



DESIGN EDUCATOR. ENTREPRENEUR.
CREATIVE DIRECTOR.

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My career as a design educator is rooted in extensive practical experience creating brand strategies and identities for corporations and new business start-ups. As a professor, I combine design theory (what students are taught) with the best practices and insights I've learned through more than three decades of professional experience (what students crave to know); my holistic strategy is academic and practical.

Since joining the Michael Graves College faculty in 2013, I have focused my research, teaching, and service on bridging design education and professional practice to ensure students are equipped to achieve their career goals. Two essential points that I emphasize are graphic design portfolio development and interdisciplinary, experiential learning. By developing projects that reflect the skills and passions of students and providing them with a classroom experience that closely resembles what they will encounter in professional practice, I aim to prepare them for the real world.

The fundamentals of my approach to portfolio development are laid out in my book, *Stand Out: Design a Personal Brand, Build a Killer Portfolio, and Find a Great Design Job* (Peachpit Press: 2016), which outlines a step-by-step process for students to create a visual identity that reveals their authentic brand, to build a body of work that represents the style, type, and industry-specific work they want to do, and to find a job that launches their career in the design field. The accompanying website, standoutportfolio.com, provides worksheets and industry resources.

My mentorship role—guiding students through the process of developing an idea, art directing their work, and teaching them how to write a business plan—helped three students place Second in the Kean University Business Plan Competition (2022: Shelley Mizrahi, "Starting Over"; 2019: Frank Mellana, "Trauma"; and 2018: Christopher Hopkins, "Forte"). In addition, I have been a participant in the Research Aligned Mentor (RAM) program, a grant-sponsored First in the World initiative, and the 2020 recipient of Circle of Eight's Lead Mentor Award for my work in Kean's EEO/EOF program.

The research project I am currently focused on is assessing student learning outcomes of interdisciplinary, experiential courses. This project draws inspiration from the New York Jets course, in which I teach and collaborate with faculty and students from the marketing, management, communication, and graphic design programs. We aim to evaluate these courses' impact on students' learning outcomes and promote the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education.