



CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2024

Zoom and In-Person

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Vivian Shyu, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Florian Pfender, Anthony Villano, Wendy Bolyard, Amy Hasinoff, Jamie Hodgkins, Alan Vajda, Mia Fischer, Erin Hauger, David, Liban, Larry Erbert, Jason Machado, Lisa Johansen, Manish Shirgaokar, Matt Shea, Maryam Darbeheshti, Tom Beck, Sarah Fields, Ester de Jong, Kevin Hirth, Jeffrey Schrader, Rachel Stein, Rashmi Gangamma, Philip Joseph, Eric Baker, George Quansah, Gisella Bassani, David Bondelevitch, Traci Sitzmann, Peter Anthamatten, Diana White, Alejandra Medina, Thorsten Spehn, Karen Sobel, Kelly See, Jim Lopresti, Shuyang Peng, Dan Maxey, AVC Turan Kayaoglu, Provost Nakuma, Jessica Valdez, Dyllan Anson, Jody Beck

Chair's Update (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Approve minutes (September 3, 2024)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted
 - Results for September 3, 2024, Minutes: approved by a majority
- Introductions: Jessica Valdez and Dyllan Anson (SGA Undergraduate and Graduate Reps)
- Civitas/Inspire Vendor Contract Transition: Now reverting to the EAB system, which was previously used before Civitas. There are concerns regarding costs and inflexibility associated with Civitas. If you customize the system to meet specific university needs it incurs additional "a la carte" costs, which is a significant issue. Switching back to EAB is expected to be more cost effective and offer quicker responsiveness to trouble shooting needs.
- AI Task Force Roll Out: FA leadership met with Chris Puckett and Katie Linder. The task force will resemble the Academic Transformation Working Groups, with Co-Chairs and broad representation. FA Chair reiterated that faculty have limited availability for additional service at this time and requested that they consider giving compensation to faculty who join this task force. The time commitment for this task force is expected to be shorter than that of the other ATWGs, potentially only lasting one semester. Please send any concerns and feedback to FA Chair.
- Microcredentials Naming and Approvals: Comments and feedback have been requested, including inputs from LETTS, EPPC, and BPC. Feedback was also requested from schools/colleges Faculty Councils (or equivalent body if school/college does not have one). Requesting comments by mid-October. If anyone is interested in reviewing or providing feedback, please contact FA Chair.
- Chancellor Search: Due date for ranked candidates is October 8th. Interviews will take place at DIA for two days.
- Culture of Fear and Retaliation: FA Chair has inherited this issue and has extended an invitation to administrators to partner with FA to address these ongoing issues. To date, Ann Sherman is the only administrator who has agreed to engage in this matter. FA Chair will keep everyone updated on any further developments.
- 3rd Party Contractors: There is a need to increase transparency regarding third party contracts, especially those related to faculty business. Chris Puckett will be collecting additional information and comments on the document of guidelines related to these contracts.

- Graduate Education: FA Chair stated she was cautiously optimistic on receiving new communications regarding graduation education from the provost in the near future.
- SESS Search: Search is ongoing but progressing slowly. There is a suggestion that the new Chancellor may wish to provide input on this position. FA believes that hiring for this position is not necessary and funds should be reallocated towards financial aid and mental health services. There are also serious issues related to retaining staff within SESS.
- Faculty Council Updates: System Level Review Process: The Regents have implemented changes to this process. The new process is still being finalized, with EPUS actively involved. The schedule for this is expected to accelerate with harder deadlines to come.
- Proposed Article 1 Revision: Regent VanDriel proposed an article that would introduce new requirements regarding speech and digital caveats. The faculty expressed significant pushback against this and it has now been tabled.
- BOR Resolution on “Intifada”: A resolution passed by the Board of Regents in June addressing the definition of intifada. Faculty across campuses raised concerns about the accuracy of this definition.
- Faculty Council Constitution: There will be a vote on proposed changes next week. Maria Lewis is the coordinator and has distributed this information across campus.
- Call for Reps: FC P&B (x1), FC Budget (x2), FC Comms (x3), FC at-large (x2)

FACAB Report (FACAB Chair, Diana White and Jody Beck)

- FACAB continues initiatives that began last year, focusing on increasing faculty involvement in the master plan. Both FACAB and SACAB have reps on the Auraria Board of Directors. Diana White is serving as FACAB Chair this year. Currently, their representation is as non-voting member, however, SACAB is advocating for voting member status. A lawyer from AHEC indicated that while voting is restricted by law, he is open to exploring the possibility further. Reps are also currently excluded from executive sessions, such as safety briefings from campus police. Reps are requesting that their presence and voices are included in these discussions.
- Tivoli Reimagined Project: Overhaul of Tivoli building
- Construction Updates: The public safety building is in design phase; ball field is in progress; two buildings are planned along Auraria Pkwy, each over 12 floors. One will be an MSU dorm and the other will house the Auraria Early Learning Center and workforce rental housing. Construction is scheduled to start July 2025 and last two years.
- IPG Nominees: FA Chair requested timeline.
- AHEC Billboard Lawsuit: CU Denver exempt from local ordinances concerning these issues, no concerns from AHEC.

FA Disability Committee Update (Colleen Donnelly)

- DRS Services Update-Student Accessibility Needs: Approximately 30% of students require services but do not receive them. The focus on accessibility is expanding beyond just those who identify as having disabilities, as it has become a significant issue for all students, especially Gen Z, who learn through multiple modalities.
- Hidden Disabilities: An estimated 90% of students and faculty may have hidden disabilities. Accessibility efforts are aimed at improving access to information and supporting all students. This is viewed as a crucial social issue.

- **House Bill Impact:** A current house bill mandates that all information on public-facing university sites must be accessible. Legal ramifications apply to the university for any non-compliance, rather than to individual faculty members.
- **Faculty Role in Accessibility:** Faculty are encouraged to implement accessible practices in the classroom. This can be done gradually by taking step-by-step actions toward better accessibility.
- **Digital Resources:** A new digital resource page has been introduced. While the Ally program has been problematic due to its back-end nature, it is still available for use. However, it is not considered best practice. The Boulder digital office is recognized as one of the best in the country for accessibility.
- **New DRS Director:** Hannah Smith has been appointed as the new director of DRS. The office offers an accessibility certificate and hosts various programs, sessions, and videos.
- **AOT Team:** The Accessibility Operations Team (AOT) includes both faculty, staff and students.
- **Upcoming Workshops:** Workshops will be hosted by the Boulder team on November 1st, organized through CFDA, and will take place in the Landing Zone, Learning Commons Building.

Budget Priorities Committee Report (Sarah Fields)

- **Budget Aligned Review Committee (BARC) Update/Activities:** BARC has commenced its work, holding open sessions each month to provide updates. More information can be found at [2024 Budget Model Revision Process](#).
- **Fiscal Year 2025 Update:**
 - The process is well underway, with recent census data showing a projected 1.7% decrease in enrollment, as opposed to the anticipated 3.4%.
 - State funding was allocated at 3% rather than the expected 4%.
 - The mix of students has not aligned with predictions.
- **Budget Outlook:**
 - Budget cuts for this year seem unlikely, which is a positive development.
 - However, the anticipated 2% raises for faculty may not occur, which is a concern.
- **Policy Issue:**
 - AVCFA is working on CAP 1006, which includes adding a section on professional development. If anyone would like a copy of this document, please let me know.
- **Graduate Education Update:**
 - The provost has confirmed that there will be no defunding of PhD programs. Further information regarding this plan, which includes faculty input, will be shared by the provost within the next day.

Provost Update (Constancio Nakuma)

- **Graduate Education:** The provost met with Sasha Breger Bush, FA EXCOM members, and David Tracer (BPC) last week. The team made a compelling case to reconsider the decision announced in June regarding the repurposing of funding for 12 PhD programs to a broader audience. They explained how that decision could negatively impact recruitment efforts for PhD students, introducing significant uncertainty about funding availability. This uncertainty hampers the ability to anticipate and award financial support to students.
- The provost stated that graduate education has historically relied on two main funding sources:
 - An operating budget specifically for graduate education, which supports the 12 PhD programs. This budget has been in place for a long time and currently holds \$500,000 available for distribution solely to these programs.

- The Chancellor's Scholarship Program, which provided additional funding for graduate students for five years. This program has ended as of this year, eliminating that source of support.
- Graduate Manual Update: The graduate manual is undergoing significant revisions, with more activity expected as new chancellor candidates are considered. The provost emphasized the importance of not letting graduate education dominate discussions during this transition.
- The provost stated he is eager to hear concerns and comments from the assembly regarding these issues.
- FA inquired about the potential reconstitution of the graduate school. The provost stated that efforts were made to centralize coordination when Michael Kocet's position was created, but it does not equate to establishing a full-fledged graduate school. Responsibilities for recruiting and registrar functions were integrated into existing structures.
- FA also raised a question about the responsibilities of graduate education policy and structure, particularly regarding the movement of functions to schools/colleges and the implications for governance.

Academic Transformation Working Group Update (Beth Myers, Rich Allen, Katie Linder, Stephen Hartke, Pam Toney, Michelle Comstock, Sarah Engel, Samantha Kelly)

- Rich Allen reported on the launch of the four Academic Transformation Working Groups (ATWGs) focused on how the institution can move forward. The aim is to foster campus-wide engagement.
- At the end of last AY, the four WGs submitted progress reports to the provost. Over the summer these reports were shared with deans, chairs, directors, and administrators, and further disseminated to shared governance groups in the fall for feedback. A Qualtrics form has been created for submitting feedback. The goal is to finalize reports for submission to the provost by the end of this semester. An engagement event is scheduled for November 6th to gather input from the campus community.
- As part of the process, these reports (such as those on Reimagining Core Curriculum) will be presented to the provost, then to the cabinet, before returning to the community for implementation of final recommendations.
- FA Discussion: EXCOM members raised concerns regarding the need to rethink administration processes and structures similarly to other topics discussed in the ATWGs. They highlighted the need for a nimble organization and acknowledged that the current structure feels outdated. They emphasized the importance of rethinking the organizational framework to better integrate administrative function with faculty roles. Another FA EXCOM member emphasized the importance of measuring research and service workloads across different schools/colleges, noting that minority faculty often take on more service responsibilities, which should be brought to the administration's attention. The provost expressed openness to these new ideas and suggested creating a working group if there is a need to address administrative topics or other concerns.

End Meeting