



University of Colorado **Denver**

**Associate Vice Chancellor for
Digital Strategy and Learning**

Leadership Profile

2021



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) seeks an experienced digital education innovator and leader to serve as its associate vice chancellor for digital strategy and learning. The associate vice chancellor will guide CU Denver in realizing its full potential to model an innovative hybrid campus experience that welcomes the broadest range of students, meeting them where they are. The associate vice chancellor will champion and inspire a commitment to innovation in teaching and learning that is student-centered and results-oriented, helping to propel CU Denver to national recognition as the urban research university of the future.

Reporting to the provost and working in close partnership with the chancellor, deans, faculty and staff, the associate vice chancellor (AVC) will develop a holistic and inclusive digital learning strategy that reimagines and transforms the CU Denver student experience. The AVC will steward the expansion of online offerings and credentials to respond to changing workforce needs and learner preferences, prioritizing accessibility, flexibility, and lifelong learning. By ensuring the strategy remains centered on student needs and interests, the AVC will help enhance student success and catalyze academic innovation across the university. The associate vice chancellor will help to develop a next-generation campus experience, build a more engaged virtual community, and play a critical role in positioning CU Denver for 2030 and beyond.

The associate vice chancellor will join the university at a time of great momentum and change. Chancellor Michelle Marks joined the CU Denver community on July 1, 2020, conducted a [listening tour](#) and established a number of action items related to [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#). CU Denver launched a university-wide [strategic planning process](#) in January 2021 and will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023. This is a timely opportunity for an imaginative leader to join a new chancellor and a mission-driven and dedicated community that is elevating the impact and reach of the university.

CU Denver has a rich history in both online education and serving nontraditional learners. Current [online offerings](#) include 14 bachelor's degrees, 16 master's degrees, and one doctoral program. CU Denver faculty have deep expertise in and are eager to enhance CU Denver's digital learning portfolio. The associate vice chancellor will have opportunities to work closely with academic units across the university and with digital education partners at the CU System to assess and expand programs to meet market needs and generate revenue while ensuring academic integrity, flexibility, and freedom.

Part of the University of Colorado System, CU Denver is a comprehensive urban research institution in metropolitan Denver. With eight schools and colleges, it is home to more than 15,000 students and 1,200 faculty members and offers 110 degree programs both in-person and online. CU Denver graduates gain the powerful combination of immersive classroom and real-world applied experiences to fuel the future of Denver, the region, and the world.

To submit nominations or apply for the position, see "Procedure for Candidacy" on page 13.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The associate vice chancellor for digital strategy and learning will develop a holistic and inclusive digital learning strategy that reimagines and transforms the CU Denver student experience. The associate vice chancellor will champion and inspire a commitment to innovation in teaching and learning that is both student-centered and results-oriented, helping to propel CU Denver to national recognition as the urban research university of the future.

The associate vice chancellor will be expected to:

- **Develop and implement a distinctive strategy for digital learning at CU Denver.**
Lead the development, integration, and implementation of a comprehensive, transformative, and inclusive strategy for digital education at CU Denver.
- **Transform CU Denver's online offerings into an innovative hybrid campus experience.**
Collaborate with deans, faculty and administration to expand the university's digital learning portfolio to respond to learner preferences and workforce needs while prioritizing accessibility, flexibility, and lifelong learning; enhancing student success; and catalyzing academic innovation across CU Denver.
- **Champion ethical, equitable, innovative, and inclusive digital pedagogy.**
Advance and promote high-impact digital teaching and learning that actively embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion; prioritizes accessibility; and emphasizes data ethics.
- **Inspire an ethos of innovation and impact, enhancing the distinction of CU Denver.**
Lead and foster a culture of experimental and divergent thinking, teaching, and learning across the university, elevating and promoting CU Denver's reputation for excellence, innovation and partnership in digital teaching and learning.
- **Represent CU Denver in cross-campus and systemwide digital initiatives.**
Collaborate, negotiate, and implement strategies with the CU System's [Office of Digital Education](#) (ODE) and with campus-level schools, colleges, and primary units in support of a shared vision and to coordinate and ensure complementary efforts.
- **Develop a digital education enrollment management strategy.**
In partnership with the strategic enrollment team and deans, develop an enrollment management strategy for digital programs at CU Denver. Partner with the senior vice chancellor for strategic enrollment and student success to operationalize business processes that support effective enrollment services, retention, and student success for digital students.
- **Steward partnerships to align digital strategy with workforce needs.**
Develop and sustain relationships with industry, business, and community partners to understand and align their workforce needs with degree-seeking and non-degree CU Denver students.

Core Responsibilities

The associate vice chancellor will report to the provost, partner with the chancellor, and collaborate with academic units across the university to evaluate existing programs and identify new opportunities for expanding digital education at CU Denver.

The associate vice chancellor's day-to-day responsibilities include the following:

- Lead the development, implementation, and continued assessment of digital education strategies centered on faculty and student success.
- Promote and sustain the university's local, regional, and national reputation for innovation, partnership, and excellence in digital teaching and learning.
- Promote growth of digital programs by working with campus stakeholders to develop, market, promote, and assess online offerings.
- Partner in and promote the development of critical digital pedagogies and high-impact, digital teaching practices.
- Collaborate and serve as the university's primary liaison with the CU System's Office of Digital Education (ODE) with other CU campuses.
- Advocate for faculty in alignment with the interests of the Faculty Assembly and the CU Denver Association of Lecturers and Instructors (UCDALI).
- Partner with key constituents in the proactive promotion of digital practices and platforms that adhere to diversity, equity and inclusion standards, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and data ethics principles.
- Develop relationships with industry and community partners to understand their workforce needs and how to align these needs for both degree and non-degree seeking students.
- Collaborate with faculty and students in the development of criteria and measures for academic quality, integrity, and engagement.
- Collaborate with Central Administrative Units including Fiscal Planning and Budget, Enrollment Management, and Information Technology to define the operations plan for the continued launch of exclusively online and hybrid programs.
- Establish and monitor digital enrollment goals and student success metrics to identify successes and opportunities for improvements.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The associate vice chancellor will have experience with digital pedagogy and platforms; a record of successful online program development and management; and a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and digital ethics. A master's degree from an accredited institution and significant experience in higher education or allied fields with a demonstrable record of progressive managerial experience in online education is required.

CU Denver seeks a leader with a commitment to and success in expanding educational opportunities; enhancing student success and engagement; recruiting a diverse student population; lifelong learning and community engagement; research and teaching excellence; sustainability; and global vision and strategy.

Minimum Requirements

To be considered for the role, applicants must have led a comprehensive suite of online services for a college or university with at least 2,000 online students and possess a track record of clear, demonstrable online growth under their leadership.

Desired Characteristics

In addition, the ideal candidate will have the following attributes:

- **Alignment with mission:** A deep resonance with the mission and possibilities of a CU Denver education, including a drive that is constantly student centered; belief in opportunity and the transformative power of education, and commitment to community; demonstrated impact in enhancing diversity, equity and inclusive excellence; a strong understanding of faculty work and world in relation to supporting digital and online education; and an eagerness to tie in to the academic and intellectual enterprise of the university with an understanding and appreciation of shared governance.
- **Leadership and vision:** The ability to conceive, foster, and implement a shared vision and strategy for next-generation digital learning, and the leadership and experience to inspire and manage transformational change.
- **Commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion:** Proven leadership in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion; advocacy for Web accessibility and proficiency in universal design; and capacity to establish and sustain relationships with a wide range of diverse constituents in order to build a broader, more engaged virtual community.
- **Ability to influence the digital education landscape:** Expertise in digital learning and digitally-enhanced pedagogy and with various digital and hybrid offerings, including alternative, stackable, and micro-credentials; and an understanding of regional, national, and global markets and of relevant regulatory and compliance requirements.

- **Innovation and entrepreneurship:** Capacity for design and divergent thinking in developing progressive strategies and initiatives; a record of leveraging technology and innovation in pursuit of institutional excellence and growth; and a dynamic style and entrepreneurial orientation.
- **Record of collaboration and partnership:** The ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships at all levels and with faculty across disciplines and colleges, and to build partnerships with business and community leaders regarding workforce education and training.
- **Online program management capability:** Prior experience with and/or responsibility for market research and marketing, student success, and course development; and a sophisticated understanding of enrollment management strategies, CRM or equivalent systems, and other best practices in undergraduate and graduate admissions and enrollment.
- **Operational mastery and results orientation:** The ability to operationalize and execute strategic plans, maintaining accountability to ensure priorities are achieved on time and with exceptional quality and service.
- **Team-building and managerial acumen:** Prior success building, developing, and leading effective teams, and the ability to achieve results through others.
- **Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills:** The ability to listen to and learn from others; a natural inclination to communicate openly and transparently; and the emotional intelligence to build trust, establish collaborative relationships and ensure broad-based support for decisions.



CU Denver Digital Ecosystem

Faculty on the CU Denver campus are pioneers and champions of online education. With a commitment to serving the unique needs of its non-traditional student body, faculty began developing online programs and courses more than 20 years ago. This early adoption has positioned the CU Denver campus as the online leader within the University of Colorado system. Today, the university's current digital portfolio includes more than 25 fully online degree programs and certificates, and hundreds of faculty routinely deliver high-quality online courses each semester.

Early during the pandemic, CU Denver faculty pivoted rapidly to virtual learning, transforming teaching and learning to serve students online and in virtual modalities. Faculty expertise drove innovative solutions, new course modalities, and utilization of new technology and digital tools. Throughout their efforts over the past year, CU Denver faculty remained focused on a singular goal — student-centered flexibility. Their commitment and ongoing work has helped the university navigate the ongoing pandemic and its impact on CU Denver students. Course delivery flexibility combined with the university's extensive experience, expertise, and leadership in online education has energized and inspired CU Denver faculty, staff, and leaders to formulate a comprehensive digital learning strategy for the university and to further enhance and expand CU Denver's digital portfolio in order to maximize course flexibility, access to and opportunities for learning, and student success.

CU Denver Partners

CU Denver faculty work closely with and are supported by a constellation of strategic partners, subject matter experts, and collaborators across and beyond CU Denver. This digital ecosystem includes:

Auraria Library

Located in downtown Denver, [Auraria Library](#) serves the students, faculty, and staff of University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and Community College of Denver. The library ensures equitable access to knowledge and information from diverse perspectives and challenges existing notions of the library. Auraria Library creates an environment that fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion, nurtures creativity and learning, and sparks discovery and curiosity about the world. Auraria library staff work with faculty to promote open educational resource (OER) use through workshops and consultations.

Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

[CETL](#) provides CU Denver faculty with the tools and support to be highly effective teachers in order to ensure student success. The center fosters the use of evidence-based educational strategies that have been shown to foster learning and to improve academic outcomes for students. CETL supports faculty seeking to strengthen their pedagogical skills regardless of experience level, from helping instructors master large lecture hall courses to assisting seasoned educators with refining course syllabi.

Digital Pedagogy Lab

The [Digital Pedagogy Lab](#) is an international professional development gathering for educators committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, critical digital pedagogy, and imagining a new future for education. It is a space for teachers, students, librarians, administrators, and technologists interested in inquiry, praxis, and social justice. Participants focus on a topic specific to their research interests, teaching area, or imaginative impulses. After forming cohorts, they learn, collaborate, and teach one another for the duration of the lab.

Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship (LETTS) Committee

A CU Denver Faculty Assembly committee, [LETTS](#) advises university administrators and committees on matters related to the advancement of student learning; educational technology as it promotes learning; quality teaching and instructional methods; and scholarship related to teaching, research, service, and outreach. The committee reviews and recommends general policies on the use of technology to support faculty work and student learning and plans associated with the acquisition and use of technology.

Office of Information Technology

CU Denver's [Office of Information Technology](#) (OIT) supports a myriad of technology services for every department and school on the CU Denver and CU Anschutz campuses. [Academic technology and classroom support](#) includes technical support as well as the development and delivery of innovative technologies for teaching and learning. Services include support of instructional technologies, consulting services, and equipment available to faculty, staff, and students for short-term loan.

Open CU

[Open CU](#) is based on a premise of openness and collective impact across the University of Colorado's four campuses and beyond. Each CU campus brings Open Educational Resources (OER) expertise, resources, and practices for awareness and adoption to the shared table, all of which are customized to meet campus needs and cultures. By working together, the campuses succeed in their common goal of increasing the reach of quality OER experience and cost savings for students.

ThinqStudio

[ThinqStudio](#) is a think tank for future-ready teaching at CU Denver — an incubator of crowdsourced digital tools, ideas, and practices. Recognized nationally among digital pedagogy networks, ThinqStudio provides evidence-based advice and training to enhance teaching and learning. It encourages a cohesive, collaborative and inclusive culture of innovation, crossing disciplinary boundaries and bridging school and college commitments across CU Denver. With an open community framework, it offers workshops, events, fellowships, and other professional development opportunities both on and off campus, nurturing a community of inquiry bound by a shared focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning.

About University of Colorado Denver

The University of Colorado Denver is Denver's public urban research university, combining innovative research and accessible education with the advantages that only a dynamic urban environment can provide. On a campus where all are welcome, CU Denver educates a diverse student body through quality academics, ambitious research, creative work, and civic engagement. CU students come from 49 states and 66 countries. Nearly half are first-generation and will be the first in their families to complete a four-year degree. Forty-two percent of students identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and the average student age is 25. Leveraging its proximity to and partnership with so many public, nonprofit and private sector employers, CU Denver graduates gain the powerful combination of immersive classroom and real-world applied experiences to fuel the future of Denver, the region, and the world.

In January 2021, CU Denver embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process to create a bold, exciting vision and strategy that will differentiate CU Denver by 2030. The feedback gathered during Chancellor Michelle Marks' 100 Days of Listening tour underscored the university community's tremendous pride and momentum, as well as a strong desire to launch CU Denver to national recognition as an urban research university.

The CU Denver Distinction

The countless voices heard during the chancellor's 100 Days of Listening helped crystallize the unique characteristics that define and distinguish CU Denver:

CU Denver's highest priority is student success. The university ensures that success by cultivating transformative student experiences, instilling enduring competencies, and promoting a supportive community that values flexible learning opportunities, innovative ideas, and academic excellence.

CU Denver views the world through a lens of equity, inclusivity, respect, empathy, care, and empowerment. As an urban university with a significant history in its community, it seeks to learn from the past and effect meaningful change for the future. CU Denver is proud that a diverse group of passionate learners with rich and varied perspectives calls its campus their own.

CU Denver cultivates a bold, innovative culture where interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, research and creative work, and entrepreneurship yields solutions that proactively address complex challenges and create positive change in the world.

CU Denver is deeply engaged with its local, regional, and global community. Its emphasis on hands-on learning and real-world problem solving creates a profound impact for its students, partners, and the world.

CU Denver aspires to learn, grow, and make an impact on the community and the world. The university evolves through inquiry, dialogue, and action, and meets the emergent challenges of a complex and rapidly changing world with agility, an open mindset, and eagerness to continuously improve.

A Bold Vision for CU Denver's Future

CU Denver recognizes the world needs what it is uniquely positioned to provide: big ideas, innovative solutions, and equitable access to a high-quality education for a diverse workforce. With the new leadership of Chancellor Michelle Marks, CU Denver is rising to meet this challenge, and the campus community is ready to take the university to even greater heights, making an ever-greater impact.

Guided by the belief that education should be radically inclusive, CU Denver aspires to redesign higher education to work for everyone, transforming lives, uplifting communities, and expanding economies in the process. The university is committed to improving the student learning experience through advances in pedagogy, a focus on faculty development, and flexible modalities that meet the needs of adult and working learners. The university will provide an outstanding, unparalleled student experience from pre-enrollment all the way through to post-graduation, setting the path for a lifelong journey of learning and for contributing back to the CU Denver community.

By the Numbers

CU Denver offers more than 100 academic degree programs, from the bachelor's to doctoral level, in the heart of downtown, where more than 15,000 students pursue academic programs that range from business, health, engineering, and global energy management to music industry studies to criminal justice. As part of the state's largest public university system, CU Denver is a major contributor to the Colorado economy, with nearly 2,500 employees and an annual economic impact exceeding \$800 million.

CU Denver has a diverse student body of nearly 11,000 undergraduate and over 4,500 graduate students. Over 60% of the fall 2020 entering class are students of color; the campus is an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution and aspires to also be designated as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, the first in Colorado. Many students are first generation and most work while pursuing their studies. Over 30% of the undergraduate students are pursuing health-related degrees. The campus employs 2,000 faculty and staff and has an annual budget of \$330 million. CU Denver is located in downtown Denver, Colorado and shares the Auraria campus, which is the largest campus in the state, with two other distinct and separate institutions: Community College of Denver and Metropolitan State University of Denver. Each institution has its own neighborhood, and the three institutions maintain and manage the campus with a shared governance model through the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC). In addition to shared facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, student union, library, health center) on the Auraria Campus, CU Denver owns and operates three academic and administrative buildings in the downtown's urban core.

Leadership

Michelle A. Marks, Ph.D.
Chancellor, University of Colorado Denver



Michelle Marks has been chancellor of CU Denver since July 1, 2020. A longtime leader in higher education, Dr. Marks has the business acumen of an experienced senior administrator as well as the spirit of an academic. She is known for developing innovative programs that help students succeed, attract new student populations, facilitate research opportunities, and drive new revenue growth.

Prior to being named CU Denver's next chancellor, Dr. Marks served as vice president for academic innovation and new ventures at George Mason University. She led strategic partnerships designed to deliver online programming at scale, create pathway programming for international students, and support adult degree completion. She also forged critical relationships with businesses, government, and education institutions to support the university's mission.

Dr. Marks has extensive experience in the academic arena, having previously served as Mason's vice-provost for academic affairs and associate provost for graduate education. As a professor of management in Mason's School of Business, Dr. Marks' research focused on organizational leadership development and teamwork. She has published studies illustrating the dynamic nature of the collaborative processes used by organizational teams and the critical roles of team leaders. Among the numerous awards she's received are the George Mason University Alumni of the Year Award (2017), Executive MBA Professor of the Year award (2008 and 2011), and Teaching Excellence Award (2006).

She holds a BS in psychology from James Madison University and an MA and PhD in industrial/organizational psychology from George Mason University.

In addition to her chancellor role, Dr. Marks is also a tenured professor in CU Denver's Business School.

University of Colorado System

The University of Colorado is a public research university system with four campuses: University of Colorado Boulder, University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, University of Colorado Denver and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. It is led by a president, and governed by a nine-member elected Board of Regents. With more than 67,000 degree seeking students and an additional 8,000 taking courses for credit, nearly 6,500 students taking online courses exclusively, over 6,200 full-time instructional faculty and an additional 1,700 research faculty members, CU is the largest institution of higher education in Colorado and has an annual budget of \$4.8 billion. CU researchers attracted more than \$1.2 billion in sponsored research funding in fiscal year 2018-19. Academic prestige is evidenced by the university's five Nobel laureates, 10 MacArthur "genius" Fellows, 20 astronauts and 20 Rhodes Scholars. For more information about the entire CU system, go to www.cu.edu.

The University of Colorado System has four distinct campuses and is led from a system office by President Mark Kennedy. The three campuses in addition to CU Denver are CU Boulder, CU Colorado Springs, and CU Anschutz Medical Campus. CU Denver's relationship with Anschutz, a world-class R1 university with six health professional schools offering over 40 degree programs, is a close one, and Anschutz contracts with CU Denver for some of its student services.

The board of regents comprises nine members serving staggered six-year terms, one elected from each of Colorado's seven congressional districts and two from the state at large. The board is charged constitutionally with the general supervision of the university and the exclusive control and direction of all funds of and appropriations to the university, unless otherwise provided by law.





Denver, Colorado

Denver has established itself as a great city on many accounts. In fact, *U.S. News & World Report* awarded it the 2020–2021 No. 2 spot for [Best Places to Live](#) — second only to Boulder, Colorado. Fort Collins and Colorado Springs took 4th and 5th place making the State a sought after destination for high-quality of life including job market, housing affordability, and more.

Set at the front range of the Rocky Mountains and known as the Mile High City, it is geographically stunning. Denver has a reputation for being extremely dynamic for business and livable for individuals and families. Many consider the Denver Metro area to have the perfect blend of outdoor adventure and metropolitan sophistication. It is one of the nation's fastest growing cities and in 2016 was named the best place to live in the USA by *U.S. News & World Report*.

While the city itself has fewer than 700,000 residents, the six-county metro area has a population approaching three million. The state of Colorado is ranked annually as one of the best states in which to do business, and Denver is known for its blend of large corporations and manufacturers as well as vibrant small business environment.

Denver has a mild, dry, mostly sunny climate (whereas the mountains receive the majority of the snow). The Denver metro area receives eight to fifteen inches of precipitation a year. As such, parks and outdoor activities are abundant in Denver. The city itself has over 200 parks, and of course, Denver is in close proximity to many prominent ski, golf, and recreation resorts.

Culture thrives in Denver. The city's diverse population supports culture through the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). This cultural district is home to many popular attractions like The Denver Performing Arts Complex, the second-largest arts center in the nation. SCFD also offers the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Denver Art Museum, Denver Zoo, and well-known Denver Botanic Gardens. Denver is one of only a few cities to offer eight professional sports teams, and has built new stadiums in recent years. Excellent shopping and restaurants are found throughout the city, from Cherry Creek Shopping Center to downtown's pedestrian-friendly 16th Street Mall.

As might be expected of a thriving, vibrant city, Denver is home to exceptional public and private schools, colleges and universities, religious institutions, and vibrant neighborhoods.

For more information visit www.denver.org or www.denverchamber.org.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Colorado Denver in this search. Applications will be considered until the appointment is made. Candidate materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#). Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Philip Tang, Robin Mamlet and Rachel Bieniek
CUDenverDigital@wittkieffer.com

Compensation and Benefits Information

Compensation range: \$200,000–\$250,000

Benefits: The University of Colorado offers a full benefits package. Information on university benefits programs, including eligibility, is available at www.cu.edu/employee-services.

University of Colorado Denver is committed to recruiting and supporting a diverse student body, faculty and administrative staff. The university strives to promote a culture of inclusiveness, respect, communication and understanding. We encourage applications from women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and all veterans. The University of Colorado is committed to diversity and equality in education and employment.