



New SMPTE Student Chapter at De Anza Launches with Two Exciting Events

By Robb Besler

The sound stage of the De Anza College Film/TV Department served as the kickoff for the first SMPTE Student Chapter in Silicon Valley history. On 22 February, John Shike, director of educational institutions, SMPTE Membership Committee, and SMPTE President Pat Griffis, demonstrated that networking among media

professionals and students is as important as SMPTE's industry-standard time code, universal film leader, and color bars. After the meet-and-greet portion of the SMPTE/Media Forward event, attendees enjoyed Steven Lampen's presentation of "The Road Less Taken" on the topic of finding future jobs in the media industry. Larry Kaplan, president of SDVI, presented "The Road Taken," about jobs and the need for talent to support the

media technology industry. A lively Q&A followed.

Transitioning from the De Anza Filmmakers Association to the SMPTE Student Chapter, more than 80 students looked forward to learning more about the latest developments in media technologies to enable their creativity and career opportunities. They did not have to wait long. Griffis invited 20 De Anza College SMPTE student members and faculty to Dolby Laboratories,

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Attendees at the De Anza chapter event.

Sunnyvale, CA. Griffis, vice president of technology in the office of the chief technology officer at Dolby, arranged for Sr. production engineer and colorist Shane Mario Ruggieri, CSI, to present “Concepts, Storytelling, and Mastering Dolby Vision” to the group on 31 May.

Ruggieri began by explaining the concept of nits, the measurement of luminescence. This proved to be an

integral term throughout the presentation. He showcased color-grading techniques to resolve the technical requirements of a film and as a complement for storytelling. The twist was when Ruggieri showed an image of a city at night with a deep blue skyline. He illustrated how to maintain color consistency in coordination with the previous shot to tie the two disparate shots

into a cohesive pair. After applying the final touches, the final colored image was compared and contrasted with the camera original image presented at the beginning, and the attendees were surprised at the vast difference. In the end, Ruggieri brought the conversation back to artistic intent, as the images that were colored together could have been taken in unlimited directions. He noted that regardless of what technology can bring to the table, color-grading must be done in close contact with the director’s vision.

During a Q&A with Griffis and Ruggieri, questions arose about workflow and communication between a colorist, the director, and the director of photography. One question highlighted one of the many new challenges with grading high dynamic range (HDR): “How does a colorist resolve a harsh contrast in brightness between two connecting shots?” Ruggieri noted that he would not solve the problem in

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Shane Mario Ruggieri, CSI, addresses students.

one particular way, and that it would “depend on the artist’s intention to create the intended reaction in the audience.” Griffis chimed in with an example from *Inside Out*, on which Dolby had its hand in supporting the Dolby Vision workflow. Griffis said that the brightness of the screen was purposely maximized to create the physical reaction to the light that would invoke both the physical feeling and emotional alignment to a baby seeing the world for the first time.

Finally, Ruggieri went over a few concepts related to monitors and color volume. He showed the same scene from *Fantasy Flights*, a Dolby piece of content graded for two different color volumes. The standard dynamic range version, which was graded at 100 nits BT.709 on Dolby’s PRM-4220, and the HDR version, which was graded at 4000 nits P3 color space on Dolby’s prototype named the *Pulsar*. Seeing the image side by side demonstrated a clear difference in several aspects of the content. The most notable of these differences were the realism and the sense of depth of the *Pulsar*-graded image over the image graded on the PRM-4220.

When the first images appeared on the *Pulsar*, there was a feeling of amazement. We knew there was something special happening as we watched this content on one of

only 22 *Pulsars* that exist in the entire world. One student asked, “Why does this look so much better here than on my television?” Ruggieri replied by explaining that what we were experiencing was on the cutting edge of HDR technology. The color volume and contrast range that make *Fantasy*

Flights look so crisp on the Dolby monitor will soon make it to household television sets.

The members of the SMPTE Student Chapter were grateful for the color-grading presentation and left with many new insights. After seeing the visuals, the students now understand the critical role of color volume in mastering and realize that the number of pixels do not necessarily determine the quality of images on a monitor. Proof of this was when Ruggieri showed creatively exposed imagery at 1920 × 1080 resolutions within 4000 nits with P3 color space. Undoubtedly, these were some of the most beautiful imagery we have ever seen. Griffis and Ruggieri provided an amazing educational experience—one that made us only wish for better pixels sooner than more pixels now.

—Robb Besler,
Chapter President

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