



## **Working Together Toward a Culture of Belonging: Provost's 2022-25 IRC Roadmap Update**

December 7, 2023

Dear campus community,

These past two years, we've been collectively working across CU Denver to better support a culture of belonging for instructional, research, and clinical (IRC) faculty, including lecturers. Together, this group comprises nearly two-thirds of our faculty and contributes tremendously to CU Denver through their student engagement, scholarly expertise, and academic leadership.

I'm writing today to provide an update on our progress this past year toward our IRC commitments and to provide some context of how we got here.

This collective work has been built on cross-community dialogue and the work of an IRC Task Force, convened by Provost Constancio Nakuma, that delivered its recommendations in an [April 2022 report](#). CU Denver's senior leadership recognizes that supporting our incredible IRC faculty is simply the right thing, in recognition of the essential contributions they make to our mission, the 2030 Strategic Plan and, most importantly, the educational experience of our students. This is a commitment we continue to reaffirm here.

In October 2022, Provost Nakuma released [Working Together Towards a Culture of Belonging: Provost's 2022-2025 Roadmap Based on the Recommendations of the IRC Task Force](#). This roadmap elevated and transformed the recommendations into an institutional action plan to be implemented over a three-year period in collaboration with shared governance groups, Chancellor's Cabinet, and academic and administrative units.

Acting on our commitment to provide regular updates on our progress, today we provide this **IRC Roadmap Year 1 Update**, informing the CU Denver community about our work so far, along with IRC Roadmap Year 2 Priority Activities.

This work could not be done without collaboration and effort across CU Denver. In particular, I would like to thank the IRC Task Force, the IRC Roadmap Advisory Committee, the Center for Faculty Development & Advancement (CFDA), CU Denver Human Resources, University of Colorado Denver Association of Lecturers and Instructors (UCDALI), and Faculty Assembly for their crucial roles in helping us understand and remedy issues at hand.

While the road ahead of us is long and will have some bumps, I trust in our collective will and creativity to move forward. Our progress last year gives me the best confidence about our future work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Turan Kayaoglu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

**Turan Kayaoglu, PhD**

Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs

## **IRC Roadmap Efforts This Past Year**

Our collective work these past 12 months has improved circumstances for IRC faculty on numerous fronts, and has built on and supplemented many efforts already in motion across the university. Indeed, some IRC Roadmap activities seek to ensure and align with—university-wide—certain policies and practices already implemented by some CU Denver units.

This section highlights these collaborative efforts undertaken in Year 1 to assess and address roadmap priorities.

**Expansion and Process Clarification for Multi-Year Contracts:** One roadmap effort with immediate and pervasive impact has been the expansion of multi-year contracts (MYCs). Due to this work, the number of IRC faculty with MYCs has quadrupled this past year.

Underlying this expansion has been our work to develop a process for establishing fair, transparent, and clear adoption of MYCs for IRC faculty. Doing so requires a revision of [Campus Administrative Policy 1027 \(Multi-Year Contracts\)](#) to remove restrictive language and establish pathways for IRC faculty to obtain MYCs. We have made significant progress on a revised draft of CAP 1027, currently undergoing Faculty Assembly review. The review process has encountered delays due to changes to CU System [Administrative Policy Statement 5060 \(Faculty Appointments\)](#), as well as the need to clarify the appeal process for IRC Faculty non-reappointment decisions as reflected in [Campus Administrative Policy 1019 \(IRC Faculty Appointments\)](#). We hope to finalize the revisions in Spring 2024.

As part of the 2023 CU Denver MYC Action Plan, we asked academic units to review records of IRC faculty members with three or more years of CU Denver experience and invite them to apply for MYCs. This work saw substantial progress, with *all* schools and colleges, plus the Auraria Library, now able to offer MYCs. At the start of the 2022-23 academic year, only 25 faculty (all in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) had MYCs. We started this academic year with 95 IRC faculty with MYCs across five colleges and schools:

### **IRC Faculty with MYCs (AY23-24)**

- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: 43
- School of Education & Human Development: 25
- College of Arts & Media: 14
- School of Public Affairs: 6
- Business School: 7

I believe this work will contribute to student retention and success and will have transformative effect on CU Denver's institutional culture by demonstrating a commitment to and thereby increasing a sense of belonging among IRC faculty.

**Standardizing IRC Promotion Compensation Increases:** For background, IRC pay increases following promotions have lacked standardization and have not reflected the work and demonstration of excellence required to achieve promotion, nor have they appropriately

rewarded the successes of this faculty group. We have recently revised [CAP 1007 \(Compensation Principles for Faculty Promotion and Tenure\)](#) to incorporate newly established IRC promotion rates. The Chancellor approved these policy changes this past summer. They are in effect this academic year.

The new IRC promotion increases are as follows:

- Instructor to Senior Instructor: \$4,000
- Senior Instructor to Principal Instructor: \$4,500
- Assistant Professor, CTT to Associate Professor, CTT: \$4,500
- Associate Professor, CTT to Professor, CTT: \$5,000

So far this academic year, 27 faculty members in these categories have already started to see pay increases in accordance with these new rates. We intend to review and adjust these rates annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as faculty members achieve promotions, aligning these IRC faculty rate adjustments with those made for tenure-track positions going forward.

While we have made progress on this issue, we also must address concerns of faculty members who had been promoted before the implementation of this policy, and thus in some cases received pay increases much lower than those now specified in the policy. To do so, this fall we collected information on prior post-promotional compensation increases within schools and colleges. The process was more time consuming than expected due to discrepancies in budget-code usage between school/college data and university-level data, a delay we recognize was difficult for impacted faculty. In October Provost Nakuma and Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Ann Sherman reviewed the data and authorized to bring promotional compensation of faculty members promoted in the prior 10 years up to the amounts set in CAP 1007, as we informed the campus community in [this October 30 memo](#).

The effective date of these compensation increases is August 15, 2023. Impacted faculty will begin receiving letters in December and January from CU Denver Human Resources for these adjustments.

**Cross-Campus Compensation Equity:** Ensuring that we compensate faculty appropriately across title series and disciplines is a university-wide priority that will help us better recruit and retain top talent. Under the leadership of Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Teri Engelke, CU Denver is midstream on a multiyear effort—the [Comprehensive Compensation Collaborative \(3C\)](#)—to develop a long-term, holistic compensation approach that reflects CU Denver’s vision of being a best place to work. The 3C initiative intends to create consistent, accessible, comprehensive job descriptions with career pathways, along with corresponding salary ranges.

We held a focus group for faculty, including IRC faculty, this past summer. While some questions and concerns have arisen related to the focus-group platform, privacy and data security have been of paramount importance during the process, and data collected were de-identified and directed toward the purpose of looking at broad patterns or themes of inequity. The 3C work

will continue through the year ahead, with completion and rollout anticipated in the second half of 2024.

**Awards and Recognition:** At our April 2023 Faculty Excellence Awards, our highest annual faculty honors, more than 20 (nearly half) of all award recipients were IRC faculty, and the awards included categories exclusively intended to honor IRC faculty. A full list of honorees can be found [here](#). An additional category we introduced in April 2023 was an Excellence in Teaching—Lecturer award designed to honor a group often overlooked in campus awards. Additionally, to increase the profile and recognition of lecturers and their valuable contributions across the university, CU Denver News published a series of Spring 2023 feature stories, [Practice What You Teach](#), that highlighted the efforts of three CU Denver lecturers.

**Establishing CFDA's IRC Professional Development Fund:** By increasing IRC faculty professional development opportunities and funding, we reinforce our commitment to helping all faculty grow their careers at CU Denver for the long term. CU Denver's Center for Faculty Development (CFDA) collaborated with UCDALI members to establish a process for a new [IRC Professional Development Fund](#), among several ways CFDA has served IRC faculty development this past year. Fulfilling the promise of the IRC Roadmap, \$20,000 was allocated for centralized IRC professional development support this year. In the first funding cycle this fall, 19 IRC faculty, including lecturers, applied for the fund, and the committee awarded \$10,175 to 12 faculty members. The second round of applications has just closed, with an expectation that recipients will be notified by the end of the Fall 2023 semester.

**Support for Cancelled Courses for Lecturers:** The Office of the Provost this past year issued [comprehensive guidelines related to course cancellations](#). The guidelines include a provision for a \$500 payment to lecturers who are subject to a course being canceled within two weeks of the start of a semester. This payment recognizes the commitment lecturers make to CU Denver and acknowledges their preparatory work, but in no way fully makes up for the lost income.

**Shared Governance and Collaboration:** We deeply value our partnerships with UCDALI and Faculty Assembly, not only in our work co-piloting activities of the IRC Roadmap, but also in all activities. We have taken to heart feedback received this past year, and we commit to further strengthening our engagement with shared governance partners. In particular, we have heard concerns about compensation, professional development leave, and collaboration with deans, and are taking them up as areas for ongoing prioritization.

Numerous activities this past year have reflected productive shared governance collaboration. Working in close partnership with UCDALI, we have aligned their budget process with the Faculty Assembly's, ensured their staff support, and will work to move the UCDALI budget into a permanent speedtype to reflect our long-term commitment to a distinct IRC faculty voice in shared governance. We have requested that senior administration include UCDALI as a shared governance consultative partner in Phase 2 of the CU Denver budget realignment process.

We also have increased connectivity in less formal ways. The Office of the Provost and UCDALI co-hosted a New Lecturer Reception as part of Fall 2023 New Faculty Orientation. Office of the

Provost leadership also authored progress updates and welcomed new IRC faculty to CU Denver in [Spring 2023](#) and [Fall 2023](#) UCDALI newsletter articles.

As this update so far makes clear, voices and participation across shared governance are essential to realizing IRC Roadmap goals. To ensure an active and consistent forum for diverse faculty voices, in December 2022 Provost Nakuma established the [IRC Roadmap Advisory Committee](#), composed of Vivian Shyu (Faculty Assembly/CLAS), Eric Baker (IRC Taskforce/LIB), Jim Lopresti (UCDALI/BUS), and AVC Kayaoglu. This group has met consistently this past year.

**Year 1 Priorities Delayed:** While the roadmap outlines plans to address numerous IRC faculty considerations, our efforts on some fronts have not yet been realized as planned, often due to factors beyond our control. These, this past year, have included:

- **Faculty Voice on Salary:** AVC Kayaoglu prepared two charge letters this past year to elevate the faculty voice on salaries. One initiated a Salary Oversight Committee that was endorsed by Faculty Assembly and its Budget Priorities Committee. However, recent changes to [Regent Policy 11.B](#), which removed the Regental requirement of the committee, created uncertainties. This year the Faculty Assembly decided to hold on creating a Salary Oversight Committee to await the completion of 3C work. Kayaoglu also worked with Faculty Assembly's Academic Personnel Committee (APC) to draft a charge letter for campuswide Salary Grievance Committee. We will continue to work on implementation of the committee.
- **Lecturer Liaison Committee:** While we have identified numerous members for a prospective cross-university Lecturer Liaison Committee (some schools and colleges already have lecturer liaisons), we have delayed the anticipated Fall 2023 launch of this committee due to concerns about an increasing number of committees and service work expectations across campus. Integrated lecturer support remains an area of focus, and this work will be prioritized for Spring 2024.
- **Revised Letter of Offer (LOO)/Contract Templates:** AVC engelke, AVC Kayaoglu, and Managing University Counsel Chris Puckett met to discuss revision of these templates to support language clarity and approachability and decided to focus efforts on revision of the LOO template and the creation of a one-page document clarifying the distinct purposes of the two documents. This effort has been delayed due to work at the CU System level to revise templates. Our work will resume after the CU System's efforts on this front are complete.

**Proactive School/College Initiative and Leadership:** So much of the progress made in Roadmap Year 1—and our potential for Roadmap Year 2—springs from the foundation of support for these efforts across CU Denver's schools, colleges, and the Auraria library. We have seen broad unit leadership alignment not only in the embrace of new IRC-friendly policies and process, but in many cases implementing actions earlier than, or independent of, our campuswide work.

For example, the College of Arts and Media has established a bylaws committee that in part will address shared governance and inclusive voting rights for IRC faculty, and reformed a budget

priorities committee inclusive of IRC membership. The School of Public Affairs too has expanded IRC representation and voices on committees for budget and academic personnel. The College of Architecture and Planning initiated a compensation increase for its full-time IRC faculty last January above and beyond annual merit increases, and started a faculty development fund for instructors.

The School of Education & Human Development has already provided financial support for IRC professional development and enabled their eligibility for schoolwide faculty grants, and working with the IRC faculty, the school leadership managed to reduce the teaching load of CTT faculty from 80% (4/4) to 70% (4/3). These are just a few of many examples of unit-level proactivity in support of IRC working circumstances that bolster our faith in our Year 2 efforts ahead.

## **Our Roadmap Work for Year 2**

Befitting the collaborative nature of this process, the IRC Roadmap Advisory Committee has co-determined with the Office of the Provost the following nine priorities for our work in the year ahead:

- 1) **IRC promotion pay:** We are continuing this year to appropriately implement retroactive salary adjustments for previously promoted IRC faculty. As referenced above, our October 2023 campus announcement clarified how CU Denver will address retroactive salary adjustments. The implementation of this complex work will require attention to ensure that salary adjustments for impacted IRC faculty are executed properly, that faculty are appropriately informed, and that appeals in disputed cases are appropriately heard and resolved.
- 2) **Multi-year contracts:** Revisions to CAP 1027, to be finalized in the year ahead, should ensure multiple pathways are available for IRC faculty careers at CU Denver, with streamlined processes and minimum paperwork both for faculty members and for their academic units. It will also clarify conditions for contracts of up to five years, longer than our current maximum contract term of three years, and recently approved by the state. We also will work to understand and address the concerns of IRC faculty in CEDC, CAP, and the Library who did not apply for multi-year contracts.
- 3) **Faculty appeal rights and processes:** We will continue efforts to revise CAP 1019 to clarify IRC faculty appeal rights at CU Denver. Beyond the campus-level policy, we will work with academic units to ensure their own policies for IRC faculty appeal are in place and in alignment with campus and system standards.
- 4) **Return to faculty after administrative roles:** Increasing numbers of IRC faculty are contributing to CU Denver as academic and administrative leaders, in roles such as

Associate Dean. This service, in addition to teaching and research priorities, is highly commendable, and APC will be studying and clarifying policies governing the return of these individuals to their traditional faculty roles following their service in administrative roles.

- 5) **Senior Lecturer and other title changes:** The work to ensure compliance with CU System APS 5060 continues in collaboration with CU Denver’s Human Resources, Faculty Assembly, and academic units to finalize job classifications for Teaching Professor track and Senior Lecturer titles. Following this initial work, a second phase will focus on reviewing IRC faculty with CT/CTT titles to determine who will continue to keep these titles and who will transition to corresponding Teaching Professor titles. We plan to finish this work in Spring 2024.
- 6) **Guidance on Faculty Inclusive Language:** Use of inclusive language with regard to faculty titles is essential for promoting a sense of belonging and enhancing the institutional climate. We have worked with UCDALI and IRC Roadmap Advisory Committee members on a document identifying ways in which language we use may exclude certain faculty members, and proposing more inclusive alternatives. Faculty Assembly endorsed the document in November, and it will be issued to the campus community in the weeks ahead. It will continue to evolve as we foster a more inclusive climate for everyone.
- 7) **IRC Professional Development Fund:** We will administer the second cycle of IRC professional development funds for AY23-24, which aims to distribute an additional \$10,000 to strengthen the knowledge and careers of IRC faculty.
- 8) **Increasing benefits awareness and access:** The benefits available to IRC faculty are not always clear or well understood. We are also aware that there are sometimes barriers to access to IRC faculty benefits. AVCs Kayaoglu and engelke will collaborate with the CU System benefits office to develop a communication plan to inform the CU Denver community about benefits available to IRC faculty and the best avenues for support.
- 9) **Expand Lecturer Welcome Reception:** In collaboration with UCDALI, the Office of the Provost organized a New Lecturer Reception in September. We will explore with UCDALI the possibility of expanding this event in 2024 to all lecturers, bringing together new and experienced CU Denver lecturers as well as CU Denver leadership and deans.

In Fall 2024, we will provide a Year 2 update on IRC Roadmap work, and on the IRC Roadmap Advisory Committee’s priorities for 2024-25.



## **The Road Ahead—In A Spirit of Partnership and Engagement**

We are still in the early stages of roadmap work, and resolving inequities in sustainable ways takes time, partnership, and the resolution of factors independent to us. Throughout this work, the Office of the Provost is dedicated to strengthening faculty engagement, and to effectively and frequently communicating with academic and operational partners across CU Denver.

These IRC Roadmap activities take place in parallel with equity efforts occurring across many colleges and universities. Our work draws upon insights gleaned from the experiences of peer institutions. While we still have much to learn from them, we also see and hear evidence that our efforts are creating a positive and recognizable wake, with others drawing inspiration from our progress on behalf of IRC faculty.

Our success in achieving roadmap goals relies strongly on partnerships with shared governance entities and is affected by policies and legal frameworks spanning faculty governance, school and college units, the University of Colorado Board of Regents, and state and federal law. While these complexities can extend timelines and introduce unforeseen barriers, they also amplify the effectiveness of our efforts and help our collective work lead to transformative changes at CU Denver. Moreover, we are tackling these challenges amidst an enrollment downturn and a budget realignment process in which CU Denver units must realize savings to ensure the university's future strength, especially given impending demographic shifts that may challenge us further.

This noted, we know we cannot cut our way to long-term success as an institution. We aim to strengthen our faculty foundation not only to preserve and grow their contributions to our educational mission, but also because they inspire and attract our students, which ultimately will grow enrollment and strengthen our bottom line. We will continue to be creative and innovative in addressing roadmap priorities, regardless of the operational environment.

Our success in this work will continue to rely on a foundation of trust and collaboration, with the goal of enhancing a profound sense of belonging for all our faculty. For our shared successes to date, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the CU Denver community. Your dedicated efforts and innovative ideas are inspiring and indispensable as we work to improve conditions for IRC faculty.