



Faculty Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

A Communication from the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee

May 1, 2024

Rapidly evolving events related to the protest on our campus, as well as the timing of these events in relation to the academic calendar, have made it difficult for Faculty Assembly to gather sufficient and credible feedback upon which to base a formal resolution. However, the FA Officers have made significant efforts to gather as much feedback as possible and will engage a more robust process in the near future. For now, the FA Executive Committee, as well as the undersigned, assert the following:

- We stand in solidarity with those who oppose the use of unnecessary force by police on our campus and in our communities. And we are critical of the decision by CU Denver, AHEC, Denver PD, and Auraria PD to authorize use of police force on April 26th.
- We are in strong agreement that protecting the freedom of expression of our students, faculty and staff is vitally important to our democracy and the intellectual life of the university. Freedom of expression is defined in Regent Law and Policy: “Free expression encompasses verbal and written means by which individuals may communicate ideas to others, including all forms of peaceful assembly, protests, speaking verbally, holding signs, circulating petitions, and distributing written materials. . . . Free expression does not include speech or conduct that is not within the First Amendment’s protections, including speech or conduct that is a true threat, fraudulent, harassing, obscene, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful.”
- We acknowledge that there is disagreement among faculty, staff, and students on the Auraria campus as to whether or not to allow the encampment to remain.
- We also acknowledge the very different experiences of the protest by members of our community including the fear, frustration, and interruption to campus life and operations that has been expressed at formal and informal gatherings such as the emergency Student Government Association meeting of April 30th, 2024.
- We condemn the spread of false information by groups on our campus as well as off our campus. In particular, we know of not a single instance of a violation of academic freedom related to the protest. Academic freedom, as articulated in Regent Law and Policy, is limited to the domains of teaching and research, protecting our right to “inquire, discover, access, publish, disseminate, and teach truth as the individual understands it, subject to no control or authority save the control and authority of the rational methods by which knowledge is established in the field.” Given proven attacks on academic freedom across our country it is imperative that we not make false claims even as we vigilantly guard this right.
- We unequivocally support and stand ready to help our Student Government Association in its effort to fully document and make public the events of April 26th and

we call on the leaders of CU Denver, AHEC, Auraria PD, Metro State and CCD to make the money available to do so in robust and meaningful ways without administrative interference.

- We are encouraged by recent attempts at dialogue as well as the offer to maintain a peaceful place for protest on campus which should include sunshades and portable toilets. We encourage both campus leaders and student protestors to continue to negotiate in good faith.
- We call for a meeting between representatives of Faculty Assembly, Staff Council, the Student Government Association, the Auraria Police Department, the Denver Police Department and CU Denver leadership to begin assessing actions taken on April 26th, with specific attention paid to allegations of mistreatment of protestors who were arrested and the willingness of the parties to enter into formal mediation if warranted.
- We call for immediate engagement with a peace negotiator, protest leadership, campus leadership, and shared governance representatives. One well-known peace negotiator is a faculty member at Regis, Professor Alison Castel: <https://www.regis.edu/academics/faculty-finder/faculty/alison-castel>).

Finally, we insist that every effort be made to find a peaceful resolution.

Signed:

Sasha Breger Bush, Ph.D. (Chair)

Vivian Shyu, Ph.D. (Vice-Chair)

Dennis DeBay, Ph.D. (Secretary)

Joanne Addison, Ph.D. (Immediate Past Chair, BPC Chair)

Wendy Bolyard, Ph.D. (EPPC Chair)

Edward Cannon, Ph.D. (LGBTQ+ Chair)

Thomas Beck, Principal Instructor (EDC Chair)

Jamie Hodgkins, Ph.D. (APC Chair)

Colleen Donnelly, Ph.D. (DisC Chair)

Robert Talbot, Ph.D. (LETTS Chair)

Maryam Darbeheshti, Ph.D. (CSW Chair)