Robert Dobbie
Communication Arts

In Winter 2014 I received a 2014 Faculty Development Grant to attend ICON 8 (Illustration Conference 8) in Portland Oregon. This grant funded travel to Portland, the registration fee, meals and hotel accommodations. The field of illustration is at a constant rapid change and as an instructor of this concentration of art ICON 8 offers a unique setting in the industry.

The main focus of my attendance of ICON 8 would be the Educators Papers Presentations where instructors from art schools across the country show how they keep the projects for their illustration students relevant and exciting.

ICON 8 is a non-profit organization run by illustrators and designers with the intent of providing the growing trend to an international audience of image makers and educators.

**Wednesday July 9**
Travel day, arrived in Portland at 9pm.

**Thursday July 10**

Educators Papers Presentations began at 10am. Mark Tocchet chair of the illustration program at The University of the Arts spoke on restructuring and developing an effective illustration program. Emphasis on todays illustrators need to be versatile so he restructured the illustration program there so students could “cross college designate their concentrations”. Illustrations students were encouraged to take electives in other departments such as animation, character development, fine art, photography, etc

[Don Kilpatrick III](#) spoke on the classroom in the 21st century. He is a faculty member in the Illustration Department of College for Creative Studies in Detroit. Gave some valuable insight from his classroom where his illustration students collaborate and
use their entrepreneurial skills in beleaguered cities and communities. Detroit obviously is the ground zero for such causes and he has given assignments that enhanced businesses through Neighborhood Beautification grants. Such start companies as Shinola and Simplified Clothing were a few examples of local Detroit start up that used illustrators and designers to enhance their companies.

Jim Burke New Hampshire Institute of Art spoke on educating illustrators in the 21st century. He concentrated mostly on collaborating with other schools, working professional artists, and organizations/museums. Create a consistent project such as a poster for the current display/exhibition for a museum was one example. Collaborating with outside organizations will help students gain more experience from actual creative jobs with deadlines and the exposure for the students as well as the school is valuable.

**Roadshow**
There was a great “Roadshow” exhibition of illustrators and designers who were selling there apparel, letter pressed prints, giclee prints, and zines. A lot of great art was for sale. I got some great ideas for students at Otis to attempt something similar if the venue is right.
Friday July 11th

Jan Pinkava from Google showed the latest technology for an animation called Windy Day. The program allows you to control the camera so you can explore any angle you want. Every view is different. Link here to see one persons experience [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lszHEu7oxE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lszHEu7oxE). This will apply towards pictures books and other narrative formats.

Rob and Christian Clayton were also noteworthy speakers. Showing their process for inspiration by visiting local flea market stores. The narratives that unfold were humorous and entertaining. Very interesting to see how a simple photograph inspired an entire exhibition of work. The spontaneous gathering of reference was

Copyright lawyer Linda Joy Kattwinkel discussed how social media is great for promoting your work but what are you agreeing to when you click yes to Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter. She explained that with all these sites
you own the copyright to your work but the site gets to license your work through its **adhesion contract**. All these sites are different however on the scope of the license so you need to read the fine print on what the site can do and what 3rd parties can do with your work. Look closely at the terms of service.

**Saturday July 12th**
Twin bothers [Aaron Smith](#) and [Owen Smith](#) find inspiration in the history and culture of Los Angeles.

Victor Juhasz and Janet Hamlin discussed their observations of war and terrorism and it’s effects from the battlefields to the courtroom. Janet Hamlin is the only courtroom artist allowed to cover the trials of Guantanamo.
Souther Salazar spoke on his Kickstarter project on a traveling art installation called “The Trading Tortoise” and the importance of play as an artist. His very intricate style of mixed media was impressive.

Keynote speaker Damian Kulash from the band OK GO.

In conclusion this grant gave me the opportunity to network with artists who attended the conference and solicit them to come to Otis as either guest speakers or to arrange a workshops for the students to collaborate with other art schools across the US. Andy Stern from Diesel Fuel prints and designer Blane Fontana are already planning to visit this fall as well as the founder of Hire an Illustrator.com and
Illustration Mundo. Creative director Soojin Buzelli of Asset International will also be visiting the illustration department and give her insight into how most art directors go about hiring illustrators. The students will greatly benefit from these successful artists and art directors. Seeing such a large gathering of illustrators and designers and all their work in one place is a rare thing and it helped me greatly understand not only stylistically what’s happening in illustration but also how to stay current with business practices and these are the most important things any artist can have.