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CITY OF NEW YORK OPENS DOORS TO NYC'S FIRST PUBLIC GRADUATE FILM SCHOOL – THE BARRY R. FEIRSTEIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CINEMA

Mayor de Blasio welcomes inaugural class to first public graduate school of cinema in NYC

Located at Steiner Studios at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Feirstein only school in nation housed on a working film lot

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today joined City University of New York Chancellor James Miliken, Media and Entertainment Commissioner Cynthia López, Barry R. Feirstein, and other elected officials to open the doors to the Brooklyn College Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema. The Feirstein School, which welcomes an inaugural class of 69 students this fall, is the only public graduate school in the nation seamlessly integrated into a working film lot, Steiner Studios, and is the first public graduate school of cinema in New York City.

“New York City has long been a global capital for film and television production, but today we are making an unprecedented commitment in the future of this industry and in New York’s finest young filmmakers,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “By opening the Feirstein School, we are unlocking the door of opportunity for a talented and diverse group of students who want to get the best, most cutting-edge education in cinema, and then put those skills to use right here in New York City. I thank former Mayor Michael Bloomberg for his extraordinary vision on this project and to the generous private funders who helped to make this first-of-its-kind school not only top-notch but highly affordable for a group of aspiring filmmakers who reflect the multicultural creativity of our city.”

The Feirstein School is designed with the objective of providing affordable access to career opportunities in cinema, while simultaneously creating a pipeline of diverse talent that can work in the local film industry in New York City’s five boroughs. Announced in 2012, the project is funded through a public-private partnership model and reflects the City’s commitment to growing the already robust NYC film and television industry. The City of New York has invested a total of \$8 million to support the creation of the Feirstein School and numerous scholarships so that more New Yorkers have the opportunity to pursue careers in film and television production. As part of the College’s commitment to affordability, the cost of tuition at Feirstein is approximately \$59,000 for in-state students over three years, while the cost of comparable three-year MFA programs at private institutions can often exceed \$150,000. Under the de Blasio administration, the City’s commitment to the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema has increased by 20 percent over initial investments. The City’s overall contribution includes

\$4.7 million for construction, \$2 million for scholarships, \$1 million for curriculum and programming, and \$500,000 for creative grants and marketing.

Through the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, the City has worked closely with Brooklyn College in various aspects of the school's development, including marketing and financing. The school is the result of an extensive public-private partnership involving the Brooklyn College Foundation, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, Steiner Studios, New York City Council, the Brooklyn Borough President and the City University of New York.

The Feirstein School provides students with access to state-of-the-art production and post-production facilities in one of the largest sound stages in the country, as well as a full complement of lighting, grip and electrical equipment. Degree programs include M.A. in Cinema Studies and M.F.A in Cinema Arts, which is composed of five tracks: cinematography, directing, post production, producing and screenwriting.

Another hallmark of the school is the involvement of seasoned directors, producers, and actors, who contribute to the Feirstein's advisory board and help to guide the school toward fulfilling its mission. Among them are actor, author, and director Ethan Hawke; director Steven Soderbergh; and Emmy Award-winning producer Celia Costas. Founding donors include Brooklyn College alumni Don Buchwald '59, Roy Furman '60, Jules Haimovitz '71, and Michael Lynne '61.

"The City of New York is committed to creating more opportunities for New Yorkers to access careers in our thriving production industry, which is why we're supporting the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema," said **Commissioner Cynthia López, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment**. "The Feirstein School will provide its students with an industry-driven – and affordable – education, and the scholarships we've established will mean New Yorkers from diverse backgrounds will be able to develop their talents and participate in meaningful industry opportunities, given the productions located at Steiner Studios."

"Brooklyn College's new Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Steiner Studios is the only public graduate film school in the city and the only film school in the country located on a working studio lot," said **CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken**. "The Feirstein School will educate a diverse new generation of filmmakers in a city that boasts a \$7 billion film industry, which employs more than 100,000 people and supports thousands of businesses. This innovative new school will serve students, the film industry and New York very well."

"Brooklyn College provided an excellent academic foundation for me and I'm extremely pleased to return the favor by helping to build a 21st century cinema school that will both strengthen the college and provide access to exciting careers for today's students," said **Barry R. Feirstein**.

"The visionary philanthropy of Barry R. Feirstein, CUNY, the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, and the New York City and State Council, among others, has enabled us to transform the lives of our students," said **Brooklyn College President Karen L. Gould**. "With instruction from faculty who are leaders in their fields, and hands on experience in a top notch facility, our students will be adequately prepared to succeed in the city's burgeoning film industry."

“We are simply elated to have the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema here on the Steiner Studios lot,” said **Douglas C. Steiner, Chairman of Steiner Studios**. “This co-location of academia and industry is cutting edge. Students are immersed in the real world thriving industry of film and television and being trained for the jobs of tomorrow. This is New York’s future at its best.”

“In Brooklyn, we are creating pipelines to prosperity in the ‘pictures,’ building on our ‘Hollywood East’ reputation to develop a full-fledged industry that trains and hires our own. I am proud to support Brooklyn College’s brand-new Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, a wonderful addition to the CUNY system – of which I am a proud alum – and a one-of-a-kind opportunity to study filmmaking on a working film lot in New York City. I look forward to seeing the Emmys, Oscars, and other awards that this school’s future grads will amass, along with the countless local jobs that will be created,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

Congresswoman Yvette Clark said, “Brooklyn has historically been a center of culture in the United States and in the entire world, producing prominent filmmakers, actors, and screenwriters from Mel Brooks and Ruby Dee to Spike Lee and Noah Baumbach. With the opening of the Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Brooklyn College - a college that has supported the aspirations of many generations of women and men - Brooklyn will have an institution where students have an opportunity to learn the techniques of filmmaking at an affordable cost, considerably less than at most private institutions. I commend Mayor Bill de Blasio, Commissioner Cynthia López of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, and the City University of New York for their commitment to the aspiring filmmakers in our community. I am certain that we will soon have the opportunity to experience the work of these talented filmmakers at the TriBeCa Film Festival, the Sundance Film Festival, and the Academy Awards.”

“New York has a rich history as an epicenter for film and the arts and this school will help continue that tradition. By providing an affordable option for students interested in pursuing a career in film, the Brooklyn College Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema will help cultivate the next generation of leaders in this industry,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**.

“Our thriving film industry means good jobs for New Yorkers with diverse education and skill levels,” said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. “We’re lucky to have a successful film industry in the city, including here at Steiner. Giving more New Yorkers more access – especially affordable access – to cinema education is important to fostering the next generation of media, film and entertainment professionals in the city. Thank you to the City, CUNY, Steiner Studios, Barry R. Feirstein, and my colleagues in government.”

Council Member Stephen Levin said “New York City is the heart and soul of the film industry and the iconic films and shows produced here are an indelible part of what makes our city the cultural capital of the world. The Feirstein School will give New Yorkers from all walks of life the chance to start fulfilling careers in this exciting and growing industry- students will have a chance to learn and work in a real industry setting and interact with some of New York’s finest film talent. It’s important that our public educational institutions give students the skills, training

and experience to build their own success and this initiative is an innovative step in that direction. I have no doubt that we'll see great things from graduates of the Feirstein School."

Council Member Inez Barron, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, said, "As Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, I am pleased to witness the opening of Brooklyn College's Barry R. Feirstein School of Cinema. This School, the City's first public graduate film school, has the distinct advantage of being integrated into a working film lot at Steiner Studio in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The curriculum offerings in cinematography, directing, post production, producing and screenwriting will prepare its students to enter the world of cinema fully equipped to excel. I am confident that as this City University of New York program advances, it will receive stellar accolades, and join numerous other prestigious CUNY programs that have achieved national and international distinctions. The location of this School, abutting the NYCHA developments of Walt Whitman, Ingersoll (formerly known as Fort Greene) and Farragut Houses is also an opportunity to provide economic, educational and social benefits for the residents of this community. I look forward to these partnerships."

"New York City is home to world class arts and culture, and today's announcement shows that Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council have a commitment to making sure that we have a talent base that is rooted in our City," said **Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs.** "By investing \$8 million in the Feirstein School, students will have access to state-of-the-art production and post-production facilities in one of the largest sound stages in the country. Congratulations to Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner López on this tremendous achievement."

Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. said, "As the Council Member who fought for the creation of "Do The Right Thing Way," I understand that film is a powerful way to represent and shape culture, while also creating economic opportunities that ripple out into the community. It's wonderful that Brooklyn will now have a homegrown, experiential program to nurture the cinematic talent that exists in our borough and our city."

"The Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema is an incredible opportunity to develop future directors, cinematographers, producers, and screenwriters by providing students with a high-quality, affordable education and real-time experience on the lot of Steiner Studios. Through the ongoing support of public-private partners, this School will help change the face of the industry by promoting diversity and inclusion. As a Member of the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education, I look forward to the growth of this School and its vital role in bolstering film and TV production within the City of New York," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo.**

"New York City is home to the world's leading film industry, and as a former film production minor at Brooklyn College, I could not be more proud to see my alma mater provide an even greater opportunity to those thriving to break into the biz. I look forward to hearing the first Oscar acceptance speech from a Feirstein Graduate School alumni in the years to come," said **Council Member Jumaane D. Williams.**

"The Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Steiner Studios represents a tremendous opportunity for a broad range of students to gain access to the growing film and media sectors," said **Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation's President & CEO David Ehrenberg.**

“We are thrilled that Steiner and CUNY have chosen to locate this groundbreaking program within the Yard, a program that will further enhance our mission of creating middle class jobs while providing unparalleled access to these opportunities for New Yorkers.”

Dr. Barbara Bowen, President of the Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents CUNY's 27,000 faculty and academic staff, said, “Thank you, Mayor de Blasio, for keeping your promise of support for the new Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema Studies at Brooklyn College, and congratulations to the faculty, staff and students of Brooklyn College who have made the School possible. New York City is of course the perfect place to explore and contribute to new directions in cinema, and a public university is exactly the right place to study cinema, among the most democratic of the arts. CUNY has long been rich in pathbreaking film scholars and practitioners; it is a great pleasure to be able to welcome the new School. “

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