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Julie Shands

Ouachita News Bureau

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Photo 1 Levi Dade

For immediate release

Ouachita student participates in Arkansas Cinema Society's Filmmaking Lab

By Julia Shands

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For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or 870-245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Sarah Critton, a freshman communications and media major from Little Rock, Ark., participated in the Arkansas Cinema Society's Filmmaking Lab for Teen Girls from July 7-Aug. 6 in Little Rock.

The lab is held annually for high school girls who hope to follow in the footsteps of prominent women in directing, cinematography, costume designing, editing and screenwriting. Over the span of a month, Critton and eight other contributors chose a storyline, wrote a script, cast characters and shot a 5-minute short film.

"We made a short film in a month," Critton said. "It sounds like a long time for a short film, but once you see how much goes into a short film, that's a big rush to get everything done in that time frame."

Through the lab, Critton was made aware of what pieces must fall into place in order to create a film.

“We started out by pitching ideas for a story with nine girls and nine ideas and deciding from those what we wanted to do, then we wrote our script and got it finalized and began the casting process,” Critton said. “Then from picking characters, we revised the script and started to work on the actual filming part. We developed our shot list, and we went to our filming spot the day before to figure out where we wanted our actors to be and what camera angles would work best.”

“Drop It,” the short film written by Critton and her team, focuses on the subject of female empowerment. The main character, a girl named Rowan, is teamed up with two football players for a class project assigned by their science teacher, who happens to be the football coach.

“The coach was hoping that she would do all of the work for his players, so they could make a passing grade on the project and be able to play in the game,” Critton said, “but Rowan, being the wise person that she is, had other plans.”

The lab introduced Critton to another aspect of filmmaking that she had never experienced before.

“I think casting was one of my favorite parts before actually filming, because I never knew how much work went into casting people,” Critton said. “For Rowan, we had four people audition for her part, and we were just trying to find someone that was naturally Rowan, not someone that could act like her, but someone that was actually her so that was really interesting.”

Before participating in the lab, Critton knew that she was interested in film, but she realized it was her passion during the almost 14-hour day of filming in 100-degree heat, when even the long hours and high temperatures didn’t dampen her spirits.

The filmmaking lab also enabled Critton to meet Jessica Chastain and see a premier screening of her movie, “They Eyes of Tammy Faye.”

Critton’s short film “Drop It” can be found on the Arkansas Cinema Society’s YouTube page at https://youtu.be/O9yte_TTZP0.

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