

## From Tulane to Hollywood

October 21, 2011 2:00 AM Fran Simon

fsimon@tulane.edu

A group of Tulane alumni who are executives in the film industry returned to campus on Thursday (Oct. 20) to share their experiences and advise students who want to break into the movie business.



Alumni working in the film industry give tips to students as they discuss their paths from Tulane to Hollywood in the Freeman Auditorium of the Woldenberg Art Center. From left are: Harold Sylvester, Steven Pearl, Chris Petrikin, Jimmy Horowitz and David Lonner. (Photos by Sally Asher)

The [panel](#) included Harold Sylvester ('72), a producer and president of Blue Bayou Productions; Steven Pearl ('85), co-owner and producer of Scarlet Fire Entertainment; Chris Petrikin ('88), executive vice president of corporate communications for Fox Filmed Entertainment; Jimmy Horowitz ('83), president of Universal Pictures; and David Lonner ('84), founder of Oasis Media Group.



Moderator Beretta Smith-Shomade, right, chair of the Tulane Department of Communication, asks David Lonner about his time as an undergrad.

Frank, yet reassuring, the panelists urged students passionate about working in the film industry to follow that passion.

"If you have the drive and the determination, you'll at least be given a shot," Pearl said.

One student asked if it were necessary to move to Los Angeles to break into the industry, or whether "Hollywood South" could be a successful springboard.

"Part of coming out to L.A. is getting an education about Hollywood," Lonner said. "There's a lot you will learn when you come out and experience what the business of this business is, and that may either alter you or inspire you on your course."

Other tips from the panelists included:

- Surround yourself with others who also are passionate about the movie industry and build a supportive community.
- Gain confidence. Allow yourself to fail. Learn to take a gamble. Get outside your comfort zone.
- Do not rush to nail a job in moviemaking; have some life experiences first.
- Network with people in the industry who either attended Tulane or are from your hometown. Industry people who have something in common will be generous with

you.