

PERSONNEL ACTION FORM

Name: Samuel Avery

Title: Associate Professor

Department: Communication and Media Studies Date: 2/1/2026

Action(s) under review (check each that apply)

- Reappointment
- Continuing appointment
- Promotion in academic rank (i.e. Inst to asst, asst to assoc., assoc. to professor)
- Full-time Lecturer (FTL) advancement (i.e. FTL I to II, II-III, or III to IV)

Date of initial appointment to SUNY Cortland: August 1st, 2013 (Assistant Professor)

Date of present rank: May 15th, 2019 (Associate Professor)

I. **Mastery of subject matter:**

A. **Formal Preparation:**

Highest Degree: MFA
Year: 2013
Institution: University at Buffalo, SUNY
Major Area: Media Arts Production

B. **Status of Degree:** Candidates currently completing a doctorate or other terminal degree should provide a description of progress to date and expected date of completion.

Status - Complete

C. **Licenses, honors, awards, certifications and other examples of recognition related to subject area:**

Professional Experiences related to subject area:

Director / Founder of the [Blackbird Film Festival](#) (2015 – Present)
Program Director of the Digital Media Academy at Harvard University (2011-15)
Academy Director, Academy at Syracuse Studies (2019-2020)

Awards / Honors:

See below (Section III. G) for a complete listing of creative achievements related to subject area.

II. **Effectiveness in teaching:**

A. **List courses regularly taught at Cortland since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion.**

CIN 208 – Introduction to Film Analysis
CIN 229 – Documentary Film Analysis
CIN 304 – Introduction to Script Writing
CIN 305 – Film Criticism

CIN 329 – Marketing the Screenplay
CIN 329 – Cinematic Cyborgs
CIN 499 – Senior Thesis

COM 203 – Introduction to Media Writing
COM 243 – Video Production 1 (Field)
COM 301 – Mass Media and Society
COM 322 – Intermediate Writing for Media
COM 342 – Video Production II (Studio)
COM 349 – Multimedia Production
COM 350 – New Communication Media
COM 445 – Advanced Documentary
COM 446 – Advanced Filmmaking
COM 499 – Senior Thesis

B. Describe new teaching materials developed and/or any different methods employed since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion.

Since my last promotion, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a comprehensive redesign of my courses and instructional methods to support remote and hybrid learning. In response, I developed a dedicated instructional website, www.profavery.online, which consolidates course materials, lectures, assignments, production resources, and instructional videos into a single, accessible platform. Originally created to ensure continuity of instruction during remote teaching, the site has since evolved into a central pedagogical tool that supports both in-person and online delivery. The website allows students to review lectures asynchronously, access step-by-step production tutorials, and engage with course content at their own pace, thereby reinforcing in-class instruction and accommodating varied learning styles. This shift has resulted in a more flexible, transparent, and student-centered learning environment, and the platform continues to be updated and expanded as an integral component of my teaching practice across multiple courses.

C. Provide evidence of accomplishments of teaching in your portfolio. Examples of the types of evidence ordinarily considered appropriate are provided in Chapter 220.07.E of the SUNY Cortland Handbook.

All evidence of my teaching can be accessed at www.samuelavery.info including CTEs and Classroom Observation Reports.

D. Describe role as an academic advisor and include any information deemed important in measuring the quality of advisement.

In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I maintain a consistent advising load of approximately 30 Media Production majors, providing academic guidance on course sequencing, degree requirements, and career planning. I also serve as the primary advisor for 6–8 senior students annually enrolled in CIN/COM 499 – Senior Thesis, a capstone requirement that involves substantial one-on-one mentorship. This role includes regular meetings, project development oversight, script and proposal review, production supervision, and detailed feedback throughout the academic year. The senior thesis advising component represents a significant time commitment due to the individualized and production-intensive nature of the work. In addition, I serve as Faculty Advisor to the Film Club, supporting student leadership, programming decisions, and extracurricular filmmaking activities. Collectively,

these advising roles reflect an ongoing commitment to student mentorship, academic success, and professional development beyond the classroom.

III. Scholarly ability:

- A. Bibliography of manuscripts either published or accepted for publication since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion: Indicate the name of the publication and the date published (or anticipated publication date) under each of the following headings.
- a. books or monographs
 - b. book chapter
 - a. "Avery, Samuel. "Not Without Us: Collaborating Across Difference in Documentary Filmmaking." *Documentary and Disability*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Print.
 - c. articles in refereed journals
 - d. articles in non-refereed journals
 - e. manuscripts submitted but not accepted for publication
 - f. book reviews
 - g. op-ed pieces
 - h. creative writing, including poems, short stories, etc.
 - i. other
- B. Bibliography of manuscripts published before initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion: List in the order given in A.
- C. List of conference presentations made since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion. Indicate the name of the conference and the date of the presentation under each of the following headings:
- a. invited presentations or keynote addresses
 - b. contributed talks at refereed conferences
 - c. poster presentations at refereed conferences
 - d. contributed talks at non-refereed conferences
 - e. poster presentations at non-refereed conferences
 - f. other
- D. List of conference presentations made before initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion. List in the order given in C.
- E. Research in Progress:
- F. External Grants
- a. Awarded
 - a. CNY Arts 2025 - \$5500 (received)
 - b. CNY Arts 2024 - \$4500 (received)
 - c. CNY Arts 2023 - \$4000 (received)
 - d. CNY Arts 2022 - \$6500 (received)
 - e. CNY Arts 2021 - \$8500 (received)
 - f. CNY Arts 2020 - \$8500 (received)

- g. CNY Arts 2019 - \$7500 (received)
 - b. Pending
 - a. CNY Arts 2026 - \$7500 (applied)
 - c. not funded
- G. Artistic and creative work since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion. This section may include musical or theatrical performances, exhibitions of artwork, audio or video production activities. For each item, include performance or exhibition date(s), venue, and if applicable, evidence of peer-review (e.g. juried exhibition, official selection at film festival)

For my main body of creative activities, please www.blackbirdfilmfest.com

The following are independently produced films and associated festival screenings (not connected to my ProLab initiative)

Nutz & Bolts (2019)

- 2021 Official Selection - Hamilton New York International Film Festival (Hamilton, NY)
- 2021 Official Selection - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Fish and Wildlife Film Festival (Moscow, ID)
- 2019 Official Selection - Furry Burque Film Festival (Albuquerque, NM)

The Catch (2019)

- 2021 Official Selection - Fort Myers Beach Film Festival (Fort Myers, FL)
- 2020 BEST NY SHORT - Adirondack Film Festival (Glen Falls, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Adirondack Film Festival (Glen Falls, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Buffalo International Film Festival (Buffalo, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Chautauqua International Film Festival (Ellington, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Hamilton NY International Film Festival (Hamilton, NY)
- 2020 Honorable Mention - Rochester International Film Festival (Rochester, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Twister Alley Film Festival (Woodward, OK)
- 2020 Official Selection - Fish and Wildlife Film Festival (Moscow, ID)
- 2020 Official Selection - Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival (Waverly, PA)
- 2020 Official Selection - Oregon Short Film Festival (Wilsonville, OR)
- 2020 OUTSTANDING COMEDY AWARD - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2020 Official Selection - Sunrise Film Festival (Nova Scotia, Canada)
- 2020 Official Selection - Dunedin International Film Festival (Dunedin, FL)
- 2019 AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD - Marcellus Mini Movie Family Film Festival (Marcellus, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - Marcellus Mini Movie Family Film Festival (Marcellus, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - SNOB Film Festival (Concord, NH)
- 2019 AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER - Syracuse International Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - Syracuse International Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)

Cravings (2019)

- 2019 Official Selection - Upstate NY Horror Film Festival (Rochester, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - Buffalo Dreams Fantastic Film Festival (Buffalo, NY)

Special Skills (2019)

- 2018 Official Selection - New York State International Film Festival (Albany, NY)

The Mayor (2019)

- 2021 Official Selection - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - Social Political Short Film Festival (Missoula, MT)

DEADEYE (2018)

- 2019 GRAND PRIZE for Best Short Film - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2019 Official Selection - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
- 2018 Official Selection - Redwood Film Festival (Online)
- 2018 Official Selection - Great Lakes International Film Festival (Erie, PA)

2018 Official Selection - Great Western Catskills International Film Festival (Andes, NY)
2018 Official Selection - New York State International Film Festival (Albany, NY)
2018 Official Selection - North Appalachian Film Collective - Fall Festival (DuBois, PA)
2018 Official Selection - Buffalo International Film Festival (Buffalo, NY)

The Study Date (2018)

2018 Official Selection - Marcellus Mini Movie Family Film Festival (Marcellus, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Berlin Flash Film Festival (Berlin, Germany)

Dirty Old Man (2018)

2018 Official Selection - Seneca Film Festival (Watkins Glen, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Great Lakes International Film Festival (Erie, PA)
2018 Award Winner (Best Comedy) - New York State Int. Film Festival (Albany, NY)
2018 Official Selection - New York State International Film Festival (Albany, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Great Western Catskills International Film Festival (Andes, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Rock 'N' Reel Music and Film Festival (DuBois, PA)
2018 Official Selection - Adirondack Film Festival (Glens Falls, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Hamilton International Film Festival (New York, NY)
2018 Award Nomination (Best Comedy) - End of Days Film Festival (Longwood, FL)
2018 Official Selection - End of Days Film Festival (Longwood, FL)
2018 Official Selection - Central New York Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)

The Marksman (2017)

2018 Official Selection - North Appalachian Film Collective - Fall Festival (DuBois, PA)
2018 WINNER: North Country Filmmaker Award - Snowtown Film Festival
2018 Official Selection - Snowtown Film Festival (Watertown, NY)
2018 Certificate of Merit (Cinematography) - Rochester International Film Festival (Rochester, NY)
2017 WINNER: Best NY Short Film - Upstate NY Horror Film Festival (Rochester, NY)
2017 Official Selection - Upstate NY Horror Film Festival (Rochester, NY)
2017 Official Selection - Buffalo International Film Festival (Buffalo, NY)

AREA 52 (2017)

2018 Official Selection - Marcellus Mini Movie Family Film Festival (Marcellus, NY)
2018 Official Selection - Fargo Fantastic Film Festival (Fargo, ND)

Glimpse (2016)

2017 Official Selection - Syracuse International Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)
2017 Commendation (Honorable Mention) - Permanent Memories Film Festival (Ancona, Italy)
2016 Official Selection - Super Geek Film Festival (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
2016 Official Selection - Buffalo Dreams Fantastic Film Festival (Buffalo, NY)

Proven: The Kingdom Saga (2015)

2015 NOMINATION: Best Costume Design - RIO Web Fest (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
2015 NOMINATION: Best Sound Design - RIO Web Fest (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
2015 NOMINATION: Best Directing (Action) - RIO Web Fest (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
2015 Official Selection - RIO Web Fest (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
2015 WINNER: Best Webseries - Direct Short and Documentary Film Festival (Online)
2015 Official Selection - Direct Short and Documentary Film Festival (Online)

Northside: Place, Memory & Belonging (2014)

2017 Conference Screening - International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (Galway, Ireland)
2015 Conference Screening - American Educational Studies Association (San Antonio, TX)
2015 Special Screening with panel discussion - Syracuse International Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)
2015 Official Selection - Syracuse International Film Festival (Syracuse, NY)
2015 Official Screening - Syracuse University Program for Refugee Assistance
2016

Other scholarly or creative activity:

In addition to my individual creative and scholarly work, I am the founder and director of the Blackbird Film Festival, an annual juried film festival that I conceived, launched, and continue to oversee. This work represents a sustained creative activity involving film curation, programming, community engagement, and creative leadership. My responsibilities include developing the festival's artistic vision, overseeing the submission and juried selection process, curating thematic programs, coordinating screenings and events, and supporting emerging filmmakers through panels, Q&A sessions, and educational programming. The festival serves as a platform for independent and student filmmakers and contributes to regional arts culture while maintaining professional standards consistent with peer-reviewed creative activity. Since its inception, Blackbird has grown in scale, reputation, and participation, requiring year-round creative planning and organizational effort. This ongoing work reflects a significant commitment to creative production, artistic evaluation, and public dissemination of film as a scholarly and creative practice. More information can be found at www.blackbirdfilmfest.com

IV. Service

List below your service activities since initial appointment (pre-tenure) or last promotion. Provide evidence of accomplishments of service in your portfolio. Examples of appropriate evidence include artifacts such as a letter from a committee chair detailing your contribution to the committee.

Since 2019, I have provided sustained service to the department through regular participation on the Personnel Committee and the Curriculum Committee, serving on one or both nearly every semester. In these roles, I have contributed to faculty evaluation processes, curricular review, and ongoing discussions related to program development and academic standards. In recent years, I have intentionally stepped back from formal leadership roles within these committees to allow newer and junior faculty members to assume leadership positions, while continuing to contribute actively as an experienced committee member and mentor.

That being said, I am currently serving at the Search Chair for our on-going Assistant Professor of Media Production search.

In addition to formal committee service, a significant portion of my departmental service is embedded in the operational and instructional demands of the Media Production program. My production courses are scheduled in extended formats that nearly double the standard 150-minute weekly class period, limiting the availability of additional time for committee assignments. These courses also require substantial out-of-class responsibilities related to equipment checkout, maintenance, supervision, and student training, which are essential to the functioning of the program and to ensuring safe and effective learning environments.

Further, I provide ongoing senior thesis advising (CIN/COM 499), mentoring approximately 6–8 students each year through an intensive, year-long capstone process that includes project development, production oversight, and evaluation. This advising commitment effectively functions as the equivalent of an additional course each semester. Taken together, these responsibilities represent a substantial and sustained service contribution to the department and program, reflecting a service profile that is intensive and essential, even when it differs in form from traditional committee-heavy models of faculty service.