

FACULTY ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION: ADDITIONAL PROVOST FOLLOW-UPS

Responses to Sasha Breger Bush, Faculty Assembly Chair, from Provost Constancio Nakuma

Oct. 27, 2023

Dear Sasha,

It was nice to see you at the CACB meeting on Wednesday. I had an opportunity to review and reflect upon my written response that I submitted on Tuesday and wanted to send a follow-up note, which I hope you will share with your colleagues on Faculty Assembly. I'm sure this is an obvious point, but I want to ensure that I am being extremely clear about my intentions and thought process about how we move forward. I absolutely intend to engage with you and Faculty Assembly leadership—when the time is right—to address the issues that were raised in the censure motion—and further look forward to faculty and shared governance input toward solutions. The motion calls for a number of specific, proposed actions (pages 3-4) and I am committed to working collaboratively with you to take action—and perhaps in ways that are similar to what you have proposed. In my letter, that is what I meant by my desire to “co-create a blueprint for our future” with you.

My sense is that the most prudent course of action is to engage in live conversation to talk through these issues, learn more about what has worked and what hasn't, and identify some mutually agreeable ways to move forward. As I see it, the specific actions you have called for me and my colleagues to take are a very good starting point from which we can begin that conversation. Most of the requests for reports, action plans, and regular updates, as an example, have happened occasionally and we should discuss them regardless of the outcome of the censure vote to ensure the issues underlying these requests are addressed promptly and responsibly. I believe our conversation will help us to better define the scope and expectations about what these products and updates should include, in addition to mutually agreeing upon appropriate timelines, frequency and other details. It will also help us to develop a strategy for the administration to be responsive to some of the requested actions that involve, but are beyond the sole purview of the Office of the Provost, and thus will require additional dialogue and consultation with others. With all that noted, please know that my commitment to working with you on these issues is strong and enduring.

Sincerely,
Constancio

Oct. 30, 2023

Dear Sasha,

Over the last few days, as we have exchanged emails regarding the censure proceedings, I am realizing that I need to balance my sincere and ongoing desire for meaningful joint conversation with Faculty Assembly's desire for more specificity in my response. I believe that we can achieve both in the best interest of CU Denver and our students.

With that in mind, I would like to provide updates and proposals on the action items that you outlined in your Oct. 17 letter.

In terms of **financial aid and student mental health** matters at CU Denver, I could not agree with you more that these are and will remain key priorities of academic and administrative leadership. I would like to propose that we schedule a meeting with all leadership (Cabinet, deans, and shared governance leaders) in **November** for a full briefing that includes an opportunity to review the reports, provide feedback, and answer questions. I also pledge to you, as well as our other leaders, **regular updates** on financial aid and student mental health. These updates could start this November and could continue on a regular basis, pending further discussion with you.

Keeping Faculty Assembly and other shared governance leaders apprised of the latest developments by providing **monthly updates** on issues of importance to the university has been a priority for the administration. Based on your feedback, I recognize that previous monthly updates may not have been meeting your needs, so I am open to more discussion about what would meet your interests. I also commit to sharing more detailed information about the issues raised in the motion/resolution and ask for the assistance of Faculty Assembly Executive Committee in determining the appropriate scope and depth of information to include. Until we agree on a format, I suggest having initial updates delivered to you in **November**.

With respect to the **State of Shared Governance Report**, I acknowledge the importance of this report and recognize the delay in producing it. I understand that the delay is due to an unresolved division of labor between the Office of Faculty Affairs and Faculty Assembly. To this end, I offer a possible solution that the Office of Faculty Affairs in consultation with the Faculty Assembly identify a faculty fellow (with compensation) to be placed at the Office of Faculty Affairs to lead this effort. Specifically, the Fellow could review the bylaws of schools, colleges, and the library and could conduct surveys of faculty and administrators within academic units to draft the State of Shared Governance at CU Denver report. I welcome your feedback on this proposed solution.

I am also prepared to commit to an **annual review of my performance** that uses a 360-degree approach. I understand that Chancellor Marks has asked AVC of HR Teri Engelke to develop a best practice-informed review model that could be implemented **before the end of the academic year**. This request aligns with our work regarding developing a policy on Comprehensive Review of Deans, which is under review at Faculty Assembly. I welcome this layer of accountability.

Lastly, I agree that we need to explore an approach to the use of **third-party reports**. To this point and with Chancellor Marks' concurrence, we have asked Managing Associate University Counsel Chris Puckett to invite you to a conversation with our vice chancellors, deans, and shared governance leaders to develop a common set of guidelines that will inform our approach to report generation going forward.

This letter reflects my desire for us to work together respecting each other's integral role in shared governance and upholding the spirit of faculty-administrative consultation articulated in Regent Policy 5. I care deeply about CU Denver and hope that we can resolve our differences together.

You have my permission to share this with the Faculty Assembly for awareness.

Sincerely,
Constancio Nakuma