

Yale University

Dean, David Geffen School of Drama
Artistic Director, Yale Repertory Theatre
New Haven, Connecticut

THE SEARCH

Yale University seeks an inspiring, accomplished, and collaborative leader to serve as the next Dean of the [David Geffen School of Drama](#) (the Geffen School or the School) and Artistic Director of [Yale Repertory Theatre](#) (Yale Rep). This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead and advance one of the best graduate theater programs in the country and an internationally celebrated professional theater that has served as a teaching theater at Yale since 1966.

The Geffen School, celebrating its 100th year, offers graduate degrees in acting, design, directing, dramaturgy and dramatic criticism, playwriting, stage management, technical design and production, and theater management, in a conservatory setting. The curriculum includes a range of classroom and production experiences at both the School and Yale Rep.

Reporting to the Provost, the Dean will be a passionate and compelling champion of theater, leading during a pivotal time for the field. Through collaboration and strategic delegation, the Dean will set the vision for the School and direct growth and adaptation in a rapidly evolving environment. The ideal candidate will bring artistic, intellectual, and technical curiosity, maintaining balanced attention across the School's complex academic and artistic landscape. They will embrace an era of new technologies, and address the needs of students, staff, and faculty, creating a strong sense of belonging for all. The Dean and Artistic Director will develop a strong partnership with alumni as well as the Board of Advisors, utilizing their knowledge and expertise to inform decision making and serve as a resource.

Yale University has retained the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm in confidence, as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT YALE UNIVERSITY

Yale University is dedicated to expanding and sharing knowledge, inspiring innovation, and preserving cultural and scientific information for future generations.

A member of the Ivy League and the Association of American Universities, Yale ranks among the world's premier private research universities. The University's academic divisions consist of Yale College, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and 13 professional schools: architecture, art, divinity, drama, engineering and applied science, environment, global affairs, law, management, medicine, music, nursing, and public health. Yale is the only American research university with four professional schools devoted to the arts (art, architecture, drama, and music). For fiscal year 2026, the University has an operating budget of \$6.4 billion, with grant and contract expenditures supporting Yale's research and training programs totaling \$1.2 billion and spending from the Yale endowment for the year totaling \$2.2 billion. Yale's endowment stands at \$41.3 billion.

In 2026, Yale was ranked 4th overall in National Universities, #3 in Best Value Schools, and #6 in Undergraduate Research by *US News and World Report*. Today, Yale enrolls more than 15,000 students, including ca. 6,500 undergraduate students and ca. 8,500 graduate and professional students. Its network of more than 190,000 living alumni remains deeply engaged with their alma mater. The University also employs ca. 5,700 faculty and ca. 12,000 staff members.

University Leadership

President Maurie McInnis

Maurie McInnis is the twenty-fourth president of Yale University and professor in the Department of the History of Art. A distinguished scholar, President McInnis has contributed significantly to her field as a cultural historian and is the author of five books, including award-winning titles. She has been published in peer-reviewed journals, anthologies, exhibition catalogs, and other publications. Since assuming her responsibilities at Yale on July 1, 2024, President McInnis has engaged thousands of faculty members, students, staff, and alumni in conversations around shaping Yale's future. Over the course of these discussions, several areas of focus emerged that will help Yale chart a bold course for the years ahead: enhancing and expanding educational opportunities for students; maintaining Yale's status as a destination university for the world's foremost scholars and teachers; setting and meeting ever higher expectations in the pursuit of academic excellence; increasing the collaboration and impact of faculty research and scholarship; welcoming diverse viewpoints with open minds; and strengthening Yale's partnership with its home city, New Haven.

Provost Scott A. Strobel

Scott Strobel was appointed Yale University Provost in 2020, a role in which he helps set and advance Yale's academic and research priorities and lead the faculty in their pursuit of research and teaching

excellence. An award-winning teacher and mentor, Provost Strobel is also the Henry Ford II Professor of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry (MB&B), having joined the Yale faculty in 1995 and serving as department chair from 2006-09. Among other roles, he has additionally served as Vice President for West Campus Planning & Program Development, where he orchestrated the emergence of the West Campus as a research and educational center of the University; the inaugural Deputy Provost for Teaching & Learning, overseeing the creation of the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning; and as chair of the University Science Strategy Committee, which was tasked with developing a ten-year strategic plan for the sciences and engineering at Yale, and then as Vice Provost for Science Initiatives, where he was charged with beginning the implementation of that plan.

THE DAVID GEFFEN SCHOOL OF DRAMA

The [David Geffen School of Drama](#) and [Yale Repertory Theatre](#) strive to train and advance leaders in the practice of every theatrical discipline, making art to inspire joy, empathy, and understanding in the world.

The Geffen School dates back to 1924 when Yale founded a department of drama in the School of Fine Arts through the generosity of Edward S. Harkness, B.A. 1897. In 1925, while the University Theater was under construction, the first class of students was enrolled. George Pierce Baker, the foremost teacher of playwriting in America, joined the faculty to serve as the first chair of the department, and the first Master of Fine Arts degree in Drama was conferred in 1931.

In 1955, by vote of the Yale Corporation, the department was organized as a separate professional school, the Yale School of Drama.

Celebrating its 100th year, the drama school is now the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale University in celebration of a \$150 million gift made by the David Geffen Foundation in 2021 to support tuition remission for all full-time students in degree and certificate programs in perpetuity. The School is highly selective, receiving more than 1,800 applications and admitting just 5%, leading to an enrollment of 244 students, 23% of whom were international students, for the 2024-2025 academic year. Students are supported by 113 talented faculty members and a dedicated staff of 77.

The David Geffen School of Drama offers graduate programs in every theatrical discipline within a conservatory setting. Programs of study include [acting](#), [design](#), [directing](#), [dramaturgy](#) and [dramatic criticism](#), [playwriting](#), [stage management](#), [technical design and production](#), and [theater management](#).

Students may pursue a Certificate in Drama, a Master of Fine Arts, or a Doctor of Fine Arts degree. Additionally, the School offers a few non-degree study options, including one-year [technical internships](#), and one-term or one-year visiting research fellowships. In addition, some students may be admitted as one-year special students in the programs of design, dramaturgy and dramatic criticism, technical design and production, or theater management.

[Productions](#) within the School provide students with an opportunity to present their work to internal and external audiences, both complementing their classroom instruction and allowing faculty to observe and offer feedback. Productions within both the School and Yale Rep maintain an open rehearsal policy, so that students, interns, faculty, and staff may benefit from observing artistic processes. Each program assigns its students responsibilities in productions. Each student and technical intern is also responsible for fulfilling a minimum number of work study hours, which gives students paid responsibility for participating in artistic, production, and administrative work in accordance with the mission of the School and Yale Rep.

With Yale Repertory Theatre specifically, each program has established a unique relationship with the theater and challenges students to work at the level of this distinguished professional company. Yale Cabaret, which is student-run and interdisciplinary, has its own student artistic and management leaders who report to a board of directors comprised of students and faculty. The Cabaret allows students to explore a wide range of material, and presents work that is entirely student-produced. It is the only area of production at the School where students regularly move out of their primary discipline of study: actors direct, managers act, and playwrights sing. During the summer, Yale Summer Cabaret is the exploratory theatrical home for the David Geffen School of Drama students. Each season, a new artistic and management team has the opportunity to shape the theater's vision, while collaborating with an advisory board, local donors, and the greater New Haven community.

YALE REPERTORY THEATRE

In 1966, under the leadership of Dean Robert Brustein, Yale Repertory Theatre, the internationally celebrated professional theater in residence at Yale, was founded as part of the School of Drama, establishing a complementary relationship between conservatory and professional practice similar to that of a medical school and a teaching hospital. A hallmark of Brustein's artistic leadership was his insistence on a resident company of artists. An emphasis on the production of new plays and classics of world theater in vivid and inventive interpretations has remained the centerpiece of the work of the Theatre. Following Brustein's tenure, Lloyd Richards joined Yale as Dean and Artistic Director in 1979. Under his leadership, the Yale Rep achieved renown for world premieres of now-classic plays by August Wilson and Athol Fugard. It also became one of the first resident theaters to regularly transfer serious work to the commercial theater, developing a model of professional producing that changed the course of new play development in the American theater. Stan Wojewodski, Jr., succeeded Richards in 1991, and over the next decade premiered important works by Suzan-Lori Parks and Ralph Lemon.

James Bundy, dean and artistic director since 2002, has continued Yale Rep's tradition of presenting bold interpretations of classics and has extended the Theatre's legacy of producing new plays and musicals. The [Binger Center for New Theater](#), which was established in 2008, has distinguished itself as one of the nation's most robust and innovative new play programs. To date, the Binger Center has supported the work of more than 70 commissioned artists and underwritten the world premieres and subsequent productions of more than 30 new plays and musicals at Yale Rep and theaters across the country.

Since 1966, Yale Rep has produced well over 100 premieres—including two Pulitzer Prize winners and four other nominated finalists—by emerging and established playwrights. Seventeen Yale Rep productions have advanced to Broadway, garnering more than 40 Tony Award nominations and 10 Tony Awards. Yale Rep is also the recipient of the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater. Yale Rep is a member of the League of Resident Theaters and draws talent from around the world.

In addition to offering main stage productions and special presentations, Yale Rep connects the educational mission of the School to the community through youth programs including Will Power! and the Dwight/Edgewood Project, which recruits David Geffen School of Drama students each summer to serve as mentors for local middle school students. Yale Rep also partners with Long Wharf Theater to host the True Colors' Next Narrative Monologue Competition.

Campus

The David Geffen School of Drama is currently spread across a [number of buildings](#) on the Yale University campus. The University Theater site is the center of the School and includes a proscenium theater that seats 636 and is shared with the undergraduate dramatic association. It also houses the main administrative offices of the Geffen School; the scene, prop, metal, and costume shops; a lounge; and several classrooms. Yale Rep is located in a nearby distinctive historical building, formerly the Calvary Baptist Church. It contains a [479-seat auditorium](#) facing a modified apron stage, and the School and Theater box office. The Iseman Theater, a flexible performance space, is located in Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Hall, which also houses the Yale School of Art.

Recently, Yale [announced](#) its commitment to the design and construction of a new Dramatic Arts Building which will be the new home of the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre. Plans for the new building are in process with an estimated opening date of 2030. The incoming Dean will play a pivotal leadership role in facilitating the transition to this exciting facility and its ongoing operations.

ROLE OF THE DEAN AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Reporting to Yale University's President and Provost, the Dean of the David Geffen School of Drama and Artistic Director of Yale Repertory Theatre will guide both the Geffen School and Yale Rep and have the opportunity to shape the future of conservatory theater training.

Deep engagement in academic life is essential, including a commitment to teaching and learning within a conservatory setting, and fostering cross-disciplinary collaborations across Yale. This leader will have an active presence both on campus and in the New Haven community and serve with other graduate and professional school deans and vice-presidents in the University Cabinet in addition to serving on the financial aid committee.

The Dean and Artistic Director will oversee a team of four direct reports including the associate dean/managing director, the associate dean/associate artistic director/director of new play programs, the

assistant dean/general manager, and the assistant dean of student life, as well as an operating budget of approximately \$43.6 million.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The next Dean and Artistic Director will have previous knowledge and experience to successfully address the following opportunities and challenges:

Serve as a strategic, visionary, and collaborative leader of the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre

With an understanding of higher education and the evolving landscape of 21st-century theater, the next Dean and Artistic Director will develop a compelling vision that will shape the future of the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre. The Dean must understand the strengths, challenges, and areas of opportunity for both the Geffen School and Yale Rep with a keen understanding of the operational demands of both a professional theater and a conservatory-model graduate school. The Dean will be expected to uphold a high standard of artistic excellence in all programs while embracing diverse perspectives and productions that resonate with a range of audiences. The leader will foster a culture of shared governance, transparency, and collaboration, ensuring a sense of unity and collaboration amongst faculty, staff, and students. The Dean will champion the School's distinct educational model and effectively communicate the impact of its outstanding educational and artistic work to all constituents.

Ensure the growth and success of the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre through successful fiscal management and fundraising efforts

The success of the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre is contingent, in large part, on its ability to obtain and manage the financial resources that support its academic and artistic goals. The Dean and Artistic Director will provide leadership for all fiscal operations, including an active role in engaging and stewarding donors and building excitement for the artistry and excellence of the School. The Dean will partner with university leadership to secure resources that support long-term success and will work closely with the Board of Advisors to capitalize not only on their expertise and industry connections but to develop and strengthen relationships with alumni, industry partners, and donors. Recognizing the vast capacities in which alumni can contribute to the success of the Geffen School and Yale Rep, this individual will facilitate more engagement opportunities for alumni to ensure connection with the School over their lifetime and activate the alumni base as potential donors, employers, and mentors for current students.

Recruit, develop, and inspire a world-class faculty and staff

The School's faculty and staff are indispensable to its mission. The Dean will oversee the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff committed to advancing the School and Yale Rep. In partnership with the faculty, the Dean will strengthen the current governance structure, adopting a shared governance model that engages the faculty even more fully in appointment and promotion decisions.

Lead the David Geffen School of Drama and Yale Repertory Theatre's transition and acclimation into their new building

This is a pivotal moment in the history of the School and Yale Rep as the next Dean and Artistic Director steps into the role during the construction of a new building that will house both the school and theater. One of the most significant additions to Yale's central campus in decades, this new building will consolidate the many locations that the School and Yale Rep currently occupy into a single, highly visible space designed to foster integration, collaboration, and community. The building will also include some portion of the Yale College undergraduate program in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies as well as rehearsal space for the Yale Dramatic Association ("the Dramat"). The incoming Dean and Artistic Director will play a critical role in stewarding this transition, shaping a cohesive culture amongst faculty, staff, and students, and leveraging the building's potential to deepen engagement across programs and within the broader Yale community and beyond. This moment presents an opportunity to explore cross-campus partnerships, particularly with other arts programs, and to advocate for sustained investment in the building.

Enhance collaboration opportunities within the School and across Yale University

In order to enhance the School's training for students this individual will identify ways to enhance current and develop new partnerships both within the DGSD and across campus in an effort to expand how art is made and contributes to other disciplines. Recognizing that nurturing well-rounded artists requires exposure to many different artistic modes and styles, it will be essential for this individual, working with faculty and staff, to think about how to welcome modes of theatrical collaboration into training and support efforts to build bridges across campus. The Dean will promote collaboration internally and externally, partnering with Yale College and other professional schools to increase opportunities for students to engage broadly throughout their educational experience.

Enhance the School and Yale Rep's efforts to build audience and community engagement within the New Haven community

As Yale Repertory Theatre continues to thrive as the professional theater in residence at Yale, it will be important for the new Dean and Artistic Director to play a critical role in understanding who the audience members of Yale Rep are, assessing their wants, and working to implement efforts to increase audience attendance at performances beyond the Yale University community. In an effort to accomplish this, the Dean must be a visible and active leader in the New Haven community and will build productive relationships throughout the community and beyond, serving as the external face of the School and Yale Rep.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following experiences, leadership characteristics, and abilities are desired, understanding that no single candidate will have all the ideal characteristics:

- A demonstrated commitment to the mission and values of the David Geffen School of Drama (the School), Yale Repertory Theatre (Yale Rep), and Yale University.
- A commitment to the conservatory model of education for graduate students, and a deep respect for the traditions that have shaped the School and the Yale Rep, coupled with a forward-looking, open-minded, and adaptable vision for its future.
- The ability to work cooperatively and effectively with administrators, faculty, students, staff, and other external constituencies; an appreciation and understanding of the need for collaboration and synergy among these groups to make critical decisions on academic priorities and the allocation of resources.
- Administrative and financial experience conducive to leading both a robust school of drama and a professional theater in residence; a proven ability to lead transparently, fairly, collectively, and responsively.
- Success in building and managing cohesive and vibrant teams, with an informed grasp of key issues affecting faculty and staff recruitment, retention, professional development, and promotion.
- A profound artistic sensibility and impeccable artistic credentials and credibility; deep experience and an unwavering passion and commitment to theater, theater training, and the development of artists and the arts.
- Demonstrated commitment to and tangible experience in creating an educational environment that is open to all.
- Ability to be strategic regarding local and national partnerships and understanding of the variety of constituents that the School and Yale Rep serve.
- An understanding of the needs of students, faculty, and staff, and the ability to effectively navigate the complexity of a large university.
- The demonstrated ability or willingness to effectively cultivate donors and raise funds to support the mission of the School and Yale Rep.
- Experience working with governing and/or advisory boards.

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 via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/yale-university-david-geffen-school-drama/dean-and-artistic-director-yale-repertory>.

Sheryl Ash, Partner
 Ben Tobin, Partner
 David Grimes, Senior Associate
 Alaine Small, Managing Search Coordinator
 Isaacson, Miller

Yale University is committed to basing judgments concerning the admission, education, and employment of individuals upon their qualifications and abilities and seeks to attract to its faculty, staff, and student body qualified persons from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives. Additionally, in accordance with this policy and as delineated by federal and Connecticut law, Yale does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment against any individual on account of that individual's sex; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions; race; color; national or ethnic origin; religion; age; disability; protected veteran status, or other protected classes as set forth in federal and Connecticut law.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Yale University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Yale University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.