UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

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Debra Herrick

Film & media studies instructor awarded Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowship

Answer: This UC Santa Barbara educator and filmmaker was named a 2024 Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowship recipient

The question: Who is Chris Jenkins?

Jenkins, head of production and an instructor in UCSB's Department of Film & Media Studies is one of 18 recipients nationwide of the award from the Television Academy Foundation, named in honor of the late "Jeopardy!" host. The fellowship provides financial support for media educators to attend the annual Media Educators Conference in Hollywood, where they can connect with television industry leaders.

Jenkins credits his experiences abroad, from volunteering with the United Nations in East Africa to serving as an ambassadorial scholar in Chile, as pivotal in shaping his career and dedication to storytelling through film.

"I love unpredictable situations in unfamiliar places and the challenge of professionally capturing fleeting moments," he said. "While I enjoy various forms of production, I prefer to be nimble and quick, so the smaller the crew the better, if I'm not working alone. I believe that it was the eye-opening experiences I had while traveling and living abroad in my younger years that led me towards a career that

involved the visual arts, exploring foreign lands and sharing stories.”

Jenkins has worked on a variety of international documentaries, primarily as a cinematographer, including "Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars, featuring refugee musicians from West Africa hitting it big; and “Riverwebs,” about a Japanese scientist who helped the world better understand freshwater fish. Other works include “The Matador,” “Marley” and “Lost Crops.”

“I have a few long-term projects in motion, so I’m always looking for good short projects,” he said, “I’ve recently co-produced with Budd Carr a short film called ‘911 Project Harmony,’ shot a live-action pilot about bad cops called ‘Dirty.’” Currently he is collaborating with filmmaker Cristina Venegas, an associate professor of film and media studies, on the documentary “Mapping Alzheimer's” featuring prominent neuroscientist and UCSB professor Ken Kosik.

In his role at UCSB, Jenkins leads his department’s notable GreenScreen and Coastal Media Project Programs, and teaches courses on “Lighting for the Moving Image” and “Crew Production,” where students have the unique opportunity to develop short films in collaboration with industry professionals.

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About UC Santa Barbara

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