

Kara Snyder 0:03

Hello and welcome to the podcast, a podcast produced by the College of Applied Science and Technology at Illinois State University. I'm your host Kara Snyder and I serve as the assistant dean of marketing, communications and constituent relations for the College. Today's episode is a special one. Typically we sit down with alumni of the College but today we get to talk to our new dean of the college, Chad McEvoy. Chad started his new role on July 1, and we are going to get to know him today. Welcome both to ISU and to the podcast.

Chad McEvoy 0:33

Thanks, Carol. Excited to be with you.

Kara Snyder 0:35

Yeah, thanks for being here. So some of our listeners may not know that this is actually your second time as a red bird.

So tell us a little bit about your career path and what brought you back to ISU.

Chad McEvoy 0:47

Thanks, Kara. So my whole discipline is sport management. I have always been passionate about sports and the sports industry, probably ever since T ball or even before starting with my Nerf basketball hoop and first grade or something like this. But seriously, I've always been passionate about the sports industry and started my professional career after college working in college athletics. I worked at a couple of different college athletic departments at Western Michigan University and Iowa State University, which is my alma mater. But I'm also always had a passion for education. My grandfather was an engineering professor. My mother was a lifelong educator and headed up all student teacher field experiences at Iowa State and their college of education for many years. So I've always had the teacher bug or educator bug. In 1999, I went to the University of Northern Colorado to earn my doctorate and pursue a faculty career in 2002.

As I was working on finishing up my doctorate, I had the opportunity to interview for a position here at ISU and had an incredible interview experience. The people were so warm and welcoming and strong programs and a real vision for the future of our School of Kinesiology and Recreation at that time, as well as for the institution and just really fell in love with Illinois State University. And so in the summer of 2002, we loaded up the U haul trailer and moved across the country from Greeley Colorado out here to normal Illinois and one day after arriving I started new faculty orientation and August of 2002 had a great 10 years as a faculty member at ISU helped launch our sport management program and

the School of Kinesiology and Recreation. ISU is a place that really values both teaching and scholarship amongst its faculty and I had the opportunity to learn and excel as both a teacher and a scholar and I had a great time here at ASU in 2012. I had the opportunity to pursue a professorship at Syracuse University in a major East Coast research one private institution and so left ISU at that time but for all the right reasons ISU had done so much for me in my career, and I hopefully done the same for ISU and our students here and after three years at Syracuse, I served for the last eight years as a leader at Northern Illinois University up the road where I was a department chair of kinesiology and physical education up there and then most recently had served as Vice Provost for the university and Chief of Staff to the provost at Northern.

Kara Snyder 3:47

And now you're back. You're back as dean of the college and what made you interested what brought you back down here to normal Illinois?

Chad McEvoy 3:54

Yeah, again, I had a great experience here as a faculty member for 10 years and ISU was a great place for me to grow as a teacher and a scholar work with so many great colleagues and just really believe in the mission of the university as a student centered institution to come back now 10 years later, 11 years later and serve in this leadership role is that the input to help our faculty and staff move their work forward and our eight different schools and departments in cast and to help our students pursue their dreams of working in the various applied fields of study that we cover here and cast as a great honor and I'm thrilled to be back here in ICU.

Kara Snyder 4:39

Well, we're happy to have you so your vantage point is new this time around. You're over here in Turner Hall, you're serving as the dean, you've been here I think a whole seven weeks or so. Tell us a little bit about the state of the college

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and what you've seen since you've been here.

Chad McEvoy 4:55

Yeah, cast is such a diverse and interesting In college, of course, as you well know, every day even every hour, we get to help our colleagues and our eight different schools and departments do so many different things that there simply is not another college at any university coast to coast that has the combination of of programs and departments and units that we do in the college. One of my priorities for these first several weeks on the job has been to be out and to go see

all of our units and tour all of our different spaces. In fact, I only have one remaining my tour of  
campus the only facility  
and fact that I haven't had the opportunity to see since I started July 1 is of course our  
Horticulture Center and I'm  
heading out there tomorrow afternoon on what looks like a 95 degree day people out and see the  
Horticulture Center.  
But again, what do you need college that we have a farm, we have a Horticulture Center, we  
have costume collections,  
we have technology labs filled with robots. We have a variety of different computer labs and  
spaces and the School of  
Information Technology. I was a part of the faculty in the early 2000s that moved into the  
renovated McCormick Hall  
connected to our Student Recreation Center on campus and the great spaces that they have in that  
building. Of course  
we have we have a circuit of sale it's just such a such a unique college with so many different  
things going on. To  
answer your questions. The simply the state of the college is amazing. We have more than 4700  
students and fact that's  
a very large college second only to the College of Arts and Sciences on our campus when these  
students as mentioned  
are pursuing their dreams of working in so many different industries related to the programs  
that we offer in fact. And  
during my time here as a faculty member and absolutely still true today. You know, I believe that  
that common bond that  
that brings us all together and fact is the A and the acronym fact which is applied. Our programs  
are applied and  
experiential by nature, whether that is exercise science, or construction management, or  
cybersecurity or any number of  
other programs. Our students from their earliest times in our majors are active learners, they get  
volunteer experiences  
and internship experiences. And they work in laboratory settings and out in the field and they  
apply what they're  
learning and then use those applied and experiential skills to go successfully pursue your careers  
related to our fields of  
study.

Kara Snyder 7:52

So as you're getting acclimated, and you're touring the departments, what are your goals for your  
first year in this  
position?

Chad McEvoy 8:00

Great question, a number of things one would want to continue to just talked about that sort of  
applied student centered  
focus of the college and university we want to continue to move that work forward. One of our  
top priorities this year is  
working on a new strategic plan for the college. Our current strategic plan has served us well  
over the last several years,

but is coming to the end nearing the end of its lifespan, if you will and 2024. And with 2024 right around the corner, we're gonna have a lot of conversation in the college this fall about what a next strategic plan looks like, and where are we at and where do we want to go over the next several years as the college, the university happens to also be working on its university wide strategic plan right now. And so we'll see what the results of that in the coming months and that will help them naturally shape the direction that we're heading in a college. Also, another of our top priorities this year is to continue to focus on student success. As I've already described, we're absolutely a student focused institution and certainly the case here and cast, we're going to continue to take a look at metrics such as our student retention rate and our graduation rate. graduation rate is one that we recently spoke to our department chairs and our school directors about and one that I mentioned and our CAS fall meeting last week that we want to better understand the data surrounding graduation rates for students in our college and then see what we might do to help more of our students graduate in a timely manner.

Kara Snyder 9:54

Think that sounds like a great year ahead and a lot of excellent priorities and you know, I know Every job has some of the favorite things and some things that are a little more challenging. Do you mind sharing what is the most challenging thing about your job at least so far?

Chad McEvoy 10:12

Perhaps the college has taken it easy on me in the first seven weeks or something. But I would say the most challenging part of this job perhaps of any Dean job is balancing finite resources and bandwidth, or a large college again, 4700 students, a couple 100 faculty and staff, we have so many good ideas put forward by our faculty, our staff and our students every day. pragmatically, we simply don't have either the budget or the bandwidth to pursue every single one of those good ideas. I think that's probably true for any organization, I suppose. So to some degree, one of the one of the real challenging parts about the Dean position is sometimes having to say no, there are many good ideas and good opportunities that come our way. But as we try to be fiscally responsible with our budget and taxpayers resources in this regard, as well as thinking about your what's our bandwidth with with a small staff, we can't we simply don't have the ability to say yes to every single good idea. And so let's say no part, particularly when you have to say no to something

that you think is a really good idea, you just simply don't think that we can afford it in our budget, or that we have the bandwidth to move it forward. That can be hard.

Kara Snyder 11:40

Sure if that makes perfect sense. But hopefully an easier question for you then what is your favorite thing about the job so far?

Chad McEvoy 11:47

Yeah, simply the people. It's so great here in recent days, so many of our students and our faculty coming back onto campus here. And as we get towards the latter part of August, with the first day of school upon us, don't get me wrong, the job was great in July as well. That one has many of us around the hallways of Turner hall or other facilities in the college. While I was able to spend a lot of that time learning and seeing so many different things in the college and around campus, it's so great to have our people back. It's so great to have the buzz of the students in the hallway to walk by classes and laboratories as learning classes are going on to just spend time with our faculty and staff and hear about how everyone's summer went and big ideas for the academic year ahead. We have a great group of people and colleagues and staff.

Kara Snyder 12:45

That is for sure. I couldn't agree more. So now the fun part, we're gonna finish with a speed round. So just go with your first instinct on these questions. Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Chad McEvoy 12:55

Morning, you get me after six or seven o'clock, I'm fading and in the evening hours. So give me a cup of coffee in the morning. I'm ready to go.

Kara Snyder 13:05

And I'm always curious, what was your very first job?

Chad McEvoy 13:09

I worked a carwash helping maintain things keep things clean, pun intended, I suppose. Keep the operations going to get

I was 13 years old or something like this, but a good experience to learn the value of hard work.

Kara Snyder 13:28

Excellent. And what is your favorite pizza topping?

Chad McEvoy 13:31

I'm a sausage guy. And I've got a couple of pepperoni kids at home. But I'm on Team sausage.

Kara Snyder 13:39

If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing, what would it be?

Chad McEvoy 13:43

Wow, that's a tough one. Oh, I'll deal with time. I don't know money. Money was the other answer on the tip of my

tongue, I suppose but, but I'll go with time. There's never enough time to do everything that you want to do both

professionally and personally. I had a great weekend at home this past weekend. And my son's heading off to college

today, in fact, and there's just never enough time. It seems

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Kara Snyder 14:11

that's a great answer. If only we could squeeze a few more hours in the day, right? What's your favorite thing to cook for

dinner?

Chad McEvoy 14:18

I love to cook. So again to connect to the last day of third don't always have as much time as I would like in this regard

but love to cook and the summer you'll find me grilling and with the smoker in the backyard and those kinds of kinds of

things. So I'll go with grilled pizza would be my favorite thing to cook.

Kara Snyder 14:37

That's a great answer. What's the best trip you've ever taken? Wow.

Chad McEvoy 14:41

That's a tough one. A few years ago back shortly before COVID had the opportunity to attend and present at a

conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia and the maritime provinces in the far eastern edge of Canada after the call friends

when I was eight, my family came with me and we spent the next week or so touring the Maritime Provinces of Nova

Scotia Prince Edward Island, some kayaking, some hiking some golf, sightseeing. It was an amazing experience.

Kara Snyder 15:17

That sounds awesome. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Chad McEvoy 15:22

Oh, that's a tough one. I instantly go to thinking about my late mother and all the words of wisdom. I think the site my

mother, in this regard, I would say just to just to be conscious of how we treat people big and small, whether somebody

has some impressive title on a business card or not. So everyone's important, we all have important roles to play and just

being good to people and treating people well.

Kara Snyder 15:52

That's a great thing to remember. And I have to ask I ask everyone that comes on the podcast, advantages gondola or

pub to cheese balls.

Chad McEvoy 16:01

Well, now I'm curious to find out what the survey results 100% on pub to cheese balls, right. The pub to cheese balls

and an extra bonus for moving back to Bloomington Normal.

Kara Snyder 16:17

There you go. There you go. Well, Chad, thanks so much for being here. That was Chad McEvoy, Dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology. Join us next time on the podcast for more stories from our caste community.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>