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Universities and Communities Mentoring Young Artists

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[Transcription begins just after start of session]

Campbell: I had no idea what a dean was supposed to do, or what training an artist meant, or any of that. I've always felt that that group was masquerading as a very benign gathering. Over time, I realized it was really an incredibly subversive group. Because what it got us to do, by gathering the heads of arts schools together, was to ask ourselves some very basic questions.

What kind of artist, in fact, are we all trying to train? If we're going to try to answer that question, what kind of world are we preparing that artist for? Having answered those questions, or at least raised those questions – heaven knows we'll never answer them – what do they need? We started off by asking what do they need in terms of liberal arts, but the question got much broader. It became a question of, what do they need in general in order to be good artists, good citizens of the world?

It was a question that was coming up at a time when training in the arts was undergoing a kind of generational shift. Many of us were finding the "art for art's sake" a little thin, and a little unsatisfying and ungratifying. I think many of us who joined the university, and those who have been in the university for many years, were finding this specialization too narrow, too constraining, not just in the arts, but in general. The whole discipline-based way of talking to each other, so that every discipline has its own vocabulary and its own language and we can barely speak to each other outside of those languages, the arts included.

I think we were also feeling disabused with this notion that art and politics don't mix. Particularly when we looked around the world and we saw artists like Václav Havel or Seamus Heaney. We're saying, yeah, but they're making great art! Very, very intensely political art that's very intensely engaged with the issues and the problems of the world.

Any of those observations that we made prior to September 11th were only more deeply crystallized. They didn't change. They just got sharper and clearer and more in focus. If we were thinking of ourselves as training artists who were going to go out into the world and bear witness, who were going to tell truth, who were going to be dealing with memory and dealing with the past, who were going to be our conscience, then we'd better well find a way to get

them outside of the academy and into a real relationship with the world outside of the academy.

The question that both the North Carolina School of the Arts and the Tisch School of the Arts have taken up in very different ways, very interesting ways, is, how do you create the conditions to engage artists at the outset of their training, throughout their training, so that they can ask these questions for themselves? So that you can provide the skill-set for them, so that they can begin to deal and engage effectively with a reality and a world outside of the academy? What transaction do you try to set up between that community or that reality and your students, so there's a real *quid pro quo*? Otherwise, if we think only of what our students can get, we're just colonizing the world. There has to be a give and take, a real sense that we have as much to gain from going out there as the people that we're engaging with.

I've often teased Jan and said that at our school, we're running on parallel tracks without our quite knowing it. It's like being at the end of the nineteenth century, when both Picasso and Braque were working on Cubism, and they both discovered it at the same time.

Jan was doing a whole set of programs, and she'll go through all of those, starting with AmeriCorps and going up through Urban Ensemble, her Garden Project and Community Connections. That took her down one track, and I'll let her speak to those.

But at the same time, I felt as the dean of the school, and I'm sure Dale Pollock will speak to this, that the school institutionally needed to have a core function that signaled to the student body population that this is an important part of what your training and your education is.

So we developed a new department called the Department of Art and Public Policy. An important focus of that department has now been our core curriculum, which each freshman is required to take. It used to be the old NYU Expository Writing program. Instead of just having writing, our students now have to do the writing exercises in relationship to very specific issues that we raise in plenary lectures, which they then have to take as their assignments in their writing workshops.

This is a real sea change for professional training schools. Up until now most of us have felt that the principal engagement is with the discipline, the craft, the technique of making sure that there is an active

role for artists within that discipline. This not only expands the training, but as you'll hear from our student and alumni presenters, it expands the sense of what an artist's career might be, and what an artist might do with his or her life.

Let me stop there by way of introduction, and introduce each member of the panel. Jan Cohen Cruz is our associate professor in the drama department, and she is also a superb scholar as well as practitioner of community theater and, as I said, has a whole range of programs that she's developed, from AmeriCorps through Urban Ensemble, Community Connections, and Garden Project at the Tisch School, which she will describe.

Also here this afternoon is John Movius, who is a junior in the Department of Photography and Imaging, and he was a participant in one of the Urban Ensemble classes and developed a project as a result of his participation.

Chris Diaz is a second year graduate student in our Department of Dramatic Writing. I like the story he told me on the train, I hope he'll repeat it about how he discovered the Garden Project. He also became involved in a project which Jan was directing, called Common Green/Common Ground, which engaged a broad range of community gardens in New York and has become quite a critical issue in our city.

Representing the North Carolina School of the Arts is the dean of the School of Filmmaking, Dale Pollock. I feel a real kinship with him, because he, like me, has no background in academia and came in and had to try to figure it all out. He has done a masterful job of that. One evidence of it was that he put together the first film conference ever on ethics in film, which was attended by nineteen film schools. I know those who participated thought that it was an incredibly important discussion for young filmmakers, because one of the things he required is not only that administrators and faculty come, but also that students come, and I think that was an extremely important part of that conference.

He too has inaugurated a required course, a Video Service class that creates films for small not-for-profits and requires them to understand the not-for-profits in order to then make appropriate films for them. He will speak to that, as will Butter Fisher, who is an alumna of this school, and also Director of Special Projects.

We also have a student and an alum with us. Brian Moore is currently a student at the School of Filmmaking at the North Carolina School of the Arts. Brian made one of the films we'll see.

Also, Aaron Bacheldar, who is an alum and a percussionist, who started working with the disabled. As a result of it, he found that it gave him new opportunities and new ideas about what his career could be as a musician. I'll start with you, Jan. Thanks.

Cruz: Thank you for coming, given our competition. It's quite amazing to be here. Informally, individual faculty members at Tisch School of the Arts have been involving their students beyond the studio walls for years, and many of us already believe that you don't become an artist totally within the four walls of the studio.

But it wasn't until we were invited to be part of, if you remember, President Clinton's AmeriCorps project, the domestic Peace Corps project that he initiated, and we were invited to create an arts-based AmeriCorps project, that we began to institutionalize such initiatives at Tisch School of the Arts.

We had ten students who would work ten hours a week. Two hours was training, and eight hours was actually in the field in an Arts for Violence Reduction project, and it took place over three years. Students got money towards tuition and learned an enormous amount by dealing with people in many different kinds of situations, and we were assured that the people in the different situations got a lot out of getting to do the arts with the students and creating projects together and being very diverse, coming together as very diverse people around issues we shared in common, and having the deep kind of exploration of those issues that the arts makes possible.

We felt it was such a good experience for the ten students and for people in the community that when we left AmeriCorps, because the paperwork alone would make you weep, we did institutionalize a class called Urban Ensemble, open to any Tisch School of the Arts students from any department. So right away, you have a sense of community within the class itself, because students get to be with other students who care about such issues from other disciplines.

The class meets once a week, and we team-teach it, Lorie Novak from Photo and Imaging, and I from

Drama. After a couple of weeks, the students are in an arts placement somewhere in New York City, often working in pairs. John Movius was in that class one of the years that we taught it, and so he's going to talk a little bit from his point of view of what that was about for a young artist.

Movius: Thanks. When I started with Urban Ensemble, I was already starting to think about what I wanted out of my art education. I felt a little skeptical about what I felt an artist needed to be in order to be successful, especially in a place like New York, where you have a lot of this art scene, this gallery scene. I do photography, so I wanted to be a part of that, but I'd felt like I wasn't isolated and bitter enough. I was aware of issues that were going on, and that was against what was expected of me as an artist, to be in my own bubble.

That's why it was great to take Urban Ensemble with Jan, because not only was it interdepartmental in our school, so that you had drama, dramatic writing students, you had dancers, you had actors, all these different people collaborating together, but you also had this chance to get out into the community.

I ended up in PS 169, which is a school up on 88th Street in Manhattan, and it's a program for kids with behavioral and developmental problems. I was helping out the art teacher.

Working with those kids turned that whole gallery thing upside down for me because a lot of them were nonverbal, and creating, for them, was the ultimate means of expression. It made the whole idea of success, or having something in a frame, or having some kind of recognition, totally irrelevant. It was a great experience.

I ended up being able to take the cameras that were not being used by my department to the school, and have the kids that were at the school that were able to verbalize and just had behavioral problems do self-portrait projects. Having a camera is so empowering. That's one of the things that I've learned in my program, it's really a tool for empowerment. When they were doing their self-portrait exercises, I saw that they felt like they were representing themselves, and they were able to spread that to the school and to the community at large.

Cruz: So having instituted the class, of course there were many students who couldn't fit the course

into their busy schedules. At a town meeting with faculty and students and administrators, the idea came up, why don't we have some kind of a clearinghouse where students can hear about internship opportunities, and they can do it extracurricularly, and there are certain faculty members who will serve as mentors?

So we set up an Office of Community Connections. At this point, the office has existed for about two years, and we have about ninety-five organizations that somebody in the school had a connection with; maybe a faculty member, maybe a student, a staff member, so that we know something about the organizations where we're sending the students. There are community centers, there are psychiatric facilities, going in as teams, assisting artists in that kind of work, after-school programs, juvenile detention centers, intergenerational theater projects.

Often, the students find what they care about and what they want to make art about. It's almost like a Rorschach test sometimes, as they go through the pages of the internship books, or they go into our Web site, which as soon as it's fixed, you can access. Technologically, it's www.nyu.edu/tisch/community, and like our students, you can go online, you can go through the internships, and then you can make an appointment with us and we'll try to help hook you up.

We also try to make events for students who are interested, and want to know more about what's happening in the world that would be important for them as young artists, and just people developing, so they can find out about them on the Web site.

We do some lecture series and discussions. Jawole Willa Jo Zollar was part of one of them, who's here today. So we're trying to expand our sense of what are community connections? What are internal connections? What are external connections? How can this lead also into more research? But certainly these internships continue to be at the heart of what we were doing and making available to more and more people.

Then we got one step more ambitious. We felt that we had a base to go one step further and create a production that would be a collaboration with the people in New York City, who because of their lived experience, had a lot to offer to students who, because of their artistic experience, had a lot to offer to the particular people we wanted to work with.

The issue that had become really burning for me was Community Gardens. I don't know how many of you know, but in the 1970s, especially in New York City, there was a lot of city-owned land that was being abandoned in a lot of neighborhoods like the East Village, Harlem, the South Bronx, areas of Brooklyn. These were terrible little lots where there were rats and there were drug deals, and they were ugly, and they smelled, and they were dangerous.

People in the neighborhoods, in a grassroots kind of way, came in, cleaned the garbage, and began deciding what they wanted that to be. Did they want it to be a place people could grow vegetables? Did they want it to be a place for a performance series? Did they want to attach it to a school, where kids could do part of their science in the community gardens? It's an amazing phenomenon. It exists in a lot of cities across the country, I know.

In the late eighties and the nineties, real estate values in New York City started to skyrocket, and the city suddenly became interested in reclaiming these lots that they had been very happy for neighbors to develop. It was a terrible thing for neighborhoods to risk losing the one spot of green. There are details about asthma rates going down in neighborhoods. There is so much concrete information on every level what these gardens have meant in people's lives.

We began a research project that ended up being a performance project involving many community gardeners from four different neighborhoods: Hunts Point in the Bronx; Harlem; the East Village, which is NYU's neighbor. This is important, because NYU is looked at quite askew by many people in the East Village who see us as part of the problem, because we need land and buildings for the life of the university. We also worked with people who we met through the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Project Greenbridge, which is an organization for community gardeners in that borough; and with children in the Children's Gardening Project. So Chris Diaz will talk a bit about what it was to be involved in that, and then I'll show you just a little two-minute clip of that performance.

Diaz: I'll try to go through eighteen crazy months in a hundred eighty seconds. I'm going to try to do it from my perspective, because I can't speak for the sixty to seventy-five people who were involved in the project.

As I was telling Dean Campbell and everybody on the train, I staggered into the project as literally as you can. I was in a class; it was a modern drama class, where we basically watched videos of great performances, which often were sort of mind-numbing, just sitting in a classroom and watching theater on tape in a dark room, and is not why I wanted to go to school.

One day I got up and in a daze went out into the hallway, and found this flier, because I needed to take another class, because I wasn't taking this class anymore because I couldn't do it. The flier was for the Garden Project, community-based. It basically said, just come, we're going to put on a show. And that was cool.

I went to the chair of my department, I said, "I want to do this." He said, "Go do it."

So I went to this meeting, I had no idea what it was. It had already started up a little bit. I was at the second meeting or so. The process was maybe ten or twelve students who were beginning to gather research on community gardens, research everything from the history of the land, that Jan talked about, to the specifics of gardens that had been destroyed, that had been taken away, people who had been there.

About two or three weeks in, we got a call that one of the gardens we were watching was about to be destroyed. Two of our students who were involved went down there and stayed the night, and joined the human chain, and were arrested. We were getting e-mail updates as they went.

From my perspective... I am from Yonkers, New York. We don't garden and I have no interest in gardening, and I have no interest in getting arrested for gardening. But, I'm amazingly attached to all of this suddenly after two weeks, and really involved with it. So we went from there.

I met a woman who ran a garden in East New York, which is a very impoverished section of Brooklyn, there are no bombed-out buildings, but lots of abandoned, old, and empty lots. Driving up to this garden and passing an empty lot on this side of the street, and crossing the street, and this wall of green literally enclosed this beautiful space. Again, this is not something that I've actually ever had an interest in. I walked in and was amazed. The children who primarily use this garden were developmentally disabled, I believe second through fourth, fifth-graders. I ended up talking with the woman

who ran the program, meeting with one of these kids, who I believe was in the second grade. They helped me plant my first seeds, told me how to put them in, read the packet to me, and said, "Meet me here in two weeks and we'll see what happens."

There was this sort of thing going on all throughout New York. We were dealing not just with children. We were dealing with older people who had had their gardens for ten, fifteen years. We were dealing with activists who weren't even necessarily connected to a garden, but who were dealing with the whole system.

This went on for quite a while, and then it became a class. I don't know the specifics of the inside; I was out of it for a little while, and then I came back. At the end, we put all of this research together into several narratives, several different performance styles. We mixed in some dance, we mixed in what you're going to see, some sort of very theatrical representation of bureaucracy in New York City.

Before we jump in, I'm going to read, not the whole thing, because it's obnoxiously boring. But I wrote an open letter to the people in the project, because I was moved by the whole thing. The one section I wanted to read to you was this, and I think we can talk about it more later, if we get to that point.

"What I've quickly realized is that this is not just about your right to your garden, but our right to bring something new into this world. Not just you in your community with your plants, but us in our community with our play."

So as far as community-building goes, we were dealing with an established community creating another community of people who were working off of this community, creating then another community of students that I think John is going to talk about later. There's a policy component mixed in with this. Creating community on top of community on top of community. That was what it meant to me.

Cruz: The play began with stories. Most of the research was from story circles, gathering stories from people who had been involved in community gardens. The first part of the play was about how various community gardens were created, and then about how they were maintained, and then about how they were threatened and how people tried to protect them. Then indeed how some of them were destroyed, and how do we go on from here? You're

going to see a little two-minute clip about this difficult effort to try to protect community gardens.

As the work on the play was going on, I was teaching a class called Making Art: Impacting Policy, where we were looking at ways that a piece of art can be a springboard. We wanted to push the efficacy envelope. We wanted to see how can this help support and communicate the importance of community gardens. John was in that class that year, so he'll get to talk a little bit about that.

Movius: Just really quickly, we were in a group, and we were assigned to different locations throughout the city, and I was in the garden at La Plaza Cultural, which was where this was presented in the Lower East Side.

We made a postcard for the show, and one of the people in the group designed this. She took a picture, an aerial view of the garden, and erased all the green, and said, "What's missing here?" That was just a really powerful visual message that we were able to get across. That was our training as artists coming through, and we were able to get that out to the community to invite everyone to the show.

We also made these posters that we hung up on the day of the show. They were larger than this; these are just prototypes of them, with facts about the garden. People who weren't even going to the show would walk by and would see something on this fence that was normally just an empty chain-link fence. They'd stop, read it, and they'd ask, "Hey, what's going on here?" We'd be able to explain to them that this was relating to them and their community, and to come watch the play. We were able to outreach to more people to generate interest in what was going on.

Cruz: Each place we did the show, there would be a group of students who met with people from that community and discussed what they might like to have happen.

The newest initiative that we're doing is through the Office of Community Connections and is continuing to develop this whole notion of ways that students become artists beyond the studio. We've just become part of something called ArtsBridge. We'll be able to give some modest funding to the students who participate. They'll go into K-12 schools and they'll be teaching their art to children as part of the curriculum. This is thanks to a program that was already

existing at UC Irvine, and they're trying to spread it at universities across the country. So that's what we're doing now.

Campbell: Thank you. I have to confess, Jan has never heard me say this, but when she first came to me with the idea of the community gardens, I said, I don't get it. Honestly. I couldn't figure it out. I said, boy, this sounds really nutty.

But I have great trust and faith in Jan and the projects she chooses, and it was clear after I went to that performance that there was an incredible amount of professional competence that went into collecting the narratives, of reforming them into a real dramatic presentation and the actual performance of it. There was considerable research that went into it, that resulted in the really intense engagement with and conversation with the community. It turned out to be really wonderful. Thank you.

Dale, do you want to introduce the North Carolina School of the Arts?

Pollock: Yes, it's really a pleasure to be here. It took us all day to get here, but we made it on time. I came to the North Carolina School of the Arts and, as Dean Campbell said, I faced the same problem she did. I had been a producer in Hollywood and had done thirteen feature films, and had started teaching, first as a lecturer at USC Film School, and then moving over to the American Film Institute, where I was head of the producing program.

As I taught more, I found that I was getting more out of teaching than I was out of producing, and luckily a wonderful opportunity opened up at the North Carolina School of the Arts School of Film-making, and I came there almost three years ago.

When I did, there was a class in the curriculum called 399, which was a professional internship requirement. It was what I call a "gimme" class, which is, if I show up, you give me the credit. Nobody took it very seriously, and most of the students tended to do their internships during the summer, and this was basically a way for them to get credit for a class they never had to go to. I said, well, this seems like a wasted opportunity.

Butter Fisher, who was on the selection committee that helped recruit me, had done a video as a different project, on Ronald McDonald House. She showed me this video and an idea began to arise

in my feeble brain, where I said, well, if she did this on her own, using school equipment but in a different way, maybe this is a way for us to involve our students more in the community.

We're in a small Southern city of a hundred eighty-thousand people. We are a city on a hill. The North Carolina School of the Arts is near the downtown area, but relatively separate from the community. Yet our students, as any filmmaking school knows, need the community for resources: locations, donations of food for the crew, wardrobe, props.

What I saw was our students taking a lot out of the community in terms of services and not really giving anything back other than a screening of our student films at the end of the year that was open to the public.

Last year, when we held our Cine Ethics conference, which was dealing with the idea of how do you instill certain ethical values in filmmakers and get them to think about what they're doing, and get them to think about the power of their imagery and its effect on the audience, not just in terms of their own artistic expression, but also in terms of how it impacts the people who watch their work, we saw a way of bringing these two ideas together and turning 399 into a community service option.

Then we faced another problem. We produce two-hundred fifty films a year in our program. There is an extremely intense competition for cameras and particularly for editing stations. The one thing you need is time to edit these kinds of videos.

We applied to the Winston-Salem Foundation, a community foundation that's very interested in building social capital, and were able to get a grant for a dedicated camera that belongs just to 399 and a dedicated Final Cut Pro editing station that belongs just to 399. This has now enabled us to do a minimum of three community service videos a year.

Through the foundation, we made it clear we wanted these to be nonprofit organizations that did not have the resources to produce a video on their own. If you figure that most finished commercial videos cost a minimum of \$1,000 a minute finished, then a ten-minute video would be \$10,000, which is far out of the reach of many nonprofit organizations.

I'd like to read you a letter from one of the nonprofits we did, Ronald McDonald House: "Small nonprofits

rarely have the resources to produce videos. And even if they do, getting all the necessary suppliers to produce a quality product is very difficult." The thing that we pride ourselves on with our students, and the whole reason for being an arts conservatory and doing professional training, is to produce quality productions.

We felt this was a way for our students to do three things. First of all, interact with the community and give something back and understand the very real needs and desires of the community in a very pragmatic and practical way. To further their own exploration in documentary filmmaking, nonfiction, non-narrative filmmaking. Even though some of these documentaries do have a narrative line, many of them are simply public service documentaries. And finally, to get them to interact with the community in a creative way. Not simply showing their work but collaborating with the nonprofits in terms of, what should the storyline be? Who should they interview? We let the nonprofits see a rough cut so they can give us feedback before we do a final finished version.

What we found is an enormous outpouring from our relatively small city. We have received requests from more than forty nonprofit organizations in the less than a year that we've had this formal program going.

The hard thing, sometimes, is completing the videos. We're on a trimester system. Every third-year student has to take 399. It is a required class. I think that's what distinguishes this program from some similar programs at other schools, where it's an elective. This is an absolute requirement, and every third-year student has to take this class in one of our three trimesters. It means sometimes, we end up with unequal numbers. We may have a bunch of editors in one term and not a lot of directors or cinematographers. The next term we'll have six cinematographers but only one editor. So it's been trying to balance that out.

Our students specialize in one of six disciplines in their second two years, so we have producers, directors, screenwriters, editors, cinematographers, and production designers, and we're able to use all of their talents in doing videos.

The thing that surprised me was the incredible range of organizations that requested our services. They went from AIDS Care Service and a local African-

American neighborhood development corporation, to a community clinic designed to help Hispanic immigrants to our area, to a historical house in a nearby community that is in danger of falling apart and desperately needs money so they can get their National Historic Landmark status. And even a documentary on one of our faculty members going into an elementary school to talk about a book he's written, and seeing the students come alive with this kind of experience.

So the range has been considerable, and to date we have completed seven of these videos. Three more are very close to completion now, and we will complete at least two or three more this year.

We're very excited about this project. We feel it has really given our students a different perspective on the community.

It's very typical for college students to come into a city like Winston-Salem, regard it as a place they went to school, spend all of their time on campus other than the time that they're out going to clubs or movie theaters, and never really interact with the community on an emotional basis, on a sociopolitical basis, and on a creative basis. We've tried to combine all three of these elements in our community service video program.

Butter Fisher, who runs this program, after being the one who inaugurated it with Ronald McDonald House, will talk about it.

Fisher: I want to thank you all for coming, and for having us today. It's really a treat to be here. It's the first time I've visited this part of the country. It's beautiful. So I'm really pleased to be here, and I feel like I'm one of the luckiest people in the world to have this job.

I was a volunteer in this community for years doing various and sundry things, went to film school. One of my friends, who works at the Ronald McDonald House, approached me and said, "We are just desperate for a check-in video. People are so upset when they come in with these very ill children that they cannot pay attention to the rules."

So anyway, we made this video, and it has helped them so much that they actually went back to one of our faculty members this year and made a dub in Spanish, because there were so many people that did not speak English. That particular video has

continued to expand and help that organization, which is wonderful.

I have a unique opportunity to work with students and to send them out, to function independently, to interact with the organization, to identify what the use of the video is going to be. It can be anything from an historical point of view to a fundraising point of view. We look at dailies, we look at the footage we've picked up. The whole class critiques the footage. They learned early on you cannot do interviews with a hand-held camera; you've really got to put that camera on sticks.

They've learned how to make a kind of film they probably never anticipated they would make in film school. They have to please the group. They have to provide what the group needs.

But in the process, people like Brian have gotten so involved with the project that even though it wasn't totally completed at the end of the term, oftentimes the students don't want to give it up. They are so vested and so inspired by the people that they've gotten to know, that one editor this year who was working on the clinic video said, "Please don't take me off," and he's in the middle of fourth-year production now, he just cannot finish. So we finally said, "Look, you cannot finish this. You're going to have to hand it off to another editor."

It's exciting for me to see, and I think for our community, to see these filmmakers. The community organizations are so excited to see our students and so thrilled to get videos that they would never have been able to afford.

The class is three hours, once a week, and during that time we might send a crew out, or we might look at dailies, or we might look at other videos we fund, and discuss that. So the class is used for different purposes, but we do put that time to good use.

We'll have maybe two or three different groups per class, generally about twelve people in a class working on different projects: finishing something up; or picking up b-roll for something that needed a little oomph; or actually developing a brand new video.

Pollock: We tried to make the process very simple for the nonprofits. So we have a one-page application that says, Give us who you are, are you a 501(c)(3)? How is the video going to be used? For fundraising,

public relations, education? Do you have plans to broadcast the video? (An important concern for us, if we have to clear music or other rights for broadcast.) Who do you anticipate to be your audience? What cash funding do you have available for this project?

We ask them that because we only have two requirements. They have to feed our student crew if they're out there shooting all day, and they have to make copies of their video. We give them a master. We will do not only the ten-minute video, sometimes a little longer, sometimes a little shorter, we are also going to cut thirty- and sixty-second PSAs for them if they do want to broadcast them.

We brought along a sample to show you, of a thirty-second PSA we did for Catholic Social Services in Winston-Salem, and a program they have called Host Homes. This is designed for children who get lost or feel abandoned to have a safe place to go. They look for a Host Home sign and they know they can go there and can get help.

Then I'd like Brian to talk about what it's like as a student to work on these productions.

Moore: The project I worked on was the Community Care Center, also called the Centro Clínico. It was a couple of local retired physicians who saw a great need in the community for free healthcare, because there's a very large population in Winston-Salem of not only people who don't have the money to pay for the kind of medical care they need and require, but also a large Hispanic community of illegal immigrants, who culturally not only felt strange about approaching and asking for health care, but also for obvious reasons of not being naturalized U.S. citizens felt a little nervous about showing up at a hospital with problems.

What these physicians did was get together in a community, find other retired physicians who also saw this need and wanted to help, and started a free clinic. They got a wonderful building rented to them for a dollar a year, and started advocating the community for all the equipment and things they needed to start this clinic.

It's completely volunteer-based. These physicians were doing this on their own time. They would open their doors on Monday and Thursday nights from 4:30 to 9:30. It's run by volunteers. Obviously, you need the doctors, but you also need the support staff. You need translators, because not all of the doctors

spoke Spanish, or the different languages that would come in. And just all the support you would imagine this kind of facility needing.

They couldn't perform open-heart surgery at this place, but they could definitely diagnose problems and write prescriptions and do all the little care things that the community required.

This is a project that I fell into myself. I was taking 399, and I had just finished my third-year project, and was asked to produce this video.

At first, I was very tired, obviously, after my production, and it was a little like, is this really something I want to take on? But just going there one time, showing up for one clinic session really got me excited about the entire process. I felt like I was one of those volunteers. Everybody in that environment was there just for the sake of helping people, just for the sake of helping these folks who couldn't otherwise afford it or get what they needed. It really, really blossomed into something that I was very proud to work on.

I was only supposed to be working on it for one term, and as Butter mentioned, I continued to work on it for the spring. We did all the research and spoke with the doctors, and got ready for our interviews in the winter term, and then in the spring, went and shot it. The editor and I spent the entire summer editing it when school wasn't even in session. I was in Winston-Salem for summer school and he was there for another reason, and so we just decided, hey, the equipment's here, let's get access to the computer and keep working on this, because it needs to get done as soon as possible.

We felt ownership of this project; it wasn't just another class. It wasn't just another grade. It became something that all of us who had worked on it were very proud of.

What Dale says about the community is very true. I think the school of filmmaking has done a lot of good things for the community, but we've also had to borrow a lot from them. Location shooting alone can ask a lot of a community. You're talking about a crew of, at the most, thirty college students coming into a business, a street, somebody's home, and asking to take over for twelve hours so we can get our beautiful dream shots and make our wonderful artistic vision.

To be able to give something back was truly an honor. I was very happy to be able to work on it and give something back.

Pollock: I just want to add that we subject these videos to the same kind of review and professional evaluation that we do all our other projects. When I saw the first cut of the Community Care video, I said, no, no, no, we've got to restructure it. We need to do some more interviews.

We had a real problem, as Brian can describe, because the people we were shooting at the clinic are illegal immigrants, for the most part, and they didn't want to be photographed. There was a real cultural aversion to this. So the student filmmakers had to work and gain trust.

Moore: Imagine trying to get someone to sign a release form. Plus, we're there, we're shooting this thing, it's a Thursday night. I'm not going to say it's like an ER environment, but it's very busy, and as I said, everything's volunteer, so they have volunteer translators from Wake Forest University. They don't always have all the translators they need. There are maybe three or four on a given night. So you have only three translators and you have everyone busy with everyone else, and then there's my crew, these four guys standing there with a camera and a microphone trying to grab shots and trying to set it up. Not just shooting it, but also trying to control what we're shooting and get the kind of shots that we want, that we think are going to be effective. Obviously, we're trying to help, but we're also trying not to get in the way.

It was an interesting contrast. So I believe that something we're still working on with that is trying to find a way to shoot the clientele.

[portion of transcription missing]

Bacheldar: During that gap time, I had begun working with persons with developmental disabilities, and got really interested in the field, and more and more involved in the field, until a point where I decided it was time for me to go back to school.

I went back to school for Composition, and during the time that I was in school, I continued to work in the field to pay my way through school. I was working for an agency that provided one-on-one

workers in the community primarily for people who needed extra behavioral care.

I was placed within another agency that I probably never would have found on my own. It's an agency called the Enrichment Center, which is a United Way agency in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. I was fascinated by this place. It's a day program that is very different from traditional day programs for adults with disabilities. Most day programs for adults with disabilities focus on various kinds of work projects. They'll often contract out simple work for local factories, and it's a lot of drudgery, really.

The Enrichment Center was founded by a coalition of parents who were interested in providing an alternative to that, and they created an arts-based day program. There are other arts-based programs throughout the country, but the difference in the Enrichment Center is that the focus is not therapeutic. The focus is vocational. Each of these programs is intended to get our participants working in these fields, making our activities there at the Enrichment Center their work.

While I was working there as an outside staff member, there was a dance and drama program, a poetry program, and a visual arts program. When it came time for me to leave school, I presented the Enrichment Center with the idea of starting a music program, because they had not had a music program. They accepted my proposal. I wasn't sure what I was going to be able to do, but I gave them a lot of big ideas that were a little beyond what I really thought I could do. What we ended up doing was beyond even that.

So in that process, we have formed a professional performing group called the Enrichment Center Percussion Ensemble. That was about four years ago. We've performed in and around the community, and two years ago produced our first recording in collaboration with a professor at the North Carolina School of the Arts, Sarah Johnson, who teaches violin. She asked me to write a piece for her and the group for her upcoming CD. The piece is called, "Nomos" and I have here a videotape. I'm going to show you a bit of the premiere of that. It was premiered at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem.

We're working right now on putting together plans to make a new recording, one that would be entirely our recording, although we've lined up several people to

collaborate with us. We have another violinist that we're going to work with, a former member of the SEM Ensemble in New York. And we've got Eugene Chadbourne, who's going to write a piece for us, which will be the first time that an outside composer has worked with us. I have arranged music of other composers, but we have not worked with another composer yet at this point. Do you want me to add anything else?

Campbell: No, thank you very much. Before I open it up to the audience for questions, I have one question that I'd like to ask of all the students. Among you, one common theme is that an intense collaboration was necessary for the success of your project. You also all spoke of having certain ownership. You felt very vested, you felt this was something that you had a real stake in.

There's an aspect of collaboration that's very harmonious and very cooperative. There's also a part of collaboration that's about negotiating and giving up part of what's yours to somebody else, or taking in somebody. I'm wondering how much of that occurred in your projects, and what value you found in it for yourselves as professional artists in training?

Moore: I found it to be very productive. We get geared to a point to accept a certain amount of creative criticism, and in this situation, I felt like almost we were a production company working for that client. The Community Care Center was the client. So I presented them with what I felt was a fine cut – it turned out to be more of a rough cut – of the project, but that's exactly what happened.

We toiled over it all summer. I'd call Jim Robinson, who runs the place, and I say, "I'm bringing the tape over." He calls me a week later, and he's like, "Very good, very good, very good, very good. But, maybe you could get a couple more interviews with more of the doctors?" And I'm thinking, I know of all the interviews we got with the doctors, only two of them work, in our opinion. Either the sound was off, or a mistake we made, we did these interviews at the end of the session, so everyone was really tired and ready to go home, and it had been a full session, the energy was really low. But that's what he wants. He doesn't know that, and I can't explain that to him, he's the client, you know?

So we ended up doing a re-shoot. We went out there and shot a couple more interviews, and he wanted to

see, again, more of the people coming to the clinic, which as I already said was kind of problematic, but we pulled it off a little better. It's just the nature of the game.

Diaz: I think it's interesting when you talk about ownership, because it's so against the notion of the personal vision of the artist, and this is what's valuable, that everything the artist creates is part of this ordained vision that they have, and we need to credit them for it. So that was interesting to me, playing with that.

Even these signs were a collaboration that we made, and not one person's vision, although one person had to put them together. Not being able to actually take ownership for that is a really different approach to the normal art experience. And I found it interesting.

Of course there are going to be those people that are just taking the class for the credits, not going to do the work, and that becomes clear, and that's fine. People have a lot of things going on in their life, and they can't concentrate on everything that's going on, and that sifts itself out. You end up collaborating with maybe a few people, and that's something good.

Our project was directly about listening to people's stories and then putting them together into sort of a form, and then giving them back to them. Basically giving them back to them to perform.

For us, perhaps luckily and perhaps by design, we were able to trust each other's expertise in each area, in terms of trusting the people who lived the events to give us the stories and give us what was really important. Then to take it and try to put it into a theatrical frame, to use our training to shape it into something, and then give it back to them, hoping that they were going to trust our instincts.

There's always the question of, "Well, this isn't exactly the way that it happened." For our purposes, maybe we needed to shape it a little bit differently.

So I think it was definitely a give and take. I think for us, it was a little bit easier to collaborate with the non-artists than it was to collaborate with each other, because we all felt we had the same expertise. So we were able to, in those other circumstances, give and take a little bit more.

Bacheldar: Collaboration is vital for musicians, particularly for a musician who is working in

a contemporary classical idiom, just because it's outside of a lot of people's experience. It's hard to get people out to hear that on its own. The context with this group, it's a little different, because people do want to come and see what this group of people is doing, what we're doing with them, and what they're able to do.

We've had some really fruitful collaborations with a performance group called Chimaera Physical Theater, who is also tied in with the School of the Arts. They do a mixture of dance and drama, and we've had some excellent collaborations with that group.

Since I'm with these people every day, I'm building works around what I know their strengths and weaknesses are, and some of those go beyond simple musical things into issues we simply cannot use. Other physical issues, such as seizures, are things that we have to keep in mind.

Campbell: One last question for the faculty and deans who are here. What are the dangers for professional training? Are there any in terms of these kinds of collaborations? We've all talked about how great they are, and how wonderful and productive, but are there things we have to be cautious about?

Cruz: They take a lot of time. There's this kind of reverse thing. When I'm working professionally with actors, the idea is to stretch them beyond what they can do, and when I'm working with nonprofessionals, it's to capitalize on what they do best, what they know best. So for students who are in training to become artists, to understand the difference, that's very hard to do. It's very hard to involve a lot of people and it takes a lot of patience. I think that's often hard for students.

It's also confusing for students. Students go through a period, sometimes, of their world going *crack*, because you wonder, why are you, the person who's being trained to be an artist, and Haja Worley, who's got this amazing voice, why isn't he the one who's going to get to move into a professional life? So you've got to be ready to go through the kind of really deep questions that it brings up. Those are my first responses.

Pollock: I would say the danger for us, we have to deliver. Time management issues are a big thing among arts students and particularly among film students, and we're competing with all the produc-

tions in our school. It's very easy for us to get distracted, by working on a peer's production, by working on their own production. We have to keep them focused on finishing these videos and coming up with a quality product that we promised.

The danger is that it takes a lot of effort on Butter's part, and we have an assistant dean who also supervises 399 and is a former military officer, and really gets in there and kicks butt. That's effective, and that's what we often have to do to make sure that the students stay on point.

The desire is always there. A lot of enthusiasm, a lot of desire, which we're very glad to see. This is not an exercise where we have to force students to do this. As Brian said, when they go out to the first meeting or the first set of interviews, they get really jazzed and excited. It's a question of keeping them focused and making sure that the projects get completed.

Fisher: I agree. It just takes one trip, generally, and they're totally vested and really excited. Then it's a problem because they won't go off the project, and I need to get it finished. I've been really pleased to see the excitement in the students, once they get out in the community.

Campbell: Questions from the audience?

Audience: I'm curious about the flip side of this. If it's a community that wants to go to a university and start a program like this... Do you have any suggestions of how we might approach the universities? We have a large university, the University of North Dakota, and I think this would be a wonderful way of involving some of them into our area.

Pollock: See if there's a film and video department, and there's always downtime where equipment isn't being used. Those are the pockets you have to seek out. Because otherwise, you're competing with curricular activities, and that's a tough sell. But there's always downtime, when the equipment is not being used. We have a two-week period called Intensive Arts, where we have no classes, and that's the time, before we got our dedicated camera, when we would try to go out and shoot.

You need to look at the program, and look at how they're structured, and look at the amount of equipment they have. We were lucky enough to find a foundation like the Winston-Salem Community

Foundation that was willing to make a one-time capital expenditure on equipment, and that freed us up to do what we want to do.

Campbell: We could never do that with film, because we have nine hundred film students. So downtime doesn't exist. We have negative time.

We have an incredible *quid pro quo* with dance whereby about a half-dozen dance companies come in residence during the summertime, because we have space and theater and rehearsal rooms. In return, they each give one week of instruction to our dance students. So that kind of exchange of services has been extraordinary for us. That's also a possibility.

Cruz: I'd say it's also about finding the right individuals. If you call the different departments that interest you and say, "Do you have someone there who's interested in doing community projects?" they'll say, "Oh, yes, it's Carlos." Then you're halfway there.

Audience: I'm trying to understand the difference. I teach at a university, and a lot of what you're talking about seems like what they're calling "service learning," but then, this seems real different. Because the service learning has some other thing on it that's not attractive to me, and I don't even know exactly what.

Campbell: What do you mean by "service learning?"

Audience: It's difficult to explain, but the students get credit for doing community service – except, for me, there's something wrong there. I've never been attracted to go do that, so I'm trying to understand how to articulate or even understand the difference between what you're doing, which sounds really connected, and the other thing, which sounds very missionary.

Cruz: I have trouble with the language. Service is so one-direction. I picture a soup kitchen, and we're ladling it out. We're talking about all being in the soup together, all of us. It's reciprocal. It's really believing that it's both ways. The language right away signals, "Missionary, missionary, missionary." Although often that's not what it really turns out to be. We have a service-learning program at NYU, and we can get some funds for putting into the curriculum some of these initiatives.

Audience: These are outside, not part of that, then?

Cruz: Well, actually, Making Art, Impacting Policy got service learning money. The woman who runs that program knows how I feel about the word, but in fact she really likes the project, and was very happy to fund it. The idea of service learning at universities is that students learn by going into the community and doing something. The trouble is, they usually think of it as being this one-way, do-gooder student, and that's just not how it is.

Audience: I work with a foundation and am also a consultant and I've just finished a strategic plan for the Hartford Arts School, so I've been spending time with students and faculty and thinking about interdisciplinary things.

One of the questions that comes up is regarding the students' professional development. I heard a little disgruntlement about, the art world's so cruel, et cetera.

I wonder how this experience might help you all as leaders transform that system, transform the gallery/museum world, or the vapidness of Broadway, or the commercialism of Hollywood, and how that gets integrated into what your teachers or the leadership at school is guiding you towards.

Movius: I definitely would still love to have my work in a gallery. No question about it, I'll take it. Any of you guys own a gallery, let me know.

I would love to get a group together, feel like there's a group mentality that we can change the system. A friend of mine is more involved in the nightclub scene, and so she's trying to get nights together where you have a donation box for the NEA. There's this notion that we can change it, and we can get money in the right direction. It's important to know that it's not like the pinnacle, it's not the point that you have to reach to get validation. That's, I think, what was being stressed in some cases, and it's not right.

Diaz: Our particular project, the Garden Project, was so much about the process, and so much about being in touch with these people who gave you a different idea about why you were doing it. These people were not actors who were worried about refining craft or worrying about if this was going to transfer. This was about people.

We had a group of fifteen- and sixteen-year-old girls who were just there because they enjoyed performing and enjoyed dancing, and they were, at the same time, saying something that was important to them. Maybe that doesn't concretely translate into, "I'm going to go and change my career path," but it's something that's going to stick. It's something more. Then when you go back, the next time you write something, there's something more important than what you might be seeing all the time.

Cruz: I have to add one thing, just because for me, the overall feeling of what I had about what the performers got was a sense of generosity. There was a way they had to be able to deal with anything that the people around them did or didn't do, and it gave them an ease and a comfort and a sense of connection that was great for them, no matter what kind of art they're going to make.

Audience: I'm wondering, for the faculty, do you see a way in which other curriculum might change in response to this? Like in Art History, of having more information about the work of Suzanne Lacy or the activist artists, starting with the '68 riots in Paris, which led to work that has been so pervasive and yet systematically left out of most mainstream education?

Campbell: When we do our core curriculum, simply because I'm trained as an art historian, one of the requirements that I have for my hundred and forty freshmen, and there are five sections of those hundred and forty freshmen – I think we had seven hundred who came in this year – is that they have to visit very specific sites.

One is the Mary Miss subway installation in Union Square, which turned out to be very ironic this time. They had to visit the new galleries at the Brooklyn Museum. They had to go up to the Studio Museum in Harlem to visit the History of Black Photography show, and I think the Giacometti show at the Museum of Modern Art.

Now this will vary every semester, but the point is that they have to understand that art has a history, it has a context, it has a public, it has a relationship. All of these basic ideas are surfaced by having them looking and understanding art as it lives in the world under very different conditions.

So to answer your question, I think it's an incredible opportunity for the history of art, and particularly for

people who live in urban areas where... A lot of this stuff is there.

Audience: I have a comment and a question. We're often working with a lot of the issues that you brought up. I want to applaud you for having the courage to do this in an institutional world that's even tighter than the presenting world, so congratulations on that.

I had an original question about how this work might affect the form and content of what you do, including the faculty, because there are certain structures to plays and films, as there are to dances. Working with community, have you found yet that it's changed how you process your structure from the beginning? That's one thing.

And then two, how do you deal with the value system, by your colleagues who don't necessarily appreciate what you're doing with those weird people off in the garden?

Pollock: From the film point of view, it's been interesting. We've had a number of organizations after we announced this who came to us and wanted a free video. They really weren't nonprofit, and they had funds. What we said was, "Why don't you hire our faculty who will work with students?" So it's done two things.

We have the lowest salaries in the University of North Carolina system, so it's helped us augment some of the money our faculty can make, which is a good recruiting thing for when I'm trying to get people to leave New York and Hollywood and come to North Carolina to teach.

It's also again involved our faculty more in the community. There has been an ancillary beneficial experience. Most often, we will bring students to work with them on these projects, which also gives the students a financial incentive that they don't have in 399, but gets them involved in a different way in the community. There has been a spin-off.

The other thing I would say is, we're a narrative school. When I came, it was purely narrative films. We tried to expand that to experimental and documentaries, and this work has really increased the level. Brian today was talking about Frederick Wiseman and "Titicut Follies." These kinds of works lead you into that kind of work. It really expands the student's consciousness, and they don't just look

at film as Hollywood or independent narrative filmmaking, but can see it for the broad spectrum of different ways of approaching the subject.

Fisher: I'd like to say on a personal note, I was a sculptor in my former life, and had a successful business. But art by committee is something that will absolutely take the life's blood right out of you as an artist, and I hit a major block.

So I went to the film school, really switched gears, and was a screenwriting major. This Ronald McDonald video fell in my lap, and then I went on and produced a video for this season called, "Race For the Cure." This totally altered my whole perception of myself and my goals as a filmmaker, and frankly the work that I did on those two projects I'm the most proud of anything I've done, because the fallout was huge!

I really do believe that it's inspiring other students to think beyond what they had intended to begin with when they went to film school.

Campbell: If I could just add to that, probably the most dramatic story we have at Tisch is the story of Keiko Ibi, who was like you, Chris. She was literally stumbling out of her class, trying to figure out what she was going to do with her career at Tisch. She was a graduate student, and got involved in a community theater project. She ended up making "Personals: The Love-life of Jewish Senior Citizens," and of course won the Academy Award for it.

The next year, Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen had literally lived in a Brooklyn gym for a year and a half and did "On the Ropes," which got a nomination. It didn't get the award, but it got a nomination. The work that has come out has been phenomenal as a result of these relationships, absolutely phenomenal!

To answer your question, I think that what happens is, when that kind of work gets into the galleries, and gets on the screens, and gets on the stages, that it changes the nature of who comes to the theater, or who comes into the gallery as well.

Diaz: It was so important to work in a different forum, with a different audience, and with a different group of people. You couldn't be abstract and theatrical in the sort of self-indulgent sense. You had to break it down, accessible for the people you were working with, and accessible for the people who were

going to see it. That's something that sticks with you, and you don't want to go back.

Audience: I'm from a foundation that is interested in fostering the success of individual artists who want to practice their profession as a primary career. Our feeling is that they are hit with the real world when they come out of schools. I had a bunch of different questions, but I wanted to ask the students, since there's not that much time.

As a result of participating in this exercise, did you feel more empowered to go into the world and say, "I'm going to create my art the way I want to, I can be successful at this, I've learned the skills that I need to go out there and be a success at what I want to do as a primary profession?" Did you feel hit when you got to the real world with, "Oh my God, I went and I learned all this stuff, but I'm still having to work as a waiter to make ends meet"? Did you learn those skills you need, and what would you like to learn, if you didn't?

Diaz: Yes, and no. I think everything helps, and this project in particular helped a lot, to know more, not necessarily that I could, that I would have the skills, but that there is an arena somewhere to do the kind of work that I wanted to do.

The idea of having a skill and being able to turn out the product, I felt confident from my training. But for a project like this, when I'm dealing within a community and doing something that's very important, I think it brings you back to what John was talking about, having to think that your work has to go up in a gallery to be successful. I think being able to define other terms and other ways to do it is a key for me that comes out of something like this.

Movius: I'm still in school, and I work for my department. A lot of my friends are getting laid off right now, and I don't have to worry about that, which is nice.

But I think, coming out of school, I realized I wanted to be in education, be somehow teaching art, and that that was an option, and that the city provides grants for that, and also tuition remission for going back to graduate school. So for me, that was a way of being able to take this ball I'd picked up with the community and trying to continue it. I haven't gotten there yet, but we'll see what happens.

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