

USC
SCHOOL of
cinematicarts

Since 1929, the USC School of Cinematic Arts has fueled and mirrored the growth of entertainment as an industry and an art form. The school offers comprehensive programs in directing, producing, writing, critical studies, animation and digital arts, production, and interactive media, all backed by a broad liberal arts education and taught by leading practitioners in each field. Its more than 10,500 alumni are among the world's most distinguished animators, scholars, teachers, writers, directors, producers, cinematographers, editors, sound experts and industry executives.

STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Undergraduate Student Body: **848**
Male: **59 percent**
Female: **41 percent**
Ethnicity:
Asian/Pacific Islander: **13 percent**
Black/African American: **5 percent**
Hispanic: **9 percent**
Native American/American Indian: **2 percent**
Non-Resident Alien: **4 percent**
White/Caucasian: **64 percent**
Unknown/Other: **2 percent**

Graduate Student Body: **707**
Male: **63 percent**
Female: **37 percent**
Ethnicity:
Asian/Pacific Islander: **8 percent**
Black/African American: **8 percent**
Hispanic: **9 percent**
Native American/American Indian: **1 percent**
Non-Resident Alien: **15 percent**
White/Caucasian: **45 percent**
Unknown/Other: **15 percent**

Faculty:
Full-time: **85**
Part-time: **200**

Staff:
Full-time employees: **130**
Student workers: **465**

Living Alumni: **10,500**
(Number rounded to the nearest 100)

Programs and Degrees Granted
Critical Studies
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Ph.D.

Film & Television Production
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Fine Arts

John C. Hench Animation & Digital Arts
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Fine Arts

Interactive Media
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Fine Arts

Interdivisional Media Arts & Practice
Ph.D.

Peter Stark Producing Program
Master of Fine Arts

Writing for Screen & Television
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Fine Arts

Undergraduate Minors
Animation & Digital Arts
Cinematic Arts
Cinema-Television for Health Professionals
Video Game Design & Management
Screenwriting

THE SCA ALUMNI IMPACT

Numbering some 10,500 strong, SCA alumni and friends form a close-knit community both in Los Angeles and around the world.

People who just a few years ago were studying in our classrooms and working in our production areas now occupy key decision-making posts throughout the creative, financial and academic ranks of film, television and interactive media. Through classroom appearances, screenings, internships and mentorships, students can take advantage of numerous opportunities to gain from the wisdom and experience of the men and women who have come before them.

cinema.usc.edu/Alumni



Alums Stephen Sommers '93, Peter Segal and John Singleton '90 join Dean Elizabeth Daley for the unveiling of the Hollywood Star at SCA.

Gregg Helvey '09 at the 36th annual Student Academy Awards



Alum Jason Reitman speaks at the 466 class, Shonda Rhimes '94 attends commencement



Drawing on the breadth and depth of the school's teaching philosophy, history, interdisciplinary organization, resources, and people, our alumni have established an enviable track record of success.

A mere sampling of those achievements includes:

- Every year since 1973, at least one USC alumnus or alumna has received an Academy Award nomination.
- To date, USC alumni have received 266 Oscar nominations, with 79 taking home the cherished statuette.
- Every year since 1973, at least one USC alumnus or alumna has received an Emmy Award nomination.
- To date, USC alumni have received 510 Emmy nominations, resulting in 125 victories.
- The top-20 highest grossing movies of all time have featured a USC alumnus or alumna in a key creative or production position.
- Critical Studies faculty are on the editorial boards of many journals including *Discourse*, *Film Quarterly*, and *Television + New Media* and the division's Ph.D. graduates have been appointed to tenure-track positions at a host of institutions including Dartmouth College, the University of Texas, Austin, as well as in Asia, Africa and Australia.
- Over 200 festivals each year feature our student films, television programs and interactive media projects.

All statistics cited are current as of June 2010.



The mission of the USC School of Cinematic Arts is to develop and articulate the creative, scholarly and entrepreneurial principles and practices of film, television and interactive media, and in doing so, inspire and prepare the women and men who will become leaders in the field.

cinema.usc.edu

SCA PHILOSOPHY

The SCA teaching philosophy is built on the understanding that people learn best by doing.

Additionally, we believe that great ideas arise when theory and practice are in constant interaction, propelling one another forward. Our aim is to give students comprehensive exposure to all facets of film, television and interactive media production. Our programs are structured to enable students, regardless of their chosen area of specialization, to take a wide selection of courses from across the disciplines. Through this process, critical studies majors get behind the camera to make short films, writers direct actors to learn how to craft the best scripts, and directors immerse themselves in the canon of work made by the generations who came before.



SCA LOCATION

The School of Cinematic Arts is situated in the heart of Los Angeles, regarded as the entertainment capital of the world.

Within just a few miles of the university are the corporate offices and production facilities of leading motion picture, television and interactive companies. The city is also home to talent agencies and management firms, independent producers and new media creators. Archival resources are also in ample supply, affording students access to primary-source research materials, as well as films, programs, scripts and other items from which they can draw insight and inspiration for their own projects.

SCA FACULTY

Each SCA faculty member has been or is currently working in the profession.

As directors, editors, writers, producers, sound designers, lighting artists, animators and in many other roles, they constitute the power behind everything from box-office blockbusters, to independent films, to broadcast and cable television hits, to interactive games and other new media. Many of our faculty have won top accolades including Oscars, Emmys, Golden Globes, NAACP Leadership Awards, the Humanitas Prize, the Pulitzer Prize and others. They are also members of professional organizations including the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, the Writers Guild of America, the Directors Guild of America, the Producers Guild of America and the American Society of Cinematographers. In Critical Studies, professors and researchers serve on the editorial boards of many of the discipline's leading journals and are actively engaged in participating in and organizing conventions, lectures and other events that advance society's understanding of the creation and cultural impact of film, television and interactive media. Each and every one of the faculty members takes particular interest in sharing this expertise with their students. And by keeping the majority of our classes small in size, students have ample opportunity to work directly with the faculty, engaging in a lively exchange of ideas and creating relationships that often extend from the classroom to the profession.

cinema.usc.edu/Faculty



Professor Mark Harris and producer Deborah Oppenheimer show off their Oscars for *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*. Harris both wrote and directed the film.



Associate Professor Amanda Pope on a documentary shoot in Moscow.



Writing Assistant Professor Ted Braun in Darfur shooting the award-winning documentary *Darfur Now*.

SCA FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

Our state-of-the-art complex sets the pace for film, television, and interactive media studies.

The Cinematic Arts Complex, completed in 2010, is comprised of seven main buildings, totaling 200,000 square feet. The George Lucas and Steven Spielberg Buildings house some of the school's essential resources including: the Marcia Lucas Post Production Center, the Ray Stark Family Theatre, which is equipped for 3-D presentation, two additional theatres, and numerous specially equipped classrooms and offices. Adjacent to the Lucas and Spielberg Buildings is the Student Services and Animation & Digital Arts building, with a screening room, mixing rooms, extensive sound production studio space, and additional classrooms. The Production Services building includes an equipment center, scenery and prop shops, hair and makeup facilities, along with screening rooms, offices and conference areas. Finally, the Complex features four industry-standard soundstages, housed in two separate buildings.

SCA's other facilities include the 35,000 square-foot Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, the country's first and only fully digital training center, and the Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre Complex. The Zemeckis Center houses the Game Innovation Lab, a performance capture studio, four soundstages, four advanced media classrooms, as well as Trojan Vision, the award-winning student-run television station. The Norris Theatre seats 365; is equipped for 3-D presentation, THX sound, is the home of the Hugh Hefner Moving Image Archive, with a broad selection of student, documentary, educational and feature films and it houses the Sinatra collection in the Frank Sinatra Hall.

cinema.usc.edu/Facilities



STUDENT INDUSTRY RELATIONS

One of the first things you'll hear during orientation day is the importance of building your network.

Success in the profession is a balance of what you know and who you know. The SCA Office of Student Industry Relations (SIR) is one of the primary resources we offer to help facilitate this process. Staffed by long-time industry professionals, SIR provides a broad range of services including résumé review, career planning, networking tips, career seminars, and the SCA Job Board, which is constantly updated with leads to employment and internship opportunities in film, television and interactive media. In addition, students can post their résumés on the board for prospective employers to search.



Every year students meet industry recruiters as part of Career Day

The Office of Festivals and Distribution, which is part of Student Industry Relations, is also a great asset for students. Besides organizing the annual First Look festival, the staff assists SCA members with entering their films in over 125 festivals worldwide each year and negotiates deals for the presentation of student and alumni films in special-issue DVDs as well as via online venues.

Students can also take advantage of many other networking opportunities including First Pitch, the annual event in which SCA writers meet face to face and present their scripts to industry representatives; First Frame, the showcase of projects from animation & digital arts students; and First Team, which seeks to bring together alumni from various creative positions such as directing, writing and producing, to form partnerships that will develop and make film, Web and interactive media projects.

The SCA Network is another vital resource that students can use to help propel their careers. Open to both current students and alumni for a nominal annual subscription, the SCA Network gives members access to the *SCA Network Directory*, which lists thousands of SCA alumni who are working in the industry. Membership can also allow advance and exclusive access to events such as career seminars, screenings and other activities.

cinema.usc.edu/SIR

Critical Studies

Degrees offered: B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

"Some of you may have asked, 'What can I do with a degree in Critical Studies?' To this I would respond simply: 'What can't you do?' Critical Studies majors, masters, and Ph.D.'s have become scholars at the leading institutions of media studies throughout the world; you have written, produced, and directed films and TV programs; you have acted in them, written about them, distributed, promoted, programmed, and curated them. You are the Renaissance women and men of this era, and you will define for us the future paths we pursue."

—Akira Mizuta Lippit, Ph.D., Chair/Professor, Critical Studies Division, speaking to the 2010 SCA Critical Studies graduates

The Critical Studies Division looks at and engages with all forms of moving image media from an analytical and historical perspective. Students are exposed to a vast array of moving images, ranging from blockbuster movies to avant-garde films to television shows to Youtube clips, and work to decode the messages and intent behind the explosion of content that surrounds us in the 21st century. As part of completing a Critical Studies degree, students will examine world cultures, history, and politics; literature, theater, and narrative theory; art and aesthetics; psychology and human behavior; race, ethnicity, and gender; business, economics, and industry; engineering and technology; and law and ethics.



"You better know when you're being manipulated, when you're being taken, and why you shouldn't be."

—Drew Casper, Ph.D., Alma and Alfred Hitchcock Endowed Chair

Students in the Critical Studies Division work daily with students from all the other five divisions, and create their own projects, through which they can explore their own stories and delve beyond the face value of media. Through a curriculum that encourages a great deal of freedom, they will experience every aspect of the cinematic arts, and in doing so, will be uniquely prepared to follow a wide variety of paths after graduation.

"It wasn't until I went into critical studies that I got to see all the great movies and hear amazing speakers. My technical knowledge combined with that knowledge, making a perfect marriage for me to graduate into film directing."

—Bryan Singer, Critical Studies B.A. '89, Director of *X-Men* and *The Usual Suspects*



Todd Boyd, Ph.D., conducts a Q & A with Rick Famuyiwa '96.



cinema.usc.edu/CriticalStudies



Drew Casper Ph.D., conducts a Q & A with Steven Spielberg



Film & Television Production

Degrees offered: B.A., M.F.A.

This program is designed to build specific skills upon a strong foundation of general knowledge of film and television production. Students learn all aspects of cinematic storytelling, from writing and producing to directing, sound design, visual effects, cinematography and editing.

cinema.usc.edu/Production



John C. Hench Division of Animation & Digital Arts

Degrees offered: B.A., M.F.A.

"Whether their goal is to work in the industry, or forge their own path, students leave our program amply prepared to make their own unique contributions to animation, digital media and visual effects, art forms whose development has mirrored the evolution of the human mind."

—Kathy Smith, Chair of the John C. Hench Division of Animation and Digital Arts

The John C. Hench Division of Animation and Digital Arts (DADA) is devoted to providing its students with the tools, theory and support to fully explore their creative potential as animators. The field of animation has evolved to encompass everything from traditional, character-based storytelling, to abstract and experimental work, and utilizes techniques ranging from painting and drawing by hand, to stop motion, to cutting-edge digital design. At DADA, students will delve into a rich and vibrant curriculum that explores every possible aspect of art in motion.

"What is animation? It's possibly the most open ended, undefined visual medium there is. Its boundaries shift with popular culture, software development, and the rapidly expanding moving image landscape. As the cutting edge of art and communication, it's important to empower students with not only the newest tools, but the ability to see and express content that's relevant to our contemporary culture."

—Mike Patterson, DGA, SCA Associate Professor



Emily Henricks at the 37th annual Student Academy Awards, and a still from her film Multiply



As feature animation takes on more characteristics of live-action cinema, and live-action cinema becomes more hybrid, the animator's role is changing and growing. The processes of live-action and animation are conjoined through the script, the actors' performance, and the understanding of cinematic language. The animators' fluency in technology allows them to participate, and fulfill their role in the collaborative creative process. DADA offers courses across the spectrum of animation and digital arts, including **Character Animation, Performance Capture, Research, Visual Effects, Motion Graphics, Experimental Animation, Documentary Animation, and Visualizing Science.**

"The SCA DADA program has provided me with not only a valuable learning experience, but the opportunity to travel to film events worldwide like the Cannes Film Festival and Tokyo Anime Fair. I've also had the unique opportunity to meet and speak with leaders in the animation field like Yuri Norstein, Henry Selick, John Knoll, Stephen Hillenburg, just to name a few. The faculty and staff go above and beyond to help and encourage me, whether it's meeting with me one on one outside of class or showing their support at the Student Academy Award Ceremony. My experience in the DADA program has been great."

—Emily Henricks, 3rd-year M.F.A. candidate, 2010 Student Academy Award winner

cinema.usc.edu/Animation



Lee Unkrich '91, director of Toy Story 3, at the Q & A session following the film's screening.



Interactive Media

Degrees offered: B.A., M.F.A.

"One of the fundamental shifts affecting both games and storytelling right now is diversification. In some ways, we're going through a Cambrian explosion of sorts as new outlets for both games and stories appear."

—Will Wright, 2007 School of Cinematic Arts Commencement Keynote Speaker

The School's interactive media program draws from a rich tradition of creative education that has always focused on the emotional experience of the viewer or user. SCA students work and study in an interdisciplinary environment that promotes creative collaboration and innovation. Each day, students are immersed in the interactive and traditional media production processes, networking with writers, directors, producers, sound designers and cinematographers, many of whom are — or soon will be — entertainment industry leaders.

*"The study of game design is still evolving. People want games to offer more deeply emotional, more interesting, rich characters and situations. We seek to produce a new breed of designers – not fans or hackers, engineers or executives, but **artists of play.**"*

—Tracy Fullerton, Professor, Game Innovation Lab Director

Recently designated by the Princeton Review as the #1 undergraduate game design program in North America, the Interactive Media Division (IMD) provides leading edge education and research, and a creative incubator for future professional interactive media creators. With a track record of over ten years, the IMD is the only program of its kind tied to a cinematic arts school and, as such, offers unprecedented opportunities for students to explore media convergence in an environment that leverages the natural advantages of its Hollywood setting.

"Neither Jenova (Chen, co-founder of thatgamecompany) nor I came to USC thinking we were going to develop video games. My background was theater. It wasn't until we were both in the Interactive Media masters program that we became inspired to make games. A couple of our professors have an inspiring philosophy of play-centric game designs—using games to communicate emotions and stories in different ways."

—Kellee Santiago, M.F.A. '06, co-founder of thatgamecompany

One important component of the IMD is the Game Innovation Lab, a state-of-the-art research space and think tank where new concepts in game design, play, and usability are developed, prototyped, and play-tested. Faculty, staff, and students push games beyond their currently defined genres, markets, and play patterns, creating a body of knowledge about players, games, and game playing that is informing the next generation of software and hardware.

"What we're trying to do here is keep a really high ratio of teachers to students to give them the first hand attention that they need, from experts who have been through it before."

—Mark Bolas, Associate Professor & Director, INIT Lab

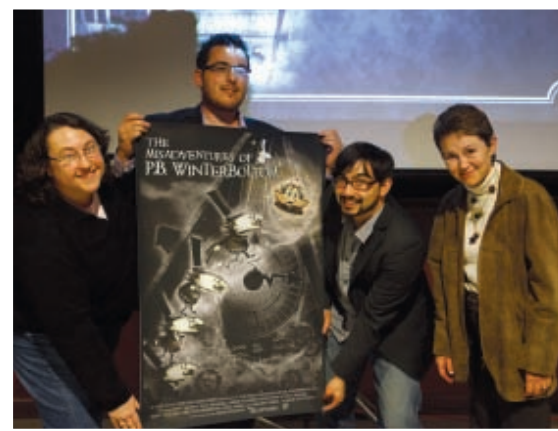
Several notable projects that have come out of the IMD program include:

- *Cloud* – a unique Zen-inspired game developed by Jenova Chen, and a cross-disciplinary team of students, which allows the player to fly among and manipulate clouds.
- *The Misadventures of P.B. Winterbottom* – developed and designed by Matt Korba and Paul Bellezza, and released by 2K Play on Xbox LIVE Arcade for Xbox 360 in early 2010. *Winterbottom* is described as "an innovative game that follows the escapes of a mischievous, time-bending pie thief."
- *fIOW* – *fIOW*, also created by Jenova Chen, was the first student game project to become a commercial console game. The game began as a student research project exploring the notion of "player-centric dynamic difficulty adjustment."

- *Darfur is Dying* – *Darfur is Dying* is an activist game that provides a window into the experience of the 2.5 million refugees in the Darfur region of Sudan. The concept design for this student research game was awarded a production grant by mtvU in 2005, funding its further development.

In parallel with the IMD curriculum and the work of the Game Innovation Lab, the Interactive Media Division has an extensive program of research to design and develop innovative content, and to invent new genres of interactive experience. The Division is also developing additional projects in the areas of **Networked Environments and Social Software, Interactive Cinema, and Public Interactives.**

cinema.usc.edu/Interactive



Peter Stark Producing Program

Degree offered: M.F.A.

With an equal emphasis on the creative and the managerial aspects of producing, the program prepares women and men for careers as independent film and television producers or executives. The program covers the industry's economics and history, entertainment law, studio management, budgeting, marketing, and producing for television and independent and studio producing.

cinema.usc.edu/Stark



Writing for Screen & Television

Degrees offered: B.F.A., M.F.A.

Focused on the fundamentals of writing for all visual media, the program teaches students the art of creating compelling scenes, characters and storylines that form the basis of treatments, short scripts, and full-length screen- and teleplays. Instruction extends into numerous aspects of the art form such as directing, producing, editing, production, history, and other areas. Through this immersive process, writers gain a full understanding of how their work integrates with the overall creative process.

cinema.usc.edu/Writing



Judd Apatow attends Leonard Maltin's 466 class.



John Singleton '90 (TOP) and Tim Story '91 (BOTTOM) participate in a Q & A with Jack Epps, Ph.D., Chair, Writing for Screen & Television

Ann Biderman '75 and Regina King participate in the Southland Q & A



Melissa Rosenberg '90 discusses her work on Dexter and the Twilight series of films, among others, as part of the Conversations With program



Interdivisional Media Arts & Practice (iMAP)

(Interdivisional Ph.D. Program)

Degree offered: Ph.D.

iMAP situates technology and creative production alongside the historical and theoretical contexts of critical media studies. This practice-oriented Ph.D. program provides students with both practical experience and theoretical knowledge as they work to define new modes of research and production in the 21st century.

cinema.usc.edu/iMAP

Entertainment Technology Center (ETC)

(Organized Research Unit)

The Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) is a neutral meeting ground that brings together senior executives from the entertainment, consumer electronics, technology, and services industries to discuss topics related to the creation, distribution, and consumption of entertainment content. ETC's work has covered a wide scope, including Digital Cinema testing and evaluation and the concept of the New Digital Home (broadband entertainment on demand, home networking, and new content distribution methods and devices). Students interested in sharing their opinions and expertise with industry leaders can do so through several ETC endeavors. For example, ETC Student Forums are informal discussions where the center's Platinum-level sponsors explore issues of entertainment consumption with USC students. Through the forum series, they listen to the students' needs and expectations, and factor the information into their company's decisions. Focus groups made up of USC students are also conducted on a regular basis in the Anytime Anywhere Content Lab and Consumer 3D Experience Lab. These groups are used to study the impact on the consumer of new technologies, how likely they are to be adopted and how they might be used outside of the intended purpose.

etcenter.org

Institute for Multimedia Literacy (IML)

(Organized Research Unit)

The Institute for Multimedia Literacy (IML) within the School of Cinematic Arts explores how students, faculty members and the public at large can use video, audio and database technologies to express themselves in today's media-rich communications environment. Students who take IML courses gain a great appreciation not only for how to use such media, but also which media are the most effective in conveying meaning to the audience. With the rapid expansion of video, audio and database technologies in today's society, expertise in "multimedia literacy" is one of the most sought-after skill sets that prospective employers are looking for. Students who have taken IML courses have reported their preparation played a key role in competing for and landing significant and challenging professional positions after graduation.

iml.usc.edu



Trojan Vision

Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Trojan Vision is an important training ground for students from all USC schools. Based in the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, Trojan Vision programs are produced exclusively by USC students and are broadcast to the entire USC campus and surrounding student housing, reaching more than 29,000 students and 18,000 university employees daily.

Trojan Vision also goes out to the greater Los Angeles area on LA@36, reaching over 1.8 million homes. In addition, the station provides programming to the Research Channel, as well as broadcasting across the globe 24 hours a day through live and on-demand Internet streaming.

TrojanVision.com



Summer Program

The School of Cinematic Arts Summer Program is committed to enabling men and women from across the nation and around the globe to explore the world of film, television and interactive media.

Taught by leading industry professionals, our classes take place during two separate six-week sessions. Areas of concentration include feature filmmaking, editing, animation, writing, computer graphics, interactive gaming and the business of the industry, among many others.

Besides having access to the school's unparalleled facilities and equipment, Summer Program students have unique opportunities to take advantage of professional resources and access to people throughout Hollywood. Several of our classes take place on major studio lots such as Paramount and Universal. We also offer a rich agenda of events, seminars and meetings that bring film and television directors, actors, producers and writers for screenings followed by Q&A sessions. Summer Program enrollment is open to all students and does not require acceptance to the University of Southern California or the School of Cinematic Arts.

cinema.usc.edu/Summer

Entertainment Business Studies

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH AN EMPHASIS IN CINEMATIC ARTS

The undergraduate offerings in this area represent a unique coupling of the School of Cinematic Arts with the USC Marshall School of Business in a four-year interdisciplinary program. In addition to the 10 Marshall School of Business core classes, the students will also take a total of 24 units from the School of Cinematic Arts. These courses will be specialized in business/entertainment topics such as; entertainment marketing, entertainment agents/managers, television, film production and interactive media. The goal of this program is to support and promote a well balanced background in business, while becoming well-versed in all aspects of cinematic arts. Both schools are committed to continuing the excellence that has made us world-class leaders in our respective fields. Upon completion of all requirements, students will receive a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Cinematic Arts.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THE BUSINESS OF ENTERTAINMENT

This certificate program provides graduate-level education in various aspects of the business of film, television and new media. In conjunction with the USC Marshall School of Business, the School of Cinematic Arts offers four graduate courses each semester in specialized business topics such as entertainment marketing, film finance, agents/managers, producing and interactive media. The classes are all taught by top industry professionals, and are open to all graduate students at the university and undergraduate juniors and seniors. Qualified graduate students completing four classes in this program will receive a graduate certificate in the Business of Entertainment.



myth vs. reality

Over the years, a number of applicants have told us about the “facts” they heard someplace about USC Cinema.

Turns out many of these “facts” were myths. So we would like to set the record straight...

MYTH: Don't even bother applying, it is too hard to get in.

Reality: Cinematic Arts is highly competitive, drawing thousands of applications from around the globe each year. Though these men and women come from incredibly diverse backgrounds, each and every one is united by the talent, vision and determination to be the best in their discipline. If you share those qualities, then we want to hear from you.

MYTH: USC is only about directing.

Reality: Tell that to *Erin Brockovich* producer Stacey Sher, *Gossip Girl* creator Josh Schwartz, *There Will Be Blood* cinematographer Robert Elswit, thatgamecompany president Kellee Santiago, *Pirates of the Caribbean* visual effects artist John Knoll, and literally thousands of other alumni who have made their impact in all areas of the cinematic arts. USC is about what you want it to be about.

MYTH: It takes forever before you get to do your first “hands-on” work at the school.

Reality: Unless you define the first day of class as “forever,” then you’re going to find that hands-on experience begins right away. And that’s not limited solely to production division enrollees. Depending on the courses they select, people in the school’s other five divisions can be directing actors, shooting footage or editing in the Avid suites.

MYTH: You have to know someone in the “industry” to be admitted.

Reality: When it comes to reviewing application materials, one thing stands above the rest: talent. If you’ve got that, along with a demonstrated ability to fuse your abilities with the skills and interests of others, that will catch our eye better than the fact that you know “the son of the guy at the place who did the deal ...” Oh, and by the way, while it’s true you don’t need to know anyone in the industry to be admitted, by the time you graduate, you’ll have had the chance to know hundreds of them.

MYTH: A cinema degree has no value in the “real world.”

Reality: Our primary emphasis is to teach individuals how to channel their unique backgrounds and experiences into a greater creative endeavor. From the undergraduate to graduate to Ph.D. levels, students are immersed in a highly collaborative environment. This sense of being part of the greater whole, coupled with the specific expertise students acquire during their time at the school, prepares our graduates to make significant professional contributions from the day they pick up their diplomas.

MYTH: There’s no diversity in cinema.

Reality: Providing access to the broadest possible array of voices is one of our primary objectives. To this end, the school has established scholarships and grants to provide financial assistance. We have also expanded our academic opportunities to include the most diverse slate of course offerings possible. Another key element in this effort is that our faculty members come from widely varying backgrounds with profession experiences and interests that allow them to provide a unique level of guidance and inspiration for their students.

MYTH: We base our acceptance only on test scores.

Reality: We evaluate applicants on a broad range of criteria: creativity, originality, determination, the ability to work with others. While academic performance is certainly part of that overall equation, it is by no means the sole determinant.

MYTH: We don’t accept transfer students.

Reality: We welcome transfer students from institutions around the city, state and nation. For example, in fall 2009, well over one-third of our incoming undergraduate students were transfers.



cinema.usc.edu