

## Student Views

This week we asked Trevians what their favorite Oscar nominated movie is. Here's what they had to say...



Noah Dolan, Sophomore

“‘The Revenant’ (twelve nominations) because I thought Leo DiCaprio was great and the film kept you on the edge of your seat.”



Audrey Green, Junior

“‘World of Tomorrow’ (nominated for best animated short film). The films are made with stick figures and background pictures but they are really poignant films with deep premises.”



Griffin Dunne, Junior

“‘Star Wars: The Force Awakens’ (five nominations) because Star Wars was my childhood and I was happy to see it do so well. It shattered all of my already high expectations.”



Morgan Ford, Senior

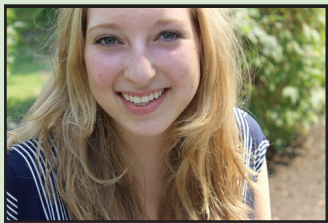
“I liked ‘Inside Out’ (nominated for best animated film) because it felt very real and it made me feel a lot.”



Sally Rubin, Senior

I really liked ‘The Revenant’ because it was filmed with natural lighting and Leo subjected himself to every insane situation he undertakes in the movie.

## There's good reason to boycott



by Camille Baer

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has disappointed the masses with this year's exceptionally white nominations, igniting frustration from members of Hollywood, and civilians alike.

My attention was first drawn to the situation due to Jada Pinkett Smith's response after the release of the main four categories of nominees.

Her announcement to boycott the ceremony caught fire in the film industry. Husband Will Smith will also not be attending, along with Spike Lee, George Clooney, and David Oyelowo, all of whom believe the Academy does not reflect the diversity of America.

“I am an Academy member and it doesn't reflect me, and it doesn't reflect this nation,” said David Oyelowo, star of film “Selma.” The Oscar boycott continues to gain momentum as more Hollywood actors join the debate and spread awareness.

Business Insider revealed Al Sharpton has launched a campaign through his National Action Network for people to join him as well. Comparing Hollywood to the Rocky Mountains, Sharpton said “the higher up you get, the whiter it gets. And this year's Academy Awards will be yet another Rocky Mountain Oscars.”

After last year's controversy over several films and actors who were “snubbed” from nominations, I expected a better outcome this year.

The backlash from actors speaking out against the Oscars is completely justified, and I hope the

issue will reach the Academy soon enough to realize that the lack of diversity is bigger than an award, it's become a part of a national conversation.

Talk has now even reached the White House, proving the Academy's most recent nominations are indeed a serious matter.

Something as pressing as race should not be handled lightly, nor go unnoticed. President Obama made an eloquent comment pertaining to the Oscar debate:

“It [diversity] makes for better entertainment. It makes everybody feel part of one American family. So I think, as a whole, the industry should look for talent, [and] provide opportunity to everybody. I think the Oscar debate is really just an expression of this broader issue. Are we making sure that everybody is getting a fair shot?”

Is everyone in America allotted a fair shot? As much as we'd like to think, “yes, of course, our president is black and there are T.V shows and movies with black people playing lead roles,” the reality is that the problem is still very much exists.

Therefore, I agree with Smith in her boycott. Her decision to take a stand and speak up for what she believes in has created a ripple that raises the discussion of race in an honest and upfront way.

Something that has also bubbled to the surface is the talk of what the host, Chris Rock, will say during the show, especially over the #OscarsSoWhite controversy. Over the past couple of weeks, as the awareness towards the subject has risen, Rock even decided to rewrite the entire show.

Although there was pressure for Rock to drop out of hosting, I hold an immense amount of respect towards his decision to continue. He's been given an incredible opportunity to take advantage of the lack of racial diversity, and I hope he addresses it head on.

## A failed model of diversity

Let the Oscars remain artsy

by Michael Blicktein

As the Academy Awards (now formally known as the Oscars) come upon us, the arguments start about which movies deserve awards, which movies should've been nominated, and which movies we feel we should've seen.

This year, the biggest debate is whether there is enough representation of diverse movies, and everybody is asking, “did we snub a large group of diverse films?” and the answer to that is “no.” Most of the movies that had diverse casts were either commercial failures or comedies, which are rarely nominated for Oscars.

Of IMDB's top 50 most popular movies of 2015, only four movies have particularly diverse casts. It's not until we get to 12 items down the list that you'll see the first one (“Straight Outta Compton”), which points to the well known phenomenon that Hollywood is predominantly white. But like TV, the film industry is a form of entertainment first, which means that a bunch of white people are controlling it.

The most unfortunate thing for people of color in the entertainment industry is that the majority of the audience watching TV or going to movies is white. Studios and networks focus foremost on selling to white people because, according to the US Census bureau, 77% of the population is white.

This is where the Oscars should step in and help even the scales. The biggest difference between the people in The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and a general movie going audience is that the Academy thinks of movies as an art form rather than an entertainment commodity.

In theory, this should balance the scales and recognize movies that are



Oscar winners Simmons, Arquette, Moore, and Redmayne in 2015 | Oscar.com

not necessarily popular, and it should help movies that studios and executives didn't necessarily support. And in some cases it does. The Academy gave light to lesser known films, ranging from excellent short animated films like “We Can't Live without Cosmos” or “World of Tomorrow” to big feature length films like “Room” or “Brooklyn,” which you could only find in art house theatres or indie film festivals.

However, this usually doesn't end up helping potentially great movies with particularly diverse casts. Currently, The Academy is made up of about 6,000 members, and according to The Los Angeles Times, about 93% of them are white, 77% of them are men, and 54% are over 60 year old. If you want to appeal to The Academy, you're mostly going to want to appeal to old white American men.

According to fivethirtyeight.com, the members vote using an instant run-off system that accounts for all their rankings of the nominations. This means that a movie doesn't even have to be ranked first by the majority of members to win the award.

Of the eight movies in the running for best picture, a few in particular have reasonably white casts because they're biopics or based on

true events. “The Revenant,” “The Big Short,” and “Spotlight” are all stories and events that have predominantly white key figures.

These movies became popular because the studios had the most faith in them, they were released at the right time, and they catered to the majority. The Academy, who looks at movies based on their artistic value, may feel that movies with diverse casts aren't as valuable for the sole reason that The Academy isn't diverse.

Fortunately, The Academy is planning on changing that before 2020. According to time.com, The Academy plans to double the membership of women and “diverse members” by 2020, which should help even the scales of which movies are getting awarded, and hopefully get the system out of the hands of a stubborn white men for once.

Whether you like it or not, the Oscars are an important award show because it finally takes the success of a movie into the hands of people who appreciate it for more than ad value. This change in Academy membership is necessary because it will better determine which movies are worthy of fame and fortune and help keep those actors and directors making movies in the future.

### Corrections:

In the Jan. 29 issue of The New Trier News, the article ‘Raise the Stage is raising the standards of NT theatre’ misstated some facts. The “Fight Night Showcase” hosted by New Trier High School in December was not hosted by Raise the Stage, but the money raised will go to the cause. The Winnetka 60093 author's name is Holly Marihugh. The March 12 Whim N' Rhythm concert will now be held at 3:00 in New Trier's McGee Theatre.