

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES PROGRAM

FILM & MEDIA STUDIES

Letter From the Director

Greetings, friends and alumni! This is an exciting time for Film and Media Studies at the University of Oklahoma — many changes are afoot, including a new director! I joined OU in July 2015, after five great years at Georgetown University. I am honored to be heading one of the most influential film studies programs in the country. OU is the home of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, the leading international scholarly organization for film, television and media scholars.

Having a resource like that at OU gives our FMS students and graduates an instantly recognizable pedigree. In April 2014, OU hosted the second annual SCMS Undergraduate Conference, which brought dozens of young film historians and theorists to campus to see what OU has to offer. In August 2014, SCMS hired its first executive director, Jill Simpson, formerly the director of the Oklahoma Film and Music Office. Having Jill “in the home office” with us means even more great internships and career opportunities for FMS students.

FMS has great plans for the future, and we’re excited to start sharing them with you through this newsletter.

One exciting development already underway is OU’s new study abroad program, OU in Puebla, which our own Assistant Professor Carolina Rueda is helping to launch. She taught two courses there this semester, “Hispanic Cinema” and “Dystopian and Post-Apocalyptic World Cinema,” while introducing OU students to the chance to make films abroad. Our majors already are reporting back about the great people and opportunities they are encountering.

Check out Carolina’s introduction to OU Puebla on the FMS Vimeo page at vimeo.com/channels/oufms, where you also may find superb short films by FMS majors and alumni.

FMS is also making important strides with our new course “Career Planning in FMS.” Led by Andrew Horton, Jeanne H. Smith Professor of Film and Media Studies, “Career Planning” shows students how they can put their FMS degree to work for them while helping them develop the practical, professional skills they need to achieve their dreams. Professor Horton brought a coterie of distinguished FMS alumni back to campus as part of the course this semester, and more are on the way. If you’re interested in being part of the alumni network for “Career Planning in FMS,” please let us know. We’re eager to hear from you!

In this issue, you’ll find information on the new and improved FMS Media Lab, which supports both our production classes and our student-run production club, and meet the FMS Student Advisory Committee. We also want to let you know about the Native Crossroads Film Festival, an annual event at OU to showcase indigenous films and filmmakers. I hope to see you there — I mean here! — on April 8 and 9, 2016. Find out more at www.nativecrossroads.org.

It’s an honor to join the FMS family. Thanks for being a part of it!



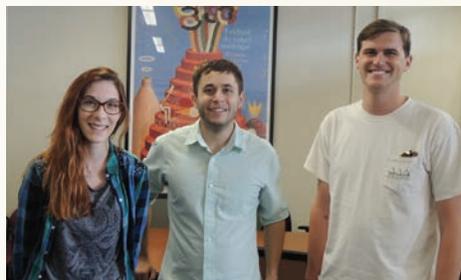
Caetlin Benson-Allott
 Director of Film and Media Studies

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FMS Alumnus Alex Greenlee, center, with FMS students Lucie Trimolet and James Crafton.

Changes Afoot in the FMS Media Lab

FILM & MEDIA STUDIES

Jennifer DuBois

The Film and Media Studies digital media lab recently underwent some big changes. Over the past year, Karl Schmidt, FMS lab manager, has worked with production faculty Carolina Rueda and Sunrise Tippeconnie and Joanna Rapf, former FMS interim director, to revamp and reimagine the lab. It will make it an even more valuable resource for both students and faculty. This expansion was made possible through the generous support of Dick Delany and the College of Arts and Sciences' Funding Assistance Program. According to Schmidt, there were two main areas of focus: providing new and better production equipment and expanding the DVD library checkout policy.

"Over the summer, we created 12 new filmmaking kits for our students," said Schmidt. "Each has an HD Panasonic 3CCD camera, a 32-gig memory card, a professional Rode microphone and a pair of Sony monitor headphones. These kits replace aging camcorders and allow many more students the opportunity to shoot with high-quality, professional-level gear. For our advanced production students, we have added a slew of new cine lenses for our two Canon C100 Cinema cameras." Among the other new gear in the lab, Schmidt said that he is most excited about the addition of eight LED lighting kits, explaining that LED lights are becoming the industry standard, as opposed to traditional hot light sets, because LED lights are smaller and safer to use.

"We have all the equipment necessary for students to make their first films, and we are excited to see what our students will produce using this new gear."

Schmidt went on to describe the lab's new computers and editing software.

He said, "We have replaced our aging Mac Pro editing stations with state-of-the-art 27-inch iMacs with gorgeous 5K retina screens. The screen is the highest resolution display on the market. These new computers run the latest version of the Adobe CC suite of video editing software."

"We are excited to see what our students will produce using this new gear."

Karl Schmidt, FMS Lab Manager

Schmidt hopes the lab will provide a collaborative space for students. "I want the lab to be a space where students can work with each other and find partners to work on each other's projects," he said. "No film is made by an individual. They're made by teams."

The program also plans to expand its collection of DVDs, and Caetlin Benson-Allott, FMS director, is implementing a DVD checkout policy for students. The FMS film library currently comprises more than 3,000 DVDs, Blu-rays and VHS tapes. Benson-Allott decided that it only makes sense to make this vast resource available to students as well as faculty. The checkout period is 48 hours, or Thursday to Monday, since the lab is closed during the weekend.

Students must be an FMS major or minor or be enrolled in an upper-division FMS course to check out films. Students will not be able to check out DVDs that are being used for classes during the current semester. These will be reserved for the courses' instructors, and there will be a non-circulating library of DVDs.



Student editors at work in the FMS Media Lab. FMS leased five new state-of-the-art iMacs for student use.



Camera skills in action. The lab acquired 12 new HD camera kits to facilitate FMS student productions.



FMS Lab Manager Karl Schmidt joined the program in 2009.

Meet the FMS Student Advisory Committee

Caetlin Benson-Allott

Every year, the director of Film and Media Studies solicits nominees from the faculty for a committee of FMS majors and minors who can represent student interests and inform the faculty about ways we can improve our program. The five members of this year's Student Advisory Committee reflect the curiosity, engagement and commitment to storytelling that characterize our program. It is my pleasure to introduce them to you. Current students: be sure to reach out to and let these folks know how we can make your FMS experience even better!

Amy Mims is a junior majoring in film and media studies and minoring in classical cultures. When asked why she majors in FMS, Amy replied, "I love movies! I always watched behind-the-scenes bonus features, so I decided to become a part of the world behind the scenes." She's still deciding what kind of career she's interested in following graduation, but was inspired by Carolina Rueda's "Editing: Theory and Practice" class, which she credits with making her "really remember how passionate I am about making movies!"

Kimberly Breece is brand-new to the

advisory committee. A sophomore FMS major, she's also minoring in women's and gender studies, because her "grand plan is to produce and direct movies deconstructing gender stereotypes." A great representative for the program, Kimberly recommends FMS to other OU students because "you get to do something you love all day with amazing resources at your disposal." She's looking forward to being "engrossed in the FMS community" in the years to come, a community she's helping to form through volunteering for the Student Advisory Committee.

Zachary Gilpin just started his third year on the FMS Student Advisory Committee and is delighted to be taking FMS's new "Video Gaming and Culture" course — "the 'M' in FMS," as he puts it. His favorite part of the FMS major has been "staying after class with Dr. [Katrina] Boyd, talking about movies, following her to her office and continuing to talk for several hours. This was what I always imagined my college experience would be like." Zach recently joined FMS Director Caetlin Benson-Allott to represent the program at the College of Arts and Sciences Rally to introduce transfer

students to the major. "Do you ever find yourself thinking about why a film had the effect it did? Then you're probably a film student!" Zach concluded.

**"FMS needs to be a family."
Kendra Kinnamon, FMS Major**

Kendra Kinnamon is another returning SAC member. Kendra is a senior criminology major, minoring in FMS because she "took 'Introduction to Film and Media Studies' and fell head over heels in love with studying film. Watching movies is so much better now," she explains. "FMS needs to be a family," Kendra observes; as a member of the SAC, she's drawing that family together by suggesting extracurricular events, such as a monthly trivia night. The Student Advisory Committee also helped to organize a *Night of the Living Dead* screening in honor of Halloween to bring more students into the FMS family — a \$50 gift card for the best-dressed ghoul of the evening!



The FMS Student Advisory Committee (from left) Jordan Farai, Kimberly Breece, Zach Gilpin, Amy Mims.



Amy Mims demonstrating her "Zombie Shuffle" for the FMS screening of *Night of the Living Dead*.

2015 Winners of FMS Awards and Honors

Lucy Ralston
The C. Clay Withrow Writing Award

This award was established by Ted and Pam Withrow in honor of their son to encourage excellent and imaginative writing about film or other visual media. The annual prize recognizes the best essay written on a film or media studies topic by a University of Oklahoma undergraduate. This year's winner was Lucy Ralston for her articulate and carefully argued paper, "Bloody Carrie: The Diverging Gendered Coding of Blood in *Carrie* 1976 vs. 2013." The judges were impressed by how well Ralston developed her thesis on the difference between the masculine and feminine use of blood, describing it as a really original and significant idea.

Kaylan Aksel
The Ned Hockman Filmmaking Award

This award was established by the Hockman family and friends and students of Ned Hockman to honor a man who has been called "the Father of Film at OU." It was Ned who first introduced the study of film and filmmaking in the School of Journalism, and the FMS Media Lab is named after him. This award is given to an OU student to help complete or exhibit a film or video project. This project must be substantially underway or complete, and preference is given for post-production and/or exhibition expenses, which may include festival submission fees and travel.

This year, the awards committee reported they had a wonderful variety of imaginative and professional student films submitted. The 2015 honor went to Kaylan Aksel for "Brain Editor," a short film that was screened as part of the Redbud Film Festival. Aksel's "dystopian drama" combines film noir and science fiction in an engaging short of a future time when human memories can be "edited" and injected into humans, completely changing their lives. With this award, the filmmaker wishes to exhibit his film in various festivals and also to begin raising funds to turn it into a low-budget feature.

Applications for the 2016 Withrow, Hockman, Kaid-Karriker, and Horton awards are open now through Feb. 1 at scholarships.ou.edu.

Haphuong Nguyen
The Kaid-Karriker Award

This award is named after two of the founders of the OU Film and Media Studies Program, the late Lynda Kaid, a professor in the Department of Communication, and Heidi Karriker, a retired professor in Modern Languages, Literatures and Linguistics and the first director of the program.

Jeanne Hoffman Smith established this yearly FMS Award to honor Lynda and Heidi for all they did to establish the program. The award is to be used for a film or media-related program/workshop or institute anywhere other than OU. Winners may apply the funds to professional or technical training classes, travel to conferences or archives to provide financial support during unpaid internships, or any other academic opportunity that will supplement a student's FMS major coursework. This year's winner was Haphuong Nguyen, who was described by the awards committee as an exemplary student and aspiring filmmaker. She used this award to fund an internship with Lagueria Davis, an award-winning OU graduate filmmaker in Los Angeles.

Chris Oz McIntosh, Logan Alexander Wrung
The Andrew S. Horton Screenwriting Award

This award was established in 2013 to honor the Jeanne Hoffman Smith Professor of Film and Media Studies in recognition of his service to the program, the university and the profession. Submissions may be feature-length films, shorts or partially completed scripts that show great potential.

This year, the awards committee decided to split the award between two winners. "Nightwing," by Chris Oz McIntosh, demonstrates a keen ability for character development and cinematic storytelling. In this screenplay, loosely based on DC Comics characters, protagonist Dick Grayson seeks to outrun his troubled childhood and the rage he experienced as Batman's sidekick, Robin. The judges also praised "Wrung" by Logan Alexander Wrung as original, well-written and highly cinematic. The lead character, young Trevor Jacobs, succeeds in breaking away from his alcoholic, ex-bullriding father to find his own identity and begin his independent life. Logan's script proves that, like Sam Shepard, he can give fresh and intimate life to the Oedipal drama.



NATIVE CROSSROADS FILM FESTIVAL & SYMPOSIUM

ELEMENTS / APRIL 7 - 9, 2016



The fourth annual Native Crossroads Film Festival and Symposium returns April 7 through April 9, 2016, with the theme of "Elements." We will showcase feature films, documentaries, animations and short films that challenge us to consider elements not only as resources of earth, water, air and fire that have been protected, managed or exploited, but also as fundamental pieces that come together to form key aspects of indigenous life.

The festival will offer audiences the chance to see two-days' worth of the most innovative works in Native cinema — which offers some of the most innovative work done anywhere. In panel discussions and keynote talks, filmmakers, scholars, tribal community representatives and activists will explore the theme of Elements from indigenous perspectives. Native Crossroads brings together diverse perspectives that help extend the work done in media, the academy and communities.

The festival works to develop a new generation of indigenous filmmakers here in Oklahoma, and we are pleased to invite short film submissions from indigenous, Oklahoma-based filmmakers for possible inclusion in the festival's screenings.

We invite you to join us April 7 through 9 at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, 2401 Chautauquah Ave., Norman, Oklahoma, for films, speakers and panels, complimentary and open to the public.

Native Crossroads is sponsored by OU Film and Media Studies and the Department of Native American Studies, and is made possible by the generous support of the Chickasaw Nation, OU College of Arts and Sciences, Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost at the University of Oklahoma and Jeanne Hoffman Smith. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact Karl Schmidt at (405) 325-6639. For a complete listing of activities, visit nativecrossroads.org.

Interested in being profiled in or contributing to a future FMS newsletter?

We want to hear from you!

Stay in touch with FMS by emailing us with professional news, personal achievements and updated contact information at fms@ou.edu. Check out recent student productions on our Vimeo channel at vimeo.com/channels/oufms. You also may follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to FMS, visit our website at cas.ou.edu/fms and click on "DONATE."

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WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

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