

# Dean's Innovation Grants

## Final Report

Date: 10/6/23

Project Title: The Music Library Picture Show: Creating a "Third Place" for Denton Students

Project Team Members: Meghan Sprabary; Kristin Wolski

### Project Purpose

The aim of the Music Library Picture Show demonstration project was to learn about how event programming affects student attitudes about the library and to position the library as a viable "third place" for UNT students and visiting high school students. To achieve this, the team hosted five musical film screening events. With these events, our goal was to provide a space for students to decrease anxiety and to learn about their perceptions of the Music Library.

### Project Activities

- November 9, 2022: *Into the Woods* screening
- February 23, 2023: *West Side Story* screening
- May 2, 2023: *Shrek the Musical* screening
- July 12, 2023: *School of Rock* screening with the International Summer Music Institute
- July 29, 2023: *Shrek the Musical* screening with the International Summer Music Institute

We promoted the events with the assistance of UNT Libraries Communications and Marketing. This included posters, small flyers, lawn signs, signage for the library digital displays, and images formatted for social media. A logo for the screening was used throughout promotions to create consistency across promotions. For the events, with the help of Communications and Marketing, we created Broadway-style playbills that included information about each musical, as well as a QR code that linked to a LibGuide about musicals. This guide has been viewed 112 times. For our final screening for UNT students, we used a whiteboard to promote the event on the first floor of the Willis Library. One of our talented student assistants drew characters from *Shrek* onto the board with the event location, date, and time and a QR code for the registration.

For the screenings done for UNT students, the screening room was decorated to match the aesthetic of the musical. Our goal was to create an immersive, relaxing atmosphere. Students verbally appreciated our efforts.

We explored many food options during the screenings. When we served hot food (pizza and breakfast burritos), student attendance was higher than when we just served popcorn and candy. We did have some attendees leave after food was consumed, but most attendees stayed throughout the entire film.

### Budget

<b>Project Budget</b>	<b>TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED</b>
<i>Film Rights</i>	\$1670.00
<i>Refreshments</i>	\$427.91
<i>Decor</i>	\$104.12
<b>Total</b>	\$2202.03

\* For student assistant (graduate).

\*\*Funds may not be used for professional memberships or journal subscriptions.

\*\*\* Travel funds may be used for site visits for research purposes or may be used for presenting a paper on this research project at a conference.

### Project Outputs/Outcomes

In reviewing the registration data for the events, undergraduate students consistently showed the most interest in the screenings, with the exception of *West Side Story*, in which graduate students showed an equivalent level of interest. Some attendees did not register. The following table shows an aggregated number of total registrations by status (see table 1):

**Table 1**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Aggregated Number of Registrants</b>
Undergraduate	50
Graduate	13
Faculty/staff	12
Other	1

For the first screening, we showed *Into the Woods* to an enthusiastic audience. 29 people registered and 26 attended. This is an attendance rate of 89.7%. For *West Side Story*, we needed to cancel this event twice due to the winter ice storm. We had a respectable registration of 17 people and an attendance of 12 with an attendance rate of 70.6%. We suspect the two cancellations and lack of hot food impacted attendance of this event. For the final screening, we showed *Shrek the Musical* during the week before finals as a pre-finals opportunity to relax. 30 people registered and 22 attended the screening. This is an attendance rate of 73.3%.

### Survey Data

For all of the UNT community events, we conducted entry surveys related to opinions about the library. Our most comprehensive datasets come from the *West Side Story* screening and the

summer music institute events. Before the *West Side Story* film screening, we conducted two activities. For students who had not previously visited the library, we asked them to list their assumptions about the library. Some responses included phrases like, “primarily used for music,” and “a place where I can find books and knowledge.” For students who had previously visited the library, we asked participants to write 1-3 words that describe the library; they wrote words like “inviting” and “friendly,” as well as “quiet, cozy, and interesting.” We sent out an exit survey after the *West Side Story* and received six responses. When asked again to provide 1-3 words that describe the library, participants chose words like “relaxing, inviting, chill” and “calm, informational, inspiring.” Although we received less responses than we desired, they were informative. Based on the results, library anxiety is less of a concern to our students than we thought. The first-time library patrons mostly described the library in terms of what services and collections we provide but did not indicate any negative feelings associated with the library.

In addition to the film screening for UNT students, we also partnered with Daphne Gerling at the College of Music. Over the summer, Daphne directed the International Summer Music Institute, which is comprised of students from the age of seven through the late twenties. For each session of the two-week camp, middle school and high school students had the choice of attending one of our musical film screenings. 18 students attended the first session, and 14 students attended the second session. We served chips, candy, and beverages. Before the film screening, we asked the students two questions:

- 1) When you think of libraries, what is one word that comes to your mind? See below for the aggregated data from the two sessions of words submitted by students:



- 2) Before music camp, did you know that there are libraries dedicated to music?
  - a. Yes: 18 responses
  - b. No: 9 responses

Unfortunately, we received no responses from participants for our exit/follow-up survey.

## Other Results (if applicable)

N/A

## Anecdotal Information

- Students were very appreciative of the space for relaxation, especially during finals. One student was visibly agitated when they arrived and was slightly disruptive during the film, but calmed down as the film progressed and thanked us as they left, stating that “[they] really needed this.”
- Attendees were more engaged when student staff were included in the events. At some screenings, our student assistants discussed library resources and how they personally use the library.
- Although we do not have hard data, the events did partially prove our hypothesis that outreach events like movie screenings are helpful in building trust and comfort between students and library staff. Meeting the students in a smaller, more casual setting was helpful for building relationships. We gained some new library regulars, and Meghan Sprabary was approached multiple times at the Music Library Service Desk by students who recognized her from the showing. They asked about jobs, music scores, and non-music related reference questions.
- In the two film screening sessions with the International Summer Music Institute, we noticed that the students were significantly more distracted than their college-aged counterparts. For instance, multiple students were playing videos or games on their phones while the film was playing. We noticed that students would watch the screen more when they were eating. As library professionals, we have been encountering studies that indicate a significant decrease in attention span, especially in younger people. At the beginning of the event, we asked the students to complete a survey on the whiteboard and this seemed like a struggle for many of the students; they appeared unwilling to take a moment to stop, read, and comprehend the text on the board. Instead of completing the task independently, students would immediately ask what they were supposed to do, despite hearing the instructions just seconds prior.
- Instagram was a useful place to promote the events; however, we learned that Instagram accounts only have data for ninety days. Anecdotally, we know that some people followed us after the events, but we do not have the exact data to share due to our lack of access to the information about engagement and follower increases.
- From our conversations on the day of the event, we learned that most of the attendees were first-time visitors to the Music Library.

## Best Practices

We learned that it is critical to plan a film screening event at least 30 days in advance. Key parts that need planning are scheduling dates and promotional materials. After trial and error, students responded better to learning about the events through physical advertising formats, like lawn signs and when one of our students drew musical characters on a whiteboard. Students also positively engaged with selecting several of the the musicals through a voting

process and using a whiteboard and Instagram. We strongly suspect that the visual forms of advertisement made all the difference in student attendance at the events.

Through targeted emails, we also contacted some professors and the student musical theater organization. We do not know the outcome of whether students came as a result of us contacting professors, but we did witness members of the student musical theater organization attend *Into the Woods*. Below, we have listed a suggested timeline for planning:

Timeline

<b>Times in Advance</b>	<b>Task</b>
30+	Get film quote and choose film; request promotion from library Communications and Marketing.
2 weeks	Put up physical and publish digital promotion
1 week	Contact student organizations or classes; Put in Dashboard requests for PPR and food
48 hours (at least)	Order food from restaurants or grocery stores (if buying food platters). If purchasing food from grocery store yourself, you can do it the day before or morning of.
Day before	Send email to all registrants
Day after	Send follow-up/exit survey

Program Continuity

The Music Library plans to continue The Music Library Picture Show. We plan to host one or two film screenings each academic year, although we will not focus only on movie musicals. For 2024-2025, The Music Library Picture Show plans to collaborate with “The Forum for Music in Media,” a group of student filmmakers and composers.