VISION TEAM REPORTS
ABOUT THE PROCESS

LETTER FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dear Chancellor Marks,

When you charged our strategic planning steering committee you told us that CU Denver has built incredible momentum in the last 50 years and that there is great pride among our community about our progress. I was also struck by your comment that across your 100 Days of Listening tour nobody told you that we were done, but rather, our community is ready to capitalize on our unique strengths to become the type of university our city, state, and nation need.

During Phase 2 of our strategic plan, we brought together a team of 130+ exceptional students, faculty, staff, and friends that broadly represented the university community. They were organized in eight Vision Teams and a Steering Committee and asked to engage in an inclusive, innovative process to envision our future.

In the following pages you will find their work – the ideas conceptualized, articulated, and conveyed by our own community. These are dreams of what CU Denver can become by 2030 and high-level strategies for how we might get there. The work is phenomenal and I could not be prouder of our team!

I am immensely impressed by, and grateful for, the work of our Vision Teams, Steering Committee, and the Comcast Media Technology Center/Inworks Design Innovation team that facilitated this process with creativity, flexibility, and unmatched professionalism. I am confident that their work delivers on your charge to dream big and determine how we can carve out our unique and impactful future.

I look forward to working with you over the next several weeks to take these ideas and shape our community’s very best thinking into a cohesive strategy for CU Denver that will guide us over the next decade. I could not be more excited for our future, and truly believe we will be the university the world needs in 2030!

Sincerely,

Marty Dunn
Dean, College of Engineering, Design and Computing
Chair, Strategic Planning Steering Committee
ABOUT THE PROCESS

BACKGROUND

CU Denver embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process in January 2021 to create a bold, exciting vision and strategy that will differentiate CU Denver by 2030.

After Chancellor Michelle Marks’ 100 Days of Listening tour, it was clear that our university community has tremendous pride and momentum, as well as a strong desire to launch CU Denver to national recognition as a leading public urban research university.

In January 2021, Chancellor Marks charged a team of faculty, staff, and students with collaborating on the development of a refreshed outlook for CU Denver, one that would capture a vision for 2030, strengthen and differentiate the university. The process was human-centered and inclusive by design and engaged hundreds of participants and generated thousands of ideas.

With the right vision, plan, execution, CU Denver can become a model university that truly meets the needs of all.

THE PROCESS

The strategic planning process used a unique method called design innovation (see page 4) that encourages big, bold idea generation, and the participation of the entire campus community. The process was divided into three phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Goal of Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHASE 1</td>
<td>January 2021</td>
<td>Set the Vision</td>
<td>Broad community input was invited via multiple channels; 3,674+ ideas generated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Vision for 2030</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHASE 2</td>
<td>February – April 2021</td>
<td>Develop the Themes</td>
<td>Eight multidisciplinary, cross-functional “Vision Teams” were charged to focus on themes informed by the 100 Days of Listening tour; they imagined, distilled, and recommended 4,000+ bold ideas.</td>
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<td>Strengthen and Differentiate</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHASE 3</td>
<td>April – June 2021</td>
<td>Build the Strategy</td>
<td>Based on Vision Team reports and community input, a cogent and integrated strategic plan will be developed and released.</td>
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<td>Synthesize &amp; Deliver Our Strategic Plan</td>
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ABOUT THE PROCESS

PHASE 1: OUR VISION FOR 2030

Phase 1 consisted of foundational work around CU Denver’s purpose, vision, values, and graduate characteristics. This began with gathering input from the CU Denver community through a series of community sessions and an online survey. The information-gathering process was rooted in appreciative inquiry – an inclusive, strengths-based approach to identify the most important attributes of our identity and ambitions — and served as a “north star” for the rest of our strategic planning work.

PHASE 2: STRENGTHEN AND DIFFERENTIATE CU DENVER — CURRENT PHASE

Phase 2 brought our community together to think big, dream, and strategize to determine how we can take CU Denver to the next level by 2030. This phase launched eight Vision Teams, organized around major themes informed by Chancellor Marks’ 100 Days of Listening tour. These multidisciplinary, cross-functional teams were diverse and represented all corners of the university, bringing tremendous institutional knowledge to the table. They were charged with digging deep into our institution in order to develop goals, strategies, and initiatives to strengthen and differentiate CU Denver around their theme. A team of faculty, staff, and students from CU Denver’s Comcast Media Technology Center/InWorks, facilitated their work by co-creating a customized design innovation process with each of the Vision Teams.

The Phase 2 work represents the culmination of significant thought, discussion, data collection, and research that will inform the strategic plan for the future of CU Denver. The Vision Team reports are featured in this document.

PHASE 3: SYNTHESIZE AND DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

In Phase 3, the Vision Teams’ work is being reviewed, synthesized, and distilled into a bold, exciting, integrated, cohesive strategic plan for CU Denver in 2030. We will present working drafts of this strategic plan through a series of community feedback sessions in early- to mid-May 2021. Following these sessions, we will begin the process of writing the final report, which will be a top-line synthesis of the community’s work focused on high-level goals and strategies. The report is expected to be delivered to the CU Board of Regents in June 2021 and shared with the community shortly thereafter. Operationalizing the plan will follow in Fall 2021.
ABOUT THE PROCESS

HOW WE DID IT: PHASE 2

Phase 2 Participation

2,000+ TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

8 VISION TEAMS

130 VISION TEAM MEMBERS

4,000+ STORIES, IDEAS, AND ASPIRATIONS GENERATED BY VISION TEAMS

ABOUT DESIGN INNOVATION

Design innovation (DI) is a human-centered approach that blends the mindsets, methods, and languages of design thinking, systems thinking, engineering design, and business innovation to discover, define, develop, and deliver innovative solutions to complex problems. The process centers the concepts of creativity, openness, mindfulness, adaptability, empathy, and freedom to explore radical and impactful ideas about our future.

A team of faculty, staff, and students from CU Denver’s Comcast Media Technology Center/InWorks, co-led by Professor Kristin Wood and Lauren Hebert, facilitated the VisionT Teams’ work. At a high-level, the teams:

• Kicked off their work by broadly engaging our community to understand individual points of view related to their theme.

• Analyzed what they heard to identify the opportunities where CU Denver could make the greatest impact.

• Generated initial ideas about how we could best make that impact and tested those ideas again with our community.

• Incorporated the community’s feedback and created bold, differentiating ideas to take CU Denver to the next level by 2030.

This process was built around four sessions that intentionally brought together all eight Vision Teams in order to facilitate cross-collaboration and inspire new and bold ideas at the intersection of the distinct teams.
EMPOWERED BY OUR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

CO-CHAIRS

- Antwan Jefferson | Associate Clinical Professor, School of Education and Human Development
- John Ronquillo | Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs

TEAM MEMBERS

- Cathy Bodine | Associate Professor, College of Engineering, Design and Computing
- Patrick Browne | Director, Veteran and Military Student Services (In Memoriam)
- Anna Ramirez Crawford | Director, Foundation and Corporate Development, Advancement
- Christopher Hilton | Undergraduate Student Representative, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Tania Hogan | Director, Undergraduate Student Success, School of Education and Human Development
- Boram Jeong | Assistant Professor, Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Laurence Kaptain | Dean, College of Arts and Media
- Sarah Kovoor-Misra | Professor, Management, Business School
- Karey Krohnfeldt | Director, Equity, Office of Equity
- Florie Montoya | Senior Director, Talent Acquisition and Compensation, Human Resources
- Charles Musiba | Associate Professor, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Stephanie Puello | Student Progress Coordinator, Graduate School
- James Speed | Policy Coordinator, Academic Operations
- Anthony Starke | Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

CU Denver embodies a bold commitment to inclusive excellence and to building our reputation as a dynamic, responsive, and flexible equity-serving institution that ensures the success of our diverse students, staff, and faculty. This represents our commitment to inclusive excellence and our awareness of the value of diverse voices and experiences to our collective success as a major public, urban, research institution.

CU Denver aspires to be an exemplar equity-serving institution. Here, we courageously humanize our systems and policies to foster a diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus dedicated to the success of every member of our community. We actively identify and eliminate barriers caused by social, racial, and economic injustices, as well as those caused by the privileging of dominant forms of knowledge and ways of being (evident in white supremacy, sexism, racism, heteronormativity, ableism, and other forms of discrimination). We endeavor to create and sustain a culture of belonging for all.

In particular, CU Denver will:

- Lead with our commitment to EDI and ensure integrity in achieving EDI goals.
- Always align our EDI mission, values, and goals through the work of staff and faculty.
- Be courageous when identifying and addressing any forms of inequality, hate, and harm that impact CU Denver students, staff, and faculty.
- Continue to learn about ourselves, about one another, and from one another, and continue to redefine our university identity and our practices to reflect that inclusive excellence is dynamic, adaptive, and aspirational.
- Utilize all of our resources in bold and courageous ways to ensure that we do not cause, shelter, or sustain harm to our immediate university community or to other communities.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

CU Denver is a richly diverse community of lifelong learners, educators, researchers, and higher education professionals.

Students want to come to CU Denver because they see it as a place of opportunity, affirmation, and authenticity. Our inclusive excellence is reflected in a uniquely diverse student body, faculty, and staff. At CU Denver, we are student oriented, and we value the supporting roles of staff who enable student success, along with the research and creative accomplishments of faculty that make our institution a forward-thinking hub of innovation. We celebrate our diversity and prioritize the affirmation of our identities through student organizations and faculty and staff affinity groups. Together, we recognize the critical importance of further embedding the values of EDI within our growing, dynamic institution.

CU Denver educates with vision and prioritizes access and awareness.

CU Denver strives to provide opportunities for students, from the moment they first make contact all the way to graduation day. Whether students matriculate here in their first year or transfer from another institution, CU Denver strives to provide the right paths to success. We offer students the most up-to-date technologies and modalities of learning. Whether students are full-time, part-time, or online, we are committed to being a nimble and innovative institution of higher education that meets students where they are. We aim for inclusion and accessibility so that nothing impedes student success.

CU Denver promotes a holistic approach to the student experience and environment.

CU Denver not only offers opportunities to learn, but also opportunities to belong. Our students are highly conscious of a constantly changing world and have the ability to enhance their experiences outside the classroom with a variety of student organizations and student-driven initiatives that reflect the values and importance of identities and intersectionalities. Students benefit not only from various EDI initiatives within their academic units, but also from a highly engaged Center for Identity and Inclusion that offers programming, training, and developmental opportunities, all while receiving a world-class University of Colorado education in the heart of downtown Denver.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

CU Denver must further prioritize the value of our people and better reflect our diverse composition.

While we celebrate a diverse student body, faculty, and staff, the leadership of the university must better reflect that diversity in school, college, and business units, as well as in top-level administration. We share a committed interest in further diffusing EDI across the university. However, administrative functions have traditionally fallen to a singular administrator, rather than an administrative team that could better support the advancement and progress of EDI. We must be more inclusive with regard to family support systems that support CU Denver students. We must decentralize whiteness and decolonize our pedagogy to be more inclusive of other cultural, non-Western ways of learning and knowledge. We must pursue equity in pay, provide professional development opportunities for our historically disadvantaged communities, and construct better avenues for conflict resolution. In an ever-changing world where tragedy and evil occur, we must also be vigilant and ready to support our diverse communities when they are afflicted.

CU Denver must reduce and remove institutional barriers to educational success.

Enabling and emboldening student success will require ongoing evaluation of various curricula and pedagogical techniques. Doing so may help identify potential biases, inaccuracies, or dated and ineffective modalities of learning that may impede success. CU Denver must find ways to better communicate available resources, enhance physical access as well as access to technology for disabilities communities within the university, and more equitably equip our students with the right tools for success.

CU Denver must better establish and embed EDI as a shared institutional value and responsibility.

Our unique position as Colorado’s only public urban research university gives us ample opportunity to better define EDI in a place-based context, and to create a greater awareness of the shared responsibility we have to confront challenges and advocate for systemic changes to systemic problems. As such, deepening our knowledge and awareness of that identity will enable us to be better advocates of the university within the CU system and with state government entities that provide resources to CU Denver. Equity, diversity, and inclusion should be viewed as an opportunity to value our people and further invest in them. The diffusion of EDI principles must be university-wide and transcend academic and unit silos. We must prioritize proactive EDI norms rather than reactive norms, while infusing our decision-making processes with objective assessments of data and re-evaluate success metrics to ensure they do not ignore or further any forms of bias. We must be open to feedback and learning—as individuals and as an institution—and be willing to reframe and adjust accordingly.
Goal 1: Redefine Success

CU Denver’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion prioritizes, informs, and incentivizes the evaluation and definition of student, faculty, and staff success. By empowering our inclusive excellence, we unlock the potential for everyone to succeed.

STRATEGY 1.1
Define and boldly communicate our commitment to EDI.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.1.1** Build a shared understanding of EDI and normalize the language of EDI within the institution.
- **Initiative 1.1.2** Identify bold, courageous, and attainable EDI goals and invest in continuous learning and improvement to accomplish and sustain these goals.
- **Initiative 1.1.3** Develop and regularly update EDI goals and accomplishments dashboard that keeps members of the CU Denver community aware of the university's progress.
- **Initiative 1.1.4** Equip and provide resources to CU Denver EDI work through adequate permanent budget allocations, fundraising, and knowledge-sharing structures.

STRATEGY 1.2
Create and fund an Institutional Equity Advocacy Council.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.2.1** Fund and staff an Institutional Equity Advocacy Council to continue the work of the Equity Task Force to ensure efficacy, success, and sustainability of EDI initiatives and goals. Include CU Denver staff, faculty, and students and empower them to ensure timely university response to EDI-related challenges across campus.
- **Initiative 1.2.2** Leverage the team to lead the university in accomplishing EDI goals and support the CU Denver community in achieving inclusive excellence.

STRATEGY 1.3
Redefine CU Denver’s educational experience to infuse EDI throughout the curriculum and student life.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.3.1** Conduct a full, formal review of the entire core curriculum that includes construction of new knowledge area(s) that are well-aligned to CU Denver’s EDI goals.
- **Initiative 1.3.2** Redesign curricula to decenter whiteness and other sources of oppression, and support improvement of graduate and major curricula to represent EDI commitments.
- **Initiative 1.3.3** Strengthen the Center for Identity and Inclusion with adequate resources, including increased funding and staff to be more responsive to student needs.
- **Initiative 1.3.4** Redefine higher education at CU Denver by integrating instructional practices, professional learning, and institutional learning goals into our unique university identity.
Goal 1: Redefine Success

STRATEGY 1.4
Embed EDI in recruiting, hiring and retention policies and practices.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.4.1** Develop innovative and/or alternative pathways for promotion and advancement.
- **Initiative 1.4.2** Identify, train, and resource current faculty and staff to serve as success coaches and mentors to support historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff.
- **Initiative 1.4.3** Set targets for diverse candidate pools and keep job openings active until filled.
- **Initiative 1.4.4** Reduce income gaps among faculty and staff by leveraging current and other pay equity legislation and through ongoing salary compression correction.
- **Initiative 1.4.5** Develop a plan to create a cluster hiring funding pool to incentivize schools, colleges, and business units to hire diverse faculty and staff.

STRATEGY 1.5
Recognize faculty, staff, and students for Advancing EDI.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.5.1** Incorporate EDI performance goals into performance evaluations for faculty and staff.
- **Initiative 1.5.2** Recognize, support and award schools, colleges, business units, faculty, staff, and students for advancing EDI goals by expanding current recognition programs and developing additional university-wide EDI recognitions and awards.

STRATEGY 1.6
Build EDI culture by investing in formal and informal professional and organizational learning.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.6.1** Incorporate a significant EDI focus into onboarding new staff and faculty.
- **Initiative 1.6.2** Offer existing faculty and staff training opportunities in EDI-based instruction and learning.
- **Initiative 1.6.3** Develop necessary partnerships to build university capacity in support of EDI culture and practice.
Goal 2: Share Responsibility

CU Denver’s faculty, staff, and students share the responsibility for creating and sustaining a just, safe, and inclusive campus, workplace, and community. Sharing this responsibility lessens the burdens of those harmed by social inequality, promotes a spirit of solidarity, and engages the entire community to ensure transformative justice.

STRATEGY 2.1
Ensure sustained physical, technological and financial access.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.1.1** Leverage Auraria Higher Education Center to improve physical spaces and accessibility.
- **Initiative 2.1.2** Strategize and secure funding to support student access.
- **Initiative 2.1.3** Develop additional student work-study opportunities.
- **Initiative 2.1.4** Maintain current fixed cost of tuition.
- **Initiative 2.1.5** Restructure the linear tuition model.
- **Initiative 2.1.6** Secure captioning system and translation strategy to ensure language access for deaf and hearing impaired faculty, staff, students, and speakers of various languages.
- **Initiative 2.1.7** Provide technology resources for students demonstrating need or interest.
- **Initiative 2.1.8** Lead the coordination of CU Denver’s business and service units to ensure adaptive, responsive, and flexible practices to support ease of access for all students, faculty, and staff and ensure their success throughout their engagement at CU Denver.

STRATEGY 2.2
Courageously practice accountability to those we impact and acknowledge the role of various forms of harm, including displacement, invalidation, silencing, and retaliation.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.2.1** Develop and employ a CU Denver land acknowledgment statement developed by members of Indigenous and Native American communities.
- **Initiative 2.2.2** Develop and communicate clear pathways to resolve conflicts and disputes that negatively impact the successes of LGBTQ+ and BIPOC\(^1\) students, staff, and faculty, as well as those with physical disabilities, neuro-diversities, and mental illnesses.
- **Initiative 2.2.3** Broden collective understandings of harm caused by CU Denver and support development of knowledge and practice to remedy, and ultimately eliminate, harms caused.

\(^1\)BIPOC = Black, Indigenous and People of Color
Goal 3: Develop Systems

We develop, utilize, and continuously improve systems that value relationships, create community, and actively support and serve people of historically marginalized identities in order to reduce bias, create and sustain equity, and ensure broad and inclusive access to CU Denver.

STRATEGY 3.1
Diversify CU Denver leadership.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 3.1.1 Emphasize and value EDI scholarship and experience in administrative and leadership position postings.

• Initiative 3.1.2 Qualify the importance of experiences and wisdom of candidates from historically marginalized backgrounds in campus administrative and leadership position postings.

STRATEGY 3.2
Improve CU Denver safety practices.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 3.2.1 Collectively define physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual safety.

• Initiative 3.2.2 Partner with the Auraria Higher Education Center, Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the Auraria Campus Police Department to invest in the development of human-centered safety strategies, including mental health training for campus safety officers and mental health professionals accompanying the Auraria Campus Police Department.

• Initiative 3.2.3 Develop annual campus-wide wellness and recovery events to encourage community-building, reconciliation, and social integration within and across various CU Denver communities.

• Initiative 3.2.4 Broaden the CU Denver criteria for wrongdoing and injustice beyond those that are law-qualifying.
LEAD IN STUDENT SUCCESS

CO-CHAIRS

- **Jaimie Carrington** | Program Director for Undergraduate Recruitment, Retention and Student Success, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- **Barbara Seidl** | Associate Dean, Teacher Education and Undergraduate Experiences, School of Education and Human Development

TEAM MEMBERS

- **Anthony Fontana** | Executive Director, Integrated Enrollment Services
- **Erika Larson** | Executive Director, Student Success Initiatives
- **Gabriel Castaño** | Assistant Vice Chancellor, Enrollment Management
- **Alana Jones** | Interim Vice Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, Student Success and Associate Vice Chancellor, Office of International Affairs
- **James Speed** | Policy Coordinator, Academic Operations
- **Kelly Hupfeld** | Associate Dean, School of Public Affairs
- **Loryann Varela** | Director, Learning Resource Center
- **Sonia Valencia** | Director, TRIO Student Support Services and McNair
- **David Tracer** | Associate Dean, Student Success and Professor, Health and Behavioral Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- **Crystal Gasel** | Program Manager, Academic Technology Applications and Design, Office of Information Technology
- **Daniel Casillas** | President, Student Government Association
- **Margaret Wood** | Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Achievement
- **Emily Moroney** | Executive Director, Transfer Initiatives
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

At CU Denver, our commitment to student success goes beyond degree attainment — we partner with students to design pathways to their dreams. CU Denver faculty and staff work alongside students as mentors and coaches as they define their priorities and establish goals. They assist students in charting a customized course through diverse learning experiences to catalyze achievement toward those goals. Our commitment to success means meeting each student where they are with the support they need, when they need it. This begins in courses and learning experiences where strong faculty-student relationships and differentiated supports lay the foundation for students to take on rigorous coursework and achieve high levels of learning. It is further operationalized in a technology-enabled, integrative system of success supports that allows for on-demand and individualized attention for every student. Recognizing that students have uneven access to fundamental resources, CU Denver works alongside them, in and out of the classroom, to ensure access to the academic, financial, health, family, and professional resources that are the critical building blocks for success.

Diversity is our strength and generates our profound commitment to inclusivity and collective action. As CU Denver advances as a model equity-serving institution, we ensure the way to greater success for all students and, in particular, students who have borne the impact of structural inequality. We acknowledge the hard work and discomfort that dismantling oppression requires and will ensure that the entire Lynx community, faculty, staff, and students, is supported in developing the vision, tools, and courage to confront and transform inequity. In doing so, we write our institutional narrative as an equitable, diverse, and radically inclusive community; one where students of today and tomorrow can see their future and their success at CU Denver.

As Lynx, we draw upon our diversity, the vibrant power of the Colorado landscape, and the spirit of Colorado’s people. We honor that which makes us strong as individuals as we lean into the collective, purpose-driven energy that makes us stronger as a community. As CU Denver students take their place in the Lynx community, they leverage this identity as a source of strength, knowing they are respected and valued as a part of the Lynx family. As a community, we rejoice in our creativity and the discovery and application of knowledge to foster both one another’s growth and improvement of the larger human condition.
WHERE WE EXCEL

Our location in the city and our high-quality programs attract a student population rich in diversity. Current students and alumni communicate that they were attracted to CU Denver because we offer a CU education within their reach. Access is a priority for us and we create opportunities for prospective students through K12 partnerships and dual enrollment opportunities. We are a destination for transfer students as we maximize transfer credits and make higher education affordable.

Over the last decade, the university has taken important steps to establish the necessary systems and resources to support our students’ success. This has included centralizing and coordinating frontline student services to increase clarity and ease of access. Lynx Central operates as a hub of services and information for students and Lynx Connect is a one-stop-shop that connects students to the many opportunities available to enrich their learning journey. Additionally, transition supports like new student orientations and transfer student infrastructures have both been significantly redesigned to provide a more seamless, supported entry to CU Denver.

CU Denver has also made important progress in designing supports that are proactive and responsive to student needs. Navigate brings together information around student progress in a central location to better track academic performance and address needs, and the early action system, which has seen a steady increase in use, anchors a process that connects students with important and timely support and resources. University-wide learning resources offered through the Learning Resource Center and school/college embedded support systems create an expanding network of support, allowing students multiple points of access. From a curricular perspective, a sustained effort over the last seven years has promoted the High Impact Practices (HIPS) that have a measurable impact on student success. HIPS are now integrated into coursework and include a robust set of first-year experiences. Finally, a number of ongoing success supports like the Center for Identity and Inclusion, Trio, and Pre-College programs offer important success supports for our diverse and first-generation student population.

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

While CU Denver has made important progress toward supporting student success, our retention and graduation rates demonstrate that we have a substantial way to go if we are to ensure our students’ goals are fully realized. Structural inequality in our systems, processes, and policies, including lack of diversity in faculty, staff, and leadership roles, presents barriers for our diverse students, and uneven access to fundamental success resources jeopardizes the ability for many to continue to degree completion. While progress has been made in coordinating services and extending resources, students continue to communicate difficulty in navigating systems and finding help when needed. Overall, we are challenged to scale personalized holistic attention that meets each student where they are with the support they need, when they need it. In part, this challenge is grounded in insufficient resources in student-facing roles and the need to further integrate infrastructure and systems.

From a curricular standpoint, many students communicate excellent experiences in courses and strong relationships with instructors and faculty, but this experience is uneven across students. Ensuring that faculty and instructors have the resources and tools needed to support their students’ diverse needs as they engage with rigorous coursework to achieve high levels of learning is a critical foundation for student success. Finally, while we have made progress in creating a sense of belonging at CU Denver, this effort is never fully complete. We are a young institution and remain engaged in the process of creating community and developing a strong Lynx culture and identity.
Goal 1: Harness The Power Of An Equity-Serving Institution To Drive Student Success

Established as elite institutions, universities have long wrestled with the racist and classist beliefs, processes, and policies that are built in by design. An equitable and just society requires that institutions confront this history and dismantle structural inequality, white supremacy, racism, classism, and other forms of oppression to ensure that all people are able to access and benefit from the resources and experiences that support success.

As CU Denver takes up the responsibility of being recognized as an HSI and AANAPISI institution, we will advance as a model equity-serving institution, ensuring the way to greater success for all students, in particular students who have borne the impact of structural inequality.

CU Denver will elevate the visibility of our equity work and prioritize our commitment to it by formalizing structures that promote critical dialogue, ensure accountability, and allocate substantial resources to the effort. We will acknowledge the hard work and discomfort that dismantling oppression requires and ensure that the entire Lynx community, faculty, staff, and students, are supported in developing the vision, tools, and courage to confront and transform inequity. In doing so, we will become a microcosm of the larger world we are constructing together and write our institutional narrative as an equitable, diverse, and inclusive community so that students of today and tomorrow see their future and their success at CU Denver.

Success toward this goal will be measured by: retention and graduation rates for all student groups at 90% or above; percentage of BIPOC and first-generation students assuming leadership roles in diverse career fields; interactions and a supportive environment for all student groups as measured by disaggregated NSSE data; and an annual equity climate survey that indicates high levels of satisfaction and support from student, staff, and faculty.
Goal 1: Harness The Power Of An Equity-Serving Institution To Drive Student Success

STRATEGY 1.1
Equity by design.

CU Denver will identify and dismantle structural inequalities and design equitable infrastructures, systems, policies, and practices. This work will take place at every level of the university, from central structures to schools/colleges and from curriculum to language use.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.1.1** Campus-Wide Equity Curriculum Review.
  Create a cross-college/school standing committee charged with helping faculty identify and transform unconscious and dysconscious, oppressive and biased content and pedagogies in order to build inclusive curriculum.

- **Initiative 1.1.2** Campus-Wide Policy And Procedures Review Through An Equity Lens.
  Review all current policies, procedures, and practices to ensure equity. Train and develop faculty and staff to construct equitable policies, procedures, and practices moving forward.

- **Initiative 1.1.3** School/College Culture, Policy, And Procedure Review.
  Review school/college culture, policies, procedures, and practices to ensure equity and inclusion in each unit and to ensure that all are responsible for creating a just and inclusive campus.

- **Initiative 1.1.4** Increase Diversity In Faculty And Staff.
  Develop hiring practices and processes that ensure a more diverse faculty and staff. Identify and remove barriers to leadership positions for diverse faculty and staff.

- **Initiative 1.1.5** Inclusive Physical Spaces.
  Review physical spaces on campus to make sure they are welcoming and inclusive of the needs of our diverse community, including but not limited to making facilities accessible to those in wheelchairs and with mobility needs, and creating lactation rooms, gender-neutral bathrooms, spaces for students who are parents, inclusive and welcoming environmental print and artifacts, and access to study rooms and technology.
Goal 1: Harness The Power Of An Equity-Serving Institution To Drive Student Success

STRATEGY 1.2
Support Every Step Of The Way.

The diversity of CU Denver's students is our greatest strength. Their pathways to us are equally diverse and their access to opportunities and resources is uneven. CU Denver expands access and opportunity to college-going success across the full arc of the Lynx journey to ensure that BIPOC, first-generation students, and all students who have borne the impact of structural inequality have what they need for success.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.2.1 Intentional Access Pathways.**
  Increase opportunities and access for historically underserved students across multiple access points including P-12 early college settings, concurrent enrollment, well-designed transfer processes, re-entry pathways for students who stop-out, and post-traditional adult learner pathways.

- **Initiative 1.2.2 Opportunities and Barriers Audit.**
  Audit the opportunities and barriers that students experience in accessing the full range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities on campus to ensure that all students have access. This includes understanding the opportunities and barriers that exist around early experiences, access to health and mental health services, financial resources, technology, study abroad, research, paid internships, academic support services, services beyond normal working hours, on-campus living experiences, physical access to spaces, transportation, orientations programming, events, student organizations, etc.

- **Initiative 1.2.3 Extend Opportunities To Create The CU Denver Promise.**
  Remove the barriers identified in the audit to create the CU Denver Promise — an opportunity ecosystem that supports thriving, accomplishment, and success for all students, including those who attend virtually.
Goal 2: Partner With Students To Design And Pursue Customized Paths To Their Success

Today’s political, educational and workforce environment is rapidly reshaping the context of higher education and the role it will play in the future. Students of today will hold many jobs across multiple careers and the rich diversity in CU Denver’s student body means that students enter the university with different goals. Some are exploring possibilities for their future and seeking experiences that allow them to discover their dreams. Others are adding degrees to already existing careers and looking for experiences that will help them extend their professional networks, while still others are changing careers and looking to gain entry-level experiences in a new field. As powerful social movements gain momentum, many students are seeking lives of meaning and civic engagement, eager to make an impact on the world and motivated to give back to their communities.

CU Denver recognizes the diverse goals and dreams that our students hold. We don’t just help them pursue a degree, we partner with them to design their lives and their futures. CU Denver faculty and staff work alongside students as mentors and coaches, assisting them as they examine and define their values and priorities and explore possibilities for their future. We partner with them to establish their goals and chart a customized course through diverse learning experiences that catalyze achievement toward those goals. Students pursue varied academic and professional experiences, establish strong social and professional networks, and build future-forward skills. In partnering with students to design their lives, we help them launch their dreams and pursue lives of personal, professional, and social meaning.

Success toward this goal will be measured in a number of ways: retention and graduation rates for all students at 90% or above; high-quality interactions and a supportive environment for all students as measured by NSSE data; high numbers of students engaging in HIPs as measured by NSSE data; and students’ electronic Impact Portfolios and customized plans showing high levels of engagement in multiple and diverse experiences.
Goal 2: Partner With Students To Design And Pursue Customized Paths To Their Success

STRATEGY 2.1
Integrate Design Your Life Principles across student success services and academic coursework at the university.

CU Denver integrates life design principles in structures, roles, and processes across student services and coursework as an overarching, organizing construct. Staff and faculty use specifically designed tools in well-defined processes as they partner with students to examine and identify their values and priorities, explore possibilities for their future, establish goals, and create plans that catalyze achievement toward those goals.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 2.1.1 Design Your Life Coaching System, Processes And Tools.
  Create tools and processes in a life design coaching system that support students in partnering with faculty and staff to explore their values and priorities and design and pursue their goals in supported reflective iterative cycles, and that can support the paradigm shift by providing an integrated foundation for life design for every student.

- Initiative 2.1.2 Capacity Development Across People And Contexts.
  Build capacity in staff, faculty, and student and alumni mentors to operate in coaching roles as they partner with students to design experiences and pursue goals. Create stand-alone Design Your Life courses and integrate experiences to work with life design principles across existing courses.

STRATEGY 2.2
Create a portfolio of exciting learning experiences that afford boundless possibilities for students in designing and pursuing their goals.

CU Denver offers students the ingredients they need to explore and achieve their goals and build lives of meaning and success far into the future. Students encounter opportunities to pursue varied academic and professional experiences, establish strong social and professional networks, and build future-forward skills. These experiences build a foundation that allows students to pursue their interests and passions and grow and develop in leadership and service as they build lives of meaning and engagement in a rapidly changing local, national and global context.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 2.2.1 Defined Experience Clusters.
  Identify, grow, organize and name different clusters of experiences, including apprenticeships, paid internships, study abroad, interest- and mission-driven research, leadership, activism, and service, to ensure visibility and access for students and coaches as they design customized learning pathways.
Goal 2: Partner With Students To Design And Pursue Customized Paths To Their Success

- **Initiative 2.2.2** Paid Experiential Internships.
  Provide every undergraduate student the opportunity for paid experiential placement. These experiences are supervised, relevant, compensated work experiences that are connected to and in some cases integrated into their academic program.

- **Initiative 2.2.3** Recognitions For Growth And Accomplishments.
  Credential students’ experiences to celebrate quick wins along the way and toward goals, such as completion of a first-year course, completion of the core curriculum, skill attainment, certification as a peer mentor, completion of an academic certificate or badge, or the development of Impact Portfolios. Locate these opportunities in courses and co-curricular experiences.
Goal 3: Our Diversity Lynx Us Together

Diversity is our strength and generates our profound commitment to inclusivity and collective action. As Lynx, we draw upon our diversity, the vibrant power of the Colorado landscape, and the spirit of Colorado’s people. We honor that which makes us strong as individuals as we lean into the collective, purpose-driven energy that makes us stronger as a community.

Our diverse students, staff, and faculty hold many different dreams, goals, purposes, passions, interests, and experiences. CU Denver leverages this diversity to create and elevate many “communities of belonging,” creating an ecosystem that fosters connections and relationships and that operates as a foundation for student success. We ensure that all students find a place at CU Denver where they can learn, grow, and thrive, and where individual and cultural identities are sustained and valued.

We build on our diversity and the trailblazing, innovative spirit of our young institution to co-construct and distinguish with our students, staff, and faculty what it means to be a Lynx. As our students take their place in the Lynx community, they leverage this identity as a source of strength, knowing they are respected and valued as a part of the Lynx family. We rejoice in the creativity of our community and in the discovery and application of knowledge to foster both one another’s growth and to improve the larger human condition. Together, we are engaged in building a network of past, present and future students, staff and faculty that celebrates our diversity and individuality, while sharing our common identity that “Lynx” us together.

Success toward this goal will be measured by: high-quality interactions and a supportive environment for all students as measured by NSSE data; annual equity climate surveys that indicate high levels of satisfaction, sense of belonging, and connection to Lynx identity; and annual alumni surveys that indicate high level of satisfaction, sense of belonging, and connection to Lynx identity.
Goal 3: Our Diversity Lynx Us Together

STRATEGY 3.1
Elevate and make accessible the many ways to connect and belong at CU Denver.

CU Denver creates an inclusive community where our students, on campus and online, easily find communities that support their passions, interests, and growth. Students, staff and faculty are engaged in communities that are mission-driven and inspired by diverse purposes, interest-based communities framed around passions and hobbies, subject-driven and activity-based communities, mentoring and leadership spaces, culture, language, and identity-based communities, and many others.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 3.1.1 Map And Build Diverse Communities Of Belonging.
  Create an iterative process for auditing existing spaces of community and canvassing students to identify areas for further development. Identify necessary infrastructure and resources needed to support our many communities of belonging.

• Initiative 3.1.2 Build Visibility To Create A Culture Of Engagement.
  Create opportunities for these communities to promote and share their purpose, foci, and collective efforts through events, environmental print and artifacts, and purposeful celebrations.

• Initiative 3.1.3 Leverage Technology To Develop Community.
  Identify technology tools and methods that develop and sustain on-campus and online communities.

STRATEGY 3.2
Co-Construct, brand, and celebrate a strong Lynx culture and identity.

CU Denver builds on the trailblazing, innovative spirit of our young institution to co-construct and distinguish what it means to be a Lynx with our students, staff and faculty. As our students take their place in the Lynx community, they leverage this identity as a source of strength, knowing they are respected and valued as a part of the Lynx family culture, language, and identity-based communities, and many others.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 3.2.1 The Lynx Identity.
  Organize a campus campaign to identify the strengths and characteristics of the Lynx culture and identity with our students, staff and faculty.

• Initiative 3.2.2 The Lynx Tradition.
  Build programming, traditions, and rituals and celebrate achievements to form deep connections to CU Denver and create a Lynx culture and identity.

• Initiative 3.2.3 Increase Visibility And Brand Our Identity.
  Work with University Communications to brand and distinguish the Lynx identity.
Goal 3: Our Diversity Lynx Us Together

STRATEGY 3.3
Build alumni community across the life cycle.

Our alumni are a part of the Lynx family and we partner together across the arc of their careers and lives in a mutuallybeneficial relationship. We value the strong connections we have with them and recognize the way in which we enrich one another’s lives in a cycle of belonging, giving, and receiving.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.3.1** Robust Alumni System.
  
  Create a robust alumni system with coordinated centralized efforts and school/college targeted efforts that allow alumni to extend relationships with the people who supported their success as students. Create multiple traditions and opportunities for alumni to return to campus as a Lynx (i.e. homecoming, alum recognitions).

- **Initiative 3.3.2** Alumni Giving Back.
  
  Extend ways alumni can be involved in campus activities and connect them with current students in mentoring roles.

- **Initiative 3.3.3** Ongoing Value-Add Alumni Relations.
  
  Provide incentives for alumni to engage with us across the arc of their professional lives. Create multiple credentialing opportunities through micro-credentials, certificates, and relevant degree pathways to make CU Denver their first and last choice for building their personal and professional lives.

At CU Denver, student success is everyone’s responsibility. Our student success culture guarantees that every student receives the support needed, at the time needed. This culture is synergized through a collaborative network of faculty, student success professionals, and peers who provide services and resources that wrap around the whole student. It is grounded in the classroom where strong faculty-student relationships, an asset-based approach, and differentiated supports lay the foundation for students to take on rigorous coursework and achieve high levels of learning. It is further operationalized in a technology-enabled, integrative system of success supports that allow for on-demand and individualized attention for every student.

Powered by an agile, data-informed infrastructure, this system enables us to anticipate students’ academic and personal needs and provide seamless and timely services and resources to carry them forward on their learning journey. Our Lynx guarantee means that all students have access to an affordable education and fundamental resources so that no student leaves the university because of unmet need.

Success toward this goal will be measured by: retention and graduation rates for all student groups at 90% or above; high-quality interactions and a supportive environment for all student groups as measured by NSSE data; annual student service and resource surveys indicating students are receiving needed fundamental resources; mobile app downloads and usage statistics demonstrating that students are using and benefiting from integrated service/resource; integrated data analysis from multiple systems that identifies success and challenges in the student support system (i.e. Navigate, MyLynx, NSSE, school, college and business units).

STRATEGY 4.1
Build a culture of student success.

CU Denver exemplifies a culture of student success. This culture begins in the classroom with strong faculty-student relationships and a well-scaffolded curriculum that provides differentiated opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and demonstrate competency. Classroom embedded systems connect students to a web of coordinated learning resources, delivered in a high touch, relational approach that makes it easy for students to seek and receive support for academic success.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 4.1.1 Faculty Success Tools.**
  Identify and build the resources faculty need in order to develop strong relationships with students and engage asset-based, scaffolded and differentiated pedagogical approaches.

- **Initiative 4.1.2 Student Success Teams For Every Student.**
  Create student success teams that include faculty and student success professionals in a high touch, relational approach to student success.

- **Initiative 4.1.3 Targeted Curricular And Co-Curricular Learning Supports.**
  Extend and formalize proven success practices like High Impact Practices, evidence-based transfer practices, and supports for international students and non-traditional adult learners, with special attention to first- and second-year students.

STRATEGY 4.2
Implement an integrated system that places services and resources at students’ fingertips.

Systems at CU Denver are designed for ease of access and provide high touch, low effort access to services and resources. Our integrated proactive system anticipates students’ needs, provides targeted, relational support, and reduces the number of people and offices students must interact with to access services and resources.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 4.2.1 High Touch, Low Effort Access To Services And Resources.**
  Assess the student experience in navigating business systems and accessing resources and create an integrated and proactive system that anticipates students’ needs, provides high touch, relational support, and reduces the number of people students interact with in the process.

- **Initiative 4.2.2 Agile Systems Built On Student Needs.**
  Generate actionable data to track students’ progress and needs to continually enhance coherence, efficiency, ease of use, and productiveness of our student success systems to CU Denver and create a Lynx culture and identity.

- **Initiative 4.2.3 One-Stop App.**
  Adopt a student-facing, intelligent application that integrates with other university systems and allows students to easily navigate business operations and access resources in a single place.

STRATEGY 4.3
Provide holistic support and resources.

We recognize the rich and complex lives of our students and the uneven access to fundamental success resources across our student community. We partner with them to ensure that they have the resources needed to pursue their goals.

INITIATIVES

• **Initiative 4.3.1 Affordable Education.**
  
  Develop a suite of strategies that ensures all students can finance their education and that no student leaves the university due to financial need barriers. This includes individualized financial coaching to develop financial plans, recruitment and retention scholarships, emergency short-term student loans, and in-state tuition rates for targeted communities.

• **Initiative 4.3.2 Fundamental Success Resources.**
  
  Identify the needs of our students and provide multiple ways to provide resources scaled to income, including health and well-being resources, access to food and housing, transportation, health insurance and child-care.
Interactions

We anticipate several themes will have important, critical overlap and connection with the Lead in Student Success theme.

Empowered By Our Inclusive Excellence – Success for all students, and particularly students who have borne the impact of oppression, hinges on equitable access to opportunities, experiences, resources and services. Identifying and dismantling structural inequality to eliminate barriers is a goal within our Lead in Student Success work. We identify multiple goals, strategies and initiatives that will move us in the direction of an equity-serving institution. It is likely and desirable that similar goals and strategies will appear in the Empowered by Our Inclusive Excellence Vision team report.

Educate For The Future – As a learning organization, student success is a whole university effort. How the learning endeavor is organized and supported in courses, degree programs, and other credentialing experiences is critical to student success. We anticipate important overlap with the goals of the Educate for the Future team around increased flexibility, customization, and student supports.

Put Our People At The Center – The quality of the student experience is directly tied to the quality of life of the people who teach and support them. Ensuring that our staff and faculty have the resources they need to support students and that they experience high levels of satisfaction and efficacy in their roles is an important step to ensuring our students’ success.
THEME

EDUCATE FOR THE FUTURE

CO-CHAIRS

- Rebecca Kantor | Dean, School of Education and Human Development (in memoriam)
- Michael “Bodhi” Rogers | Professor and Chair, Physics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

TEAM MEMBERS

- Richard Allen | Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum and Professor, Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Jorge Chavez | Associate Professor, School of Education and Human Development
- Catherine Ebert-Gray | Director of Global Education, Office of International Affairs
- Matthew Gines | Director, Design Fabrication Laboratory, College of Architecture and Planning
- Mark Golkowski | Associate Dean, Education and Student Success and Professor, Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering, Design and Computing
- Lindsey Hamilton | Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Associate Professor, Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Nicole Harper | Master of Public Administration Candidate, School of Public Affairs
- Nimol Hen | Executive Director, Academic Advising
- Marlinda Hines | Recruitment & Outreach Manager, School of Education and Human Development
- Cynthya Ippoliti | University Librarian and Director, Auraria Library
- Lexie King | Program Assistant, Center for Faculty Development & Advancement
- Sean McGowan | Associate Professor, Music and Entertainment Studies, College of Arts and Media
- Sean Michael Morris | Director, Digital Pedagogy Laboratory and Senior Instructor, School of Education and Human Development
- Antoinette Sandoval | Graduate Advisor and Coordinator, Diversity and Inclusion, School of Public Affairs
- Inge Wefes | Senior Associate Dean, Graduate School

Facilitation Team:

- Kate Goodman | Associate Director and Assistant Professor, InWorks
- Afu Vue | Bachelor’s Candidate, Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Design and Computing
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

Our vision for educating the future is grounded in our understanding of the many ways our students are diverse. Some are looking for a room in the new residence hall to have a campus experience, some are older students with families of their own who will access our campus but continue to live at home, and many are first-gen undergraduates. We are richly diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability. Some of our students are veterans and some are already in their careers and looking for continued professional learning. Who are we designing a CU Denver 2030 campus for? The answer must and can only be: all of these students.

A second driver for our thinking is our collective commitment to success and degree attainment as a social justice commitment to our students. Here you will see our integration of the academic and student success parts of the CU Denver experience. In 2030, we envision our campus as a place where students participate in shaping their pathway to earning a degree or earning credentials and certificates following their passions and the needs dictated by their lives. The overall theme of our proposal is to be known for our flexibility, willingness to cut cost burden by accepting as many credits as possible on the way in, and diversity of ways to get to the same degree or certificate learning outcomes. With as much variability as we have among our students, we believe this flexibility will lead to a much-increased success and degree attainment rate.

Lastly, our proposal includes ideas that have gained strength nationally: building social and professional networks with our students that last a career and lifetime, educating the whole student including their mental wellness, and offering courses that are high quality pedagogy and innovative hybrid designs.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

While CU Denver has elements of our vision, we need to bring these elements together in thoughtful, intentional, and meaningful ways. For example, we already accept many of the credits we are talking about, but they are not messaged as a distinctive part of who we are.

We already have an experiential learning office, but we need to ask each and every college to partner with them to reach each and every student. All means all. Right now, the students who can take advantage of opportunity do, and those who don’t, get left behind.

Our reorganization lines up well for these goals—A Provost who will have both the academic program and student success as part of their purview. A new outward facing partnership set of goals that will feed the idea of the network as well as help us keep an ear on what our stakeholders see as those critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Our digital pedagogy progress has been strong these past few years and COVID certainly accelerated it. We have a new digital strategist coming in; we propose we maintain and innovate for the future the hybridity we now have and describe it as a way to be flexible for our students. We believe we also need to figure out how to offer campus life with hybridity as well!

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

We need to create a faculty and staff culture, an infrastructure, and institutional policies that support the idea of flexibility. For some, this orientation comes easily; for others, it feels very challenging to be flexible when the culture and structure has been one of checking boxes. Our collective experience with the service centers is that “no” comes more easily than “yes.”

Faculty culture has to shift too. For some, giving credit as students arrive, means “they will take fewer courses with me.” Degree attainment has to be the priority goal. Reducing cost burden is a top priority. Faculty are also concerned with being supported to develop their courses with high quality pedagogy and hybridity. We need to support Michael Lightener (CU Denver President for Academic Affairs) who is working on changing the intellectual property rules for courses and curriculum development; if we invest heavily in courses, only to lose them when faculty move on, that would be an issue. Shared intellectual property makes good sense and is the norm around the country.
Goal 1: LynxPartners!

We partner with our diverse students to shape learning pathways to certificates and degrees that reflect their lives and passions and provide maximum access, flexibility, equity, and inclusion while also reducing cost burden.

Our undergraduate and graduate students are diverse in so many ways: some arrive after high school and live in the residential halls; some are older, returning students with jobs and families and live in their own homes; many are first-gen; many are bilingual in Spanish; some arrive with an AA/AS or credits toward a degree; some are international. We also have students looking to earn credentials or certificates to achieve their career aspirations. Who are we designing the CU Denver 2030 campus for? The answer can only be all of them!

To meet all students and offer them pathways to success, CU Denver's 2030 academic and co-curricular experience is characterized by flexibility, choice, and student-centered policies that support success, reduce student cost burden, and invite students to partner and have voice in their educational experience with support from faculty and advisors. There are many paths to all of our CU certificates and degrees. The degree outcomes are defined by the faculty—this is not the individually structured degree. This is offering students different ways to build a pathway to get to their certificates, degrees, or anything in-between.

CU Denver students, whether seeking their first degree right out of high school, or more mature, first-gen undergraduates returning to finish their bachelor's degree, students seeking graduate degrees, or professionals seeking further learning, are invited to have a role in shaping their own pathways to credentials, certificates, and degrees with access to a variety of traditional and new learning experiences that include learning modules, stackable credentials, and flexible options alongside existing semester-based schedules. Revised policies for assessing and counting credit from many prior learning sources (e.g., dual enrollment, AP, credit for work experience, credit for prior learning, credit from prior institutions) will reduce cost and facilitate success for students on their learning pathways. Retention and graduation are a good business model even if we allow more credit to come in on the front end.
Goal 1: LynxPartners!

STRATEGY 1.1

Create a campus infrastructure and culture that supports sustainable flexibility across academic units and service centers with academic units defining the appropriate (per financial aid rules) number of credits as possible on the front-end as students arrive. The “Welcome Center” (as opposed to “Transfer Center”) would be responsible for helping students new to college, as well as those joining us with some college experience, bring in as much credit as possible to reduce their cost burden. “Gatekeeping” courses and required prerequisite courses could continue to be one option for demonstrating necessary skills for success in a major, with competency assessment another option. An ecosystem of support that builds on students’ strengths includes a Summer Bridge Program for incoming students that provides them with a Coach/Navigator who helps them find resources, manage relationships, and navigate the system. Assess for math and writing upon arrival to provide appropriate support.

INITIATIVES

1.1.1 Strengthen the ecosystem of support (including learning communities, coaches, mentors, and tutors) for students to learn to manage choices, be comfortable having and using their voices. These are not “natural skills” for any student and must be taught and learned.

1.1.2 Revise policies for assessing and counting credit from many prior learning sources (e.g., dual enrollment, AP, credit for work experience, credit for prior learning, credit from prior institutions) which will reduce student cost burden and facilitate success for students on their learning pathways. Identify all sources of potential credit for prior learning, work experience, and co-curricular learning. Include credit for work experience, credit by assessment, relevant military training; units and their programs will figure out what works for them and will be mindful of financial aid restrictions.

1.1.3 Define micro-certificates, micro-credentials, and certificates that can be earned as standalone achievements or stacked towards degree attainment.

1.1.4 Work with CU system to create a unique CU Denver transcript (right now a common transcript exists across campuses). For example, competency-based transcripts along with course-based transcripts allow determining course prerequisite completion by assessing competencies or by completing identified prerequisite courses.

1.1.5 Reimagine the language, and therefore the culture and identities we create on our campus (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Fifth-year Senior, Non-Degree Seeking student, Non-Traditional Student, Transfer Student, undeclared major, probation, etc.) to be more assets oriented and maintain motivation.

1.1.6 Consider creating “Markers of Progress” toward a degree to incorporate certificates of smaller pieces of accomplishment (e.g., certificate of completion of general education requirements) to maintain motivation. Award an AA/AS on the way to a BA/BS. Students who step out with a sense of accomplishment are more likely to return. Create “return and finish” programs.

1.1.7 Invest in advising to support students on flexible learning paths. Advisors who aren’t checking boxes need coaching skills to help students develop a vision for their university experience/career life design and lead them/scaffold them in making choices. Ensure a sustainable advising ecosystem in which student-to-advisor ratios are balanced and align with professional recommendations. Develop procedural and budgetary processes for growing advising staff along with growth in the student population.

1.1.8 Improve systems for Advisors to manage various degree pathways.
Goal 2: LynxFlex Courses!

At CU Denver, we offer courses that use a variety of high-quality pedagogies and modalities with student choice and flexibility the hallmark to meet the varying needs of our diverse students’ lives.

STRATEGY 2.1

Incentivize and reward faculty for using a variety of high-quality pedagogies and modalities in their teaching with choice and flexibility the hallmark. Use campus assets like Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, ThinqStudio, the Digital Pedagogy Lab, and the Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship committee of the Faculty Assembly to define and create the bars for high quality. Encourage Primary Units to build incentives and rewards into annual review, merit, reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Require flexible, high quality, and inclusive pedagogical practices that are culturally sustaining and focused on DEI goals.

INITIATIVES

2.1.1 Represent and model whole student development by providing for whole person development among faculty, staff, and administrators through work-life policies.

2.1.2 Build capacity of all faculty and staff who interact with students to have time to interact and teach in ways that support whole student development.

2.1.3 Reimagine career services as a place that creates a lifelong learning relationship with students not just an exit strategy. Intentionally work to reach all students, not just those who have the social capital resources to access the services.

2.1.4 As much as possible, take down the walls between D1, D2, and D3 - a course, a certificate, and a program are equally CU quality. Remove barriers for students, faculty, and leaders to expand their enterprises.

2.1.5 Expand new timescapes to add to the 15-week semester like the 8-week-long classes, low-residency options, “flipped” classes that meet on weekends, etc. Consider half-credit and one-credit courses that “stack” to the equivalence of a three-credit course.

2.1.6 Make the culture shift at the administrative and IT level: ensuring that systems (registrar, billing, IT) are adjusted to accommodate flexible enrollments, for example, and that technology purchases are in alignment with diversity and inclusion objectives.

2.1.7 Award grants/scholarships to faculty for innovative work in DEI pedagogy.

2.1.8 Provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff around anti-racism/classism/homophobia/etc. as well as teaching in the key of DEI. This training should include our lecturer community.

2.1.9 Help students understand how to navigate work cultures by enhancing work with the career center through course presentations, seminars, workshops and through the development of discipline-specific professional development seminars.
Goal 3: LynxedIn!

Promise every student experiential learning, beginning with a reimagined general education core that uses interdisciplinarity to learn about critical social problems. This reimagined core would exist as an option alongside GT Pathways and existing categorically organized general education curriculum. Experiential learning continues with opportunities in their professional fields as part of their academic program, where they will develop and enhance skills identified by industry and non-profit leaders as critical to success in the workplace. Design ways to incorporate workplace learning into the curriculum for students already working in their field. Again, use intentionality to reach out to every student.

CU Denver 2030 prepares students with skills (e.g., collaboration, problem solving, writing, resilience, digital skills, critical thinking) deemed critical to success in the workplace and in life. These skills are cultivated, assessed, and documented through certificates in both the formal academic and co-curricular contexts of campus. CU Denver 2030 recognizes both the power of the formal academic curriculum as well as the wider co-curricular life on campus as learning grounds for skills. Industry leaders and employers are asking us to attend to these skills as part of career readiness.

CU Denver 2030 promises every student experiential learning to achieve their professional aspirations—on campus and with our partners—through internships, apprenticeships, practica, and student employment. These experiences are critical for readiness for work in those fields and for some students offer a better context for learning than the classroom. We work with each student to figure out what works with their particular situation. For students who are already professionals, we incorporate their workplace learning into their curriculum.

We propose to reimagine the general education core curriculum to offer an option to study significant social problems through interdisciplinary lenses. Theme-based options with a focus on significant social problems (quality of schools as a systemic racism issue, immigration, voter suppression, climate change, etc.) will align general education and disciplinary competencies. Competency mapping will see where competencies are addressed so every course can touch some of them. All of our programs should address the need for knowledge, skills, and dispositions, but does not necessarily mean every course will address each one. In reimagining the general education core as an option, we need to support the Colorado GT Pathways program and students who would be better served with the current categorical organization of the general education. Again, flexibility and choice are the watchwords.

Recent events (Boulder, violence against Asian Americans, the continual dissemination of vitriol and misinformation) weigh heavily upon all our minds. The Chancellor has asked us to think boldly, and we believe “health and wellbeing” and “citizenship” are vitally important initiatives as we move forward as a community. The health and wellness of students, staff, and faculty, as well as the concepts of citizenship and community are at the core of Educate for the Future, and could yield truly innovative, holistic, and signature initiatives.
Goal 3: LynxedIn!

STRATEGY 3.1

Ensure that the reimagined general education core is designed intentionally to connect with all of the varied programs, majors, and perspectives at CU Denver and that all of the varied programs, majors, and perspectives at CU Denver see how they can connect to the general education core.

INITIATIVES

3.1.1 Help students see the connections between the skills they are learning alongside the content they are learning and the dispositions they are building.

3.1.2 Think critically and creatively about how all lived experiences can be integrated and taught relative to different disciplines.

3.1.3 Invest in faculty groups interested in coordinating theme-based clusters that intentionally welcome all of the varied programs, majors, and perspectives at CU Denver to connect with the general education core theme-based clusters.

3.1.4 Expand engagement with the Salazar Wellness Center (e.g., ongoing workshops on mental wellness, conflict resolution, and intervention for some sort of credit.

3.1.5 Design "Modules" for citizenship/values/community/mental wellness.

3.1.6 These might include meditation for mental wellness, fatigue, balancing work/life/studies. These days could feature guest lectures, art, musical performances, and are a great opportunity to include DEI programming. This could also include various partnerships with the Anschutz campus.

3.1.7 Another concept to consider is ‘safety’. This is especially relevant when paired with DEI concepts such as social justice and inclusivity. Students, faculty, and staff should be able to feel truly safe in a shared community experience.

3.1.8 Teach courses on misinformation and how to discern truth and facts from the constant barrage of falsity and speculation.

3.1.9 Reimagine experiential learning as a critical part of the student experience where we partner with students to identify opportunities that enhance their career aspirations while breaking down boundaries in access to opportunities.

3.1.10 Create systems (e.g., e-portfolios, Domain of One’s Own) for identifying, assessing tracking, documenting, sharing growth of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for every student.

3.1.11 Re-examine GPA requirements that are barriers for various co-curricular experiences.

3.1.12 Consider inter-disciplinary linked courses with shared service components.

3.1.13 Ask Schools and Colleges to amplify their research and creative activity opportunities for undergraduates.

3.1.14 Award faculty workload credit for courses such as directed research, practica, and independent studies for undergraduates.
Goal 3: LynxedIn!

STRATEGY 3.2

All means all. Create access for all students and not only for students with personal, time, or financial resources to access opportunities.

INITIATIVES

3.2.1 Offer scholarships for students who want to study abroad or do internships or service experiences.

3.2.2 Design a system that includes support for students who are working full time.

3.2.3 Design a system that includes support for students who have families.

3.2.4 Create experiential learning opportunities that can be experienced in different sized packages (instead of a summer long research experience or service experience, can the same outcome be achieved with a few hours per week over many semesters?).
Goal 4: LynxNet!

Intentionally build culturally sustaining, social and professional learning Networks with students, faculty, alumni, staff, industry partners, and non-profit partners that amplify our inclusive, highly diverse campus and invite the alum and partners in the network to see CU Denver as a learning home for their continued learning. Engage with partners in ways that are meaningful to them and give voice to their issues.

We will intentionally partner with every student at CU Denver 2030 to develop a social, learning, and professional network for each student, which will consist of their fellow students, alumni, staff, industry partners, and non-profit partners. Networks of mentors for lifelong learning and career support are critical to personal and professional success. For the alumni and stakeholders in the network the LynxFlex Ecosystem is seen as a learning home for them and all CU students across their careers and lifespan. Campus life is designed to be hybrid so that all students have access to it. Students develop social and professional learning networks that support their academic success and sustain their lives and careers through all of the various options that factor into the reimagined general education core and exist within academic certification and degree programs, and/or campus/co-curricular life experiences.

STRATEGY 4.1

Develop the network through partnerships with high schools, two-year institutions, alumni, community, and business/non-profit leaders. Create services, programming, events, and networking opportunities that will motivate current and future alumni to engage with the University long after they graduate and across their careers and lives. Expand initiatives like the Mentor Collective and other efforts related to mentoring and peer support.

INITIATIVES

4.1.1 Shift the career center paradigm from “career planning” to “life design.” Coach students to create a vision for their lives with steps into their first career or next steps in their current career.

4.1.2 Promote sustainable faculty-student connections that persist post-graduation.

4.1.3 Promote CU resources available for alumni. Create an “Alumni concierge” role.

4.1.4 Expand formal continuing education and its relationship to the D1 program.

4.1.5 Create Alumni interactions infused throughout the curriculum.

4.1.6 Expand outreach to local High Schools and Community Colleges – create a pathway into the University – “LynxPathway”?

4.1.7 Support transition to work and promote continuing connection to the university.

4.1.8 Enhance curriculum for depth of career readiness preparation across student lifecycle.

4.1.9 Create more partnerships with companies, non-profit organizations, governments, and institutions.

4.1.10 Have industry-based/sponsored class projects wherever possible.

4.1.11 Think critically about how all diverse lived-experiences can be integrated and taught inside courses relating to different disciplines and across disciplines.

4.1.12 Incentivize faculty, staff, and student work on producing this knowledge.
BETTER THE WORLD THROUGH RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORK

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What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

CU Denver is a bustling hub of community conversation, idea exchange, multi-directional support, and asset-based inquiry—all focused on creating better lives and a healthier planet. Together, our diverse faculty, staff, and students explore research and creative work that is deeply meaningful to our partnered communities.

Through robust faculty mentorship, embedded sharing networks, a world class research and creativity hub in the heart of Denver, and distributed community workshops, we engage with and feel inspired by each other’s work. We recognize that our uniqueness makes a difference and that our collective intelligence yields visionary approaches to the world’s most complex problems.

We are curious, nimble, and dynamic—comfortable with change and insistent on fostering a culture of radical inclusivity for all who join our community. Everyone is granted the agency to impact what we do and how we do it. Our inclusive approach emboldens all to shape our university into their reflection. We relentlessly hold ourselves to the highest standards of equity, respect, empathy, and care.

We enthusiastically disrupt entrenched ways of thinking. We value serious play and we grant the gift of time and purposeful slowness to our researchers, creators, designers, and artists. We value and champion truly impactful work. Our expanded metrics demonstrate our commitment to making a difference and embrace community engagement, work that amplifies traditionally underrepresented voices, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cross-departmental and cross-institutional team building.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

**Diversity:** Our students bring diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences to enrich our community in ways unique to our location in Denver, and to our relationships with our partnered institutions and campuses. Our students are our lifeblood and one of our greatest assets.

**Urban location:** Our prime urban location connects us to important industry and community partners. We are central to the vitality of downtown Denver, and positioned perfectly to utilize both where we are and how we’re connected to catalyze and support important research and creative work.

**Academic community:** We are an integral part of larger, overlapping academic communities, including the University of Colorado system and the Auraria Higher Education Center. In sum, this community offers broad and deep expertise across a kaleidoscope of richly diverse research and creative work.

**Nimble, scrappy, and efficient:** We get things done. We move faster and more efficiently than most institutions of comparable size. We are resourceful and resilient. With our work ethic and a get-things-done attitude, we embody an innovative spirit that directly impacts the quality of our output.

**Applied and engaged:** We foster an environment that values applied, engaged research and creative work. Our work lives out in the world. We value connection to our students and their communities. Our work reflects these relationships.

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

**Structural and financial impediments:** Our work can feel disconnected and siloed because of structural and financial impediments. The systems in place do not promote connected, cooperative work. Many faculty researchers collaborate despite the barriers, but it is not encouraged or facilitated by our financial models or administrative structures.

**Time and space:** To produce truly disruptive research and creative work, there must be time and space to do so. Currently, research faculty and staff are crippled by the tyranny of immediate and mundane, yet necessary responsibilities.

**Risk:** Innovation in research and creative work requires risk-taking. Our institution does not demonstrate the patience, trust, and recognition of the importance of slowness or the embrace of failure for risky research and creative work to flourish. We currently reward work that is well-defined, clearly stated, and monetarily valuable in black and white terms.

**Mentoring:** Mentorship is vitally important, across all stages of one’s career. Currently, research faculty and staff miss a robust, integrated, and systemic approach to cross-college and cross-departmental mentorship.

**Belonging:** Not everyone feels a sense of belonging and agency over their work. There exist “haves” and “have-nots” at CU Denver. Some feel like their work is valued, while others feel like they are outsiders and are not valued.

**Work/life balance and mental health:** Those willing to sacrifice work/life balance to produce research and creative work quickly are rewarded and held up as the most successful and accomplished. Rewards and accolades are proportional to one’s willingness to sacrifice mental health and to work around the clock. This is not sustainable.
Goal 1: Inspire And Connect

Through our research and creative work, we will inspire fresh insights into the complex issues impacting humanity, such as climate change, racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation equality, quality education for all communities, health and wellness, access to healthcare, access to food and water, housing access, the impacts of the Anthropocene on our environment, employment, and transportation.

To inspire outside connections, we will leverage our location in the core of one of the fastest growing cities in the country and our diverse students who bring deep connections to underserved communities. This vibrant and complex context will orient us toward leading with listening, thinking laterally, and discovering unlikely solutions to problems that matter. It will offer genuine opportunity to engage with private industry and community expertise. High quality, community- and industry-connected research methods, designs, and spaces will foster connection that is authentic and real.

To inspire inside connection, we will cultivate people, spaces, and networks to support collaboration across disciplines, pooling strengths and diversifying participation. We will build on our collective expertise across the CU System, on the AHEC Campus, and within CU Denver to inspire unconventional and disruptive solutions to meaningful challenges.

To further inspire and connect our research and creative work, we will hire more researchers, artists, and designers. These individuals will be primarily, but not exclusively, housed in the tenured and tenure track ranks. We will lead the country in reversing trends that result in unsustainable workloads for faculty and staff alike and are caused, in part, by short-sighted hiring practices.
Goal 1: Inspire And Connect

STRATEGY 1.1
Entrust faculty and staff to facilitate and energize cross-disciplinary and community collaboration.

The human capital within the current faculty and staff is an institutional strength that can be better leveraged by creating connections across units and into the community. Fostering new connections and partnerships requires time, focus, and patience along with the realization and acceptance of the fact that the dividends are often years away.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.1.1** Create chaired “Research and Creative Work Connector” positions among the faculty and staff that provide time and resources to create connections across disciplines and units. Pursue large-scale, multiple investigator external funding.

- **Initiative 1.1.2** Create chaired “Community Connector” positions among the faculty and staff that provide time and resources to connect research and creative work with underserved communities. Pursue external funding to support or expand these community connections.

- **Initiative 1.1.3** Use cluster hires across Departments and Schools/Colleges to build capacity in the tenure/tenure-track ranks in areas of existing or emerging strengths and establish deep connections.

1 | Connectors & Cluster Hires

![Diagram of Connectors & Cluster Hires]

STRATEGY 1.2
Establish a university-wide mentoring and championing strategy that extends across a career.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.2.1** Use “Entering Mentoring” workshops to train faculty and staff on how to be effective mentors.

- **Initiative 1.2.2** Institutionalize best practices in mentoring that cater to different faculty, staff, and student positions and include mentors outside of primary units.

- **Initiative 1.2.3** Build truly two-way connections into our community partnerships such that external entities and individuals both give and receive mentoring and championing.

- **Initiative 1.2.4** Recognize that JEDI doesn’t stop at recruitment. The retention and career growth of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups need to be supported in line with the findings and recommendations of the Equity Task Force.
Goal 1: Inspire And Connect

2 | Physical Spaces

STRATEGY 1.3
New physical spaces that distill, collect, distribute, and engage.

Even in an increasingly virtual workplace, the need for physical spaces for faculty, staff, and students to engage with each other is essential to develop and support collaboration. Moreover, to engage our surrounding communities, a distributed network of spaces for testing, prototyping, and exploring ideas important to them is vital for building trust and meaningful connection.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 1.3.1 Establish a “Centralized Research Park” as a space to meaningfully and deeply connect faculty, staff, and students in unlikely ways.

• Initiative 1.3.2 Expand and grow incubator spaces for prototyping and testing new ideas and translating those ideas into entrepreneurial ventures.

• Initiative 1.3.3 Create “Distributed Community Discovery Workshops” as spaces to celebrate and foster community-connected designs and methods.
Goal 1: Inspire And Connect

STRATEGY 1.4
New virtual spaces that disseminate, cross-pollinate, and catalyze discussion.

The proliferation of virtual spaces and networks is a blessing and a curse. An intentional and cohesive strategy will help amplify research and creative work, and provide a centralized space for researchers and creators to connect.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.4.1** Create a database to connect research and creative work virtually modeled off of Colorado PROFILES.
- **Initiative 1.4.2** Continue to invest and grow the social media presence of CU Denver research and creative work via various mediums, including YouTube, webinar series, podcasts.
- **Initiative 1.4.3** Evaluate how faculty and CU Communications can better connect to promote research and creative work.
Goal 2: Support And Disrupt

Through unprecedented support of our faculty, staff, and students to research and create, CU Denver will disrupt deeply-rooted approaches that prevent new insights and fresh questions. We will offer our researchers, artists, and designers the valuable gift of time by reducing overall workload, providing a flexible distribution of effort, and addressing the tyranny of the immediate.

In our pursuit to support and disrupt, we will celebrate failure, promote play, and support risk-taking. We recognize that some of the world’s most disruptive, meaningful advancements have occurred by accident, through serendipitous conversation, lateral thinking in the face of apparent failure, and merely as the result of opportunity for deep and slow reflection. We will address the threat that poor mental health exerts on the creative process.

We will redistribute workload. We will leverage our unique position, in the urban core of Denver, to engage with private sector practice and community expertise to reimagine the delivery of curriculum. In doing so, our researchers, artists, and designers will be free to discover, play, test, fail, reflect, and ultimately elevate their work to never-before-seen heights.
Goal 2: Support And Disrupt

STRATEGY 2.1
Radically rethink and customize the distribution of workloads.

Faculty and staff are often hired with a prescriptive distribution of their workload that does not change over time. For example, the 40:40:20 Teaching:Research:Service distribution for tenure track faculty. These distributions can poorly reflect the reality of how an individual spends their time. Moreover, it places faculty and staff into a one-size-fits-all box, while not valuing those that carry disproportionate teaching, service, or teaching loads, even though those individuals often have the largest impact on research and creative work.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.1.1** Balance and adjust workload distribution not only at the time of hiring but also over time as roles change, to reflect an individuals’ strengths and the needs of their units.

- **Initiative 2.1.2** Develop attainable, low barrier-to-entry course release programs.

- **Initiative 2.1.3** Reduce annual teaching load by one course for all full-time research faculty.

1 | Reduce Teaching Load
Goal 2: Support And Disrupt

STRATEGY 2.2
Reduce the administrative burden on those conducting research and creative work.

A nearly ubiquitous response from our stakeholder analysis was concern over low-level, administrative tasks overwhelming faculty and staff at the expense of the time needed to support impactful research and creative work. Many stakeholders recognized their own deficiencies in time and project management skills, which is an area where a modest investment could yield substantial gains. Others related challenging experiences with respect to grant management and accounting.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.2.1** Provide faculty and staff training, time management tools, and useful strategies for developing a healthy work/life balance, developing a personal routine, prioritizing research over busy work, and setting aside time for unscripted play, explorative conversation, and reflection.

- **Initiative 2.2.2** Offer faculty improved tools for managing research and associated finances.

- **Initiative 2.2.3** Develop alternative modes of communication while recognizing that email’s original utility has run its course.
Goal 2: Support And Disrupt

STRATEGY 2.3
Promote, connect, and enthusiastically encourage unscripted time.

Creativity is born in the unlikely connections between disparate ideas and fields of study. Carving out time and space for playful, unscripted thinking and connections amongst faculty and staff is akin to planting the seeds for innovative research and creative work. Faculty and staff need regular, routinely scheduled time and dedicated spaces to playfully explore, freely make mistakes, and iteratively develop ideas that can only emerge at the intersections of multiple fields, and with like-minded, but complementary collaborators. We will actively train our faculty and staff in the valuable skills of maintaining work/life balance, prioritizing one's research and creative work above busy work, managing one's daily, weekly, and monthly schedule effectively, developing a personal routine, and carving time out of every day to do inspiring disruptive work.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.3.1** Alternative sabbaticals for faculty and staff across units and in the private sector.
- **Initiative 2.3.2** Institutionalize ‘meeting free Mondays’ and ‘email-free Fridays’ to promote time for thinking, unscripted collaborations, and play.
- **Initiative 2.3.3** Lectures/symposia between two unlikely departments that alternates, Pecha Kucha-style.
- **Initiative 2.3.4** Internal seed funds for cross-unit collaborations that support the 2030 Strategic Plan.
Goal 3: Empower And Incentivize

We will incentivize departments to address outdated Review, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) processes to celebrate the work of our most disruptive thinkers. In tandem, we will build a system of promotion and recognition for the essential staff who make research and creative work possible. We will create a system that values, empowers, and promotes the work of historically underrepresented/BIPOC faculty and staff. To make a difference in the world, we will move beyond entrenched reward systems, reframe who and what we value, relentlessly challenge the phrase “it’s just the way we’ve always done things,” and continuously improve our rewards and incentives.

CU Denver’s unique personality, as a resilient, nimble, interrogative, and reflective institution positions it well to lead the country in fundamentally rethinking academic incentive systems and the values upon which we base empowering our best and brightest.

We will articulate CU Denver’s distinguishing values from our upper administration down to our reimagined RTP standards that celebrate and reward disruptive research beyond traditional RTP modalities. We recognize that time, space, and money are the most valued resources. Beyond these, we will additionally reward people with new connections, extended networks, and unique leadership and development opportunities. We will operate with the understanding that if we want to meaningfully and fundamentally address the complex challenges we face, we must value the exact things that will get us there: cross-disciplinary sharing and collaborating, meaningful engagement and partnership with our most underserved communities, and the pursuit of work that takes risk, values failure, and seeks to disrupt entrenched ways of thinking.
Goal 3: Empower And Incentivize

STRATEGY 3.1
Broaden and clarify how we define impactful research and creative work.

Faculty and staff are empowered and incentivized to pursue high-risk, high-reward research and creative work. We will expand the aperture on what we consider impactful beyond the conventional measures of research productivity.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.1.1** Hold an annual event that identifies current global challenges and identifies how to pivot research and creative work strengths to address these challenges.

- **Initiative 3.1.2** Identify and promote exemplars of unconventional research and creative work with high impact within the CU Denver community.

- **Initiative 3.1.3** Develop seed funds that will annually support disruptive research in areas of local, national, and global need.

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**STEAM**

![Diagram showing Expanded Definition of Research vs Current Definition of Research]

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STRATEGY 3.2
Align our RTP criteria for faculty and promotion and evaluation criteria for staff with our values.

We recognize that radical changes in research and creative work culture will only come to fruition if the proper incentives are in place. We will place value in research and creative work that engages with underrepresented and underserved communities, cross- and interdisciplinary research, team science approaches to complex problems, intellectual property, and entrepreneurial activities.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.2.1** Identify institutional values that emerge from the 2030 Strategic Plan that can guide research and creative works.

- **Initiative 3.2.2** Align RTP criteria across faculty and staff ranks with our values, while honoring the academic freedom that each unit has in developing their criteria.
Goal 2: Empower and Incentivize

STRATEGY 3.3
Support research and creative work through dynamic development assistance.

We will bolster research and creative work by providing support structures and tools that improve faculty members’ ability to compete for external funding and support, as well as provide internal seed funding for campus-wide initiatives that will catalyze discoveries and the interdisciplinary teams of tomorrow.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.3.1** Hire focused faculty expertise that supports, builds upon, and extends currently identified disruptive research themes.
- **Initiative 3.3.2** Support staff who not only administer and facilitate, but also help frame and conceptualize research (i.e. grant writer, graphic designers).
- **Initiative 3.3.3** Business development and entrepreneurial support—hire people from successful startups and innovative companies who help to identify and catalyze disruptive ideas in our research and creative work.
Interactions

There are significant connections between our theme and many of the other Vision Teams. During Phase II, we had particularly fruitful conversations with the ‘Put Our People At The Center’ and ‘Empowered By Our Inclusive Excellence’ Teams. Although we have not had the chance to see the final recommendations from each of these Teams, our conversations identified overlapping goals with respect to redefining RTP/Promotion criteria, hiring practices, and mentoring and supporting faculty and staff so that they can achieve their full potential. There appears to be nearly unanimous support for achieving faculty and staff diversity that mirrors our student body.

In terms of numbers of engagements with stakeholders (faculty members, staff members, students, alumni, donors, and external partners), we estimate that we connected with several hundred different people throughout our three-month process. In total, our team consisted of twenty members. Some members connected with as many as fifty or more different stakeholders, through listening sessions and emailed surveys, while others connected with four or five, through deeper conversations and interviews. Our team averaged about ten connection points per person, for about two hundred connections to stakeholders in total.
PUT OUR PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

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- **Michelle Larson-Krieg** | Interim Executive Director, Office of International Affairs and Chair, Staff Council

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What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

We were asked to consider what would make CU Denver an exceptionally good workplace and an employer of choice for faculty, staff, and student employees. “Our people” comprise these groups.

We aspire to fully embrace our identity as a public urban research university and transform CU Denver into a diverse, equitable, and inclusive human-centered workplace where employees at all levels reflect the diversity, in all of its forms, of our student body and community. All faculty, staff, and student employees feel a sense of belonging and safety. They participate in meaningful work and engage in relevant career-enhancing professional development. Physical and mental health and wellness are an integral part of campus life. Employees’ contributions to the successful advancement of our shared mission are fairly compensated, readily acknowledged, and consistently celebrated.

All CU Denver faculty, staff, and student employees understand our university’s vision, mission and strategic priorities, and their role in achieving our shared goals. Employees are empowered by organizational structures, systems, processes and approaches that enhance agility, reduce bureaucracy, and inspire innovation and collaboration. We provide the support and opportunities necessary for all employees to reach their full potential. We respect time as a critical resource. We are optimally resourced to successfully execute our collective priorities. Employees have the technology, tools, and training they need to be efficient and effective. We offer flexibility, focus on outcomes and impact, and share accountability.

Transparency prevails. All employees at every level have access to the information they need to be effective. Faculty, staff, and student employees have opportunities to provide meaningful input on decisions that impact them. We embrace and accelerate change where it advances our cause, and proactively manage change to maximize positive outcomes. Trust is pervasive and all employees work hard to build and maintain it. We openly discuss challenges and issues. Everyone, from the Chancellor to frontline workers, understands how to give and receive constructive feedback and recognition.

Our people are our greatest asset and our best opportunity to differentiate ourselves.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

Today, CU Denver faculty and staff are fully committed to serving students and each other to the best of our ability. We are resourceful and resilient. We are dedicated to the institution and consistently go above and beyond our duties and responsibilities to advance the mission. We do impactful and cutting-edge teaching, scholarship, and creative work. We are innovative, creative and collaborative where possible and when we feel safe to do so. We embrace the opportunity to address challenges and contribute to positive change in our city, region, state, nation, and the world.

The Chancellor and cabinet-level leaders, along with a critical mass of faculty and staff, are committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are becoming more transparent. The campus and broader community are now included in high-level position searches. Shared governance leaders and groups receive regular updates. Town halls are a regular occurrence, and we have continuously updated websites on important topics such as COVID-19 vaccines and the institution’s plans for Fall 2021.

Our location in the heart of Denver in the state of Colorado creates an opportunity to make enjoying our natural environment and vibrant city an important part of our culture. We are uniquely situated to purposefully combat the tyranny of the urgent, recharge our energy, and take time to play, contemplate, and reflect.

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

The challenges to putting our people at the center can be categorized into three areas: 1) organizational structure, 2) infrastructure, and 3) culture.

Structural Challenges

- CU Denver is one of four campuses that make up the University of Colorado System. We are one of the two that form the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus. We are one of three institutions that comprise the Auraria Higher Education Center. This complexity creates jurisdictional ambiguity and can make identifying and resolving issues more challenging.

- Schools, colleges, student services units, and administrative offices largely operate within discrete siloes. Because everyone is used to doing their own thing, it can be hard to build consensus around collective priorities and get everyone to work together. Our siloed structures prompt us to operate with suspicion of the unknown and to feel threatened when change, collaboration and combination are suggested.

- CU Denver’s overall organizational structure and the divisional structures that separate us largely by function are multi-layered and hierarchical, while also being highly decentralized. This “organized anarchy” typical of many institutions of higher education leads to complicated chains of command, which slow down decision making; inconsistencies in management, which cause confusion and resentment and can lead to legal and regulatory compliance issues; and delays and lack of clarity in communication as messages must travel vertically through the levels and horizontally between teams.

Infrastructure Challenges

- Our human resources infrastructure is not optimal. “Double decentralization” aptly describes human resources functions. “Employee Services” is housed at the CU System Office, CU Denver has a “Central Human Resources” function, and each school or college, as well as organizational units, have their own staff who are responsible for performing human resources functions. This staff reports to the Dean, the Provost, or another university officer. Neither central HR nor HR business partners at the unit level have sufficient time to devote to talent management, developing career pathways, or other critical people-supporting functions that many organizations deem essential in building great places to work. We need to invest in this essential function.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

- We are not optimally resourced to do all of the great things that we could and should do. People shared time and time again that they do not have the bandwidth to do their own work let alone the additional work needed and additional work they are called upon to do.

- Our communications systems are not robust enough to overcome the challenges created by our complicated organizational structure. Individuals in closer proximity to leadership may feel informed, included, and valued, but many of our people do not.

- CU Denver has a history of technology-related misadventures. In many instances the end-users were never consulted before purchase and implementation. To conserve limited resources, certain features were stripped out of the versions that we purchased causing frustration, creating the need for time-wasting workarounds, and compromising our data integrity and regulatory compliance. We’ve begun implementing systems and then changed our minds mid-stream. Change management processes were non-existent or poorly resourced.

Culture


- Specifically, we operate with a continuous sense of urgency that seems unsustainable; react to criticism or questioning with defensiveness; engage in zero-sum thinking; hoard power and withhold information; fear and avoid open conflict; narrowly define growth as the only measure of progress; over-prioritize objective “facts” over subjective “feelings;” and protect those in power from interactions that could be uncomfortable or difficult.

- People often mistrust each other and leadership at all levels. Shaming and blaming are actively employed in efforts to draw attention to issues and call for change. We do not always, or even often, assume the best of each other and are often quick to divide into us versus them camps.

- We do not routinely invite or openly share ideas. Nor are we good at providing and receiving constructive feedback and recognition. While so many of the faculty, staff, and student workers with whom we engaged were genuinely grateful to be asked for their views and opinions, several individuals – often from lower levels within the organization or those who were members of under-represented groups – expressed discomfort with sharing their identities and asked to participate in our focus groups and surveys anonymously. Some individuals indicated that they had concerns about retaliation.

- Power dynamics, among faculty ranks, between faculty and staff, and between the administration and everyone else, create fear and stifle employees’ willingness and ability to contribute their best ideas and effort. There is a perception that those in positions of power are not held accountable for their behaviors and actions.

- Front-line staff are not often valued as the critical resource they are and as the representatives of the institution to our students, the public, and other community members. Some even reported feeling dehumanized.

- There is widespread perception among instructional, research, and clinical (IRC) faculty, especially lecturers, that neither they nor their work is truly or adequately valued.

- Tenure/tenure track faculty have shared concerns regarding our campus commitment to scholarly and creative work and allowing the time needed to engage in those critical pursuits. They also noted that more tenure track faculty are needed.

In many ways, these three areas are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Features of a loosely coupled system make it possible for there to be many and conflicting HR offices and functions; silos make it more likely that accountability for results will be segmented and invite shame and blame across units; loose coupling and silos both engender situations in which people may be treated inequitably or unfairly as compared with others who do the same job in another unit; a lack of trust means that we are more reliant on bureaucratic rules and regulations to govern how we interact with each other.

Consequently, the recommendations that follow cut across these three challenge areas, which may be addressed holistically.
Goal 1: We Embody Diversity, Equity And Inclusion.

Our faculty, staff, and leaders value and reflect the diversity, in all its forms, of our student body and the communities we serve.

We will know we’ve succeeded when our faculty, staff, and leaders are representative of the diverse identities of our students and the communities we serve with respect to ability, age, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual differences, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

STRATEGY 1.1
Increase diversity of faculty and staff to reflect our student body and the broader community.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 1.1.1 Identify, confirm, and annually monitor the diversity of our faculty and staff against the diversity of our community.
- Initiative 1.1.2 Grow diverse representation in leadership positions.
- Initiative 1.1.3 Identify and address issues that create barriers for diverse populations even when doing so is uncomfortable.

STRATEGY 1.2
Provide opportunities and clear pathways for advancement.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 1.2.1 Within a new Career Center for CU Denver staff, develop mentorship, retention, and growth initiatives designed specifically to support historically underrepresented staff.
- Initiative 1.2.2 Within the Center for Faculty Development and Advancement, grow professional development and mentorship programs designed to specifically support historically underrepresented faculty.
- Initiative 1.2.3 Review and assess evaluation criteria and processes to identify areas of change needed to support historically underrepresented faculty and staff.
- Initiative 1.2.4 Create and communicate pathways for rank and career advancement for faculty and staff, while allowing sufficient flexibility to capitalize on employees’ unique strengths.
- Initiative 1.2.5 Engage in sophisticated talent review and succession planning to grow from within.
- Initiative 1.2.6 Transform faculty annual review evaluations, and rank and promotion criteria and processes to ensure inclusivity, reduce bias, and reflect the unique characteristics of our faculty body.
Goal 1: We Embody Diversity, Equity And Inclusion.

STRATEGY 1.3
Support the needs of a diverse workforce, in all its forms, of CU Denver faculty, staff and student employees.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 1.3.1 Establish affinity groups focused on supporting faculty and staff.
- Initiative 1.3.2 Deploy strategic cluster hires.
- Initiative 1.3.3 Require all faculty and staff to develop and achieve annual DEI goals.
- Initiative 1.3.4 De-stigmatize and streamline the process of providing workspace accommodations for faculty and staff with physical and mental health disabilities.
Goal 2: We **Empower, Value And Support All Employees To Exercise Authenticity And Take Risks In Their Work.**

For our people to feel empowered, everyone needs to be respected, valued, know they belong, and feel supported to take risks as critical to fueling innovation.

We will know we’ve succeeded when employees willingly take risks toward achieving goals and priorities on a regular basis and when both they, and the community, are comfortable with success and failure and are willing to take full responsibility for positive and negative outcomes.

**STRATEGY 2.1**
Redesign top-down decision-making to ensure shared governance, shared solutioning, shared ownership of actions, and shared accountability.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiative 2.1.1** Train supervisors and teams in collaboration strategies, teamwork, shared governance, and shared accountability.

- **Initiative 2.1.2** Establish meaningful ways in which the organization demonstrates value and respect for all employees’ time, expertise, and contributions, especially for the most vulnerable and humble positions, and eliminate language that devalues employees (menial, unskilled, entry-level).

- **Initiative 2.1.3** Require all leaders and supervisors to be trained in distributive leadership and processes for developing and growing employees.

**STRATEGY 2.2**
Ensure that our people are set up for success.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiative 2.2.1** Develop and deploy a strategic comprehensive onboarding experience for all new hires and internal job changes as an organization and within departments.

- **Initiative 2.2.2** Ensure each employee has the tools and resources necessary to do the job successfully.

- **Initiative 2.2.3** Transform the evaluation process to promote greater impact on employee growth and development through consistency, reliability, and validity.

- **Initiative 2.2.4** Annually and collaboratively assess the alignment of job descriptions to roles, responsibilities and workloads and ensure employees know their roles, responsibilities and what is expected of them.

- **Initiative 2.2.5** Establish a continual feedback culture, reinforcing positive behaviors and giving room for risk-taking and failures that may result from taking risks.
Goal 2: We **Empower, Value And Support All Employees To Exercise Authenticity And Take Risks In Their Work.**

**STRATEGY 2.3**
Create consistent, effective, and efficient processes that reduce steps and layers, and empower people to make decisions at the point of delivery benefiting both our people and those served.

**INITIATIVES**
- **Initiative 2.3.1** Unpack, define, align, and communicate how our “federated” (centralized and decentralized) model operates and identify changes needed to ensure employee success and the ability to achieve our strategic priorities.
- **Initiative 2.3.2** Map the connections between and across the spokes (decentralized) to the hub (centralized) to ensure that support is provided where and how it is meant to be, eliminating the need to create unit-specific processes, reducing inequities, and dispelling confusion.
Goal 3: We Collaborate To Engage Diverse Expertise And Achieve Impactful Solutions.

Our people drive our decisions.

We will know we’ve succeeded when the results of our collaborative efforts are broadly recognized and our people are proud of their contributions to work that advances the institution in innovative and strategic ways; feel a deeper connection to and appreciation for colleagues; value and tap into each other’s strengths and expertise; and our work together contributes to a sense of belonging. We will know we’ve succeeded when employees regularly provide input into the decision-making process and that input is openly shared and celebrated.

STRATEGY 3.1
Achieve reimagined hierarchies.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 3.1.1 Flatten power structures and empower faculty and staff to initiate collaboration across the organization.
- Initiative 3.1.2 Commit to radical transparency by implementing open communication channels that give all employees at all levels the information and perspective needed to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Initiative 3.1.3 Reduce the number of layers in decision-making structures and empower cross-pollination horizontally among practitioners.

STRATEGY 3.2
De-silo institutional structures.

INITIATIVES

- Initiative 3.2.1 As a catalyst to ignite collaboration and foster interdisciplinary work, create an intentional program with dedicated real or virtual space to encourage employees to gather and share ideas.
- Initiative 3.2.2 Objectively Identify institutional roadblocks to collaboration and collaborative decision-making opportunities, and to help re-imagine structures and processes to increase collaboration.
- Initiative 3.2.3 Establish awards for successful interdepartmental and inter-unit collaboration that achieve impactful results.
Goal 3: We Collaborate To Engage Diverse Expertise And Achieve Impactful Solutions.

STRATEGY 3.3
Cultivate a people-centered culture that reflects our values of inclusion, unity, authenticity, humility, and continual improvement.

INITIATIVES

• Initiative 3.3.1 Expect and reward knowledge sharing, including giving and receiving multi-directional (horizontal AND vertical) constructive feedback.

• Initiative 3.3.2 Develop interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence and reward faculty and staff who demonstrate these skills. Place a high value on humility, authenticity, and respect.

• Initiative 3.3.3 Create a results-oriented change management culture that incorporates our people’s voices and values our people’s input in everything we do.
Goal 4: We **Infuse Trust, Accountability And Transparency In All That We Do.**

We will know we’ve succeeded when employees at all levels of the organization are able to contribute ideas and raise concerns without fear and with confidence that they will be heard; all employees are held accountable for upholding CU Denver’s values and achieving desired outcomes; and information and the rationale for decisions are readily and broadly shared.

**STRATEGY 4.1**  
Promote a culture of transparency in decision-making.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiative 4.1.1** Require that information sharing be frequent, systematic, expected, and rewarded so that input is regularly received and valued.

- **Initiative 4.1.2** Share clear, honest reasons and rationales for decisions and openly report decisions in a timely fashion.

**STRATEGY 4.2**  
Promote a culture of individual and organizational accountability.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiative 4.2.1** Establish a process of continuous feedback from employees through surveys, focus groups, and other means and report results and action steps being taken.

- **Initiative 4.2.2** Expect and reward risk-taking that is goal driven, focused, and results in continuous learning even if the effort does not achieve the intended result. Reframe “failed” attempts that result in learning and experience as “successes.”

- **Initiative 4.2.3** Institute 360 evaluation processes.

- **Initiative 4.2.4** Mandate people-leading training for all supervisors.

**STRATEGY 4.3**  
Promote a culture of trust between and among employees at all levels.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiative 4.3.1** Value and trust people to do their best work and recognize outcome excellence and ownership of work at all levels, especially for non-leadership positions.

- **Initiative 4.3.2** Define, establish and apply CU Denver Trust in the Workplace Norms and Expectations.

- **Initiative 4.3.3** Establish and maintain equitable policies and practices so that employees in distinct parts of the organization experience similar opportunities, outcomes, and consequences for the same actions.
Goal 4: We **Infuse Trust, Accountability And Transparency In All That We Do.**

We will know we’ve succeeded when employees at all levels of the organization are able to contribute ideas and raise concerns without fear and with confidence that they will be heard; all employees are held accountable for upholding CU Denver’s values and achieving desired outcomes; and information and the rationale for decisions are readily and broadly shared.

**STRATEGY 4.4**

Commit to intentional culture shaping and ensure that we put our people at the center.

**INITIATIVES**

- **Initiatives 4.4.1** Develop a baseline understanding of employee culture and all goals included in this report.
- **Initiatives 4.4.2** Annually assess how our people are experiencing our culture and people centered goals, transparently communicate results, and identify actions to take to continue advancing goals.
Goal 5: We Commit To The Professional Growth And Financial, Physical, And Mental Health Of Our People.

Our commitment enables everyone who works here to reach their full potential.

We will know we’ve succeeded when we meet established employee retention goals; when our people are able to successfully advance in their chosen career path; and when our people meet their physical and mental health goals.

STRATEGY 5.1
Provide a comprehensive Employee Wellness Plan.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiatives 5.1.1** Create a CU Denver-specific Employee Assistance Program to address and support employee mental health.

- **Initiatives 5.1.2** Repurpose sick leave as “well” leave. Employees can use sick leave to work out, meditate, get a massage, or engage in other wellness activities. They can use excess sick leave to volunteer. Employees can donate their sick leave to others in need.

STRATEGY 5.2
Ensure competitive, equitable salaries.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiatives 5.2.1** Offer additional compensation for additional work that is outside the scope of an employee’s current role.

- **Initiatives 5.2.2** Offer multiple tracks for promotion and professional growth.

- **Initiatives 5.2.3** Publish salary structures and compensation philosophies and practices in an easily accessible place.

- **Initiatives 5.2.4** Reimagine and realign Human Resources to make the function accessible and comprehensive to support the organization and its people, and ensure that data integrity is high.

STRATEGY 5.3
Support work/life balance.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiatives 5.3.1** Create right-size jobs for all employees.

- **Initiatives 5.3.2** Focus on productivity and outcomes versus scheduled hours and the location where work is performed.

- **Initiatives 5.3.3** Increase number of tenure track faculty positions.

- **Initiatives 5.3.4** Allow all faculty and staff to apply for research time.
Goal 5: We Commit To The Professional Growth And Financial, Physical, And Mental Health Of Our People.

STRATEGY 5.4
Support the professional development and career growth of our people.

INITIATIVES

• Initiatives 5.4.1 Purchase and integrate the full suite of Interfolio Faculty Life Cycle products.

• Initiatives 5.4.2 Establish and communicate progressive career pathways in all position types.

• Initiatives 5.4.3 Fund and support “micro-sabbaticals” for staff and faculty to be used to advance strategic priorities, work on larger projects, and devote time to accomplish goals outside of usual duties and responsibilities.

• Initiatives 5.4.4 Create and adopt a Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for Faculty and for Staff.
THE ART OF INNOVATION AND MISSION-DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

Innovation is not just a practice. It's an art. And entrepreneurship should have a purpose beyond commerce. To that end, we've refined our vision to not only amplify innovation and entrepreneurship, but master the art of innovation and champion mission-driven entrepreneurship. CU Denver 2030 has emerged as a community of open innovation, embracing new forms of social entrepreneurship, economic development, public-private partnerships, and progressive education.

Classrooms once featuring neat rows of desks give way to high-touch/high-tech ateliers brimming with writable surfaces, construction materials, and mediums that facilitate serious play across the expanse of human understanding. Lectures happen asynchronously online — harnessing the limitless possibilities of living, learning, and teaching in a hybrid world — so that time together can be preserved for experimentation, exploration, and prototyping. And experiential learning is essential, especially when student opportunities to succeed are prized and when student opportunities to fail are present. Syllabi have expiration dates, Pass/Not-Pass grading has been long recognized to incentivize students to explore ideas at the edges of their understanding, and core courses align with the entrepreneurial process.

In 2030 the world is our classroom. Study abroad is afforded to every student, understanding that learning alongside someone from a different tradition, another culture, changes you. It changes them. And then when we pick up the newspaper and read about lives lost in distant, war-torn countries, or hospital systems at the brink of collapse, or communities embattled over the question about WHOSE LIVES MATTER, our differences no longer feel so different, so distant, so foreign. It is closer to home. Closer to our own understanding. Part of our shared humanity.

In 2030 silos are sidelined and outcomes are human-centered. Departments give way to cohorts of transdisciplinary scholars, creators, and organizers galvanized by the problems they hope to solve rather than the degrees they once pursued. Faculty rank is on a sliding scale that rises and falls in concert with our own curiosities, while percentage allocations of teaching, service, and scholarship ebb and flow as faculty lean into the most pressing work and greatest opportunities for impact.

Seeking inspiration for envisioning our best future, we need not look any further than a portrait of one of our own graduates. Caleb Carr is a member of the CU Denver community already living this vision and blazing a trail for those who come later.

In 2018, Caleb Carr entered THE CLIMB | Jake Jabs Business Competition with an eye toward innovating enhanced air rescue missions that could bring everyone home safely. THE CLIMB validated the vision of this CU Denver alumni and gave Vita its first-of-15 competition wins in the same year. Vita Inclinata is now a startup Unicorn with a global reach. And Caleb — committed to giving back to his alma mater and the next generation of CU Denver entrepreneurs — returns to campus as a frequent lecturer. He, too, has joined forces with Pete Buttigieg by serving on President Biden's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Initiative.

In 2030, students who wish to follow in his footsteps will do so with support that starts on campus. This document is not simply our vision for the future, but rather a roadmap for delivering on our promises.
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

The maverick spirit of Colorado itself lives within the dream-makers, innovators, and entrepreneurs among us who help define where we excel.

Architect, inventor, entrepreneur, and CU Denver Professor Julee Herdt runs her own tech start-up. Committed to “create building products for a healthier planet, a stronger green economy, and U.S. jobs that fulfill lives while restoring the earth and its natural resources,” mission-driven BioSIPs, Inc. emerged as a spin-off corporation from Herdt’s research, teaching, service, and intellectual properties established at CU Denver.

Alumnae, Marina Rosi is a human-centered designer who strives to understand how user experience design can solve human challenges. Marina developed CHATLOG, a multimodal connected experience designed to increase information accessibility for deaf and hearing impaired students in post-secondary classrooms, as well as WHEELS, a mobility app that helps people with limited physical mobility navigate historical cities.

Connected by their mission of inspiring innovation, embracing entrepreneurial frameworks, providing resources, and sparking imaginations, we envision the innovation engines already existent on our campus to someday find a home under a shared vision and a single roof:

- Jake Jabs Center for Entrepreneurship
- ThinkqStudio
- InWorks
- Comcast Media Center
- Smart Cities Initiative
- SPARK Program
- Managing for Sustainability Program
- Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering

Each of these centers and entities have developed networks within the business community via advisory councils, donor prospects, and mentor lists. But we wonder: What might be possible if we were to harness the breadth and depth of all of these assets under a single roof? How might an Institute for Innovation create synergy across CU Denver? How might a Center for Creativity become a force for preparing generations for change agents?
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

As an institution of higher learning, we are privileged to be in the business of fostering curiosity, expanding the imagination, creating knowledge, and growing empathy. These are the ingredients that empower people to shape the human experience. These are the mindsets needed to invent a better future.

It is our belief that CU Denver has the passion, vision, drive, and energy to differentiate itself from all other higher education institutions. Yet, despite the best of intentions, there are three major areas where we struggle, facing active barriers for growth: 1) curating a culture of innovation, 2) moving beyond the knowable, and 3) fostering creative environments.

First: Creating, nurturing, and growing the garden of our community connections and a collective spirit of innovation requires complete buy-in by all layers within the university and support from our campus neighborhood. It requires tending to our culture growth by implementing a fully developed change management program. A program that needs sponsorship, funding, and invested guidance to have a chance to bear fruit. Without an effective change acceptance and adoption, the recommendations will remain static as a historical artifact, becoming just another forgotten plan.

Second: As an institution of higher learning, we struggle with rapid change and growth beyond the knowable. As an institution, we follow processes defined to protect data, to ensure reputation, and increase reliability and stability. Processes serve to reduce chaos, diminish failure, and allow more effective forecasting. Yet, developing “process-for-process-sake” stifles the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit we strive to achieve. Fear of failing prevents the opportunity to grow from failures, to overcome challenges, and to create the space where dreamers can achieve the truly inspiring.

Third: We struggle to recognize the sacrifices that must surely be made if we are to achieve our goals. Faculty must be incentivized to collaborate, even if the metrics are difficult to measure. Administration needs to trust faculty and staff who are working in the space of innovation and entrepreneurship to lead the design of incentive systems that recognize the non-measurable benefits that will accrue over the long term. Innovation requires resources: time, people, training, infrastructure, and spaces to play. With budgets constrained, each effort must produce success and results to stimulate the next phase of investment. Supporting creative environments could result in numerous competing systems and services. Without the available resources to support all of these efforts, long-term viability suffers both in terms of financial realities and drive to innovate within the organization.
Goal 1: CU Denver 2030, Will Be The Most Innovative, Inclusive, Entrepreneurial, And Socially Impactful University In The U.S.

Driven by the belief that the charge of the 21st century university is to equip the next generation to make the world a better place, we imagine CU Denver 2030 as the most innovative, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and socially impactful university in the U.S.

CU Denver is home to students, staff, and faculty who share a belief that career success is defined in three parts: a life of means (the ability to care for those whom you love most), a life of meaning (to do good work that creates lasting impact), and the chance to give back, with special attention to those at the margins.

Citing our diverse community of people and perspectives as the driver of divergent thinking, penchant for big ideas, and bias towards action, we [politely] argue for positive disruption. We are change agents who radically reimagine policies, practices, processes, and priorities to empower collaboration, incentivize innovation, and assess success through real-world impact.

CU Denver takes inspiration from longtime Denver-based serial social entrepreneur, Paul Polak. By helping businesses reimagine how they design, price, market, and distribute their products across the tech, farming, and healthcare sectors and beyond he championed freshwater access, fought for those living on less than two dollars a day, and accelerated start-ups that positively impacted girls experiencing extreme poverty.
STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Inventing And Incentivizing A Culture Of Innovation

How might we invent equitable, agile systems, ecosystems, and resources that incentivize rethinking routine, taking measured risks, and playing in the messy, fertile space of the inventor, artist, healer, and entrepreneur?

To achieve our vision we must reimagine models that mirror the design process and incentivize faculty, staff, and students to embrace the habits of mind for: empathizing with others by listening, observing, and walking in their shoes as a means for understanding; growing our skills, knowledge, and experiences in service of better defining the problems we hope to address; reserving time and creating spaces for ideating, brainstorming, and highlighting opportunities for innovation; and creating a culture where prototyping, testing, and iterating solutions is safe and celebrated.

If we are to create a culture of curiosity, creativity, and one-of-a-kind perspectives that invites all of us to show up as our whole selves, we must first acknowledge the crippling impact of enslaving Black people for 250 years, followed by another 150 years of systematic oppression. And acknowledge how we have perpetuated racist systems that privilege white culture. We must acknowledge the violence we’ve leveled on our LGBTQAI+ community. Acknowledge the painful history and forced removal of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Pueblo and Shoshone Nations from the University of Colorado’s four campuses.

Strategy 1, Initiative 1: Creating Agile, Mission-Driven Ecosystems

In the short- to mid-term, several small steps are needed to ensure the development of agile, mission-driven systems and ecosystems across campus.

- Meeting-Free-Fridays affords time for reflection, incubation, and dreaming.
- Value-based budgeting fast-tracks, fast-funds priorities so that funding matches the mission.
- Human energy is preserved for work that is important, not urgent; human-centered, not routine.
- Mind-space is afforded for playing the believing game of critical optimism rather than the doubting game of critical thinking.
- The culture of busyness falls away in favor of a culture of micro-napping, as a way of institutionalizing the power of tapping into the subconscious as a means for discovery and a celebration of that which is yet unknown.
- The entirety of entrepreneurial entities and centers work together under one “e-roof” and unifying mission (i.e. an institute for mission-driven entrepreneurship where all colleges are represented).
- Individual college priorities do not take precedence over the institution’s priorities.

In 2030, established policies will protect the resources that shape our culture:

- Stackable certificates, degrees, micro-credentials, and D1/D2/D3 courses are offered seamlessly as a part of the open-loop university.
- Innovation and entrepreneurship become the key differentiators for CU Denver, and CU Denver is ranked number one in the country.
- Flexible degree programs are offered in various formats (i.e. online, synchronous, in-person, bootcamps, seminars, degrees, etc.).
STRATEGIES

• CU Denver’s education is famed for being experiential, involving innovators and entrepreneurs from across the world as mentors, donors, advisors, and speakers.

Strategy 1, Initiative 2: Overhauling The Student Registration And Enabling Cross-Disciplinary, Stackable Micro-Credential & Certificate Programs

In the short- to mid-term, initiatives include:

• The student admissions and enrollment and registration process for main campus, extended studies, and non-degree students will be improved. The goal should be developing a uniform, seamless, and pleasant user experience for all students who are enrolling and registering for classes at CU Denver, irrespective of their status. Removing barriers would allow CU Denver to have more robust micro-credential and certificate programs in innovation and entrepreneurship.

• Research should be conducted to examine the desire for certificates comprised of for-credit courses. This research should also examine the barriers and pros and cons of non-degree, postgraduate, and masters certificates, and consider different design structures and delivery models such as courses or mini-courses that are stackable for credits leading to courses and certificates.

In 2030, CU Denver will become a model of academic innovation and entrepreneurship.

• Cross-disciplinary degrees and stackable certificates will become the norm, rather than the exception.

• Education will become much more experiential.

• Education offerings will become synonymous with student needs. Students will be able to access CU Denver’s courses and programs either in pursuit of a four-year degree program or as a resource to upskilling or reskilling.

Strategy 2: Building Bridges to the Entrepreneurial Community and a Global World in Need

What might be possible when building bridges that span departments and colleges, ways of thinking and ways of being, Speer Avenue and Colorado’s entrepreneurial ecosystem?

An incubator for inventing a more promising future, 2030 CU Denver amplifies mission-driven entrepreneurship by placing the following at the center of all its actions:

• Equity and Justice
• Empathy and Observation
• Ideation and Iteration

• Incubation and Acceleration
• Creativity and Collaboration
• Storytelling and Funding Innovation

Connecting and combining knowledge and experience, skillsets and mind-sets, we are known for identifying needs, gaps, and opportunities and creating innovative solutions that lead to social impact and social justice, greater health and greater wealth, and a world filled with artistic moments.

Perhaps our greatest opportunities lie within our capacity for mastering the art of imagination?

What if we were to think of the 2030 CU Denver experience as a work of art? What if internal and external gatekeepers and dream-makers and our community of entrepreneurs and innovators were to think of their work the way composers go about their artistic process?
STRATEGIES

Composers see the big picture first—the scope of the work, the instrumentation as it impacts orchestration, moments of arrival, and transitions that lead us on a hero’s journey or glide us across a dance floor, four feet scrambling to find three beats.

The thought that a composer begins a masterpiece in measure one and never lifts her pen from the page until the final note of the coda is absurd. Neither art nor life unfolds in linear fashion.

So, what if we were to imagine the 2030 CU Denver experience as our masterpiece? What do the big moments look like? How do the transitions unfold? Who will be in our ensemble? And who will be our audience? How will we orchestrate the composition of a life well lived?

Strategy 2.1, Initiative 1: Connecting with Colorado-based Mission Driven Organizations

Colorado is home to several mission-driven companies who want to be associated with our vision. These include:

- IDE Global [https://www.ideglobal.org]
- Global Seed Savers [https://globalseedsavers.org]
- Tetulia Tea [https://www.teatulia.com]
- Pairin [https://www.pairin.com]
- Vita Inclinata [https://vitatech.co/]
- Nokero Solar [https://www.nokero.com/our-team-a/257.htm]
- FloWater [https://www.drinkflowater.com]
- Wunder Capital [https://www.wundercapital.com/sustainability]
- Engineers Without Borders [https://www.ewb-usa.org]
- EcoEnclose [https://www.ecoenclose.com]
- Global Accelerator Network [https://www.gan.co]

In 2030, CU Denver will form strategic partnerships with leading thinkers and companies in Denver to better outcomes for society and the university.

Our open-loop stackable curriculum design incorporates feedback from academics and the CEOs of these great organizations. We visualize a future where our graduates are mentored and hired by globally experienced entrepreneurs — where agile eco-systems seamlessly involve the campus and relevant businesses. Where funding for exciting future initiatives is shared, and our graduates find their networks and experiences and, ultimately, ready employment in mission-driven organizations.

Incentive systems encourage collaboration within and without the university, particularly with mission-driven organizations. Staff and faculty are delighted and proud of the support they receive from the university, and are no longer punished for being innovative. Old-school incentive systems, such as the 40-40-20 are revised to encourage such collaboration.

Strategy 2, Initiative 2: Empowering the outgrowth of our internal and diverse talents

In the short- to mid-term, initiatives include:

Incentive systems are created at the faculty and the college level to incentivize collaboration. We have developed a mentality that working with other schools and colleges is desirable and rewarded. Reward systems may include summer research grants to foster research collaboration, as well as student scholarships for cross-college work. Furthermore, the 40-40-20 system disincentivizes faculty collaboration with other schools and this needs to be reviewed and reinvented.

Currently, several different entities and centers (e.g., the Jake Jabs Center, ThinqStudio, Inworks, the Comcast Center, etc.) work independently of one another, typically in their own colleges. This leads to redundancies and overlap in their activities and work.
STRATEGIES

We should immediately work towards pooling these resources under one “e-roof,” particularly in areas where short-term synergies may be accrued, perhaps as an “institute of mission-driven entrepreneurship.” By 2030, we should be able to pool in all these resources under this institute, thereby working seamlessly across colleges. Imagine how incredibly powerful this entity will be with each of the existing entities working together in synergy as opposed to independently.

To start off, these centers and entities should work together to make 2-3 campus-wide events happen, including perhaps one large campus-wide event, such as a “celebration of success” speaker event which will bring sponsorship, awareness, and media coverage to our joint endeavor.

Strategy 3: Telling Our Origin Story Anew

Leaning into our agile, inclusive, and entrepreneurial youth, CU Denver is poised to author our best future.

Creative with our resources, relevant in our degree programs, and embracing our city center location, our early journey as a CU System Extension maps our arrival as a Research 1 Institution known as Colorado’s premier Public Urban Research University. But our story is just beginning.

Galvanized by the challenges presented by the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism, we have learned how to learn in real time. Champions of equity, inclusivity, and social justice, CU Denver 2030 serves the underserved, make dreams a reality for Dreamers, opens-up possibilities for first-generation degree-seekers, welcomes international exchange, beams with PRIDE, and proudly acknowledges that we are Colorado’s Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

Keenly aware that the future of education is hybrid and in recognition that accessibility is a prerequisite for inclusivity, CU Denver students’ and employees’ stories are filled with multi-modal, real-world experiences that take them out of the classroom and out of the box. Our career-driven student body are problem-finders and challenge-solvers. And our faculty and staff are networked throughout the entrepreneurial community in Colorado and beyond, co-creating Colorado’s best future and doing good down the street and around the world.

Strategy 3, Initiative 1: Rebranding, Communicating, and Marketing CU Denver 2030

The Hispanic Serving Institution designation would provide economic support and help CU Denver build on existing entrepreneurial partnerships and programs that focus on Latinx and Hispanic students’ professional career paths.

CU Denver is committed to providing access to all qualified students. One critical initiative that would help provide all eligible students access would be to offer scholarships to all first-generation, Latinx and Hispanic, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and DREAMers.
Interactions

The way forward is to collaborate, engage, and synergize and to do so effectively. Three key stakeholder groups will need to be empathetically engaged.

These are:

**External Dream Makers**

- When we listen to the external dream makers and involve them in our zeal to make CU Denver a truly outstanding university with regard to impactful innovation and entrepreneurship, we realize that their profound experience and insights can help us in a plethora of useful areas such as:
  - Current trends in the Colorado ecosystem, understanding that they possess great insights;
  - Synergies and expertise with regard to curriculum development and sponsored research;
  - Student mentorship;
  - Funding requirements consistent with our desire to be an open-loop university consisting of agile systems, ecosystems, and cultures.

**Internal Gatekeepers and Dreammakers**

- Internal dream makers include chancellors, vice chancellors, deans, associate deans, department chairs, faculty, curricular gatekeepers and co-curricular content creators, formal change engines (Comcast Media and Technology Center, Jake Jabs Center for Entrepreneurship, ThinqStudio etc.) and informal mentors, whose support is critical in breaking down silos and fostering new, collaborative and agile systems.

- They also include staff members whose support and vision is necessary to break down departmental barriers as well as policies that currently exist in colleges and departments inhibiting cross-campus collaboration, such as enrollment sharing, cross-listing of courses, D1/D2/D3 revenue sharing, etc. For an example of some current policies that inhibit cross-campus collaboration, please see the Appendix B.

**Entrepreneurs and Innovators**

- When we listen to entrepreneurs and innovators among us – the curious, creative, collaboratively minded students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community partners who believe that the role of the university is to prepare the next generation with the mindsets, skill sets, knowledge, and experiences to invent the future they will soon inherit, we realize that silos were made to be broken and that the only way forward is to create an environment of positive interaction, where students, experienced entrepreneurs, community leaders, faculty and staff of complementing skills get together to create magic.
THEME

TRANSFORM THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

CO-CHAIRS

- Lisa VanRaemdonck | Executive Director and Lecturer, School of Public Affairs Institute
- Chris Puckett | Managing Associate University Counsel, General Counsel

TEAM MEMBERS

- Gregory Gibson | Senior Director, Facilities Management
- Zack Strober | Senior Director, University Events
- Keith Teeter | Associate Director, Auraria Library
- Marci Grant | Director of Development, Advancement
- Jessi Zemetra | Program Manager, CityCenter
- Julie O’Brien | Co-Director, C-PEER; Executive Director, Assessment and Program Improvement; Associate Research Faculty, School of Education and Human Development
- Rebecca Martinez | Employer Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator, Career Center
- Cecilia Wu | Assistant Professor, Music and Entertainment Studies, College of Arts and Media
- Sarah Kelsey | External Relations Coordinator, Risk Management and Insurance, Business School
- Kristen Kang Salsbury | Continuing and Professional Education Program Manager, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Clay Harmon | Interim Director, International Enrollment Management, International Affairs
- Laura Hager | Associate Director, K-12 Partnerships and Dual Enrollment Program, Undergraduate Admissions
- Rachel Brown | Director, Professional Development and Internships, College of Architecture and Planning
- Taylor Broderick | Marketing Manager, University Communications
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

CU Denver embraces external partnerships as a cornerstone of realizing our university values and accomplishing our mission. We develop and foster synergistic relationships where we have equal agency in creating mutually reinforcing activities that have important impact. Our intentional, holistic, and inclusive approach to partnership allows us to bring our unique position and expertise to a variety of collaborations that serve our communities and co-create positive change.

Our students, faculty, and staff succeed because our partnerships support individual and collective success, and create unrivaled opportunities for growth and learning. Our partners succeed because we listen to their needs, curate our best-matched people, opportunities and resources, and offer a customized pathway for ongoing engagement.

In 2030, partnership is a core value of everyone and everything we do at CU Denver. Our partnerships and their impact on our students and the community is what sets us apart from other universities.

WHERE WE EXCEL

Our current, organic approach to partnerships has resulted in some impactful and mutually beneficial partnerships, in part, because CU Denver employs mission-driven and community-minded faculty and staff, and serves passionate, driven, and thoughtful students. Our past success is also the result of the generosity of our alumni and community partners who continue to walk with us and support us to improve in our partnerships with them.

We excel at connecting an individual unit and well-matched partner for a specific purpose. When we are in partnership, we are generous with our time and expertise and work hard to limit the internal administrative burden on our partners. We have some deep and long-lasting partnerships. Our partners find our students to be engaging, thoughtful people who bring value and new perspectives, and our faculty to be knowledgeable experts who bring information and new thinking.

Our mission-driven, do-it-yourself culture has provided the flexibility and autonomy for people at CU Denver to create unique partnerships that have had short- and long-term impact. Many programs and units have embraced the fact that partnerships are key to their success and to the educational experience we offer at CU Denver.
WHERE WE STRUGGLE

CU Denver currently has a plethora of impactful yet overlapping, disconnected, and varying partnerships grown out of individual needs, connections for students, donor interests, educational needs of our programs, and personal networks without an overarching vision or strategy.

There is no easy way for all potential partners to access CU Denver, although there are some nodes of access to specific units. It can be difficult for partners to know where to start, and to find their way through the dense network of university employees, units, and systems. Sometimes our partnerships are uneven and lack sustained followup and cultivation. Feedback shows that as a result, these potential (and even current) partners choose not to approach or expand partnership when we make the process and relationship unnecessarily difficult. Some of this complexity is a result of the decentralized nature of the university, but part of it is of our own making.

When we are at our worst, we do not understand the political and power dynamics of our partnerships, we compete internally for partnership connections, we focus more on what we will "get" from the partnership than on what we have to give, and we fail our partners through our well-meaning but myopic actions or through benign neglect.

The result of our struggle is a siloed system of partnership that usually serves the needs of individual CU Denver programs but that requires persistence and patience from our partners. This approach leaves untapped CU Denver expertise and resources, and limits what CU Denver can learn from our communities. Our approach implicitly disadvantages partners who have less time and resources and ultimately limits the opportunities and success of our students.

This disconnected system prevents us from widely sharing a compelling and collective story about the impact of our partnerships which means fewer potential partners are aware of the opportunities to work with CU Denver.

Overall, our partnership approach lacks an overarching strategic lens, shared commitment and resources for partnerships, and shared accountability for mutual success.

Metaphor and Imagery

Current: A lovely container garden of partnerships — separate requiring individual efforts to provide soil, fertilizer, sun, and water, with mixed outcomes as a result.

Future: A cohesive and thoughtfully cultivated field that supports a variety of partnerships — some rigid and orderly, others natural and blended—with an intentional system for getting nutrients and water to every kind of partnership and an understanding of the anticipated fruits of this collective labor.
Goal 1: Partnerships Guided By Values

IDEA

CU Denver approaches partnerships as the foundation for fulfilling our purpose and mission as a public, urban, research university. We are guided by our values and partnership principles with a deep understanding of power dynamics and the university voice and role in community and systems change. Our partnerships are a cornerstone of our academic mission and our position as an anchor institution in Denver and across Colorado.

Many of our strongest academic programs would not be possible without our external partners hosting capstone projects and internships, providing mentorship, hiring students, and giving faculty the opportunity to use and grow their expertise in real-world environments. As a premier anchor institution we have a responsibility to be a good neighbor and create additional value for communities beyond our educational mission.

We learn side-by-side with our partners and they challenge us to grow and evolve in ways that help us realize our full potential.

STRATEGY 1.1: PARTNERSHIPS AS A UNIVERSAL CORE VALUE

Designate partnerships as a core value for CU Denver, adopt a set of partnership principles, and communicate from the top leadership that partnership is a cornerstone of our mission and success.

Adopting partnerships as a core value communicates internally and externally where we are going to put our resources and commitment. By making partnerships an intentional core value, we can set goals and hold ourselves accountable for the outcomes. This is important across the entire institution. Declaring this intention from the Chancellor’s office, in conjunction with CU Denver leaders in innovation, advancement, and equity will be a strong message that will help lay the groundwork for culture and structural change. It will also show high-level support for the new managing director to help them succeed.

To help further guide our partnership interactions, we should also adopt a set of university-level partnership principles in the short term. In the longer term, these principles could be integrated into our CU Denver values. In the short term it will be important to call out these specific principles for how we expect faculty, staff, and students to guide partnerships through their lifecycle.

In the use of these principles, we must openly acknowledge the harm and/or benign neglect that we have inflicted on our partners in the past, and be willing to work through reconciliation with curiosity and growth mindset rather than defensiveness.

(The Vision Team has drafted the following set of partnership principles as a start to this work.)
Goal 1: Partnerships Guided By Values

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

**Defined Partner Spheres**
We focus our partnership efforts to match defined opportunities and needs within CU Denver, across the CU system, among Auraria campus partners, in Denver, around Colorado, across the Rocky Mountain Region, the US, and with our international partners around the world.

**Mission Driven**
We unite with partners who are aligned with our mission and share our values by clearly articulating our values and intentionally exploring the values of others.

**Mutually Reinforcing**
We ensure that our partnerships are creating mutually beneficial relationships and we each have equal agency in addressing our collective challenges and needs. We acknowledge the complex aspects of partnership driven by power, competition, cooperation, and mutual need.

**Make It Matter**
We seek out partners who are proactive and have intent and capability to co-create meaningful, creative solutions.

**Value Outcomes And Relationships Equally**
We build relationships beyond our immediate, transactional needs, and mend relationships where we have caused harm, in order to create sustaining transformation in ourselves, our communities, and our world.

**Do What We Say We’ll Do**
We focus our partnership efforts to match defined opportunities and needs within CU Denver, across the CU system, among Auraria campus partners, in Denver, around Colorado, across the Rocky Mountain Region, the US, and with our international partners around the world.

**Coordinate Our Efforts**
We coordinate our efforts across CU Denver to maximize our impact and ensure that we can be an effective, comprehensive, and supportive partner.

**Partnering For The Long Run**
We find ways to continue partnerships beyond a single project and to continually evolve the relationship together.
Goal 1: Partnerships Guided By Values

STRATEGY 1.2: BUILD AN OVERARCHING PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

While individual schools, programs, and units have some carefully thought out partnership strategies, CU Denver as a whole needs an overarching and inclusive vision and strategy for partnerships. This will help guide decisions about infrastructure and use of resources and help align the many means of partnering across campus.

A key to this strategy is to start by assessing our existing assets and resources. Build on what we have and only dismantle or reorganize if what we have can’t be grown or amended to be what we need. This approach honors the good work that has been happening, helps elevate the existing experts and best practices in partnerships, and helps focus new resources on real gaps. Our ability to be bold and creative in our partnerships rests on this right balance of autonomy, flexibility, and connectedness. We should take a network, systems-view or landscape analysis lens rather than simply trying to create an inventory list that is constantly changing.

STRATEGY 1.3: SIMPLIFY AND SUPPORT OUR PARTNERS IN ENGAGING WITH US

Employ professional staff who act as a partnership concierge to provide a customized experience, ensure warm handoffs between programs, schools, and units with the end result of providing holistic and partner-focused relationships.

Create a public-facing menu/catalog of opportunities for partnering with CU Denver to showcase our capacity and capabilities and help partners find the right entry point.

Routinely ask partners for feedback and reflect together on our partnerships in order to continually improve. Taking the partner view through user experience and human-centered design thinking can help make sure that our partnerships are truly, mutually beneficial and that the process of partnering with us is easy and accessible.

Map out and build easy-to-use pathways and pipelines for our partners. Rather than our partners having to do the work of figuring out where to start and how to engage, we want to provide a bit of a roadmap that works from the user (partner) perspective. The difference between and pathway and a pipeline could be described as—pathways are a bit more customizable based on our mutual needs, pipelines are a bit more transactional (as in, we know we have a clear need for a pipeline of local government partners to be capstone clients for our Master of Public Administration students).

In thinking about the pathways and pipelines, house staff in physical spaces that provide a higher level of accessibility to CU Denver. This includes keeping and enhancing the idea of a “front door” and a physical and virtual home for partner resources.

This strategy builds off of the broader infrastructure and systems view of our existing partnerships, partner pathways, points of entry, and gaps.
Goal 1: Partnerships Guided By Values

STRATEGY 1.4: SUPPORT FACULTY AND STAFF IN BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Build a new, hub-and-spoke infrastructure (dedicated staff, IT systems, communication channels) to ensure that we are well-organized and connected across campus to serve our partners in ways that meet our principles. This infrastructure should add to the existing partnership structures at the unit levels to create an abundance of new opportunities for everyone, rather than create administrative barriers, additional expenses, and systems with limited access.

Create tools, toolkits, trainings, and peer learning opportunities that help guide faculty and staff through partnership conceptualization, development, and maintenance – all rooted in our values and principles. Use best practices and expertise that already exist at the school and unit level and compensate those experts for their time in helping build this new culture and supportive tools. These tools would walk an employee through how to create the partnership, how to maintain and cultivate it, and when and how the partnership can be tracked for future success.

Because so many of our partnerships are focused on student success, these supports should have a heavy focus on these types of partnerships in alignment with the larger student success strategic plan goals and with the partnerships for student success goal herein. In addition to tools, the University could create professional development programs that incentivize and reward staff and faculty for student success partnerships. CU Denver’s staff and faculty are committed to our students and will gladly engage when provided support and tools.

Create incentives for faculty and staff to engage in partnerships and add accountability for Deans and other leaders to ensure we are all committed to and supporting the partnership strategies.
Goal 2: Partnerships For Student Success

IDEA

CU Denver engages in mutually-beneficial, reciprocal, ongoing, and holistic partnerships that drive enrollment, retention, life-long learning, and workforce-ready student success for the people who come to CU Denver at any point in their educational journey.

STRATEGY 2.1: PARTNERSHIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS ARE EVERYONE’S BUSINESS

Building on partnerships as a core value in the foundational goal, our partnerships for student success are the most directly linked to our educational mission. Make the creation and cultivation of partnerships that support our students a responsibility for every staff and faculty member, as well as the campus as a whole. CU Denver’s culture needs to value, incentivize, and reward individuals for building and maintaining student supporting partnerships.

Partnerships sustain and create opportunities for CU Denver’s students. CU Denver’s students are frequently first generation, from historically marginalized backgrounds and identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC). Partnerships are more critical for students from these communities because historically they have been excluded from accessing structures of power in government and industry that lead to jobs. Whether they are women, people of color, differently abled, or from a marginalized religious background, many groups have been excluded from open and ready access to the networks of people and organizations that can provide mentors, internships, jobs, and lifelong connections for career success. Our commitment to partnerships for student success can help overcome these network barriers.

We know that employers look to us to help diversify their workforce. We must be clear about the ways in which we are serving our students and honoring our partnerships while holding our partners to a high standard of inclusion and embracing students for everything they have to offer, not just their background and identity.

STRATEGY 2.2: CENTER OUR ALUMNI AS PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AND AS LIFELONG LEARNERS

CU Denver can strengthen its partnerships with and through our graduates. We should step up to meet our alumni interests by seeing them as more than bragging rights and donations when they succeed. Our alumni are some of our greatest champions and they are eager to give back to the university and to our current students. By strengthening and broadening our connections with our alumni we create mentorship/internship/job connection opportunities with our current students and lifelong learning opportunities for our alumni in micro-credentials, certificates, and additional degrees.

A key to this strategy is to create targeted efforts that bring alumni into classrooms as guest lecturers, into relationship with students as mentors, into roles as internship and capstone project hosts, and into our career and educational events as successful professionals with stories to share. Our alumni have unique vantage points, having experienced our programs and found their way in the professional world. Their guidance on how to help our students be workforce ready is a valuable asset and gift. Like our other partners, our alumni need clear points of entry and obvious partnership pathways in order to find the optimal ways to serve our students.
Goal 2: Partnerships For Student Success

But the new alumni pathways don’t end with connections to lift up our existing students. Our alumni also want and need ongoing learning opportunities after their initial educational achievement with us. As higher education evolves to offer more accessible and rigorous lifelong learning opportunities, our alumni are well positioned to take advantage of our professional development and continuing education programs.

As with all of our partnership activities, specific units are already engaging alumni in some of these ways. This strategy will benefit from all of the elements of the foundational goal to have a stronger infrastructure and collective culture supporting partnerships with alumni.

STRATEGY 2.3: LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS TO GUARANTEE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND MENTORSHIP FOR EVERY STUDENT

Partnerships create jobs. Many of CU Denver’s students attend to “get ahead” in life. Unlike students for whom college was the next thing paid for by parents, many of CU Denver’s students are here because they want to change their lives and the trajectory of their families. Classroom education may provide knowledge and some skills but partnerships create mentorships, internships, networks, support systems, and jobs. With a stronger, campus-wide focus on partnerships for student success and more coordination across partnership activities, CU Denver should be a place where students are guaranteed an opportunity to have a mentor and experiential learning experience.

CU Denver owes its students the opportunity to create meaningful connections with partners and to have real-world experiences in their chosen fields of study. For this strategy to be accomplished we’ll need more partners, more collaboration to ensure partners are consistently engaged, and more support for partners to fulfill their role in these relationships. Many staff and faculty are already creating these opportunities, but in some areas they are doing so without expertise and support. Imagine the possibilities for our students if our structures, processes, faculty, and staff were fully enabled to create these connections.

STRATEGY 2.4: INVEST IN A UNIVERSAL LOCATION WHERE PARTNERS CAN CONNECT TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

CU Denver’s distributed structure can make it difficult for external partners to find a way to connect. External partners want to connect to support students, but are often unable to find their way through our weird structures and language (what is a provost?).

Building on simplifying and supporting our partners in engaging with us in the foundational goal, create a single location for external partners to engage in supporting student success. Since many of our partners are primarily interested in connecting with our students, this enhanced point of entry would provide easy access, support, and the ability for CU Denver to nurture, cultivate, and follow-up on partnerships. A central, well resourced location demonstrates and furthers the commitment to make student partnerships a core value.

CU Denver has already invested in LynxConnect, but to create guaranteed mentorships or internships for all students would take a significant resource commitment. A strengthened and broadened LynxConnect would make this a reality.

Again, the balance of cross-campus coordination, ease-of-use, autonomy, and flexibility is important for individual units to meet their different needs when it comes to required experiential learning for degree programs.
Goal 2: Partnerships For Student Success

STRATEGY 2.5: ESTABLISH PRIORITIES, AREAS FOR GROWTH, OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND EQUITY, AND ADDRESS HISTORIC WRONGS IN PARTNERSHIPS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

It is necessary that partnerships are a core value, but it is also critical that a group start to identify entities and industries that warrant additional support and ideation. While it is useful for all CU Denver partnerships, this level of strategy is particularly important for partnerships for student success with larger, more complex organizations. For example, both the city and county of Denver and Denver Public Schools are important affiliates that warrant specific planning and resource commitments. These entities are key to successful student partnerships and CU Denver should be committed to providing concierge-level service to each of them.

In addition to the core affiliates, CU Denver needs to create a strategy that recognizes that all partners are not the same and that we cannot sacrifice our core principles. This strategic plan should identify new, emerging, and disruptive partners who can challenge us to think differently about our educational experiences and how we support our students with experiential learning.

STRATEGY 2.6: EXPLICITLY EVALUATE ALL STAFF AND FACULTY ON HOW THEY SUPPORT STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS

Building on supporting faculty and staff in being good stewards of our partnerships and partnerships as a core value in the foundational goal, CU Denver should adopt metrics and be held accountable for meeting or not meeting goals related to partnerships for student success. This accountability should extend to the individual level as well. Many primary units already do this by evaluating faculty on engagement in experiential learning and creation of student learning opportunities. By making partnerships (and potentially other core values like DEI) part of an annual evaluation that includes plans, goals, and metrics, we demonstrate to our students and community that we want to be different.
Goal 3: Partnership To Change Our World

IDEA

CU Denver uses its organized and collective expertise and resources in partnership with people, communities, organizations, governments, and companies to co-create solutions for the challenges of our time and drive equitable, positive change on our campus, in Denver, across Colorado, and around the world.

As a public urban research university on a unique campus, anchored in a growing and dynamic city with a colorful history, and in a state with vast opportunities and deep inequities, CU Denver has a responsibility to harness its talent, knowledge, assets, and resources to help build a more equitable community. The challenges of our time are intensely complex, multidimensional, and dynamically evolving. Enduring solutions require collaboration among many types of organizations and people, with many different ways of understanding the challenges and acting on potential solutions. Our approaches must be iterative, innovative, and adaptive and trusted relationships are required.

CU Denver must build a reputation as being a valuable, consistent, and relevant partner in these conversations. This reputation must be earned through our organized, valued, and consistent participation, and through innovative communication about our work. We must understand what we bring to the table and we must be coordinated and organized in our approach.

Key metrics should look beyond the number of partnerships and overall impact and take a network lens to measure and track the components of success of our relationships such as trust and value.

STRATEGY 3.1: BE WHERE THE FUTURE IS BEING ENVISIONED

Employ professional staff as Community Connectors to represent the campus in community and statewide conversations and bring together cross-disciplinary faculty and staff experts with students and university assets to participate in co-creating solutions. These Community Connectors strategically and proactively represent CU Denver at various “tables” around the state and region with a natural pathway to engage with partners in the work.

A key to this strategy is employing the right professionals who are systems thinkers and can see and act on “connecting the dots” among partners and within the university. They must be committed to representing CU Denver as a whole and must be perpetually curious about our partners and our own capabilities and assets. They must be supported by campus leadership, internal communication channels, and a culture of responsibility for partnership success and accountability to staying organized and connected internally.

Another key to this strategy is understanding the landscape and timing of conversations about the challenges of our time, and choosing our engagement wisely, based on our capacity and skills and the alignment with our values.
Goal 3: Partnership To Change Our World

STRATEGY 3.2: CREATE THE SPACES WHERE THE FUTURE IS BEING ENVISIONED

Proactively convene conversations about complex community and societal issues, our collective future, and community needs, with the purpose of engaging our partners to better understand a challenge, and to bring together cross-disciplinary teams of faculty, staff, students and alumni with university assets, to co-create solutions. Then, commit to our right role(s) in carrying forward action on the issues—rather than convene and leave.

A key to this strategy is using our existing assets in physical space, event planners, skilled facilitators, systems thinkers, subject matter experts, and engaged students to create experiences that generate new, collaborative ideas that no individual could have come up with on their own.

In the long term, this strategy may require new assets and investments aligned with goals related to student success, research, and creative activities, innovation, and our place.

STRATEGY 3.3: AFFIRM OUR ROLE AND INTEREST IN THE COLLECTIVE FUTURE WITH A PUBLIC INITIATIVE

Create a major, well-publicized, consistent, and externally valued initiative to affirm our commitment and role in the challenges of our time. The purpose is to be clear about our value and right role — and to show our commitment with an impactful initiative that engages students, alumni, faculty, staff, and partners. This could include:

- An annual “grand challenges” initiative.
- A community challenge annual theme.
- Acting as an incubator for smaller components of big solutions.
- A data hub (similar to NYU, Brown and UNLV).
- A multidisciplinary innovation hub.

This strategy must be deeply guided by our partners and we must be clear about our right role(s) and the power and political dynamics involved for us and our partners. We can not create this initiative in isolation and still be true to our partnership principles.

STRATEGY 3.4: USE A “THINK TANK” MENTALITY FOR PROACTIVE AND RESPONSIVE PROJECTS

Use the think tank model to create a scholarly venue that responds to requests and proactively seeks partnerships. These partnerships provide knowledge and thought leadership and allow CU Denver faculty, staff, and students to learn from the expertise of our partners. In this realm our role is one of knowledge generation, sense making, observing trends, and creating translated-to-practice and accessible information to inform decision makers. The think tank model also allows CU Denver to use its voice and influence to help catalyze change.
Goal 3: Partnership To Change Our World

Scholarly think tanks are catalysts and hubs for new ideas and new ways of thinking. They have an understanding of the broader context and timing of when their knowledge could be used to make change. They are connected to decision-makers and often take their direction about research topics and questions directly from those decision-makers. They have rigorous, multidisciplinary approaches and ways of seeing solutions that span the boundaries of traditional academia and the realm of community and policy change.

A key to this strategy is finding all of the various think tank-like entities we have on campus and creating something that is additive, not competitive with our own current work. Another key to this strategy is having a clear business plan and connecting the think tank work to student experiential learning.
Goal 4: Putting The Soul Into Our Brand And Reputation Through Partnerships

IDEA

CU Denver tells its partnership stories in a way that brings CU Denver’s brand (CU in the City) to life by inspiring new, diverse partnerships, embodying our reputation as a values-driven organization seeking equity for all, celebrating our success, and reinforcing our value as a partner.

STRATEGY 4.1: BUILD THE REPUTATION OF CU DENVER BY TELLING THE STORY OF PARTNERSHIPS TO REINFORCE THAT OUR SOUL IS THE COMMUNITY AND OUR IMPACT IS MULTIGENERATIONAL

From bridges to bike lanes, our research partnerships literally built this city. And, while concrete, bricks and mortar might be the outward evidence of our work, our community partnerships and creative activities have ensured that Denver continues to be a city that was built by her people, for her people. Our students and alumni broaden this impact across the United States and the world through student success partnerships. From supporting rural communities to creating more equitable classrooms we begin and end in the Mile High City.

At CU Denver, we believe in research. And research shows that when a first-generation student achieves an advanced degree it sets their life, and the lives of the generation before them and after them, on a new course.

CU Denver may be young, but it will exist long after Denver’s booms and busts. In order to continue to be a catalyst for socioeconomic mobility, CU Denver needs to continue to build our reputation as a reliable partner that seeks reciprocal benefits for the students, staff, and faculty that we serve.

Additionally, CU Denver has existing relationships with institutions and industries that need to be cultivated to continue to build trust. It is imperative that CU Denver nurture these partnerships, and trumpet their impact.

We believe that our storytelling drives awareness and increased belief in our reputation, which drives an increased interest in partnering with us, which creates more stories to tell.

We must invest in our storytelling in order to increase our partnerships. The way we tell our stories is the innovation in this strategy.

![Diagram of Storytelling, Awareness & Reputation, Interest & Partnership]
Goal 4: Putting The Soul Into Our Brand And Reputation Through Partnerships

INITIATIVES:

Create an immersive, interactive experience by leveraging new technology such as virtual and augmented reality, so people can see and feel the multigenerational benefits of our partnerships in the community. Imagine: Walking across a bridge and seeing that it was evaluated for strength and safety by CU Denver’s civil engineering students; an alumni profile pops up when you pass the building for the nonprofit organization they lead; standing in a classroom where our students are creating equitable learning spaces.

Shift the focus from telling the story of a partnership to highlighting the impact the partnership has had. This includes leaning into the human experience in all aspects of our partnership storytelling. We would rather have people walk away knowing the impact of our partnerships than knowing how the partnership was created. Our stories make it clear that we value our partnerships and that they are not just a transaction between a university and organization.

STRATEGY 4.2: RECOGNIZE THAT OUR PARTNERS ARE BRAND AMBASSADORS

When we tell our partnership stories we can lean into our partners and recognize them as being some of our best communicators. When we connect students with our partners for experiential learning or conduct research with our partners, we become connected in a way that links our futures. Our partners are trusted community resources and CU Denver should recognize and be a partner to preserve that. Even further, CU Denver can continue to gain trust and credibility in key underrepresented communities on a local and global scale by being strategic about our partners and recognizing success. To begin moving in this direction, CU Denver needs to develop an institutional mindset that our partners can be our greatest advocates for the university and students and support their efforts in telling our joint stories.

INITIATIVES:

Allow people to experience the partnership and feel the impact through experiential marketing and brand activation. An example of these types of brand activations would be Game of Thrones and the Red Cross running a blood drive by allowing attendees of South by Southwest to sit on the iron throne. People experienced the partnership and understood their contribution to the end goal. We can attract interest, boost engagement, and showcase our values through interesting brand activation.

Equip our partners with the tools and resources needed to effectively tell the story of our partnership together. This includes the creation of joint creative and marketing materials as well as ideas to encourage further collaboration. We encourage our partners to share the story of our partnership and its impacts on key stakeholders and work together to share the impact of our work with the broader community. The goal would be to leverage the principles of brand borrowing to elevate both CU Denver and our partners, simultaneously. For some partners, access to our communication resources (video, print, written) can be a benefit and a way that we create a mutually beneficial campaign.

Another idea would be to show the breadth and depth of our partnerships by developing actual activations and installations through key communities to highlight impact. For example, painting on the streets in the bike lines to demonstrate how it was made safer by CU Denver (and partner). This creates an interactive experience where people can journey through the city and see the impact of our partnerships.
Goal 4: Putting The Soul Into Our Brand And Reputation Through Partnerships

In the form of an app, members of the community could take a physical (or virtual) tour and experience our impact in the wild. This could include visiting key landmarks of our research in action, learning more about our work in classrooms and frequenting locally owned businesses by alumni, all of which were made possible through a vast network of partnerships. A Pokemon Go for CU Denver, if you will.

Our partners would welcome these opportunities for us to showcase them and how we partnered with them and could use the materials for their own marketing efforts.

STRATEGY 4.3: REINFORCE THE PARTNERSHIP SPACE BY COMMUNICATING ABOUT RADICAL INCLUSIVITY

By leaning into our value of radical inclusivity, CU Denver will increase our partnership potential and continue to build brand equity and reputation. CU Denver needs to develop a strategic plan towards partnership as noted above. As part of that plan, CU Denver needs to acknowledge and recognize how it can use its partnerships to further equity for its students, acknowledge historic wrongs, and seek community based solutions to decenter whiteness. This work should be connected to the strategic plan goals of being empowered by our inclusive excellence.

INITIATIVES:

CU Denver should shift how we talk about and tell the story of our partnership while it is happening by bringing CU Denver into the community and the community into CU Denver. This includes rethinking our downtown location as a destination and giving people an opportunity to come in, while also creating activations outside of our space. For example, setting up a tent and passing out water, sunscreen, and snacks to peaceful protestors during the Black Lives Matter movement this summer. Or removing barriers to our space and allowing community organizations to use buildings to conduct business and create impact.

By communicating in authentic and dynamic ways about our own evolution toward being an equitable and inclusive organization, we can inspire partners on their journey and find others who will newly align with us as they see our commitment and transformation.
INTERACTIONS

The partnerships goals intersect across all of the other vision teams because good partnerships will be required in order to achieve other goals (such as experiential learning for students) and because other goals will need to be met for partnership goals to be realized (such as partnered research being considered differently in promotion and tenure).

Specifically, we have seen links in the following places:

**Be Empowered By Our Inclusive Excellence**

- We also believe we need a change in the culture of responsibility. Equity is everyone’s responsibility and partnerships should be everyone’s responsibility too.

- We also know that our partnership work has caused harm in the past. We need to acknowledge and reconcile that harm. This should be done through the same process and lens as our other reckoning and reconciliation work.

- We want our future partnership work to be based in values of equity and to be as intentional and forward thinking as our journey to inclusive excellence.

**Lead In Student Success and Educate For The Future**

- We believe that our strategies fit nicely with the interests of the student success group in providing career services, experiential learning and student-focused opportunities through partnership. Our strategies will help ensure that these partnerships are equitable, mutually beneficial, well-matched and holistically serve our partner needs.

- Our toolkits and principles will help us be more consistent while retaining the customized and personal touch with our partners.

- We see our strategies as additive in ensuring that part of the partnership pathway includes providing lifelong learning opportunities to partners and that faculty and staff are accountable for good partnership work.

**Better The World Through Research and Creative Work**

- We believe that goals around incentives, tenure, promotion and work balance are critical to the success of our strategies for co-creating community and societal change with partners.

- Multidisciplinary, cross-campus, partnered research and creative activities goals align with our strategies to be in and create places where we understand and work toward solving the complex issues of our time and proactively create a new future.

- To meet our partnership goals, faculty especially need the incentives, training, support and freedom to do community-based, community-driven and partnered research.

**Put Our People At The Center**

- Our strategies around culture change and accountability for good partnership stewardship connect with some of the goals for people at the center.
INTERACTIONS

The Art Of Innovation and Mission-Driven Entrepreneurship

- Our lifelong learning opportunities align with some goals within this area.
- We believe that targeted efforts in partnerships can build exciting and innovative initiatives.

Leverage Our Place

- The place goals align with our interests in having physical spaces that are welcoming and create an atmosphere that matches our partnership principles. They also align with our goals of having a stronger front door presence and physical places for partners to use our resources.
LEVERAGE OUR PLACE

CO-CHAIRS

- Tobin Bliss | Associate Vice Chancellor, Fiscal Planning
- Nan Ellin | Dean, College of Architecture and Planning

TEAM MEMBERS

- Kelly Mason | Assistant Director, University Events
- Meg Touborg | Director, Development, College of Architecture and Planning
- Will Swann | Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs
- Esther Sullivan | Assistant Professor, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Ken Schroeppe | Assistant Professor and Urban Design Program Director, College of Architecture and Planning
- Cary Weatherford | Executive Director, Office of Institutional Planning
- Alice Crogan | Director, Marketing and Communications, College of Arts and Media
- Lori Pace | CEO, Changing Paces
- Eugene Howard | Senior City Planner, City and County of Denver
- Joey Carasquillo | Principal, Anderson Mason Dale Architects
What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

CU Denver is a destination and gateway to the city. People come through our front door with a sense of arrival, get what they are looking for and more, and keep coming back. CU Denver provides research and service as an action leader and thought partner, addressing pressing issues that face our community and beyond. CU Denver will be the first place people turn when they seek partnership, sponsorship, philanthropy, or expertise. The campus will also offer a rich array of arts and cultural events, reflecting our diverse community and including people from across the globe, as well as those whose families contributed to the history and evolution of Colorado migration and immigration.

WHERE WE EXCEL

• We are uniquely positioned within a magnificent landscape and a vital downtown, with diverse communities where both the city and environs continue to be our campus, as well as our canvas.

• We are accessible to students from all backgrounds and socioeconomic groups, including nontraditional students.

• Our campus is traversed by a creek that endows it with natural beauty, biodiversity, and recreational opportunities, while also connecting us with a major network of parks and waterways.

• Denver is an emerging global city with a healthy economy that allows many opportunities for engagement and impact: research, community outreach, arts and culture, philanthropy, revenue, and diverse partners.

• We engage in hands-on, experiential, community-based, and engaged teaching, learning, research, and creative work.

• We are scrappy, nimble, and willing/able to evolve.

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

• There is a lack of community awareness of — and affinity for — CU Denver.

• CU Denver has not fully recognized and honored the Native communities that originally lived on this land, nor have we fully engaged the West Denver community.

• There remains identity and brand confusion within the Auraria campus and the CU system.
Goal 1: Distinguish CU Denver And Strengthen Our Identity By Transforming The Larger Neighborhood And District

Distinguish CU Denver, strengthen our identity, and transform the larger neighborhood/district by creating an outstanding physical setting and developing strong symbiotic partnerships with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Success measures may include:

• Even stronger bridges are established to the community through outreach, community engagement, research and creative work, internships, mentorships, and philanthropy.

• Vital and vibrant public outdoor spaces are accessible to all, including organic learning gardens (so we eat what we grow) and the campus is designated an arboretum.

• CU Denver facilities are amenities for Denver and create impact for us as a civic institution.

• Students and community members feel welcome, safe, and comfortable here.

• We achieve a strong CU Denver identity.

• The district is a legal entity with political and economic authority, and has a name that speaks to all stakeholders.

Success cannot happen without:

• Good urban design, placemaking, and building in harmony with nature (sustainability).

• Bringing people to campus.

• Including neighbors, partners, community, and industry as well as students, faculty, and staff.

• Partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors as well as our Auraria campus partners.

• Honoring our location in Larimer Historic District, where Denver was founded.
Goal 1: Distinguish CU Denver And Strengthen Our Identity By Transforming The Larger Neighborhood And District

STRATEGY 1.1: ESTABLISH AN INNOVATION DISTRICT OR CORRIDOR

Establish a new district (Innovation District) that would distinguish CU Denver, strengthen our identity, and transform the larger neighborhood or district. This district would become a major hub in the larger regional network and a magnet for urban, economic, and ecological vitality through innovation, entrepreneurship, placemaking, and community building. It would also make CU Denver a magnet for intellectual life and a place for the creative spirit to flourish.

Initiative 1.1.1
Establish a clear value proposition for an Innovation district or corridor for CU Denver and the community, city, state, and region.

Initiative 1.1.2
Leverage our space by identifying opportunities for the diverse use of existing properties, including reimagining our workspace to include industry partners to provide enhanced educational opportunities along with mutual economic benefits through sharing and leasing space, equipment, and staff.

Initiative 1.1.3
Partner with developers of new buildings on the CU Denver side of Speer Boulevard for inclusion in their flagship buildings at Larimer and 14th Street and on empty lots adjacent to CU Denver in their building programs.

Initiative 1.1.4
Enhance the Auraria campus and CU Denver’s presence on the city side of the creek through creative wayfinding and environmental design to provide a sense of place and enable students and visitors to easily navigate and find their way.

Initiative 1.1.5
Create an iconic pedestrian bridge over Speer Boulevard connecting the Auraria Campus to the CU Denver presence on the city side. Like the High Line in New York City, the bridge would be highly programmed with community spaces to attract and engage people.

Initiative 1.1.6
Establish strong physical connections with surrounding neighborhoods and with the new Meow Wolf, River Mile, and 5280 Loop.
Goal 1: Distinguish CU Denver And Strengthen Our Identity By Transforming The Larger Neighborhood And District

STRATEGY 1.2: CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Initiative 1.2.1
Strengthen collaborations with our Auraria campus partners - MSU and CCD – with the three Hispanic-serving institutions becoming a force for the region, something larger than the sum of our parts.

Initiative 1.2.2
Strengthen relationship with the K-12 public school system and be intentional about students’ first experiences on campus through field trips to cultural activities, the wellness center, labs, etc.

Initiative 1.2.3
Reach out to underserved communities around Denver through active programming, research, recruitment activities, or partnerships.

Initiative 1.2.4
Create a centralized events office with clear processes to facilitate campus-activating events.

STRATEGY 1.3: CREATE A VIVID BRAND

Through “touchpoints” (color, fonts, collateral, textures, even potentially scent – every detail that conveys the essence of CU Denver), visually and symbolically link this new brand with environmental wayfinding.

Initiative 1.3.1
Refresh both the CU Denver logo and the CU in the City motto, leveraging the opportunity to re-introduce CU Denver to the larger community by vividly signaling distinction from the other CU’s as well as MSU and CCD, and advancing beyond our mere location (“in the City”) toward weaving strong symbiotic partnerships with mutually beneficial outcomes.

Initiative 1.3.2
Introduce new traditions that distinguish us, honor those here before us, and foreshadow our unique future path.

Initiative 1.3.3
Create “pop-ups” in vacant storefronts, along the creek, on campus, and elsewhere – designed and built by transdisciplinary teams of CU Denver students – to simultaneously activate places while showcasing (Public Relations) the cutting-edge skills and talents of our students.
Goal 2: Honor Our Place And Those Here Before Us To Inform The Future

Finally, and inclusively, remember and reckon with Auraria’s past as we imagine its future through appropriate land and community recognitions and ongoing activities. This cross-campus effort will engage transdisciplinary teams of faculty, staff, students from CU Denver, MSU, and CCD, along with community partners to heal festering wounds from the past so we may grow together for the benefit of all. This active remembrance of the campus’s histories will generate a more welcoming and enriching learning and experiential environment for students, staff, faculty, community members, and visitors.

Ensure recognition and inclusion of Auraria’s pre-Anglo and pre-CU Denver histories, peoples, and landscapes, and include these communities in future planning efforts.

Success measures may include:

- A new entity to oversee these efforts that might include a living museum, exhibitions, panel discussions, related research, and creative work such as monuments, remembrances, and proposals for the future. This entity could be called The Bridge — bridging past, present, and future while also bridging and celebrating cultural differences — and it could be located on the new pedestrian bridge. In the meantime, it could be located in the Auraria Library, which is shared by all three institutions.

Success cannot happen without:

- Coordination and collaboration with representatives from surrounding neighborhoods, as well as displaced Aurarians and their children, to create a sense of belonging in an ongoing way.
- Connecting history to the future by emphasizing growth and the ability to transform and evolve.
- Applying for existing funding to support this work, especially restoration of Ninth Street Park and its buildings.
- Acknowledging the larger context of Denver.
- Ongoing staffing, programming, and participation of students, faculty, and staff.

STRATEGY 2.1: INTRODUCE A CAMPUS HISTORY PROJECT OR LIVING MUSEUM

To remember, un-erase, and make amends to co-create a stronger and more compassionate community, and educate current and future generations.

Initiative 2.1.1
Engage with Auraria partners to assemble, discover, and curate the extensive existing work on the campus’ history, as well as gather its untold histories and narratives. This could include developing museum content by collaborating with courses and projects and creating a community-facing website to collect and discover untold stories.

Initiative 2.1.2
Produce physical places, spaces, and markers on campus to honor the campus history, including markers and plaques based on location analysis, campus and community input, and design.

Initiative 2.1.3
Support historical recognition and maintenance of our buildings. Apply for funding to restore Casa Mayan and other buildings, and for programming. Generate interest from History Colorado as a partner and apply for a History Colorado State Historical Fund grant.
Goal 2: Honor Our Place And Those Here Before Us To Inform The Future

STRATEGY 2.2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN TO FACILITATE AWARENESS OF HISTORY AND SUPPORT INVOLVED PARTIES

Open public relations and communications efforts to all, bringing together disparate initiatives to collaborate and cross-pollinate.

Initiative 2.2.1

Establish intentional community engagement processes. Bring the right people together, including History Colorado, Historic Denver Inc., Colorado Preservation Inc., students, faculty, staff to develop a facility that could potentially become a City of Denver History Museum, including information and material culture related to Auraria and Downtown Denver.

Initiative 2.2.2

Create an Inclusive Auraria Community Engagement Board. Consider a possible activist lens.

1. Support for native Aurarians
   a. Inclusion of displaced Aurarians on Board

2. Land recognition, people acknowledgments
   a. Build on existing partnerships with local tribes (Dr. Roane) to move towards land and peoples acknowledgments

3. Intentionality through landscape to reflect local flora (e.g., as part of a campus arboretum effort)
   and recognize a sense of “home”

4. Ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are visibly reflected in our campus spaces

STRATEGY 2.3: CREATE PRACTICAL WAYS TO IMPLEMENT OUTCOMES OF STUDIOS, SEMINARS, AND STUDENT PROJECTS

Initiative 2.3.1

Integrate coursework into these efforts. Consider, for example, an architecture studio that could develop museum designs on campus informed by this research and outreach; a public history course that would curate existing and new materials for current and future exhibit spaces on campus; and graduate students’ professional projects for the Master of Historic Preservation degree.
Goal 3: Beyond The District, Leverage Our Larger Place: The Region, The State Of Colorado, The West

Success measures might look like:

- Local, state, regional, and international recognition of place-based and community-based work, engaged scholarship, and experiential and service learning at the university and what CU Denver graduates take with them.
- Leverage our impact because of our place, with local, state, regional, and international recognition of graduates and their impact.
- Develop recognizable CU Denver branding throughout the state and the region, using marketing and brand strategy.
- Meaningfully leverage our HSI status across the inclusivity, diversity, and equity of our student body and in our work.
- Establish opportunities to create individual and university identity through new traditions, contemporary work, and diverse representation in age, ethnicity, and geography.
- Broaden our influence beyond Denver, and validate CU Denver experiences in all locations.
- Extend our work for visible impact and positive transformation.

Success cannot happen without:

- Leveraging our current branding or new branding themes — leverage and build on “All Four ONE.”
- A clear identity and value proposition within Colorado and the CU system: What is your CU Denver; what will CU Denver be for you?
- Autonomy to take action as CU Denver, with our own goals.
- Flexibility in a variety of avenues, including financial or geographical backgrounds.
- Leveraging our collaborations and partnerships to do good in communities.
- Awareness of our identity.
Goal 3: Beyond The District, Leverage Our Larger Place: The Region, The State Of Colorado, The West

STRATEGY 3.1: ENHANCE CU DENVER BRANDING AND IDENTITY THROUGH PLACE-BASED TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE WORK TO BE CHANGE AGENTS FOR GOOD

Initiative 3.1.1
Develop clarity and strength of our identity and value proposition within Colorado and CU System.

Initiative 3.1.2
Partnership with local entities, establish community research and innovation hubs embedded in neighborhoods throughout the city, region, or state. Potentially, include health clinics in these.

Initiative 3.1.3
Provide research on topics chosen by communities to help them advance by addressing homelessness, displacement, poor air quality, traffic and street design, urban greening, transit options, access to education, healthcare, quality food and water, etc.

Initiative 3.1.4
Leverage the assets of the CU System as a partner in development to make targeted, strategic investments in land and locations around Denver aligned with the needs and opportunities of community stakeholders.