

2014

# Student Short Film Festival at Western Oregon University

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Maurice Undergraduate Initiative  
2013-2014 competition

## **Final Analysis**

February 25, 2014

Back in October I outlined my plan to bring an annual short film festival to this campus, to give an outlet to the students of WOU whose passion for film has largely gone unnoticed and un-nurtured. I wanted to give the directors and videographers of this university the opportunity to present their hard work to a real-life audience, to experience the electricity of seeing their short films on the big screen. Four months ago, this seemed like a daunting, distant plan, but on Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2014, it came true. If I were to pick one major lesson that I learned from the experience of putting together the inaugural WOU Student's Short Film Festival, it would probably be the realization of just how much goes into planning an event on this campus. And admittedly, I think my ignorance of this fact ended up hurting the festival. Let me explain.

I initially intended to do it all myself. Plan, coordinate, sponsor, advertise, market, host, the whole nine yards. It was recommended to me pretty early on, however, by Facilities Scheduling Manager Don Boderman, that I should instead ask for sponsorship from a campus organization to alleviate the cost of the event. Because of this advice, I went to Student Media advisor Shelby Case, and asked for the sponsorship of Student Media, a department I currently work for as Editor-in-Chief of the campus literary magazine the *Northwest Passage*. With the sponsor, I would be able to secure a location for the festival without having to pay for setup or room fees.

Once I'd determined that the festival was indeed happening (although *where* it would happen had yet to be determined), I started thinking about the particulars. Date and time: Friday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30. Far enough away to give filmmakers ample time to make their short films, early enough to occur before the final analysis for the Maurice Prize was due. Rules: films should have a running-time of 10 minutes or less. I foresaw a sizeable number of submissions, but didn't want the event to run over two hours if I could help it. Finally, I set a submission deadline of Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, two days before the festival. To advertise, I created a Facebook event page and invited my WOU friends. I kept this page updated regularly throughout the process of planning the event. Next, I designed a poster. I even appeared on the KWOU campus radio show *It's Wet Outside with Ollie Bergh* to discuss and promote the festival.

Looking back to past film-related events on campus, it seemed to me that the Willamette Room of the Werner University Center or the auditorium of the IFC would be the two best options for the festival's venue. Willamette was already booked for an event on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, so IFC it was. Now came the approval process. Working with Event Advisor Ed E-Nunu, I sought the approval and signatures of Sarah Alvarado at the ITC, Debra Arends at the Physical Plant, Public Safety Director Jay Carey, and the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. Once the latter approved the posters I'd designed, I requested 25 of them from the Print Shop. Unfortunately, this is where I started to hit some serious roadblocks. The printing of the posters was already behind schedule, so when I received word from

Steve Carter at the Print Shop that their color printer was down and wouldn't be fixed for two days, I started to stress somewhat, but the event was still two-and-a-half weeks away, it would be fine. Then, on the day the printer was to be fixed and my posters to be printed, campus was closed due to snow. This was on a Thursday. Campus was closed again on Friday, through the weekend, and on Monday as well. The festival was now less than two weeks away.

After contacting the Print Shop to confirm that I did indeed still want my posters, I finally received them one week before the event, and only five days before the deadline I'd set for submissions. This was disheartening. If I'd known how long the process of planning an event would take, and just how many people I'd have to seek the approval of, I could've planned ahead better, gotten the posters out sooner, and I believe my advertising would have been much more effective. But I didn't, though now I do know for next year.

In the end, the film festival received only three actual submissions. These were from students Marissa Thompson (*Senioritis*), Declan Hertel (*Rainy Day Horse Tranquilizer*), and Tyler Crawford (*Window Pains*). Because of the small number of submissions, I decided to also screen one of my own short films, entitled *What's in the Box?* which had showed at last year's Residence Hall Association festival.

When the event finally arrived, I was unbelievably excited. Twenty-two people came to support the festival and to see some quality student films. I asked my girlfriend Shannen to take photos and video during and after the festival, and to ask people what they thought of the event and if it was something they think was worthwhile. The response was overwhelmingly positive. All told, the inaugural event lasted just under 40 minutes. It was a success, despite its setbacks, and it's something that I'm incredibly proud to have created. But this isn't to say that it couldn't be done better in the future, because this doesn't end here. My goal, inspired by the Alfred Maurice Initiative, is to create an *annual* festival. Something that students can look forward to and expect every year. Something they can see has support from this school, its students and faculty alike. Something that may actually help them choose Western over all the other schools they could attend.

This is difficult to express through one event, one festival, my intentions to make it a WOU tradition, but that's my plan and I'm sticking to it. We may have only had three submissions this year, but won't that make the WOU Student's Short Film Festival even more of a success story when we receive thirty submissions two years from now?

So would I say my goal was reached? For now the answer to that question is no, as it's impossible to call it an annual event when only one has occurred. But in a few years time, I think the answer could change.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel M. Dunaway

*Student Media presents  
the inaugural  
WOU student's*

# SHORT

# FILM

February 21, 2014

7:30 in Rm. 211 of ITC

# FESTIVAL

## **Submit a film!**

Films should have a run-time of 10 minutes or less

Must be submitted via YouTube link or  
shared file no later than February 19

For more info or to submit a  
film, e-mail Nathaniel Dunaway  
at [nadunaway11@wou.edu](mailto:nadunaway11@wou.edu)



If you have a disability that may require some accommodation in order to participate in a Western Oregon University activity, please notify the Office of Disability Services (503) 838-8250 at least 72 hours in advance.