

DANIEL (DAN) GURSKIS

HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Montclair State University

Dean, College of the Arts, 2012-Present

Designated a New Jersey State Center of Excellence, the College of the Arts consists of the Department of Art and Design, the School of Communication and Media, the John J. Cali School of Music, the Department of Theatre and Dance, four professional departments (Arts and Cultural Programming, Performance Operations, Broadcast and Media Operations, University Galleries), two centers (Center for Cooperative Media, Creative Research Center), and two service offices (Education and Community Outreach, Career Services). The college each year presents over 500 public events: concerts, recitals, theatrical performances, screenings, exhibitions, panels, lectures, and colloquia.

Overall Responsibilities

- Foster a supportive, inclusive, student-centered community with an emphasis on access, equity, belonging, and excellence.
- Provide overall direction of the operations of the college, leading academic affairs, student affairs, budget, personnel, communications and marketing, policy, strategic planning, accreditation, facilities, industry relations, and community outreach.
- Supervise 13 direct reports: two associate deans, an assistant dean, a budget director, two school directors, two academic department chairs, four directors of non-academic units, and an executive assistant.
- Supply leadership for 90 tenured/tenure-track/full-time faculty, 400+ contingent faculty, 65 professional, managerial, and administrative staff, and 200+ contingent staff in service of nearly 3,800 majors and graduate students in 60 programs, including 37 BM, MM, BFA, and MFA professional arts training programs.
- Oversee 12 campus buildings and those theaters, galleries, studios, workshops, laboratories, and classrooms housed there.
- Serve as the chief fundraiser and public spokesperson for the college.
- Steward existing relationships and establish new relationships with business and industry partners, public school districts, arts and community organizations, and higher education institutions in Asia, Australasia, and Europe.
- Ensure compliance with the standards set by four accrediting agencies: National Association of Schools of Art and Design, National Association of Schools of Dance, National Association of Schools of Music, and National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Budget and Finance

- Manage an operating budget of \$35 million (\$4 million in non-personnel budget lines).
- Gross auxiliary revenue of \$600K+ per annum from rentals, location services, production services, and consulting.
 - Client list includes Google, Hulu, CBS Studios, NBCUniversal, ESPN, MSNBC, National Public Radio, New Jersey Lottery, and the Red Bulls II Pro Soccer Team.
- Administer more than \$21 million in college-designated accounts with the MSU Foundation.

Student Success

- 75 percent six-year College of the Arts graduation rate (vs. 69 percent university-wide).
- 94 percent retention rate from first to second year.
- During the 2020-21 pandemic-impacted year, returned 50 percent of classes to some in-person instruction while maintaining a COVID-19 positivity rate of 0.3 percent.
- Returned 95 percent of classes to in-person instruction in the following academic year.

Enrollment Management

- Engage in enrollment management in all phases: recruitment, admissions, retention, and time to degree.
- Oversaw managed enrollment growth of 45 percent over the past decade (25 percent in the last four years), peaking during the current 2023-24 academic year.
- Made the College of the Arts “a first-choice destination” by offering competitive, highly desirable programs, top-flight facilities, and a welcoming, student-centered environment.
- Bolstered retention with the addition of five professional advisers combined with continued mentorship by the faculty.
- Devised and gained approval for a uniform tuition structure for in-state and out-of-state students in the performing arts to enable more effective recruitment nationally and internationally.
- Support over 100 college-specific recruitment events and activities on campus and around the country each year.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Championed efforts to increase diversity in college enrollment, resulting in the current 55 percent minoritized representation, with a 22 percent rise over the past four years.
- Appointed a Special Assistant to the Dean for Diversity Initiatives (the only such appointment at Montclair State University).
- Expanded national recruiting efforts for theatre, dance, and music to include specific performing arts high schools serving diverse populations.
- Instituted a mentorship and enrichment program for middle and high school students in East Orange, New Jersey, with college faculty and undergraduates providing in-school and on-campus learning.
- Established a partnership with Ghetto Film School, an award-winning non-profit founded to educate and develop the next generation of great storytellers, for summer programs in film/television and college prep for students from its New York and Los Angeles campuses.
- Oversaw the creation of the partnership of the John J. Cali School of Music with Music for All Seasons, a non-profit that facilitates live professional musical performance in a wide range of institutions: children’s hospitals, medical centers, retirement facilities, nursing homes, juvenile detention centers, halfway houses, prisons, and veterans’ facilities.

Fundraising and Development

- Over \$23 million in private funding raised.
- Grant funding college-wide over the previous ten years of more than \$5 million, from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Mellon Foundation, the Dodge Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Democracy Fund, among others.

- Reconstituted and revitalized the College of the Arts Board of Advisors, recruiting 16 of its 22 members from the community and shifting its focus to philanthropy. Five members were subsequently invited to join the MSU Foundation Board of Trustees.
- Participated each year in the planning and solicitations for the Scholarship Dinner, the university's largest fundraising event.
- Engage in alumni cultivation both locally and nationally at university-sponsored events.

External Engagement

- Established partnerships with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Sony, New York Public Television, New Jersey Public Television, New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts, ReelAbilities Film Festival, Montclair Film Festival, Montclair Art Museum, Papermill Playhouse, and Atlantic Health System.
- Provided expert testimony in support of the Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act to the New Jersey State Assembly and New Jersey State Senate.
- Created the Shanghai Exchange to foster student collaborations with East China Normal University, Shanghai Institute of Technology, Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts, and Shanghai Theatre Academy.
- Host annual Congressional art competitions for high school-age constituents of U. S. Representative Bill Pascrell and U. S. Representative Mikie Sherrill.

Communications and Marketing

- Added the staff position of Web Content and Digital Communications Manager to the Office of the Dean.
- Shifted marketing and promotion efforts to a digital-first strategy, extending reach while significantly reducing collateral and print advertising.
- Oversaw the complete revision of the college's web pages to HTML responsive web design as a part of a university-wide website overhaul.
- Expanded the number of news channels pushing out information aimed at prospective applicants and alumni.
- Added external websites featuring student-produced work and related matter.
- Supervised the production of all fundraising videos for the university.
- In collaboration with the University Office of Communications and Marketing, secured increased earned media coverage for the college.

Change Management and Team Building

- Oversaw hiring more than 60 percent of the college's full-time faculty and nearly 80 percent of its professional and managerial staff.
- Successfully mentored 30 faculty members granted tenure and an additional nine awarded promotion to full professor.
- Led the opening of the School of Communication and Media, including recruiting its inaugural director and associate director.
- Created the Department of Broadcast and Media Operations by combining media production services, engineering, and IT under one umbrella. Enlarged the staff with six hires, including its director, a direct report to the dean.
- Restructured the Office of Arts and Culture Programming into two separate units, one overseeing programming and marketing and the other supervising the university's six performing arts venues.
- Expanded the College of the Arts Office of Career Services to four staff members.

Curriculum

- Supported and approved thirteen new academic programs: BA in Advertising, BFA in Animation and Visual Effects, BA in Journalism and Digital Media, BA in Recording Arts and Production, BA in Social Media and Public Relations, BA in Sports Communication, BA in Visual Arts, K-12 Teacher Certification in Theatre, low-residency MFA in Dance, MM in Performance, combined BA/MA in Theatre Studies, Graduate Certificate in the Theatre of Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Change, and International Artist's Diploma in Music offered in conjunction with East China Normal University.
- Spearheaded the complete re-imagining of the undergraduate curriculum in the Department of Art and Design with a greater emphasis on trans-disciplinarity.
- Developing bachelor's degree programs to be delivered off-site at two community colleges.
- Developing additional online and low-residency master's degree programs.

Additional Highlights

- Served as a principal in the design and construction of six capital projects, ranging from \$500K to \$56.5 million, resulting in the creation or renovation of nearly 350,000 square feet of performance, studio, laboratory, and classroom space.
- Provided leadership in the formation and implementation of the university's COVID-19 response as a member of the university's seven-person executive oversight team.
- Sponsored three threatened, displaced artists/scholars through the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund.

Brooklyn College, City University of New York

Special Adviser to the President, 2009-2012

Counselor to the college president on a range of initiatives.

Responsibilities

- Served as the chief adviser on the design, construction, and realization of a new satellite campus at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- Spearheaded all aspects of project development: architect selection, budget modeling, facilities design, staff planning, and curriculum planning.
- Collaborated with the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment together with local and state officials in support of the Navy Yard development.
- Acted as the liaison to Steiner Studios.
- Advised on global initiatives and provided advance in-country support in Beijing and Shanghai, China.

Selected Achievements

- Created, articulated, and promoted a vision for the first and only graduate school of cinema in the United States to be located on a working studio lot.
- Participated as a principal in the team that raised \$20 million in initial funding for the Barry R. Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema.
- Authored the grant that brought \$6.7 million of that funding from the City of New York.

Brooklyn College, City University of New York

Chair, Department of Film, 2005-2012

Academic leadership position in a department with approximately 350 majors, 25 full- and part-time faculty, and ten full- and part-time staff.

Responsibilities

- Oversaw instructional programs, budget, equipment acquisition and distribution, outcomes assessment compliance, scheduling and staffing of classes, student services including advisement and tutoring, internship program development, community outreach, and industry outreach.

Selected Achievements

- Guided a 15 percent increase in enrollment and a 375 percent increase in graduation rates.
- Developed and implemented programmatic articulation agreements with Westchester Community College (Digital Filmmaking) and the Borough of Manhattan Community College (Video Arts and Technology).
- Implemented profile-raising initiatives that included weekly podcasts of student films via the Apple iTunes Store, a YouTube channel, a film industry speaker/workshop series, and relocation of the annual student film festival to landmark off-campus venues at Symphony Space and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.
- Originated special programs with MTV, the Independent Film Project, and the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Montclair State University

Professor, School of Communication and Media, 2012-Present

Brooklyn College, City University of New York

Professor Emeritus, 2012-Present

Professor, Department of Film, 2008-2012

Associate Professor, Department of Film, 2001-2007

Assistant Professor, Department of Film, 1999-2001

State University of New York, College at Old Westbury

Adjunct Professor, Department of Comparative Humanities, 1995-1997

RELATED EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Self-employed

Independent Writer-Producer-Director, 1984-2012

McCann-Erickson Advertising, New York, New York

Senior Writer-Broadcast Producer, 1982-84

Kenney Advertising, Natick, Massachusetts

Copywriter, 1981 –1982

EDUCATION

Brandeis University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Master of Fine Arts, Theatre Arts

University of Pennsylvania, College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts, History of American Ideas

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Writers Guild of America, East (Lifetime Member)

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Montclair State University

Lead negotiator, Selected Procedures Agreement with AFT Local 1904, 2023-Present

Mentor for the founding dean of the College for Community Health, 2023-Present

Negotiating Committee for the AFT Local 6025 contract, 2022-Present

Presidential Investiture Committee, 2021-2022

Search Committee, University President, 2020-2021

Committee on University Effectiveness, 2012-2021

Search Committee, Vice President for Communications and Marketing, 2018

Chair, Search Committee, Associate Vice President for Development, 2016

Brooklyn College

College Personnel and Budget Committee, 2005-2012

Honors College Advisory Board, 2009-2010

Whiting Fellowship Selection Committee, 2008, 2010

Committee on the Course Scheduling Grid, 2008-2010

Faculty Creative Achievement Award Selection Committee, 2006-07, 2010

Convener, Arts Division, 2006-2009

Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Course Renumbering, 2008

Mentor, CUNY Baccalaureate Program, 2003-2008

Middle States Subcommittee on Outcomes Assessment, 2007

Hess Scholar-in-Residence Planning Committee, 2005

Koppelman Professorship Selection Committee, 2005

Stern Professorship Selection Committee, 2005

Strategic Plan Subcommittee on an Engaged Intellectual Community, 2005

Reviewer, PSC-CUNY Performing Arts Grant Review Panel, 2003, 2005

Chair, Arts Division Promotion Committee, 2004

Chair, Committee on Honorary Degrees, 2000-2002

Founding Faculty Member, CUNY Honors College, 2001

Committee on the 2001 Celebration, 2000-2001

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

External Reviewer (Promotion), City University of New York, 2022

External Reviewer (Promotion and Tenure), City University of New York, 2021

External Reviewer (Promotion), The New School, 2018

Advisor, Filmmaking curriculum development, Shanghai Theatre Academy, Shanghai, China, 2013-2017

External Reviewer (Faculty Search), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 2015

30th Anniversary Planning Committee, Hampton Theater Company, 2014

Witness, expert testimony in support of the Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act, New Jersey State Assembly and New Jersey State Senate, 2014

Advisory Committee, AS in Digital Filmmaking, Westchester Community College, 2011-2012

Program Advisory Committee, AS in Video Arts and Technology, Borough of Manhattan
Community College, 2009-2012

External Reviewer (Faculty Search), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 2011

External Reviewer (Promotion), American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 2008

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND MEDIA APPEARANCES

Commentary and response, Summer Cinema Screening Series, Westhampton Beach Performing
Arts Center, 2011-Present

Interviewee, "Montclair State Alumni in Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*," WABC-TV, 2021

Interviewee, "New Thanksgiving Traditions," WCBS-AM, 2021

Voiceover narration, *Hayatuna*, Spiritus Mundi Sweden documentary, 2017

"Going Native: The Arts Curriculum in the Age of the Digital Native," campus presentation and
faculty workshops, Davidson College, 2013

Master of Ceremonies, Mask and Wig 125th Anniversary Gala, University of Pennsylvania, 2013

Principal guest, *One on One with Steve Aduato*, WNET-TV/New York Public Television, 2012

"Understanding American Film," Peking University, Beijing, China, 2011

"A Public Dialogue with Molly Haskell: *Frankly, My Dear*," Summer Authors Series, Quogue
Library, Long Island, New York, 2009

Principal interviewee, "Virginia Tech Aftermath: Violent Images in Student Writing," Channel 2
News at 6:00, WCBS-TV, 2007

"All I Really Need to Know I Learned from *The Dick Van Dyke Show*," Faculty Day, Brooklyn
College, 2006

"Nicolas Roeg: The Auteur as Collaborator," Society for Cinema and Media Studies Annual
Conference, 2005

Interviewee, "From Killer Smile to ... Killer?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 2004

"Just Like Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare on Film," Panel on Adaptation, Faculty Day,
Brooklyn College, 2003

"The Homogenization of Hollywood" and "Screenwriting and American Film," Peking
University, Beijing, China, 2002

Interviewee, *Study with the Best*, CUNY-TV, 2001

AWARDS, HONORS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Honorary Faculty Member, Peking University, Beijing, China, 2012

Bernard H. Stern Professor in Humor, Brooklyn College, 2003-05

Finalist, Philadelphia International Film Festival, Screenplay Competition, 2002

Finalist, Sundance Filmmakers Lab (*Then Again*), 2000

Finalist, Playwrights First Competition (*Extenuating Circumstances*), 1999

Finalist, Sarett Playwriting Competition, UNLV (*Extenuating Circumstances*), 1999

Playwright-in-Residence, National Playwrights Conference, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, 1998

Featured Filmmaker, Chicago International Film Festival, 1996

Emmy Award, Special Program Category, (*James Stewart's Wonderful Life*), 1989

Ace Award Nominee, Outstanding Cultural Program (*James Stewart's Wonderful Life*), 1989

Winner, National One-Act Play Contest ("Detention"), 1985

Winner, Frank McClure One-Act Play Contest ("Old Boys"), 1984

MacDowell Colony Fellow, 1980

PUBLICATIONS

The Short Screenplay, Chinese language edition, Wenhui Publishing, 2013
 “The Decline of American Film Narrative: Movies, Money, and the Culture of Distraction,”
Selected Papers of the Beijing Forum, Beijing Forum, 2012
The Short Screenplay, Cengage, 2006
 “Old Boys: A Play,” *Amelia Magazine*, Autumn, 1986

FILM

Kasser at Ten: A Decade of Creation without Compromise (executive producer), Alexander Kasser Theater, 2014
The Substitute: Failure is Not an Option (screenplay), Artisan Entertainment/ HBO, 2001
Hollywood on Flatbush: Brooklyn in the Movies (director-producer-editor), 2000
The Substitute: Winner Takes All (production polish), Artisan/HBO, 1999
TNT (production polish), HBO World Premiere Pictures, 1998
Full Body Massage (screenplay), Showtime in association with Littman-Gurskis-Nolin Productions and Nicolas Roeg, 1996
Body Language (screenplay-executive producer), USA, 1994
The Stranger (screenplay), Columbia Pictures, 1991

TELEVISION

Christie-Buono Gubernatorial Debate (executive for the sponsor), NJTV/C-SPAN [live broadcast of the debate], 2013
James Stewart's Wonderful Life (writer-producer), Cinemax [documentary], 1989
Dangerous Film Club (executive story consultant), Cinemax [series], 1989
Vote '88 with Linda Ellerbee (writer), HBO [special], 1988
HBO Weekend (head writer), HBO [pilot], 1987
Coming Attractions (head writer), HBO [series], 1984-86

STAGE

Views from the Bridge (text/media elements), Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, 2001
Extenuating Circumstances, National Playwrights Conference, O'Neill Theatre Center, 1998
Civil Wars, Theatre-by-the-Sea (workshop), New Hampshire, 1990
Dancer Kicking (workshop), Williamstown Theatre Festival, 1987
Pater Noster, Atelier Theatre, Avignon, France, 1985