

Screening Movies on Campus

As a student organization, you may want to screen a film or movie for an event. This is certainly a great idea, but there are some regulations you must follow to show a movie as what's considered a 'public performance.' The circumstances that constitute public performance are clearly defined in the law: "A place open to the public or any place where a substantial number of persons outside of a normal circle of a family or its social acquaintances are gathered."

Groups screening films or videos at South Dakota Mines must be sensitive to the educational mission of the University and comply with federal copyright laws.

Copyright law prohibits the showing of film in a public setting unless approval is granted by the company who owns the rights to distribute the film (sometimes the creator does not solely own the rights to grant permission for a screening) or unless the film is rented from a licensed public film distributor which generally includes licensing fees. Film programming may be shown in a public setting at an educational institution without additional approval or licensing if the program fits under the educational exception stipulated in copyright laws. Under the "Education Exemption," copyrighted movies may be exhibited in a college without a license only if the movie exhibition is:

- An "integral part of a class session" and is of "material assistance to the teaching content".
- Supervised by a teacher in a classroom.
- Attended only by students enrolled in a registered class of an accredited nonprofit educational institution.
- Lawfully made using a movie that has been legally produced and obtained through rental or purchase. Listed below are some common violations of film copyright laws by student organizations.

The student organization or group rents a video from a local video rental store or streams a film from a media site and:

- Shows it in a residence hall lounge.
- Shows it to their student organization members for a social gathering.
- Plays the video at a table in the union for recruiting members or providing information.

Solution: Student organizations planning a film program for public viewing should consult with the Office of Student Engagement staff to learn more about the copyright law educational exception or to review catalogs of licensed public film/vendors.

The Student Engagement Staff will be happy to assist you in planning a successful film/video program that is in compliance with copyright laws. Film licenses can range from free to \$500, and sometimes more. In order to determine the cost, the Office of Student Engagement will need to know the following:

- The film title
- The film screening date, time, location
- Capacity of the venue
- If there is an admission charge, and how much
- If the group already owns a physical copy of the film (i.e. DVD), and if not, what format the film needs to be sent to us in (tip: check with venue capabilities)