national event titled "The Ides of Trump<sup>13</sup>," the purpose of this event was for people across the nation to write and send postcards to President Trump on the same day, so as to demonstrate the number of citizens that disagreed with his policies and actions. Having learned about the event from a fellow Theater Arts graduate student, I felt the event was a perfect opportunity for BarnStorm students to continue to take action. We quickly had a BarnStorm specific postcard designed by a former student, and decided to utilize our participation in the Ghostlight Project as the central theme for the postcard, surrounded by other issues held dear by BarnStorm students.

Each of these events offered an opportunity for BarnStorm students, audiences, and community members to interact with other members of the BarnStorm network in an overtly political/social context. Social ties developed and gained strength because each attendee was personally invested in the spirit of the events. By providing overtly political and supportive outlets for our students, we offered opportunities for them to engage with one another politically and personally. These interactions and strong social ties support the development of BarnStorm's mission to reflect the political and social climate of UCSC. Furthermore, they allowed for

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<sup>13</sup> Its title, inspired by the infamous line in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, made the event an ideal way for theater students to reach out to the Trump Administration.

students to cultivate political social capital that can be exchanged in and out of the BarnStorm network.

In addition to these politicized, community centric events, we decided to produce politically and socially motivated shows Winter Quarter<sup>14</sup>. Our two full-length productions were *(dis)Organizationalize!*<sup>15</sup>, a student written game show, and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*<sup>16</sup> by Anna Deveare Smith. Both of these full length productions served to show our audiences that the work produced by BarnStorm is a direct reflection of the issues that our students value. Like our political “one nighters,” these productions allowed students to develop strong social ties by promoting interactions of a politically engaged nature. The students working on these

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<sup>14</sup> Each of these productions was selected from the second pool of proposals, submitted after we requested students propose productions with a social or political motivation.

<sup>15</sup> *(dis)Organizationalize!* was a game show that hoped to organize groups of people through the disorganization of power structures. With only three performers, the show relied heavily on audience participation. Participants joined the cast on stage amongst a plethora of props/set pieces. These pieces consisted of household objects that were hyper-organized on stage, participants were required to find specifically marked pieces and to “disorganize” while they searched; all the while, the “Organizational Task Force” cleaned up and organized behind them. The prizes ranged from small pieces of candy to broad social goals i.e. “solve the water crisis in Flint, MI.” The prizes served to remind the audience of important social issues and offered an opportunity to think about what they as an individual can do to step up and enact change in a politically turbulent climate.

<sup>16</sup> *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* centers on the riots in Los Angeles following the beating of Rodney King by four Los Angeles police officers; it consists entirely of monologues inspired by real life interviews. Rather than utilize a traditional actor/audience relationship, the ten cast members performed their monologues at the same time while the audience members traveled between them.

shows were highly invested in producing work that reflected the climate of the UCSC campus and drew attention to poignant social issues. The ties within these sub-networks within the BarnStorm network were very strong due to the personal investment each individual had in their work with one another. These political inclinations raised the overall sense of community within the BarnStorm network by making clear our intent to represent “the political, social, cultural and academic climate of UCSC” outlined in the BarnStorm Mission Statement.

## CONCLUSION

The conscious integration of both social and professional networking in BarnStorm 2016-2017 in an attempt to raise the overall sense of community within the course proved to be an elaborate, interminable process. Although I cannot quantify the overall sense of community throughout the year, I have demonstrated that the networking tactics utilized this year proved a valuable addition to the course on the whole. I encourage future BarnStorm Directors to consider implementing similar systems in an effort to maintain a high sense of community within the course.

Engaging with high centrality members of the Theater Arts department allows for BarnStorm centrality to grow. Higher centrality within both networks, allows for access to greater resources for the facility and students alike. It is necessary for future directors to establish and grow relationships with members of the theater department. Increased social ties between the BarnStorm and Theater Arts networks allows for greater collaboration and communication between the two, resulting in stronger work.

BarnStorm's course requirements, both new and old, provide opportunities for students to interact with one another in both social and professional settings. The addition of maintenance and workshops increased the number of interactions between students, and allowed stronger relationships to form. These strong personal relationships drive the growth of the student's personal investment in the BarnStorm network. Higher personal investment benefits the individual and other students by creating an environment where students are more likely to exchange social capital with one another. The exchange of social capital in conjunction with strong social ties

creates an environment where students receive personal and emotional support in addition to new skills and information from one another.

The addition of professional networking in BarnStorm, specifically through the renovated workshop requirement, allows the BarnStorm student to access a broader social network that they can utilize after graduation. In offering a space for students to actively pursue a future in theater, we contribute to a more professional and productive environment within the BarnStorm course. The reminder that BarnStorm serves students outside of individual productions and events promotes student satisfaction with the course on the whole.

Social and political motivation within the BarnStorm season has always been a primary goal of the course. Representation of the political and social atmosphere on campus is an integral function of the student run theater. In seeking politically active and engaged full length productions, like *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, and “one nighters,” like The Ghostlight Project, BarnStorm establishes the necessity of political activism in the arts. The incorporation of political engagement and outreach in curating these events promotes social networking among both BarnStorm students and community members. In broadening the BarnStorm network through active political engagement, we provide further opportunities for personal investment in the network to grow.

The above solutions are just a few ways that BarnStorm Directors can consciously integrate networking in the course. I argue that the heightened sense of community established through these practices allows for a more inclusive,

productive and satisfactory experience for BarnStorm students; in integrating these practices and more, BarnStorm directors better accomplish the goals laid out in the BarnStorm Mission Statement.

**Appendix A BarnStorm Syllabus, Fall 2016**

Fall 2016 - THEA 55A and THEA 55B

# BarnStorm

Student Production Company and Class  
Faculty Advisor: David Cuthbert cuthbert@ucsc.edu

<p><b>Production Manager:</b> <b>Alyssa Glenn</b> pm.barnstorm@gmail.com Office Hours: Mondays 12-2pm or By Appointment Theater Arts C206</p>	<p><b>Managing Director:</b> <b>Brianna Grabowski</b> md.barnstorm@gmail.com Office Hours: By Appointment Theater Arts C206</p>
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**Our Mission Statement:**

*"BarnStorm creates opportunities for the developing artist to reclaim theatre and the theatrical process. Our aim is to integrate our perspectives into the political, social, cultural and academic climate of the UCSC campus and community. We are devoted to fostering new works of art and giving artists and audiences alike opportunities for exchange through a theatrical setting."*

The purpose of this class is to provide a space for students to gain practical, intensive experience working in a theatre company. We welcome artists of all kinds, at all levels of experience: performers, directors, writers, designers, technicians, and all who desire to learn, grow, and to build a strong community through working in the theatre. We strive to produce stimulating and fulfilling professional-level work in a supportive yet challenging academic environment. Our hope is that here, students will be supported with the resources to create art about which they are passionate, and thus will be motivated and armed with the tools to continue their craft beyond The Barn.

**Texts/Scripts**

There is no course textbook. Scripts are provided for you, however, if you lose your original copy you are responsible for replacing it.

## Evaluation:

Grade Penalties:

Points will be deducted for incomplete work in any of these areas.

<b>RUBRIC FOR 55A</b> <i>(110 possible points):</i>	<b>RUBRIC FOR 55B</b> <i>(95 possible points):</i>
Main Job: 25pts. Support Call 1: 10 pts Support Call 2: 10 pts. Support Call 3: 10 pts. Maintenance Call: 5 pts. (two hours total) Workshops: 10 pts. (two total) Midterm: 15 pts. (5 for attendance, 10 for paper) Final: 15 pts. (5 for attendance, 10 for paper) Time Sheet: 5 pts. Confirmation Form: 5 pts.	Main Job: 25 pts. Support Call 1: 10 pts Support Call 2: 10 pts. Maintenance Call: 5 pts. (two hours total) Workshop: 5 pts. (one total) Midterm: 15 pts. (5 for attendance, 10 for paper) Final: 15 pts. (5 for attendance, 10 for paper) Time Sheet: 5 pts. Confirmation Form: 5 pts.

# Course Requirements:

## **55A (a minimum of 150 hours of work produced during the quarter)**

- *1 Main Job*
  - Main Job: Director, Assistant Director, Performer, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Designer, Assistant Designer, Master Electrician, Technical Director, or Dramaturg
- *3 Support Calls:*
  - Usher, Publicity, Sound/Light/Media Board op. (not for full productions)
  - A technical Assistant will count for 2 of the 3 support call positions.
- *2 Workshops*
  - Attend or facilitate **TWO** workshops presented by BarnStorm (get signed off on confirmation form)
- *Maintenance Call*
  - Complete at least **TWO** hours of maintenance, may be completed in two separate calls if you so desire (get signed off on confirmation form)
- *Required attendance to midterm meeting:*
  - Midterm: Monday, October 31st @ 7pm
  - Final: Monday, November 28th @ 7pm
- *Strike:*
  - Attendance of Strike for your Main Job is Mandatory of this Course.
- *2 Papers: Papers should be formal, typed, college-level papers*
  - 1 Midterm Paper: Due Monday, October 31st @ 7pm
    - A “processes paper” **1-2 pages**. A description of the work you have done thus far, or physical representation of it (a plot, drawings, model, brief performance etc...) If you choose to submit a project, include a one paragraph description of what you are handing in/how it represents your process
  - 1 Final Paper: Due Monday, November 28 @ 7pm
    - A more formal representation of your Barn experience, **2-3 pages**. What did you learn? What worked/did not work? Feel free to include feedback about your experience with the class format on the whole
- *1 timesheet* Due Monday, November 28th with your final paper.

# Course Requirements:

## **55B (a minimum of 50 hours of work produced during the quarter)**

- *1 Main Job*
  - Main Job: Director, Assistant Director, Performer, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Designer, Assistant Designer, Master Electrician, Technical Director, or Dramaturg
- *2 Support Calls:*
  - Usher, Publicity, Sound/Light/Media Board op. (not for full productions)
  - A technical Assistant will count for 2 of the 3 support call positions.
- *1 Workshop*
  - Attend or facilitate **ONE** workshop presented by BarnStorm (get signed off on confirmation form)
- *Maintenance Call*
  - Complete at least **TWO** hours of maintenance, may be completed in two calls if you so desire (get signed off on confirmation form)
- *Required attendance to midterm meeting:*
  - Midterm: Monday, October 31st @ 7pm
  - Final: Monday, November 28 @ 7pm
- *Strike:*
  - Attendance of Strike for your Main Job is Mandatory of this Course.
- *2 Papers: Papers should be formal, typed, college-level papers*
  - 1 Midterm Paper: Due Monday, October 31st @ 7pm
    - A “processes paper” **1-2 pages**. A description of the work you have done thus far, or physical representation of it (a plot, drawings, model, brief performance etc...) If you choose to submit a project, include a one paragraph description of what you are handing in/how it represents your process
  - 1 Final Paper: Due Monday, November 28 @ 7pm
    - A more formal representation of your Barn experience, **1-2 pages**. What did you learn? What worked/did not work? Feel free to include feedback about your experience with the class format on the whole
- *1 timesheet* Due Monday, November 28th with your final paper.

## Appendix B Fall Quarter Events

October 8  
Open Mic Night

October 15  
Someone Always Dies  
Long Form Improv Team

October 21  
Staged Reading  
*God Damn Ring* by Magenta Howard

October 22  
Buttprov  
Shared Improv Performance for  
Humor Force Five and Someone  
Always Dies

November 4, 5, 6  
Autobahn  
Directed by: Ben Chau-Chiu  
Written by Neil LaBute

November 11  
2016 Election Discussion Forum and  
Support Group

November 11  
Humor Force Five  
Long Form Improv Team

November 18, 19, 20  
Dance Collisions: Spectra  
Directed by: Alyssa Soderberg, Chloe  
Rosen & Makenna Bantillo-Pearlman

November 27  
Musical Theater Scenes  
Musical Theater Cabaret

December 2  
Loose Lips  
Lip Synch Cabaret

December 3  
SheBAM  
All female sketch comedy team

December 4  
The Michael Becker Experience  
Sketch Comedy team

## Appendix C Winter Quarter Events

January 19 The Ghostlight Project	Directed by: Daniel Fisher and Tanner Oertel
January 20 Humor Force Five Long Form Improv team	March 3, 4, 5 Twilight Los Angeles 1992 By Anna Deveare Smith Directed by: Ciera Eis
January 21 Open Mic Night	March 11 The Michael Becker Experience Sketch Comedy team
January 25 Buttprov Shared Improv Performance	March 12 Musical Theater Scenes Musical Theater Cabaret
February 3 Comedy Joust Short Form Improv Team	March 13 Loose Lips Lip Synch Cabaret
February 10 Someone Always Dies Long Form Improv Team	March 15 The Ides of Trump
February 17, 18, 19 (Dis) Organizationalize! by Daniel Fisher	March 16 SheBAM All female Sketch Comedy team

## **Appendix D Facilities Maintenance and Improvements**

### General Facility Maintenance:

- Repair downstairs exterior door
- Repair all lighting instruments and cable
- Repair audio monitor in green room
- Install carpeting and nose guards on stairs
- Install Toe Rail at the top of the stairs
- Deep clean catwalk, lighting storage, audience, lobby, ticket office, scene shop and green room
- Remove broken televisions from the lighting grid
- Organize and clean prop storage

### Equipment

- 8 x American DJ Mega TriPAR LED Instruments
- 3 x projectors

### Miscellaneous

- “The Barn Theater” sign outside lobby
- “Concessions: Everything \$1” sign in lobby
- Ghostlight and BarnStorm pledge in lobby

## **Appendix E Workshops**

**Stage Make Up** taught by Sologne Patterson (UCSC Theater Arts Graduate Student)

**Sound Design** taught by Chris Graham (Bay Area Sound Designer/Engineer)

**Media Design** taught by Nick Kumamoto (Bay Area Lighting and Media Designer)

**Resume Development** taught by Kelly Mack (Production Manager for Opera San Jose)

**Vocal Audition Techniques** taught by Sologne Patterson (UCSC Theater Arts Graduate Student)

**Drag 101 (make up and performance)** taught by Giamaica Zeidler (Bay Area Drag performer)

**Audition Tactics** taught by Quest Zeidler (UCSC Theater Arts Graduate Student)

**What skills will get you hired?** taught by Carolyn Guggemos (Production Manager for SCU Presents)

**Working in Children's Theater** taught by Loryn Hatten (Producing Artistic Director for Peninsula Youth Theater)

**Lighting Design** taught by Alyssa Glenn (Producing Artistic Director for BarnStorm, UCSC Theater Arts Graduate Student)

**Making a Career in Technical Theater** taught by Jo'Juan Johnson (A/V Technician, IATSE 134)

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