

Bo Fernhall

Dean of Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Bo Fernhall, Ph.D., joined the University in August 2022 as the new Dean of Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences. He is originally from Sweden but came to the United States for college and made the decision to stay after completing his degree. For the past twenty years, his experience has varied from being a Professor in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Chair of the Exercise Science Department, and Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs. Most recently he was Dean of the College of Applied Health Sciences and a Professor of Kinesiology and Nutrition at the University of Illinois at Chicago for eleven years.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Fernhall who shared with me his philosophy, “The dean’s office is really a service office.” Despite not always being viewed as such and gaining a negative perception from students he claims, “Power has nothing to do with it if our students and our faculty and staff are not successful - we totally fail. It’s all matter of service. How can we ensure a setting where there is the opportunity for success for everyone?”

However this is not an easy task, “We have constraints like everyone else, we don’t have unlimited resources, we don’t have great facilities, there are a lot of things we don’t have but we can’t focus on what we don’t have. We need to focus on what we do have and how we can make that better and what we can do to enhance the success of our students.” These constraints won’t stop the Manning college from achieving its goals. They have several solutions and plans in the making. Including but not limited to hiring more advisors, starting organized mentoring and tutoring programs, and finding ways to ensure students continue on the right learning path i.e. taking the right courses at the right time.

The role of the dean’s office is to make the lives of students, faculty, and staff better. The mission is for our faculty and staff to know it’s not about them but what they can do for students in order to see them succeed. Dr. Fernhall claims, “When you take on a leadership role, like a department chair or a dean, the first thing you have to accept is it is no longer about you it’s about everyone else.” Following this, I asked him what his favorite part of being a leader and having a voice was and his response was heartfelt and uplifting, “Seeing improvement, seeing how we can make things better, and improving the success of our students and faculty and staff, seeing everything moving forward, that’s the good part.”



“My wish is to 100% to have all the students that enter with us do a great job all the way through and everyone graduates with a degree, I know that won’t happen but it would be great if it did”

- Bo Fernhall

Fig. 1 Still from UIC College of Applied Health Sciences (2:42)

Works Cited

UIC College of Applied Health Sciences. “Spring 2020 Virtual AHS Graduation Ceremony Welcome and Opening Remarks by Dean Bo Fernhall.” *Www.youtube.com*, 19 May 2020, youtu.be/V5ikLE-RIZM. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.