

Dear Colleagues:

I'm writing as Director of Northwestern University School of Communication's MFA in Writing for the Screen+Stage (www.write.northwestern.edu) to ask that you continue to send us your best and brightest writers who are interested in graduate education in screenwriting, playwriting and television writing.

We had another great year --

We hired playwright **Thomas Bradshaw** (one of *Time Out New York's* Ten Playwrights to Watch and featured as Best Provocative Playwright in the *Village Voice*) and television writer **Carla Waddles** who, for the last 13 years, has worked on shows for Warner Bros, UPN, TBS and Nickelodeon. In addition, TV writer/producer/NU alum **Janae Bakken** (*Scrubs*) flew in from Los Angeles to teach a highly popular course on sitcom writing.

Faculty Highlights

Rebecca Gilman was named to the highly prestigious Goodman Theatre Artistic Collective, and her play, *Blue Surge*, had a run at the Finborough Theatre in London where it garnered rave reviews and sold-out performances. **Zayd Dohrn's** play, *Reborn*, was produced at SF Playhouse and *Want* will be performed as part of Steppenwolf's First Look Repertory of New Work. Zayd is also working on a pilot for HBO. **Kat Falls** published the YA novel *Rip Tide*, her second in the *Dark Life* series (in development at Disney with Image Movers and the Gotham Group producing, with Robert Zemeckis attached to direct). As for myself, besides working on several screenwriting projects in various stages of development, I co-produced Debra Tolchinsky's award-winning feature documentary *Fast Talk* currently being seen around the country (fasttalkthemovie.com).

Visiting Artist Highlights

We hosted a panel on comedy writing featuring **Thomas Bradshaw**, NU alum **Michele Ganeless**, president of Comedy Central, and NU alum **Luke Matheny**, whose short film *God of Love* won the 2011 Academy Award in the Best-Live Action Short category.

NU alum **Richard J. Lewis** spoke to the MFAs about his movie, *Barney's Version*, and directing work on *CSI*.

NU alum **Maryam Keshavarz**, spoke to students/screened her film, *Circumstance*, winner of this year's Sundance Audience Award.

NU alum **John Logan** talked about his career as a screenwriter (*Gladiator*, *The Aviator*, *Rango* and the upcoming James Bond movie) and playwright (*Red*). In his comments, John definitely echoed the philosophy of the MFA: always keep art in the foreground as you smartly pursue opportunities in film, TV, and theatre.

Alumni Highlights

Sarah Gubbins (MFA '08) is having plays produced at both Steppenwolf and at Chicago Dramatists and was recently featured in [The Chicago Reader](#). **Toby Herman** (MFA '09) was associate producer for the Emmys. **Andy Miara** (MFA '11) sold a sitcom pitch to Comedy

Central. **Erik Gernand**'s (MFA '09) short comedy *Tech Support*, co-written by and starring **Jenny Hagel** (MFA '09), won several festival prizes including "Best Lesbian Short" at the Hamburg International Queer Film Festival in Germany. **Stephanie Kornick** (MFA '10) is the Showrunner's Assistant on the NBC Chelsea Handler sitcom based on her memoirs, *Are You There Vodka, It's Me Chelsea*. **Kendall Sherwood** (MFA '11) is Script Coordinator on *The Closer* (where she did her TV Academy internship through our program in summer 2010). **Carrie Barrett** (MFA '09) accepted Gotham Stage Company's invitation to join their company. **Meridith Friedman** (MFA '10) was appointed as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Drama at Kenyon College following a residency at Curious Theatre in Denver.

Program Developments

Our unique **Professional Reads Program** is in full swing. MFAs who submit a polished play, screenplay, or teleplay within one-two years after graduation receive up to five "professional reads" with feedback and guidance from established Northwestern alumni in the entertainment industry. We signed an agreement with **The American Theatre Company** to develop one of our alumni's works each year. **Chicago Dramatists** will present staged readings of six new plays by our students and once again, we will hold a Northwestern New Plays Festival. We also continue to help students gain other valuable professional experience through internships at such places as **CAA, Comedy Central, the SyFy Channel, Victory Gardens Theater and the O'Neill Playwriting Conference**.

Further Information

You can get more information at write.northwestern.edu, including details about our curriculum, grants/scholarships (at the minimum, every student receives a \$5000 production grant), and an application (due by December 31). We also have an e-brochure available: <http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/graduate/ebrochure/>. Thanks so much for continuing to help us get the word out.

Best,

David Tolchinsky
Director, MFA in Writing for the Screen+Stage