



STRATEGIC PLAN

**THE
CHIMAERA
PROJECT**

Advocacy and Action for Female Filmmakers

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The Chimaera Project is a 501 (c) 3 Nonprofit Organization



THE CHIMAERA PROJECT STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Chimaera Project recognizes the collective voice as a catalyst for social change. We are dedicated to empowering filmmakers who identify as female to fearlessly create, inspire and lead. Our goal is to create change by demonstrating an inclusive model.

VISION

Our long-term vision is to support filmmakers identifying as female to see their project through fruition; establish an ongoing mentor-ship program accessible to individuals interested in acquiring filmmaking skills that might not otherwise have access to resources; and spotlight industry professionals who are making major stride in changing the landscape of the film and media arts industries by demonstrating diversity, equity and inclusivity.

WHO WE SERVE

Individuals identifying as female and the general population interested in the art of storytelling and filmmaking.

Guiding Principles

CREATIVITY

We believe that all individuals have the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships and create. It is our belief that only when people from different life experiences and points of view are given a chance to express themselves can we really create change.

CULTURAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Our organization believes the value we gain from cultural diversity, equity and inclusion reflects the current social climate and develops thought leaders, ideas, perspectives and values. Through a variety of projects in the past five years we have learned that diversity includes (and is not limited to) socio-economic, geographical, racial, people with disabilities and the LGBTQA communities. We have evidenced firsthand the impact our participant's film projects have among the artist community, audiences engaged and the greater community. Film and media arts are shared on multiple platforms, both locally and globally, with new technology growing exponentially, and outreach possibilities are limitless.

COLLABORATION

We believe in the power of the individual and at the same time the importance of each of our roles as an agent of change through collaboration and goodwill.

EMPOWERMENT

The Chimaera Project supports and encourages female filmmakers to achieve their fullest potential in the film and media arts industries. We do this through demonstrating an inclusive model in our core programs.



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Core Programs

MEDIA ARTS

Promoting projects created by filmmakers identifying as female through funding support opportunities and screenings.

MENTORSHIP

Partnerships with community and industry professionals to meet the needs of participants by providing mentoring in front of and/or behind the camera.

OUTREACH

Public panel discussions, film screenings, gender-flipped screenplay readings and networking events to bring awareness to our mission to advocate and take action on behalf of female filmmakers. In so doing, we help create a more equitable landscape in the film and media arts hiring practices.

FISCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Chimaera Project is proud to partner as a fiscal sponsor for amazing projects. We provide fiscal sponsorship to a limited number of qualified non-commercial projects with filmmakers identifying as female in key creative roles.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The factors that contribute to our mission are the heart of The Chimaera Project's strategic plan. By using our network of resources our organization will inspire confidence in hiring more filmmakers that identify as female. Our programs support an alternative point of view on projects that are often excluded from mainstream opportunities with a focus on transforming the landscape for females in film and the media arts. This model creates new opportunities for filmmakers to support each other professionally.

The body of our Strategic Plan is organized into three goals and supporting objectives. It is intended to provide sharper focus and a clear definition of where we want to be. The overarching goal is the long-term sustainability of The Chimaera Projects programming. The plan strengthens our commitment to empower filmmakers who identify as female to fearlessly create, inspire and lead, while at the same time demonstrating inclusivity.

We realize we may need to refine strategies as new lessons are learned and keep this at the forefront of each action taken in the name of responsible stewardship. A wide range of partners, volunteers, and staff will be involved in the conversation and actions taken to implement the Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors is held to the highest standards of ethics, integrity, service, and fiduciary responsibility.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Board of Directors began a discussion of a Strategic Plan for The Chimaera Project (TCP) in 2016. A two-day meeting of the board included the review of the history of TCP and the board's role in the caretaking, development, and future of the organization. This meeting sparked a new era for board involvement. Some of the more strategic actions and activities TCP has undertaken: Assess board and staffing roles; address key capital needs; establish a Cultural Equity and Inclusion Statement.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The Chimaera Project was organized as a nonprofit in 2013, receiving our state and federal ID's in 2014. In the past four years we have built our resources in human capital: The skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by our Board of Directors, Advisory Board, Staff and Volunteers is immeasurable. Thus far, the organization has been run on a volunteer basis with no brick and mortar address. Our meetings and events are held at donated spaces throughout Los Angeles County. We have received donations from individuals who believe in our mission and consecutive grants from the Puffin Foundation; received a 2017-2019 grant from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission; and a 2018-2019 grant from the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles.

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SHORT-TERM GOALS

GOAL 1

Generate salaries for two part-time staff members. We realize that a volunteer-run organization is not sustainable to accomplish long-term goals.

OBJECTIVE

This objective is twofold: (1) Increase donor giving base via a matching funds campaign through our current organizational grant from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. (2) Actively seek corporate sponsorship for unrestricted funding.

GOAL 2

Increase the number of projects we support through our filmmaker programs.

OBJECTIVE

Contract with a fundraising expert to facilitate events that will generate supplemental income for our core programs.

GOAL 3

Provide hands-on mentoring by professionals in the film industry to women filmmakers. Thus far, we have provided a successful mentor program to high school students and we would like to add non-students to the experience.

OBJECTIVE

Increase the capacity of our mentor program by adding a facilitator to our team to oversee as the project lead. One of our board members, Jenn Fee, has the ability and resources to champion the addition of women not currently enrolled in school to the mentoring program.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS DATA - EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

From our external analysis, we identified the following trends and how they might affect our organization:

POLITICAL TRENDS

Film and media arts industries have impacted national politics, influenced cultural constructions of American identity, and affected social change as well. As the vast range of scholarship exposes, since the beginning of the motion picture industry, movies have played an extremely important, if frequently controversial, role in American political culture.

Before the premiere of Eva Husson's *Girls of the Sun* at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, 82 women marched up the red carpet, stood on the stairs, locked arms, and turned to face away from the Palais des Festivals and toward the crowd. The number 82 was significant; it's the number of films by female directors (including seven in mixed-gender teams) that have premiered in competition at Cannes in its 71-year history. By contrast, 1,645 films by male directors have had that same honor. The protest was organized by a French movement called 5050x2020, which is calling for 50/50 gender equality in the French film industry by the year 2020. Among the crowd were representatives from feminist and industry pro-equality movements.

The trend in gender equality and inclusion policies in the film industry both nationally and internationally has a significant impact on The Chimaera Project as we navigate this current political culture. Since 2014, our core programming has addressed the discrimination of individuals identifying as females. From accessing the current political landscape, we can learn and inform the course of our future programming.¹

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Less than a week after the release of the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative's latest study, "Inclusion in the Director's Chair? Gender, Race & Age of Directors across 1,000 films from 2007-2017" — which found that, of total of 109 film directors associated with the 100 top movies of 2017, a full 92.7% were male and 7.3% were female — another long-running study of women in the entertainment industry has revealed similarly uninspiring numbers. In its twentieth year, San Diego State University's Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film and executive director Martha M. Lauzen have revealed their latest "Celluloid Ceiling" study, tracking women's behind-the-scenes employment in the film world. This 2017 study finds that "women comprised 18% of all directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 17% in 2016 and is virtually unchanged from the percentage achieved in 1998."²

The disappointing statistics of individuals identify as female working in the behind the scenes employment of the film and media arts industries has an economic impact on the entire community, both local and national. It is this very economic trend that The Chimaera Project's Mentoring and Production programs address by giving support to female's looking to work in these industries. We aspire to create leaders who will in turn demonstrate an inclusive policy in their hiring practices by providing employment opportunities for females and all underrepresented sectors.

¹ <https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/5/13/17347738/cannes-womens-protest-march-film-festival-cate-blanchett-agnes-vara-timesup-red-carpet>

² <https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/aii>



STRATEGIC ANALYSIS DATA - EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

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SOCIETAL TRENDS

Societal and economic trends are hand-in-hand when it comes to equality, equity and inclusion in today's activist movements and initiatives. As mentioned in the Economic trends, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative revealed how little things have changed in the past 10 years for employment for females in the behind-the-scene employment in the film world. Additionally, the top-grossing movies have changed very little in 10 years when it comes to on-screen relevance and portrayal of females, underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, LGBT community and individuals with disabilities. The study is the largest and most comprehensive intersectional analysis of characters in motion picture content to date.

This awareness of this societal trend validates the importance of The Chimaera Projects programs to provide no or low cost resources, mentoring and support to females aspiring/and working in the film and media arts. Securing funding for ongoing programming is pivotal to The Chimaera Projects future programming. The industry is changing and will enable more females and people of color in positions of power.

TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS

Film and media arts are both global industries and a technological art, so it's only natural that the trends and challenges we see are interweaved in the future of The Chimaera Project's programs. The business of streaming films and series has become competitive and if filmmakers are not knowledgeable on new and practical techniques it will impact their employment opportunities as a widening variety of tools and approaches is creating a Cinematography Renaissance.³

The Chimaera Project aims to provide current technological trends and current practical information through our Mentoring Program. Our Board of Directors and Advisory Board are industry professionals and guide the content of our programs.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS DATA - INTERNAL ANALYSIS

From our internal analysis (our SWOT analysis), we identified the following factors:

STRENGTHS

Strong leadership; Volunteer advocacy; In-kind contributions

WEAKNESSES

A budget that will not sustain paid staff members; Small individual donor base; Board of Directors that have the ability to implement a cash Give/Get Policy

OPPORTUNITIES

Collaborations with like-minded organizations; Growing need for our programs; Societal change and recognition for the need of our organization.

THREATS

Lack of funding to keep up with the need for our programs.

EVALUATION

Short evaluation forms will be distributed to audience and participants via Survey Monkey after all project and program events. We include both qualitative and quantitative questions for our data resources. Attendees will sign-in electronically for the podcasts, workshop and project finishing opportunities.

Our goal is to assess the overall effects of the organization including cost-effectiveness; and reexamine existing data to address new questions or use methods not previously employed. The evaluation will influence decision-making and policy formulation through experience-driven feedback to plan future programs and events. We aim to collaborate with a strategic consultant and this individual to our team to design an evaluation study to efficiently and meaningfully answer our research questions.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

J. Cheryl Bookout, Executive Director
Shana Betz, Board of Directors Co-President
America Young, Board of Directors Co-President
Stacy Sweeting, Development and Events Manager
Elizabeth Worley, Operations Manager