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5-20-2020

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Recommended Citation

Taylor University, "From Film Student to Business Owner" (2020). *2020 Website News Stories*. 32.
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From Film Student to Business Owner

BY: Julia Gosden

PUBLISHED: May 20, 2020 4 pm

45



While his career may seem unconventional, with some days starting as early as 4 am for a shoot, TU alum Conor Olstad's passion for film inspires him to continually develop his skills and grow his own production company: Olstad Media. Now based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, he considers his years at Taylor as formative in shaping his hungry mindset.

Conor's time in Taylor's [Film and Media Arts](#) program stretched him to figure things out on his own, providing "structure for those that need it and flexibility to expand for those who see the sky as the limit."

Day in the Life of an Independent Videographer

After graduating from Taylor, Olstad worked for an outdoor media agency for a year and a half before deciding to venture on his own. Now, as an outdoor videographer, he does not clock in the normal 9-5 day. Every day is different, and some start far before sunrise and are followed by a full day of filming. Furthermore, Olstad generally edits the footage that same night so his client can use the content right away.

Although his work schedule varies, Olstad says the one thing that remains the same is how he can see God's faithfulness daily. From his time at Taylor to now, he has learned to live in such a way that he does not continually have to ask himself, "What if?" He makes it a priority to find peace in the fact that God is, and will remain, faithful.

Learning from Talented, Experienced Faculty

To this day, some of the most influential people in Olstad's life are Taylor faculty. He is quick to recognize the great lengths his professors took to invest in his career goals and challenge him spiritually, even taking class time to offer valuable life advice.

He still refers to his notes from his senior seminar, which are filled with information about how to interview well, how to establish himself in the workplace, and even miscellaneous pieces of advice such as when to get a credit card.

Taylor's film program faculty members are talented professionals and award-winning filmmakers, many of whom are recognized in their industry and have been accepted into various film festivals. Not only do these professors personally invest in students, they also invite students to be part of their crew for their projects, further preparing them through hands-on experience.

With the guidance of his professors, Olstad took advantage of the resources available to him at Taylor whether it was taking on extra projects for fun or experimenting with the program's cameras, lights and gear.

Studying Film and Media at Taylor

Taylor's film program has over 350 recognitions and film festival acceptances, along with 12 Crystal Pillar awards from the regional Emmy organization in 2020.

Faculty seek to harness their students' potential and help shape them into skilled filmmakers like Olstad, who attributes where he is now as an independent videographer to Taylor: "I give credit for my knowledge of telling a good story completely to the Taylor film program."

Film students begin taking production classes in their first semester of college. Throughout their four years, they will be able to continually hone their skills with expert technology like Sony's FS-5 and FS-7, RED Weapon 8K, Avid Media Composer, teleprompters, green screens, Cam-Mate jib, and much more.

By the time our students are seniors, they have already formed an accomplished portfolio that will guarantee to show off their experience as they begin meeting with employers.

Aside from the many opportunities available to film students right here in Indiana, Taylor also has programs that send them around the country. The semester-long [Hollywood Internship Program](#)

sends students to the heart of the entertainment industry, where they earn 16 credits by completing two internships and a course taught by industry professionals in addition to weekly networking events set up by the program coordinator.

A January class is also available where students travel to the Sundance Film Festival, which allows them to dive further into the process of independent filmmaking.

Some Words of Advice

Olstad encourages students to take full advantage of their time at Taylor, “It is such a safe place to learn and grow,” Olstad said. “Leave no stone unturned, foster every relationship, and invest in the four years God has given you there.”

For more information about Taylor’s film program, view the [YouTube](#) channel to see some of our students’ award-winning projects. Check out Olstad’s [channel](#) to view his work.



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