

Dr. David Potash



David Potash, PhD, is president of Wilbur Wright College, an independently accredited open access community college with two campuses in the City Colleges of Chicago system. Under his leadership the 89-year old community college in northwest Chicago has substantially increased student success, with significant gains in retention and student completion. Wright has created new degrees and certificates, crafted and implemented equity plans, enrollment plans and strategic plans, heightened community service and civic engagement, grown career programs and apprenticeships, and taken major strides in serving the city's Hispanic population. Wright's newly established Center of Excellence in Engineering and Computer Science has received national attention through its innovation and student accomplishments. Wright is a well-respected anchor institution with deep ties to the community. In 2021 Wright earned national recognition through the Seal of Excelencia and in 2022 the college received the Padron Award for institutional transformation.

Growing up in northern New Jersey, Potash traveled to Houston for a BA at Rice University. He returned to the New York metropolitan area to start his academic career at NYU, where he earned an MA in History while working full-time. Thanks to the advice of several professors, including Tony Judt, he traveled to Cambridge University to earn a PhD in history. After holding different positions at NYU, Potash joined Baruch College, CUNY, where he played a major role in the college's rise. He led the college's revision of advising, first-year programs and academic supports, worked across schools to reform curriculum, and participated in numerous reforms. A similar position at Hunter College, CUNY, followed, and then service outside of Boston as Curry College's first Chief Academic Officer. Curry is known for its work with students who have language-based learning difficulties. Quality, access, and equity have been the values driving Potash's career, helping institutions work in alignment to promote student success.

President Potash is a frequent presenter at conferences and events. His current affiliations include board membership for Campus Compact, Community College Presidents for Democracy, Presidents for Latino Student Success, Rice University's Teaching and Learning Center advisory board, GetSet advisory board, and the Portage Park Chamber of Commerce. He is active in the Chicago community and on social media. Potash has taught US history classes and misses the classroom.

Married for more than twenty years, President Potash has an adult daughter and a college-age son. He's an avid cook, an enthusiastic bicyclist, and an aspiring sketchbook artist.

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Academic Appointments

President, Wilbur Wright College, Chicago, IL

2013 -

Wright College, an independently accredited community college in the City Colleges of Chicago system, offers associate degree and certificate programs, vocational training, ESL and ABE/ASE programs, and professional and personal development opportunities at two campuses in northwest Chicago. A center of excellence for Engineering and Computer Science, Wright serves more than 12,000 students annually and is a Hispanic Serving Institution with one of the largest Hispanic enrollments in Illinois. Wright is committed to equity, access, high-quality education and outstanding support services with the goal of student success. I lead the college, coordinate Wright's efforts within CCC and promote the college to the external community, local and national. Selected accomplishments under my leadership include:

- Received the Seal of Excelencia (2021) for intentionally serving Hispanic students.
- Received the Padron Award from Campus Compact (2020) for college transformation.
- Received Inspiring Programs in STEM Award (2021) from Insight into Diversity magazine.
- More than doubled the IPEDS completion rate in my tenure (2022 - 29%), also raising retention and completion rates.
- Strengthened Wright's enrollment management processes and structure, stabilizing systems as programs were relocated, building capacity for growth, establishing one-stop services and improving outreach, effectiveness and student satisfaction, leading to highest retention rate at CCC.
- Integrated Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center into Wright College, increasing community outreach and span/scope of programs, bolstering workforce programs and partnerships with high schools, including programs on the West Side of Chicago.
- Sponsored the development of wide scale improvements to developmental education (testing, placement, onboarding, curricula) to increase speed of students to credit, with a focus on access and equity.
- Development of new programs, including IT - AS, AAS, certificate and non-credit programs with industry, military and four-year college partnerships; alignment with K-12; new industry partnerships, internships, apprenticeships and placement programs; AFA in fine arts; Latinx studies; Cannabis Processing (in process).
- Creation of honors program, service learning program, civic engagement initiative, Center for Teaching and Learning, partnership with Greater Chicago Food Depository, and many other partnerships with community stakeholders.
- Transformed Continuing Education to revenue-positive, creating new courses and programs for professional development and community outreach.
- Improved testing and level gain rates for Adult Education, integrating AE into Wright's overall culture and practice.
- Decreased full-time employee turnover to lowest rate in CCC.
- Establishment of a practice and culture of intentional planning, including strategic plan, equity plan, strategic enrollment plan, campus action plan, and created a long-term master space plan - all new to the college.
- Led CCC-wide task force to restructure online education at CCC.

- Developed and implemented a multi-prong strategy to increase Wright's equity-minded policies and practice, including AAC&U grant, increasing diversity of staff and faculty, participation in ILEA (state-wide initiative), and Excelencia Seal.
- Created partnerships among Chicagoland HSIs to increase collaboration, advocacy, and best practices for serving our Hispanic communities.
- Secured external funding (including Title V, NSF, NEH, Illinois State agencies, businesses and others) and internal scholarship funding, while supporting CCC efforts.

Chief Academic Officer, Curry College, Milton, MA

2008 - 2013

Curry is a private liberal arts college with professional and masters programs: 2,000 plus undergraduates, 85% residential; NEASC accredited and specialized accreditation in nursing, education, criminal justice; unionized faculty; internal governance via all-faculty; 1,200 adult students in degree-granting continuing education; 450 part-time students in four master's programs; Division III athletics.

Responsible for all academic activities: 130 full-time faculty and 89 Senior Lecturers; 60 administrators and staff, ten academic departments, Career Development Center, Levin Library, Center for Faculty Development and Curricular Innovation, Program for the Advancement of Learning (PAL), student newspaper, radio and television stations, Institutional Research, Registrar, Academic Advising, Center for Academic Enrichment, Honors, and Study Abroad, annual budget of \$30 million. Selected accomplishments:

- Negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement; restructured faculty hiring processes; recruited 24+ full-time faculty; increased faculty with terminal degrees 16%.
- Established Dean of Faculty, created Faculty Center for Professional Development and Curricular Innovation, facilitated learning outcomes based general education reform.
- Led NEASC self-study and reaccreditation process, strategic planning, developed academic planning and reporting processes, and departmental self-studies system.
- Creation of hybrid and online courses, oversaw \$3.5 million academic capital plan.
- Restructured Career Services into Center for Career Development, growing experiential education and providing every student with an internship.
- Established Diversity Committee with charge of increasing faculty and staff diversity, raising awareness and facilitating a more inclusive college environment.

Associate Provost/Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Hunter College, The City University of New York

2005 - 2008

A senior independently accredited college in The City University of New York, Hunter enrolled 21,000 students in five schools, 700+ faculty represented by a system-wide union (PSC); internal governance through a Senate. Responsible for curricula, program development and review, Middle States accreditation, school and departmental reviews, strategic planning, outcomes assessment, general education, academic support units, enrollment management, academic budgeting, faculty development, space planning, and educational technology. Selected accomplishments:

- Co-chaired CUNY Compact to secure and allocate new funding.

- Integrated multiple undergraduate retention efforts into college-wide initiative
- Led development year-long course planning, scheduling, and advising.
- Managed Hunter's CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE), a rising junior exam, instituting new policies and processes increasing the exam's show rate 20%.
- Partnered with CIO to restructure Hunter's web and information architecture.

Associate Provost for the Teaching and Learning Environment, Baruch College, The City University of New York 2001 - 2005

A senior independently accredited college in the City University of New York, Baruch enrolled approximately 16,000, 500+ unionized faculty; three schools; governance through all faculty committees and senate. Responsible for curricula, program, department, and school development and review, accreditation, strategic planning, learning outcomes assessment, academic support units, enrollment management and planning, academic budgeting, faculty development, space management and planning, and educational technology. Select accomplishments:

- Raised retention and graduation rates (20% plus).
- New partnership program with community colleges, coordinating curriculum, easing transfer, and increasing student success.
- Restructured advisement and student orientation.
- Restructured the Schwartz Communication Institute and CUNY Writing Across the Curriculum, later recognized with Hesburgh Award.

Executive Director of Academic Services/ Director of Academic Services, Baruch College, The City University of New York 1998 - 2001

Responsibilities included administrative oversight of the college's curricula, coordination with central administration, supervision of Continuing and Professional Studies, supervision of Sponsored Programs and Research, educational technology (instructional and administrative), development of coordinated freshman year program, new program development, program evaluation, and skills testing and assessment. Select accomplishments:

- Coordination of space allocation and course scheduling for college relocation.
- Creation of block/linked programming for all entering freshmen.
- Development of transfer information system for student advising.
- Facilitation and development of College's core curriculum.
- Development of three new graduate programs (MA in Corporate Communication; MA in Business Journalism; MS in Applied Mathematics for Finance).

Associate Director, John W. Draper Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Humanities and Social Thought, Graduate School of Arts & Science, New York University 1994 - 1997

Worked with GSAS Dean redesigning liberal studies into interdisciplinary graduate, raising reputation, revenue and enrollment; responsible for all program management and administration: recruitment, admissions, student advising, curriculum, faculty recruitment and evaluation, thesis supervision and workshops, and finances.

Assistant to the Dean 1989 - 1990
Dean's Office, Graduate School of Arts & Science, New York University

Managed the Dean's Office and staff, worked with school-wide and university-wide committees, handled budgeting, graduate bulletin, curricular and enrollment reports, and supported transformative efforts to reshape graduate education in FAS.

Budget Coordinator/Assistant to the Budget Director 1986 - 1989
Faculty of Arts & Science, New York University

Analyzed \$100+ million annual FAS Budget, including funded research, database management, capital funding and a wide range of initiatives; created sponsored programs database; analysis and reporting on restricted and endowed accounts of more than \$30 million.

Education

Ph.D., History, Cambridge University, 1998
Dissertation: *The Emergence of Conservative Republicanism, 1908-1912*
M.A., History, New York University, 1989
B.A., English and Philosophy, Rice University, 1986

Teaching

Professor, Department of Politics and History, Curry College, 2008 - 2013
American History II

Adjunct faculty, History Department, Baruch College 1998 - 2005
Courses taught include History Survey, Themes in American History, Modern America, American Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century

Adjunct faculty, Expository Writing, New York University 1989

Key Committees

Wright College/City Colleges of Chicago	
CCC Web/CRM	2020-
Chancellor Search Committee	2016-2017
CCC LMS development and RFP	2016-2018
CCC Performance Management	2016
Enrollment Management (executive sponsor)	2017
Task Force Online Learning (chair)	2014-2015
Curry College	
Board of Trustees (ex officio)	2008-2013

NEASC Steering Committee (chair)	2010-2012
Strategic Planning Committee (co-chair)	2011-2012
Hunter College	
CUNY Committee on Coordinated Undergraduate Education (chair)	2005-2008
Hunter College Technology Committee (chair)	2005-2008
Middle States Commission Steering Committee	2007-2008
President's Task Force on the Libraries (co-chair)	2006-2007
Senate Assessment Committee (co-chair)	2006-2008
Senate Committee on the First Year (co-chair)	2006-2008
Senate Technology Committee (co-chair)	2006-2008
Baruch College	
College Committee on Student Evaluation of Faculty and Courses (chair)	2002-2005
College Joint Committee on Curriculum and Articulation (chair)	2002-2005
CUNY Committee on Coordinated Undergraduate Education (chair)	2003-2005
CUNY Committee on General Education (co-chair)	2002-2005
CUNY Task Force on Retention and Graduation	2004-2005
Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee	1999-2000
President's Task Force on Course Scheduling (chair)	2002-2003
President's Task Force on Student Advising (co-chair)	1999-2000
New York University	
Task Force on the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences	1989-1990
Task Force on Salary Equity	1988

Scholarship and Selected Presentations

- “Nuestra Historia y Futuro: Building Better Hispanic Serving Partnerships through Code,” presentation with Tatiana Gallegos, Tricia Rosado, and Ken Santiago at AAC&U National Conference, 2022.
- “Equity, Engineering and Excellence: Pathways to Student Success” with Doris Espiritu, paper with ASEE, 2021.
- “Equity, Engineering and Excellence: Wright College & Engineering Pathways” presentation with Doris Espiritu, Professor and Director of the Wright College Engineering Program, for HACU Annual Conference, 2020.
- “Civic Engagement: From Service Learning to Community Impact” presentation with Scott Evenbeck, President of Guttman College, CUNY, for League for Innovation in the Community College Annual Conference, New York, NY, 2019.
- “Chicagoland Hispanic Serving Institutions: A Partnership for Student Success” presentation at AACC Annual Conference, Dallas, TX, 2018.
- “Regional Collaboration of Chicagoland Hispanic Serving Institutions” presentation with Kyle Westbrook, Partnership for College Completion, for HLC Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, 2018.

- “Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence” Panel for AAC&U Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 2018.
- “State of the Community 2016: Education and Employment” Panel for Polish American Association, Chicago, IL, 2016.
- “Implementing Change to Bring the Pieces Together: Preliminary Insights from the Wright College Student Experience Project” Poster at 13th Annual Illinois Education Research Symposium, Lisle, IL, 2015.
- “Wright College, City Colleges of Chicago, and Sustainable Student Success” presentation at the National Community College Advisory Council, ETS, Princeton, NJ, 2014.
- “Connecting Students with Employers” Panel and Provost Forum, presentation at Blackboard World, Las Vegas, NV, 2014.
- “Workplace Skills and Liberal Education: Equity and Access” panel presentation at AAC&U national conference, Washington, DC, 2014.
- “A Special Sort of Project Management: Academic Administrative Leadership and Effective General Education Reform,” presentation at AAC&U conference, Chicago, IL, 2011.
- “A Shared Classroom: General Education at Baruch College”, chapter in Reclaiming the Public Universities, Judith Summerfield and Crystal Benedicks, editors, (NY: Lang, 2007).
- “Redefining Undergraduate Education: Issues and Challenges in General Education” presentation at AAC&U conference, Long Beach, CA, 2007.
- “General Education and the National Curriculum: a planned course of research” 2nd Annual CUNY General Education Conference, Queensborough Community College, 2006.
- “History 1000 Syllabus” in On Campus: A Reference Guide to College, Monroe Community College (Pearson Custom Publishing, 2005).
- “Constitutionalism and the Taft Campaign of 1912,” Third Biennial Woodrow Wilson National Symposium, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Birthplace, Staunton, VA, 2004.
- “Nicholas Murray Butler,” “Henry Clay Frick” and “Elihu Root,” entries in the Encyclopedia of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, John Buenker, editor (M.E. Sharpe, 2004).
- Introduction, Collected Works of William Howard Taft, Volume V, David Burton, editor, (Ohio University Press, 2003).
- Review of David Carlyon, Dan Rice: The Most Famous Man You’ve Never Heard Of (Public Affairs, 2001) *Library Journal*.

“Teaching Philip Gourevitch’s We Wish To Inform Your That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda,” Middle Atlantic World History Association, “Encounters in World History: Teaching and Research” 2000.

“Block Programming and Integration in an Urban Commuter Setting,” International Conference on the First-Year Experience, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience, Reading, England, 2000.

“From Liberal Studies to Interdisciplinarity: A Primer in Transforming a Masters Program,” Presentation at the Association of Integrative Studies Annual Conference, Detroit, MI, 1998.

Review of Ruth Limmer, *Six Heritage Tours of the Lower East Side* (New York University Press, 1997) H-Urban, H-Net, 1998.

“Rowing,” Entry in Encyclopedia of Sports in American Culture Joyce Duncan, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Books, 1999).

“Corporate Manliness in the Progressive Era: Henry Clay Frick,” Culture, Representation & Disciplinarity Colloquium, Draper Program, New York University, 1997.

“Nicholas Murray Butler’s Judiciary Plank and the 1908 Republican National Platform,” American History Working Group, Cambridge University, England, 1993.

Review of Martin Sklar’s *The United States as a Developing Country* (Cambridge, 1992), *The British American*, vol. 4, no. 2.

The Graduate School of Arts and Science at New York University, A History, New York University, 1991.

Current Professional Associations

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
American Society of Engineering Education
Campus Compact - national board member
Community College Presidents for Democracy - national board member
Educause
Excelencia in Education - Presidents for Latino Student Success
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) - member of Annual
Conference Planning Council (2019)
League for Innovation in the Community College

Selected Professional Development

CUNY Executive Leadership Program, Spring 2003.

“Reacting to the Past” History Pedagogy, Barnard College, August, 2001.

Socrates Distance Learning Technologies Group, Online Facilitator Training, Fall 1999.

“Crossing Borders: New Media Classroom” faculty seminar on teaching with technology; Borough of Manhattan Community College, American Social History Project, 1998.

Other Professional Activities

American Society for Engineering Education Conference reviewer, 2020 -

Computer Science Education in Illinois, CME group, Advisory Board Member, 2020 -

Co-facilitator, Campus Compact Communities of Practice, micro-credential, Community Partnerships, Summer 2020.

Advisory board member, Community Colleges for Democracy Leadership, in conjunction with the Campus Compact, 2019 -

External Advisory board member, Rice University’s Center for Teaching Excellence, 2019 -

Advisory board member, Getset, 2018 -

ETS Skills for a New Economy (SNE) Advisory Council, 2019 - 2020

Guest lecturer, LEAD 480: The Community College, Northeastern Illinois University, 2016

ETS National Community College Advisory Council, 2015 - 2018

NEASC site reviewer, 2009 - 2013.

New York State Education Department Accreditation Reviewer, 2005 and 2006.

Panel Moderator, “Integrating Information Literacy & Communication Skills Across the Curriculum: Learning Goals & Assessment,” Baruch College Faculty Conference, March 2005.

2005 FIPSE Comprehensive Program, preliminary reviewer, November 2004.

Panel Moderator, “Communication Skills: From Classroom to Workplace,” National Symposium, Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute, May 2004.

Loyola College, Baltimore, MD - provided pro-bono consultation on the development of their freshman year program, Spring 2001.

Community Service

Community First Health Care Hospital, Community Board member, 2016 - 2018.

Portage Park Chamber of Commerce, 2013 -