

11:59 P.M. A NEW ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Shahd Abbas Theatre Major

Project VVM

The challenges that my project addresses are issues pertaining to mental health that some college students may go through. The mission also includes providing opportunities for artists during the pandemic.

Rationale for the Capstone

- New students come in overwhelmed and more damaged than those who came in previous years ((Levine & Cureton, 1998b).
- Depression is the fourth ranked health problem that college students experience (ACHA, 2005).
- Students often deprive themselves of sleep and sleep more time in the weekend (Pilcher & Walters 1997).

Other's Solutions

The content in the musical contains elements of awareness for the audience to learn from, to reflect on their own surroundings, and to see what they can do better. It encourages those who are suffering to reflect and seek help.

Abstract

The project is an animated musical that addresses mental health struggles with college students, which would spread awareness about the situations. Due to the pandemic, it has turned into an animation and an album for audience to access from their homes. It allows the artists involved to focus on sound quality.

Possible Partners

The theatre and film artists involved are members from the AtCampus Theatre and Volunteer Short Films Organizations. In addition, we also have Dr. Boyd from the LSM Department on our team. The listening event that will be held to showcase the album will be sponsored by the Center for Student Engagement. A possible partner includes the Student Counseling Center and the Dean of Students Office. Although the content contains a trigger warning because it is inspired by true, sensitive events, it invites anyone who is willing to learn and enjoy some music. The musical opens a discussion for those who like to study the situations further.

First Three Steps

The first steps I took to create this project was write everything down: the idea, the script, the music, and the plan. During the second step, I talked to theatre and film peers, professors, advisors, and anyone who may have had a connection with the topic, which resulted in many drafts and changes to the plan and even the script and music. The third step was to put the plan in order and start the rehearsal and recording process.

Project Status

Currently, we are in the process of rehearsing, recording, and editing. We will be holding a premiere of the musical on around Fall 2021 Welcome Week. (contact sabbas1@vols.utk.edu for information to attend). An album will also be public for those who wish to listen to the music after the event.

For the future, I wish to keep building and workshopping the musical for possibly presenting it on a stage when the pandemic fades.

References

- Levine, A., & Cureton, S. (1998a, March/April). What we know about today's college student. *About Campus*, 4-9.
- American College Health Association. (2003). The American College Health Association National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA), Spring 2003 reference group report. *Journal of American College Health*, 53(5), 199-210.
- June J. Pilcher PhD & Amy S. Walters MA(1997) How Sleep Deprivation Affects Psychological Variables Related to College Students' Cognitive Performance, *Journal of American College Health*, 46:3, 121-126.