

UNC- School Of The Arts Gets New Chancellor

By Administrator
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University of North Carolina System Interim President Bill Roper has named Brian Cole as the ninth chancellor of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA). Cole joined UNCSA in 2016 as dean of the School of Music and has served as interim chancellor since August 2019. He will assume the role of chancellor effective immediately.

“Over the past four years, Brian Cole has played an essential role helping generate the extraordinary momentum UNC School of the Arts has harnessed, which includes attracting incredibly talented students from across the nation and achieving recognition as one of the country’s top arts conservatories,” said Dr. Roper. “Throughout his career, Brian has consistently demonstrated strong, creative and engaging leadership, which is exactly what UNCSA needs as it continues to prepare students for careers in the arts. With him as chancellor, I have the utmost confidence that UNCSA will continue its track record of success.”

Chancellor Cole was selected by Dr. Roper for approval by the UNC Board of Governors from finalists that were chosen by a 20-member search committee, which included UNCSA students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and members of the Winston-Salem community.

“It was clear to our board that Brian Cole stood out due to his many unique qualities,” said UNC Board of Governors Chairman Randy Ramsey. “We were especially impressed with what he has achieved in just four years as dean and interim chancellor at UNCSA, as well as his goals for the future. His impressive credentials in curricular innovation, experience in the international arts community and success in fundraising were key factors in this decision, as was the unified support he received from the many stakeholders on campus.”

Cole succeeds Lindsay Bierman, who served as chancellor from 2014-2019 and departed to become chief executive officer of UNC-TV Public Media North Carolina.

As interim chancellor, Cole drew upon his strengths in the development and implementation of collaborative arts initiatives. Under his leadership, UNCSA launched the public phase of its largest fundraising effort in the university’s history—a \$65 million comprehensive campaign called Powering Creativity: The Campaign for UNCSA. Most recently, he has led the UNCSA community with steadfastness and compassion while helping the institution navigate the ever-changing human, academic and administrative impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

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As dean of the School of Music, Cole oversaw all operations and programs at the graduate, undergraduate and high school levels, as well as the Summer Intensive programs and the UNCSCA Community Music School. He developed the school's first-ever strategic plan, modernized existing and created new academic programs, and facilitated international partnerships with institutions in Germany, Austria and China. He also served as the executive director for two pre-professional graduate institutes at the school: the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute and the Chrysalis Chamber Music Institute. During his time as dean, Cole oversaw the installation of a state-of-the-art video recording system in UNCSCA's premier recital hall, Watson Hall, which allowed for the livestreaming of performances, bringing UNCSCA to a wider audience and providing practical training for students. He created an all-guest conductor model for the UNCSCA Symphony Orchestra, bringing in world-class talent from the industry to lead the orchestra, and he emphasized entrepreneurship and technology training for student-artists.

Ralph Womble, chair of the UNCSCA Board of Trustees and the Chancellor Search Committee, said Cole's previous roles give him a deep understanding of the needs of the institution.

"As an internationally acclaimed artist and an experienced administrator, Brian has proven himself to be an effective leader who deeply understands the needs of our student-artists at this pivotal time for our institution and our world," said Chair Womble. "Brian is well-positioned to build a strong leadership team and recruit top talent from the industry as we look ahead to shaping the institution's next 50 years."

Chancellor Brian Cole

Prior to joining UNCSCA, Cole served four years as the founding dean of academic affairs at Berklee College of Music's campus in Valencia, Spain. Before that, he served seven years as associate dean of academic affairs at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music.

An accomplished conductor, Cole has led orchestras and operas throughout the United States, Europe, South America and the Caribbean. He has served the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops and the May Festival as conducting assistant, and also as assistant conductor for the May Festival. He has held the positions of assistant conductor and director of education and outreach programs for the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, and as music director of the Concert Orchestra of the University of Cincinnati College – Conservatory of Music.

"It is an honor to lead the community of artists at UNCSCA. Now more than ever, we need

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creative minds to translate our experiences into inspiration, and to change the industry and the world for better,” said Chancellor Cole. “While UNCSCA is a relatively young institution, we already have a storied history, and our alumni can be found working and leading everywhere across the arts and entertainment industries. Now is the time for us to come together and write our next act with vision, purpose and imagination. The unprecedented times we are living through present an entirely new set of challenges, and our community of artists is better equipped than anyone to meet those challenges.”

Cole is a doctoral candidate in orchestral conducting at the University of Cincinnati. He received his Master of Music in instrumental conducting from the University of Illinois and his Bachelor of Music in bassoon performance from Louisiana State University.