

# Mike Watson, EdD

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## Curriculum Vitae

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*Interim Associate Chair • College Instructor • Thought Facilitator*

*"Brilliant educator, Creative thinker, Outstanding colleague. Mike is a tireless advocate and practitioner of experiential learning and best practices in teaching and learning. So glad we have him at USC!"*

- Karen Edwards, Senior Instructor/Interim Associate Dean at the University of South Carolina College of HRSM

Solutions-focused, innovative, and progressive **College Instructor and Leadership Professional** with experiences spanning higher education, entrepreneurship, and the retail industry. Creative and purposeful with documented success motivating and inspiring students as professor and inspiring attendees at numerous events as host, emcee, and keynote speaker. History of managing and implementing multiple projects simultaneously, ability to communicate effectively across all levels of an organization. Empowered and inspired by the integration of seemingly disconnected elements in the service of others: these elements include experiential learning, mindful leadership, integrative thinking, and higher education.

### ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

**University of South Carolina | Columbia, SC | 2025 - present**

#### Interim Associate Chair

As Interim Associate Chair for the Department of Retailing at the University of South Carolina, I serve in a key leadership position supporting departmental operations, academic programming, and strategic initiatives. This role involves:

- In this role I am providing administrative leadership during an active period of change, ensuring continuity of departmental functions and academic excellence as they align with the development of a new 5-year strategic plan.
- Collaborating with the Department Chair to develop and implement strategic plans aligned with college and university objectives, mission and vision.
- Overseeing development of new Undergraduate Director in support of curriculum development, assessment, and accreditation activities.
- Representing the department in college and university committees and external stakeholder engagements, including Faculty Senate InDev subcommittee, multiple immersive experience trips, fundraising, and study abroad programs.
- Facilitating student success initiatives and addressing student concerns.
- Contributing to budget planning and resource allocation decisions.
- Coordinating with industry partners to enhance experiential learning opportunities and program relevance.

#### Undergraduate Director, Department of Retailing | 2019 - 2025

As the Undergraduate Director for the department of Retailing I oversee student academic progression; communicate program policy and processes to students and faculty, and review curriculum to assess its educational quality and soundness while making recommendations, leading change initiatives and implementation.

##### University Projects

- One of fourteen individuals selected campus-wide to participate in the Office of Organizational Excellence's Improvement Leader Program. One of the university's top three strategic priorities is to transform service delivery and promote operational excellence.

##### Service and Support

- Organize and lead the student National Retail Federation (NRF) NYC Trip (2024-Present).
- Developed and led the Columbia Museum of Art exhibit immersion experience, *Rendez-Vous*, Lee Alexander McQueen (2023).
- Developed and led the Belk day of immersion trip to Belk headquarters and flagship store, Charlotte NC. (Fall 2023).
- Augusta National Golf Club immersion experience trips (2022 – present).
- New Student Orientation, Retailing presentation and breakout sessions (2022 – present).

#### Senior Faculty Fellows, CIEL (Center for Integrative Experiential Learning)

Support students in developing Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD) e-portfolios and explore the application of integrative learning strategies. Collaborate with CIEL personnel and peers to assess student learning and pursue scholarship opportunities including national presentations and publications.

- Reviewer, Discover USC (2022 – present).
- Reviewer of GLD course approvals, Professional and Civic Engagement.

#### **Store Director, Faculty Liaison, Gamecock iHUB (Apple authorized campus store)**

Lead, design, train and develop all aspects of operations, sales, planning and marketing in conjunction with the establishment and running of a unique internship, student-run Apple certified campus retail store. As faculty liaison create collaborative, service-oriented and research focused departmental opportunities for experiential learning.

Experiential Learning and Development

Developer of “Mobile Reflection Station” in collaboration with CIEL and in support of university QEP, self-reflection and evaluation. Ongoing project that supports numerous classes on campus (2021 – present).

#### **Instructor, Department of Retailing: Professional Track**

Develop, lead, and teach hybrid, online, and face-to-face undergraduate and graduate courses in contemporary retail, fashion business, and professional development, including: RETL 735 Leadership for Retailers, RETL385 Global Sourcing, REL366 Retail Buying, RETL362 Principals of Customer Service, RETL330 Asset Protection for Retailers, RETL 242 Professional Communication, RETL216 History of Designers, and RETL116 Fashion Through the Ages.

Committees

- Curriculum Committee member (2024-2025).
- Chair, Research and Awards Committee, Patricia G. Moody Distinguished Researcher and Scholar Award, Outstanding Doctoral Student Research Award (2023 – 2024).
- Dean’s Ad Hoc Committee, HRSM Required Courses. Retailing, professional communication subject matter expert, co-authored final draft, presented at faculty town hall (2022 – 2023).
- Chair of RETL 242 Instructor Search Committee (2023).
- Chair of Professional Track Instructor Search Committee (2022).
- RETL 295 Sub-Committee member, reviewing exemption applications and course modifications (2022).
- RETL242 Instructor Search Committee member (2021).
- Curriculum Committee member (2020 – 2021).

Book/Article Reviews

- Online reviewer of Shwom/Snyder Business Communication 4th edition, Pearson Higher Education Courseware (10/7/2022).
- Online reviewer of "Conscious Leadership: The Evolution of Servant & Transformational Leadership," by Ty Wenglar, Academia (9/17/2021).

Presentations

- Elevating Student Engagement in the Classroom, Dr. Michael Watson, USC, Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Columbia SC, (3/1/2023).
- An “Apple a Day”: Enriching the Student Educational Experience through Integrative Learning Opportunities, Dr. Jeffrey Campbell, Dr. Michael Watson. American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA), New Orleans LA (3/2022).
- Pausing as a Means of Moving Forward with Purpose, Dr. Michael Watson, USC, Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Oktoberfest: A Symposium on Teaching, Columbia SC, (10/22/2021).

Invited Presentations at Professional Meetings

- Greater Cayce West Columbia Chamber of Commerce, “Learn Local” breakfast. “Holiday Retailing in 2023: Obstacles and Opportunities” (9/7/2023). (With Dr. Jeff Campbell).
- Video and lecture production: Systems Thinking and Ethical Leadership. Created two video series (3 videos of 15-20 minutes for each series) for both the community health partners and the public health students in the University of

Alabama Department of Health Science.

#### Contributor, Subject Matter Expert

- Article: WalletHub, May 2025: Are Auto Insurance Ads Misleading or is it Just Marketing, <https://wallethub.com/cheap-car-insurance/south-carolina>
- Article: WalletHub, May 2025: Expert Thoughts on Capital One Venture X, [https://wallethub.com/d/capital-one-venture-x-3361c#expert=mike\\_watson](https://wallethub.com/d/capital-one-venture-x-3361c#expert=mike_watson)
- Article: Post and Courier, 2023: *Car washes popping up all over the Columbia area. Here's what's driving the boom.* <https://marketscale.com/industries/retail/spike-in-retail-crime/>
- Video (9/2023): *A Sound Loss Prevention and Asset Protection Strategy Could Mitigate the Rise in Retail Crime.* <https://marketscale.com/industries/retail/spike-in-retail-crime/>
- Article: FCW, (8/2023): *Succession to Succeed.* <https://bt.editionsbyfry.com/publication/?i=798844&p=24&view=issueViewer>
- Article: FCW, (5/2022): *Margins vs. Markups, Understanding Crucial Retail Metrics to Grow your Bottom Line.* <https://www.floorcoveringweekly.com/main/features/margins-vs-markups-41187>
- Article: The State (1/2021): *What's the state of malls after 2020? Here's what's new at Columbiana Centre.* <https://www.thestate.com/news/business/article248026420.html>
- Article: USC.edu: *Holiday Shopping Outlook 2021.* [https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/hrrsm/about/news/2021/holiday-shopping-outlook.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/hrrsm/about/news/2021/holiday-shopping-outlook.php)

#### Service and Support (recent)

- Continued curated partnership with Loss Prevention Foundation (LPF) in support of national LPQ certification testing for students in RETL330 Asset Protection for Retailers course.
- South Carolina Tiered Credentials, subject matter expert, developed and wrote new LOs for Marketing, Sales and Service programs, SC department of education. Postsecondary Leaders' Feedback session, SREB.
- Faculty support for student virtual interviews/selection process, Augusta National 2024 Masters Tournament.
- HRSM 301 Practical Exam: Marnie Pearce Program, evaluator, guest speaker on EQ.
- Meeting with University of Aruba's IT department in collaboration with development of experiential opportunities.
- MFA Thesis proposal and presentation committee member, Teachers as Co-Designers: Fostering Collaboration in the Design of K-12 Public Schools, Department of Interior Architecture, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

#### Podcasts/Interviews (recent)

- Carolina News and Reporter: New retail format emphasizes a variety of activities, steers away from traditional mall, (9/8/2023), <https://carolinanewsandreporter.cic.sc.edu/new-retail-format-emphasizes-a-variety-of-activities-steers-away-from-traditional-mall/>
- MarketScale: A Sound Loss Prevention and Asset Protection Strategy Could Mitigate the Rise in Retail Crime, (9/6/2023), <https://marketscale.com/industries/retail/spike-in-retail-crime/>
- WCBD, Columbia SC TV: Experts offer tips to avoid scammers during South Carolina's tax-free weekend, (8/2023), <https://www.counton2.com/news/south-carolina-news/experts-offer-tips-to-avoid-scammers-during-south-carolinas-tax-free-weekend/amp/>
- Paradigm Shifts, season 1: Heart-Centric Leadership, (5/25/2023), <https://youtu.be/Y5OOouP5Cus?si=8-yqj4Pd1K8ukskR>
- LPF Magazine, feature story, (11/10/2022), <https://losspreventionmedia.com/university-of-south-carolina-students-earning-lpq-certifications/>

#### Personal Development/Certifications (recent)

- Teaching with Cases, Harvard Business School, (2025)
- Emerging Leaders Program, University of South Carolina, (2024-2025)
- Improvement Leader Program, University of South Carolina, (2024)
- Leading Diverse Teams and Organizations, University of Michigan, (2024)
- AI in Education Explorer, Auburn University, (2024)
- Learning Design Thinking: Lead Change in Your Organization, Turi McKinley, Frog Design, (2023).

- PCI for Merchants, University of South Carolina, (2023).
- Defining and Achieving Professional Goals, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, (2022).
- Effective Communications Certificate (in progress), University of South Carolina, CTE. **Completed Courses:**
  - Communicating Effectively, Difficult Conversations, Generational Differences, Conflict Resolution Skills, Emotional Intelligence
- LEAD Supervisory Essentials, University of South Carolina, CTE, (2021).
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate, USF Corporate Training and Professional Education USF Corporate Training and Professional Education, (2021).
- Managing High Performing Teams Certification (in progress). University of South Carolina, CTE. **Completed Courses:**
  - Team Dynamics, Building Cohesive Teams, Team Decision Making Methods, Team Problem-Solving, Measuring Team Performance, Managing Change, Psychological Safety
- Safe Zone Ally, University of South Carolina, Office of Organizational and Professional Development, (2021).

#### Support Courses/Webinars (recent)

- Empathy for Sales Leaders, Flexcel Network, (2023).
- GPT-4, The New GPT Release, Cohere, (2023).
- Blackboard Ultra Course View 101, University of South Carolina, CTE, (2023).
- A Faculty Perspective of Integrative and Experiential Learning, University of South Carolina, CTE, (2021).
- Rethink education, Logitech, (2021).
- The Edge of Leadership Series - How to Work Together Differently, Acorn Inc., NYC, (2021).
- Clarity in Higher Education: Every written word represents your brand, Gather Content, Mocatta House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4DU, United Kingdom, (2020).

#### **University of North Carolina Greensboro | Greensboro, NC | 2019 - 2023**

##### **Lecturer, Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies**

Instruct graduate students in the following courses: MAS626, Ethical Leadership, MAS611, Design Thinking, MAS621, Systems, Integrative Thinking.

##### **Instructional, Course Designer, Liberal and Interdisciplinary Studies**

Create interactive and engaging graduate courses for the division of online learning. Specifically co-authored courses in Design Thinking, Systems, Integrative Thinking and Ethical Leadership.

#### **Queens University | Charlotte, NC | 2018 - 2020**

##### **Coordinator, Department of Art, Music, and Design**

Report directly to Executive Director of Art, Design and Music. Assist in the creation, curation, and installation of the faculty collaboration project for the grand opening of the Gambrell Center for Arts and Civic Engagement. Coordinate all student recitals, department concerts, showcases, juries, art openings, theatrical events, and other events with an academic and departmental purpose.

##### **Adjunct Instructor, QLC (Queens Learning Community)**

Design course curriculum and teach 300 Level courses within QLC.

Create traditional and blended course material to ensure lessons and outcomes integrate with other QLC courses and program goals as part of an overall strategy.

#### **The Art Institute of Charlotte | Charlotte, NC**

##### **Associate Professor, Fashion Marketing and Management**

- Instruct college students in several Fashion Marketing and Management courses, specializing in BA Portfolio, Leadership, and Organizational Development.
- Committee member for Dean's Advisory, Faculty Development, Curriculum, and Admissions.
- Organized and promoted the Creative Showcase at Knight Theater, a college-wide and community event, attended by 300+ regional high school students and 500+ community members, March 2011.

- Created real world projects, connecting students to art in the community, including McColl Center for Visual Art, Mint Museum of Art, Neiman Marcus, Dress for Success, and Southern Women's Show.
- Rated in top 5% of all instructors every quarter, earning 25 IMPACT awards for excellence in teaching, and the only Teacher of the Year two-time award recipient.
- Led team of 14 students in fashion week-study abroad trip to Milan, Italy.

#### Experiential Learning and Development

- Experiential Design, collaboration with artist in residence, Lee Renniger, *Define, A Breach of Gravity*.  
<https://vimeo.com/13857736>

#### Invited Presentations at Professional Meetings (highlights)

- Davidson College, Chidsey Center for Leadership Development – workshop facilitation: *Reflection and Leadership*, 10/5/15, *Empowerment*, (9/5/16).
- Queens University of Charlotte – guest lecturer: *How to Deliver TED Style Talks*, 2015, *Fashion Today*, 2016.
- Wake Forest University, Charlotte Campus – keynote speaker: *Why our Heart Matters in Leadership*, utilizing our heart and mind when we lead, 2016.
- Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte NC – keynote speaker: Modern Mondays: *Emergence of Self*, how the work of David Hockney in the 60s and 70s emphasized the artist's gaze, (12/2015).
- Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte NC – keynote speaker: Modern Mondays: *Afterschock, The Convergence of 1960s Art and Fashion*, (6/2014).
- Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte NC – keynote speaker: *Warhol and Fashion, Pop Art and its Influence on Design*, (10/2008).
- Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte NC – featured panelist: Andy Warhol's radical multi-media experimentation, *What is Art?* (11/2008).

#### The Art Institute of Charlotte | Charlotte, NC

##### Gallery Curator, report to Director of Public Relations/Academic Director

- Curate 5-8 exhibitions annually for college gallery with emphasis on artists whose work aligns with principles of the applied design curriculum and college mission of community connections.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### Heartcentric Leadership | Charlotte, NC | 2011 - 2020

##### Owner & Founder

- Provide impactful and focused professional and personal development, collaborating with clients to explore, experiment, and learn new behavior paradigms.

#### Hot Topic | Philadelphia, PA | 1998 – 2000

##### Regional Director

- Reported to Vice President of Stores, ensuring cohesive company brand message portrayed.
- Managed 58 stores throughout 11 states with an average regional sales volume of \$43.9M.
- Successfully led and coached district managers in the opening of over 20 stores along the East Coast, meeting all financial, merchandising, and operational goals.
- Hired, trained, and coached 8 District Managers and an Area Manager.

#### Gadzooks | Atlanta, GA | 1995-1998

##### District Manager, promotion | 10/95-6/96

##### Regional Manager, promotion | 3/97-3/98; Regional Manager in Training | 6/96-3/97

- Reported to VP of Stores, managing 53 stores in 8 states with an average regional sales volume of \$42.5M.
- Coached and directed 6 District Managers and Regional Visual through 30 + store openings.
- Regularly recognized as #1 in comp stores increases, total sales, and direct reports within Top 10.
- Developed lowest ranking district into top 10 performer.

## **Younkers Department Store | 1994-1995**

Regional Manager Visual Merchandising | Omaha, NE | 10/94-10/95

Regional Manager Visual Merchandising | Green Bay, WI. | 10/92-10/94

- Managed upwards of 20 associates and a regional sales volume between \$141-151M.
- Led team of visual merchandisers in transitioning 14 acquired stores into Younkers stores.

## **EDUCATION**

### ***Ed.D, Leadership and Organizational Development* | Argosy University**

Course concentration: preparing students to become visionaries capable of driving organizations during times of dynamic change. The curriculum enhances professional expertise and develops personal abilities, and it positions practicing professionals to compete and work in complex organizations faced with increasing globalization, societal shifts, and elaborate strategic partnerships. Including courses in:

- R 7031 Methods and Analysis of Quantitative Research
- R 7038 Applied Research
- L 7101 Foundations of Leadership
- B 7401 Organizational Behavior
- L 7432 Professional Development in Leadership
- L 7454 Organizational Consultancy and Assessment
- B 7610 Leadership in Global and Multicultural Organizations
- DR 8801 – DR 8804 Doctoral Research I-IV, A-B

### ***MALS, Consumer, Apparel, Retail Studies concentration* | University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

Course concentration: focuses on research issues in consumer, apparel, and retailing. It is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue careers in academics and business.

24 hours of course concentration including the following:

- TDM 552 Textile Production Mgt
- TDM 560 Textile Products Marketing
- RCS 562 Behavior Soft Lines Consumer
- CRS 563 Analysis of Apparel/Related Industries
- MLS 620A Dress, Identity and Culture
- TDM 630 Economics of Textile Products
- ERM 680 Intermediate Statistical Methods in Education
- CRS 721 Consumer Behavior Apparel /Retailing

### ***BS, Fashion and Textile Design* | University of Nebraska**

Course concentration: emphasizes creative problem solving and the development of technical skills related to apparel and textile design and theory, apparel pattern making, computer-aided design, and printing and dyeing techniques.

Including courses in:

- TMFD 212 Product Development II: Apparel Analysis and Development
- TMFD 213 Merchandising I: Textile and Apparel Industry
- COMM 286 Business and Professional Communication
- TMFD 313 Merchandising II: Merchandise Buying and Control
- TMFD 406 Textile Testing and Evaluation
- TMFD 407 History of Dress
- TMFD 412 Product Development IV: Trend Analysis & Product Conceptualization
- TMFD 422 International Textile and Apparel Sourcing