

AARON DANIEL ANNAS

CREATIVE DIRECTOR | ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY LEADER | EDUCATOR | DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLER

North Carolina • Portfolio and professional contact available at the personal website

PROFILE

Academic leader, creative director, educator, and media technologist with more than a decade of higher education experience across academic technology, digital learning, curriculum development, online education, responsible AI practice, and professional media workflows. Brings a terminal MFA in Independent Film and Digital Imaging, a record of building people-centered programs, and a practical approach to translating emerging tools into clear, verifiable workflows.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Creative direction and documentary storytelling • Academic technology and digital learning • Professional learning and faculty development • Curriculum and program development • Responsible AI and local inference • Media production and post-production • Faculty governance and collaborative leadership

SELECTED IMPACT

- Develops privacy-conscious AI workflows for research, writing, curriculum, media production, verification, accessibility preparation, and knowledge organization.
- Awarded a 2026 open educational resources grant to develop open-source course textbooks and the supporting research-to-publication workflow.
- Leads academic programs, curriculum work, faculty collaboration, scheduling, student-centered initiatives, and operational planning in higher education.
- Creates documentary and public-facing media projects connecting classrooms, professional practice, community partners, and regional stories.
- Builds practical learning through festivals, visiting-artist programs, industry partnerships, online courses, and applied production work.

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Private liberal arts college, North Carolina

2024-Present

Associate Professor and Department Chair; elected

Faculty Senate Chair, 2026-2027

- Lead communication, media, public speaking, digital cultures, documentary storytelling, and production leadership work.
- Coordinate faculty collaboration, curriculum, program planning, scheduling, student-centered initiatives, and departmental operations.
- Teach Digital Cultures, Public Speaking, Documentary Storytelling, Digital Media Production, Cinematography, and Production Leadership.
- Direct and co-produce documentary work connecting academic programs with professional media practice and community partners.

SUNY Buffalo State University, Buffalo, New York

2015-2024

Director of Television and Film Arts; Associate

Professor; Assistant Professor

- Coordinated an interdisciplinary academic program across curriculum, technology, student opportunities, and operations.

- Led development of a proposed MFA program in Television, Film, and Streaming Media and served on faculty leadership, curriculum, assessment, technology, governance, and search committees.
- Served as Academic Supervisor of the Buffalo/Niagara Film Office and Director of the SUNYWide Film Festival.
- Chaired a technology committee and administered shared Avid media infrastructure.

**Vanguard University of Southern California,
Costa Mesa, California**

2012-2015

*Assistant Professor of Cinema Arts; Faculty Director of
the Vanguard Sundance Program*

- Led curriculum development in Cinema Arts and updated the program for contemporary digital production and post-production.
- Founded the 55 Arts Festival and the Vanguard Sundance Program, creating student-facing programs and partnerships with working professionals.

Additional online and graduate teaching

2011-Present

*Grand Canyon University, Concordia College New
York, and Governors State University*

- Teach and have taught digital film production, cinematography, directing, documentary production, conflict, practicum, editing, and production courses in online, graduate, and undergraduate settings.

CREATIVE MEDIA WORK

- Life In the Gap, documentary project, Director / Producer, scheduled for PBS North Carolina in 2026.
- Foundations of Home: The John Steele House, documentary project, post-production, with a regional history organization.
- Alien Contact, feature documentary in progress, Director / Film Editor, Anno Domini Productions.
- There's No Such Thing as Ghosts?, feature documentary, Director / Film Editor, distributed by 1091 Pictures; Best Director and Best Feature Documentary awards.
- There Is Many Like Us, feature documentary, Associate Producer / Film Editor, with international broadcast and streaming distribution.
- Selected editorial and broadcast work includes National Geographic Channel, TVOne, History Channel, and Discovery Channel productions.

TEACHING, PROGRAMS, AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Develops courses and programs connecting theory, professional practice, technology, media production, and applied learning.
- Created public-facing student programs including the SUNYWide Film Festival, Vanguard Sundance Program, 55 Arts Festival, visiting-artist programming, and industry-connected learning opportunities.
- Speaker and moderator on documentary creation, distribution, creative practice, curriculum relevance, paranormal storytelling, and post-production.

TECHNOLOGY AND RESPONSIBLE AI

- Generative AI and local AI workflows using commercial and open-source language models, local inference, model evaluation, retrieval and memory workflows, automation, and privacy-conscious implementation.
- Experiments with NVIDIA DGX Spark hardware and open-source models to study reliability, model routing, data control, workflow design, and alternatives to exclusively cloud-based services.
- Avid Media Composer 101, 110, and 239 certified instructor; Certified Avid Media Composer user. Experience with Avid NEXUS, Avid Interplay, Pro Tools, Adobe Premiere Pro, After Effects, Photoshop, and Creative Cloud.

EDUCATION

- MFA, Independent Film and Digital Imaging, Governors State University
- BFA, Musical Theatre, magna cum laude, Mars Hill University