

The Georgia Film Industry Impacts Higher Education

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The film industry in the United States began well over 100 years ago when Thomas Edison began making movies with his company Motion Picture Patents Company out of New Jersey (Lewis, 2013). Since then, the film industry has exploded into what is a multi-billion-dollar business today. Specifically, the Georgia film industry has made its way to the number one position in the entire world for filming (Ho, 2021). This rise to stardom for Georgia came about during the pandemic in 2020. With the state opening faster than any other state in the United States with safety protocols in place, it was able to bring in many new and old productions. It helps that in 2008, Governor Sonny Perdue signed a tax incentive for film productions because he saw that Georgia had great potential in the film industry. This tax incentive reduced tax payments for businesses and individuals so that it would entice people to invest money into a certain area (Dockerman, 2018). Georgia quickly became the most advantageous place for the film industry; and as a result, institutes of higher education began, exploring ways to respond to the increased demand. Mainly, how could institutes develop curricula that would effectively equip college graduates for the film industry? This research paper will dive into how higher education is changing the barriers for the film industry by equipping students with a curriculum that helps navigate communication hierarchies, power, and norms within the film industry.

Statement of Purpose

With Georgia's film industry skyrocketing, higher education is transforming to accommodate the growing job demands in the industry (Whitten, 2021). Exploring the role of why the industry has started partnering with different colleges and universities can help scholars understand how higher education is shifting the film industry into a place where anyone is welcomed if they are equipped with the right skills. The Georgia film industry having such a significant impact on higher education is especially important to look at due to existing barriers

that the industry has always had. The film industry has always been about contacts and connections (Doyle, 2012). It has not always been about who has a degree in this industry and if someone has the right skills to succeed in film. The Georgia Film Academy is a great place to research because it has begun to partner with the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia to make more of an effort statewide to train students to work in the film industry (Rice, 2015).

The purpose of this capstone is to show how the Georgia film industry has influenced higher education to allow the Film Production major to be at the college and university level. A prime example of this is Piedmont University because they will be introducing the Film Production major to students in fall of 2022. The goal is to prove that higher education can be very beneficial in breaking the norms of the film industry by allowing students to learn the skills needed to succeed in this career. The benefit of this research is to prove to Piedmont University and students who are interested in this program that they will be very successful when graduating with a Film Productions degree.

Context

Piedmont University is introducing a Film Productions major to students in Fall of 2022. Piedmont University is responding to the ever-growing film industry in Georgia. They are providing a new curriculum for students so that they are better equipped to be successful in industry. The curriculum will allow students to grow their skills in producing, directing, camera operations and screenwriting. This curriculum will provide better job opportunities for graduates. Piedmont is very unique because there are no comparable film production programs in Georgia at a small liberal arts school. This is an advantage for Piedmont because most, if not all, other colleges and universities are partnered with the Georgia Film Academy. Piedmont University is

taking the curriculum in their own hands to continue to have this advantage in the Georgia film industry.

Literature Review

Within this study, the themes examined are the reasons behind the Georgia film industry partnering with different universities and technical colleges in Georgia, how higher education's curriculum is breaking the barriers in the film industry and how this curriculum benefits the Georgia film industry.

Georgia's Film Industry Partners with Georgia Universities and Technical Colleges

With Georgia's film industry advancing to number one in the world (Ho, 2021), the Georgia Film Academy has started to partner with different universities and technical colleges across the state. It is the nation's only statewide effort to train students to work in the film industry (Rice, 2015). The growth in Georgia's film industry sparked the interest of Governor Nathan Deal to initiate an unprecedented and cooperative effort for all higher education institutes in the state so that they can deliver an industry recognized professional upon receiving the certification (Rice, 2015). There is no question that there are many jobs that need to be filled, especially entry level jobs. Now, these entry level jobs require very specific skill sets and with the certification, it puts graduates on a fast track to gainful employment (Rice, 2015). The Georgia Film Academy has partnered with over 20 different universities and colleges across the state (Farner, 2015). Merging with the different colleges and universities has shined a light on Georgia's film industry because students are able to gather the skills, they need to be successful in the industry.

Georgia's Higher Education is Breaking the Film Industry's Barriers

The stigma around the film industry has always been about who you know, who you have worked with and who talks about you (Doyle, 2012). It is a very verbal and talkative business that heavily relies on deal making and negotiations. A well-established person can easily contact anyone to get the rundown on someone. They take into consideration what your title is and how much someone is paid (Doyle, 2012). They do not always look at the skills someone may bring to the table. With higher education making its big debut, the stigma has begun to change for the better. The Georgia Film Academy has merged with higher education to break these boundaries. They want students to train for jobs in the industry so that they can have required skills and knowledge (Farner, 2015). It calls for the Georgia film industry to welcome students with degrees with open arms because the industry knows they have what it takes to get the job done. The Georgia film industry is moving away from connections and looking more at having a degree with the right skill sets.

Higher Education's Curriculum Helps Georgia's Film Industry

Higher education has made it to where students will be fully prepared to take jobs in the film industry while being freshly graduated. These colleges and universities require curriculum that allows them to be eligible for jobs as executive directors, professional production, and camera operations (Adams, 2016). Now more than ever, it is a huge impact for the Georgia film industry due to the industry citing growth of 3,000 to 5,0000 new jobs over the next three to five years (Adams, 2016). The curriculum that these colleges and universities provide combines classroom instruction and hands-on experiences with industry standard equipment. Students will also work on a film set to help them learn the craft with a crew for professional production (Rice, 2015). This is highly beneficial to Georgia's film industry because they are receiving firsthand

experience in film. Programs that merged with the Georgia Film Academy have trained on different productions like “The Originals,” “Ozark” and “Walking Dead” (Dennard, 2021). This type of hands-on experience is rare to find anywhere in the United States for students (Dennard, 2021). This results in having great employees that are skillful and creative. With this, the job demand will be met by Film Production graduates.

Methodology

The goal of this capstone project is to show that the film industry in Georgia is the reason Piedmont University is introducing a new Film Productions major to students. This capstone project is also showing that Georgia’s film industry is helping the Peach state economically.

- A. I have created a press kit to promote the new Film Productions major that is coming soon to Piedmont University. The press kit includes a brochure, promotional poster, video and audio advertisement, and a press release. All of these provide helpful information about the new major.
- B. For seven weeks, there will be a weekly article that will be published in *The Roar*. These articles will touch on different subjects surrounding Piedmont University’s students, the new Film Productions major coming to Piedmont University and about the Georgia film industry.
- C. This research paper is designed to explain the ways that the Georgia film industry is impacting higher education and its curriculum. It researches why the Georgia Film Academy has merged with over 20 different universities and colleges. All this together helps scholars understand how higher education's curriculum helps the Georgia film industry.

- D. I have created a website that will hold all my research and projects for my capstone so that anyone is able to access this information. The website will hold individual sections that will allow anyone to see each and every one of my deliverables, journalism, and public relations.
- E. I have made a blog that will be posted weekly for 12 weeks. Each week there will be a new topic related to Georgia's film industry. The blog allows for interaction in the comments between me and other viewers. This will help readers to understand just how significant the film industry in Georgia has grown.
- F. Lastly, a 2–3-minute video will be prepared. This video will be promoting the new Film Productions major at Piedmont University. The video will include interviews with faculty and students that will have a part in the new major. It will also include a video of the facility, equipment, and software that students will be using for the new major.
- G. The technologies that will be used for the capstone project are as follows: Adobe Premiere Pro that will create the video advertisement and promotional video. Adobe Audition to create the audio advertisement. Canva to help create the brochure and promotional poster, Wix to create and maintain the website, WordPress to create and maintain an interactive blog and Adobe Photoshop to edit photos for the project.

Capstone Project Management

Timeline

For this project, there are six different deliverables that have deadlines over the span of a two-month period. With a project this important, it is a necessity to map out a timeline for each and every step that will be taken to finish the project on time. This also includes having enough

time to create excellent work. With each deliverable being completely different from the next, knowing the dates that each one is due helps with starting the project in advance. Deliverable one is due September 14th, deliverable two is due on September 21st, deliverable three is due October 5th, deliverable four is due October 19th, deliverable five is due October 26th and deliverable six is due November 2nd.

Challenges

With the night and day difference between each deliverable, it needs to be noted which deliverables will take longer than others. Some of the deadlines will not allow for a fully finished product. There will need to be a detailed plan for the deliverables that extend past the deadline so that it can be followed. It is important that the plan is followed for the deliverables to be accepted. The challenges of extended due dates lie within deliverables two and five. These will need to be completed depending on the plan that is placed for these two deliverables.

Successes

For this project, four out of the six deliverables will be able to meet the deadlines that are set in stone. Deliverables one, three, four and six will be able to meet the designated deadlines. They have been constructed to be created in a timely manner.

Conclusion

For future research on this topic, it would help to see how many employees have a degree in film production and how many got the job from their connections. A poll should be conducted to see if the curriculum is helping the employees be more successful at their job. Running a study on how older films that used a crew that mostly did not have a degree compared to films that have crews that are mostly equipped with a degree in film would be interesting. It could help show the

advancement due to skill sets that are being taught in higher education that also allows for a hands-on experience.

For this capstone project, keeping all the research that has been done throughout it will help scholars to do further research on the topic. Having a website that houses everything that is needed by other researchers will help them to access it faster and easier. The research paper will be saved and downloaded to the website so that anyone can take this information and further their research. The blog posts will be maintained within WordPress. The goal of this blog post is to hear the opinions and thoughts of other people who are interested in the Georgia film industry. The articles will be stored on *The Roar* website where anyone can comment and give their opinion as well.

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