

Texas State University
Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award
Application Form

Name Thomas W. Copeland tc20 Net ID

Department Theatre and Dance College Fine Arts

Current TXST teaching appointment FTE% 50%

Number of long semesters of TXST teaching 26

Brief statement (100 – 150 words) of your qualifications for this award:

While at the Texas Film Commission I became aware that few University Film programs were preparing students for the realities of this business. They concentrate on opening credit jobs vs the end credits where the bulk of the employment lies. So, why not offer a class that does just that? My Business of Film class is one of the few in the country that covers this. Another problem was a flood of Short Films on the internet. The development of digital cameras has made it possible for anyone to make a film but the missing link is story. All good stories should have a beginning, middle and end with strong character development. This class focuses on development with production coming later. Ideas are pitched, notes are given, actors give readings, storyboards are made and budget/schedule tells you how much it's going to cost. Now make the Film.

Teaching Award Statements

Personal Strengths

My strengths are a forty-four year career in the Motion Picture and Television Industries and ten years spent in the Theatre.

I've seen all aspects of the business from working on *Austin City Limits* for three years to six years working freelance jobs that ran from makeup, location management, production managing and grip work. I spent twenty-two years at the Texas Film Commission starting at the bottom and working my way up to the Director's position, and I'm finishing my thirteenth year as a teacher. I've also spent the last few years producing short films for some of my students and producing workshops all over the state. I work closely with various Film Festivals across the state not only as a consultant but also as moderator and panel guest. Having such an extensive career has given me invaluable knowledge, resources, and contacts that I've been able to use to enrich the education of my students. For example, I have a vast network of companies and individuals here in Texas as well as in Los Angeles and New York

who I bring in to guest lecture regularly, and I count on them for internships and potential employment for my students after graduation. In fact, in my thirteen years of teaching I've put more than eighty former students to work in this business. They are working locally, regionally, and nationally, as free-lancers and at all levels in the industry, including heads of production companies.

How has my teaching changed?

My experience in the industry has helped me to craft classes that work. From the beginning, it's been important to me to give student's realistic understanding of what they will find when they apply for jobs and the concrete skills they need to succeed. My teaching has changed as the program has grown; I've found it particularly important to update the *Short Film Development* course. One key change has been the addition of script readings as well as explorations of techniques for character development. I've added at least three more lectures including exercises to better understand and build characterization into scripts. Script readings were added so writers could have a better grasp of the written word - how those words make sense coming from an actor and how they help to establish character relationships. I've increased the number of drafts from two to three to encourage greater depth of thought and sophistication. These readings are done in front of the full class and with additional participation from outside actors. This allows writers to hear their scripts from a fresh voice and to receive additional vital feedback.

Teaching challenge

I've had many good Teaching Assistants over the years, and about 90% have gone on to work in the business. However, I realized a few years ago that I was just taking the cream of the crop and concentrating on them versus reaching out to ones that needed more help. This is a very dog-eat-dog business and if you're meek or shy you usually get passed over. So, my teaching challenge was to start concentrating on those types of students who were talented but just weren't showing the drive that was needed to succeed. It's all about self-confidence and some of these students just needed faith in themselves, so I knew that I needed to start mentoring these types and working beyond the classroom. My current and last two TA's have risen to that level and I only wish I had adequate time to give this kind of attention to all of my students outside of class.

Innovative assignments

I explain on the first day of class (and in the syllabi) that all of my classes are "reality based". In other words, not theory but based on my experiences working in the business. One important key to this business is the ability to work on a team, so I consider these classes as jobs in which the students are working for me and required to work collaboratively. Is Film an Art? Yes, but to me it's chiefly a business. If it's also an art, it's a highly collaborative one. My innovative assignment for my *Business of Film* class is to place them into groups of four and have them bring a (fictional) film to San Marcos based on what they've learned in this class. They're given a synopsis of a script, major locations, and a brief description of characters. Then they are sent out to location scout, concentrating on the director's vision and the production designer's and cinematographer's needs as well as how each location will impact the individual departments. Each location selected must be backed up with three

examples and Photo-shopped into a Power Point presentation. The teams are also asked to provide information on crew availability, housing, meteorological information during the duration of the project, airline information, and distances to and from the location and San Marcos. Also, each student gets to evaluate the performances of their teammates. Collaboration is the key to the making of any film, and as you might expect not all of these folks will agree on everything. A big part of the class and this final is seeing how well they work together, because in the real world you don't get to pick who you work for and in some cases, it's not always a good mix. It's the ability to work with difficult people that could make you even more employable.

TEXAS STATE VITA
(with Fine Arts components)

I. Academic/Professional BackgroundA. Name: Tom CopelandTitle: Lecturer**B. Educational Background**

Degree	Year	University	Major	Thesis/Dissertation
	1972	Southwest Texas State University	Theatre	

C. University Experience

Position	University	Dates
Guest Lecturer	University of Texas RTF Dept.	1995-1997
Studio Technician	University of Texas at Austin School of Communication	1974-1977

D. Relevant Professional Experience

Position	Entity	Dates
Director, Texas Film Commission	Governors Office State of Texas	1995-2005
Assistant Director, Texas Film Commission	Governors Office State of Texas	1988-1994
Locations Consultant	Texas Film Commission	1983-1988
Freelance Motion Picture & Television Artist	Various film, commercials, Television projects, etc	1977-1983
Studio Tech and Makeup Artist – Austin City Limits Television show	KLRU Television Station/University of Texas at Austin	1975-1983
Studio Technician	Southwest Educational Development Labs Austin, TX	1978-1983

II. TEACHING

A. Teaching Honors and Awards:

B. Courses Taught:

Business of Film (2005 – present)
Short Film Development (2006- present)
Internship program (2006 – present)

C. Graduate Theses/Dissertations or Exit Committees (if supervisor, please indicate):

D. Courses Prepared and Curriculum Development:

(see above)

E. Funded External Teaching Grants and Contracts:

F. Submitted, but not Funded, External Teaching Grants and Contracts:

G. Funded Internal Teaching Grants and Contracts:

H. Submitted, but not Funded, Internal Teaching Grants and Contracts:

I. Other:

III. SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE

A. Works in Print

1. Books (if not refereed, please indicate)

a. Scholarly Monographs:

b. Textbooks:

c. Edited Books:

d. Chapters in Books:

e. Creative Books:

2. Articles

a. Refereed Journal Articles:

b. Non-refereed Articles:

3. Plays:

4. Abstracts:

5. Reports:

6. Commissioned Design Work:

7. Book Reviews:

8. Other:

B. Works not in Print

1. Papers Presented at Professional Meetings:

2. Invited Talks, Lectures, Presentations:

Austin Film Festival, South by Southwest Film Festival, Spindletop Film Festival, Flatland Film Festival, Deep Ellum Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Independent Feature Film Market in New York, Association of Film Commissions International; Texas Educational Theatre Conference; Southwest Educational Theatre and Film Conference; Locations Expo LA & NY; Texas Tourism Association; International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees local 484; Texas Association of Film Tape Professionals; Texas Motion Picture Producers Association; Directors Guild of America; Dallas Producers Association; Houston Motion Picture Council; Women in Film; Guest speaker for the Convention & Visitors Bureau cities of: Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Waco, Lubbock, Harlingen, El Paso, Wichita Falls, Marshall, Nacogdoches, Brenham, Abilene, Amarillo, Midland, Odessa, Alpine

3. Musical Compositions, Publications, or Recordings:

4. Musical Performances (international, national, regional, and/or state; if not refereed, please indicate):

5. Theatrical Productions (design, directing, and/or performance; international, national, regional, and/or state; if not refereed, please indicate):

Talent, The Catfish Prince, Texas State Theatre Dept., spring 2007

6. Films (directed, performing, and/or consulting): Brought the Texas Independent Film Network to Texas State campus.

Executive Produced films for Students. YOU GO, I GO (2012), MODERN TIMES (2013), LOST LIKE SOCKS (2017), ALONG THE CREEK ROAD (2018)

Consultant on over 1000 Film & Television projects during tenure at Texas Film Commission
Producer – of 5 Filmmaking 1o1 short Films from 2008 to present

7. Multimedia Design Productions (web-based and/or electronic media):

8. Exhibitions (title; date; location; solo, 2-, 3-, 4-person or group; curated, juried, or invitational-list curator, jury, or inviter; and scope-international, national, regional, and/or state):

Judge, Houston Filmmaker Showcase, 2005-2008

Judge, San Antonio Film Commission Student Film Grant Project - 2012

9. Collections, Commissions, Gallery Representation, Residencies:

10. Published Photos and Reviews of Creative Works:

11. Consultancies:

Villa Muse Studios, Austin, TX -2005- 2008

Flatland Film Festival , Lubbock, TX

Austin Film Festival

Lone Star International Film Festival – Ft. Worth, TX

Crossroads of Texas Film Festival – Waxahachie, TX

12. Workshops:

Film Friendly Texas, Texas Film Commission and LCRA

Filmmaking 101 Workshops in San Marcos, Lubbock, Ft. Worth and Dallas, Wayland Baptist University in Plainview

13. Other:

C. Grants and Contracts

1. Funded External Grants and Contracts:

2. Submitted, but not Funded, External Grants and Contracts:

3. Funded Internal Grants and Contracts:

4. Submitted, but not Funded, Internal Grants and Contracts:

D. Fellowships, Awards, Honors:

Pioneer Award, Flatland Film Festival - 2006

Southeast Texas Film Hall of Fame, Spindletop Film Festival - 2006

Leonard Katzman Award, Dallas Lone Star Awards – 1997
Lifetime Achievement Award, Lone Star International Film Festival – 2008
Inducted into the Austin City Limits Hall of Fame along with the 1st year crew. June 18, 2015

IV. SERVICE

A. University:

Fine Arts Committee member, Texas State University -2006-2007

B. Departmental:

C. Community:

D. Professional:

Texas Association of Film Tape Professionals
Texas Motion Picture Producers Association
Austin Film Festival
Austin Film Society

E. Organizations

1. Honorary:

2. Professional:

Board member Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau – 2008-2010
Board member Lone Star International Film Festival
Board member Flatland Film Festival

F. Service Honors and Awards

Inducted into the Austin City Limits Hall of Fame – June 2015

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

TH 4341: SHORT FILM DEVELOPMENT

SPRING 2018

Instructor: Tom Copeland

Class Meets: T/Th 9:30 am – 10:20 am, Room 209

Office: Theatre Building 211

Office Hours: T/TH 8:30 – 9:15 or by appointment

Phone: 512-417-7674 Email: tc20@txstate.edu

Course Description: This is a reality based class on Independent Short Film Production. Starting with the creation of an idea and focusing on script research, character development, storyboarding, producing, budgeting, scheduling, finance & development.

Course Objectives:

- . Clearly define the art of storytelling via the short film format and how to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end.
- . Identify where story ideas come from and how to deal with clearances and permissions.
- . Communicate the importance of character development and how characters are created and built to better understand how to tell the story and create conflict.
- . Evaluate and critique both Feature and Short Films by watching and annotating the script vs the finished product.
- . Identify the importance of Script formatting. Never give someone a reason not to read your script.
- . Identify the importance of Storyboarding not only to the production of the script but also as a use to better sell the script to potential investors.
- . Demonstrate the difference between producing a Short and Feature Film and the importance of a schedule and a budget also as a use to better sell the script to potential investors.
- . Communicate the importance of having the writer hear their words spoken vs reading them.
- . Effectively demonstrate the purpose of a good distribution plan in order to get your Short read, accepted and screened to a Film Festival.
- .

Required Texts: There is not a required text for this course but suggestive readings and some lectures come from the following:

Goodell, Gregory Independent Feature Film Production . – ISBN 031181175

Field, Syd Screenplay – ISBN - 0385333938

Snyder, Blake Save the Cat – ISBN -9781282466081

Communication: Students will be expected to check Texas State email accounts daily for important information. The best way to reach the instructor is by email. Students wishing to discuss grades must schedule an appointment. Grades will not be discussed through email.

Participation: This is a participation-based course and all students will be expected to fully contribute to class discussions and activities. Students leaving the room or using electronic devices without permission will receive a grade reduction.

Students with Special Needs: Students with special needs (as documented by the Office of Disability Services) should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. www.ods.txstate.edu

Attendance: Attendance in the course is mandatory. You are allowed TWO unexcused absences. Any additional absences will lower your final grade by One-Half a letter grade (5pts) for each additional absence. For example, if your final grade is a 90% and you have 4 absences (2 additional to the 2 allowed you would receive an 80% for the course. Students who are tardy to class will receive an unexcused absence for every three tardies.

Excused absences must be documented and submitted in writing to the instructor within a week of the absence. Excused absences would include: medically documented illness, documented family emergency, documented university obligation approved in advance, or other extenuating circumstances approved by the instructor in advance.

Late work: Assignments are due at the beginning of class or on the due date according to the instructions by the instructor. For written assignments, students may submit the assignment to the instructor up to two days late from the due date for half credit. Assignments will not be accepted after two days resulting in a zero for that assignment.

Late work will not be accepted for the final project/presentation. Students will receive a zero if not in attendance for the final unless it is an excused absence (see Attendance).

Final Project: The final for this class is team collaboration. . At the beginning of the semester students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and at least 3 of those questions will pertain to the final project and they are: Are you a writer, can you draw, and have you taken Directing for Film)? That along with other information we can gather you will be put on a team that hopefully will cover all those bases. Each team through the democratic process will have the ability to pitch two ideas for the final. Notes and critics will be given on that idea and from there via the democratic process each team will write, storyboard and create and schedule and a budget for the Final.

Grading:

- . In Class work and participation.....30%
- . Guest Lectures30%
- . Final Project40%

Grading Scale

- 100% - 90%.....A
- 89%- 80%.....B
- 79% -70%.....C
- 69% - 60%.....D
- 59% - 0%.....F

Any grade ending in 0.5 – 0.9 will be rounded up. Any grade ending in 0.1 – 0.4 will be rounded down.

1/16 – Tuesday.....1st day Syllabus

WHERE SCRIPT IDEAS COME FROM:

- 1/ 18– ThursdayThe Story: where it all *begins*
- 1/23 - Tuesday..... The Story: Where script ideas come?
- 1/25– Thursday.....Ideas (screen Termination).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- 1/30– Tuesday..... Create a character exercise assigned teams for character dev.) (Who are you due?)
- 2/1– Thursday.....Create a character exercise results
- 2/6 – Tuesday.....Building character and screen NIGHT STAND

SECONDHAND LIONS SCRIPT, VIEWING AND DISCUSSION

- 2/9 – Thursday..... Watch Second Hand Lions
- 2/11 – Tuesday.....Finish Second Hand Lions and discuss

- 2/15 – Thursday.....Showcase #1 (screening of selected short films)

CREATION OF FINAL PROJECT

2/20– Tuesday.....Intro teams for final and team meeting.

2/22 – Thursday..... The Art of the Pitch

2/27 – Tuesday..... Guest Filmmaker and screening of their film

3/1 – Thursday.....Showcase #2 (screening of selected short films)

STORYBOARDS AND SCRIPT FORMATTING

3/6 – Tuesday..... Storyboards with Jason Zentner

3/8 – Thursday..... Screenplay formatting

SPRING BREAK

3/20 –Tuesday..... Casting for Short films

3/22– Thursday..... ..Teams pitch ideas

3/27 – Tuesday..... Guest Filmmakers and screenings

3/29 – Thursday..... Showcase #3 (screening of selected short films)

4/3– Tuesday..... Resume writing (in conjunction with resume guest for Business of Film)

PRODUCING THE SHORT

4/5 – Thursday.....Producing a Short

4/10– Tuesday..... Backing into a Budget

4/12 – Thursday.....Showcase #4 (screening of selected short films)

SCRIPT READINGS

4/17 – Tuesday..... Script to be read in class by actors

4/19 - Thursday..... Script readings continued

DISTRIBUTION

4/24– Tuesday..... Entertainment Attorneys and Distribution Ideas

4/26 - Tuesday – Film Festival information and publicity

4/28 – Thursday – Summation and Final team meetings Scripts due on this date

5/8 – Thursday – FINAL – 8:00 am – 10:30 pm

*** Guest dates are subject to change**

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

TH 4340: BUSINESS OF FILM

SPRING 2018

Instructor: Tom Copeland

Class Meets: T/Th 11:00 am – 12:20 pm, Room 209

Office: Theatre Building 211

Office Hours: T/TH 8:30 – 9:15 or by appointment

Phone: 512-417-7674 Email: tc20@txstate.edu

Course Description: A reality based class based how film projects are put together. The course follows a producer through Development, Preproduction and Production, with concentration on the creation of the idea into script, schedule, budget and the development process of finding funding, attaching talent, director and hiring a crew. This course will also concentrate on the entry level positions available and how best to get a job.

Course Objectives;

- . Identify the various Departments of a Film project and their role in the process of making a film.
- . Communicate the role of the Creative Producer and describe the various other Producers roles.
- . Describe and explain the Development side of the business which is done by Creative Producer.
- . Demonstrate the annotation of a feature film script into a schedule and budget.
- . Describe and explain the difference btw Development and Preproduction and when that takes place
- . Communicate the collaboration of departments on a film and the how best to prepare yourself for that beginning position.
- . Prepare a location survey for a fictional script to be shot in the San Marcos area.

Required Texts: There is not a required text for this course; however students will be required to purchase a packet which consists of a feature film script and a Production Assistants Handbook. Cost is \$10.00. Students not picking up this packet on a designated date will receive a grade reduction.

Communication: Students will be expected to check Texas State email accounts daily for important information. The best way to reach the instructor is by email. Students wishing to discuss grades must schedule an appointment. Grades will not be discussed through email.

Participation: This is a participation-based course and all students will be expected to fully contribute to class discussions and activities. Students leaving the room or using electronic devices without permission will receive a grade reduction.

Students with Special Needs: Students with special needs (as documented by the Office of Disability Services) should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. www.ods.txstate.edu

Attendance: Attendance in the course is mandatory. You are allowed TWO unexcused absences. Any additional absences will lower your final grade by One-Half a letter grade (5pts) for each additional

absence. For example, if your final grade is a 90% and you have 4 absences (2 additional to the 2 allowed you would receive an 80% for the course. Students who are tardy to class will receive an unexcused absence for every three tardies.

Excused absences must be documented and submitted in writing to the instructor within a week of the absence. Excused absences would include: medically documented illness, documented family emergency, documented university obligation approved in advance, or other extenuating circumstances approved by the instructor in advance.

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Late work will not be accepted for the final project/presentation. Students will receive a zero if not in attendance for the final unless it is an excused absence (see Attendance).

Final Project: The final for this class is a team oriented location survey based on the lessons executed in this class. At the beginning of the semester you'll be asked to fill out a questionnaire and at least 3 of those questions will pertain to the final project and they are: Do you have transportation, do you own a digital camera (not including a smart phone) and do you know Photoshop. That along with other information we can gather you will be put on a team that hopefully will cover all those bases. You will then be asked to research, and coordinate and location survey for the San Marcos area based on the major locations given to you in our script which is entitled THE SECRET. Photos will be shot and photo shopped into a power point for a presentation to a Producer (me) along with research information on the San Marcos area.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Compile a list of local Production Managers, Location Managers, Production Coordinators, and Transportation Coordinators. **These positions must have feature film credits and I need at least three in each category.**

The number of hotel rooms available in the San Marcos area?

Compile a list of events and dates that could jeopardize finding housing during the months of **September –November** in the San Marcos area; such as festivals, graduation etc.

Compile weather data for the Austin/San Marcos area during the months of **September - November** the average temperature and precipitation for each month.

Compile foliage information, an approximate time for a change in foliage in the area.
(I'll explain this later)

Compile distances to major airports and information on direct flights to Los Angeles. This would include both Austin and San Antonio. Southwest Airlines or other airlines that do not have 1st class seats should be noted accordingly. I'm not interested in prices.

Distances from major locations in the script to San Marcos.

Team participation - Travel log for scouting (who scouted and number of days), Photo shop (who handled), Research info (who compiled).

Each team member will also turn in separately and privately an evaluation of how well you worked as a team and your contributions as well as a critique on your teammates.

Scouting photos will be reviewed in a Power point you will create on your laptop. Research information is to be printed out and put into a book or folder.

Presentation is very important!

Grading:

- . In Class work and participation.....30%
- . Guest Lectures30%
- . Final Project40%

Grading Scale

- 100% - 90%.....A
- 89%- 80%.....B
- 79% -70%.....C
- 69% - 60%.....D
- 59% - 0%.....F

Any grade ending in 0.5 – 0.9 will be rounded up. Any grade ending in 0.1 – 0.4 will be rounded down.

Business of Film Lesson Plans for Spring Semester 2018

DEVELOPMENT:

- 1/17- Tuesday.....1st day syllabus
- 1/19– ThursdayBiz of film the 1st day - Understanding the Business
- 1/24 – TuesdayThe Producers
- 1/26 - Thursday.....Development & Option
- 1/31 – Tuesday.....Guest Producer *
- 2/2 – Thursday.....More Dev/Option *
- (2/7 – Tuesday..... ..Discuss Perfect World and breakdown of script

2/9 – Thursday..... ..Locations (discuss in relation to Perfect World and the final

2/14 – Tuesday..... Guest Production Manager *

2/16 – Thursday.....Location managers

PREPRODUCCION:

2/21 – Tuesday.....Guest, Production Designer/Set Decoration *

2/23– Thursday..... Intro the Final Project THE SECRET and Team assignments

2/28 – Tuesday.....Scout San Marcos

3//2 – Thursday.....Scout Martindale

3/7– Tuesday.....Guest for-Photoshop instruction *

3/9– Thursday..... Scouting instructions for the Final project The Secret

SPRING BREAK:

3/21 – Tuesday..... Scout or lab

3/23– Thursday..... Production Asst. handbook

3/28 – Tuesday..... Scout or Lab

3/30 – ThursdayCasting

PRODUCTION:

4/4- Tuesday..... .. Guest for Resume writing for the Film Industry *

4/6- Thursday.....Scout or Lab

4/11 – Tuesday..... Guest, 1st AD *

4/13– Thursday..... Scout or Lab (last chance to go over photos and research with me)

4/18 – Tuesday..... . Unions and their role in the industry

4/20 – Thursday Scout or Lab

4/25 – Tuesday.....Summation

4/27 – Thursday..... Last day of class - Lab

5/3– Thursday.....Final 11:00am– 1:30 pm

*** Guest subject to change**

Any grade ending in 0.5 – 0.9 will be rounded up. Any grade ending in 0.1 – 0.4 will be rounded down.

Academic Honesty: “Students found guilty of academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination of other academic work to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, or abuse of resource materials, are subject to disciplinary actions.” (TSU Student Handbook, page 47).

Classroom behavior: “Students are full partners in fostering a classroom environment which is conducive of learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of behavior that detracts from the learning experience of fellow students. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in request for the offending student to leave class.” (Taken from Student Justice brochure “Maintaining Civility in the Classroom”).

LETTERS FROM STUDENTS

March 1st, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Since I've graduated, everywhere I go, people know the name "Tom Copeland", he has curated a family that I am happy to be proud of.

I started my journey at Texas State, with the plan to finish a sensible degree in communications and pursue whatever I was good at and paid well, but that all changed after I discovered Tom's film classes. I soon learned he was not only knowledgeable, but a very unique teacher. He focused on speaking to us frankly, using real-world experience and entertaining stories that spanned decades. At the beginning of a 9am class, Tom stood in front of a white board with three words written on it. "Adventure, Security, and Identity." He said that you can have one of these things in your life, and in your career, maybe if you're lucky you can have two, but you can never have all three. He encouraged us to quickly figure out which one we really wanted. This was 4 years ago. I still remember this every so often.

I've been out of school for almost 2 years. Within that time I have not only been able to consistently work within the Film industry, but also have had the confidence to produce my own projects. All of this could never have been possible without Tom. He finds people who need help and he gives them an opportunity to help themselves. I'm very lucky to know that while I'm carving my path within my career, I have someone routing for me, who I can call if I need any help. I know many other former students can do the same.

I'm always running into people who were mentored and taught by Tom, and we always find each other working. Recently I produced a short film where 99% of the people there were either current students of Tom, or previous students. There is no doubt that he is an impactful teacher, and has given hundreds of people jobs-but what is unique about Tom is he gives you an opportunity to learn something yourself. To build something yourself. If that doesn't make you an excellent teacher than I can't imagine what would.

Sincerely, Learda Shkurti

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my great pleasure to personally recommend Tom Copeland for the 'Excellence in Teaching Award' at Texas State University. When I came to Texas State I was interested in working in the film industry and

was shocked to learn that there wasn't a film department, so I decided to major in Communication Studies with a minor in Theatre. It was through the Theatre Department that I discovered Tom's 'Business Of Film' class. This one class changed the course of my entire career. You see it was in Tom's class that I learned the ins and outs of the film business and the many departments that it encompassed. Tom's extensive knowledge of the Film Industry was immediately apparent. He brought in experts from various film departments to talk to the class, broke down the various stages of production and explained how the mystifying world of film operated. My favorite group project was when Tom has us go on a location scout for a mock film and then Photoshop our photos to present the scout to the entire class. This was a brilliant way to see what it was like in the field and gain hands on experience. I also met several friends in his class who have turned into lifelong colleagues and collaborators on several productions. His class was in the early stages back then, but it continues to inspire students and improve their careers because of Tom's exceptional teaching abilities.

When I graduated, Tom recommended me to the Film Commission where I became an intern and took a keen interest in the Casting Department. Through my internship at the Film Commission I learned about my next internship which was with legendary Texas filmmaker Terrance Malick. From that experience I learned about an internship with local Casting Director, Beth Sepko, with whom I went on to work with for 5 years and attend the Emmy awards for the show 'American Crime,' because we were nominated for Outstanding Casting. My credits include "HBO's 'The Leftovers',

James Cameron's 'Alita Battle Angel, AMC's 'The Son' and I've worked on several Robert Rodriguez and Richard Linklater films as well. Just a few months ago I took the leap and moved to LA. I landed a job with a legendary Hollywood Casting Director who has two films in this years Academy Awards that she cast. I owe it all to taking Tom's class and the lessons that he taught me.

In closing, I give you my highest recommendation for Tom Copeland to receive the Excellence in Teaching award at Texas State University. Tom not only gave me the tools to succeed in his class, but he gave me many tools to succeed throughout my career. He taught me the value how hard work pays off in the Film Industry and it most certainly has for me. I'm writing this letter because I want you to know that what Tom does and has done throughout his teaching career at Texas State matters. He has been a champion for his students and former students careers, a true mentor and inspired us to achieve greatness. I can imagine it gets tough having students come in and out of the classroom every year and it can feel as though you are not making a difference in their lives in just few short months, so for this reason above I want you to know that Tom has made a profound impact on my entire life and career and I could not be more grateful to have entered his class. I thank him for teaching me and anyone who gets the opportunity to take his class should consider themselves lucky.

Sincerely, Stacey Rice

Feb 24, 2018

To whom it may concern,

This is a letter of ardent support for my former professor and mentor, Tom Copeland, to be nominated for the Part Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award. Before attending Mr. Copeland's class, Business of Film, I was a bit lost at Texas State. I had started my college years as a Wildlife Biology Major and quickly realized that was not for me. After noticing the comradery that my roommate was experiencing in the Theatre Department I decided to switch Majors and join her in the Theatre Program. While I did start to feel more at home, I still felt adrift, not quite finding my footing within the department. Then an article from the University Star changed my life; they wrote about Tom Copeland and his plans to join the faculty at Texas State. Based on that article alone, I was able to choose a minor that would allow me to take his Business of Film course which would end up steering me toward my current career as an Art Department Coordinator for Film and Television.

Tom Copeland provided me with the confidence and know-how to excel in my current career. First and foremost, he let me know that working in film and television was attainable, and that I was well-suited to the task. Mr. Copeland taught us how to read and decipher the unique paperwork that comes with working in the film industry and how to do more complicated tasks like breaking down scripts for various departments, such as casting, locations, and set decoration. He also assigned difficult group projects that got us out of the classroom and made us develop real teamworking skills and industry specific skills that I continue to use on a regular basis. Professor Copeland also had the occasional industry professional give guest lectures about what it takes to make things happen in such a difficult and diverse industry, and what it was like for them to start at the bottom. One thing that separates his students from students that hail from other film schools/universities is that we understood that we all had to start at the bottom of the food chain. Show up early, work hard, don't gossip, have a good attitude, and be present – not just physically, but mentally – these traits are what set us apart. I am proud and thankful for the opportunity to learn from Tom, his mentorship really has made all the difference.

The thing that sticks out the most to me about Mr. Copeland is his drive to give all of his students the skills they need to succeed. He is very invested in making sure his students have as much knowledge as possible when entering a field such as TV/Film. There is no amount of classwork that can truly prepare you for what it is going to take to make it happen, which is why he was instrumental in pushing me to take multiple internships while still in college. I was able to land two internships during my time at Texas State; one on a feature film, *Friday the 13th*, where I made some industry contacts that are still serving me well today, and the other was a fellowship at the Texas Film Commission where I was further able to hone my skills and broaden my network. Since my graduation in 2009, I have been honored to work with a growing number of Mr. Copeland's former students in my professional career. When I need a new assistant, Tom is always one of my first phone calls. I know what kind of person I will get if they have passed through his classroom – strong, smart, organized, and ready to learn.

I would like to end with a quick thank you to the University Star for writing that article for I would not be where I am without the experience of learning from the most dedicated, reliable, most honest, and down to Earth professor I've ever had, Mr. Tom Copeland. Please recognize his devotion to his students, his craft, and his influence over so many lives by selecting him for the Part Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award, he most certainly deserves it.

Alison Hatfield Art Dept. Coordinator – The Son

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The rising STAR of Texas

March 6, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Tom Copeland is one of the great unknown wonders of Texas State, and I am enthusiastic in supporting his application for the Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award. A proud graduate of this University, Tom came back to teach after more than 30 years in the film industry, including ten years as director of the Texas Film Commission. During that time, nearly 600 movies and television shows were made in Texas, and it was Tom who took the calls when Hollywood came looking for a place to film. There's nothing fancy or pretentious about Tom, and one would hardly know that he's got history with a lot of important people in the business. He came to know them the old-fashioned way – through hard work and perseverance – and has not lost sight of his beginnings.

I say all this because this is what Tom brings to his classroom. He has a really intimate first-hand view of what it means to start at the bottom and work your way up, and he spreads his wisdom with pragmatic passion. I've listened to Tom talk to students about working in the business and he is good at unpacking the wonder of the movie set. Every story is a fresh conjuring of the magic of movie-making, but also a reminder of the determination, discipline, and commitment that the art form demands. Students know that he's serious about film-making and that if it's not good enough for the "real world," it's not good enough for his classroom. Students are inspired to dream but also to stand with feet planted firmly on the ground. It's how Tom's film program differs from those at other universities – his is built on the realities of getting that first job and knowing how to build that into a career.

In his 13 years at Texas State, Tom has put more than 80 students to work in the business. The internships that he has arranged and supervised include work with the Texas Film Commission, the Austin Film Festival, the Austin Film Society and the numerous production houses in Austin, Dallas, and Houston. He's able to reach out to independent filmmakers and is good at convincing them to hire his students. Last year, three alumni were hired to work on a \$200 million James Cameron/Robert Rodriguez film in Austin, and two AMC television series have hired our alumni, *The Son* employing eight former students and *The Walking Dead* hiring three more. Last summer, a mixture of seven students and alumni worked on National Geographic's *The Long Way Home*, and eight of our students are currently being paid to work on an

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independent film shooting in San Marcos. Other alumni are building careers in New York, Los Angeles, and here in Texas. Natasha Straley's work is now frequently featured at film festivals and Joseph Bowman's short film, CONTACT HIGH was a hit at the Austin Film Festival last year.

When Tom returned to his Bobcat home in 2005, there was no film program – no classes, no equipment, no students. He created two classes – *Business of Film* and *Short Film Development* – encouraged students to enroll in them, and began accruing equipment. Over the last 13 years, he has donated or raised somewhere between \$30,000 and \$40,000 to pay for cameras, sound equipment, lighting rigs, and computers. He still teaches *Business of Film* and *Short Film Development*, but now to packed enrollments. He's built the Lone Star Film Festival – a showcase for student work – and he's attracted a cadre of talented filmmakers (many with extensive IMDb listings) who have joined him in creating classes in Film Direction, Film Editing, Cinematography, Production Management for Film, and Art Direction for Film. Last year, we were able to hire our first full-time tenure-track faculty in Film and the interest in this area is so strong that a BFA seems likely in the near future. All of this is built solely and completely on the foundation Tom laid and then nurtured with care.

Tom may have a part-time schedule with our department, but his heart is with us on a full-time basis. He gives his very best to his students, providing them with an insider's knowledge of how to succeed and offering them a gateway to long-term professional careers in film. His belief in this program and its students is as fervent today as it was in 2005. I am in awe of his energy and his single-minded pursuit of anything that will benefit his students and his profession.

I cannot say enough good things about this man. Too few outside our department know the incredible impact he has had on our students' lives. I hope you'll reward his quiet steady work with the award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Alley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "A".

Deb Alley, Chair