Dear colleagues,

The 2016-2017 academic year has been a momentous time to be at CU Denver.

Last year we were fortunate in a new highly engaged chancellor who conducted an extensive listening tour and, on that basis, set for us five priorities and launched four working groups, which became four action teams, in which dozens of faculty and staff have been collaborating this spring to generate real advancements that serve our students.
The fall 2016 Undergraduate Experiences Symposium (UES), the biggest and best yet, focused on Chancellor Horrell’s first priority—student success, as well as equity—on which 186 faculty, staff, and students worked together generating a list of best next steps, most of which now are occurring. At the same time, the project spun off from the previous year’s UES, the provost-funded High-Impact Practices (HIPs) grant project, incentivized 70 of us to work throughout 2016 on integrating HIPs into courses and programs (see the HIP-grant final report).

Fast on the heels of these events came two perhaps even more momentous reforms: 1) a new budget model for the campus, and 2) a partnership with the Education Advisory Board. EAB is a national leader in higher-education reforms to improve student success. CU Denver not only became an EAB Student Success Collaborative campus (one of 450), but Provost Nairn arranged a unique partnership between CU Denver, EAB, and Wayne State University and charged a faculty-and-staff committee to steer that Student Success Project for Transformational Change.

This is a whole lotta change goin’ on. At its base is an impetus to enlist every single faculty, staff, and student on this campus to be part of one, unified culture of student learning and success. This is big.

As a result, in the next academic year, we will:

- prioritize and implement the recommendations of the chancellor’s four action teams, in itself a big effort with potentially big rewards;
- convene a hopefully even bigger and better UE Symposium, the focus of which will concern the opportunities and responsibilities of all of these reforms, the keynote speaker for which will be the Senior Director of EAB, Dr. Ed Venit—please mark your calendar now for October 20th;
- continue the campus HIP initiative through the work of the provost-funded, Center for Faculty Development (CFD) HIP Fellows, three of whom will lead faculty learning communities focused on a single HIP (such as Service and Community-Based Learning, Capstone Courses, or Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities)—any faculty reading this may choose to join that work;
- pilot the new budget model, which will impact pretty much everything and everybody;
- undertake the work of the partnership with EAB, which will take CU Denver to the forefront of national best practices in higher education, big time.

This truly is a big time for CU Denver. All of these reforms are going to serve our university and our students (which is not to sugarcoat the growing pains of culture change either). CU Denver continues its rise toward being one of the best public urban research universities. If you see an opportunity to join in, I hope you will, and if you’d like guidance toward engagement, contact Regina Kilkenny in the chancellor’s office, Jessi Zemetra in the provost’s office, Margaret Wood in the CFD, or me.

Have a successful semester wrap-up and a fun and productive summer.

Be well,
Jeff Franklin
HIPs Update

For the HIP-grant project, eight professional learning communities (PLCs) wrapped up their work by December 2016. As a result, between 16 and 25 courses and 6 degree programs on campus are more HIP-intensive than they were, and 51 faculty members and 100s of their students are having a more engaged teaching-and-learning experience. This gift will keep on giving.

The Writing-Intensive Course (WIC) PLC, led by assistant professor Rodney Herring, inspired an article in CU Denver Today about WICs in Business, Psychology, and Sociology, as well as English. This is the third in a series of four articles on HIPs in Today, the most recent of which reprints the HIP-grant final report.

On April 13th at the Auraria Library Discovery Wall, five HIP-grant teams showed short, snazzy Pecha Kucha videos to share their work and its outcomes. Faculty from Business, Education, English, Psychology, SPA, and other units attended—along with Chancellor Horrell, Vice Chancellor Brenda Allen, Dean Jansma, and Dean Teske—as HIP-team leaders presented and answered questions. CFD Director Margaret Wood organized and emceed. The Business School newsletter followed with an article on its HIP work, “High-Impact Practices, Enhancing Diversity and Global Learning.”

The HIP Steering Committee—Brenda Allen, Rich Allen, Jeff Franklin, Megan Frewaldt, Laura Goodwin, Kelly Hupfeld, Marjorie Levine-Clark, Tony Smith, Donna Sobel, Kenny Wolf, and Margaret Wood—submitted a proposal for continuing the HIP work to Provost Nairn, who has generously agreed to fund three HIP Faculty Fellows in the CFD in 2017-2018. The CFD has reviewed the applications and soon will announce the names of new faculty fellows. All faculty are invited to join one of the HIP-focused PLCs in fall 2017.

RaCAS 2017

The 20th annual Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS) was held in the Student Commons Building at CU Denver on April 28, 2017. Nearly 200 undergraduate and graduate students delivered over 150 presentations as part of this well-attended day-long event. Dr. Leo P. Bruederle, Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities, and Rachel Wilcoxson, Tony Smith, and Lesley Bishop (Experiential Learning Center) organized the event, which included a wide range of student scholarly activities featured during poster sessions, exhibits, panel discussions, and other oral sessions. Notable among the presentations this year included a living honeybee hive, healthcare spending simulations, the world of high fashion, and more.
The day concluded with the Convened Session, during which Vice Chancellor Richard J. Traystman reflected on RaCAS 2017. Chancellor Elliman subsequently announced the Awards for Outstanding Mentoring of Student Research and Creative Activities, which were given to Dr. Dan Connors (College of Engineering and Applied Sciences), Dr. John Repine (School of Medicine), and Dr. Sheana Bull (Colorado School of Public Health). Dr. Bull then delivered an inspiring LYNx Talk entitled "Students and Mentors Co-Navigating 21st Century Challenges in Digital and Mobile Solutions to Promote Health." Associate Vice Chancellor Jeff Franklin closed the session by recognizing the recipients of the Peoples’ Choice Awards for outstanding undergraduate and graduate student presentations; they are Abhishek Rauniyar (Biology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) mentored by Dr. James R. Roede (Skaggs School of Pharmacy) and Lucine Papazian (Modern Human Anatomy, School of Medicine) mentored by Dr. Lisa Lee (School of Medicine), respectively. CLAS provided additional awards to students, thanks to Dean Pamela Jansma. Congratulations to all of the student participants!

RaCAS provides students with an opportunity to taste what it's like to be a professional in their discipline, while providing other students with an opportunity to become inspired, connect with a mentor, and generate ideas with an eye toward presenting at next year’s symposium. Save the date for RaCAS 2018 — Friday, 27 April 2018! Read about this year's RaCAS in last week's CU Denver Today article .

See the presentation abstracts for detailed information about the event and the student presentations.
UROP

In April 2017, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) spring grants were awarded to 29 teams of student(s) and faculty (with some recipients supported by the CCTSI, for underrepresented students in the biomedical sciences). A list of 2017-2018 recipients can be found here. Meanwhile, thirty-nine UROP teams presented their work at RaCAS 2017 (described above). Three groups of people deserve recognition for their UROP participation. First, there are the students who take the initiative and conduct the research, scholarship, or creative work. Second are their mentors, the dedicated faculty who take the time to nurture them toward professional-level work. Third are the 48 faculty and staff who serve on the UROP steering and panel committees, organized by Mary Baitinger. Congratulations to everyone, and thanks to all who promote and grow the undergraduate research and creative activities at CU Denver.

UROP-funded work sometimes leads to published research; see here for a partial list of recent UROP-recipient publications.

UROP is open to proposals from all disciplines; learn more at the UROP webpage. This fall 2017, there will be a second round of UROP mini grants available (up to $500 per individual). Applications will be due September 22, 2017. Keep posted for the announcement in August with further details, and spread the word to all students who may be interested in participating.

First-Year Experiences (FYE)

Greetings from First-Year Experiences!

FYE, which coordinates First-Year Seminar (FYS) courses, College Success (UNIV) courses, and Learning Communities (LC), is working to grow academic opportunities available to first-year students. Why? Because national experience shows that they improve student sense of belonging, academic performance, and persistence toward completion.
Each year we gather data to test these claims and improve our performance. I am happy to report that our FYS courses saw an increase in ratings, from course content and faculty effectiveness to faculty and peer mentorship. 90% of first-year students would recommend an FYS course to an incoming student. In terms of retention, students who took an FYS course in fall 2015 had a 4.5% higher retention rate than first-year students who did not take an FYS course. Our UNIV courses, which were piloted last fall, also received high ratings for instructor and peer mentorship, as well as campus resource workshops.

As we look to grow the FYE offerings at CU Denver, enrollment and retention information, as well as student ratings and student feedback gathered by Peer-Advocate Leaders (PALs), will help guide our conversations in how we best serve our first-year populations.

**FYE Overview**

Fall 2017, brings some new academic opportunities for first-year students. FYE offerings this fall include 18 First-Year seminars, 15 UNIV courses, and 8 Learning Community (LC) options. New FYS options include the American Indian Experiences course, which will examine tribal identities and the cultural retention of American Indian traditions. Also new is an English course entitled Taking Stories Apart: The Relationship between Justice and Imagination, which will examine stories in written, audio, and visual forms, including the podcast *Serial*. Check out our entire FYS offerings [here](#).

**UNIV**

FYE’s one-credit-hour option, UNIV, is also getting a new look! With the increase in UNIV options, several specialized sections will be available: a section designed for new Veteran students, a section for new transfer students, as well as a section for students living in Campus Village Apartments (on campus housing), which will meet in CVA. Sections designed for specific majors and first-generation students are returning this fall. To see our full listing of UNIV options, click [here](#).

**Learning Communities**

Our LC options offer a variety of courses across colleges and schools. Returning this fall will be our Voicing Differences LC, pairing a Sociology and a Women and Gender Studies course. Students will explore social influences that define and often regulate our experiences, all while finding how to voice their own differences. One of our newest LCs is our Engineering option. This LC pairs three courses: Calculus or Pre-Calculus, Interdisciplinary Freshman Experiences (engineering course), and Core Composition I. Both Math and English courses are designed for Engineering and Pre-Engineering majors. Click [here](#) to review all of our fall Learning Communities!

FYE is eager to continue its collaborations with academic units, Student Affairs units, campus-advising offices, and other student-service offices. Stay tuned for some new and exciting collaborations this fall!
Experiential Learning Center (ELC)

The ELC provides centralized administration of CU Denver’s internship programs. We partner with faculty across campus and with an extensive list of diverse employers in the community to engage hundreds of students each semester in internships. We are on track to exceed last year’s internship placements. The ELC also partners with the Director of Research and Creative Activities (URCA), Dr. Leo Bruederle, to connect students with faculty mentors for URCA and to plan and facilitate the annual RaCAS. ELC staff currently are supporting a greater number of students in solidifying their summer ’17 internship experiences. We invite all faculty to explore the ELC website, drop in to our office in the Tivoli, email, or phone at our new number: 303-315-7258. The opportunities for student success and mentor satisfaction are boundless.

Quick Committee Updates

Core Curriculum Oversight Committee

This semester, the CCOC has been busy reviewing proposals for new Core courses in ENGL, FITV, HDFR, and LING. The Committee is involved also in its regular periodic review of existing Core-course syllabi, this semester in the Behavioral Sciences Core Area. Learn more about the CU Denver Core, “Explaining the CU Denver Core to the Regents,” the CCOC policies, or how to submit a Core-course proposal.

HIP Steering Committee

The HIP Steering Committee, a collaboration with the Center for Faculty Development (CFD), continues to meet monthly and to work on propagating HIPs and engaged teaching-and-learning experiences in all of our degree programs and for all interested students. The committee prepared and received funding for a proposal to the provost for HIP Faculty Fellows in the CFD in 2017-2018. See the HIPs website to access the HIPs Best-Practices Guidelines, which are useful to any faculty person thinking about integrating a HIP into a course or program.

Undergraduate Council

The UGC, an all-colleges faculty-governance body, supports all academic aspects of the undergraduate experience and reviews proposed new curricula with cross-college content. See the UGC bylaws for more information about this group.

Undergraduate Working Group

This cross-campus forum develops solutions to undergraduate-education-related issues through
The FYAC brings staff, faculty, and students together to collaborate and improve upon all aspects of the first-year student experience, from admission to persistence to second year. The FYAC will continue to focus on new and continuing programming, including workshops for admitted students, New Student Orientation, Summer Bridge, CU Prep Week, Convocation, community engagement opportunities, first-generation support, FYE courses, second semester programming, and outreach to new admits. The FYAC will reconvene in fall 2017.