

Michael Roth



Michael S. Roth '78 became the 16th president of Wesleyan University in 2007, after having served as Hartley Burr Alexander Professor of Humanities at Scripps College, Associate Director of the Getty Research Institute, and President of the California College of the Arts. At Wesleyan, Roth has overseen the launch of academic programs such as the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life and the Shapiro Center for Writing, as well as four new interdisciplinary colleges emphasizing advanced research and cohort building in the areas of the environment, film, East Asian studies, and integrative sciences. Under his leadership, Wesleyan had its most ambitious fundraising campaign in its history, raising more than \$482 million, primarily for financial aid. Roth has undertaken a number of initiatives that have energized the curriculum and helped to make a Wesleyan education more affordable and accessible to students from under-represented groups—creating a supportive and diverse campus community that inspires students to achieve their personal best.

Author and curator (most notably of the exhibition “Sigmund Freud: Conflict and Culture,” which opened at the Library of Congress in 1998), Roth describes his scholarly interests as centered on “how people make sense of the past.” His 2014 book, [*Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters*](#) (Yale University Press), has been a powerful tool for students, their families, faculty, and policymakers who are wrestling with the future of higher education in America. It was recognized in 2016 with the Association of American Colleges & Universities’ Frederic W. Ness award for a book that best illuminates the goals and practices of a contemporary liberal education. Roth’s newest book, [*Safe Enough Spaces: A Pragmatist’s Approach to Inclusion, Free Speech, and Political Correctness*](#) (Yale University Press, 2019), addresses some of the most contentious issues in American higher education, including affirmative action, safe spaces, and questions of free speech. Roth regularly publishes essays, book reviews, and commentaries in the national media and scholarly journals. He continues to teach undergraduate courses and through Coursera has offered MOOCs, most recently, “How to Change the World.”