

Correction: Film-Academy Interns-Bigelow Story

Correction: Film-Academy Interns-Bigelow story.



AP

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — In a story Aug. 10 about a new film industry internship program, The Associated Press misspelled the first name of one of the student participants. Her name is Tracey Aivaz, not Tracy Aivaz.

A corrected version of the story is below:

New Academy Gold program connects interns with Oscar winners

New industrywide internship program, Academy Gold, connects film-school interns with Oscar winners

By SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — When asked by an intern how she continues to make movies despite the dismal opportunities for women behind the camera, Kathryn Bigelow said she's fueled by her belief in each project.

"That's what makes it possible, I guess," the "Detroit" director told a group of aspiring young filmmakers during a candid question-and-answer session last weekend. "It's a very arduous process. It's not for the faint of heart. But it's worth it."

The audience of undergraduate and graduate students working as summer interns in the film industry sat rapt. For almost an hour, they chatted with the Oscar-winning director and several stars of her new film, "Detroit," asking about story development, character trajectories and historical accuracy. Bigelow also talked about her experiments with virtual reality and how she never asks her actors to hit a mark.

Her private appearance in the film academy's executive board room was part of the new Academy Gold internship program, an entertainment-industry partnership that aims to connect aspiring filmmakers from diverse communities with the Hollywood establishment. Sixty-nine film-school students, most from underrepresented populations, were chosen to participate in the inaugural program: eight weeks of panel discussions, screenings and intimate conversations with filmmakers such as Bigelow, Sofia Coppola and Jada Pinkett Smith.

"People work many years before they get to meet people like Kathryn Bigelow and Sofia Coppola and all of these great people," said 20-year-old Tracey Aivaz, an undergraduate student at University of Southern [California](#) and summer intern in Panavision's post-production division. "Hearing from their experiences and knowing how they work on a set — especially since I want to be a director and I'm a woman — so seeing that people like them are out there in Hollywood being really successful, that just teaches me a lot of lessons about how I can manage my career."

Twenty entertainment businesses — including The Walt Disney Company, Technicolor, HBO, Warner Bros. and Creative Artists Agency — funded the new internship program, which the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences launched in June.

The film academy has long employed summer interns, but the Academy Gold program was borne out of the growing industrywide recognition of a need for more diverse talents, said administrator Edgar Aguirre. Following two years of #OscarsSoWhite, the film academy has actively sought to diversify its membership, and the new internship program is part of its overall inclusivity efforts.

"Last year there was a lot of momentum from the board to say look, we need to be more proactive and we need to collaborate and engage with the rest of the industry about how do we create more pipelines for more young professionals of color from underrepresented communities to enter into the industry," Aguirre said. "And if we're going to start putting a dent into those numbers that we're all very familiar with, then we have to make this a much bigger, more expansive program."

All of the Academy Gold participants spent the summer working as full-time, paid interns at the various partner companies supporting the program. Each

company selected one or more of its summer staffers for the Gold program, and the resulting class of 69 students represented 42 colleges across the country. Gold interns learned about "above the line" positions like writer and director; "below the line" jobs such as casting direction and costume design, and how to find an agent and manager. They also attended academy screenings and mixers, and socialized together on their own outside of planned Gold events.

"It's amazing. It's like a second family," Aivaz said. "We're talking about making a film together."

Babatunde Akinloye, a USC graduate student who's interning at Disney, said the Gold program makes him feel like the industry really wants to become more inclusive.

"There's a lot of genuine people here who are working to give us access to just a phenomenal amount of resources," he said. "For me, it's just great knowing that they value diversity and are putting their effort behind doing that."

Aivaz said she feels more prepared to weather the inevitable challenges of breaking into the industry after meeting so many artists through the Gold program.

"The biggest thing that I've taken out that school doesn't really teach you is how hard it is to actually make it and how much perseverance we need to have; how many setbacks we're going to have and how strong we have to be in the face of those setbacks," she said. "That's the one thing I've heard all of the panelists talk about."

Aguirre said the academy intends to keep up with its Gold graduates after the program concludes Friday. Each alumnus will be matched with an academy member as a mentor for the upcoming school year, which for many begins

later this month.

"We are investing in a talent pool," he said, adding that he hopes all 20 participating companies re-up next year.

For USC graduate student Jamie Walker, the intern who asked Bigelow how she persists, the Gold program and a summer spent working at the academy has been profoundly inspiring.

"The best advice I've gotten from this program is to just stay centered and really believe in your project," she said. "I feel very hopeful, but I'm also a little bit scared too, a little bit nervous, because the program is ending and I want to be able to carry on this legacy."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Sandy Cohen at www.twitter.com/APSandy.

Copyright 2017 The [Associated Press](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.