Film Buffs Program Review

Mission: The mission of Film Buffs has always been to provide film screenings for faculty and organizations at Loyola University. The mandate for the program is to train student workers to screen films, handle technical difficulties, and work with faculty to keep a log of attendees at screenings. Furthermore, in the past the Film Buffs Institute (the name of the program previous to 1992) invited community members to attend screenings for a small fee.

Support for Educational Objectives: Film Buffs supports the educational objectives of the Film and Digital Media major, the Film Studies Minor, and classes in the college that have a film component. Students are encouraged to learn how to read films as texts, and think critically about cinema.

Resources: The program has three screening rooms available from 6:10 to 9:30, Monday through Thursday. Those rooms are Bobet 332, Bobet 214, and Bobet 101. Film Buffs can also request Friday and weekend screenings for special events. While the library has a DVD collection that is available, Film Buffs orders films that faculty are using in their classes in order to have the films readily available. The technology in all three screening rooms has recently been updated.

I. Brief History of the Program:

➢ History: Brother Alexis inaugurated The Film Buffs Institute in 1973. John Mosier became involved in the program during the early years. He served as Director from 1985--1992. Peggy McCormack took over the director's position in fall 1992 and changed the name to The Film Buffs Program. The service of FBI was an important component of the university and the community in the beginning because the program rented 16-millimeter films and showed them for the Loyola and the New Orleans community. In the late 80's the program transitioned to laser discs and VHS screenings. Because of copyright restrictions, it became more difficult to invite community members to attend. When DVDs became readily available, the program transitioned to using them, and is now buying Blu-ray discs. During the last ten years, the program has been almost exclusively utilized by faculty members teaching film classes. For a few years in the 90's the Latin American community used Film Buff services to host a yearly film festival. Now Film Buffs hopes to make the program more available to the whole Loyola community and to groups in New Orleans to host festivals.

➢ University Strategic Plan: The program aligns with the University's Strategic Plan in several important ways:
   - It encourages the development of critical thinking about film.
- It broadens students’ and faculty members’ awareness of other cultures and communities.
- It encourages interdisciplinary studies.
- It encourages the development of the whole person by making students aware of the larger world.
- It encourages students’ development of different perspectives and service to others.

It must be said, however that the above is the ideal. Film Buffs has not been sufficiently attentive to the strategic plan to integrate it effectively into university classes and the program.

II. Findings and Recommendations from the Previous Program Review:
There is no record of previous program reviews that we have been able to find.

1. Mission and Goals:

- The mission of Film Buffs is to make students aware of the power of cinema in their daily lives and to encourage critical thinking about film in their classes and in their viewing for entertainment. Further, a critical awareness of the power of film to support the status quo or to promote change is an important element of thinking critically and acting justly.
- The goals of the program include providing a service for faculty members teaching film, campus organizations wishing to show films and to discuss them critically, to help students gain competency in running film equipment, and to foster job responsibility through training and evaluating work-study students working for the program.
- Another important goal of the program is continuously to evaluate and maintain the equipment so that the program runs smoothly.
- The goals of the program are listed above. The Director is responsible, with the film studies minor faculty, for setting the goals of the program. Student work-study students are responsible for carrying out the goals that pertain to film screenings.
- Faculty should be polled as to the number of students who have watched the films before class discussion, the ability of students who have viewed the program on the large screen versus those who have watched streamed films to be critical in their assessment of the important elements in the films. Student workers are assessed on their ability to deal with technical difficulties, their attention to filling out required head count forms, their promptness in starting the films,
and their attention to leaving the screening rooms clean and locked at the end of the screenings. All student workers must be on time, must fill out appropriate forms, must be available throughout the film, and must close and lock the screening room at the end of the film.

Contribution of Program in Advancing the State of the College’s and University’s Goals: At this point, it is not really clear that the Film Buff’s Program is providing services in a way that contributes to the college’s and the university’s mission and goals. For the last two years, film buffs has not reached out to the Loyola community in a way that would indicate that it is serving the needs of the whole community, or even the needs of the faculty members using the program to screen films.

Describe the Critical Elements of the Program:
- It is imperative that students be properly trained to screen films and handle equipment problems.
- It is imperative that film screenings are always covered by a work-study student who has access to the student assistant and the director in case of problems.
- It is imperative that all DVD’s and Blue Ray Discs are checked before the screening time in order to assess any problems.
- It is imperative that the work-study student is at the screening throughout.
- Faculty members, student organizations must be made aware of the opportunities available through Film Buffs.
- The budget must be sufficient for equipment upkeep, for film resources and purchases, and for payment of the student assistant.

Describe the direct measures used to assess outcomes:
- Work-study students do a head count at each screening to log the number of students who attend.
- The director assesses work-study student performance by evaluating performance at screenings, attendance at Film Buffs work-study meetings.
- Since work study-students are not graded, the director is responsible for dealing with problems with work-study students.
- The student assistant is also assessed by the Director in terms of the job description, which includes: supervising work-study students, ordering films for the program, advertising films through a brochure and through weekly flyers.

Discuss how assessment data have been used to enhance the program.
- There is no record that there has been any assessment over the past two years.
- It is clear that the screenings are not well attended unless the faculty member showing the film gives his/her students incentives to attend.
Work-study students have not been as responsible as they should have been in terms of dealing with equipment difficulties, damaged discs, and on-time film screenings.

Some movies have not been screened even though on the program.

It is clear that some work-study students are not fulfilling their contractual obligations.

The director has not really been available (because of illness) over the last two years to supervise the students.

41 of the 147 films had zero attendance in 2011-2012
44 had 1-5 attendance during 2011-12.
28 had 6-9 students attending.
34 had 10 and up. Note that those films were those shown by a faculty member who attended the screenings and gave incentives to students to attend.

Movies have also not been shown when scheduled.

The brochure lists 82 films; Film Buffs screened 147; 65 films that were projected were not in the brochure. The brochure in its current form is, therefore, not helpful to students and faculty.

One department opted to show a film series without using Film Buffs because of difficulties.

One faculty member who shows films weekly opted out of Film Buffs because of screening problems, untrained student workers, and equipment failings.

The Film Buffs Website has not been utilized effectively to advertise films and enhance the program.

Social media have not been utilized effectively, even though one work study student had that as her exclusive task.

Behrooz Moazami’s Middle East Film Festival and Middle East Peace Conference have not been invited to use Film Buffs facilities. Film Buffs should work more closely with faculty members who have programs and film festivals.

It is clear that the program is not effective in terms of paying students to screen films that fewer than five students attend. This problem must be dealt with in order to make the program an effective and valuable service to the Loyola Community.

3. Resource Utilization:

- Resources: The program has excellent technical resources, and those facilities should be put to use for the enhancement of the program and should be utilized more effectively by the Loyola community. Media Services streams films on blackboard, but the process creates a lag between audio and video, so the streamed films are irritating to watch. Also the resolution of streamed films is poor as is the image
quality. Film faculty should be encouraging students to attend the Film Buffs screenings because, when students attend the screenings, they are fully engaged in watching the film. Students watching streamed films are often multi-tasking, doing other work, talking with friends, etc., so they are not fully engaged in watching the film. That becomes evident during class discussions. Students who have attended the screenings are much better prepared to discuss the films critically, to point to specific important scenes, and to relate the films to larger thematic issues. Students who attend the screenings have the opportunity to spend time after the film discussing it with fellow students and instructors who attend the screenings. This contributes to deeper and more critical understanding of the film. Unfortunately, very few instructors attend the screenings. Equipment is excellent; its utilization is poor.

- Film Buff’s Office Space: Film Buffs shares an office with other English department programs: The New Orleans Review, Sigma Tau Delta, ReVisions, and The Reader’s Response. The NOR uses the office during the day to scan and digitize all volumes of the magazine. The other three programs do not use the office, and Film Buffs uses it exclusively from 6-9:30 Monday through Thursday.
- Budget: Film Buffs received approximately $2,700.00 operating budget. Most of the money is spent on film purchases and on brochures and flyers. There is also $8,580.00 for a student assistant. Part of that money came from Peggy McCormack’s disability fund. How much will be available for a student assistant next year is not clear.

4. Future Plans:

- Plans within existing budget:
  - Create possibilities for film festivals for different departments.
  - Develop a schedule for monthly International Student Association film screenings (FBP is working with Kristy Magner of CIE).
  - Integrate the monthly film screenings organized by Religious Studies—Big Screen Beliefs into the Film Buffs schedule (Working with RELS faculty).
  - Sponsor the Bolivian Film festival that Josefa Salmon is planning in conjunction with Tulane University.
  - Collaborate with the New Orleans Film Festival to screen some of the films for the festival.
  - Continue to work with the Churchill Society.
  - Inaugurate special laser disc screenings for students interested in digital media.
• Create opportunities for screening more documentaries about important human rights and social justice issues.
• Invite the university centers to collaborate on film screenings.
• Refurbish seating and curtains in Bobet 332 and Bobet 214.
• Establish a library of films pertaining to New Orleans for Freshman Seminars and The Center for the Study of New Orleans.
• Create a database of films in the Film Buffs library to disseminate to the university faculty.
• Work with Uriel Quesada to host a Costa Rican film director to do a master class on campus. He will also talk about how he finances his film (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies).
• Continue to work on the website for Film Buffs and on the Facebook page.
• Advertise film screenings on the TV's in the Danna Center, and put the website address on the ad, so students can see summaries of the films.

Plans for the future should additional resources become available.
• If there is no course release, offer a stipend to the Director with the guarantee that he/she will attend film screenings for the first month to make certain that all equipment is working and student workers are fully trained to screen the films and deal with technical difficulties. The Director should also hold monthly meetings of the students to deal with problems and to plan for the next month.
• Request a legal opinion from the Loyola Law School (possibly Dane Ciolino) surrounding issues of copyright and the legality of inviting people from the New Orleans community to view films screened by Film Buffs.
• Create a Criterion Collection of classic films. Since the Criterion Collection is dedicated to gathering the greatest films from around the world and producing them in editions of the highest technical quality, they could form the backbone of an excellent collection available to students and faculty.
• Spend more money on advertising on campus. Current advertising does not reach enough of the campus community.
• Invite local filmmakers to present their work and give master classes to Loyola students.
- Director should be able to attend regional film festivals and national film conferences to enhance the program and its offerings to students and faculty.