

CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2024

Zoom

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Vivian Shyu, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Joanne Addison, Florian Pfender, Anthony Villano, Bailey Wallace, Bud Talbot, Joan Bihun, Cristina Gillanders, Manish Shirgaokar, Marta Maron, Matt Shea, Maryam Darbeheshti, Tom Beck, Sarah Fields, Wendy Bolyard, Eric Baker, Erin Hackel, Ester de Jong, Fernando Mancilla-David, Jeffrey Schrader, Rachel Stein, Ilkyeun Ra, Rashmi Gangamma, Lisa Johansen, Linda Fried, Sarah Hagelin, Thorsten Spehn, Jamie Hodgkins, Jim Lopresti, Larry Erbert, Kelly See, David Liban, Pratham Sharma, Kristen Kilbourne, Jose Ibarra, AVC Turan Kayaoglu, Dan Maxey, Provost Constancio Nakuma
Guests: EVC Katie Linder, VC Antonio Farias, Laura Perrigo, David Deffenbacher

Chair's Update: Sasha Breger Bush, Chair

- Approve minutes (November 7, 2023 & December 5, 2023)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted
 - Results for November 7 Minutes: approved by a majority
 - Results for December 5 Minutes: approved by a majority
- Standing Committee Chair's reports: provided electronically to the full assembly
- FCQ revision working group opportunity: This remains an ongoing matter of concern. Sasha B. will be meeting with the Boulder office to address the issue of faculty letters being distributed based on FCQs, as well as explore the reasons behind the variance in policy and procedure between the Boulder and Denver campuses. The next course of action is contingent upon the outcomes of these findings/discussions with the Boulder office.
- IRC appeal/grievance rights: Provost's office is collaborating with FA on matters concerning IRC and grievance rights. FA has been given the opportunity to provide recommendations for consideration. Both FA and UCDALI are partnering to ensure that all faculty members have access to appeal and grievance rights.
- SB23-111: Public Employee's Workplace Protections: Be advised of this Senate Bill as it pertains to our current working culture/landscape.
- FC/FS Update: APS 1014 (Intellectual Property Rights to Educational Materials): Faculty Council met late January 2024 to discuss/revise the policy regarding the rights faculty possess over the material they create for their classes. This revision will determine the parameters governing who (and how) faculty-created materials can be used. Faculty members would like to limit certain usage rights vs. ownership rights.
- FC/FS Update Anschutz: They have separated their Financial Aid office from CU Denver. Their system will be online imminently.
- FC/FS Update Boulder: Searching for new Chancellor. They want to prevent a situation similar to the one concerning the appointment of the UCCS Chancellor from occurring at Boulder.

Provost Nakuma Update:

- Provost noted that commencement has recently taken place, marking the celebration of our students' achievements. As faculty and as an institution, the primary focus remains on providing the

best possible learning journey for students (enrollment, retention, education, and graduation). The University is striving to embody the ethos of a “university for life,” dedicated to equity and serving all members of our community. Provost would like to ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging, along with faculty. He believes it is imperative that everyone feels empowered to voice their concerns and he emphasized that retaliation will not be tolerated. He stated that he was committed to setting a precedent for integrity and accountability, and assures faculty that no actions taken within this administration will reflect any form of retaliation.

- Provost sent Sasha B. a memo last week, outlining his commitment to provide continuous, comprehensive reports from leaders concerning matters of college affordability, retention, financial issues, and mental health concerns. Additionally, he stated that SESS staffing is on an upward trajectory, with additional hires currently in progress.
- Active FASO committee working on sustained improvements.
- Provost is engaged in advancing academic excellence, even as the landscape of higher education continues to evolve. The administration is actively delving into various facets of academia, including workload parity, academic calendar considerations, and ensuring academic viability of the university.
- Provost reiterated the strategic vision for the university as a research-focused institution. He stated that AVC De Leon recently hosted a Research Symposium on February 2nd which underscores the administration’s commitment to research. He also announced CU Denver’s collaborative efforts with Wyoming on securing an NSF grant to fund a new national innovation hub focused on environmental and climate change technology. He stated that this also serves as tangible evidence of the administration’s progress towards achieving the goal of becoming a research university.
- Provost office collaborating with Peter Anthamatten to provide a report on shared governance within the schools/colleges/library which is scheduled for completion by the end of spring. The objective is to identify and address any gaps or inconsistencies that may exist between schools/colleges.
- IRC Roadmap will be coming soon; major kudos to AVC Kayaoglu for pushing this through.
- Provost is supporting and funding a faculty-led study into the FCQ matter. FCQs serve as one of several avenues through which faculty receive feedback from students. How this feedback is utilized “rests with the faculty themselves, rather than being a directive from above.” Provost’s office anticipates that the study will provide several recommendations on how to proceed in this area. Sasha B. relayed that faculty strongly recommends suspending collection of written comments until this study is complete.

EVC Linder Presentation:

- Enrollment Update: has decreased by 3.4%, equating to a reduction of 450 students, however, CU Denver is graduating notably larger classes than in the past. Examining year over year trends, there is a decrease of 2.8%, amounting to 200 students. The largest gap in enrollment is seen among transfer and international students. Over time, there has been a consistent 85-87% continuation rate among students, with the ratio of continuing students to new students at 90:10. The continuing students enrollment rates have stabilized.
- A workshop focused on recruitment in 75 programs is scheduled for this Friday. An enrollment information session will also be held on Thursday, 22 February, featuring a hybrid format, questions are encouraged. This session marks the first campus-wide initiative of its kind, with the goal of hosting similar sessions twice a year following census data updates.

- FAFSA Update: Delays are beyond CU Denver's control; however, implications of these delays will be promptly communicated with students. This delay by the Department of Education has also caused a shift in the university's schedule, extending the deadline from March 1st to May 1st.
- Financial Aid Update: There are 11 full-time staff members. Office is actively recruiting for the four remaining positions. Financial aid packages are currently being processed in real-time, and there has been a notable increase in processing speed. Metrics indicate improved efficiency, with average wait times decreasing significantly. Phone wait times are averaging approx. seven minutes.
- EVC Linder also explained that financial aid funds only increase in conjunction with tuition increases. Efforts are made to proportionately increase financial aid alongside any tuition hikes. For example, following the recent tuition increase, financial aid allocation was similarly augmented.
- Working Group Updates: There are two distinct groups actively engaged in this area: the Scholarship Working Group and the Advisory Committee on Financial Aid. The Scholarship WG is collaborating with schools/colleges to address ongoing developments. Sessions are scheduled for February 14th and 21st, and efforts are being made to ensure that deans have designated POCs. Regular meetings will be held to facilitate progress. The Advisory Committee on Financial Aid convenes less frequently and serves more as an advisory body. Plans are underway to establish dedicated websites for both groups, which will include membership lists. Websites are anticipated to be launched within the next few weeks.

VC Farias Presentation:

- CWC Survey and Pulse Survey Updates and Dashboard Demo: CWC is mandated by the Regents to be conducted every four years, with results reported to the Regents on workforce culture data.
- Representatives from various entities, including FA, SGA, Staff Council, Dean Jansma and key offices such as OIRE and HR, are all involved.
- Pulse Survey serves as an interim measure of engagement between the 4-year CWC survey cycles. The next CWC survey is scheduled for 2025. Survey data contributes to the development of the Inclusive Excellence Plan.
- OIRE has developed a human-centered dashboard. Demo provided to FA by Laura Perrigo and David Deffenbacher. Additional info sessions will be held to explain data aggregation and dashboard utilization. The goal is to provide universal access to the dashboard.
- Key findings: 26% response rate (307 faculty), with positive trends indicating that 67% feel their work is respected, 63% agree on good work-life balance, and improvements made towards clarifying evaluation/promotion criteria. Area for growth: less than half agree with statement on ability to succeed to full potential regardless of identity. Low responses are also seen in these areas: sense of community, decreasing scores on pride in working here and are considering leaving the university. Notable disparities exist, with lower responses from African American faculty members. More gender/binary categories were included for the first time, though data is limited. VC Farias stated that it takes an organization five years to change its culture.
- FA member expressed concern that surveys would be data mined for equity violations and then reported to Office of Equity. VC Farias stated that the Pulse Survey did not include the protected class questions around discrimination or abuse, therefore, it would not be reported to the Office of Equity.

CACB and budget updates (Bailey W, Joanne A, Sasha B):

- Library is facing the impact of budget cuts, requiring a reduction of \$500K from the learning materials budget. Library is proposing cutting the materials listed on this site (covers both Phase 1&2 cuts): <https://library.auraria.edu/about/database-journal-cancellations>
- Joanne A. provided updates from BPC: BPC met with Chancellor Marks and other administrators to discuss persisting budget cuts. Positive news is that certain offices are being fully staffed (e.g. financial aid), despite cuts. Initially, Spring enrollment appeared bleak, but recent developments indicate a more positive trajectory, which aligns with their initial projections.
- Efforts are underway to address concerns regarding the dissolution of the Graduate School, with a focus on mitigating potential fallout.
- Considerable concerns arising from recent retirement incentives, particularly regarding number of individuals leaving vs. the ability to replace them. A total of 60 faculty and staff are expected to leave.

Dean's Review Policy (Sasha B.):

- FA Chair noted that the FA Bylaws do not outline a specific procedure for these policy reviews, however, historically policies are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate Standing Committee. The Dean's Review Policy was recently reviewed by the APC, who provided feedback by recommending greater specificity with respect to information gathering and key metrics used for evaluating deans. This feedback was also presented to FA EXCOM, who had no additional comments.
- Proposal is now brought to FA for approval based on APC's comments. The intent is to return the policy to AVC Kayaoglu with APC's comments unchanged, as recommended by EXCOM.
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted
 - Results for Dean's Review Policy: approved by a majority; policy will move forward to AVC Kayaoglu

Closed Session

End Meeting