NUTV gives movie festival green light

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News Staff Photo/dayin Chen

Jared Booker's first movie featured him and his roommates hurling hardened Twizzlers at each other. The freshman criminal justice major, who filmed the movie in his Stetson East residence hall room, will now have the chance to enter his project in a city-wide competition.

"I've always loved making movies, and getting a chance to work with good equipment and my friends is a once in a lifetime event," Booker said.

Campus Movie Fest (CMF) is the brainchild of Dan Costa, a graduate of Emory University in Atlanta.

"When I was an RA (Resident Assistant) at Emory, I made a movie with my floor," said Costa, now leader of the seven-man group that runs the festival. "We began competing with other floors, and soon, the idea exploded at Emory."

In 2000, Costa hosted the first CMF, which featured only movies produced at Emory. In 2001, he included Georgia Tech. Three more universities, including the University of Georgia, Georgia State University and Atlanta University Center School joined in 2003.

Teams of seven competing in the contest are loaned a digital camera and an Apple iBook and are told to make a five-minute film in one week.

Northeastern will join the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston College and Emerson College in making its first appearance in CMF since Costa decided to bring the contest to Beantown.

"Boston is a great city for the event because there are a lot of schools and a lot of energy," Costa said in a recent interview. "It was on the top of everybody’s list [of cities to add for the 2005 CMF]."

NUTV will be sponsoring the event at Northeastern and will hold a kickoff next Wednesday, the deadline for teams to sign up.
"Dan is a man who gets things done. He motivated us to set up this event in a little under two months and kept us on track to get this event done right," said NUTV president Jonathan Cunha.

Costa said he tried to choose a variety of schools from the Boston area, with Northeastern representing a moderately-sized school.

Students can register their teams online at the CMF Web site, www.campusmoviefest.com.

Each team must produce a film that includes a theme decided by Costa. Entries are then screened by an audience and judged by a panel of students, faculty and administrators from each school. CMF has two brackets. The first is a Northeastern-wide contest, where three movies are selected. Those three winning movies are then entered in a city-wide competition, where they will be judged against movies from MIT, Emerson and BC.

The competition will also take place in Tampa, Fla. and Atlanta, but there is no current plan to have a nation-wide competition.

CMF will provide contestants with the software necessary to make a movie, including iMovie and Garageband, programs that are used for editing. iMovie is an interactive program that allows the user to add special effects, insert a soundtrack and edit a movie.

iMovie also interfaces with a digital camera, so a would-be filmmaker can plug a camera into a laptop and edit a movie from there instead of handling cards or trying to sync the camcorder with a third-party program using a PC. Garageband is a music editing program for Apple computers. A simple interface allows original recording through an iBook's built-in microphone, allowing teams to record their own music for their movies. Garageband also has eight tracks so teams can insert beats in the background of original songs.

CMF rules bar nudity and illegal activities such as drug use and violence on university property, and all computers must adhere to school information technology guidelines, which vary among universities.

Northeastern has allowed filming in residence halls as well as all public areas, except in the lobby and halls of residences and apartment buildings.

"The school says that RAs are supposed to be patrolling the halls for illegal activities, and they don't want to have to punish an RA because someone filmed something illegal," Cunha said.

Costa has yet to announce the location for the award night, the kickoff party or this year's theme. Winners can earn prizes for victories at each level of the festival.

First place winners at Northeastern win round-trip tickets for their squad anywhere from Delta airlines. Taking the gold for the city of Boston yields Mini Macs for the entire team. Other prizes include iPods, iPod shuffles and dinner and a movie for the entire team.

For more information or to sign up for the event, visit www.campusmoviefest.com.