

TO: Film Lit Conference Planning Committee
FROM: R. M. Berry, chair
RE: Annual timetable for planning of FSU Conference on Literature and Film
DATE: November 7, 2004

The following schedule gives an approximate idea of deadlines and chronology for annual conference planning.

Summary:

- 1) Choose a conference theme and appoint a director early in the fall semester of the academic year prior to that in which the conference is scheduled. This will normally occur during a planning committee meeting in late October.
- 2) Distribute the CFP at the Film and Lit Conference one year before the planned conference.
- 3) Arrange publicity, draft budget, select venue & accommodations during March or (at latest) early April following the conference. Normally, the conference planning committee will meet with the director(s) during March.
- 4) Actively solicit proposals and participants during the summer and early fall prior to the conference.
- 5) Vet proposals during mid to late October, three plus months prior to the conference.
- 6) Make a schedule, solicit panel moderators, print programs, etc. during November and December, one to two months before the conference.
- 7) The Conference will take place in late January or early February.

Details:

1) Conference theme and director

Early in the fall semester of the academic year prior to that in which the conference is scheduled (i.e., approximately 16-17 months before the conference is held), three things must occur, normally in the following order:

a) Appoint a conference director or directors – Normally, selecting the director and approving the conference theme or topic will occur simultaneously, but choosing or finding a director is chronologically prior, since the theme can and probably will be modified as planning progresses.

NOTE: the committee needs to begin seeking individuals interested in directing the conference well *in advance* of the fall. Normally, discussions for directing the conference will begin in the spring immediately following the conference itself (i.e., nearly two years before the conference the new director(s) will actually organize).

b) Approve a conference topic or theme – By late October, the planning committee should meet to discuss and officially approve both the director(s) and his/her/their suggested topic. Prior to this meeting, the proposed director(s) should make the first attempt at formulating the conference theme and provide the committee with a description of 100-250 words.

c) Design, produce, and print the Call for Papers – After the conference topic has been approved, the new director(s) must put the

earlier 100–250 word description into its final form, producing the text for the official Call for Papers. (The new director may want to consult earlier conference descriptions and CFP’s.) If the conference director wishes to generate a new design format for the upcoming conference, as opposed simply to modifying that of a previous year, then it would be a good idea to produce this design in time to use it for the CFP.

Once the CFP has been written and designed, it will need to be printed, usually through the FSU Printing Service. (The CFP should be designed for use as a “flyer” or multifold, one page document capable of being mailed cheaply and displayed unfolded on bulletin boards.)

2) Distribute CFP

At the Film and Lit Conference one year before the planned conference the CFP must be included in the packet of materials given out to all participants. This means, of course, that all the steps in 1) (above) must be completed well in advance of the conference. In order for the conference staff to have time to assemble the packets, the printed CFP should be *delivered* at least two weeks before the conference, meaning that it should be delivered to the Printing Service ready for printing a month to six weeks before the conference. (Beware of winter break when the printing service may be closed or have reduced hours.)

3) Publicity, budget, venue, accommodations

During March or (at latest) early April following the conference, five things need to occur, roughly in this order:

a) Mail out CFP – The CFP should go to English and Modern Language departments, schools of communication, film schools and film studies programs, etc., and all other prospective participants. If the CFP is not mailed until the end of the semester, it will be of very limited usefulness, since most faculty will be away for the summer.

b) Set up conference website – The CFP should include the URL for the conference website, so that when participants receive the CFP, they are able to consult the website for further information. At the least, an initial home page with a notice to consult at a later date for complete information should be available by the time the CFP is mailed.

c) Draft a budget – Working with the conference staff, with CPD (if they are still hosting the conference), or with the conference planning committee, the director should draft a budget, itemizing both expected income and expenses. (It would be a good idea to begin with the budget for the previous year’s conference.)

d) Determine a site for the conference – If the conference is going to be held in an FSU building, it will be crucial to determine the availability of the building and reserve rooms early in the spring. If the conference is going to be held off campus at a hotel, it is crucial to determine by late spring or early summer how much this will cost, and so include this cost in budget preparations. If CPD hosts the conference, then they will also take care of registration and payment from the participants. However, if CPD is not involved, then the

director(s) will need to figure out some way for participants to register and pay. These arrangements will need to begin no later than late spring, early summer.

e) Choose a conference hotel – Local hotels will offer special rates for conference participants, as well as other helpful reductions, if they can be assured of selling a certain number of rooms. Selecting a hotel as the official hotel of the conference is the principal way to obtain these advantages.

4) Generating participants

During the summer and early fall prior to the conference the director(s) will need to make contact with personal and professional acquaintances at other universities, as well as with participants in past Film and Lit Conferences, and actively solicit or generate proposals for panels and papers. This is especially important in the case of nationally recognized scholars whose participation in the conference will help increase the significance, quality, and prestige of the event. The director(s) may also want to contact local FSU faculty and encourage those working in fields related to the conference topic to take the lead in organizing conference panels made up of their professional acquaintances from other universities. (It is probably not wise to encourage panels made up entirely of FSU faculty.)

5) Vetting proposals

During mid to late October prior to the conference, the conference director(s) should begin to read abstracts and panel proposals and start to organize a schedule for the conference. Normally, deadlines for submissions is mid-October.

6) Printing programs, soliciting panel moderators, etc.

During November and December, the conference directors will need to notify the participants of their acceptance, complete the schedule, put the schedule on the website, print the programs, etc. The important consideration here is that most of this needs to be done *before* FSU lets out for winter break. Once the holidays begin, very little can be accomplished, and with the new semester starting in early January, it will be a very difficult time to arrange anything.

7) The Conference

The conference will normally occur in late January or early February.