

Meet the Candidates

Mitchell Mauro

Executive Ticket: President

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Mitchell Mauro is completing his Bachelor's degree in Public Administration and will begin his Master of Public Administration in the Fall semester. He currently serves as Vice President of the Student Government Association and is a founding member of CU Denver's Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) Fraternity chapter. His leadership experience has provided him with a deep understanding of university governance, student advocacy, and community building. As SGA President, Mauro aims to foster a more inclusive and engaged campus environment while ensuring student concerns are effectively addressed. Together, Mauro and Diaz bring a strong combination of experience, vision, and dedication to SGA leadership. Their platform prioritizes student well-being, campus connectivity, and advocacy, ensuring that CU Denver remains a thriving and supportive environment for all students.



Juan Diaz

Executive Ticket: Vice President

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Juan Diaz is a sophomore majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology, dedicated to leadership and student advocacy. He serves as Vice President of both the Pre-Law Society and Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity Inc., Xi Delta Chapter. Additionally, as CU Denver Student Life's first Student Project Manager, Diaz has played a key role in organizing initiatives that enhance student engagement. His work reflects his commitment to amplifying student voices, promoting inclusivity, and driving meaningful change. As SGA Vice President, Diaz plans to create more opportunities for student involvement and ensure that all students feel heard and valued.



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Jalissa Vega

Executive Ticket: President



Hey, I'm Jalissa Vega—a first-generation student navigating life between leadership, academics, and personal growth. I've always had a passion for advocating for others, which is why I serve as the Vice Chair of the Civic Engagement Committee for CU Denver's Student Government Association. Helping my community, especially underrepresented students, is something I take seriously because I know what it's like to feel unheard. But outside of leadership, I'm just a girl who loves concerts, bailes, and spending weekends curled up with my cat. I'm naturally outgoing, but I have my introverted moments too—sometimes I'd rather vibe alone than be out and about. Lately, I've been trying to break out of my homebody tendencies and push myself toward new experiences. Mental health awareness and social justice are also close to my heart. I've learned firsthand how much our experiences shape us, and I try to use mine to uplift others. Whether it's through organizing events, mentoring, or just having real conversations, I want to leave a positive impact wherever I go. At the end of the day, I'm just figuring things out like everyone else—balancing responsibilities, chasing dreams, and embracing all the little things that make life meaningful.



Elizabeth Thomason

Executive Ticket: Vice President



I am currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry with a minor in Victims and Victim Advocacy. I hope to one day be a forensic pathologist for the FBI. Governance, STEM, and advocacy have always been passions of mine, and this shows through my actions thus far as Director of the Student Services Review Committee and community volunteer work. I have been advocating for the care and dignity of the students at CU Denver since I first joined the Student Government Association in the Fall of 2024. As the Director of the Student Services Review Committee, I communicated with campus leaders. I analyzed the work they were doing with the use of student funds to determine if they were using student money for the best benefit of students. Furthermore, I held a seat on the ad hoc "Know Your Rights" committee. This group worked to educate students on their rights in response to executive orders placed by the Trump administration. Aside from my work in Student Government, I also regularly partake in community-based work. I frequently volunteer to wash dishes and serve meals at the Lawrence Street Denver Rescue Mission shelter for unhoused individuals. I have also studied and worked abroad in the Netherlands, volunteering at an after-school care facility for children from underprivileged families. It is with the empathy and respect for others that I gained from these experiences that I hope to lead with as your vice president. Having displayed my continuous efforts and ability to advocate for those in need, I hope you will all consider me a dedicated potential leader for Vice-Presidency here at CU Denver.

Andy Xiao

College Council Rep: Business School

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Since joining the Student Government (SGA) at Front Range Community College in 2022, I have served as a Legislative Representative, actively contributing to student engagement and campus events. My role involved organizing events, recruiting students, and promoting SGA initiatives. One of the key efforts was bringing a wagon filled with prizes around campus to engage students, distribute flyers, and encourage them to SGA. We also hosted informational tables where we could learn more about SGA, pick up free school supply kits, and scan a QR code to join our Discord Community. Additionally, we planned events such as dances, and other activities to foster student involvement. Beyond event planning, I participated in roundtable meetings with Student government representatives from different campuses, where we discussed campus issues and initiatives and the issues with the world. These meetings included important topics and collaboration on solutions with the student government Association. Through my involvement in SGA, I have gained valuable experience in leadership, event planning, and student advocacy, helping to create a more engaged and connected campus community. And we asked the other students to join by asking if we are giving away free stuff from the wagon and doing the table for students to join the SGA, and we meet every Monday from 4-5 PM in the SGA large conference room. The members are given a stipend. The Student Government Association meeting is open to all students and faculty. And if people want to join the Student government Association and part of the team, you have to get a packet and get how many signatures if you want to be any member of the SGA you need to get a range of signatures to be any part of the Student government Association, and you need to participate in two meetings before you can join SGA.



Majula Ceesay

College Council Representative:
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

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Hello! I'm an Anthropology major with a minor in Teacher Education and plan on teaching Secondary Social Studies after I graduate from my 4+1 program. I currently student teach in the JeffCo District and love being able to work with such bright students. I'm also a student assistant for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, so you may have already seen me when scheduling an appointment or being checked in. Outside of classes I love writing, thrifting, and reading classic literature.

Michelle Favorite

College Council Rep: College of
Architecture & Planning



After a majority of the spring semester college council members resigned for this spring semester, I was placed in the chair position for the committee. This means for the spring semester I have been trying to restructure college council and the responsibilities of your representatives to make sure constituents are getting the representation they deserve. This next school year I plan on using the new bylaws to create more opportunities for college council to interact with their students as well as work together on more interdisciplinary projects that are currently in progress.



Najma Ahmed

College Council Representative:
School of Public Affairs



As a third-year Criminal Justice major with a minor in International Studies, I am passionate about advocating for student voices and fostering a more inclusive and supportive campus community. My experience as a student assistant in the financial aid office has given me firsthand insight into the challenges students face when navigating university resources, and I am committed to improving accessibility and transparency in student services. Beyond academics, I am actively involved in Her Village, a community organization dedicated to empowering women through mentorship and resource-sharing. My dedication to public service extends to my work in legal advocacy, having completed an executive law internship at The Limbaugh Law Firm, LLC. These experiences have strengthened my leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills qualities I will bring to student government. If elected, I will prioritize initiatives that enhance student support systems, promote equity, and ensure all voices are heard in decision-making processes. I believe in proactive leadership, meaningful engagement, and collaborative solutions to address the issues that matter most to our student body. I am excited about the opportunity to serve and make a lasting impact. Your voice matters, and I would be honored to represent you. Vote Najma Ahmed for Student Government!

Faduma Abdile

College Council Rep: College of Liberal Arts & Sciences



Faduma Abdile is a junior majoring in Psychology and a proud first-generation college student. She understands the challenges of navigating higher education and is committed to making sure every student in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences feels supported and heard. As a candidate for College Council Representative, Faduma wants to bridge the gap between students and the resources they need to succeed. She is passionate about creating a more inclusive and engaging campus environment where no student feels indifferent or disconnected. Whether it's advocating for better academic support, increasing student involvement, or ensuring diverse voices are represented, she is dedicated to making meaningful changes.



Tejaswi Baggam

College Council Representative:
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences



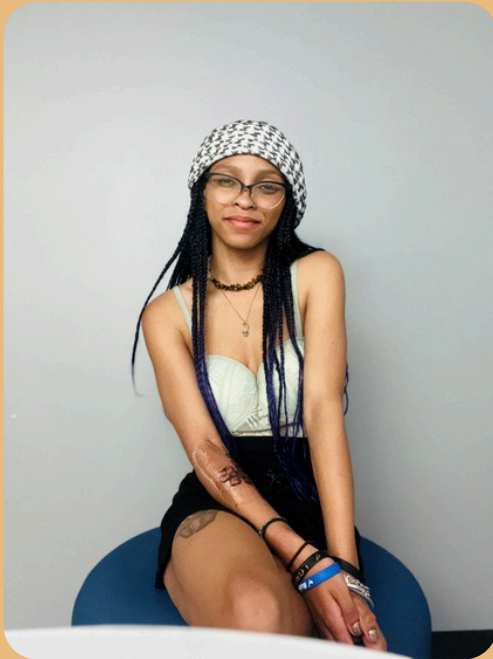
Hello! My name is Tejaswi Baggam, and I'm currently in my second semester pursuing a Master's degree in Computer Science at CU Denver. I'm passionate about using technology to create positive change and am eager to contribute that same energy and dedication to the Student Government Association (SGA). During my time at CU Denver, I've had the opportunity to connect with a diverse student body and engage with the many resources our campus has to offer. These experiences have inspired me to run for a position within SGA to ensure that student voices are heard, valued, and represented in meaningful ways. With a background in both technical problem-solving and collaborative teamwork, I believe I can bring a thoughtful, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach to student leadership. I am particularly interested in advocating for increased transparency in student services, promoting accessible academic and wellness resources, and strengthening the connection between students and campus leadership. If elected, I will work hard to be a reliable, approachable, and proactive representative for our student community. I am committed to creating an environment where every student feels empowered to succeed, and I'm excited for the opportunity to serve and make a lasting impact. Thank you for your support!

Madeline Miller

College Council Rep: College of Arts & Media



I have participated in many various parts of the CAM College, and I would be honored to represent its students and faculty!



Mariam Waite

Senator at Large



Mariam Waite is a committed Biology/Pre-Health major who is passionate about advocacy and promoting positive change. As an African American woman with White and Native American heritage, she offers a distinctive perspective in various situations. Her dedication to service is demonstrated through her two years of experience as a Resident Assistant, where she has developed her leadership and interpersonal abilities. As a Muslim, Mariam is strongly inspired by her principles of community, inclusivity, and respect for others. She is enthusiastic about joining student government to further her commitment to representing the needs and concerns of her fellow students. Mariam believes in the importance of effective communication and seeks to connect the student body with the administration, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. She is motivated by the idea that there is always room for advancement and is determined to foster a campus environment that is more inclusive, transparent, and responsive. With her diverse background, extensive leadership experience, and steadfast dedication to making a positive difference, Mariam is well-suited to contribute to student government and guide CU Denver toward a more unified and empowered future.

Sumit Shah

Senator at Large

Hi, I'm Sumit Shah, a graduate student at the University of Colorado Denver, pursuing my master's in business Analytics. I'm running for the position of Senator because I believe in contributing actively to our university community and representing students with purpose and integrity. With prior experience as a Relationship Manager at Karnali Development Bank and Branch Manager at United Insurance Co. Ltd. in Nepal, I have led teams, analyzed complex financial data, and provided tailored solutions for clients from diverse backgrounds. These roles not only sharpened my problem-solving and decision-making skills, but also taught me the value of empathy, inclusion, and clear communication—qualities that I believe are essential for serving effectively in the Student Government Association (SGA). As an international student from Nepal, the land of Mount Everest, I understand the unique challenges that come with studying far from home—navigating new systems, building connections, and finding a sense of belonging. That's one of the main reasons I want to serve in the Student Government Association. I want to be a voice for international students and help make the campus experience smoother and more inclusive for everyone. Moreover, I see this role as a powerful opportunity to pave the way for future students from Nepal and other underrepresented communities. My academic interests in data, analytics, and decision-making are aligned with the skills I bring to this role. I'm gaining proficiency in Statistics, Python, SQL, and data visualization, and I'd like to use those skills to support transparency, evaluate student needs, and contribute to meaningful initiatives within the Student Government Association. If elected as Senator, I will work hard, stay accessible, and represent all students with fairness and dedication.



Armando Jaramillo

Senator at Large



Born and raised in Chihuahua city, Mexico, Armando is an outgoing person who is always ready to attend his classes with a positive attitude. He is a part of a fraternity on campus and loves involvement in Auraria community events. He enjoys sports and many other activities outside of school that are all for a good time. He is very family-oriented putting that first always and will do anything to uphold those values personally.

Jared Bynum

Senator at Large



Hey CU Denver! My name is Jared Bynum, and I'm excited to run to represent you as a CU Denver Student Senator. I am a born-and-raised Coloradan and non-traditional second year student of geography, with a focus in urban and regional planning. A passionate community organizer, I have experience as a campaign staffer, campus organizer, and now as an environmental policy advocate, working to protect Colorado's air, water, and public lands. I'm running because I want to create a better student life, beautify our campus, and increase opportunities for achieving our career goals. UCD's student-led organizations and central location provide unparalleled access to events, venues, and civic institutions- and it's time we invest in more engaging activities and cultural connections for students. As a working professional and full-time student, I'm particularly eager to translate my career experience into turning academic achievements into workforce readiness, and I want to strengthen our partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, and governments to secure more jobs, internships, and funding. By working with students, faculty and Auraria leadership, we can leverage more student talent right here at CU Denver. Together we can continue to build an exceptional university and an unmatched college experience. Thanks for your time - I hope I can count on your support to be your next Student Senator.



Mike Leaser

Senator at Large



Mike Leaser is a senior at CU Denver, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Economics. An environmental enthusiast, Mike is passionate about sustainability and creating a positive impact on campus and beyond. Last year marked Mike's first year on the Student Government Association (SGA), where he had the opportunity to work closely with students, faculty, and administration. He greatly valued the experience and is eager to continue serving the student body. Mike is a dedicated and hardworking individual, always putting the needs and concerns of CU Denver students first. His loyalty lies solely with the students, and he is committed to advocating for their interests. As someone who is driven and focused on making a difference, Mike is excited about the opportunity to continue his work with SGA, pushing for solutions that will enhance the student experience at CU Denver.

Jackson Elliott

Senator at Large



Hello! My name is Jackson Elliott, and I am running for a Senator-at-Large position with SGA. I am majoring in Political Science and am also currently serving in SGA as a Senator-at-Large. In SGA, I serve on the Civic Engagement Committee, in which we coordinate campus outreach and lead community service events, while also exploring other avenues as to how we can better serve our campus. I hope to continue my time with SGA and the Civics committee with hopes to strengthen our community here on campus and to use my previous experience to be a more efficient representative of the student body. As an out-of-state student, I began my time at CU Denver feeling anxious and lost. It was instructors, student staff, faculty, or whoever else with a role to play on this campus, that resolved those negative feelings and made me feel comfortable in this new environment. In my short time at CU Denver, I have become incredibly proud to be a Lynx. And I think that this pride for our school is worth spreading for the simple fact that collective pride is imperative to fostering a more robust community. To achieve a stronger community, we must continue to make our institution something to be proud of, and I would be honored to have your vote and play a role in making this a reality. Thank you!



Supriya Gosavi

Senator at Large



Hello! My name is Supriya Gosavi, and I am running to be your next SGA representative. I am a graduate student in Business Analytics at CU Denver, with a strong background in marketing, fashion merchandising, and data-driven decision-making. Originally from Mumbai, India, I bring a global perspective and a passion for diverse student representation. As the current President of the Indian Student Association, I have organized inclusive cultural events, led marketing and outreach efforts, and strengthened student engagement across campus. I also serve as a Teaching Assistant and Marketing & Communications Officer, working closely with students and faculty to ensure everyone's voice is heard and valued. With experience in leadership, communication, and creative problem-solving, I am committed to building a more connected, supportive, and opportunity-filled campus environment. If elected, I will focus on increasing transparency, promoting wellness resources, and creating more academic and professional development opportunities for all students. Let's work together to make CU Denver a place where every voice matters and every student thrives!



Rishita Nileshkumar Patel

Senator at Large



Hi, I'm Rishita, a graduate student in Computer Science at CU Denver. I'm passionate about using my technical skills and leadership experience to make a positive impact on campus. I believe in the power of hard work and manifestation, which has taught me valuable lessons in discipline, teamwork, and perseverance principles which I plan to apply in my work with SGA. My experiences, from leading and organizing events to developing innovative solutions as a Software Developer, have shaped my interest in building inclusive, connected communities. These roles have enhanced my problem-solving skills and ability to collaborate and lead effectively. If elected, I'm eager to join a committee focused on enhancing campus life, allocating student fees to support cultural, educational, and recreational growth. I'm also committed to expanding civic engagement, ensuring students are informed and involved in key campus issues. I'm excited about the chance to serve as an SGA representative and work with my peers to build a stronger, more vibrant university community. Together, let's create positive change and leave a lasting impact on our campus .



Prateek Gothwal

Senator at Large



Hey! I am an international master's student passionate about making our campus a more inclusive, engaging, and fun space for everyone. With a background in machine learning and AI research, I thrive on problem-solving and bringing innovative ideas to life. Let's work together to build a stronger, more connected campus!

Bharath kumar Lakkakula

Director, Events & Planning

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Hello, my name is Bharath Kumar Lakkakula, and I am currently pursuing my Master's in Information Systems at CU Denver. From a young age, I have been passionate about helping others, understanding different perspectives, and fostering a sense of respect and inclusivity in my community. Coming from a military family, I have witnessed firsthand the values of discipline, resilience, and service. These experiences have shaped my leadership approach, teaching me the importance of teamwork, integrity, and making informed decisions that benefit the community. As a candidate for the Student Government Association (SGA), I am committed to advocating for student needs, fostering a supportive campus environment, and ensuring that every student's voice is heard. I believe in the power of collaboration and innovation to drive meaningful change. Beyond my academic and leadership pursuits, I have a deep curiosity for space exploration and technology. I love learning about advancements that shape our future and finding ways to integrate innovation into everyday life. I look forward to the opportunity to serve and represent my fellow students. Together, we can create a campus experience that is engaging, inclusive, and forward-thinking.



Jess Shelton

Director, Marketing & Public Relations

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Hey, I'm Jess! I am a 21-year-old college student studying Psychology and Communications at the University of Colorado Denver, who is passionate about photography, digital media, and design. Once I complete my undergraduate program, I hope to work full-time in the sports industry doing digital media, design, and photography work for a professional team or league. While I'm still completing my undergraduate program, I am interested in participating in any jobs, internships, or other opportunities that allow me to gain relevant experience that I can use to help me towards my ultimate career goals. My time with the SGA has done exactly that, and allowed me to also directly serve the student body of CU Denver simultaneously.

Micaela Delarosa

College Council Representative:
College of Arts & Meida



I currently serve on the College Council board as the College of Arts and Media Representative in SGA. Joining in late October, I have beyond just fulfilled the role obligations, but I have been an active member of my community. I have organized meetings with the Student Success Program Manager to keep tabs on notable developments in CAM and cultivated and established clear goals. A goal I have successfully started and continue to focus on is reaching out to CAM constituents. By attending CAM events, tabling in the art and CU Denver building to advertise events, and cultivating surveys, I aimed to collect data to increase engagement across majors and increase participation in events, especially among commuters. Additionally, I have proactively attended Dean Advisory meetings and voiced students' grievances and concerns from survey data and conversations I had with constituents during CAM events. Alongside my CAM duties, I've been helping rebuild the College council. The College Council has highly individualized roles and lacks clear direction, making it difficult for new representatives to acclimate quickly. Furthermore, we have adjusted the bylaws to provide new members with clearer direction in their roles. Additionally, we have decided to implement a common objective that encourages collaboration among representatives: working to foster engagement with students outside their major and promote interdisciplinary connections. With the lessons I've learned and the diligent work I have provided during my first term on the College Council, I aim to continue serving as the CAM representative, advocating for CAM constituents through building relationships through tabling and events and continuing to work on projects that can nurture the growing community within CAM.

