

Danny Warboys – Production Manager, College of Arts and Law



Growing up, Danny wanted to be a musician but unfortunately a wrist operation put paid to that idea and so he embarked upon a career in the world of drama and technical theatre. He worked on some full scale tours in the South and London before working in lighting at Birmingham school of speech and drama. The set designer he worked with also worked with the Drama and Theatre Arts department at the University and when one of the technicians fell ill Danny was asked to step in for a couple of shows. He then went on to teach a 2nd year module in lighting for a year. Danny enjoyed the work because there was a broader remit. Unlike regular theatre the emphasis was not just on the drama there was also an opportunity to teach backstage. So when an opening came up for a Grade 7 technician and lighting and sound tutor, Danny applied and began managing several productions and events.

A change in remit for Danny came about with the refurbishment of the Muirhead when the Drama department lost some of its theatre and rehearsal rooms. At that time the School of Education ran the George Cadbury Theatre at the Selly Oak campus but it was in a bad state of repair. Over the course of the next two years Danny spearheaded the refurbishment and redevelopment of the theatre included the introduction of Birmingham's first high definition cinema, constructed in collaboration with the BBC. The theatre opened in 2008.

The production manager then went on a secondment so Danny covered this role which subsequently became full time. The role was still at Grade 7 but provided Danny with the opportunity to develop a different set of skills. Previously he was focussed more on teaching but the new role focussed more on production and the management of eight other staff. Now Danny is looking forward to developing the role and making more improvements. He also foresees a move back to the main campus which will present yet another challenge.

Danny is also currently working one day a week on the Bramall building project informing technical decisions because of his specific skills and technical venue based background. In the more distant future he hopes to transfer to a management position at school level or an operations manager position.

Danny finds the atmosphere and ethos of the University make it an interesting place to work. He says "the student interaction is really rewarded. Helping students to feel excited about their future in this industry is fantastic. I find the University offers a variety of training methods and there is encouragement to try different things. You should use the resources available to you rather than just coming in and doing the job you do, actively seek advice, share your skills and look for opportunities to move sideways and work with people fulfilling similar roles."