

## **8G: Best Audience Engagement Event: Cal Poly San Luis Obispo – Mustang Media Group**

Radio stations in the modern media world face challenges across the board but perhaps none more so than funding. As a non-profit college media radio station KCPR 91.3 FM at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (part of Mustang Media Group) must find creative ways to generate the revenues necessary to run the station and this is best evidenced through its annual pledge drive which provides close to 50% of KCPR's operating revenues. The 2025 KCPR pledge drive used the theme of "The magic of college radio" and featured a combination of on-campus and off-campus events. It featured raffle tickets, movie screenings, business partnerships, boosted social media posts, shirt giveaways and the hard work of nearly a hundred separate volunteer student employees at KCPR radio. Their work resulted in the organization growing its pledge drive revenues by nearly 29% compared to the previous year via a 52.6% increase in individual donations. In the process KCPR crushed their overall revenue goal for the pledge drive raising nearly \$40,000.

## Launch of the 2025 KCPR Pledge Drive and selection of theme

The 2025 KCPR Pledge was a 6 week event that began on April 10<sup>th</sup> and ended on May 24<sup>th</sup>. The goal for this year's pledge drive was set at \$35,000 (a 12% increase over 2024's final of \$31,000 for the pledge drive). Achieving this number would ensure that KCPR could meet all of its payroll needs for the upcoming 2025-2026 academic year but also potentially add on new positions for events and marketing allowing the station to continue to expand its reach and impact. Holiday postcards sent directly to all of the donors for the 2024 pledge drive in December of 2024 thanking them for their donation and letting them know that the next pledge drive would soon launch. The pledge drive planning team in early 2025 chose to go with a theme of "The Magic of College Radio" for this year's event which allowed for easy call to actions and fun, playful associated art.



The pledge drive launched on April 10<sup>th</sup> with targeted emails to all past donors to the pledge drive social media outreach and on and off-campus events. Radio spots aired on KCPR throughout the entire pledge drive along with boosted social media posts on Facebook and Instagram targeting the residents of San Luis Obispo county. The schedule for the 2025 pledge drive went as follows:

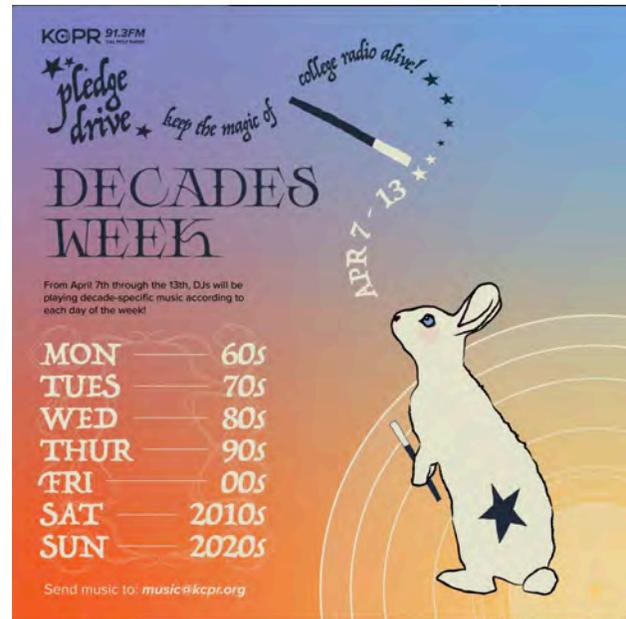
**Week 1:** Launch with email blitz to past donors and on and off-campus events. Decades week on KCPR. Open House promotions. First of two KCPR nights at the Palm Theater.

**Week 2:** Phone bank outreach to past donors.

**Week 3:** On and off campus events promoting raffle tickets

**Week 4:** Final KCPR night at the Palm theater.

**Weeks 5 and 6:** Final outreach by email, final phone bank and raffle ticket events. KCPR night at Hotel SLO.



## Pledge Drive Merchandise

For many years the KCPR pledge drive finished at donation levels around \$7000. Four years ago branded merchandise was made a part of the annual pledge drive as a “thank you” to donors with merchandise bundles increasing in size and value depending on the size of the donation. The annual KCPR pledge drive shirt has been by far one of the most popular merchandise items. To help increase pledge drive donations the first donation level eligible for a shirt increased from \$100 to \$125.



A new merchandise item added to this year’s pledge drive was custom KCPR playing card decks. Both the back of the cards and the box that they were stored in were designed to reflect the theme of “The Magic of College Radio” but were also only available at the \$250 donation level as part of a merchandise bundle. These card decks came with instructions for a "magic trick" that could be accomplished with playing cards by the donors. Coffee has proven extremely popular with past pledge drives so custom "KCPR blends" and mugs were made available starting at the \$500 donation level. Donation levels started at \$50 (stickers and a KCPR pin) and went all the way up to \$1000. Donors at the top level received ALL of the merchandise that was available. These merchandise bundles made for easy incentives for donors and were also relatively simple to promote on social media.



## Reaching out to new audiences

To reach the goal of \$35,000 our pledge drive team knew that it would need to reach new audiences that hadn't been part of the 2024 drive. The team moved the dates of the 2025 pledge drive to align with Cal Poly's annual Open House which would take place from April 10th to 12th. Open House is where 8000 prospective new students and their parents visit the campus annually to decide whether or not to commit to study at Cal Poly as first year students. The marketing campaign during Open House featured several different elements. Hundreds of people would be touring the Journalism department during this weekend and checking out the KCPR studios as a part of the tour so a special banner was designed to grab their attention outside of the KCPR studios with a QR code to donate.



Our pledge team also realized that many parents wouldn't give on the spot that weekend so they prepared special flyers with a QR code that parents and their visiting students could take home with them to have on them and donate to KCPR sometime in the weeks to follow. The QR code led to the KCPR Link Tree including a link to the 2025 pledge drive donation page. These flyers were passed out at 3 days worth of on-campus Open House events as well as the off-campus Farmers Market in Downtown SLO devoted to Open House. All of these strategies and tactics resulted in total individual donations for the pledge drive increasing from 36 to 69 in week 1 compared to the previous year. Total dollars donated in week 1 increased from \$5051 in 2024 to \$12,260 compared to the previous year.

*Flyer used for Open House (bottom left), KCPR pledge team on campus for Open House (bottom right)*



## Raffle tickets for the 2025 pledge drive

This year's pledge drive team continued a winning strategy from past pledge drives in the form of raffle tickets. A prominent KCPR alum in the music business in Los Angeles donated two separate three day passes to the Outside Lands Music festival. This festival has proven to be incredibly popular with Cal Poly students and thus has helped grab the attention of a younger pledge drive demographic. To be entered all a student would need to do is buy a \$5 raffle ticket from the KCPR team at events during the duration of the pledge drive. Tickets were made available to buy via credit card using mobile Clover devices made available to the KCPR pledge drive team.

*Below: Friday Night Invite concert on-campus*



Raffle tickets were promoted at events both on-campus and off-campus (the weekly downtown Farmer's Market as well as at a special concert KCPR held on-campus during Open House called Friday Night Invite which brought in an estimated 500 prospective students. 215 separate raffle tickets were sold with the winners drawn at the conclusion of the pledge drive.



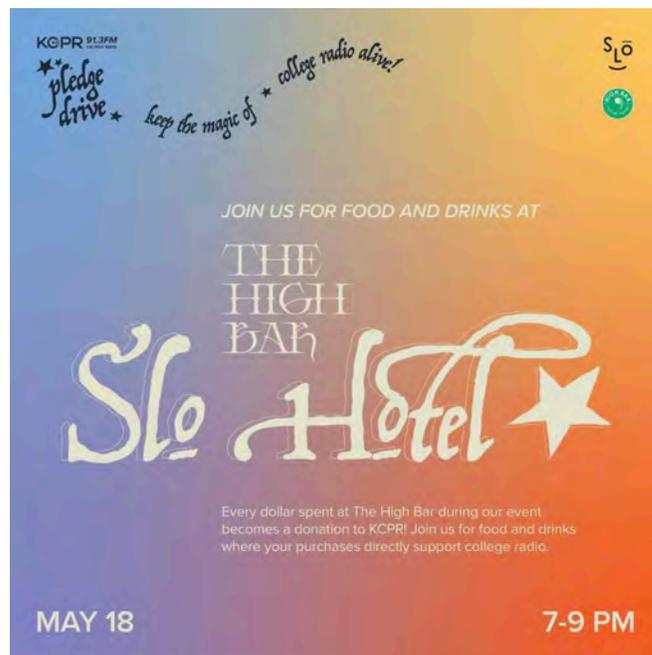
## OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS

For the 2025 KCPR executed numerous partnerships with off-campus vendors where a percentage of sales would go back to KCPR . This was especially key as donations outside of \$20 from Cal Poly Students has been an on-going challenge. Instead KCPR set up partnerships with vendors that it had been working with before. One of these partnerships was with the Palm Theatre which is a historical cinema located in Downtown San Luis Obispo. The Palm agreed to do two “KCPR Nights at the Palm” for two separate Thursdays during pledge drive. KCPR would keep all ticket revenues while The Palm would keep all revenues from concessions. The two movies chosen by both parties were

“Bottoms” and “Scott Pilgrim vs the World” with the latter featuring a costume contest as well. After heavy promotions by both KCPR and The Palm for these nights both screenings sold out and resulted in nearly \$2500 in ticket revenues that went towards the KCPR pledge drive.



KCPR also carried out events like a partnership with the High Bar at Hotel SLO in Downtown SLO. Through this partnership all monies spent on food and drink at the rooftop High Bar during a two hour period on May 18<sup>th</sup> were matched in donations by the High Bar to the pledge drive resulting in another \$2500 in donations.



## FINAL OUTCOMES

**The 2025 KCPR pledge drive was a MASSIVE success. All of the team's work allowed it to soar past its goal of \$31,000 and finish with a total of \$39,975. In addition total individual donations for the pledge drive increased from 150 in 2024 to a staggering 229 in 2025.**

	2024	2025	% increase
Number of individual donors	150	229	52.6
Total pledge drive revenue	\$31,000	\$39,975	28.9

**The creativity, team work and hard work of the KCPR pledge drive helped create favorable circumstances for success and the supporters of KCPR did the rest. KCPR now has a solid financial base to continue to evolve as an organization during the 2025-2026 academic year thanks to its supporters who believed indeed in the magic of college radio.**