



Search for the Dean, School of Theater, Film and Television
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) seeks an entrepreneurial, creative, and successful leader to serve as the next Dean of the School of Theater, Film and Television. The incoming Dean will be joining the UCLA community at an exciting and pivotal time, as the campus has recently tapped [Julio Frenk](#) as its next chancellor; he will begin his tenure at UCLA in January of 2025. Until then, longtime campus leader and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost [Darnell Hunt](#) has been appointed interim chancellor. In an effort to deepen and expand its reach and impact, the University recently revealed [“Creating the Future,”](#) UCLA’s strategic plan from 2023-2028, and in 2028, UCLA’s centrally-located campus will serve as the Olympic and Paralympic Village for the Summer Olympic Games hosted in Los Angeles. The new Dean will join the UCLA campus community as it positions itself as a nexus for positive and lasting impact in Los Angeles, the nation, and around the world.

The UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (TFT) is a world-renowned interdisciplinary professional hub committed to cultivating exceptional humanistic storytellers, trailblazing industry leaders, and insightful scholars. Rooted in its rich heritage as a top-tier entertainment and performing arts institution, TFT champions diverse and innovative voices that have the power to enlighten, to enchant, and to transform students, audiences, and communities. It is the only School of its kind in the nation, seamlessly blending the study and creation of live performance, film, television, and digital arts through its innovative curriculum. TFT’s programs are consistently ranked among the nation’s best, in large part due to its renowned professors as well as working creatives and industry leaders who contribute to the curriculum. More than ever, the media and performing arts play a significant role at a national and global level; situated in the heart of the entertainment capital of the world, TFT has a strong track record and even greater potential to lead the way for creative innovation and social change.

In that context, the TFT community is looking for a visionary Dean who can advance its scholarship and practice during a time of transition and opportunity. To ensure the success and sustainability of TFT, the next Dean will ensure that the School’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is reflected in its actions; see to it that investments align with the School’s mission and campus-wide objectives; and demonstrate a dedication to shared governance and advocacy across campus and beyond. To that end, the Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Implement a strategic plan that clearly defines and articulates a distinctive, compelling, and competitive identity for the School of Theater, Film and Television;
- Develop a robust resource and infrastructure base that will allow the School to fully achieve its ambitious objectives;

- Advance and expand equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives and outcomes;
- Cultivate and deepen the School's connections within Los Angeles, nationally, and globally;
- Engage TFT to lead in significant and ongoing evolutions in the creative industries;
- Recruit, develop, and inspire a world-class faculty and staff; and
- Serve as a passionate and effective advocate for TFT across campus and externally.

A full list of desired qualifications and characteristics of the Dean can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT UCLA

UCLA is widely recognized as [the top public university](#) in the country and one of the world's top research institutions because of its enduring commitment to ensuring inclusive excellence in research, teaching, and service. As a public institution of higher learning, UCLA advances knowledge, addresses pressing societal needs, and creates a university enriched by diverse perspectives where all individuals can flourish. This vibrant community includes world-renowned faculty and scholarship, including 16 Nobel Laureates and 15 MacArthur Fellows; a preeminent medical center with soon-to-be six hospitals and 270 outpatient clinics; and a Division I athletics program that boasts 120 NCAA championships and more Olympic medals than most nations. In 2023, The Los Angeles Times recognized UCLA as the most selective public institution of higher education in the U.S., receiving more applications than any other postsecondary education institution in the nation.

Situated on 419 acres in Westwood, five miles from the Pacific Ocean, and recent site acquisitions in [Downtown L.A.](#), [South Bay](#), and [Westside](#), [UCLA](#) is enriched by the cultural diversity of the dynamic greater Los Angeles area and the geographic advantages of Southern California. One of the world's preeminent public research universities, UCLA is an international leader in breadth and quality of academic, research, health care, wellness, cultural, continuing education, and athletic programs, with more than 5,500 faculty members who teach approximately 47,800 students in the UCLA College and 12 professional schools. UCLA is consistently ranked among the top institutions nationally for research funding, having generated nearly \$1.7 billion in research grants and contracts in the last fiscal year alone.

UCLA's primary purpose as a public research university is the creation, dissemination, preservation, and application of knowledge for the betterment of our global society. To fulfill this mission, UCLA is committed to academic freedom in its fullest terms: the school values open access to information, free and lively debate conducted with mutual respect for individuals, and freedom from intolerance. In all of its pursuits, the University strives at once for excellence and diversity, recognizing that openness and inclusion produce true quality.

Learning and teaching at UCLA are guided by the belief that undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students and their teachers belong to a community of scholars. This community is dedicated to providing students with a foundational understanding of a broad range of disciplines followed by the opportunity for in-depth study in a chosen discipline. All members of the community are joined together in discovering and advancing knowledge and practice. Learning occurs not only in the classroom but also through engagement in campus life and communities and organizations beyond the University.

UCLA is also an effective engine for social mobility for students. In fact, first-generation college students represent nearly one-third of the UCLA undergraduate population. A recent [study](#) ranked UCLA first in the economic mobility index for the seventh straight year. It was also ranked the number one public university for veterans in 2023.

Discovery, creativity, and innovation are hallmarks of UCLA. As one of the world's great research universities, UCLA is committed to ensuring inclusive excellence across a wide range of disciplines, professions, and arts while also encouraging investigation across disciplinary boundaries. In so doing, UCLA advances knowledge, addresses pressing societal needs, and creates a university enriched by diverse perspectives where all individuals can flourish.

Civic engagement is fundamental to the University's mission as a public university. Located on the Pacific Rim in one of the world's most diverse and vibrant cities, UCLA reaches beyond campus boundaries to establish partnerships locally and globally. The school seeks to serve society through both teaching and scholarship, to educate successive generations of leaders, and to pass on to students a renewable set of skills and commitment to social engagement. UCLA endeavors to integrate education, research, and service so that each enriches and extends the others. This integration promotes academic excellence and nurtures innovation and scholarly development.

The Academic Senate is one of the distinctive organizational elements of the University of California – a feature that distinguishes it from other major research universities. Codified by the UC Regents in 1920, the Academic Senate is the vehicle through which faculty share in the operation and management of the University. UCLA's contemporary practice of consultative decision-making and shared governance affirms that faculty are at the heart of the academic enterprise of teaching, research, and public service and critical to maintaining the quality of the University's academic program. The Senate is delegated authority over such matters as degree and enrollment requirements and program establishment, disestablishment, and review. It also has a formal advisory role in academic personnel actions and a myriad of other matters. The Academic Senate's efforts derive from the premise that the University's excellence cannot be sustained without faculty, administration, staff, and students all making substantive contributions to the university in an involved, respectful, and collaborative fashion.

ABOUT THE UCLA SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION (TFT)

History

UCLA first established the Theater Arts Department in 1947, with film producer Kenneth Macgowan as its first chair. In 1960 the department became part of the UCLA College of Fine Arts, with theater director William Melnitz as its founding dean. For its first two years, the department offered undergraduate study across three divisions: Theater, Motion Pictures, and Radio. This groundbreaking arrangement marked the first time a leading university had brought together these distinct subjects under a single administration.

In 1987 the College of Fine Arts was dissolved, and in 1990 the School of Theater, Film and Television was founded by the eminent film, television, and Broadway director Gilbert Cates. Dean Cates set out to create a professional conservatory environment within UCLA, which by then was a dominant research university. With his guidance, new faculty were hired, curriculum was expanded and direct outreach to the entertainment industry was markedly increased. Following Dean Cates' tenure, the School was led by professor and film historian Robert Rosen from 1999 – 2009, and by award-winning feature film producer, founding dean of the Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television, and UCLA alumna Teri Schwartz from 2009 – 2019. Since 2020, the School has been led by artistic director, theater director, actor, and professor Brian Kite.

TFT Today

The UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television is recognized for its top-ranking programs and is the only school in the country to offer professional training and scholarly research in theater, film, television, and digital media. In addition to more than 196 faculty (41 senate and 155 non-senate), the School is home to approximately 350 undergraduate and 261 graduate students enrolled in its 14 graduate degree and four professional programs, who produce 250 student films and host 12 student theater productions every year. Faculty and students are supported by 150 staff, who help maintain the rich institutional history and community that is TFT.

The School houses [the Ralph Freud Playhouse](#); [the Little Theater](#); [the James Bridges Theater](#); [the Darren Star Screening Room](#); [the David C. Copley Center for the Study of Costume Design](#); [the Center for Performance Studies](#); [the Digital Incubator and Think Tank](#); and the [Center for Research in Engineering, Media and Performance \(REMAP\)](#), a joint effort of TFT and UCLA Samueli School of Engineering. REMAP explores the intersections between engineering, the arts and community development, facilitating collaborative projects that integrate technology with artistic creativity.

The Department of Film, Television and Digital Media

The [Department of Film, Television and Digital Media](#) (FTVDM) offers three academic degrees and one professional degree: BA in Film and Television (plus a minor in the same area), MFA, and MA and PhD in Cinema and Media Studies. Students can choose to specialize in Animation, Directing, Cinematography, Documentary, Producing, Screenwriting, and Cinema and Media Studies. The BA program is highly selective,

balancing critical/media literacy, history and critique, and basic production skills, plus a greater emphasis on digital and data-driven platforms, production, and transmedia. The Department has 20 senate faculty and approximately 82 non-senate faculty. These faculty serve a student population of 89 undergraduate students and 211 graduate students.

The Department of Theater

The [Department of Theater](#) provides comprehensive and rigorous training in all the professions of theater, from playwriting, directing and acting to set, costume, and lighting design, and a study of theater's 2,500-year history, literature, and theory. The Theater BA offers emphases in Acting, Design/Production, Directing, Integrated Studies, the Ray Bolger Musical Theater Program, and Playwriting. The MFA includes specializations in Acting, Directing, Design for Theater and Entertainment, and Playwriting. The PhD in Theater and Performance Studies is an interdisciplinary program that offers an exploration of theater, performance, and the performative. The Department has 21 senate faculty and 73 non-senate faculty. These faculty serve a student population of 261 undergraduate students and 50 graduate students.

TFT Facilities

TFT classroom, performance, production, and administrative spaces are housed in East Melnitz Hall, Melnitz Hall, and Macgowan Hall. The Department of Theater maintains three primary performance spaces: the 552-seat Freud Playhouse Theater, the 172-seat Little Theater, and the Black Box Theater. The unit also maintains a mixed-use space, 1473 Melnitz Hall. The Department of Film, Television and Digital Media facilities include three film sound stages, three television studies, and two screening rooms (the James Bridge Theater and the Darren Star Screening Room). An urgent priority for the School is to upgrade and expand existing facilities, especially with regard to teaching spaces and classrooms.

Alumni

TFT boasts a global community of [more than 11,000 remarkable alumni](#) that includes Academy Award, Emmy, Golden Globe, and Tony winners. Some notable alumni include Carroll Ballard, film producer Harve Bennett, Garrett Bradley, Carol Burnett, Francis Ford Coppola, Dean Cundey, James Dean, Broadway actress Judy Kaye, Ray Manzarek and Jim Morrison, Rob Reiner, Paul Schrader, and George Takei. Adding to the School's legacy are screenwriters Dustin Lance Black, Colin Higgins, Aleta Kalogridis, Eric Roth, and David Ward; Broadway directors Kristin Hanggi, Justin Lin and John Rando; actors Jack Black, Mariska Hargitay, Billy Porter, Tim Robbins, Tom Skerritt, Ben Stiller, Michael Stuhlbarg; filmmakers Shane Black, Steven Canals, Alex Cox, Julie Dash, Valerie Faris, Alex Gibney, Catherine Hardwicke, Marielle Stiles Heller, Janet Leahy, Frank Marshall, Gregory Nava, Alexander Payne, Gina Prince-Bythewood, Tom Shadyac, Brad Silberling, Penelope Spheeris, Gore Verbinski, and Aron Warner.

ROLE OF THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND TELEVISION

As the chief executive and academic officer for the School, the Dean provides strategic vision for and operational oversight of the School, which has an annual operating budget of approximately \$36 million. The Dean works to advance scholarship, creative and artistic accomplishment, education, and civic engagement; encourage distinctive programmatic innovation; enhance excellence through diversity in educational programs and faculty and student recruitment; and link the work of the School's faculty and students to other disciplines, communities, and interests within and outside of the academy. Supporting the university's research mission, the Dean will advance the faculty's scholarly activities, including opportunities afforded by interdisciplinary approach

es. The Dean serves as the School's public voice, articulating its contributions to local, state, regional, national, and international communities, and pursuing an aggressive development program to build the School's resources.

Reporting to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, the Dean serves on the Dean's Council, the Council of Professional School Deans, and the Chancellor's Council on the Arts, and collaborates with leadership across UCLA and the UC system as well as local, national, and international leaders in the entertainment industry and the performing arts.

The Dean and school are supported by a dedicated and experienced [administrative leadership team](#), including Associate Dean for Administration; Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Associate Dean for Faculty and Students; Associate Dean for Research and Technology; Executive Director for Development & Alumni Affairs; CFO/ Director of Business Operations; and Directors of Academic & Staff Personnel, Admissions and Outreach, Events, Information and Instructional Technology, Media Relations, Professional Programs, and Student Services.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW DEAN

The Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Implement a strategic plan that clearly defines and articulates a distinctive, compelling, and competitive identity for the School of Theater, Film and Television

As an integral component of a top-tier research institution, TFT is already at the leading edge of research and creative activities. However, more can be done to distinguish and better articulate the School's unique identity, programs, and opportunities to prospective students and the public writ large. TFT is currently developing strategic priorities in alignment with the campus-wide strategic plan. Working closely with faculty, administrators, and other key stakeholders, the Dean will advance this strategic plan for TFT that clearly defines its focus on academic and creative excellence in service to Los Angeles and beyond. Reexamining and clearly articulating TFT's identity and offerings will be critical to the School's continued work in recruiting and attracting top students, staff, and faculty from around the world. The Dean will lead

the identification and promotion of TFT's distinct programs in an effort to strengthen its presence nationally and globally.

This individual will work closely with the School's key stakeholders to advance a shared vision that embraces the School's ambitious goals. Central to this will be developing and expanding student support and services that will ensure success in their academic and professional pursuits. In finalizing a strategic plan, the Dean will have established the School as a global hub for innovative research and creative activity, in theory and in practice, within theater, film, television, and digital media. The Dean is responsible for implementing this plan, assessing the School's progress, and mobilizing community members in support of TFT's shared goals and commitments.

Develop a robust resource and infrastructure base that will allow the School to fully achieve its ambitious objectives

The School aspires to advance a 21st century education: prioritize undergraduate student recruitment and academic success; ensure job-placement post-graduation; advance equity, diversity, and inclusion; and advocate for resources to support the School's academic programs and overdue and much-needed facilities renovations. The Dean will need to be an effective fiscal manager to address strategic investments while diligently managing complex fiscal realities.

Located in the heart of Los Angeles, TFT and UCLA more broadly operate in a dynamic and resource-rich environment. The incoming Dean is well positioned to take advantage of the city's local industries, philanthropic sources, and growing alumni base. Responsible for creating and participating in activities that support fundraising, the Dean will set ambitious fundraising goals and should be skilled in stewarding donors and securing resources from a wide range of sources. The incoming Dean will work with a recently formed advancement team to identify and support the needs of the School, including student scholarships, endowed faculty lines, classroom technology and equipment, labs and research infrastructure, capital projects, facility renovations, deferred maintenance, and other key initiatives. They will use exceptional interpersonal skills to articulate the identity of and vision for TFT to excite donors, while leveraging their financial acumen to effectively manage resources and ensure the School has a healthy and sustainable future.

Advance and expand equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives and outcomes

The School of Theater, Film and Television community at UCLA is among the most diverse schools of its kind in the nation. UCLA TFT has its own equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) office which serves as a liaison between the School and the UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The incoming Dean will have experience and a deep commitment to advancing EDI and will work with the EDI offices and broader TFT and campus communities to build and nurture a culture that is welcoming and supportive to everyone. This individual will engage diverse ideas for the provision of culturally competent education and research.

The Dean will support the School's community of educators, staff, and learners from all backgrounds and identities while ensuring its curriculum is inclusive. By bringing an awareness of and critical consciousness to inequities within the School's departments and their respective industries, the incoming Dean will work to break down barriers to success and to foster a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment. Equity, diversity, and inclusive excellence will remain part and parcel of the identity and activities of the School; the incoming Dean will be a stalwart advocate in advancing these initiatives.

Cultivate and deepen the School's connections within Los Angeles, nationally, and globally

One of the core pillars of the campus-wide strategic plan is to deepen UCLA's engagement with Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles and UCLA have a symbiotic relationship. TFT is uniquely positioned to leverage UCLA's rich and robust research enterprise to create impact beyond the campus. The incoming Dean will increase support for advancing faculty research and help TFT to further collaborate with other campus units in advancing a 21st century education and community-engaged research.

Los Angeles is a diverse and dynamic city; TFT contributes to that dynamism by partnering with the city's vibrant arts and entertainment communities, supporting its economy, particularly in film, digital media, television, and theater industries. The School's ties to Los Angeles are part of what distinguishes it from other institutions with similar programs. The incoming Dean has a tremendous opportunity to further weave the School's contributions into Los Angeles and beyond to address some of society's most pressing issues and challenges. By leveraging untapped creative assets in Los Angeles, TFT's incoming Dean will fulfill UCLA's mandate as a public land-grant institution while extending its reach and impact nationally and around the world. The incoming Dean will strengthen existing and cultivate new professional relationships with industry leaders and other key stakeholders in Los Angeles and beyond to secure coveted job placements for students and opportunities for collaborations and engagements with the broader TFT community.

Engage TFT to lead in significant and ongoing evolutions in the creative industries

Today, the creative industries are clearly in a state of flux and transition. Both movie and live performance attendance have been impacted since the pandemic, film and television production is down since the strikes, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence pose both opportunities and challenges to the creative fields. . TFT's next Dean will provide leadership on engaging these changes within the School, especially with respect to their impact on research, creative work, teaching, and public programming.

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

The UCLA TFT's faculty and staff are indispensable to its mission. As the School advances a strategic vision led by the Dean and in alignment with campus' strategic plan, TFT's diverse and passionate faculty and staff will be critical to carrying these initiatives to fruition. The Dean will oversee the recruitment, retention, and advancement of faculty, lecturers, and staff committed to advancing TFT's mission. This individual will

invest in employee retention efforts, ensuring that people are acknowledged for outstanding work and feel valued for their contributions. They will also invest in professional development opportunities for faculty and staff whose work can be both physically and emotionally taxing.

The incoming Dean will display exceptional interpersonal and management skills and will be an accessible, visible, and engaged leader. This individual will be committed to ensuring a healthy workplace environment and will foster a culture of shared governance, transparency, team building, and collaboration in which a world-class faculty and staff are eager to teach and work. The incoming Dean will be prepared to lead in a unionized environment and will inspire loyalty and dedication to TFT to boost morale for faculty and staff at all levels.

Serve as a passionate and effective advocate for TFT across campus and externally

As a member of the Deans' Council, the Council of Professional School Deans, and the Chancellor's Council on the Arts, the incoming Dean will be a champion for the School, attending university events to broadcast the great work being done by students and faculty, building relationships across schools and colleges on campus to identify opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaborations, and advocating for resources from university leadership.

Given its unique status as a combined professional school for entertainment in the UC system, its Southern California location, and both the research and entrepreneurial strengths of UCLA, TFT also has tremendous potential to be at the forefront of contributions to the creative industries that are an integral component of the California economy and the state's identity. In coordination with the campus, a successful Dean will engage at the state and local level to better frame TFT's ability to advance the creative industries during an exciting time of transition and evolution. They will fully leverage the assets of the UCLA campus to represent TFT credibly and effectively. Externally, the Dean will continue to build bridges to the Los Angeles arts community and will partner with UCLA development staff to cultivate and steward philanthropic donors. The incoming Dean will bring TFT, the UCLA community, and external stakeholders together around collective objectives that are grounded in its unique strengths and public mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

UCLA seeks a visionary leader to build upon TFT's tradition of inclusive excellence and advance the School to a new level. Ideal candidates will be nationally and/or internationally recognized for scholarly and/or professional achievement, with demonstrated leadership and administrative experience in a creative environment and in academia, and a strong commitment to education and scholarship. Minimum requirements include a record of distinguished scholarly accomplishment and/or comparable achievements in film, television, theater, or digital media; significant organizational leadership and administrative responsibility; demonstrated success in external relations and fundraising, particularly with alumni; an established record of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion; and credentials that merit appointment at the rank of full professor.

The search committee enthusiastically welcomes applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. In addition to the above minimum requirements, the committee will also consider the factors below when evaluating candidates for this important leadership role. A successful candidate will possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Experience with broad global traditions of theater and filmmaking as well as with the media and entertainment industries;
- An energetic, entrepreneurial, diplomatic, and consultative leadership style that inspires students, faculty, and staff at all levels;
- Ability to collaborate with the faculty to articulate and build consensus around a vision and distinguishing identity for TFT in its teaching and research/creative work;
- A commitment to supporting and cultivating a world-class and diverse faculty;
- A commitment to shared governance;
- A track record of effective personnel, fiscal, and physical resources management;
- A track record of developing and nurturing relationships and partnerships across a variety of disciplines and with external partners;
- A proven ability to serve as an advocate for the School and its initiatives across campus and beyond.

LOCATION

Los Angeles is the epicenter for the global entertainment industry and one of the major economic centers of the State of California, one of the largest economies in the world. Los Angeles County has the largest population of any county in the United States and is one of the most populous metropolitan areas in the world. Its nearly 10 million residents represent more than 140 cultures and speak an estimated 224 languages. With an average of 292 sunny days per year, UCLA's location is five miles from Santa Monica beach. Home to the one of the largest city parks in the country, countless hiking trails, and some of the nation's most renown museums and farmers markets, Los Angeles is internationally recognized as one of the most livable cities in the world. Learn more at www.discoverlosangeles.com

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Confidential review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. Address nominations, inquiries, and applications to our Isaacson, Miller consultants David Bellshaw and Rafael Escobedo via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-california-los-angeles-school-theater-film-and-television/dean>. To be ensured full consideration, please submit a letter of interest, diversity statement, and curriculum vitae by November 25, 2024. Electronic submission of materials is required. The anticipated salary range for this position is \$400,000-490,000 and is commensurate with experience.

David Bellshaw, Rafa Escobedo, and Salem Adisu
Isaacson, Miller
Los Angeles/San Francisco/Boston/Washington D.C./Philadelphia

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity Employer advancing inclusive excellence. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the UC nondiscrimination policy –

<https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/DiscHarassAffirmAction>