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Fourth-Year Arts Award Outcome
TV Production Internship: Spending My Final Semester in LA



Original Proposal

My original proposal was titled *Low Life: Making a High-Quality Short Film*. For my Fourth-Year Arts Award, I set out to write, direct, and edit *Low Life*, a 10–15 minute coming-of-age short film inspired by my first job at a movie theater. This story had been a passion project of mine for over 5 years before submitting my original proposal. My goal was to raise the production quality of my filmmaking by hiring non-UVA collaborators (when needed) for crew positions and investing in professional post-production services like color grading. Pre-production would have taken place in the fall, while the main production phase would have occurred during the Spring 2025 semester. A key part of my original proposal also included attending the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Fall 2024, which I previously traveled to in 2023 and found incredibly valuable for networking, industry awareness, and freelance reporting experience.

Outcome: TIFF 2024

With the generous help of the Miller Arts Scholars Program and my Fourth Year Arts Award, I was able to attend the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival as an entertainment reporter. I was also able to attend five film premieres/screenings: *The Last Showgirl*, *The Life of Chuck* (Winner of People's Choice!), *Eden*, *Nightbitch*, and *Heretic*. I originally only proposed \$300 of funding for my roundtrip flight. However, I was unable to stay with my family in Toronto for housing, and I was also rejected from the TIFF Press office for accreditation despite being approved by their team the previous year. Thankfully, one of my close friends organized an Airbnb for fellow TIFF attendees, and I also reapplied to the press office working under a new outlet: ForReel.

I received a different type of Press Pass at the festival this year, where I could access most red carpets and press events, but I would not be given complimentary tickets for screenings. Thankfully, one of my friends purchased some extra tickets to the premiere screenings and let me

tag along with him! I really enjoyed working with the team at ForReel, and I had the chance to interview Mikey Madison at the *Anora* premiere, months before she won her Best Actress Oscar! Other interview highlights include speaking with Hugh Grant and Sophie Thatcher on the red carpet for *Heretic*.

Overall, the Airbnb cost an additional \$360, while the 5 tickets I purchased for film screenings were \$350 overall. Because of the housing and ticketing changes, I ended up spending an extra \$710 of my funds at TIFF.

Outcome: Pivot from Short Film to TV Internship

In early January, days before the spring semester began, I was offered a Production Internship at 20th Television, the major television department for Disney, with the program running from February–June. Since my first year of university, I have applied for hundreds of internships at the 5 major studios, usually not getting far into the recruiting process. So when this opportunity emerged, I knew I couldn't turn it down, even if it meant missing the majority of my final semester at UVA. I also knew that by accepting this opportunity, I would not have the time or availability to make my short film. I am incredibly grateful to the Miller Arts Scholars Program for allowing me to reallocate my grant funds toward making this internship possible.

My last three months in LA and at Disney/20th Television have truly been remarkable. I have gained experience in so many aspects of the entertainment industry that I never imagined I would have access to so early in my career. For a majority of the internship, I have worked on the historic Fox Studios Lot, where I had the opportunity to walk around active sound stages and see what daily life is like at a major studio. With over 50 TV shows in various stages of production at any given time, no day at the studio is the same! I now have a better understanding of how a major TV studio like 20th TV operates, specifically with how production executives and their assistants are constantly communicating with showrunners, producers, and on-set crews to manage production schedules and budgets.



One of the most eye-opening experiences was learning how shows are budgeted and how these budgets are constantly revised in production prep. The budgeting/logistical process of production on this macro scale is beyond what I could have learned in a classroom. Alongside other interns and assistants, I've been fortunate enough to attend a weekly "Budgeting 101" class led by one of the VPs of Production, where we dive deep into the process of television budgets, union regulations (including WGA, SAG, and DGA rules), and the tools used to manage these shows. I also created mock production schedules using MovieMagic, the industry-standard software, which gave me hands-on experience in breaking down a script's elements and planning a realistic shooting schedule.

Working in a creative office environment alongside executives, assistants, and coordinators has given me insight into the rhythm of a studio job. I rotated among different desks to shadow Executive Assistants, which gave me a better perspective on their responsibilities and how they support the VPs and SVPs on our team. In addition, I've also had the chance to meet passionate people across departments like development, current programming, and post-production. Learning how TV post schedules are structured, which can include incredibly short timelines for network/broadcast shows, has helped me understand the coordination required across editorial, sound, and VFX departments. Additionally, one of the current programming SVPs leads a material workshop for the interns and assistants where we discuss how the studio gives feedback on a script or episode cut. I have really enjoyed these meetings because it's fascinating to see what feedback we have given that matches the previous feedback from the studio executives.

Alongside my daily work, I've also been working on my main intern project, which centers around a research survey on college student TV viewing habits. The survey will explore not just what shows students are watching, but how they're watching them in the age of TikTok, YouTube, and social media becoming more popular forms of entertainment. I will be distributing the survey to UVA and some other college campuses in May, and I'm excited to share my discoveries at the end of the program.

In addition to my work on the 20th production team, I've had the chance to PA and shadow on major shows like *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *Nobody Wants This*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Paradise*, which offered me invaluable experience in both set and production office environments. I also had the chance to sit in on a *Criminal Minds* writers' room session, which is an environment I've always dreamed of working in. Last, the crews on these shows have been incredibly welcoming and open to helping me learn about all of the different departments that make a TV show's production possible.

Outside of my internship work, I've tried my best to take full advantage of the Film and TV opportunities in LA. Thanks to the support of Miller Arts, I joined two LA-based film organizations, including JHRTS, which was recommended to me by a VP in Series Programming who is an alum of the organization. Through JHRTS, I've already attended industry panels and networking events, and I am hoping to take advantage of their mentorship program in the near future.

With my internship, I also had the chance to visit Disneyland for free, go on studio tours of the Disney lot in Burbank, sit in on a sound mixing session, watch a foley artist demo, and visit a live scoring stage. All of these visits were extremely informative and helped me put into perspective how much work goes into any movie or TV show.

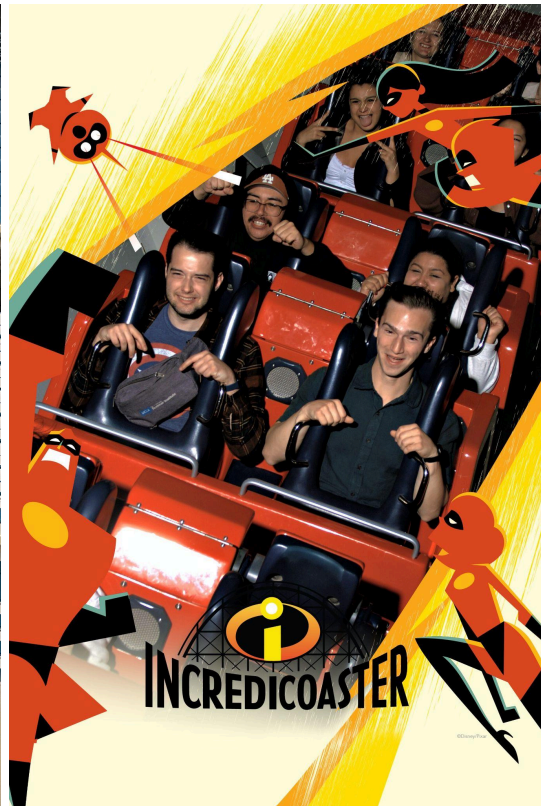
Last, I was able to use my remaining Miller Arts Scholars Award funds to help offset monthly costs like my sublease rent and rental car payments, which allowed me to fully commit to this experience without financial strain or any logistical issues since I have had to drive frequently around LA.

Overall, this internship has been incredibly fulfilling and I hope to potentially stay in LA and find a role at the studio or as a set PA after graduating from UVA in May. I've made so many meaningful connections through this program and feel like I've already started building my own community in LA. Despite my original short film plan changing, this internship experience has further motivated me to pursue a career in entertainment. I was initially worried about leaving school abruptly for this dream internship, but if I learned one thing from this entire experience, it would be: MAKE THE LEAP OF FAITH!

Final Costs/Budget

Item	QTY	Cost	Notes/Description
TIFF 2024: Travel, Accommodation, and Screening Tickets			
Roundtrip Flight: DC – Toronto	1	\$300	
Toronto Airbnb (4 Nights)	1	\$360	Total cost split among four other film journalists. Airbnb was a 5 min walk from the festival and downtown Toronto.
TIFF Screening Tickets	5	\$350 (\$70 x 5 = \$350)	Film premiere screenings included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Last Showgirl • The Life of Chuck (<i>Winner of People's Choice!</i>) • Eden • Nightbitch • Heretic
Food/Meals	1	\$150 (\$30 x 5 Days)	
<u>TOTAL COST FOR TIFF</u>		<u>\$1160</u>	

LA Internship, Filmmaking, and Entertainment Industry			
Adobe Student License Pack Subscription - 12 Month License	1	\$99	Saved \$60 through the UVA Bookstore annual license
JHRTS Membership Initiation Fee	1	\$70	Junior Division of the Hollywood Radio & Television Society, I was recommended to join by one of the VPs of Current Series. Includes access to many exclusive panels and great networking opportunities!
Film Independent Membership Fee	1	\$105	General Member/Lowest Tier. Access to online screeners, exclusive screenings and in-person Q&As, and voting for the Indie Spirit Awards.
Roundtrip Flight: IAD – LAX	1	\$417	<u>January</u> : Outgoing flight to LA <u>April</u> : Return flight to DC for 4/27 Miller Arts presentation
Roundtrip Flight: LAX - IAD	1	\$312	<u>May</u> : Outgoing flight to DC for UVA graduation <u>June</u> : Return to LA for rest of internship
Monthly LA Housing/Sublease Rent (Cost Offset)	1	\$574.50 (\$114.90 x 5)	The rest of my funds were used toward offsetting monthly housing & car expenses, the rest of which were covered by my internship wages. Unfortunately, I could not bring a car to LA, and the rental car was necessary for commuting to different locations for the internship.
Monthly Rental Car (Cost Offset)	1	\$574.50 (\$114.90 x 5)	
TOTAL COST		\$3312	
Income Item: MAS Fourth Year Award		\$3000	
Remaining Balance (Covered by internship wages)		\$312	









(Thank you Chris Pratt!)