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Producing a Career in Film Festivals

Gabbi DiNobile '18 builds film festival experience into her PR career path



May 16, 2018 | Justin Wilder

BRISTOL, R.I. - "How do you feel about Nova Scotia?" It's not how most jobs start, but with a chance to travel to the Halifax Independent Filmmakers Festival (HIFF) and represent Rhode Island, senior Gabbi DiNobile couldn't say no.

DiNobile's participation at HIFF will begin her role as the Public Relations & Programming Coordinator with the Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF), a staple in the Rhode Island film community for curating top local, national and international selections for screening in their annual festival. She'll speak on panels, meet with filmmakers to talk from the perspective of a festival producer and give them advice on submitting for selection.

It's an opportunity that connects her public relations major with her film minor, while also allowing for great networking. "The conversations you can have with people from all over the world are the conversations that never end, because there are so many things to talk about and compare," says DiNobile.

This isn't her first foray into the festival world. As part of RWU's "Curation and Film Festival Production" course, DiNobile and classmates worked with Professor George T. Marshall to produce their own festival on campus, the annual Roving Eye International Film Festival. Having just completed its 13th year, Roving Eye gives students the opportunity to organize, produce and promote a festival themselves. "It was great to see the event planning and the promotion sides at the same time," while also selecting films and building the schedule for a festival, says DiNobile.

"The class taught me the technique to go through a film and see if it has potential or not to be featured in the festival," a perspective she hopes to bring to HIFF. "We would watch 10 or more films a week, learning tips on reviewing films and programming festival blocks more quickly. Over time, our comments became more insightful and critical."

Professor Marshall serves as the Executive Director of RIIFF, the largest film festival in New England that is also a qualifier for three Oscar categories, the British Academy of Television and Fine Arts and the Canadian Screen Awards, drawing in considerable talent from international submissions. The films that aren't selected for the festival are then screened by students as the contenders in the following year's curation for Roving Eye, providing a wide breadth of cinematic skill and cultural perspectives for them to review. The class also prepares them to apply for a hands-on internship with RIIFF, which is how DiNobile has been able to gain experience in a variety of roles while still in school.

“That’s the nice thing about being with RIFF is that there is a certain sense of fluidity between the roles,” DiNobile said. “One day I could be more focused on programming, reviewing submissions before a deadline. The next day I might focus more on scheduling the films and the production of the upcoming events.”

When she comes home from Halifax, DiNobile will shift roles and focus on this year's RIFF. Over the summer, she'll manage a team of interns from RWU and throughout the state as they put on one of the biggest shows in the smallest state.

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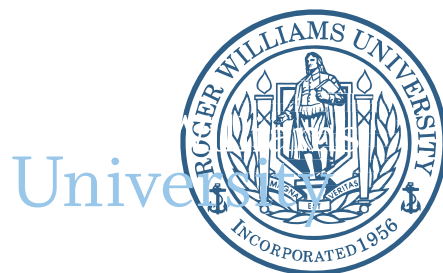
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