Dr. Joseph McGill has been an associate professor of management at Kean University since 2003, teaching courses primarily in Strategic Management. McGill received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University in 1999, and has management experience in several global high-technology firms. McGill’s research concerns formation and governance of alliances, emphasizing how alliance partners manage cooperative and competitive dynamics. In 2006, McGill was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to support research and seminars at the University of the Aegean’s business school in Greece. The University of the Aegean is located on five islands in the North Aegean Sea. The business school is located on the island of Chios, an island which is also home to many of the world’s shipping dynasties. As a Fulbright fellow, McGill worked with faculty there to research factors affecting the formation, governance and performance of strategic alliances in Greece’s coastal shipping industry.

Q&A

What influenced you to become a professor?
I had a corporate career for many years, most recently with Avaya, a communications firm, and I became friendly with a few professors at Rutgers University, where I was in an Executive M.B.A. program. From them, I realized there are few careers where you get to choose your own work (area of research), discover interesting things, and then share what you’ve found with students and colleagues. So, I decided my next career would be in academia.

Please tell me about your Kean experience.
I’ve gotten a lot of support and encouragement from everyone I’ve met – colleagues, ORSP, administrators, students, and so on. I haven’t run across anyone yet at Kean who has said “no” to me – perhaps a function of what I was asking for. I also remember writing a letter of reference for a student going to graduate school. She emailed me afterward, saying that beyond the graduate school admissions process, my comments in the reference letter also had meant a lot to her, personally. That was nice to hear, and it reminded me that as a professor, I have many opportunities to influence students’ futures, for better or worse.

You might be surprised to learn this about me…
Being from Chicago, I love blues music, and even play a Fender Stratocaster.

Of which accomplishment are you most proud?
No doubt about it: my family – although they might argue that I am their accomplishment.

If you could have dinner with anyone at all, living or dead, who would it be?
Probably Leonardo da Vinci – here’s someone whose intense curiosity led to tremendous accomplishments in the arts and in technology. Anyone who could paint the Mona Lisa and engineer a hang glider has got to be a good conversationalist. We’d probably grab a patty melt at the Mark Twain Diner.

If your TV was broken you could pick only one channel, which would it be?
QVC or the Home Shopping Network, so I could buy a new TV!

What hobbies do you have?
I enjoy composing music, although probably more than others would enjoy listening to it.

If you had to pick song lyrics to live by, which would they be?
“Alle Menschen werden Brüder” – “All men will be brothers,” although please read “men” as “mankind.”

What are your favorite books?
*When the Fire Hits Your Brain*, by Frank Vertosick, and *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, by Thomas Kuhn.

What is your favorite movie?
The Bicycle Thief (1948), directed by Vittorio DeSica.

If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?
Great question! I’m not sure…maybe get into the microcredit/microfinance industry, an emerging area of business that makes a direct social contribution.

What do you think you’d be doing if not teaching?
Another great question! I guess in the broadest sense of the term, we all teach, even if we’re not college professors. A lot of human activity involves teaching, i.e., “pointing out things to others.” Communicating, managing, parenting, sharing a hobby – these all involve teaching. So, I guess I’d still be teaching!

Do you have a personal philosophy?
Yes, I do have a personal philosophy, but it has a large number of contingencies. It is roughly this: “people may not always remember what you say, but they always remember how you make them feel.”