



Clockwise from left: Thomas, Soria, Stahl and students Rashad Alton, Caroline Cerrelli, Logan Slater, Omar Soto, Dilshan Herath, Kim Dana, Sachie Masuda and Kaitlyn Nesbitt were photographed Dec. 30 at Cal State Northridge.

‘Enriching the Industry With Diversity’

The HFPA reveals exclusively to *THR* a \$2 million gift to Cal State Northridge — the largest-ever grant to its competitive film program, where *Grumpy Old Men* director Donald Petrie earned his stripes — to foster fresh Hollywood talent By Michael Walker

IN 1996, THE HOLLYWOOD FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION, THANKS in part to the Golden Globes, donated \$15,000 to Cal State Northridge’s Department of Cinema and Television Arts — a gift to support senior film projects. The HFPA in the 20 years since has given nearly \$1 million to the acclaimed program and this year will grant an unprecedented \$2 million — part of \$6 million that the nonprofit (in conjunction with Dick Clark Productions, which provides matching funding and shares a parent company with *THR*) will donate in 2016 from revenue generated by the annual Globes telecast.

“We like CSUN’s focus on trying to diversify their student body,” says Lorenzo Soria, president of the HFPA, which has doled out more than \$23 million in grants to entertainment-related charities from LACMA to the San Francisco Silent Film Festival (its 82 members vote annually on the slate of grantees). “We know that state schools are going through financial difficulties and that we alone cannot fill the gaps, but every dollar counts,” Soria adds.

More than \$1 million of the grant will go to endow scholarships available to the 1,700 undergraduates studying film production and the 30 graduate

students in the MFA screenwriting program, many of whom come from low-income families and are members of groups that are underrepresented in the film industry. The gift “sends the message that studying film is not just for the privileged,” says Emmy-winning director Nate Thomas, a professor of film production. Adds CTV chair Jon Stahl, “This incredibly generous gift will ultimately feed the diversity in Hollywood.” The money will help CSUN to maintain the standards that have kept it competitive with far better endowed institutions, notes Dianne Harrison, president of CSUN, whose CTV alumni include *Grumpy Old Men* director Donald Petrie, Screen Gems executive Glenn Gainer and screenwriter Dale Launer (*My Cousin Vinny*).

The grant also will allow the school to keep pace with rapidly evolving filmmaking technologies. “We want our students trained on the latest and best equipment — it’s an expensive process, not only to learn filmmaking but to actually do it, and you have to constantly be on the top of that game,” says Harrison, who praises the “amazing people” at the HFPA for their continuing support, which will “enrich the industry with our very diverse students who have incredible potential.” **THR**