

SAMUEL JAY, PHD

Denver, CO

Executive Summary

Innovative and pragmatic academic leader with over a decade as a tenured professor and researcher and seven years of progressive leadership experience in higher education. Combines steady realism with forward-looking strategy to honor faculty expertise while guiding measured transformation across academic, administrative, and student-support units, helping colleagues throughout the institution adapt with confidence and purpose to better serve students and cultivate lifelong learning. A trusted advisor to the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, and Board of Trustees, offering clear, evidence-based insight on emerging trends to inform institutional strategy and shape the university's future with confidence. Leads with calm and integrity through uncertainty, aligning people toward shared goals that harness their expertise and strengthen a healthy, high-performing university culture. Recognized nationally as an invited speaker on AI, XR, and digital transformation within higher education.

Core Competencies

Strategic Academic Leadership
Digital Transformation & Online Learning
AI Strategy, Governance & Compliance
Digital Accessibility & Compliance
Change Management & Execution
Enrollment Growth & Retention
Data-Informed Decision Making

Budget & Resource Stewardship
Cross-Functional & Stakeholder Leadership
DEI & Inclusive Excellence
Academic Policy & Shared Governance
Faculty Development & Performance
Program Development & Quality Assurance
Grants & External Funding

Education & Credentials

Ph.D., Communication Studies (Rhetoric & Emerging Digital Media), University of Denver, 2014

M.A., Radio, Television & Film (Film History & Criticism), University of North Texas, 2009

B.A., Cinema & Comparative Literature, University of Iowa, 2006

Certificate, Artificial Intelligence: Implications for Business Strategy, MIT Sloan School of Mgmt., 2024

Leadership & Administrative Experience

Executive Director - Digital Learning & AI Strategy, MSU Denver, Denver, CO 2023-Present

- Set the university-wide agenda for digital, online, and hybrid learning and for the integration of emerging technologies, reporting directly to Provost as a member of the academic leadership team
- Advance MSU Denver's digital transformation by integrating online learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and extended reality (XR/VR/AR) to drive innovation in teaching, learning, and operations
- Lead cross-divisional team of 12 (six direct reports) and build partnerships linking Academic Affairs, IT, Enrollment Management, and Finance to deliver scalable, sustainable, equity-centered initiatives
- Provide strategic counsel to IT and Data leadership on AI governance and compliance, ensuring adherence to Colorado AI Act and the responsible use of emerging technologies in higher education
- Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, aligning technology initiatives with student success, instructional quality, and institutional effectiveness at an HSI- and MSI-designated university
- Oversee professional development for faculty and staff in AI literacy and lead campus-wide student AI literacy initiatives that prepare all learners for the evolving digital economy
- Champion data-informed decision-making by building feedback systems that deliver real-time insight, enabling adaptive, evidence-based responses to institutional challenges and opportunities
- Develop and sustain industry partnerships to align AI, XR, and online program design with workforce needs, ensuring academic offerings prepare graduates for evolving professional landscapes
- Administer an annual portfolio exceeding \$3.5 million, including \$1.5 million for the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Design and \$1.2 million for the Office of Online Learning
- Reinvest surplus revenue strategically to expand faculty development, enhance staff well-being, and advance student-success initiatives that strengthen university's academic and operational health

Key Achievements:

- Launched MSU Denver's first AI Literacy course for students, enrolling 12,000+ active learners, and a companion course for 1,200+ faculty and staff, building institution-wide knowledge and confidence
- Designed and executed campus AI surveys for students and employees to establish baseline awareness and inform priorities, resourcing, and risk management
- Recognized locally, regionally, and nationally for AI strategy and governance expertise, delivering keynotes and panels for higher education, non-profit, and business industry audiences
- Established the university's first AI Governance and Ethics framework, convening a cross-campus council to craft principles and risk protocols, positioning the university as a leader in responsible AI
- Researched and vetted AI model (BastAI) and co-lead development with Advising and full-stack engineers, delivering an AI advising tool that reduced response times and increased advisor capacity
- Secured approximately \$700,000 in donor and grant funding to accelerate XR labs, AI pilots, and faculty development, leveraging public-private partnerships to scale implementation and impact
- Expanded online programs (including undergraduate and graduate certificates, majors, and minors) from 18 at the time of appointment to over 30 at the beginning the 2025-26 academic year
- Increased online-only majors from 539 to 1,450, turning pandemic-era demand into sustained growth through program expansion, targeted support, and data-driven marketing
- Partnered with Academic Affairs units to improve quality of online courses, leveraging training for instructors, expanded instructional design support, and data and reporting to improve DFW rates
- Embedded a data-informed operating model, integrating analytics into planning and review cycles to improve agility and performance accountability within the Office of Online Learning

Director - Faculty Affairs, MSU Denver, Denver, CO

2021-2023

- Oversaw full faculty lifecycle -appointments, reappointments, tenure and promotion, post-tenure review, sabbaticals, and emeritus recognition- ensuring consistent, timely, equitable processes
- Shepherded annual Faculty Handbook revisions with Faculty Senate, Legal, and HR partners, clarifying procedures, modernizing policies, and strengthening shared-governance alignment across colleges
- Administered a faculty development portfolio of approximately \$500,000 for sabbaticals and grants, applying transparent criteria and equitable allocation to maximize instructional and scholarly impact
- Partnered with HR, General Counsel, Data and Analytics, IT, and Registrar to modernize faculty data and compliance as well as served as Academic Affairs lead for the transition from Banner to Workday
- Advised the Provost and Vice Provost on complex personnel cases and policy implementation; represented Faculty Affairs on workload, well-being, and diversity committees
- Designed and delivered training for deans, chairs, and faculty on evaluation processes, academic policy, and effective documentation, improving consistency and preparedness across units.

Key Achievements:

- Built a real-time faculty performance data system for teaching, research, and service, increasing evaluation transparency and informing promotion, support, and resource decisions
- Awarded approximately 30 sabbaticals annually and funded multiple teaching-innovation projects, improving satisfaction with resource distribution and strengthening scholarship and pedagogy
- Launched an online Faculty Evaluation Preparation course and revitalized chair and emerging-leader training, expanding leadership capacity and contributing to improved faculty retention
- Streamlined faculty HR workflows for discipline, departmental guideline changes, and annual reviews; digitization reduced processing time, decreased errors, and informed subsequent policy updates
- Co-founded and co-lead a Predictive Retention Taskforce; interventions delivered substantial term-to-term retention gains among cohorts previously predicted not to re-enroll
- Led cleanup of faculty data, implementing SharePoint storage architecture for quantitative and qualitative records, improving access, integrity, governance, and lifecycle management

Presidential Faculty Fellow – Office of the President, MSU Denver, Denver, CO

2020–2021

- Selected by the President to advise on strategic initiatives and organizational development, partnering with cabinet leaders on high-priority projects and decisions
- Facilitated executive leader onboarding to institutional mission, culture, and strategic plan, accelerating leader acclimation and alignment during periods of transition and change

- Conducted campus listening sessions with faculty and staff, channeling feedback to senior leadership to improve transparency, trust, and shared understanding across units
- Provided research and recommendations on institutional effectiveness, communication strategies, and diversity, equity, and inclusion to inform presidential priorities and resource allocation
- Coordinated stakeholder communications during sensitive initiatives, ensuring clear messaging, timely updates, and alignment between governance groups, academic leaders, and administrative partners

Key Achievements:

- Developed and led a comprehensive onboarding program for new executives, accelerating integration and alignment with the Strategic Plan and the university's HSI mission
- Chaired the search for the inaugural Chief Strategy Officer, partnering with the President to define the role and recruit a high-caliber, mission-aligned leader
- Collaborated with the COO and Chief of Staff on COVID-19 planning; facilitated stakeholder forums and authored communications that maintained campus safety and cohesion
- Advised on mission communication and stakeholder engagement, launching new forums for faculty, staff, and students that strengthened buy-in and inclusive decision-making

Assoc. Chair & Adjunct Faculty Coord. – Communication Studies, MSU Denver, Denver, CO 2018–2020

- Managed a 30-plus affiliate faculty cohort, overseeing hiring, orientation, mentoring, scheduling, and evaluation to maintain instructional quality and student learning outcomes
- Directed departmental course scheduling and resource planning, balancing instructional capacity with demand to optimize access, efficiency, and student progress to degree
- Organized professional development workshops for faculty, promoting evidence-based pedagogy, inclusive practices, and continuous improvement aligned with departmental program review findings
- Contributed to accreditation and program review processes through data collection, analysis, and reporting that informed curricular updates and resource prioritization

Key Achievements:

- Redesigned course scheduling and staffing with the Chair, improving fill rates, increasing average class size, and reducing conflicts to enhance student time-to-degree
- Instituted regular training and feedback for affiliate faculty, improving teaching performance, integration, and continuity; several progressed to full-time or long-term appointments
- Led data-informed curriculum discussions and new course proposals, aligning offerings with industry trends and student interests identified through assessment and enrollment analysis

Associate Director – Honors Program, MSU Denver, Denver, CO 2019–2020

- Collaborated with the Director and associate directors to grow a university-wide Honors Program serving high-achieving students across academic disciplines and colleges
- Developed honors curriculum and co-curricular programming, coordinating faculty participation, community partnerships, and experiential learning aligned with program outcomes and standards
- Coordinated student engagement, communications, and outreach to raise program visibility, improve persistence, and strengthen alumni and donor relationships significantly across campus
- Advised honors students and supported admissions and capstone processes, ensuring high-quality experiences and timely progression through program milestones and recognition

Key Achievements:

- Designed interdisciplinary honors seminars and community engagement projects, contributing to a twenty percent enrollment increase and deeper student participation during tenure
- Improved communication channels including newsletters, events, and outreach, boosting current student participation and strengthening alumni support and advocacy across key initiatives

Board & Community Leadership

Board of Directors – Cherry Creek Academy (Public K–8 Charter), Greenwood Village, CO 2025-Present

- Elected board member providing governance oversight for a public K–8 charter serving approximately 550 students across academics, operations, compliance, and community engagement

- Lead policy development initiatives, executive director evaluation, and multi-year strategic planning; ensure alignment with mission, accountability standards, and measurable student success priorities
- Contribute expertise in educational innovation, technology integration, and data-informed decision making to strengthen instructional quality, transparency, and stakeholder trust across CCA community

Editorial & Professional Leadership

Co-Founder & Assoc. Editor 2025-Present
Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on Pedagogy & Learning Design, South Dakota St. University

- Co-founded and serve as Associate Editor of a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing innovation and scholarship in higher education teaching, learning, and design
- Lead editorial board recruitment, establish peer-review standards, and set strategic direction to promote research on instructional design, inclusive pedagogy, and educational technology

Faculty Appointment & Academic Experience

Professor - Communication Studies, MSU Denver, Denver, CO 2015-Present

- Tenured faculty specializing in Rhetoric and Media Studies, examining how media technologies shape discourse, judgment, and civic decision-making across contemporary contexts
- Teach undergraduate courses in rhetorical theory, media criticism, and professional communication; consistently earn strong evaluations for engaging, inclusive pedagogy and student-centered practice
- Earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in 2020 and to Full Professor in 2023, demonstrating excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service
- Led inclusive teaching practices and curricular innovation to support diverse learners, improve gateway course outcomes, and strengthen retention and progress to degree
- Mentored students through research projects, internships, and career preparation; advised student organizations and undergraduate scholars across disciplines and programs across the university
- Contributed to academic governance through departmental, college, and university committees, shaping policies, curricula, and assessment aligned with institutional mission and strategic priorities

Selected Publications & Presentations

Geinitz, S., Peprah, K., Rajan, R., Singh, S., & Jay, S. M. (2025). Exploring the Pedagogical Potential: An Investigation into Faculty and Students' Perceptions of Integrating Generative AI in the Classroom. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*. (Forthcoming, accepted with revisions).

Jay, S. M. (2025, August). *AI Policy in Practice*. Invited Speaker, WCET Webcast (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies).

Jay, S. M. (2025, July). *From Generative to Agentic: How AI is Evolving in Higher Education*. Panelist, Marcus Evans Group, Virtual.

Jay, S. M. (Presenter) & Geinitz, S. (2024, October). *Leveraging Generative AI for Enhanced Digital Learning*. Refereed Presentation, WCET Annual Meeting 2024 (WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies), Long Beach, CA.

Jay, S. M. (2024, September). *The Role of Generative AI in Reducing Faculty Administrative Work*. Refereed Presentation. 2nd Annual Business & Generative AI Workshop, AI at Wharton, San Francisco, CA.

Jay, S. M. (2024, June). *Applying AI to Increase Enrollment and Revenue While Reducing Cost*. Panelist, Marcus Evans Group, Virtual.