Nathaniel Downing received his Master of Education focusing on instructional leadership from the UIC College of Education in 2014 after earning his bachelor's degree in Sociology from the UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2011.

While attending UIC as an undergraduate, he played with the UIC Flames Men's Soccer Team and served as team captain in 2010. At UIC, Downing worked in the athlete department as an athletic development assistant and assistant director of ticket sales. He rose to become director of ticket sales and operations. He also served in the UIC College of Pharmacy as associate director of development and was promoted to director of development.

Currently, Downing, who also serves as a youth soccer coach, is major gifts officer for the Illinois Institute of Technology.