

# Lecturers Practices and Policies Recommendations

## UCDALI | July 2021

Instructional, Research and Clinical (IRC) faculty account for 66% of all faculty at CU Denver by head count.<sup>1</sup> Lecturers (faculty at FTE < 0.5, hired per semester) account for 56% of IRC faculty and 37% of all CU Denver faculty.<sup>2</sup> Composing more than one third of our faculty, our Lecturers are dedicated educators as well as experts in their fields with connections to industry and professional endeavors throughout Denver and across the Front Range. They work from semester to semester with little job security, low pay, and few benefits, under conditions that vary across the University. By any metric they are our most vulnerable faculty, and they are often teaching, supporting and in other ways working with our most vulnerable students.

This report reflects UC DALI's ongoing work on Lecturer issues and working conditions across CU Denver's schools and colleges. It expands upon the UC DALI Lecturer Report of 2019 and identifies critical areas in need of reform if CU Denver is to meet its goals of becoming a higher ed leader in equity, inclusivity, innovation and being a people-centered workplace. To that end, we recommend twelve actions across three areas (compensation, professional development and career advancement, and integration and appreciation). These recommendations align with the university's stated vision and values as articulated in the Strategic Plan for 2030. With administrative support and advocacy, from the offices of the chancellor and provost down to primary unit chairs, implementation of the following actions would help create not just improved working conditions for the individual Lecturer, but a culture of integration, appreciation and investment that stands to benefit our students and the entire CU Denver community.

## Where We Are Today

### What We Do Well:

Across every school and college, the importance of Lecturers to CU Denver's educational mission is recognized. In recent years, schools/colleges and primary units have implemented commendable practices and policies regarding Lecturers and the ways they are supported in their work for CU Denver and its students. Such practices include Lecturer-specific handbooks (BUS, CAP, SEHD), a Lecturer orientation (CAP), a dedicated Lecturer coordinator (BUS, SPA), awards recognizing Lecturer excellence (BUS, SPA), a defined review process (SEHD, SPA), and a pipeline to rostered ( $\geq 0.5$  FTE) positions (SPA). Additionally, CAM, CAP and CLAS report recent or soon-to-be-implemented minimum pay rate increases for Lecturers.<sup>3</sup>

These efforts are appreciated, and they clearly make a difference in ensuring Lecturers feel integrated into and valued members of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> This is consistent with the national ratio of 66-70% of faculty positions without tenure or on a tenure track, although it is above the national average (56.7%) for 4-year public institutions. See ["Tenure Status of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Members, Fall 2018," Chronicle of Higher Education 66/36 \(2020\): 22](#), and TIAA Institute, ["The Changing Academic Workforce"](#) (2018). These studies reflect the higher ed landscape of 2017-2018, the most recent years for which national data is available.

<sup>2</sup> Data from Fall 2020. Source: [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness \(OIRE\) Faculty and Staff Counts for CU Denver](#).

<sup>3</sup> The practices noted here are a condensed, representative sampling derived from information provided by schools and colleges in response to UC DALI inquiries made in June 2021. The intent is simply to acknowledge and put on record some of the good things happening across campus. We understand that we have not captured everything each school or college does to support Lecturers.

## Where We Struggle:

Despite these steps forward, Lecturers are still too often disenfranchised from the University, their schools/colleges, and even their home units and fellow faculty. Lecturers too often report feeling disconnected, underpaid, undervalued and expendable.<sup>4</sup>

UCDALI's foundational principle emphasizes recognizing and fostering professionalism among all CU Denver faculty, regardless of rank or discipline. Our research into the current state of Lecturer supports and working conditions has found a troubling range of practices and policies regarding Lecturers across schools and colleges. Inquiries about resources available to Lecturers, including how units inform them of expectations and processes, and how they are evaluated and debriefed, revealed a bimodal distribution of practices that parallels the two broad types of Lecturers: those who identify as educators and those whose primary professional activities lie outside of academia. The most comprehensive support is found in units whose Lecturers come to us from the latter, non-academic community. There are also significant pay differentials between disciplines. We understand that these discrepancies respond to market realities. However, the result is that Lecturers who teach large, lower-division core curriculum courses that garner higher student-credit hours are often paid less. Neglecting both remunerative considerations and non-pecuniary supports fails to appreciate the contributions of all faculty to the University's mission.

While disparities and imbalances in higher education will persist so long as the current class system of faculty lines remains in place, there is nevertheless much that can be done to better support our Lecturers. This is imperative as the integration, appreciation, compensation, and valuation of Lecturers benefits not only this substantial percentage of our faculty but will directly and positively impact the students they teach. Support for Lecturers is support for our students.

The following recommendations are actions that can be implemented now to markedly enhance Lecturer working conditions at CU Denver. These recommendations align with best practices encountered at colleges and universities in the region and across CU Denver's identified peer institutions. They reflect the stated goals of the 2030 Strategic Plan and the aspirations of the Equity Task Force convened in the past year. While these actions are not all we as an institution can or should do for our Lecturers, they will help us become the premier higher education employer in the region—a place where great educators and industry leaders want to teach and choose to work.

## Recommendations

### 1: COMPENSATION

#### a) Proposed Action: Increase minimum pay rate across all schools and colleges

*Rationale:* In order to attract and retain the best Lecturers, CU Denver needs to provide direct, monetary incentives on par with the other universities in the region, and which more accurately reflect the tuition revenue connected to Lecturer work. Investment in Lecturers will make it possible for them to more fully invest in our students. Failure to do so limits students' experience.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Above all else, we should strive for consistency and transparency regarding compensation as part of our larger efforts to address structural and systemic inequities.

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<sup>4</sup> Summaries of Lecturer experiences and perceptions included here are drawn from data gathered through UCDAI administered surveys in 2019 and Strategic Plan surveys and listening sessions in 2021, as well as individual conversations and communications between Lecturers and members of the UCDAI executive committee.

Specifically, CU Denver should establish a MINIMUM Lecturer pay rate across all schools and colleges. Additionally, Lecturer salaries should be included in the general raise pool. In the spirit of equitable compensation for comparable work, the University should set maximum percentage pay differentials between all Lecturers of equal rank and between all faculty and administrators in individual schools/colleges. (Lecturer salaries should be calibrated to 1.0 FTE and confirmed to fall within this range.)

**b) Proposed Action: Compensate consistently based on student credit hours**

*Rationale:* [CU Boulder \(CAS\)](#) stipulates additional compensation for larger class sizes. CU Denver has no such policy. Furthermore, while higher pay for upper-division courses is standard in several schools and colleges, the stated rationales (more complex content and methodologies, greater expertise needed) ignore or devalue the typically larger enrollments in lower-division courses, the challenges of teaching and engaging new students in foundational material, and the impact Lecturers in lower-division courses have on incoming students and overall retention rates.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Require schools/colleges to reconfigure Lecturer pay by student credit hour rather than level (using the minimum pay rate recommended above as a base). Adopt a uniform pay increase policy for oversized classes.

**c) Proposed Action: Allow Lecturers access to benefits**

*Rationale:* This is an area of need we hear about frequently from Lecturers. While not all Lecturers would need benefits options, for those who cannot easily access them elsewhere, lack of benefits is commonly cited as one of the primary factors that might cause them to leave the position.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Allow Lecturers the option to purchase health insurance (medical, dental, vision) through CU. Clarify FTE percentages for 3-credit courses per primary unit to make eligibility for benefits clear.

**d) Proposed Action: Allow FTE  $\geq$  0.5 for Lecturers where primary unit need exists**

*Rationale:* In most units, Lecturers are currently prohibited from teaching more than 6 credit hours per semester. Permitting Lecturer appointments of greater than 0.5 FTE would allow us to maximize the availability of our best, most engaged Lecturers.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Review and, if needed, revise campus policies to allow Lecturer appointments of  $\geq$  0.5 FTE. Incentivize units to extend Lecturer appointments accordingly when there is need and opportunity to increase staffing efficiency.

**2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

**a) Proposed Action: Compensate Lecturers for participation in professional development (PD) programming**

*Rationale:* Ensuring all our faculty are the best scholars, creatives, educators and innovators they can be directly supports our students and our educational mission. CU Denver has invested considerable resources in professional development support and offerings to great success. Yet, issues of time and accessibility are particularly significant barriers for Lecturers when it comes to taking part in PD programs. As employees who are paid per course, uncompensated participation in professional development to

improve pedagogical practices and benefit CU Denver's students further devalues Lecturer expertise and time.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Provide uniform, University-wide compensation for Lecturers who participate in CU Denver-sponsored professional development programming. Incentivize (through awards, grants and/or budget increases) schools and colleges that provide additional compensation for lecturers engaging in professional development.

### **b) Proposed Action: Enhance Lecturer-specific professional development offerings**

*Rationale:* While much pedagogically-focused professional development is relevant to ALL faculty, and as much as it is important to integrate Lecturers thoroughly into the faculty ranks, Lecturers also face particular issues in their teaching. Yet, there is a lack of both programming and funding specifically geared to Lecturers that speaks to their experiences and concerns.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Ensure that the Lecturer information session runs at every New Faculty Orientation (NFO).<sup>5</sup> Provide funds to the CFDA budget to reinstate Lecturer career grants (\$500/recipient). Ensure that the missions of the CFDA and CETL reflect support of and commitment to all faculty ranks and that programming relevant to lecturers (both lecturer-specific and integrated with other faculty lines) is offered throughout the academic year.

### **c) Proposed Action: Annual review for all Lecturers**

*Rationale:* Debriefing with Lecturers about their experiences both in the classroom and within the CU Denver system provides a critical opportunity for both faculty and administration to evaluate what is going well and where improvement can happen. This investment in Lecturers supports the instructional rigor of the University and helps Lecturers integrate into their schools/colleges and primary units. Additionally, review and assessment are critical for promotion to Senior Lecturer (see below), consideration for rostered faculty positions (see below) and teaching and/or service awards.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Require a holistic teaching review (addressing course development and revisions, pedagogical experimentation, and self-assessment as well as peer observations and FCQs) at the primary unit level AT LEAST every three semesters of employment.<sup>6</sup> (Allow Lecturers to request and receive review more frequently.) Establish peer-observation network for Lecturers with documentation that can be included in materials for evaluation.

### **d) Proposed Action: Introduce Senior Lecturer position**

*Rationale:* A promotional level within the Lecturer rank recognizes excellence in teaching and long-term engagement with and service to the CU Denver community.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Include new Senior Lecturer title in the Campus AP being developed to define IRC titles on our campus. (Ensure that there is room for us to do this in the [APS 5060](#) revision). Develop University-level policies to guide schools/colleges in implementing this new rank and require schools/colleges to develop clear criteria for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

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<sup>5</sup> This session was implemented with the help of UCDALI in 2018 and run with great success (high attendance, positive feedback). The Lecturers session was eliminated in the planned NFO for 2021 for unknown reasons. UCDALI is working with the NFO planning committee to put the Lecturer session back in the schedule.

<sup>6</sup> See CU Denver [APS 1028](#).

### **e) Proposed Action: Define pathways to rostered positions**

*Rationale:* Establishing pathways from Lecturer to rostered faculty positions and encouraging units to support the development of interested Lecturers recognizes dedication and demonstrated excellence on our campus and with our students while also creating the potential for greater consistency and more productive partnerships between students and their faculty.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Encourage units to hire Senior Lecturers and/or Lecturers with established excellence in teaching on our campus as rostered positions become available.

## **3: INTEGRATION AND APPRECIATION**

### **a) Proposed Action: Encourage, promote, and compensate engagement of Lecturers within the campus community and shared faculty governance**

*Rationale:* Shared governance is a cornerstone of CU policy and procedure. Yet, Lecturers are typically excluded from direct participation in decision-making at all levels, leaving more than one-third of CU Denver faculty disenfranchised and without direct voice or representation (despite Faculty Senate policy that encourages the designation of an organization of Lecturers participating in appropriate faculty governance matters).

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Including Lecturers as representatives at every level of faculty governance requires policy changes at the system level and campus level. Faculty Assembly (FA) should recruit a Lecturer to serve on FA and commit to maintaining that position. Lecturers and any faculty member who does not have service in their appointment should be compensated.

### **b) Proposed Action: Ensure basic and essential teaching resources are made available to all Lecturers**

*Rationale:* For Lecturers to teach our students effectively, they need clear communication from units, schools/colleges and the University regarding employment, expectations and resources, and easy access to a minimum of support services.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Develop and supply new Lecturers with a “New Lecturer Packet” that welcomes Lecturers to the campus community and informs them of CU Denver resources, requirements, and expectations, and that provides a checklist of materials and information all Lecturers should receive at the start of their appointment. Require all units to equip Lecturers with timely appointment letters and compensation for courses cancelled or taken away within two weeks of the start of the semester; user-friendly onboarding information that familiarizes Lecturers with school/college and unit requirements, expectations and recourses; access to secure office space that allows for safe storage of personal belongings and confidential meetings with students; access to computers, printing and other relevant technologies; University ID cards/badges; access to transportation discount programs and parking subsidies for unit meetings and events. Incentivize units to assign a Lecturer mentor as a point of contact regarding teaching resources.

### **c) Proposed Action: Create ‘CU Lecturers in the City’ program**

*Rationale:* Lecturers possess untold potential for building bridges and linking the campus community to the city of Denver. Because Lecturers often work—by choice or necessity—outside CU Denver, they maintain professional relationships with business and industry organizations, non-profits, and city and state

institutions. By drawing more fully upon the nonacademic expertise and connections of our Lecturer faculty, we provide more opportunity for instruction and experiential learning that connects our students to the diversity and opportunities of the city.

*Suggestions for Implementation:* Remove barriers and build structures that encourage our Lecturer faculty to bring concurrent real-life professional experiences and experiential learning opportunities to the classroom. Provide incentives and compensation mechanisms for Lecturers to develop, mentor and/or supervise experiential learning opportunities, including internships, research and service projects, and study abroad. Provide administrative support and guidance through the offices of Experiential Learning and Partnerships and Innovation to streamline and demystify the process. Also create ways to recognize and reward contributions to CU Denver and its students.

## Alignment

***For more details on how the recommendations of this report align with campus goals for 2030, please see Appendix A: Strategic Plan Alignment.***

As the final touches are being put to the new CU Denver Strategic Plan, we can already see how our recommendations for new policies, procedures, and structures pertaining to our Lecturer faculty will play a pivotal role in achieving the ambitious goals of our campus community. By integrating our Lecturers more fully into our campus culture and structure, we avail ourselves of previously untapped opportunities to address equity priorities, ensure the highest quality and breadth of learning, expand the research and creative activity landscape, and fuel our innovation efforts. The path to a better 2030 must not merely include Lecturers but prioritize support and recognition of this faculty and their contributions to the work of the University. Additionally, addressing specific policies and the larger cultures of exclusion and contingency within which Lecturers operate will begin to bring our community in line with the Equity Task Force's requisite that "CU Denver...prioritize the value of our people and better reflect our diverse composition."<sup>7</sup>

Through specific actions such as the recommendations outlined here, we can drive cultural and systemic change in how the Lecturer position is conceptualized. As we look to the future, we must transform our ideas of "faculty" and "rank" by more fully integrating all who lend their expertise to our community of learners. We can no longer neglect Lecturers by maintaining outdated, ineffective policies and procedures that treat this constituency as marginal, temporary, and irrelevant. By implementing broad change and courageously reimagining how best to engage our Lecturers, CU Denver is better positioned to achieve the bold goals and visions set forth in the Strategic Plan.

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<sup>7</sup> CU Denver [Equity Task Force Report](#), April 2021.

# Appendix A: Strategic Plan Alignment

## Goal 1: Equity

Goal is to provide “a racially and culturally enhancing educational and work environment and a sense of belonging for all.”

- By supporting the work of our Lecturer faculty identifying as persons of color or as members of traditionally marginalized groups, we provide our diverse student body with voices that speak to their own experience and reflect their worlds early in their CU Denver enrollment
- By drawing more fully upon the nonacademic experience and expertise of our Lecturer faculty, we provide more opportunity for instruction that connects our students to the full diversity of the metropolitan Denver community.

### Recommendations:

- Identify current Lecturers that can contribute to these goals and engage them more fully in this process.
- Ensure diversity of Lecturer faculty hiring pools by widening recruitment efforts beyond our existing sources.

## Goal 2: Learning

Goal is to provide “access to high-quality, relevant education at every stage of life and career... with abundant occasions for real-life learning and working.”

- Broaden our instructional and experiential offerings by including our Lecturer faculty in these efforts. They are often our most well-connected and engaged professional faculty.
- Remove barriers and build structures that encourage our Lecturer faculty to bring concurrent real-life professional experiences and experiential learning opportunities to the classroom.

### Recommendations:

- Provide incentives and compensation mechanisms for Lecturers to develop and offer non-traditional, market-focused courses.
- Provide incentives and compensation mechanisms for Lecturers to develop, mentor and/or supervise experiential learning opportunities, including internships, research and service projects, and study abroad.

## Goal 3: Research & Creative Activities

Goal is to “bring together a diversity of researchers, artists, and designers to knock down disciplinary boundaries.”

- More fully engage our professional Lecturer faculty in these efforts as they provide a currently untapped pool of talent.

- Remove barriers and build structures that encourage our Lecturer faculty to bring their research and creative activities to our students.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide incentives and compensation mechanisms for Lecturers to oversee, be involved in, and/or oversee student research experiences.
- Support efforts of our Lecturer faculty to secure funding for and conduct research or scholarly activities as CU Denver faculty.

## Goal 4: Innovation

Goal is to “leverage our place and partnership philosophy to foster new forms of social entrepreneurship, economic development, public-private partnerships, and transformative education.”

- More fully engage our professional Lecturer faculty in these efforts as they provide a currently untapped pool of opportunity for building relationships and partnerships.
- Remove barriers and build structures that encourage our Lecturer faculty to bring their unique access to our students.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide incentives and compensation mechanisms for Lecturers to connect CU Denver to the community many of them work in as active professionals.
- Support efforts of our Lecturer faculty to take part in efforts for innovation.

## Goal 5: People

Goal is to “make our university one of the best and most desirable places to work in the region and nation, drawing exceptional, purpose-driven talent reflective of the rich diversity of our community”

- We must extend these efforts to this constituency of faculty if we truly strive to be a “best place to work.”
- By implementing new and innovative policies and procedures to recognize, reward and elevate the role of our part-time Lecturer faculty, CU Denver can be a leader and serve as a model in this time of transformation in higher education faculty composition.

**Recommendations:**

- Implement economic, cultural, and structural change on our campus by revisiting and revising or developing policies that will achieve these ends.