

For purposes of this presentation, I will refer to our current level of funding as \$11 instead of \$11.05.

We appreciate the work done by the Appropriations Committee (AC), but we strongly disagree with their assessment and recommendation. Cornell Cinema has done nothing to warrant a 9% cut in funding. Instead, we have been working overtime over the past two years to institute major changes to the operation so that we would not need to ask the GPSA for an increase in funding.

We ask that you send this unfair recommendation back to the committee and that you ultimately restore our funding to its current level.

Before going through the report point by point, though, I want to emphasize what seems to us to be a fallacy in the committee's, and perhaps a number of graduate students' reasoning, when thinking about the \$11 CC currently receives from the fee:

We repeatedly hear: why should CC be funded at a level higher than almost any other byline funded organization? The simple answer is two-fold:

1. CC provides much more programming than any other group funded by the fee: 5 - 6 different programs every week with upwards of 10 screenings during the academic year.

2. CC's budget is likely much higher than most other groups. It's entirely misleading to look at each group's allocation as a hard number and not as a percentage of its overall operating budget. The amount we receive via the GPSA activity fee covers just 15% of our operating budget. My guess is that other groups receiving byline funding are receiving a greater percentage of their operating budget from the fee. (To illustrate this point, please look at example on the CC Fact Sheet we distributed.)

Now onto the committee's report:

The report states that "only" 24% of graduate students who completed the GPSA survey use Cornell Cinema, and that this constitutes a "low level of attendance."

We refute the characterization that 24% of all graduate students (~one quarter of all graduate students) is insignificant, especially when you consider that we attract graduate students from a wide cross section of departments on campus.

Just this past weekend we received emails of support from grad students in Anthropology, Architecture, Asian Studies, Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering,

Comparative Literature, Computer Science, English, Human Development, Landscape Architecture, Neurobiology and Behavior.

You can read their comments in another document we distributed.

Oddly, survey usage figures for most other byline groups were not even included in the report.

It's also important to note that even though we are frequented by at least 24% of graduate students, our current portion of the graduate student activity fee is just 13.5%.

The report implies that the fact that “only an estimated 24-32% of all Cornell Cinema attendees are graduate students,” is somehow a poor reflection of Cornell Cinema’s value to graduate students.

We refute this characterization as well. Cornell Cinema is open to the public and draws audience from not only from the undergraduate & graduate student population, but from the entire Ithaca community, including Ithaca College. Cornell graduate students comprise approx. 10% of Ithaca’s academic year population of 60,000. And yet, they make up 24-32% of our audience. This means graduate students make use of Cornell Cinema far beyond the 10% they represent.

The report states that “The committee felt that issues specifically raised in the analysis from the previous byline funding cycle had not been addressed, specifically marketing.”

This statement could not be further from the truth.

There are 2 primary ways would-be patrons get their information about CC: our hard copy Flicksheet and our website.

In the past two years we completely revamped both of these primary marketing tools to make them more appealing, and now a greater percentage of our audience makes use of them.

Flicksheet - 72/200 – 36% - up from 20% reported in our last survey

Website – 66/200 – 33% - up from 22% reported in our last survey

We also greatly improved the look and functionality of our weekly e-blast, and expanded our social media outreach (both on Facebook and via Twitter).

We also redesigned our print ads and flyers.

Please refer to your hand-outs for an overview of Cornell Cinema’s comprehensive marketing strategy.

It's also very important to keep in mind that Cornell Cinema's primary mission is educational, meaning that we show many titles that are not well known to the audience and that require additional effort & expense to advertise; i.e. we're not just showing blockbusters that everyone has heard of.

The analysis from the previous byline funding cycle also recommended that Cornell Cinema consider raising the ticket price and/or undertake programmatic restructuring so we would not need to seek an increase in the GPSA activity fee funding in the future.

We, in fact, did both of these things. We raised ticket prices at the beginning of FY12-13, just a little over the year ago. And we completely restructured our program and added state-of-the-art digital projection to Willard Straight Theatre. We cut tens of thousands of dollars from our budget by reducing the number of films shown per year and by reducing the number of nights per week we show films. The new format offers a more manageable slate of screenings and made it possible for us to shift resources so that there is a bit more money for special events & free shows which attract audiences.

The changes also resulted in an increase in per screening attendance – not a drop in attendance as the committee's report implies.

This year's committee report stated that “The committee also had concerns that marketing efforts specifically targeting graduate students were minimal and the reliance on print sources ineffectual.”

Our marketing efforts are not minimal. In addition to all of things we do to attract students in general, as outlined in our comprehensive marketing strategy, we do a number of things to attract graduate students in particular, and they are listed on the CC Fact Sheet.

In addition, this past August, we contacted Janna Lamey, Asst. Dean of Student Life for the Graduate School and asked, once again, that Cornell Cinema's website be included somewhere on:

<http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/life-cornell>

She got back to me in Oct 30, as she, like so many of us, has way too much to do. She is now working with us to include our listings in the weekly Grad School Announcements.

While we agree that print advertising is no longer as effective as it used to be, it's not yet something that a movie theatre can simply stop doing. We would no doubt be chastised if we were not running ads in the Sun, etc.

It's important to note that a single ad doesn't need to sell that many tickets to cover its cost:

Cornell Daily Sun:

FY13-14 - \$25.60/small ad, usually advertising 2 movies, so if that ad attracts just 5 people @ \$5/ticket, the cost of the ad is covered.

Friday 1/4 pg ad \$154, usually advertising 6 movies, so if that ad attracts, on average, 5 people/movie @ \$5/ticket, the cost of the ad is covered.

We regularly assess the efficacy of our marketing efforts and will continue to do so. We have been incredibly overtaxed in the past two years instituting the most major changes the organization has ever experienced, so if we haven't managed to get to quite everything, we would appreciate an understanding of the magnitude of all that we have managed to accomplish.

“To compensate for this [proposed] loss [in funding via the fee], the committee suggests the GPSA vote to increase grad student ticket prices.”

We don't think this is a good idea:

We just raised the graduate student ticket price by \$1 in FY12-13; not good business practice to raise them again so soon.

Movie ticket pricing is elastic – generally speaking, when the price goes up, attendance goes down, and we want to attract more graduate students, not fewer.

Our own grad student patrons have said they'd attend less if the price goes up. CC already has to compete with numerous alternative ways for viewers to watch films, many of them cheaper or free (albeit inferior to what CC offers), so raising the ticket price would make us less competitive and likely discourage attendance. Grad students in particular are on limited budgets

We're already competing with lots of free events on campus

In conclusion, we hope that you will vote to reconsider CC's allocation and find another way to set the fee at a comfortable level without penalizing an organization that serves a significant number of graduate students and has likely done more than any other group to address GPSA concerns and adapt to the rapidly shifting landscape of film exhibition.

Cornell Cinema Fact sheet:

The last time Cornell Cinema received an increase in its GPSA activity fee allocation was FY06-07. If the allocation had kept pace with inflation, then we would be receiving \$12.78 in today's dollars.

Current GPSA activity fee allocation: \$11.05/student

Current SA activity fee allocation: \$10/student

SA activity fee allocation approved for FY14-15 & 15-16: \$10.60/student

Proposed GPSA allocation for FY14-15 & 15-16: \$10/student

Likely new ticket prices if these recommendations go through:

Graduate student price: \$6

Undergraduate student price: \$5.50

Current graduate student price: \$5 (raised fr \$4 at beginning of FY12-13)

Current undergraduate student price: \$5.50 (raised fr \$4.50 at beginning of FY12-13)

Cornell Cinema's operating budget ~ \$460,000

% coverage provided by current GPSA activity fee ~ 15

% of CC's audience comprised of graduate students ~ 28

% of GPSA activity fee allocation that goes to Cornell Cinema ~ 13.5 (~\$11 out of \$81)

Example:

Group X's budget is \$100,000 and they get \$5/grad student via the fee, which translates into about \$31,000 (6200 grad students x \$5), or 31% of their operating budget. So Group X needs to come up with the remaining ~70% of their budget from other sources.

Cornell Cinema's budget is \$460,000 and we get \$11/grad student, which translates into \$68,200 (6200 grad students x \$11), or 15% of our operating budget. So CC needs to come up with the remaining ~85% of our budget from other sources.

Things Cornell Cinema does to specifically reach graduate students:

Offer free screenings to new graduate students in August.

Ask the Graduate School to include a link to our website on their website and to promote the free orientation screenings.

Set up and staff promotional tables at the Graduate Student Orientation Event in Barton Hall & the Maplewood and Hasbrouck Apt Community Fairs.
Pass out our Flicksheets at the International Student Orientation Event
Send out one or two announcements each semester to the Intntl Student listserv listing all the foreign language films we're showing.

Send targeted emails about specific films to graduate student organizations. This fall we've contacted at least 17 groups, including the Anthropology Graduate Student Assoc, Chinese Students & Scholars, Korean Graduate Students Assoc., and Turkish Student Assoc.

At the suggestion of the GPSA AC, we are now distributing ¼ cards advertising weekend film offerings at the Big Red Barn's TGIF event.

CC's marketing strategy is three-fold:

One:

Activities designed to maintain/increase general awareness of CC and the kinds of programs it offers.

Including:

Dynamic website (**new as of FY12-13**)

Active Facebook page, twitter feed & instagram account.

Roadside marquee changed daily.

Name listed on banner displayed outside Willard Straight Hall. (**new this year**)

Posters around campus depicting WSH Theatre with words: "Cornell Cinema: A classic movie theatre with state-of-the-art projection." (**new this year**)

Postcards picturing CC w/web address on back distributed on & off-campus.

Presence at downtown art house through their email list & onscreen slides & flyers.

Presence on other organization's websites w/links to cinema.cornell.edu.

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Information table at the Barton Hall New Student Orientation in August.

Information table at RA Orientation, Club Fest and a variety of other orientation events.

Photos of cinema events periodically appear on Cornell University's home page (**new this year**)

Screenings offered for free to new students every August.

Free Orientation Event (to learn about CC) w/free popcorn offered to all students each August.

Two:

Activities carried out for each Flicksheet/calendar.

Including:

8-10K calendars distributed to 120+ locations on & off-campus.

Comprehensive website updates.

Online calendar entries: CU Events, Ithaca Events, Fandango

Calendar listings and press releases sent to local & regional newspapers.

160 packets of a Flicksheet/calendar & specialty flyers sent to professors, graduate TAs of film related courses, and other individuals who have regular access to potential audience members (on & off-campus).

Regular advertising in on-campus & local newspapers.

Film & series flyers posted on & off campus.

Weekly e-blast sent to over 5000.

Sandwich board listing nightly offerings placed on Ho Plaza in front of WSH.

Display cases for film reviews & posters around campus and in theatres (Campus Store, RPCC, Noyes Rec, Uris Hall, Willard Straight lobby, Okenshields)

Promotional lobby tables set up in WSH lobby 2-3 times each semester (where coming attractions trailers are shown on monitor).

Hundreds of emails sent to professors/graduate TAs in advance of each semester to let them know about any films we're showing that may be relevant to their classes.

Coming attractions trailers shown in WSH theatre.

Team up with student organizations to co-present films and series like Hayao Miyazaki films last year with Japanese Animation Society.

West Campus Deans sent announcements about line-up of films for each semester – follow up done for particular titles.

Three:

Activities to promote specific films & events.

A plan is developed and executed for each calendar,

Including:

Local film reviewers given preview screeners of Ithaca premieres and contact info for visiting filmmakers to do write-ups/interviews.

Local arts editors pitched stories involving special series & events.

Specialty newspaper & radio ads done for special events.

Onscreen ads for CC's own events made & projected in advance in theatre and screens in multiple locations around campus (RPCC, SCPA, WSH)

PSAs & Facebook events go out regularly.

Hundreds of targeted emails & flyer mailings to community groups, professors, departments, graduate & undergraduate student orgs, etc.

Targeted on-campus & regional listservs identified & used.

Weekly film offerings included in Denise Cassaro's email messages.

Weekly film offerings included in the Janna Lamey's

Chalking.

Visiting artists stay in West Campus apartments raising awareness of their presence on campus.

¼ cards distributed in front of WSH and other locations (Big Red Barn added this fall) for both general weekend screenings and special events.

All activities are reviewed regularly for cost/benefit.

Emails of support from Graduate Students in:

Anthropology, Architecture, Asian Studies, Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, Comparative Literature, Computer Science, English, Human Development, Landscape Architecture, Neurobiology and Behavior

Cornell Cinema is a major resource for grad students. I support Cornell Cinema and don't want to see its funding cut and a subsequent increase to the graduate student ticket price.

Carissa Kang, Human Development

I would like to add my support to keeping or increasing the level of funding for Cornell Cinema. Keeping the Cornell Cinema fee at \$11.05 per student keeps the cost evenly distributed across students, while keeping the per ticket cost reasonable, allowing attendance to remain at current levels. My husband and I have attended shows at Cornell Cinema many times over the years - one of our favorite film experiences to date was seeing Celine et Julie Vont en Bateau - a rare opportunity among MANY rare viewing opportunities that Cornell Cinema provides. It is a genuine and significant cultural contribution to the academic, as well as the wider, community. Cutting [Cornell Cinema's] activity fee [allocation] does not make any sense, especially when you consider the relatively significant cost per ticket increase that would be necessary. Cornell Cinema is a bigger asset to the Cornell community than many others - it is more important that ticket prices remain low rather than that the activity fee be kept artificially lower for some arbitrary reason. Thank you for making the Cornell campus a filmic mecca.

Alisa Strassner-Chirico, Dept of Landscape Architecture

I would like to express my support to continue financing Cornell Cinema at its currently level by GPSAAC.

Maciej Lukawski, Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Cornell Cinema has been one of the shiniest stars in the sky that is the Cornell Experience. I came to Cornell this Fall and I have visited Cornell Cinema about 10 times already. I'm about to exhaust my Cinema Six pass and intend to buy another one. Graduate school is tough. It gets hectic and after a point, one really needs a break to unwind and move on with the rest of the work. I owe Cornell Cinema a lot in helping me with this. I plan my study schedule to accommodate the timings of my favorites from the films that play here. It is very convenient to watch films here as it is in the central part of the campus. One of the things that makes me a frequent visitor here, is the cheap prices of the tickets. I hope that there is no price rise in the tickets, as I may have to reconsider the number of films I watch here. Cornell Cinema is one of my favorite things to do around campus and I intend to work at the Cinema in the spring semester (one of my life dreams is to be a projectionist). I really hope Cornell Cinema stays the way it is. Just my two cents.

Manit Hirani, Dept of Computer Science

Cornell Cinema is a major resource for grad students: it is very convenient, and has amazing offerings. I really value having it available, especially during winter. I am always very proud to show it off to visitors and to prospective students. It is one of the major ways that I regularly "get out" of the house/office and I attend it at least 10 times as often as I go to the Big Red Barn.

Kristin Hook, Dept of Neurobiology and Behavior

Cornell Cinema is hands-down my favorite cultural venue at Cornell, and one of the best-curated movie houses I have ever had the privilege to live near. Just last night I went to see Buster Keaton's *The General* with the Alloy Orchestra, and was thrilled to see the theater brimming with so many other Cornellians and Ithacans. Part of what makes the Cinema such a regular part of my weekly life here on campus is that I can afford it. I sincerely hope that the GPSAAC does not cut the funding for Cornell Cinema, and have also emailed them to express this opinion.

Josi Ward, Architecture Department

I was distressed to learn that the GPSA might cut funding for Cornell Cinema, an important academic and social resource. I attend about once a month, almost always with other graduate students. I never use the Big Red Barn. The variety of films, the affordability, and the convenience of Cornell Cinema make it really important to my life as a graduate student, and make Ithaca much more attractive - this is a pretty small town.

Jane Glaubman, 2nd year PhD program, English

I am a first year graduate student in Anthropology PhD. I came from Cambodia to Cornell just a couple of months ago. Back home, after I received the offer from Cornell, there were 2 websites I was always hooked on: Craigslist as I needed to find an apartment, and not the grad school, not the International Students Office, not even my department, but the Cornell Cinema website. I just kept going back to the program, the films announcements with delight: in a couple of months, I would be there, not only to have this wonderful inspirational academic life that all Cornellians aspire too, but also to fully absorb all the diversity and possibilities offered by a one-in-a-kind movie theatre. Hearing that the Cornell Cinema may face cuts in funding comes with great disappointment. It is surreal as I can't imagine a cut in the library funding, with students paying fees to access knowledge. I can't imagine a cut in physical activities structures with students paying more and more to keep healthy. And I can't therefore imagine that this little island of warmth, carefully and heartily curated pieces of art, would be threaten, with students often more and more hesitating between a cinematic adventure and the ease of convenient downloading, now being pushed back by an increasing fee. I therefore hope that this is all imagination. And that indeed the funders of Cornell Cinema will realize that cutting in the funding of this home-far-away-from-home would be more devastating than they seem to imagine.

Emiko Stock, Anthropology PhD student

I would like to express my support in opposing the funding cut to the Cornell Cinema and the subsequent increase in the ticket price. I believe that the Cornell Cinema is one of the most interesting cultural options available to students; the selection of films is great and allows us to watch valuable films that are not normally screened at commercial cinemas, and at a reasonable price. The Cornell Cinema offers a way of socializing that it's fundamental especially during Ithaca's harsh winter.

Liliana Colanzi, Ph.D. Candidate, Comparative Literature

Cornell Cinema is a major resource for grad students: it is very convenient, and has amazing offerings. I really value having it available, especially during winter.

Wah Guan Lim, Asian Studies