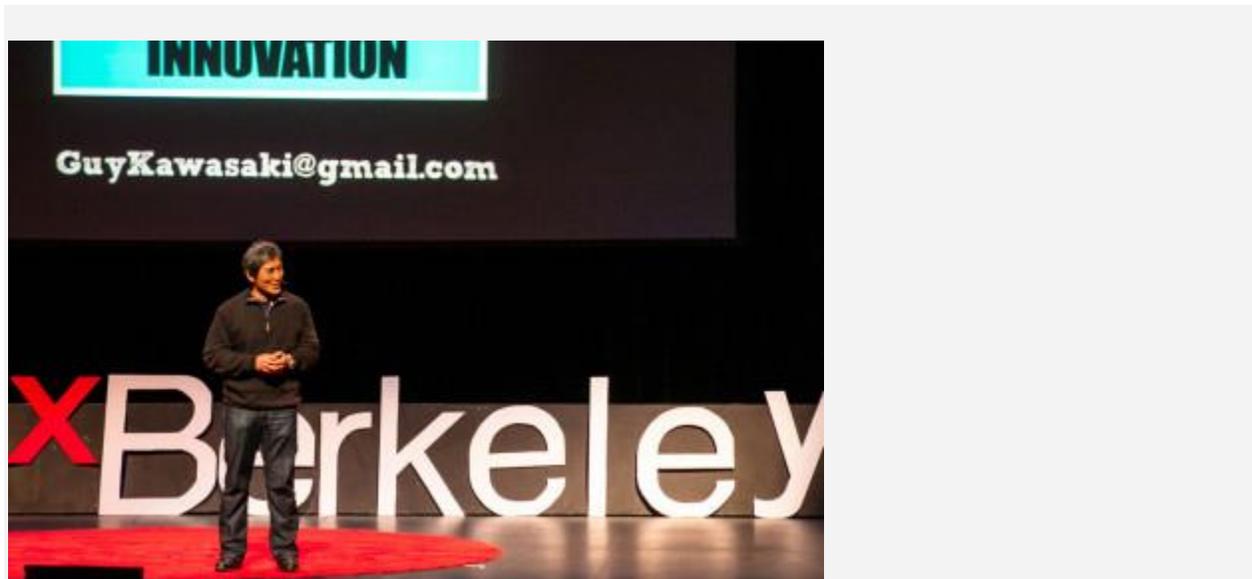


Campus event channels TED spirit

By [Steve Hockensmith](#), NewsCenter | February 11, 2014

BERKELEY —

A sellout crowd packed Zellerbach Hall Saturday for the fifth TEDxBerkeley, a daylong showcase for speakers and performers tackling the theme “Rethink. Redefine. Recreate.” Organized by student volunteers with logistical support from the Regents’ and Chancellor’s Scholarship Association (RCSA), the event was designed to capture the spirit of the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conferences that provide a popular platform for leading tech experts, entrepreneurs, scientists and artists.



Silicon Valley tech guru Guy Kawasaki takes to the stage during this year’s TEDxBerkeley event at Zellerbach Hall. (Photo by Halina Veratsennik/ www.HalinaV.com)

Among the 20 speakers at this year’s TEDxBerkeley were author and Silicon Valley business “evangelist” Guy Kawasaki; Carol Sanford, founder and CEO of the Responsible Entrepreneur Institute; and Brenda Chapman, co-writer and co-director of the Oscar-nominated Pixar film *Brave*. Several speakers addressed social-justice issues, including filmmaker and attorney Roberto Hernandez, who discussed flaws in the Mexican court system, and composer Paul Rucker, who used art and music to explore America’s history of racial violence. The lineup also included two Berkeley professors, economist Edward Miguel and Nobel Prize-winning biologist Randy Schekman.

“We like to keep it on Berkeley’s campus with Berkeley faculty and alumni and students, but we throw in a mix of people from elsewhere because we don’t want to create a Berkeley bubble where we’re just circulating the same ideas,” said Erin Roberts, one of three “curators” who collaborated on the event’s roster of speakers. “We want an intersection of fresh ideas from the outside as well as innovations coming from Berkeley itself.”

TED was founded in 1984 and has been holding an annual conference since 1990. Its influence spread quickly after 2006, when it began posting all TED talks for free at TED.com. Today, the most popular talks — given by such big names as Steve Jobs, Stephen Hawking and Mary Roach — draw millions of hits.

In 2009, TED launched TEDx, a program encouraging independently organized, TED-like conferences around the world. The first TEDxBerkeley was held a year later in Wheeler Auditorium. The event moved to Zellerbach the next year to accommodate growing crowds.

This was the first year the event sold out, with 1,700 tickets sold. In addition, more than 200 student volunteers from the RCSA were on hand to help the day run smoothly. The event was also available for free, live online viewing, and according to Roberts, more than 2,000 people came to the TEDxBerkeley website to watch.

Though it isn't an official TED event, TEDxBerkeley is produced under a license from TED and follows the TED format: Talks and performances are no more than 18 minutes long and are intended to provoke reflection, discussion and, ideally, life-changing action.

"No one listens to a TED talk without being impacted by it," said TEDxBerkeley director of logistics Chris Lew. A second-year Berkeley student double-majoring in molecular toxicology and public health, Lew joined the TEDxBerkeley team "because of what TED represents."

"Since human knowledge and ideas function in a 'domino effect' way," he said, "it's crucial that we have events like TEDxBerkeley that showcase brilliant minds off of which other brilliant minds can feed."

All the talks from TEDxBerkeley will soon be uploaded to YouTube, and some will be submitted to TED for inclusion on the official site. A 2012 TEDxBerkeley presentation by Ken Goldberg, the craigslist distinguished professor of new media at UC Berkeley, was picked for the site and has been viewed more than 250,000 times. And after doing a talk at TEDxBerkeley last year, Berkeley professor of city and regional planning Ananya Roy was invited to speak at a TED conference on the future of the world's cities.

"It's really exciting to know that TED is receptive to our speakers and that we're pretty high-caliber when it comes to TED's standards," said Roberts.

A third-year public health major, Roberts said she hopes to curate another TEDxBerkeley next year before handing the reins over to other student volunteers.

"This has been one of the most phenomenal experience of my time at Cal," she said. "It's been humbling to meet these amazing people who see the world differently and have dedicated their lives to solving problems."

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