

American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory Dean

American Film Institute (AFI) seeks a passionate, inspirational, collaborative and professional leader, steeped in the art, science and business of storytelling through moving images.

The Dean will lead the AFI Conservatory, in concert with the AFI President and CEO, AFI Board of Trustees and Conservatory stakeholders, with the goal to educate and inspire the next generation of storytellers. The Dean will further elevate the AFI Conservatory's celebrated reputation and ranking, as well as ensure academic excellence, robust admissions and financial strength; recruit and retain exceptional faculty; and build upon a strong reputation for educational achievement.

Reporting to AFI's President & CEO, the Conservatory Dean's overarching priority will be to measurably enhance the stature of the Conservatory's programs, drive enrollment, and financially strengthen the Conservatory as it pursues its mission. The Dean will coordinate action on all policies and procedures related to these matters, and will recruit, retain, manage and cultivate a capable team of faculty and administrators who are dedicated to the educational mission of the Conservatory.

As an advocate and strategist for academic excellence, the Dean will engage the best thinking of the faculty in the planning required to evolve the Conservatory's academic profile. The Dean is responsible for accreditation and for the Conservatory's relationship with the various evaluation and rating organizations, partners and influencers.

The Dean will ensure that the Conservatory remains responsive to the development and maintenance of admissions, registration, records, academic progress, counseling, financial aid, and other academic and nonacademic functions.

The Conservatory operates with a shared governance model, and the Dean will ensure that this model continues to be employed in ways that encourage ambition while embracing and supporting diverse perspectives. The Dean will create a sense of community among all staff, faculty, Fellows and AFI partners.

The academic environment under the Dean's supervision will be collaborative and responsive to the perspective of the faculty and Fellows. The Dean will facilitate the best possible teaching environment that engages and evolves based on the shared insights of leaders in the field. A record of credibility and personal achievement in the field is important, as is experience working in collaboration with a diverse team of leaders.

The Dean will manage the overall budget for all academic and nonacademic functions of the Conservatory. The Dean will review how the various investments in infrastructure, physical assets and research and training advance the conservatory's mission.

The Dean will serve as an articulate and persuasive spokesperson for the Conservatory and will represent the Conservatory and its programs to a broad range of internal and external constituencies, while cultivating strong and supportive relationships.

Working with the AFI's President & CEO, Advancement Team, and CFO, the Dean will function as the Conservatory's chief revenue office and chief fundraising advocate. In this capacity, the

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Dean will drive both earned and contributed revenue programs that strengthen the Conservatory financially, minimizing debt, building endowment, and creating a financial environment that can be responsive to the needs of expansion and improvement.

DETAILED RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure the AFI Conservatory's place at the highest levels of educational effectiveness.
- Develop, articulate and implement annual AFI Conservatory goals in partnership with AFI Conservatory Trustee committees, faculty and staff. Inspire and unite faculty, Fellows and Conservatory staff related to annual goals and actions and ensure alignment between the Conservatory's goals and the overarching goals of the Institute.
- Oversee AFI Conservatory financial operations, ensuring compliance with overall AFI goals and the financial health of the Conservatory to meet or exceed budget expectations.
- In cooperation with AFI Advancement, participate in a robust ongoing development program that includes donor identification, relationship development and gifts management. Participate in the conception of and make presentations for opportunities to support the AFI Conservatory.
- Set goals for Fellow recruitment and retention while maintaining the unique voice of the AFI Conservatory. Oversee and participate in the admissions and selection process for Conservatory applicants and the administration of tuition rates and fees, scholarships and aid, and tuition remission.
- Lead the process to cultivate, hire, retain and develop world-class faculty and staff, including collaborating on recruitment, evaluations and personal development activities. Diversity and inclusion with regard to underrepresented groups will be organic to the Dean's leadership and management of the Conservatory.
- Oversee and ensure the establishment and implementation of policies and procedures relating to AFI Conservatory programs and administration as detailed in the Faculty and Fellows Handbooks and collaborate to ensure alignment of those policies with AFI administrative policies.
- Work closely with the faculty and collaborate with Discipline Heads, the Vice Dean, Administration, and the Vice Dean, Academic Affairs to lead the daily operations of the Conservatory, in areas including:
 - Strategic Planning –This includes developing, implementing and assessing strategies designed to enhance the overall quality of the Fellows educational experience at AFI.
 - Curricular Development/Ongoing Assessment/Institutional Effectiveness – Lead ongoing planning and program reviews, especially in connection with Institutional Effectiveness activities and accrediting body policies and procedures for assessing Fellow learning and enhancing programs and processes. Develop and utilize success metrics for Fellows, faculty and staff related to general Conservatory operations, individual performance and education standards. Liaise

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- with the Conservatory's accrediting organizations and meet expectations to ensure successful accreditation.
- Program Review – Ensure all programs are assessed annually to advance a culture of continuous academic enhancement. Oversee the development and ongoing review of standardized course syllabi.
 - Faculty Organization and Review – Evaluate the effectiveness of the faculty's teaching style, program content and Fellow learning, making appropriate modifications to maximize instructional effectiveness for both full-time and part-time faculty.
 - Staff Organization and Review – Evaluate the effectiveness of Conservatory staff, recommending appropriate adjustments as warranted.
 - Resource Review – Assess appropriate tools and technologies to ensure AFI's educational opportunities remain state-of-the-art.
 - Administrative Planning and Review – Oversee the approval of AFI Conservatory faculty contracts and annual performance evaluations, as well as applicable Conservatory budgets and expenditures.
 - Best Practices – Support faculty and staff by sharing best practices of graduate program design, offerings and processes, as well as through individual mentoring to foster a collaborative environment. Develop and communicate performance metrics to faculty and staff, and education expectations to Fellows.
- Organize and participate in the activities of AFI Conservatory Committees including, but not limited to, Curriculum Policy Review Meetings, Fellows Advisory Committee Meetings and Action Meetings.
 - Provide academic counsel to Fellows referred by the Director, Fellow Affairs or Discipline Heads and address situations involving Fellows progress, disciplinary action, appeals and complaints. Serve as the final arbitrator of Fellow and faculty disputes, including resolution related to Fellows continuation and academic probation.
 - Advocate on behalf of the AFI Conservatory to relevant companies and organizations.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE & CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will have the following range of experience, qualifications and characteristics:

- **Credibility** among leaders in the world of visual narrative storytelling through film, television and internet-based production; strong experience in cultivating, coaching, educating, training and stewarding teams of artists in the creation of works embraced by a diverse public;
- **Operations management**, with demonstrated ability to manage the financial aspects of a Conservatory; an understanding of education program revenue and expense models would be a distinct advantage; it would be useful to have previous senior management and leadership responsibility in an institution such as a college, university, conservatory,

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professional development, community college, professional school or other education program known for quality education in the craft of visual storytelling through film;

- **Measurable and successful results in raising funding** and in identifying, cultivating and soliciting donors and other sources of revenue;
- **An understanding of academic standards** and shared governance models as well as experience in evolving academic standards and accelerating change that measurably improves the overall rating of the academic programs of an institution as measured by third parties, and in terms of the respect accorded to the institution by experts in the field;
- **Strong experience that is applicable to recruiting**, developing, retaining and leading a diverse group of faculty; an ability to shape an academic environment that attracts top talent; current or past experience as a teacher, coach or counselor would be extremely advantageous;
- **Planning**, including an understanding of the tools required to encourage and manage institutional development, development of strategic plans, identification and implementation of best practices,
- **A charismatic communicator and advocate**, able to build enthusiasm for the Conservatory among internal and external constituencies; an ability to be a bridge among diverse business, artistic and academic constituents, leaders and influencers across the world of film and television; a person able to advance American Film Institute's reputation among prospective Fellows and the academic community in the U.S. and abroad with outstanding oral and written communication skills;
- **A good listener**, comfortable receiving input from many sources, and able to analyze and formulate disparate information into sound, well-organized plans; a leader that has demonstrated the ability to develop and convert new opportunities into programs that strengthen the Fellow experience and advance AFI and the Conservatory;
- **Mission-driven**, a decisive individual with a belief in the mission of the American Film Institute and the Conservatory, and a commitment to continuous, measurable improvements to the Conservatory's academic programs, faculty reputation and Fellow achievement;
- **A leader** sensitive to the needs of faculty, staff and Fellows with different backgrounds, ethnicities, interests and aptitudes.

For more information or to apply, please contact:

Mark Oppenheim
marko@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Associates
425 Market Street, Suite 1020
San Francisco, CA 94105

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ABOUT THE AFI CONSERVATORY

The AFI Conservatory at American Film Institute is one of the world's premier film schools. The Conservatory identifies and educates future leaders in the art of the moving image through an intensive two-year Master of Fine Arts degree program. The program is offered in six disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. The Fellow experience combines attribute of an apprenticeship by accomplished artisans, with the educational rigor of a modern academic institution. Faculty and seminar guests are drawn from the world's most accomplished storytellers. The Conservatory experience transforms young men and women with a raw passion for film into accomplished filmmakers who collaborate to create original films. The goal is not simply to earn an MFA, but to graduate prepared for a career in the industry.

Admission to the AFI Conservatory is highly selective, with a maximum of 140 Fellows per year. Small class sizes ensure Fellows receive one-on-one instruction from a faculty comprised of professionals with decades of experience guiding projects from script to screen. Fellows are encouraged to find and develop a unique voice as they are trained in the art of storytelling – and they learn to make movies by making movies. During their two-year training, Fellows team with classmates to write, produce, design, direct, shoot and edit four to ten films, with classroom training supplementing the hands-on production experience.