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Ashley H Pollock, Public Relations & Information Coordinator
College of Performing and Visual Arts
Southern Utah University

Office: 435-865-8667
Cell: 435-590-0961
pollocka@suu.edu

SUU Students Jumpstart Their Education with *An Active America*

Written by Lola Taylor

Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah: Southern Utah University's innovative Jumpstart program presents *An Active America*, a photography exhibit created by freshmen students. This special exhibit will be on display until March 3, 2017, at the Southern Utah Museum of Art (SUMA). Admission to SUMA is free, and the museum is open to the general public on Tuesday through Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Jumpstart is a general education program at SUU that helps freshmen students complete thirteen GE courses (34 credit hours) in their first year of classes. English, Chemistry, Biology, Technology, and Visual Art courses are integrated into a learning environment that encourages the students to practically apply the education they are receiving. Jumpstart students go on field trips, make movies, develop personal websites, give speeches, and create beautiful works of art to provide practical application of what the students learn in the classroom.

Elizabeth Andersen, a freshman from Las Vegas studying Psychology, said she enjoyed being a part of the creative process for *An Active America* because it didn't feel like work. "The group assignment was to take individual pictures of what we thought America was and then combine them into a huge collage that makes an American flag. It's all of our viewpoints on how the Country fits into one image."

Psychology freshman Taylee Ciccone from Clearfield echoed Andersen's sentiments, saying, "This project helps you look at your own viewpoint on life. There are so many different ways to look at something, that it helped get the creative juices flowing." She also appreciated the personal aspect of her Jumpstart education, knowing that the professors truly cared about her learning experience. Ciccone said, "In high school you may get some personalized attention, but in bigger colleges you definitely don't. With Jumpstart, it's fantastic because it blends everything together. I wish more colleges implemented something like it."

In response to the Jumpstart photography course, many of the students expressed that it was their favorite course during the year-long Jumpstart program. "With photography, there is no one

right way to take a picture of something,” said Biology freshman Nathan Kingery from Herriman. “So, like with life, there is no one right way to do it. You just have to figure out what works best for you in that situation.”

Ethan Dixon, a Strategic Communications freshman from Layton, UT, spoke about the larger implications of his participation in the *An Active America* exhibit. “I realized, from the perspective of being a college student, we can either look at ourselves as being small in the world and not having a big meaning. But with photography, when I take a picture that’s going to be in a museum, someone is going to look at it and they are going to have a moment that impacts them, and that makes me larger in a way. I feel I have meaning in the world with this project.”

New York freshman Kathryn Bjorling spoke very highly of her Jumpstart experience and how working on *An Active America* helped her choose her field of study at SUU. “For me as an undecided student coming into college, Jumpstart really helped me because it incorporates all general education classes together. You learn how to apply each aspect of the course into real-life situations. So, not being sure what I wanted to do, my Jumpstart courses showed me that marketing is what I wanted to do and being a photography minor was a good niche for me. Hopefully, I can start a photography business or go into advertising with it. That is what Jumpstart led me to do.”

For more information about the Jumpstart program at SUU, please visit www.suu.edu/jumpstart.

For Calendar Editors: SUU Students Jumpstart Their Education with An Active America

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Who: Southern Utah University Jumpstart Students & Southern Utah Museum of Art

When: February 2 - March 3, 2017, Tuesday to Saturday from 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Where: Southern Utah Museum of Art, 13 S 300 W, Cedar City, Utah

Tickets: Free admission, General Public invited to attend.

Info: Visit www.suu.edu/pva/suma for more information about the exhibit.

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