

February 4, 2025

FACULTY ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

In which we communicate our perspectives regarding administrative structures, dynamics, and practices at CU Denver to our new Chancellor

Whereas The CU Denver Faculty Assembly warmly welcomes our new Chancellor, Dr. Kenneth Christensen, with whom we look forward to working in the coming years to fulfill our commitments to our students, community, and one another. We also thank other members of our executive administrative team for recent invitations to share ideas related to the strategic plan roadmap, budget models and the budget deficit, and the search for our new provost;

Whereas the University of Colorado Denver administration has faced difficult decisions regarding resource allocation in recent years, including concerning reductions in instructional resources and tenure-track faculty lines, academic advising, research grants, scholarships, professional development funds and opportunities, and student programs, among other areas core to the university's mission;

Whereas Faculty Assembly shares deep concern about the implications of these decisions for our university community, particularly their impact on our students, including: increasingly limited mental health, financial aid, advising, accessibility, and technology supports, constraints on our course offerings, research opportunities, and high impact experiences; and amplified administrative emphasis on tuition adjustments to address budgetary challenges, among others;

Whereas the faculty have identified several areas where enhanced communication and partnership between administration and faculty could strengthen our institution:

1. Limited access to budget and expenditure information for administrative units has made it challenging for Faculty Assembly to fully participate in strategic planning and offer informed recommendations for positive change¹;
2. The large size and cost of our administrative apparatus as student enrollments decline and faculty and staff ranks shrink²;

¹ Among other asks since September 2023, we've asked to see the central admin's budget, expenditure data for the Provost's and Chancellor's discretionary funds, as well as budgets for specific units like SESS, among other similar requests from FA/BPC. Most recently, in December 2024 requested data on actual disbursements to central and the schools and colleges, so that we can compare to the allocations stipulated in the budget model.

² The data available to us indicate that the number of administrators at CU Denver doubled over the past 10 years, and that we currently have an estimated 47 administrative positions at the AVC level and higher.

3. Concerns about salaries³ and administrative compensation structures, and the need for more transparent evaluation processes or expectations of accountability⁴;
4. Opportunities for more strategic resource allocation, including: reviewing the balance between administrative and student-facing services, evaluating third-party contracting practices, assessing hiring patterns, ensuring adequate staffing for critical student-facing positions, and addressing compliance-related expenses⁵;
5. The need for greater shared governance participation in administrative reorganizations (particularly those affecting central administrative structures) and the creation of new administrative units, as well as systematic assessment of their effectiveness and alignment with Regent Law⁶;
6. A need for stronger integration of faculty input and recommendations in university initiatives that require significant faculty time and effort.⁷

Be it resolved that the CU Denver Faculty Assembly, in the spirit of shared governance and our collective commitment to institutional excellence, seeks to work with Chancellor Christensen and his administration to address these concerns and strengthen our university's administrative practices. We offer these observations from our deep commitment to CU Denver's mission and our students' success.

We look forward to collaborating with the administration to develop solutions that will strengthen our institution and better serve our students, faculty, and staff.

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³ Colorado Public Radio [reported](#) in 2023 that CU Denver had the highest administrative costs per student of any institution in the state, and further noted that “nearly 50 people in upper administrations cost the university \$10.4 million in salaries, which is an average salary of \$212,245. In contrast, more than 700 faculty and staff positions cost less than \$48 million, and the average salary is \$67,605”.

⁴ FA has repeatedly requested the implementation of an evaluation process for our administrators. While a process for Dean’s review has been set out in policy and is slated to begin this coming Fall 2025, our multiple requests for a similar review process for the central administration—one that is transparent, conducted regularly, and incorporates feedback from faculty, staff, and students—have been denied.

⁵ Recent examples include a narrow focus on the SESS VC search while critical student-facing positions in that unit remain unfilled, as well as the prioritization of administrative initiatives and priorities over gender pay equity.

⁶ Examples include breaking up and outsourcing the previously faculty-led Center for Faculty Development to TIPS and OFA where administrators now set the agenda and closely manage faculty activities, CityCenter, UComm centralization, SESS reorganization, Graduate Education, the rapid creation and dissolution of the ASC and its operations teams, and the central administrative sweep of salary savings and faculty lines following the implementation of retirement incentives.

⁷ The Academic Transformation Working Groups provide a recent example.