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## TEDxUSU Program Expands for National Audience



(Photo courtesy Holly Reynoso from the USU Statesman online)

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### TEDxUSU Program Expands for National Audience

By [Owen Price](#), Staff Writer, [The Utah Statesman](#), Thursday, November 7, 2013

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies hosted a forum for “ideas worth spreading” this Tuesday [November 5, 2013] in its second annual TEDxUSU event.

The event featured eight live presentations and two previously recorded presentations given by speakers from diverse professional backgrounds. This included USU professors as well as candidates chosen from a national pool.

TEDx events are independently organized, but are increasingly popular alongside TED conferences, which are arranged by a nonprofit organization based out of California.

The event on Tuesday was fairly popular.

“Our tickets were gone in three hours and the waiting list grew quite quickly after that,” said Carlie Pennington, a logistics specialist for the Office of Research and Graduate Studies communications team.

Presentations were focused around the theme “Survive,” chosen by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

The theme, according to Pennington, can be interpreted in many ways.

“Everybody has their own unique way of saying things that matter to them, so that’s going to be something very interesting,” she said. “There will be a very different texture between each speech. This is an opportunity to share what you care about and let your personality come through.”

The theme was woven into presentations, which ranged from USU psychology Ph.D. candidate John Dehlin’s discussion of his research and work as a Mormon LGBT ally, to former president of Lockheed Martin Norman Augustine’s assertion that technological advances are leading to international competition in local job markets and his suggestions on how America will be able to keep up.

Because of an expansion on USU’s TEDx license, this year’s event was held in the Manon Caine Russell Kathryn Caine Wanlass Performance Hall, a much larger venue than last year’s TEDx event.

“Last year the initial license restricted us to having 100 people in the room,” said Scott Bates, associate vice president for the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. “We looked around for places where we could do that and we ended up in a classroom, and it was great. It was well staged and it was really nice, but you know, moving in to this kind of space has another kind of meaning. And that meaning is, ‘Hey, pay attention,’ and ‘It’s an event.’”

Despite the move to a larger venue, there were still about 150 people waitlisted for a seat in the Performance Hall during the event.

“A lot of this is about the videos,” said Brandon Crouch, a project and event manager for RGS. “There was about 400 people that fit into the Performance Hall, and there’s tens of thousands that’ll watch this online. So if we can get really high quality videos here, there’s a good reason to stay here.”

According to Crouch, the videos of the presentations, commonly called

“TED Talks,” should be available online through both RGS and TED within the next two months and will hopefully help to propagate research and ideas being generated at USU.

“It’s really an opportunity to showcase these to a national audience,” Crouch said. “We kind of use the TED brand. They give us the opportunity to use this license for free, and so we kind of use that brand to help carry our research and the things that we do here to a national audience.”

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