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Film students get big breaks as production interns on new movie

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Oakland University's new crop of film students are getting real world experience this spring and summer as film production interns working on director and producer Michael Manasseri's new movie, "Sucker."

As production interns on "Sucker," students had the opportunity to participate in nearly every aspect of production, from building sets and securing locations to shooting several scenes on Oakland's campus and assisting with post production editing work over the course of the summer.

This collaboration represents a rare opportunity for students, as few academic programs have the capability to partner with an established production company and an experienced filmmaker, according to Kyle Edwards, Cinema Studies program director.

"I hope our students gain an intimate understanding of film production and all of its constituent components," Edwards said. "This is an industry that requires vision, passion, perseverance and the ability to communicate with others in a collaborative environment. Additionally, these internships may provide the experience that leads to new opportunities within the film industry."

The experience has done all that and more, according to "Sucker" interns Michael Rhadigan and Jenifer Whalen. Both students began as production interns and both have since been promoted to assistant art directors, earning a place in the film's credits and getting the chance to design original graphics and props.

Rhadigan designed all the graphics for props such as fake newspapers, while Whalen worked to decorate the sets and add props to characters. Both were responsible for maintaining continuity between takes.

Kaitlyn O'Lynnner, OU junior and production assistant intern, transferred to Oakland specifically for the Cinema Studies program. Calling the internship experience "invaluable," O'Lynnner is steadily gaining a variety of marketable skills in a professional environment.

"This internship has been an amazing experience," O'Lynnner said. "In the Cinema Studies program I have learned a lot about film theory and technique, and now this internship has really put me in the middle of the Michigan film industry and taught me how to be a great production assistant. I hope to continue working on some of the productions that are shooting locally this summer."

As an intern, O'Lynnner helps to create the call sheets detailing what the cast and crew should be doing throughout the day. She also makes runs for the film, for anything such as picking up actors from their hotels or getting the catering for the day.

In its first year, the Cinema Studies program has been in a constant state of growth, partnering last fall with Manasseri and his production company, Big Screen Entertainment, for a series of independent film workshops and special screening of his last film, "Babysitter Wanted."

Originally, Edwards anticipated that about 20 students would be admitted during in the program's second year, but already has more than 40 students signed up. To keep up with this demand, the program has hired a new faculty member and created 8-10 new courses for fall 2010.

"We have received multiple calls from students that are coming to OU solely to join this program," Edwards said. "We are very excited with this success, but working hard to keep from being overwhelmed."

For more information about Oakland's Cinema Studies program, visit the Web site at oakland.edu/cinemastudies.

SUMMARY

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