

Brian Cole, Chancellor
University of North Carolina School of the Arts

An innovative, experienced and bilingual arts leader, Brian Cole is the ninth chancellor of UNCSA. He leads approximately 1,300 students from high school through graduate school, as well as 700 summer and 500 community school students, and more than 600 faculty and staff. The UNC Board of Governors appointed Cole as chancellor on May 20, 2020. He had previously served as interim chancellor at UNCSA since August 2019.

Since becoming chancellor, he led the development of “UNCSA Forward: Our 2022-27 Strategic Plan.” The five-year plan will guide UNCSA into the next era as it evolves to meet the demands of a transforming arts and entertainment landscape and helps its student-artists ignite cultural change in the industry and society. The plan focuses on five core strategic priorities: institutional sustainability; maintaining and expanding industry relevance; interdisciplinary arts work; health and wellness in the arts; and equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB).

Cole also filled seven key leadership positions, including the executive vice chancellor and provost, the vice chancellor for advancement, three art school deans, the vice provost and dean of student affairs, and the executive director of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, forming a talented team that will take UNCSA into the next decade. In addition, he provided leadership for the first comprehensive campaign at UNCSA in decades, Powering Creativity: The Campaign for UNCSA, leading the school across the finish line to raise more than \$75 million, surpassing the original goal by \$10 million.

Cole led UNCSA through a worldwide pandemic, ensuring that UNCSA students would continue to learn, train and perform under the guidance of community health standards informed by scientists and the global arts and entertainment industry. He has also advocated for faculty and students to lead the industry in imagining new ways to create and innovate through the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Cole joined UNCSA as dean of the School of Music in 2016. In that capacity, he also served as the executive director for two preprofessional graduate institutes at the school: the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute and the Chrysalis Chamber Music Institute. In collaboration with the vice chancellor for advancement, Cole doubled merit-based scholarship resources through major gifts totaling \$4 million and achieved a 150% increase in applications.

Prior to joining UNCSA, 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 as conducting assistant and also as assistant conductor for the May Festival. Cole 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.

Cole was a doctoral student 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.