

## Should I go to film school?

Contributed by Stuart

In this article I discuss my thoughts on film school and its place in the film industry. There is, and always has been a debate on this topic from those who have gone and those who haven't, the fact is that both have valid reasons! How kickass would it be able to go to school for making movies! Man, I felt just that way when I was starting to hate life as a Computer Science major at ASU. The fact is my friend, film school is in many ways unique to the normal major, if there is such a thing. Unfortunately a couple factors came into play preventing me from going to film school when I was tackling my other career path. Well, it was really myself that was the main preventative factor in going to film school, I will not blame it on the world. There are a couple things that could make or break your experience with film school, and well that's exactly what I am going to discuss in this article. First thing is first, and this is something you will see me stressing heavily in all of my own recommendations to friends who have the interest, you must also have the passion. Sorry if I am beating a mildly injured horse here, but man most people don't get it! This is indeed different from selecting a cool sounding elective in high school, this costs SERIOUS money too. I would ask you first how much film has played a role in your life so far, I mean besides owning all 7 seasons of Seinfeld so far. If you can honestly say that this is something you have been interested in, seriously, for a while now then great! If you like the other 98% of high school graduates who think, "oh crap, time to make a decision and fast". Well who knows how it will work for you, but I am not going to give a very bright outlook. I mean I guess you could go to film school just to get a degree and then after graduating go work up the ladder at Office Depot, and while there is nothing really wrong with corporate Office Depot, just think about all that knowledge you just acquired, what are you doing with it? Ok, so you may or may not have the passion in film, but none the less want to go to film school! Awesome you have made a good choice, well that too depends. First thing is first, a degree in film is not really something colleges have for the most part... Crap! Yeah that's how I felt after finding out that the closest thing ASU had to a film degree was Journalism. While I would have had the chance to get in a mock film studio and work with cameras, it would be to record people talking about news and to be completely honest I couldn't force feed interest in that. Now if you find yourself luckily living in California, or New York or by some random college somewhere that does have a film program then your options are better. Also if you find you don't mind moving away from home, and if your parents have the dough to support that then fantastic X2. These states are more than film friendly, especially California. Unfortunately for me I was never a straight A student, and most of my extracurricular activities included my Playstation. That hurt me because I found out that film school is blasted expensive man! Sure there are cheaper degrees, like for Cal State Fullerton and what not, but still we are talking big bucks. I never wanted to be the guy paying for his degree into his mid thirties, so I was a bit SOL. But don't let that stop you if you're really interested, because if you're academic enough about it you may be able to sport a scholarship and that would be totally sweet especially for the mega-expensive schools such as USC, the school George Lucas went to. Then on to the kick in the pants part of this whole deal. Do you really need a film degree at all? Well the short answer is definitely a NO. The fact is that if you want to make a movie, well who is stopping you? Even more so, if you want to be a production assistant on a big budget feature film you will find that most of the people working on it in fact did not go to film school, imagine that. Even more so, I can most definitely recall spending time with my boss reviewing resumes for prospective production assistants on a feature I was working on. Ever time we got a resume that was full of Producer and Director credits we would just chuckle and move along. Hey if you have produced and directed your own feature length short in college then great, but unfortunately I don't give a rat's ass! I want to know how much experience you have had as a production assistant, and if you don't have any I want to know why we should hire you. Unfortunately we don't hire people so that they can stand behind the Director and give him pointers, we hire production assistants to work and work hard! Alright now that I have most certainly gone over why you don't need to go to film school, maybe I should make a stand from the other point of view. Well for one if you want to learn the technical side of film making and get real hands on experience with 35mm film cameras, lighting equipment and everything in between then you're in the right place. You will most certainly get a chance to make some movies, and learn a lot about how to make them look nice. Not only that but you will get to network with a group of like minded individuals who also want to become the next big timer in Hollywood. This is very much an awesome thing and will help you in your quest. Keep in touch with these people and you could very well have free help in making the movie that separates you from the crowd of cookie cutter film directors. Unfortunately for the production assistant crowd, not many are really passionate about making movies. On top of that, your going to get a chance to learn about filming, but your going to be working so hard half of the time your probably going to be to brain dead to take away any solid gems of information. I guess in the end, going or not going to film school is okay. One route is not intrinsically better than the other, and you can most definitely work in the industry sans a degree. Is one really worth it? I don't know I don't have one, and I have done just fine. It sure sounds like it would have been fun though.