



CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2024

Zoom and In-Person

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Amy Hasinoff, Sarah Fields, Thomas Beck, Maryam Darbeheshti, Lisa Johansen, Wendy Bolyard, Diana White, Traci Sitzman, Vivian Shyu, Peter Anthamatten, Katy Divittorio, Erin Hauger, Philip Joseph, Alan Vajda, Alejandra Medina, Jeff Schrader, Ester de Jong, Kristin Kilbourne, Manish Shirgaokar, Matt Shea, Kelly See, Rachel Stein, Gisella Bassani, Shuyang Peng, George Quansah, Karen Sobel, Jason Machado, Bryn Harris, Anthony Villano, Kevin Hirth, Jessica Valdez, Dyllan Anson, Dan Maxey, Turan Kayaoglu, Constancio Nakuma, Estefani Pena Figueroa, Kenneth English

Chair's Update (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Approve minutes (October 1, 2024)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for October 1, 2024, Minutes: approved by a majority.
- Precipio Training was vetted and approved through FA's Disability Committee. FA has conducted a series of meetings with administration on accessibility, advocating for compensation in the context of embracing inclusive pedagogy and accessible documents.
- Board Docs Replacement: The old system has been discontinued and a new system is being used to house board documents. A vanity URL was requested, as they are not advertising for a third party vendor. Searchability was identified as an issue with the new system. Please visit portal for more details: <https://cu.diligent.community/portal/>
- Budget Update: FA Chair met with Ann Sherman. In addition to the Budget Allocation Review Committee (BARC) project, a new budget model is being introduced which will focus on longer-term budget planning (3-5 years). Central administration is interested in hearing ideas for efficiency and improvements.
- 5th Academic Transformation Working Group (ATWG): This was briefly discussed during the October FA meeting with the provost. Since then, FA's Executive Committee (EXCOM) has reviewed the proposal and is working on framing details to present to the full assembly. The focus will be on the size of the administration. EXCOM hopes to have a draft resolution or more concrete ideas moving into the new semester.
- Call for Reps to Faculty Council (FC) and Committees: FC Comms (x1), FC at-large (x1), FC LGBTQ+ (x1)

Provost Update (Constancio Nakuma)

- Graduate Education: Provost met with stakeholders last month to discuss additional funding, and some investment has since been approved.
- Recap of how Graduate Education is funded:
 - Continuing dollar line to support PhD programs (preallocated historically).

- In June, the decision was made to redo this funding stream to make it more flexible and offer scholarships from that pool, after the second funding stream (Chancellor's scholarships) was eliminated.
 - After realizing unintended consequences that would hurt recruitment funding, the decision was reversed.
 - There is \$500K in one-time funds for the next three years which will supplement the reduced funds, helping to make up for the loss of the Chancellor's scholarship funds.
 - Efforts are underway to work with a group to determine how best to allocate this money, with a closer tie to research endeavors.
- **Principles for Allocating Funds:**
 - Provide some level of certainty/guaranteed funding for select programs.
 - Allow for the possibility of awarding funds to a variety of programs, not just the 12 with guaranteed funding.
 - Ensure the funding model is sustainable in the long term.
 - Establish accountability for recipients, measuring how the funds are used and whether the intended outcomes are achieved.
- **Timeline for Allocating Funds:**
 - Information about available funding and the process will be shared by February.
 - A group of graduate faculty and administrators will convene to determine how the funds are awarded. Faculty interested in being part of the group should contact the provost. Graduate Program Directors, faculty, and some administrators will be part of this group. FA expressed interest in having a rep.
- **Policies and Procedures Update:**
 - Policies and procedures governing graduate education need clarification. Scott Bauer is leading a group focused on processes and procedures related to graduate education.
 - This group is working with Michael Kocet to expedite the process.
 - Additionally, the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS; <https://cgsnet.org>) which is a national organization offering consulting to improve graduate school operations, will conduct an assessment of current graduate operations, identifying gaps and suggesting ways to improve efficiency. The cost of this consultation is relatively low; the provost will share precise pricing once available. FA Chair mentioned that it's estimated at \$15-20K.
 - This spring, the Council team will conduct interviews and help map out the next steps.
 - FA member asked the provost for his thoughts on tuition remission for research students. The provost responded that tuition remission must be justifiable, especially as a public institution, to allocate state money. While graduate education adds value, there need to be clear principles and guidelines for awarding tuition remission. Currently, there are no formal guidelines, but work is underway to establish them.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Report (Wendy Bolyard)

- The final draft of DEI Report was presented by Wendy Bolyard.
- A group first convened in Summer 2022 to discuss how Faculty Activity Reports (FAR) were tracking DEI related activities. That decision occurred without going through shared governance. FA passed a resolution to create a group with funding to explore how to incorporate DEI efforts, including those

from the DEI office, along with reports from institutions like the University of Oregon and Oregon State. This work and report are in response to FA's resolution.

- The group emphasized that the report was not shared earlier due to the need for administration's support. There have been instances of individuals losing their jobs over DEI-related work, and the group seeks assurances from administration that they support this process and will offer protection.
- Report Recommendations:
 - DEI should be discussed at the unit level (FA member suggested that "primary unit" should be defined in final version), and this report reflects what the units should be considering.
 - DEI should not be a requirement in annual evaluations. While it should be encouraged, it should not be mandated as part of the evaluation process.
 - Recommendations extend beyond the FAR, including the rollout of micro-credentials related to DEI.
- FA Member Questions:
 - There was discussion regarding the level of student involvement or awareness in DEI efforts.
 - There was also discussion regarding whether separate reporting is needed for DEI work, as DEI efforts often seem disconnected from day-to-day practices. FA member stated that some states do not mandate DEI efforts, which leads to inconsistencies and marginalized groups are often expected to do more DEI work. DEI efforts that are above and beyond should be recognized and rewarded.
- Motion was made to Approve the DEI Report, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for DEI Report: approved by a majority; information will also be posted online.

Center for Identity and Inclusion (Estefani Pena Figueroa and Kenneth English)

- Estefani and Kenneth presented the services offered by the Center for Identity and Inclusion (CII), which provides resources for various student groups, including Latinx, Black, and undocumented students. Programs such as DECCA (undocumented student services) and Black Student Services were highlighted, with a focus on supporting student progression, retention, and graduation rates.
- CII offers peer-to-peer and coach mentoring for undocumented students, as well as case management services. This year, housing support for undocumented students has been improved, and a task force has been created to support these students more effectively.
- CII works closely with financial aid, faculty, and the counseling center to support students. They also offer resume workshops, internships, and job placement assistance, which contributes to positive outcomes for students' post-graduation.
- The presentation (slides) will be shared with FA for further distribution. FA members should also reach out if they are interested in receiving newsletters related to these programs.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree Letter (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Discussion centered around the proposed Reduced Credit Hour Degree letter.
- FA members raised concerns regarding whether the CU system would support a 3-year degree, as it could significantly undermine the traditional 4-year degree and potentially reduce faculty positions.
- Other concerns centered around whether students would be able to enter graduate programs with a 3-year bachelor's degree. Would we need to create new transfer pathways. Both Student Government Reps were concerned that most master's programs require a 4-year degree. FA Chair stated that UNC has lobbyists opposing this policy.

- FA members questioned whether this would improve enrollment. The burden is on the 3-year program to prove it will boost enrollment without undermining the 4-year degree.
- FA members expressed concern regarding the focus shifting away from research and reducing the need for research active faculty.
- FA Vice Chair stated that a 120-credit bachelor's degree is still associated with better financial outcomes and career prospects. Underrepresented students may feel pressured to choose the 3-year degree, thinking it offers the same opportunities as a 4-year degree and then later recognize the need to complete the additional credits.
- Motion was made to Approve the Reduced Credit Hour letter, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for Reduced Credit Hour letter: approved by a majority; next step is to send this letter for a vote at the system level. CU Anschutz, Boulder, and UCCS have also approved the letter.

End Meeting