



CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2025

Hybrid

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Jamie Hodgkins, Sarah Fields, Maryam Darbeheshti, Wendy Bolyard, Katy Mohrman, Amy Hasinoff, Tom Beck, Rachel Stein, Jessica Valdez, Erin Hauger, Kodi Saylor, Katy DiVittorio, Mari Prestigiacomo, Kristin Kilbourn, Karen Sobel, Peter Anthamatten, Joanne Addison, Larry Erbert, David Bondelevitch, Anthony Villano, Gisella Bassani, Margaret Woodhull, Manish Shirgaokar, Jose Ibarra, Bryn Harris, Diana White, Eric Baker, Florian Pfender, Jeffrey Schrader, Kelly See, Linda Fried, Philip Joseph, Alejandra Medina, Stephen Hartke, Shuyang Peng, Dan Maxey, Turan Kayaoglu, Pamela Jansma, Kenneth Christensen

Chair's Update (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Approve minutes (December 3rd, 2024)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for December 3rd, 2024, Minutes: approved by a majority.
- **Jarrold Hanson:** Chair began by acknowledging the passing of Jarrold Hanson. A few moments were dedicated to honoring his memory, with members reflecting on their memories and the impact Jarrold had on their lives and the community.
- **Comprehensive Compensation Collaborative (CCC):** Chair received a sneak peak preview of the final report, which has not yet been distributed within shared governance. Materials related to the report have been requested, and the Chair expressed hope that the group will receive the information soon.
- **Concerns and Issues:** Chair addressed concerns related to the federal transition and changes in leadership; she emphasized that if there are issues and concerns that cannot be addressed during the meeting, members should send an email for further discussion.

Secretary's Update (Jamie Hodgkins)

- **Notice of FA Chair Elections:** FA Chair position is upcoming. A nomination email will be sent out shortly. Members are encouraged to nominate themselves or others for the position. If you nominate someone else, please ensure you check with that person first and receive their permission. This announcement will also be available on the FA website in the next few days. Voting will take place at the April meeting.

Provost's Update (Pamela Jansma and Turan Kayaoglu)

- The chair welcomed Pam Jansma, new Interim Provost. Pam shared that this is her first meeting, and she is here to listen. She clarified that her role is interim for just a few months, as the search for a permanent provost is ongoing, and she will not apply. FA members highly recommended an internal candidate for the provost position. Turan Kayaoglu provided the Provost Update.
- The Council of Graduate Schools will be visiting in early March.
- Academic Transformation Working Group is reporting on their progress.

- Turan and Peter Anthamatten are starting to share their list of shared governance recommendations with faculty, staff, and leadership groups. Turan and Peter will meet with FA and UCDAI shortly to discuss these and aims to send them to all faculty for feedback, to help refine the recommendations. This initiative is in response to the 2022 FA resolution requesting administration strengthen shared governance across the university.
- Women's Leadership Program, led by Brynn Harris, is going exceptionally well. This program will continue into next year. Applications are being accepted for the second cohort until February 14. Applications can be submitted through the Office of Faculty Affairs website:
<https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/faculty-affairs/faculty-leadership-opportunities/women-s-leadership-program>
- Sabbaticals: 25 applications have been received to date.
- Center for Faculty Development and Advancement (CFDA) IRC Professional Development (PD) Funds: Turan stated that funding has been allocated for this and decisions will be made this week. Turan also noted that the CFDA offers a multicultural mentoring program.
- Retired Faculty Association used to be a part of campus life, but didn't survive COVID. Now, Turan is attempting to revitalize the program and will host a retired faculty lunch later this semester.
- Turan approved 23 hiring requests: 11 IRC faculty and others are TT.
- Q&A session with Interim Provost Jansma:
 - FA Budget Priorities Committee Chair asked about her intent in this new role. Pam shared that she is seeking perspectives beyond just the deans' viewpoint. She acknowledged that there are areas where things have been "stuck" and expressed her desire to help address these issues. She emphasized the need to clearer, more trustworthy, and transparent communication between central administration and faculty. Pam encouraged anyone who wishes to reach out to her to do so and stressed the importance of mutual respect and patience during this time of change. She reminded everyone that the goal is to serve all Coloradans.
 - There was discussion about certain initiatives not being funded due to concerns over naming in titles. Todd Saliman's recent communication was criticized for being misleading, with members pointing out that name changes were driven by political reasons related to President Trump and federal funding, not because there were inherently "better."
 - FA member raised concerns about ICE being present in classrooms and shared that some students were feeling unsafe.

Resolutions (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Chair brought up the FA draft resolution on academic freedom and nondiscrimination, asking whether it should be voted on. She mentioned the difficulty students have in finding resources and expressed the need for a central website for these resources. It was suggested that a message be sent to faculty informing them that the website will be regularly updated.
- FA member suggested voting on the resolution and promoting resources through the FA website.
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for FA Resolution on academic freedom and nondiscrimination: approved by a majority, however, with one addition to include "immigration status."

Introduction to Chancellor Kenneth Christensen

- Chancellor Christensen joined the meeting and was presented with an FA binder and shared governance cookies. He began by emphasizing the importance of shared governance, sharing that

he values it deeply as someone who has served on the Faculty Council. He views himself as a faculty member at heart, understanding faculty life despite not having taught in four years. He expressed his commitment to supporting students, pursuing new knowledge, research, creative works, and scholarship, with a vision that remains student-centric. He acknowledged the current heightened tensions and asked for a “reset” and a call to come together around a common goal, while recognizing that there may be differing views on how to achieve that goal. He stressed the importance of collaboration, open communication, and rebuilding trust across the campus, encouraging everyone to approach this new phase with a clean slate.

- He noted that transitions in leadership are ongoing, and his goal is for everyone to come together in open and honest collaboration. He reassured the group that he has read every single comment from listening sessions and anonymous forms and is eager to work toward a collective reset. Coming from a family of teachers, the Chancellor expressed a deep personal commitment to the mission of the university.
- Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement and Support Services search: Chancellor acknowledged that there are ongoing discussions about the necessity of the role, especially in light of changing higher education landscapes, demographic challenges, and competition. He emphasized the importance of retaining current students, not just attracting new ones, and highlighted that student success now includes preparing students for employment, not just academic achievement. The partnership between the Provost and the VC for SESS will be essential, as both need to collaborate to benefit students.
- Upcoming search for new Provost: Chancellor acknowledged the challenging financial times, especially concerning faculty and staff retention amid budget cuts and salary concerns. He reaffirmed his commitment to being open and visible while learning from the faculty and staff.
- FA Disability Committee Chair asked the Chancellor if he would be willing to attend FA subcommittee meetings and he said he was open to that, requesting that administrators involved in those areas be allowed to attend.
- FA Secretary raised concerns regarding the Graduate School. Chancellor responded that the Council of Graduate Schools will meet in March, hoping to provide outside perspectives on how to improve support. He reiterated his commitment to graduate education, acknowledging that 75% of PhD students don’t stay in academia and stressing the importance of providing services to support their future careers.
- FA member brought up the need to diversify the financial base for the university’s future. The Chancellor addressed this, mentioning the ongoing advancement campaign. He emphasized that philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and community engagement are key to increasing the financial base. All faculty and staff have a role to play in this effort.
- FA member expressed concerns about the university’s commitment to equity, especially in light of recent changes to the associated office and its focus. She asked for a clear message on the university’s ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially given the name changes without sufficient explanation. The Chancellor responded by directing members to the CU Denver leadership email for updates. He reassured everyone that the university’s mission remains unchanged, and despite external pressures, the university continues to prioritize supporting its community. He mentioned that a temporary restraining order had halted some executive orders, including those related to DEI-focused research grants, and that ongoing communications are essential to navigating these challenges.
- FA member asked about the Chancellor’s view on the value of teaching faculty, particularly lecturers, since they make up over 65% of the faculty. The Chancellor made it clear that he does not

view any faculty as second tier and highly values the unique contributions that teaching faculty bring to the university's mission.

- FA member raised the issue of transparency, asking how the Chancellor views it and how it could be improved. The Chancellor responded that transparency is critical and that everyone deserves to understand how decisions are made. He highlighted the importance of consultation, feedback, and clarity in communication. He acknowledged that turnover has been an issue but assured everyone that the provost would be the primary point of contact for faculty communications.
- FA member discussed the concerns around faculty workload and compensation, noting that the current structure creates challenges for shared governance. The Chancellor agreed that there needs to be a more streamlined approach to faculty workloads and emphasized his commitment to supporting schools and colleges that want to try new and innovative approaches.
- FA member revisited the issue of DEI and the recent changes to the DEI office, suggesting that it appeared the university might be backing away from its commitment. The Chancellor reassured everyone that no programs have been stopped, as confirmed by the President's message. He acknowledged the challenges posed by the polarized external environment but emphasized that the university remains committed to its DEI mission while navigating these changes carefully.
- FA member also asked about the university's efforts to lobby for increased funding in light of Colorado's historically low ranking in terms of higher education funding. The Chancellor responded that he has been meeting with the government relations committee and is still learning about the landscape in Colorado. He explained that higher education funding in the state is not constitutionally mandated, which allows for cuts, and that increasing funding requires ongoing advocacy.
- The meeting concluded with the Chancellor reaffirming his openness to working with all members of the campus community in the coming months.

End Meeting