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Dear Dr. Cerbasi,

Here are 4 write-ups of the film grants  
I've just made - please excuse the repetition.

Also the latest Sloan brochure.

Please let me know if you need anything else.  
Otherwise I will expect a proposal or pre-proposal in the  
coming weeks.

Sincerely,  
Doron

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Up against - Average

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

To stimulate young film directors and screenwriters to create compelling drama about science and technology, and to more accurately portray scientists and engineers in film and television.

This is one of four proposed grants to the four leading film schools in the country to stimulate their top students to write and produce new film and television shows about science and technology. The schools propose to establish annual awards in film production and screenwriting and an annual film colloquium on science and technology. Their programs aim to influence the next generation of filmmakers to create more realistic and dramatic stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers through the visual media. Another half dozen institutions nationwide may be worth considering for similar grants at a later date.

The American Film Institute is one of the premier film centers in the United States. Among its graduates AFI lists film directors Jon Avnet, Martin Brest, and David Lynch and in television Ed Zwick and Marshall Herskovitz, creators of *Thirtysomething* and *Michael Dinner of Chicago Hope*, *Wonder Years* and *Picket Fences*. Unlike the other three proposed film school grantees, which are all part of larger universities, AFI is an independent institute devoted exclusively to "the art of the moving image" (film, TV, video and digital). AFI students are older and often have other graduate degrees, even some film or TV experience, before enrolling. The Institute is modeled on the European conservatory concept, where talented individuals study with the leading artists of the day. Jean Firstenberg, the Director of AFI and James Hindman, the co-Director, are both actively involved with this proposal. AFI proposes to set up two annual \$12,500 screen writing awards for scripts that treat science and technology themes, or scientists and engineers, in a more accurate and compelling fashion. The Institute would also like to give one film production award of \$17,000 to enable the most promising candidate to complete a film that explores science and technology issues or characters. The finished scripts will be read by agents and studios and the completed film shown at an annual festival.

AFI also proposes to hold an annual colloquium bringing scientists and engineers to talk to film students about the narrative possibilities in their work. Since AFI does not have its own science faculty, these speakers will be selected from industry and business.

One of AFI's unique and much-heralded features is an annual Television Writer's Workshop. Traditionally sponsored by the three major networks on a rotating basis--and most recently by Fox TV as well--AFI selects a dozen talented but unknown writers from across the country and immerses them in an intensive three-week workshop with established film and TV professionals.

Screenplays from one or more of the participants may be selected for development by the networks--several already have. AFI now proposes to make "science and technology" the theme for next year's workshop. Such an effort would not only generate several scripts on S&T written by up-and-coming screen writers, it would also get them read by the networks--and possibly even produced. It could also be starting several careers on the right S&T track.

As foreshadowed in the Foundation's 1996 Directions Paper, the underlying aim of this program is to establish science and technology as legitimate and entertaining subject matter in the mass media. Over time, this program aspires to do for scientists and engineers what television series like "ER" or Chicago Hope" have done for doctors or "LA Law" for lawyers. Or to produce more feature films like "Apollo 13." The program could expand to include other efforts with the networks and studios, as well as the S&T community. The long-term goal is to inform and attract Hollywood at the grass roots and to have S&T concerns become part of the natural landscape.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, which includes the Institute of Film and Television, is one of the leading film schools in the country and the only non-California institute to make the first round of our proposed film grants. It has produced such renowned directors as Martin Scorsese, Oliver Stone, Spike Lee, and Martha Collidge. Dean Mary Campbell, who runs the school, is married to a physicist, George Campbell, and is a genuine believer that scientists and engineers need to be portrayed in a more complex and realistic way in films.

NYU will give four annual screen writing awards of \$5000 each for screenplays that explore science and technology themes or characters in a compelling way, placing S&T scripts at the high end in terms of financial incentive and visibility. They will also give two annual \$10,000 awards for film production to their top students who handle S&T subjects in an original way. One difference with the other schools is that the NYU proposes to give awards to undergraduate film students as well as graduate students. The NYU undergraduate film program is one of the largest and most successful in the country--arguably the best. Dean Campbell thought she would get some of the most interesting and original work from her undergraduates.

NYU proposes to hold an annual symposium bringing scientists and engineers to talk to film students, and to describe some of the excitement and the challenges involved in their work. Attendance at the symposium would be mandatory for those wishing to enter the competition. NYU would also like to create a Science Advisory Group of four distinguished experts to advise students as they proceed and to provide technical expertise where needed.

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June 11, 1996

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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The grantee in this proposal, the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television is one of the top film schools in the country with a direct channel to the film and television industry. Active alumni include Francis Ford Coppola, Rob Reiner, and Tim Robbins; the Board includes Mike Ovitz, Samuel Goldwyn, Jr, and Sylvester Stallone. Robert Rosen, chairman of the department, has taken an active role in organizing this program.

While the top film schools are all broadly similar, each has its particular areas of strength. UCLA has the best (and most competitive) graduate film screen writing class in the country, run by Lew Hunter, a widely respected film teacher and author . Almost all of its graduates--20 a year--go on to jobs writing for television and films.

UCLA proposes establishing two \$7500 Sloan screen writing awards which are guaranteed to capture every student's attention since they are the highest monetary awards for screen writing UCLA makes. UCLA is similarly competitive on the Sloan film production award, proposing to match the highest award at \$25,000. This would enable the most talented film student to create an original film using S&T themes or characters. The finished film would be shown at an annual festival and submitted to agents and studio people.

Since many film students will want to know just what "science and technology" means, UCLA has arranged for a colloquium featuring half a dozen scientists and engineers from the UCLA faculty. They will discuss the narrative possibilities--the dramatic stories--inherent in their fields of inquiry and will initiate a long-term dialogue.

They will also take the students on tours of their labs. It is hoped that exposure to scientists, engineers and their work will make for more informed film making and screen writing and will initiate a long-term dialogue.

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The USC School of Cinema-Television is one of the most illustrious film schools in the U.S. Its founding faculty included Douglas Fairbanks, DW Griffith, Irving Thalberg and Darryl Zanuck. Its current board lists some of Hollywood's most powerful names including Marvin Davis, Barry Diller, David Geffen, George Lucas, and Stephen Spielberg, since 1951 only two years have passed without a USC graduate receiving a nomination for an Academy Award. In 1994, it received 11 nominations including a Best Director Award for alumnus Robert Zemeckis (for Forrester Gump). Among films associated with its alumni are Apollo 13, Boyz n the Hood (John Singleton wrote the screenplay in a USC class), Silence of the Lambs, and Remains of the Day. John Wells, executive producer of ER and Lance Gentile, an Emmy-winning writer for ER, are both USC alumni. Dean Elizabeth Daley, who holds the Steven J. Ross/Time Warner Dean's Chair, has been actively involved with this proposal.

USC proposes to give two annual screenwriting awards of \$12,500--topping the previous highest script award at USC--for screenplays that challenge stereotypes of scientists and engineers. They also propose to give two annual \$12,500 awards for the best completed film with a science and technology theme. Unlike the other three proposed grantees, USC completely subsidizes film production costs for its students, so these would be cash awards. Dean Daley believes that she needs this level of award to capture her students' attention and get them to take a chance on new subject matter. USC students are so close to the film industry that most make their films as demos for the Hollywood studios--meaning that they are replete with sex, violence and car chases. The completed films with science and technology themes would be shown at annual festivals and sent to the studios.

USC also proposes to hold an annual seminar with scientists and engineers talking about their experiences to cinema-television students. They would discuss some of the day-to-day realities of their work, as well as the high moments, and examine how Hollywood has treated these professions in past films.

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