Faculty Name  Smartt, Samuel

Dept.  Communication Arts & Sciences

Project Title  Editing and Story Development for Feature Documentary

Project Abstract  I hope to provide you with collaborative experience in the intermediate stages of editing a feature-length documentary. The film, Luminous, follows the now internationally recognized work of Calvin Astronomy Prof. Larry Molnar, who is the first person to predict the near-future explosion of a star (in 2022). The film has been in production for over two years, and will likely not be finished for another six or seven years. In the meantime, it is critical that we begin working with the ~80 hours of footage we currently have to start crafting our story. You will be working very closely with me in this process. There may also be occasional opportunities for small-scale production work. Pending travel funding, one production trip is possible.

Project Outcome  The broader value of the project to the public is tremendous. Larry's work has exploded in international news coverage recently, and the trailer for the film has received over 60,000 views on Youtube in the past three weeks. This film will serve to document what will likely be one of the highest profile academic achievements in Calvin's history. But the film will also explore the lives and faith commitments of those involved in the science. It will be a human story, deeper and more intimate than any of the other stories that will undoubtedly be published on this research over the next five years. As a result, there will be opportunities for screenings in both sacred and secular contexts, hopefully fostering dialogue about the relationship of faith and science in a way that fits Calvin's mission.

In the short term, there will be brief segments completed and made available for viewing on the Luminous website by the end of summer 2017. In the long term, working with this McGregor fellow will be just one (indispensable) phase of a much larger process of editing the feature-length documentary. The ability to finish and disseminate the film quickly (i.e., within two years) after the star explodes depends on the work that we do now. Also, the continual process of reviewing our material and crafting our story helps us better understand what additional materials are needed.

I plan to submit the finished feature film to film festivals and seek distribution, either through educational or traditional channels. I also intend to plan an outreach campaign involving educational and religious institutions.