

Message from the Provost



Dear Faculty & Staff colleagues,

I hope you are having an enjoyable start to the fall semester.

The beginning of each new academic year presents new opportunities and a chance for us to collectively consider how we make education work for all. We are responsible for positioning ourselves for a more successful future that includes high-quality academics to meet learner needs, more formalized and best-practice-infused academic operations, and strong enrollment and student persistence.

In that spirit, I am writing to invite your participation in any one of four proposed [Academic Transformation project](#) areas that have great potential to improve the way we educate students and best prepare them to meet future workforce needs. This initiative supports our [2030 Strategic Plan](#) aspirations to make education work for all, with particular emphasis on our goals around student success.

You may recall that I alluded to this project during last year's series of information sessions and mentioned that as we participate in our budget realignment initiative, we must equally focus on academic transformation along a parallel path.

Today, I am asking you to signal your interest in participating in this initiative by signing up, as we form four working groups charged with specific study areas that will reimagine academic operations to be more focused on student success, consistency, and best practices. The working groups will have concentrations on:

1) [Reimagining the Core](#): CU Denver largely serves a population of working learners seeking social mobility, many of whom are commuters. We need to constantly evaluate our educational offerings to respond to their educational and career needs. This working group will analyze the general education core requirements and provide recommendations on better alignment with students' general knowledge needs relative to their majors.

2) [Academic Program Viability and Curricular Innovation](#): As technology evolves and cultural and workforce needs change over time, academic programs need to keep pace and be tied to current industry needs and learner demand. This working group will develop recommendations for a clear, data-informed, and transparent set of processes and protocols for the early ongoing detection and required realignment of academic programs to current workforce needs and learner demand.

3) [Workload Parity and Class Size Variability](#): We want to help ensure that faculty workloads inclusive of teaching, research, and service are appropriately consistent and designed to support learner success while also meeting our campus' financial needs. This working group will develop a collective understanding of, and relative weighting scheme for, how faculty workload portfolios fit together. Relatedly, this working group will also consider how class-size variability factors into workload across the schools and colleges.

4) [Time Use and Course Schedules Review](#): For our learners, the need to work while attending college poses unique instructional needs. This working group will study how instructional schedules could be more effectively optimized and make recommendations for changes to course schedules and instructional time grids in a manner that allows us to be responsive to the time management and financial needs of our students.

The above links will take you to more expansive charge documents for a fuller understanding of each concentration. The working groups will spend the coming academic year researching these goals and providing recommendations via reports to me by late spring 2024. Campuswide engagement with and discussion of the recommendations will help us develop a shared vision for implementation, which we would expect to begin as early as the Fall 2025 semester.

This will be a faculty-and-staff-driven, transparent, and collaborative process. I have asked **Beth Myers**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, and **Richard Allen**, Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, to provide day-to-day leadership on this initiative and communicate campus updates throughout the academic year.

Please learn more about and express your interest to participate in this project on the [Academic Transformation website](#). You can express your interest by clicking on your working group of choice and filling out the corresponding FormStack titled "Connect with Working Group." The preferred deadline to express interest is Tuesday, September 26. We will name members of the working groups following this date and charge them later in October.

Thank you in advance for your assistance as we work to improve student success and our academic operations.

Sincerely,

Constancio Nakuma, PhD
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

