

COD Media Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Held at College of the Desert
Friday, September 15th, 2017

ATTENDEES:

Laurilie Jackson – Media Instructor
Vinnie Sassone – Film Instructor
Dan Taylor – Film Industry
Sheri Davis – Film Industry
Michael Green – P.S. Cultural Center
Michael Childers – Filmmaker/Photographer
Gary Belzman – CBS Radio
Ross Becker - KMIR

KEY NOTES/FINDINGS:

- Documentary filmmaking marketing is going to be booming in the TV market.
- Students need to know about the world and have natural curiosity to succeed, beyond knowing how to make a film.
- Students need to know they may have a dream/passion for one aspect of the industry, but they may find themselves liking a different area than their original dream because the industry is so broad.
- Advised to make sure students spend time in conversation and development before jumping into the making of films and using the technology.
- Students need to be prepared for using permits, following rules, jurisdictions for film locations, the practical side of filmmaking because many come out and do not know.
- Need to spend time on what type of jobs are COD students trying to get?
- Make sure you get the right instructors and professors for these new classes.
- Need to teach students to multi-task because one company that once had 20 jobs now has 1 job.
- They need to experience internships because after a few weeks they discover other opportunities and jobs out there in the field they didn't know about.
- New building needs to take on the realistic, dynamic fast turnaround, time commitment of newsrooms, tv stations radio stations with minute to minute deadlines.
- Make sure there is a post-production lab in the new building and do assignments where a pretend client comes to the group and three groups of students have to pitch idea, create and sell idea.
- Most likely won't attract big LA groups to use the facility but smaller groups. Also suggested to allow film crews to shoot on campus but work with production classes so students can shadow professionals.
- Radio: Have more talking content and remember that when Florida happened recently they all turned to radio during the emergency.

Dictated Notes:

Opening Remarks by Laurilie Jackson
Introductions by Vinnie Sassone

Laurilie:

- This is the first time in 18 years there is a full-time faculty in this department and we are excited to have support of the department and its growth.
- New AA-Certificate is being proposed for a CTE Film Certificate
- Catalogue included in the packet that shows what we currently offer and what we would like to offer in the certificate program.
- COD offers many certificate programs and this would be a great addition.

Vinnie:

- The screenwriting course is a new addition to the catalogue and what this does is brings the program home because the certificate program would be focused on storytelling.
- There is a lot of interest in a certificate program from students.
- There has been a lot of research into the certificate program and a lot of help from Dr. Kelly Hall, Laurilie Jackson and Darlene Romano.
- There are two certificates that would be offered, a main certificate and an advanced certificate.
- We spoke with many other departments including the Business department and there is much interest in incorporating these courses into other programs.
- Film is applied in so many different ways, in film and video, its about communication and the information coming at you and how to give it back.
- We are looking at how students can take the beginning certificate in 2 semesters.
- In the advanced certificate, the BUMA 027 Marketing course would be a producing course through the business program who would teach small business management. It is an important course for film students to learn to be independent filmmakers and know how to understand practical production techniques they can use out in the world.
- There would be a strong film core of RTV courses (Goes through Advanced Certificate RTV courses)
- RTV 014: Acting for Camera would pull students from theatre program in addition to the film certificate program.

Michael:

So important for students and directors to learn how to speak with actors and learn the language.

Dan:

This industry is an apprenticeship world. We know a number of students in film school and study one track, but end up in some other field. It's hard in this industry where they look at a degree of talent or not. In the industry you are trying to sell it. We have always said it is a great foundation and it will make you even better when you get into the industry, you will know stuff that other people don't know.

I'm a music education major. I went to school to teach music and here I am working in film. We always tell students you aren't going to get the job you want but your education will give you skills so you know how to work in film. You have to let them know you have your passion and have your dream, but life may move you somewhere else and you will learn a new dream.

Sherie:

In the industry they get in as a PA then they can see where their passion is. They are exposed to so many facets of making that film. We have an intern who has been filming all over the country after they went to film school. There are opportunities that students can get in LA.

Ross:

I spent 40 years being a reporter and anchor in LA. Now I'm in management. When you said documentary it made me think. I think documentary films are going to be huge in the future. If you read how TV is changing, it isn't you sit down and watch 60 minutes at 7pm. But if you produce journalistic television that can run over and over, that is going to be a huge venue for people that don't want to do fiction or science fiction.

The other thing that occurs to me is I've heard a lot of things about how to build houses. Write a script, edit, make a film. I have a student now and one is a USC intern. She knows how to edit a story and put it together and be on-air. But I asked her about a Congressional hearing news story and she didn't even know what a Congressional hearing was about and what was going on. So the students need to know how the world works and they have to have natural curiosity about current history and the world in order to know what to make scripts and films about.

The key that you need is what is in the scripts, how do you get a good point where you can tell a good story. You need to know what you are going to write about and know the world first. Not just how to build the house.

Dan:

Why write things into a script if you don't know how the world works. (Story about person who wrote in a horse crying/shedding tear, but horses don't cry)

Sherie:

British films make you know the characters. That's important as well.

Ross:

We get facts everyday, about vandalism in DHS etc. but find a person to tell that story so you can see it and hear it in their voice so you can sell that story.

Laurilie:

Your reporters are making mini movies.

Dan:

I think its important for a journalist to understand filmmaking and filmmakers to understand journalism.

Michael C:

So many great photographers know how to train the eye and learn character.

Ross:

I think you can excite students by saying you don't have to be a day-to-day news reporter. You can do news related documentaries and sell them to the history channel.

Vinnie:

They are affordable to make

Ross:

There are a lot of grants for documentaries as well.

Vinnie:

We have the opportunity to teach students show how to make a living not just make fiction and fantasy film. I have a student that wants to write about the Watergate burglars and how they correlate to Trump and Russia. He is writing his script on this and that isn't common.

Michael C:

Digicom is great, what they are doing with these devices. Their mini docs are coming to life. No one reads anymore. But the students are learning different ways on these devices.

Vinnie:

The change in the skills the students come in with is breathtaking. We got iPads for RTV 10/11. To focus on storytelling. They are more focused on storytelling.

Ross:

Every time I hear people talk about storytelling. But I hear we tell stories on devices. But that's not where stories start. They start with the conversation about what this story is going to be, what your point is, who is going to be in it. I think we need to slow them down and back them up off the technology. We need to ask them what story are you telling? You need people to go into an office and be able to sit down and tell the story. Come up with idea and converse first, not just ask what device do you have me to shoot with.

Vinnie:

Our production course is majority about pitch, working with the story, storyboarding etc. They spend a huge amount of time on story first before shooting.

Laurilie

We feel very strongly about content. We have a lot of students that want the technology as well.

Ross:

Larry King – they ask how he became a good interviewer, I listen he said.

Vinnie:

Where are we pointing them for jobs for work? That is another question.

Sherie:

We are the ones that get the students out of film school. They don't know how to deal with jurisdictions, rules, the world. They don't know how this hurts conversation (devices). Devices are in a way ruining conversation and listening.

Ross:

Someone is always going to be there to teach them technology and where to set the lights. But if you can't stand in a room and listen to a story and have the story half written before the time you leave. So they get excited about story.

Michael C:

The pitch is everything. You better be able to know how to find the story.

Sherie:

In this one situation these students didn't know how to take advantage of the three minutes to make a pitch.

Michael C:

There is a class to make a pitch in LA in 3 minutes.

Ross:

You guys know how do teach and know all these things. But they come in all wide-eyed

Vinnie:

What will be able to make them set apart is to know story.

Ross:

Someone is going to ask them when they come out to do that. They need to know.

Michael G.

One of the things I kept going back to is what is the jobs these kids are trying to get? Some time spent on what those career paths are is important. The gap between graduating with that film degree or going in as a journalist, whatever you are doing. There is a big gap there. If you can help close that gap, that is where you are going to help those students transition from the college world to the working world.

Michael C.

What has happened in the last 5 years is great. A lot of these students are getting hired out of film schools. Film production is down 70% this summer. 5 of the most amazing films are from Amazon

Dan:

I agree and disagree. The side of getting permits and getting locations, I'm getting young filmmakers who don't know how to work with people and don't know what their job is. Know one who knows what certain rules and restrictions are when on Netflix productions. My argument is they need to learn some of this stuff.

Vinnie:

What if it was part of a production course. They have to get permits before shooting.

Dan:

They need to know how hard it is with permits and restrictions and it isn't just that easy to go shoot.

Vinnie:

We can work these into the course.

Sherie:

The drones are a big thing right now too.

Ross:

You need to find out what is your intention. Why do you come to your class. If someone says do you want to be an actor. Then you ask what do you know about photography? Because you can be a better actor if you understand that. It isn't about what you want to do. Its what you need to learn to what you want to do.

Vinnie:

We want everyone to be able to take this class and cross disciplines. Whenever our classes start I find out what it is students want to do and what is their vision, what do you want to do.

Ross:

I write the story first and fill in the facts later. Get the story on paper first then you can put the facts and colors and names in.

Vinnie:

That is what we were talking about with iMovie and the timeline and what they put into them.

Michael G:

Where are we going to get these professors?

Vinnie:

We have ads out now.

Dan:

Film industry has a mental block against people in theater. Production designer thinks designing a theater is one thing but what are they going to do when they get into a room like this or onto a road? Make sure you have someone who knows film. Some schools you have a theater person teaching film.

Michael G:

What's happened is because of finances and technology, what was once 20 jobs is now 1 job, so you need to teach them multiple hats and this is where internships come in, the more kinds of exposures you can give them the better. Because none of that is in their head when they start. I've talked a lot to broadcast journalists and now they are on camera, editor, doing news, producing. Especially for documentary filmmakers.

Laurilie:

You call them video journalists now.

Ross:

Most of our people are like that.

Laurilie:

They need to learn the whole package. They have to learn to write, produce all of it.

Dan:

You are going in the right direction by saying if you want a film certificate you need to know this.

Michael C:

I get a lot of parents asking about these students paying huge amounts for photography schools but where are the jobs? There are none. You have to go back to basics and start at the bottom.

Ross:

This freshman intern we have doesn't know what she wants to do. The people find out 4-5 weeks in there are other jobs and they are exposed to everything. They realize on the job they don't want to be a reporter, they want to be a producer. That's what you can do, you can expose them to all the jobs. There are all kind of ways to tell stories.

Laurie:

How we grow to Palm Springs how do you see our program growing? If you were to put us all together in one building, how would you see us and what do we need?

Ross:

One thing that jumps into my mind, you need to give them an outlet for their work that is an immediate outlet. We do TV news every hour and every minute. This comes from the USC intern, they had 2 days to do story, now they have 2 hours. That is a practical thing a certificate program that they can get the skill from to lose the intimidation factor. In a long-term program that gives them immediate outlet that the community will embrace. Like your own local NPR. Just posted new story go watch it. That is the dynamic news room it is minute by minute.

Like a COD Facebook channel. I place where they can feel the immediate needs of a news room and the immediacy.

Gary:

I saw a KMIR live thing by 2 of your viewers it was really professional.

Ross:

Journalism is a conversation. It was getting things done immediately. Create a lab and when they walk in it is a news room, the demands go up and the stress level goes up, transparency and how going to tell the story and post it immediately and the thing they need to learn is it isn't perfect. It isn't like creating a feature film.

Dan:

It applies to film as well, when people want to work in commercials, they have fast turnaround. Ad agency calls production companies and without even having job yet need to figure this out asap.

Vinnie:

What facilities do we have in this building?

Dan:

Have a post-lab. Three different groups of students I'm the client, I want this for you to shoot, come back and hear the pitches and those groups have to have it done by a certain date. Then produce it and give it to you and see if you can do it on time.

Michael C.

With music videos you have very little time.

Laurilie:

Maybe we have our students make music videos for the artists we are putting on KCOD.

Ross:

Have someone put together an electronic board game. Make one commercial but 5 groups making same commercial.

Vinnie:

What about in terms of post? Would we be able to attract people to come out and work with them? Could we rent out the facility? There could be an intermingling.

Dan:

Yes and no. The big guys in LA will want to stay in LA due to production equipment. But smaller guys will. If the campus can make it easy for commercials to shoot on campus then you can have the production classes come. Students have to work to get privilege to work on shoots.

Ross:

We are doing a lot of video editing in laptops. Adeptus (?) editing program. I have reporters editing in front seat of vehicles. 3 minute story in 2 hours.

Laurilie:

What about a new social media course? Should we offer this or do they already have the skills.

Dan:

A little of both. They know Youtube but do they know how to monetize it and create a channel. There are millions of shows and what is the topic, why are they successful?

Vinnie:

They are approaching it like you are, new material and they are professional.

Ross:

If you watch some of the young people and I call it the trail. They start at snap chat then they go to youtube then they go to facebook. They have to be prolific to get word out.

Michael G.

If you want to be serious about doing something with that, how do you make it do that? You look at it as a play toy in spare time or are you going to make it a realistic job.

Laurilie:

Using it affectively and looking at the business aspect of it.

Michael G:

After they have made their first short. If you can bring the business base of knowledge into it. Bringing in companies from LA to talk to filmmakers about the various ways you can get distribution.

Dan:

A guy we work with knows how to do crowd funding and he has become extremely successful. He just did a one-hour speech with us and it was very intriguing to hear this concept.

Sherie:

One thing is you have the prep work before you ever begin to ask for money you have 6 months of prep work, before you put it online and then you have to continue to work that.

Dan:

It takes time.

Laurilie:

Anything for Radio? We have three radio programs.

Gary:

My son has a streaming service in San Bernadino. Its an alternative rock streaming and he's monetizing it and he is selling commercials. He is making money at it. And he has 20-30k of listeners. That would be nice to have and hear. I would like to hear on KCOD as a broadcaster. Not just content. Conversation. If we can work around that, you can intro songs in and out. Take little baby steps, read a couple PSAs, can tell us whats going on at KCOD or if you are doing segments, you can have 10-12 minute segments. Would like to see more variety in the hour.

Ross:

When the power turned off in Florida people could do nothing but listen to radio and it saved Southern Florida. That is an important aspect – that radio is not just a jukebox. They need to understand that we will turn to radio for friendship and emergency needs.

Gary:

They need to learn to connect with the listeners, not just talking at them, but talking with them. Saw how radio went down hill and as the economy gets better and radio will do better. Millenials don't know about radio when it was so good.

Ross:

Let's teach these people how to do that.

If you had a radio station that did live theater on radio I would listen.