

Date: December 9, 2022

To: Dr. Constancio Nakuma, Provost and Dr. Turan Kayaoglu - AVC for Faculty Affairs  
From: Joanne Addison, FA Acting Chair, Vivian Shyu, FA Vice-Chair, Dennis DeBay, FA Secretary on behalf of CU Denver Faculty Assembly  
Re: Shared Governance in all Schools and Colleges: Compliance with Regent Law/Policy

As we all know, CU Denver is facing significant change as a result of demographic shifts, transitions in the academic workforce, pressures to improve outcomes while simultaneously lowering costs, expansions of online and competency-based education, and more. Most importantly, these issues arise at a moment of financial urgency for our institution. Together, we must seek the most effective ways to manage these issues. Universities like ours have been described as a “pluralistic society with multiple cultures . . . [having] many separate sources of initiative and power.”<sup>1</sup> The pluralistic nature of our university is recognized in Regent Law and Policy and poses both great challenges and opportunities, especially in times of change. Because of its pluralistic nature, one of the most effective ways to work through these issues is by adhering to Regent Law and Policy concerning shared governance.

Steven Bahls, President Emeritus of Augustana College, argues that shared governance in times of change should lead to the identification and implementation of “sustainable strategic direction through aligning the interests of stakeholders in a shared academic vision”<sup>2</sup>. Further, the benefits of shared governance include:

- Ability to address new challenges
- Better-informed, timely decisions
- Faster, more effective implementation
- Mutual investment in outcomes
- More participation in governance
- Model of civility

Unfortunately, adherence to Regent Law and Policy concerning shared governance is inconsistent across our campus. Indeed, an informal review of the state of shared governance undertaken by Faculty Assemblies on all CU campuses in 2019 evidenced that while there seems to be a general willingness to engage in shared governance at CU Denver, most of our schools and colleges do not have the structures and practices in place that allow shared governance to thrive. Further, we can find no evidence of a system of accountability from either the Office of Faculty Affairs or the Provost’s Office to advance adherence to shared governance.

As codified in Article 5 and Policy 5 of Regent Law and Policy, faculty have principal responsibility for decisions concerning pedagogy, curriculum, research, scholarly or creative work, academic ethics, and recommendations on the selection and evaluation of faculty. In addition, faculty shall collaborate<sup>3</sup> with the campus and system administration in making recommendations or decisions on faculty personnel policies, administrative leadership, and resource allocation. Abiding by these laws and policies is only possible through strong adherence to shared governance.

Therefore, we call on our Provost and our AVC for Faculty Affairs to work with Faculty Assembly as well as each school/college/library to 1) identify the minimum shared governance structures, principles, and practices to be followed at CU Denver to comply with the Regent Law and Policy, 2) ensure that these structures are in place and these practices followed in each school/college/library at CU Denver, 3) identify the best practices in shared governance in CU system and elsewhere to strengthen the faculty voice in shared governance, 4) issue a report in May of each year to inform the campus the health of shared governance at CU Denver and work done and planned to strengthen it.

1. Bahls, Steven. *Shared Governance in Times of Change*. Washington, D.C. AGB Press.
2. Kerr, Clark. *The Uses of the University, Fifth Edition*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
3. We do not have a useful definition of “collaborate” or “consult” despite often using these terms in relation to shared governance. We suggest something along these [lines](#) be developed as well as using the [AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) as a model, keeping in mind adherence to CU Regent Law and Policy.