

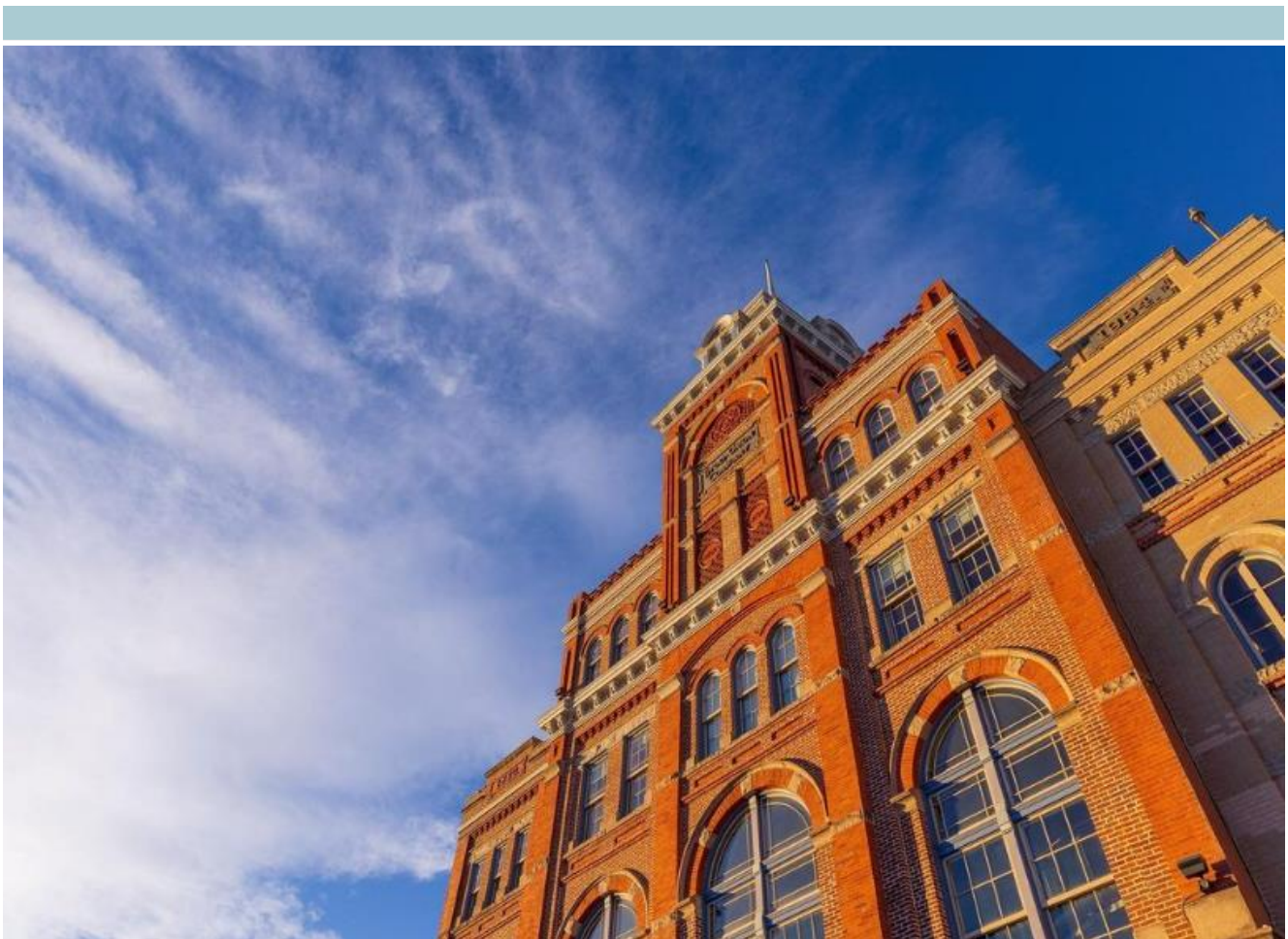


University of Colorado **Denver**

Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communications

Leadership Profile

Fall 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) seeks nominations, applications, and expressions of interest for a creative, collaborative, and inclusive leader to serve as vice chancellor for marketing and communications.

CU Denver, part of the University of Colorado system, was officially founded in 1973. Located on the downtown Auraria Campus and stretching into Denver's central business district, CU Denver brings innovation, research, and learning to the heart of a global city. CU Denver is the state's premier public urban research university, with more than 100 in-demand, top-ranked bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs.

Throughout its history, CU Denver has supported students from all walks of life. The university educates approximately 14,000 students (70% undergraduate and 30% graduate) and is committed to supporting diverse learners for transformative educational experiences. Students of color make up 46% of the undergraduate student body, and 51% of undergraduates are first-generation college students. CU Denver is a Hispanic-Serving Institution and the first Rocky Mountain region campus to gain Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) status, reflecting efforts to increase access and opportunity for those underserved by higher education. Learn more at: [About Us | The University of Colorado Denver](#)

The vice chancellor will join the university as it expects to be onboarding a new chancellor. CU President Todd Saliman named Ann Schmiesing, Ph.D. interim chancellor of the Denver campus, effective Aug. 26. Schmiesing, who has served as vice chancellor for academic resource management at CU Boulder, will return to the Boulder campus once a new chancellor is on board and is not a candidate for the permanent position. Finalist visits for the new chancellor are occurring in mid-November 2024.

CU Denver seeks a vice chancellor who will be a skilled communicator, possess an instinct for win-win solutions and proactively engage and develop relationships with colleagues to ensure that the interests of all constituents are understood and represented. The new vice chancellor should be committed to advancing the mission of the university as well as its reputation and identity as a leading academic and research institution. They should possess a master's degree in a relevant field and significant experience in a senior leadership role or have progressively increased responsibilities in a large complex organization, and have a strong, demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. CU Denver is committed to an ethical foundation, a sense of shared responsibility, and a culture of trust. The new vice chancellor must possess impeccable moral character and conviction in serving the university's greater good.

For information on how to apply or to submit nominations, please refer to the section "Procedure for Candidacy" at the end of this document.



Role of the Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communications

The Division of University Marketing and Communications (MarComm) advances the university's mission and reputation as a leading academic and research institution. Through strategic communications planning, media relations, branding, marketing, executive communications, and a wide range of digital media, the office tells the stories of the university and its people.

The division is organized into five units that report to the vice chancellor:

- Marketing and Digital Strategy
- Creative Design and Content
- Engagement & Events
- Strategic Communications
- School/College level Marketing & Communications Teams

At the direction of the chancellor, the vice chancellor is responsible for leading a team of roughly 30 marketing and communications professionals charged with creating the overarching strategy, goals, metrics, and tools to promote and raise the visibility of CU Denver. This includes engaging key internal and external audiences while protecting and elevating the reputation of the university.

The vice chancellor supports the Chancellor's Office in all communications needs and manages the internal communications for the institution, ensuring that the campus has timely and effective communications around critical issues, key developments, and emergencies. The new vice chancellor also oversees a robust marketing plan across traditional, social, digital, and emerging media, and assumes a leadership role in integrating and coordinating the efforts of communications and marketing professionals across the university, including enrollment marketing and communications, to ensure the university's goals and priorities are achieved.

Roles and responsibilities include:

Marketing and Brand

- Lead the creation and implementation of a marketing strategy that aligns with the university's brand, enrollment management strategy, and market research. Work closely with the chancellor, senior leaders, and key stakeholders to ensure the strategy supports the university's strategic goals and aspirations.
- Ensure consistent messaging, brand integration, and institutional priorities are properly reflected across all platforms, including print and digital content.
- Engage key constituents across campus, including but not limited to school and college-level MarComm teams, enrollment management leaders, deans and other academic leaders to ensure interdepartmental coordination and collaboration in marketing efforts.
- Partner with the University of Colorado System to support and integrate the system brand and marketing strategy with the campus approach.

Strategic Communications and Media Relations

- Lead the development of a strategic communication plan that promotes the university's strategic priorities by sharing engaging storytelling and effective messaging through creative services and digital communications to both internal and external audiences.

- Oversee the execution of a comprehensive communications plan that includes strategic messaging, brand development, best practices, print and digital content creation, event marketing, and coordination of digital communications (email, website, and social media).
- Guide a team of skilled communications professionals and others across the institution on creating unified communications materials.
- Provide vision and guidance on implementing new ways to communicate that encompass the latest communications formats, tools, and delivery methods.
- Oversee the university's media relations strategy, including key relationships with on-campus, regional, and national media. Develop programs that prepare key university administrators to interact effectively with the media.

Management and Coordination of the Marketing and Communications Effort Across the Institution

- Oversee the resources and personnel within MarComm to ensure the delivery of excellent and strategic services. Provide leadership and mentorship to staff that advance both their professional growth and the department's strategic priorities.
- Work with the deans and the school/college-level MarComm teams to ensure their marketing and communication needs are met and their goals aligned with the university's overarching strategy. Guide and inspire an integrated and unified approach to marketing and communications across the campus.
- Offer ideas and support to academic and administrative unit communications professionals, to inform and inspire an integrated approach to marketing and communications across the campus.
- Gather key voices from across the institution to clarify goals and unify messages, enhancing overall engagement.
- Collaborate with the CU System, President's Office, [Auraria Higher Education Campus](#) (AHEC), and other University of Colorado campuses to develop and deliver cohesive and effective communications strategies that serve the best interests of both CU Denver and the CU System as a whole.

Advisor to the Chancellor and Senior Leadership Team

- Advise the chancellor and the senior leadership team on all aspects of marketing and communications.
- Serve as a strategic partner and trusted advisor to the chancellor as the chancellor considers various initiatives and their implications.
- Partner with the Office of the Chancellor to develop and implement a media engagement plan for the chancellor.
- Serve as a member of the university's senior leadership team.

Crisis Communications

- Serve as the primary advisor on all major communications issues. Handle communications for challenging and sensitive university matters, including crisis and emergency situations, while ensuring complete confidentiality.
- Act as the university spokesperson in times of institutional crisis.

- Collaborate with Auraria Higher Education Center and its associated team to manage communications that have tri-institutional impacts.
- Work with university leadership and other key constituents to provide communication for internal and external audiences.
- Ensure the accuracy of information across various platforms, focusing on official communications, social media, and institutional websites.
- Strengthen the trust of the CU Denver community and the public by ensuring accurate, timely, and transparent communications during crisis situations.



Opportunities and Expectations for the Vice Chancellor

Develop a University Communications Strategy

CU Denver requires a dynamic and nimble communications and marketing plan that is grounded in data-informed analysis and responsive to internal and external perceptions of the university so that it can best provide a transformational educational experience to a highly diverse and talented student body, produce world-class research, contribute to critical discourse, champion social justice, and solve the most pressing real-world challenges of the times. In close collaboration with the new chancellor and other senior leaders, the vice chancellor will lead the effort to construct this plan, resulting in a marketing and communications campaign with consistent and clear messaging across the entire institution.

The vice chancellor will utilize internal and external partners to highlight the university's scholarly achievements, research, and teaching excellence. The new plan should build on the work of the university over the course of the last decade, reinforcing its refreshed brand and paying careful attention to efforts to differentiate itself as Denver's urban public research university. In addition to traditional on-campus students, CU Denver also offers online and hybrid programs. The new vice chancellor should collaborate closely with deans and campus leadership to place recruitment, enrollment, retention, outcomes, and graduation rates as a top priority and articulate CU Denver's value proposition and impact on potential and current students and their families.

Serve as an Institution-Wide Voice for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

One of CU Denver's strategic priorities – foundational to the university's success – is to create a more cohesive, collaborative, and inclusive culture, ensuring that all who learn, teach, research, and work at the university feel that they belong. At CU Denver, equity means that everyone can find a fulfilling path to success. The university believes that equity is a justice issue, an institutional and leadership priority and imperative, and a value that guides everything the university does. Becoming the nation's first equity-serving institution means that CU Denver creates an environment where one's racial and social identity no longer predetermines educational outcomes and professional advancement opportunities. The university recognizes inequities among all underserved communities and strives to address them through multifaceted approaches that include policy and structural reforms, inclusive academic programming and research opportunities, inclusive hiring and retention practices, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

In the effort to make education work for all, CU Denver launched the [*Meet Your Moment*](#) brand, which reflects the university's diverse learners, dynamic urban landscape, and the innovations and discoveries created by CU Denver's students, faculty, staff, and partners. The Meet Your Moment brand showcases diverse voices and visualizes a course for the university's future.

The new vice chancellor will implement a plan highlighting and amplifying the voices of underrepresented students, faculty, staff, scholars, and community partners who champion equity and social and racial justice. This implementation must ensure that CU Denver is doing everything possible to adopt meaningful change as an institution unwavering in its commitment to this effort. To this end, the vice chancellor will partner closely with the vice chancellor of diversity, equity, and inclusion and other university champions to ensure that this work remains visible as a university priority and is integrated into every strategic initiative. The vice chancellor will also ensure regular and consistent internal and external communications, anticipating and responding proactively to a wide range of matters in this space.

Embrace A New Era of Leadership

In the next several months, CU Denver will welcome a new chancellor who will arrive at a time of multiple challenges for higher education as well as the ongoing priorities of student success, scholarly excellence, creating an inclusive community, and fiscal stability.

The vice chancellor will be a critical strategic partner to the new chancellor as the chancellor establishes leadership priorities, responds to crises in an expedient and substantive manner and continues to place communication and transparency as a high priority. The next vice chancellor should exude high levels of emotional intelligence and cultural competency along with the ability to work effectively with varied personalities and tactfully influence others to take particular courses of action.

Manage Partnerships and Lead the Division

The vice chancellor will lead a high-performing, best-practices division that effectively advances CU Denver's mission, vision, and brand. In addition to the [centralized University Marketing and Communications staff](#), the vice chancellor will encourage collaboration with other [decentralized campus partners](#) embedded in the university's academic and administrative units, with particularly close communication with the Chancellor's Office, Enrollment Management, and Advancement. The vice chancellor will skillfully use leadership influence and goodwill to ensure that each college and unit is dedicated to following campus-wide marketing and communications policies, procedures, and guidelines.

The vice chancellor will be responsible for assessing staff and operational needs within the division and university-wide to ensure that as trends change, both the division and university have the talent and resources to be effective in their work. A vice chancellor with exceptional management and mentoring skills will develop and ensure a high-performing, customer-centric team entrusted to make decisions within their units and ready to adapt to a fast-paced and rapidly changing higher education landscape. Each member should be valued as a university spokesperson in their own regard.

Additionally, the vice chancellor is responsible for a \$3 million operating budget and will be accountable for ensuring the most efficient and effective use of financial resources.



Personal Qualities and Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate will be an innovative, agile, creative, collaborative, and proactive professional who embraces a team environment and works with colleagues in a spirit of partnership, transparency, and fiscal responsibility. The new vice chancellor will be a confident and high-energy leader who has most if not all of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

- **Alignment with the mission:** A strong alignment with CU Denver's mission and educational potential, driven by a student-centered approach, belief in opportunity and the transformative power of education, understanding of research impact, and commitment to community. Proven success in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. Deep understanding of faculty roles and shared governance, eagerness to collaborate with the university's academic and intellectual pursuits, and the ability to maintain principled stances during challenges and crises. Skill in navigating complex political environments.
- **Leadership ability:** The ability to inspire and provide collaborative, visionary leadership to a key team of communicators within the unit, across the university, CU Denver leadership, and the broader community. Demonstrate a track record of fostering collaboration, innovation, and team motivation. Serve as a strategic thought partner to the chancellor and senior leaders, contributing creatively and reliably to the university's overall leadership. Exhibit energy, enthusiasm, credibility, and empathy in interactions with colleagues at all levels, fostering buy-in and followership. Capable of resolving complex issues and utilizing facts and data in decision-making, crisis management, and other sensitive matters.
- **Expertise in branding, marketing, media relations, and/or communications:** Demonstrated success in leading branding, marketing, media relations, and communications planning for a complex organization with diverse audiences (preferably in a higher education setting of similar size and complexity). Proven ability to develop integrated marketing and communications strategies that support advancement and enrollment goals, using data and analysis to guide decision making. Extensive experience with various communication channels including print, social media, websites, CRM, and other digital platforms. Skill in responding strategically to public scrutiny, sensitive issues, and information requests for a high-profile institution while maintaining professionalism and calm during crises.
- **Management skills:** The ability to inspire, coach, mentor, develop trust, provide direction, and set expectations for a dedicated and professional team. The skills to manage and develop programs and operations effectively and to assess and make necessary changes to the organization and infrastructure to achieve objectives; promote a culture of teamwork, high performance, and continuous improvement; advance an approach that values excellence and responds successfully to a high-volume, deadline-oriented environment; and carry out the many responsibilities of the role including planning, analysis, resource management, and supervision.
- **Communication skills:** Exemplary communication skills, ability to present information effectively and respond to questions from internal and external audiences with grace and finesse. Strong oral and written communication as well as listening skills, including the ability to accurately interpret what others are saying and convey messages, information, concepts, and details accurately and clearly. The capacity to formulate, articulate, and influence a wide range of audiences around a shared vision, a record of working with others collaboratively to reach critical decisions and the ability to communicate effectively about issues, decisions, and developments large and small.
- **Personal qualities:** A demonstrated confidence and ability as a senior leader with the humility to be an effective part of a collaborative and collegial senior team; a lack of ego and self-promotion, together with the desire to partner with others in service of the strongest possible effort and outcomes; an ability to listen and hear ideas and thoughts from a variety of interested parties and partners and to integrate the thinking and views of others into one's own; integrity and trustworthiness; flexibility, adaptiveness, and resilience; optimism; and a sense of humor are all desired qualities.

Required Qualifications:

- A master's degree is required.

Preferred Qualifications:

- A master's degree in a relevant field(s).
- Significant experience in a senior leadership role or progressively responsible senior positions overseeing related work at a multifaceted organization or university.
- Experience with strategic planning implementation, public-private partnerships, and leading complex negotiations in politically charged environments.
- Strong, demonstrated commitment and accomplishment in diversity, equity, and inclusion.



About University of Colorado Denver

CU Denver's Charge: Make Education Work for All

CU Denver is redefining the model of tomorrow's public urban research university to lead to a more equitable and innovative society.

CU Denver knows that, for the last 300 years, higher education was designed to meet the needs of the privileged few.

CU Denver sees it differently: The university strives to make education work for all. Education has the power to transform lives, expand economies, and uplift communities, and everyone must have access to these opportunities. That is why the university seeks to become the nation's first equity-serving institution — an inclusive, supportive university where all can excel.

Overview

Nestled in the center of one of America's most vibrant and fastest-growing cities, the University of Colorado Denver is Denver's public urban research university. It educates a diverse student body through quality academics, ambitious research, creative work, and civic engagement in the city it calls home. Leveraging its proximity to and partnership with so many public, nonprofit, and private sector employers, CU Denver graduates gain the powerful combination of immersive classroom and real-world applied experiences that are in demand today. CU Denver provides well-educated top talent and a new generation of knowledge to fuel the future of Denver and the region.

CU Denver is located in downtown Denver. The university shares its campus with two other distinct and separate institutions: Community College of Denver and Metropolitan State University of Denver. The shared campus is called the Auraria campus and is the largest campus in the state. Each institution has its own neighborhood, and the three institutions maintain and manage the Auraria campus with a shared governance model through the [Auraria Higher Education Center \(AHEC\)](#). In addition to shared facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, student union, library, health center) on this campus, CU Denver owns and operates three academic and administrative buildings in downtown Denver's urban core.

The search for the next chancellor of CU Denver is currently underway. Please refer to this website for additional information regarding the [search process](#).

Learn more at [College Campus & Student Community Information | CU Denver and History of University of Colorado, Denver | CU Denver](#).

CU Denver by the Numbers

Students

- Approximately 14,000 students (state-funded students; 70% undergraduate / 30% graduate).
- 46% of undergraduates are students of color.
- 51% of undergraduates are first-generation college students.
- Over 130 student-led organizations.

Academics, Faculty, and Staff

- 7 schools and colleges.

- More than 110 undergraduate majors and minors.
- 2,000 faculty and staff supporting student success.
- 12:1 average student-to-faculty ratio.

Alumni

- Over 100,000 alumni from more than 100 countries.

Finances

- \$832 million economic impact contributed to Colorado's economy.
- \$383 million annual budget.

2030 Strategic Plan

CU Denver's [2030 strategic plan](#) is a profound repositioning of CU Denver to be a public urban research university that works for all: learners of all kinds and at all stages of life, industries, and employers that need talent ready to hit the ground running, and communities requiring new solutions and discoveries. The strategic plan includes:

Goal 1: Become the nation's first equity-serving institution

CU Denver's diversity is highly prized by students, faculty, and staff alike. It is a source of pride based on our shared belief that diverse experiences and viewpoints enrich the learning and professional environment for all. But simply being diverse is not enough.

The university aims to put its diversity into action by becoming an equity-serving institution—one that provides a racially and culturally enhanced educational and work environment and a sense of belonging for all. The university will sustain this culture of belonging and provide the necessary resources and support to help everyone succeed.

CU Denver will accomplish this goal by engaging the entire community to share responsibility for creating and sustaining a just, safe, and inclusive campus; improving the systems to actively support minoritized people and historically marginalized identities in order to reduce bias and create and sustain equity; and redefining success through a lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion to unlock the potential for everyone to succeed.

Goal 2: Become known as a University for Life

CU Denver will provide access to high-quality, relevant education at every stage of life and career—from 17 to 117 years old. As a research university in the heart of a great city with abundant opportunities for real-life learning and working, the university will guarantee experiential learning opportunities for every student.

With nationally ranked programs and a commitment to providing more affordable pathways to degrees and credentials, CU Denver will build critical thinking skills and further position learners for the success of their design.

Acknowledging that today's learners need education to work in the practical reality of their lives, the university will provide flexible and stackable undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs accessible to them whenever and wherever they seek it over their lifetimes.

Recognizing the diverse goals and dreams each learner holds, CU Denver will not just grant degrees — the university will meet learners where they are and treat each learner as a whole person to collaboratively design lives of personal, professional, and social meaning.

Goal 3: Be internationally known for our research and creative work

With a true collaborative ethos, CU Denver will build a research enterprise of interdisciplinary teams specially designed to solve some of the biggest societal challenges currently.

The university will bring together a diversity of researchers, artists, and designers to knock down disciplinary boundaries to create innovative and impactful outcomes for the city, region, and world.

The research enterprise will be internationally respected, well-funded externally, and well-supported internally through state-of-the-art physical, digital, and administrative infrastructure.

Goal 4: Serve as the anchor institution for an open innovation district in downtown Denver

Uniquely positioned within a magnificent landscape and a vital downtown, the city and environs are our campus as well as our canvas. The open innovation district will be a vibrant, open-access hub of intellectual and creative vigor with CU Denver at the center. In the heart of the emerging global city, CU Denver will leverage the university's place and partnership philosophy to foster new forms of social entrepreneurship, economic development, public-private partnerships, and



transformative education. The university will expand the boundaries of the campus to be the convener of the brightest and most diverse inventors, thinkers, and entrepreneurs to collectively shape the future of the region and beyond through the most impactful connections in academic and civic life. The university will advance mutually beneficial pursuits and maximize the collective strength of CU Denver and our greater community.

Goal 5: Be known as a people-centered best place to work

CU Denver will put its people at the center of everything and fully unleash the entrepreneurial spirit that has defined the university for its first five decades. Through this, every member of the community will make the University of Colorado Denver one of the best and most desirable places to work in the region and nation, drawing exceptional, purpose-driven talent that is reflective of the community's rich diversity.

CU Denver will empower and routinely recognize the faculty and staff, who are the greatest asset and play a critical role in delivering on the university's purpose, whether that is educating in front of the classroom or contributing behind the scenes.

CU Denver will create an environment where new and cross-pollinating ideas flourish, where collaborative spaces for ideation and collaboration are plentiful, and where employees belong and look forward to coming to campus every day to make an impact. The university will make intentional investments that support its employees, their work, wellness, and life.

CU Denver will establish equitable structures, policies, and pathways to help its people reach their full potential. In doing so, CU Denver will reach its own full potential and help advance the people and place it serves.

The University of Colorado System

CU Denver is part of the University of Colorado System, which has four distinct campuses and is led from a [system office](#) by [President Todd Saliman](#), and governed by a nine-member elected Board of Regents. The other three campuses are [CU Boulder](#), [CU Colorado Springs](#), and [CU Anschutz Medical Campus](#). CU Denver's relationship with Anschutz, a world-class R1 university with six health professional schools offering over 40 degree programs, is a close one, and Anschutz collaborates with CU Denver on some administrative, academic, and student services.

The University of Colorado plays a profound role in the lives of individuals, businesses, and communities throughout Colorado, across the country, and around the world. More than a half million alumni are leaders in business, science, the arts, health care, and their communities. The university collectively contributes about \$17.2 billion to the Colorado economy.

Denver, Colorado has established itself as a great city on many accounts. Set at the front range of the Rocky Mountains and known as the Mile High City, it is geographically stunning. Denver has a reputation for being extremely dynamic for business and livable for individuals and families. Many consider the Denver Metro area to have the perfect blend of outdoor adventure and metropolitan sophistication. It is one of the nation's fastest-growing cities and, in 2016, was named the best place to live in the United States by U.S. News & World Report.

While the city itself has fewer than 700,000 residents, the seven-county metro area has a population approaching three million. The state of Colorado has ranked annually as one of the best states in which to do business, and Denver is known for its blend of large corporations and manufacturers as well as its vibrant small business environment.

Denver has a mild, dry, mostly sunny climate (whereas the mountains receive the majority of the snow) with 300 days of sunshine. The Denver metro area receives eight to 15 inches of precipitation a year. As such, parks and multiple outdoor activities are abundant year-round in Denver. The city itself has over 200 parks, and of course, Denver is in close proximity to many prominent ski, golf, and recreation resorts.

Culture thrives in Denver. The city's diverse population supports culture through the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). This cultural district is home to many popular attractions like The Denver Performing Arts Complex — the second-largest arts center in the nation. SCFD also offers the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, The Denver Art Museum, The Denver Zoo, and the well-known Denver Botanic Gardens. Denver is one of only a few cities to offer eight professional sports teams and has built new stadiums in recent years. Excellent shopping and restaurants are found throughout the city, from Cherry Creek Shopping Center to downtown's pedestrian-friendly 16th Street Mall.

As might be expected of a thriving, vibrant city, Denver is home to exceptional public and private schools, colleges and universities, religious institutions, and vibrant neighborhoods.

For more information, visit: [Denver Colorado Vacations & Conventions | Plan Your Trip](#) or [Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce](#).



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as two separate documents, a CV or resume, and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. Professional references are not requested at this time.

Compensation and Benefit Information

- Compensation range: \$250,000 — \$275,000
- Benefits: The University of Colorado offers a full benefits package. Information on university benefits programs, including eligibility, is available at www.cu.edu/employee-services.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Colorado Denver in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by February 17, 2025.

Application materials, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to:

Robin Mamlet, Jeff Compher, and Natalie Song at

CUDenver-VCMarComm@wittkieffer.com

University of Colorado Denver is committed to recruiting and supporting a diverse student body, faculty and administrative staff. The university strives to promote a culture of inclusiveness, respect, communication and understanding. We encourage applications from women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and all veterans. The University of Colorado is committed to diversity and equality in education and employment.

Commitment to Job Application Fairness: Applicants are not required to provide age or age-related information and may redact information related to age, date of birth, or dates of attendance at or graduation from an educational institution from any submissions during the initial application process.