



Dean, Mason Gross School of the Arts
Rutgers University–New Brunswick
New Brunswick, New Jersey

THE SEARCH

Rutgers University–New Brunswick, seeks a collaborative, dynamic, and visionary leader as the next Dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts (Mason Gross, or the School). Mason Gross is the flagship arts school of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a Big Ten research university and the nation's eighth oldest institution of higher learning, serving close to 70,000 students. Mason Gross offers the best of all worlds as it redefines what it means to act as a conservatory within a public research institution. This is an opportunity to lead a rigorous and renowned institution to future growth and innovation.

Founded in 1976, Mason Gross serves a notably diverse cohort of about 1,100 students in its undergraduate and graduate programs. The School's mission is to nurture creative talent and instill the insights and skills that future generations of arts professionals will need to contribute to the creative and scholarly world. Mason Gross benefits from and contributes to the artistic and cultural environment of the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan regions, as well as locally in New Brunswick communities.

Reporting to the Chancellor, the Dean will provide strategic and unifying leadership for the School; provide astute and transparent financial stewardship; recruit, retain, and support excellent faculty; serve as a visible champion for the important and dynamic role of the arts in the University, the New Brunswick community, and beyond; and support a high-performing and diverse team of staff and academic leaders. The successful candidate will possess creative, strategic, and transformational leadership skills to advance the School toward its aspirations and goals; an astute understanding of higher education finances; a talent for fundraising, significant and successful administrative experience, and a track record of working closely with faculty and senior academic administrators; a leadership and management style that is present, accessible, and transparent; a collaborative, collegial approach; and a demonstrated ability to work effectively across all levels of a large, complex organization engaging a broad range of individuals and constituencies.

Rutgers University – New Brunswick has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment effort. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEW BRUNSWICK

Rutgers University–New Brunswick is the flagship home of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a leading national research university committed to excellence in teaching, innovative research across a broad spectrum of subjects, and service that improves local, national, and global communities. Rutgers is a member of the Association of American Universities, the Big Ten Athletic Conference, and the Big Ten Academic Alliance. Founded in 1766, Rutgers is one of America’s nine original colonial colleges and one of America’s first land-grant institutions.

Rutgers University–New Brunswick comprises more than 43,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, approximately 10,000 faculty and staff, 12 degree-granting schools, over 175 research centers, a premier honors college, and Douglass Residential College for women. The Rutgers faculty includes members of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; winners of the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Medals of Science and Technology; MacArthur “Genius” Fellows; Guggenheim Fellows; and Fulbright Scholars.

Leadership

William F. Tate IV, a renowned social scientist and president of the Louisiana State University (LSU) system since May 2021, has been [appointed the 22nd president of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey](#). He began serving as president on July 1, 2025, succeeding Jonathan Holloway, who served as president for five years.

Dr. Francine Conway is Chancellor of Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Prior to assuming the title of Chancellor, Dr. Conway served as Chancellor-Provost and previously as Provost. She is also a Distinguished Professor in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, where she served as Dean from 2016 to 2020, and is an internationally recognized clinical psychologist.

As the leader of Rutgers–New Brunswick, Chancellor Conway champions the [Academic Master Plan](#), a comprehensive blueprint for the institution’s future based on Four Pillars of Excellence: Scholarly Leadership, Innovative Research, Student Success, and Community Engagement. Its [implementation](#) includes bold new initiatives to reimagine the student experience from enrollment to retention and graduation; establish a public health and prevention-focused approach to wellness; create interdisciplinary scholarly communities to address society’s grand challenges; expand the access and affordability of higher education; and more.

ABOUT MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Mason Gross is a vibrant community of creators and scholars—as well as historians and theorists of the arts—who study, teach, create, perform, exhibit, and publish. [The mission](#) of the School is to nurture creative talent and curiosity and instill the insights and skills that future generations of arts professionals

will need to contribute to the creative and scholarly world through critical thought and innovation. The School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in [dance](#), [filmmaking](#), [music](#), [theater](#), and [art & design](#). Mason Gross graduates emerge not only with a degree but with a commitment to making innovative and purposeful contributions to the wider community—onstage, backstage, in the gallery, the classroom, the studio, and beyond. In addition to its professional and research-based arts programs, Mason Gross provides the larger community the opportunity to embrace the creative arts through the activities of [Rutgers Arts Online](#), [Rutgers Community Arts](#), and the Rutgers Filmmaking Center.

In the past four years, the school has made great strides in the areas of community engagement and interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research and collaboration. The new dean will maintain momentum in these areas and introduce significant new ambitions in response to the school's stakeholders and to the university's Academic Master Plan.

Academic Programs

Mason Gross encompasses four departments—Art & Design, Dance, Music, and Theater—and three divisions—Rutgers Arts Online, Rutgers Community Arts, and the Rutgers Filmmaking Center.

Art & Design

The Department of Art & Design seeks to cultivate a diverse community that values visual literacy, critical dialogue, experimentation, and the skills necessary for sustaining a creative life that can extend well beyond the studio. It has a rich history of experimentation and hybridity across disciplines and media. [Degrees include](#) BFA and MFA in Visual Arts, BFA and MFA in Design, and BA in Art. Studio classes are offered in the concentration areas of design, drawing, media, painting, photography, print, and sculpture. Central to the department's vision is engaging in interdisciplinary research and collaboration. [Mason Gross Galleries](#) at Civic Square is a 4,200 square-foot space exclusively devoted to student work and showcases up to ten exhibitions per year, all free and open to the public. Global in reach, the [Rutgers Print Collaborative](#) is host to a research-driven print collaboration program with professional artists and students.

Dance

The Dance Department offers a distinctive, impactful curriculum that centers on global dance traditions across various movement expressions. Its goal is to provide students with an exceptional education in equitable approaches to dance training, dance scholarship, and dance-making. The program aims to create opportunities for prospective students with diverse proficiencies in dance and to give students access to an expanded range of careers in the evolving field of dance. [Degrees offered](#) include the BFA and BA in Dance, and an Ed.M. in Dance Education that is unique in the United States for pairing advanced artistry training with a master's degree in dance education as well as teacher certification credentialing. An accomplished faculty of artist-scholar-educators works closely with students, providing mentorship

and expert instruction in dance techniques, performance, choreography, pedagogy, and theoretical studies. At the core of the department's mission is the cultivation of a community of dance professionals of the highest caliber who are collaborative and multi-dimensional in their view and knowledge of the dance field internationally.

Filmmaking

Filmmaking at Mason Gross trains students in all aspects of film production, from research, interdisciplinary collaboration, script writing, cinematography, field production, directing, editing, and post-production. The division's pedagogy exposes students to a broad range of cinematic traditions and a wide array of concepts and approaches so they can become informed filmmakers who can integrate theory with practice to establish their unique intellectual and creative approach that can be applied to both narrative and non-narrative modes of filmmaking. The Rutgers Filmmaking Center offers a [BFA in filmmaking](#). Previous students have been accepted to the top graduate film schools, and its faculty have won numerous awards, including the Academy Award and the Guggenheim Fellowship.

Music

As a music conservatory within a large research university, the [Music Department](#) offers professional undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and diplomas in classical performance, composition, conducting, jazz, and music education, as well as scholarly graduate degrees in music theory, musicology, and composition that are housed in the University's School of Graduate Studies. Musicians perform, teach, refine their skills, and forge new paths in the arts through their scholarly and creative endeavors, engaging with faculty who are among the world's leaders in academic studies, composition, and performance. Working closely with the distinguished faculty, each student receives support to develop as both a musician and a scholar. Graduate and undergraduate students participate in ensembles that perform regularly on and off campus, including in venues such as Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

Theater

The Mason Gross School of the Arts [Theater Department](#) combines intensive studio classes, innovative academic curricula, and a diverse season of productions in a wide range of styles and approaches to provide students with in-depth training and practice in theater. Guided by master teachers and accomplished professionals, the department offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree for actors, designers, stage managers, and technicians, and a Master of Fine Arts program in playwriting, as well as a Bachelor of Arts through Rutgers University's School of Arts and Sciences. Select BFA Programs include a residency in London at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and The Lyric Hammersmith. Mason Gross is committed to developing theater artists of the highest caliber who are prepared to join the profession and be a part of the next generation of practitioners and innovators.

Interdisciplinary and Global Programs

Mason Gross offers [two interdisciplinary minors](#), Arts Management and Leadership, and Creative Expression and the Environment, as well as [research centers and initiatives](#) representing collaborations with schools across the University to create new career pathways and opportunities for collaborative research and study. The [Arts in Health Research Lab](#) is a collaboration between the Mason Gross School of the Arts, the Rutgers School of Public Health, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. [Environmental Arts](#) is a collaboration between the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Mason Gross School, engaging in work at the leading edge of the field of environmental arts. The [Integrated Dance Collaboratory](#) is a hub of interdisciplinary research exploring dance's unique rehabilitative potential for individuals with a wide range of physical and mental health conditions, such as autism, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, stroke, chronic pain and fibromyalgia, mental illness, and cognitive decline. The Arts Integration [Research \(AIR\) Collaborative](#) applies strategies of creative placemaking to enhance spatial justice and free access to nature for all. It establishes multidisciplinary research and curricular agendas that benefit and strengthen the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus and surrounding local communities.

In addition to its stellar academic programs, Mason Gross presents annual performances and exhibits in New York City at venues such as Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, the Joyce Theater, the Blue Note, Westbeth Gallery, Pioneer Works, the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, and Broadway's Majestic Theatre.

International programs include exchanges with Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in Greenwich, England; the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem, Israel; the National Taiwan University of the Arts in Taipei, Taiwan; and the Academy of the Arts in Munich, Germany, as well as the residency program at Shakespeare's Globe in London.

Students

The heart of the Mason Gross community is its students. As of fall 2024, the student body consists of approximately 900 undergraduate students and 200 graduate students from more than 30 states across the U.S. and over 20 countries worldwide. The students reflect the diversity of the state of New Jersey, and many are the first generation in their families to attend college. The diversity, character, and energy of these students make the School distinctive among its peers. For over five years, Mason Gross has consistently been the most selective undergraduate school at Rutgers.

Faculty and Staff

Mason Gross faculty are exceptional teachers, performers, musicians, artists, and scholars. The faculty consists of 325 members, of whom approximately 89 are full-time. The faculty is highly active in research and creative areas, provides service to organizations that support their disciplines, and has a rich history

of ongoing community engagement. Mason Gross faculty regularly earn national and international recognition through Grammy, Guggenheim, Emmy, Fulbright, and similar awards. For more information about Mason Gross faculty and their accomplishments, click [here](#). Mason Gross students and faculty are supported by over 100 technical and administrative staff members. From Student Success to making and performance spaces, departmental administrative support to technological support, the staff of Mason Gross are integral to supporting the school's day-to-day operations and the larger mission of nurturing creative talent.

Alumni

Mason Gross alumni are performers, artists, thinkers, and teachers. Because of their intensive training at Mason Gross, they are at home in both the creative and scholarly realms. Some of the many notable alumni include: Mike Colter, Theater (actor, Marvel's *Luke Cage*); Orrin Evans, Music (jazz musician, lecturer, GRAMMY Nominee); Brandon Flynn, Theater (actor, *13 Reasons Why*); Jennie C. Jones, Art & Design (conceptual artist, recipient of the Foundation for Contemporary Arts 2016 Robert Rauschenberg Award); Stephanie Klemons, Dance (associate choreographer for Broadway's Tony-winning *Hamilton*); Pope.L, Art & Design (performance artist and educator); Kyle Marshall, Dance (2018 Juried New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award); Cristina Pato, Music (Galician bagpiper, member of Yo-Yo Ma's Grammy-winning Silk Road Ensemble); Sebastian Stan, Theater (actor, *Captain America: Civil War*; *I, Tonya*, *The Apprentice*); and Qiang Tu, Music (principal cellist, New York Philharmonic).

ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the Chancellor, the Dean of Mason Gross School of the Arts oversees a team of 25, with 14 direct reports and a budget of approximately \$55 million. The Dean is expected to co-create and implement a strategic plan for the School; encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative activity across the School and University; ensure a continued orientation and investment in fostering a community of belonging that is open to all; foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and excellence; engage alumni and potential donors; increase the visibility of the School through outreach and partnership to the University, along with local, national, and international communities; and enhance capacities internally so that the students, faculty, staff, and programs can achieve excellent outcomes and success. The next Dean will continue to partner with their fellow Deans across Rutgers, encouraging cross-disciplinary academic and research initiatives and collaborating on strategies and best practices for leadership of their respective schools.

Direct reports to the Dean include; divisional Chairs and Directors from Music, Art & Design, Theater, Dance, and Filmmaking; Director of Communications; Director of Research; Associate Dean for Finance & Administration; Associate Dean for Equity; Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Assistant Dean of Admissions & Enrollment Services; Director of Development; and Assistant to the Dean.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The successful Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges that are central to the sustained growth and success of the Mason Gross School:

Provide strategic and creative leadership for the Mason Gross School of the Arts

Drawing inspiration from and complementing the Four Pillars of Excellence from the Rutgers Academic Master Plan, the Dean will engage Mason Gross's constituent groups to activate key shared values and encourage collaboration among the departments across campus and beyond. Mason Gross requires holistic and creative approaches to resource allocation. The Dean will work with faculty and staff to determine opportunities for new, enrollment-generating programs that reflect strong student interest, with a targeted focus on interdisciplinary collaborations with existing Rutgers programs. As innovative initiatives emerge, the Dean will discuss with faculty such factors as market demand, funding models, methods of artistic enterprise, and the path to implementation.

To advance the School, the Dean must honor the differences and distinctive identities of each department while unifying and energizing the constituencies around Mason Gross' shared identity, building cohesion across both philosophical and physical divides. The Dean will support the artistic platforms and unique profiles of faculty and students in ways that can bring new voices and aesthetic perspectives to emergent fields of artistic practice.

Generate and develop resources for the Mason Gross School

As the lead ambassador for Mason Gross, the Dean must be a financially astute leader who provides strategic management of the School's resources. The Dean must have the financial acumen to strengthen the School's finances and ensure that it operates sustainably. The Dean will position Mason Gross structurally and programmatically to fully realize its potential as a training ground for future creators through the development of revenue streams that are in line with the values and strategic goals of Mason Gross and Rutgers University. In addition, the Dean will communicate effectively and build transparency with respect to budgeting processes, principles, and decisions.

An enthusiastic fundraiser, the Dean will work with Rutgers University Foundation to engage and inspire potential donors and secure additional funds to support the work of the School. The Dean will be expected to be entrepreneurial in seeking new sources of revenue and delivering a compelling message for support of academic programs, scholarships, research, fellowships, and facilities. In addition, the Dean is an emissary to alumni and potential friends of the University and will both lead and be an active participant in outreach to potential individuals and partners.

Serve as an advocate for the arts through strategic partnerships on and off campus

Serving as an advocate for the School's community involvement is a key facet of its public mission. The Dean will be charged with creating sustainable community partnerships that leverage the critical role Mason Gross plays in the New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia arts scenes. They will connect with alumni, donors, local educators, leaders in the arts and arts-affiliated organizations, and other external audiences to persuasively tell the story of Mason Gross's successes and ambitions. By championing Mason Gross, the Dean will shine a light on the ways the School's expertise, knowledge, and resources can contribute to the greater good of the community and beyond. The Dean understands and advocates for the role of the arts within the broader mission of a top research university, calling attention to the ways in which artistic creation and scholarship function as sites for the creation of new knowledge.

Locally, the Dean will support faculty and staff in building bridges to the New Brunswick community, New Jersey arts organizations, and local public schools. By bringing Rutgers out into the New Brunswick community, the Dean can strengthen enrollment pipelines for future arts students and establish Rutgers as a viable option to pursue higher education. The Dean will aim to cultivate community partnerships and advance the arts through teaching, creative activity, advocacy, and research that contributes to the public good.

Cultivate an atmosphere of belonging

Rutgers University stands out for its vibrant and diverse student body that includes a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives. The Dean will continue to nurture a welcoming community while reinforcing a school culture where every student's unique identity is supported and celebrated.

Support and retain excellent faculty and staff

A successful Dean will develop strategies to foster the support and retention of faculty and staff. Recognizing each discipline's unique needs and empowering each of them for success, creating a culture of communication, collaboration, fairness, and cohesion throughout the school, the Dean will enhance the strengths of the academic units. They will assume the responsibility of cultivating an environment that places a premium on the continuous professional growth of staff, ensuring they remain well-versed in the latest advancements or changes occurring across the university.

Improve effectiveness and efficiency of School operations

The Dean is charged with providing the human infrastructure to support teaching, learning, and research. With a keen focus on fostering a culture of perpetual enhancement and service to the units, the Dean will actively work towards refining and optimizing work processes and communication channels within Mason Gross, thereby reducing non-essential administrative tasks and augmenting communication efficiency. Transparency in communication will further encourage a team that works well together and collaboratively with faculty in engaging the student body.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Rutgers University and the Mason Gross School of the Arts seek candidates with strategic vision, strong management skills, and a commitment to all artistic disciplines and their role within a public higher education institution. While few candidates will possess all the qualifications and characteristics the search committee is seeking, the ideal candidate for the Dean role will have many of the following:

- Terminal degree preferred; a proven record of excellence in scholarship or creative activity in disciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches to art, design, new media, dance, film, music, or theater;
- A record of distinguished scholarship and teaching requisite for an appointment as a tenured full professor within an academic department at Rutgers University.
- A deep appreciation for the arts and an ability to articulate the vision, mission, achievements, and ambitions of Mason Gross to a diverse audience;
- Vision and strategic, transformational leadership skills to advance the School toward its aspirations and goals;
- Understanding of higher education finances, insight regarding the interrelationship of academic priorities, experience in planning and managing budgets, and ideally, in raising new revenue;
- Evidence of successful development initiatives and the ability to work effectively with university alumni;
- A deep understanding of the educational value of a community that encompasses many backgrounds and perspectives;
- Significant and successful administrative experience, and a track record of working closely with faculty and senior academic administrators in ways that acknowledge their strengths;
- A leadership and management style that is present, accessible, and transparent; a commitment to empowering and valuing the contributions of every member of the community;
- Proven skills as a senior manager; a demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and supervise staff and provide successful oversight of people, budget, and space; the ability to effectively manage organizational change while working in a collaborative environment;
- A collaborative, relatable approach; a demonstrated ability to work effectively across all levels of a large, complex organization and to engage a broad range of individuals and constituencies;
- The ability to recruit, motivate, inspire, and retain talented faculty and staff. A commitment to engage collaboratively with faculty and respond effectively to their concerns;
- A record of synergizing internal departments and academic programs;
- A track record of maintaining and developing vital infrastructure (e.g. facilities, capital equipment);
- Strong listening skills and a high degree of emotional intelligence; a commitment to an internal culture of trust, flexibility, and balance;
- A strong sense of intellectual curiosity and appreciation for an interdisciplinary approach to arts education and research.

COMPENSATION

The projected salary range for this position is expected to begin at \$300K.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent electronically via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/rutgers-university-mason-gross-school-arts/Dean>.

Jackie Mildner, Partner
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It is university policy to provide equal employment opportunity to all its employees and applicants for employment regardless of their race, creed, color, national origin, age, ancestry, nationality, marital or domestic partnership or civil union status, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, disability status, liability for military service, protected veteran status, affectional or sexual orientation, atypical cellular or blood trait, genetic information (including the refusal to submit to genetic testing), or any other category protected by law. As an institution, we value diversity of background and opinion, and prohibit discrimination or harassment on the basis of any legally protected class in the areas of hiring, recruitment, promotion, transfer, demotion, training, compensation, pay, fringe benefits, layoff, termination or any other terms and conditions of employment.

For additional information, please see the Non-Discrimination Statement at the following web address:
<http://uhr.rutgers.edu/non-discrimination-statement>