

**STRATEGIC PLANNING | PHASE 2**

# **VISION TEAM REPORTS**

**PUT OUR PEOPLE AT THE CENTER**



University of Colorado **Denver**

## THEME

# PUT OUR PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

## CO-CHAIRS

- **Joann Brennan** | Professor, Photography, College of Arts and Media and Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs
- **Michelle Larson-Krieg** | Interim Executive Director, Office of International Affairs and Chair, Staff Council

## STRATEGIC THOUGHT-PARTNER

- **Scott Bauer** | Professor and Associate Dean, Advanced Education and Doctoral Studies, School of Education and Human Development

## TEAM MEMBERS

- **Laurie Barnes** | Principal Compensation Consultant, Human Resources
- **Sarah Buller** | Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement, Office of Strategic Impact
- **David Daley** | Battalion Chief, South Metro Fire Rescue, Alumnus
- **Leo Darnell** | Assistant Dean, Academic Services and Extended Studies, College of Architecture and Planning
- **Mary Dodge** | Research and Instruction Specialist, Auraria Library
- **Sharon Grant** | Organizational Change Program Manager, Office of Information Technology
- **Christy Heaton** | Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Transitions and Family Engagement, Student Success
- **Justin Jaramillo** | Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Enrollment Operations and Compliance, Student Success
- **Jesse Kuroiwa** | Visual Resources Center Program Manager and Lecturer, College of Architecture and Planning
- **Kristen Kushmider** | Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health, Wellness, Advocacy and Support
- **Jered Minter** | Campus Architect, Office of Institutional Planning
- **Ariadne Ochoa Magallanes** | Success Advisor, Center for Undergraduate Exploration and Advising
- **Elizabeth Pugliano** | Instructor, Art History, College of Arts and Media
- **Tina Schlichte** | Director, Office of Advancement
- **Karen Sobel** | Associate Professor and Director, Center for Faculty Development and Advancement
- **Yang Wang** | Assistant Professor, Art History, College of Arts and Media

## CRITICAL CONTRIBUTORS

- **Kelsie Faulds** | Program Manager and Instructor, InWorks
- **Mark Karger** | Senior Project Manager, Office of Information Technology
- **Lauren Herbert** | Director, External Innovation Programs, InWorks

# 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 front-line 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

- CU Denver, like so many U.S. institutions of higher education, struggles with the negative impacts of white dominant culture. See "Why Higher Ed Can't Change," by Michelle Pacansky-Brock, published on August 20, 2020 at brocansky.com.
- 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.



# ABOUT THE PROCESS

# 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 5) that encourages big, bold idea generation, and the participation of the entire campus community. The process was divided into three phases:

Phase	Timing	Goal of Work	Format
<b>PHASE 1</b> Our Vision for 2030	January 2021	Set the Vision	Broad community input was invited via multiple channels; 3,674+ ideas generated.
<b>PHASE 2</b> Strengthen and Differentiate	February – April 2021	Develop the Themes	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.
<b>PHASE 3</b> Synthesize & Deliver Our Strategic Plan	April – June 2021	Build the Strategy	Based on Vision Team reports and community input, a cogent and integrated strategic plan will be developed and released.

# 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.

