

## **State of the Campus Address, by Chancellor Dorothy Horrell: From Success to Significance**

October 22, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you all for coming. It's wonderful to return to the Lola & Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center for the second year. Thank you to Amber and her team as well as Zack and Kelly for all they do to make events like today happen. Thanks also to Leanna and our UComm team for their assistance with the visuals for today's address.

I'm delighted to extend a warm welcome to our special guests that include the President of our Alumni Board –David Heisler, several members of the Chancellor's Development Committee, colleagues from the CU System and the CU Foundation, Colleen Walker – CEO of Auraria Higher Education Center, and my husband, Ted. Would all of you stand? We're pleased you could join us.

During our time together today, I'd like to do several things:

1. Take a look back at the last four years and some of our major accomplishments
2. Share why I believe CU Denver is at the right place and right time to move from success to significance
3. Describe our current financial picture and our plans to address it
4. Outline the top areas that need our collective attention in the coming year
5. Conclude with an informal Q&A with our student, faculty and staff governance leaders

So, let's get started.

In the busyness of day-to-day activities, it's easy to lose sight of the extraordinary work and accomplishments that all of you make possible. Let's recap some highlights from the past four years.

### **2016:**

- Opened Comcast Media & Technology Center (CEDC/CAM)
- Completed Reach Out and Listen Tour
- Developed 5 strategic priorities
- Convened working groups followed by action teams to address most pressing issues
- Launched Student Success Partnership with EAB
- Celebrated first annual LynxFest
- Fundraising reached an all-time high of nearly \$19 million
- Opened NextStage Gallery (CAP/CAM) in partnership with Denver Arts & Venues at Denver Performing Arts Complex
- Developed first stand-alone Facilities Master Plan
- Reclaimed CU in the City brand

### **2017:**

- Initiated Campus Conversations
- SEHD launched partnership with Otero Junior College to address rural teacher shortage
- Became JED campus, partnering with the JED Foundation to promote student mental health and reduce suicide and substance abuse on campus

- Awarded \$1M grant from Howard Hughes Medical Institute to improve learning outcomes for under-represented students in math and science (CLAS)
- CAP's Colorado Center for Community Development celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- SEHD and CLAS launched ThingStudio and named first Faculty Fellows
- Margarita Bianco (SEHD) named the Timmerhaus Teaching Ambassador
- Completed North Classroom renovations
- SPA's Master of Criminal Justice online program ranked 13<sup>th</sup> nationally and one of the top three programs in the Western U.S.
- Began CU at the Table to extend hospitality to our international students
- New BA/BS-DDS program launched in partnership with Anschutz Medical Campus (CLAS)
- Received "Delivering on its Promise" \$5M/year commitment from CU System
- Created the Office of Digital Education
- Milo celebrates his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday!

## 2018:

- Opened CityCenter as our front door to the community
- B School re-designated as CIBER by Dept. of Education for advanced study and teaching of international business
- Inaugural CU in the City donor celebration
- Launched Navigate, tracking tool for advisors and department chairs to provide coordinated support and interventions for student success
- Created Imagine a Great Region partnership
- CAP received CU Denver's largest-ever estate gift valued at \$12M
- First Chancellor's Diversity Showcase
- Broke ground on Jake Jabs Event Center (B School)
- Ranked top school for veterans by *Military Times*
- Launched LynxUP scholarship campaign
- Began plans to deliver "unparalleled student experience"
- Tom Noel, "Dr. Colorado," named State Historian (CLAS)
- CEDC receives \$4.5M DARPA grant to design search and rescue drones
- Developed CU Denver Flywheel
- Gillian Silverman (CLAS) named one of three President's Teaching Scholars
- Opened Lola & Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center

## 2019:

- Finalized design for First Year Student Housing & Dining facility and Learning Commons
- Fully implemented new incentive-based budget model
- Celebrated International College of Beijing's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Graduated the largest class in CU Denver history
- CAM hosts its first-ever Town Hall on publicly-engaged scholarship
- College of Engineering, Design & Computing unveiled new name and new vision and kicked off fundraising for new building

- Dr. Robin Shandas (Bioengineering) named University Distinguished Professor
- Dr. Stephanie Santorico (CLAS) delivered first Chancellor's Distinguished Faculty Lecture
- Named first cohort of TIAA Chancellor's Urban Engaged Scholars
- Center for Faculty Development graduated first cohort of Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) in Effective Teaching Practice
- Completed renovation of Campus Village
- Launched YOU@CUDenver to support student wellness
- SEHD graduated 48 EdD students of which 11 were part of the inaugural LatinX cohort
- SPA welcomes 30 Executive MPA students from Shandong, China, as part of new cultural exchange program
- Opened LynxConnect

This is but a snapshot that reflects the hard work, talent and dedication to excellence that each of you brings every day. And, it's the story of a university on the rise. As I think back to the fall of 2015 when then President Bruce Benson introduced me as your new chancellor, I recall being told by a number of people – both internal and external to our university-- that the most important thing I could do was to help CU Denver define who it was and why it mattered.

Yes, our history is complicated by circumstances including being in a crowded and somewhat confusing marketplace, having undergone several name changes, not having leadership focused exclusively on it for 12 years, and existing in an environment of declining financial support from the state. But what has been consistent is something infinitely more powerful and sustaining – a special spirit of strength and resilience that is hard-wired into the DNA of this place. It comes from deep within each of you. Call it what you will-- scrappiness, resolve, an unwavering commitment to social justice and opportunity for all. And, it's not surprising that those very qualities mirror the attributes that describe our students.

Along the way, CU Denver has crystalized an identity that is distinctive and codified in Colorado statutes: that the University of Colorado Denver is the state's only public urban research university. As we've embraced that as our north star, it has provided guidance and direction that has informed our priorities and solidified our strategies, and I believe secured a place not only defined by our success – but also by our significance.

An urban-serving university is more than just a university located in an urban area. To be urban-serving means to be integral to the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the community we call home and the people we serve.

Four elements characterize our work as an urban-serving university:

1. **Student access and success:** A focus on expanding access to undergraduate and graduate higher education within the metropolitan region, and support for programs that maximize student success;
2. **Engaged research and creative work:** Scholarship that is guided by the potential use of its results, and strives to respond to problems or needs of the community;
3. **Meaningful community partnerships:** Connecting governmental entities, the business community, educational institutions and the social sector to the wealth of the university's talent, expertise, technology and resources;

4. **Economic development:** Leveraging our assets as a catalyst for growth, improved quality of life, and economic prosperity in the larger community.

Today, 55% of the world's population lives in cities. According to United Nations projections, that number will grow to 68% by 2050. While cities are the epicenter for exciting cultural and economic opportunities, we know firsthand that urbanization is accompanied by demographic, environmental, economic, and social challenges.

This underscores the indisputable fact that CU DENVER MATTERS – it has for almost 50 years and its role going forward will be of increasing importance. I will be so bold as to say that CU Denver and other urban-serving research universities represent the future of higher education. Our faculty have expertise and insight and every day are creating new knowledge and solutions to address some of humanity's most perplexing challenges. Our diverse student body is drawn to the vitality of the city and brings ingenuity and energy as they prepare to be the thought leaders and problem-solvers of the future.

The greater Denver region is growing with business start-ups, expansions and relocations. Their success depends on having a pipeline of skilled talent – and they are looking to us to help fill it. Meanwhile, Denver is ranked among the top US cities in attracting millennials. That coupled with the fact that Colorado lags behind in the percentage of our residents with post-secondary credentials says there is no shortage of potential students who need what we have to offer.

For us to deliver on our promise means that we have to be at the top of our game. We need to be even more data-driven in our decisions regarding our products, our programs, our services. We need to strengthen our connective tissue that leverages our efforts and provides greater speed and efficiency in how we get things done. And we must have a strong, stable financial foundation that enables us to not only sustain our operations but invest in our top priorities.

That leads me to our current financial situation. I know you've heard from our budget team and me that the CU Denver budget relies heavily on tuition revenue. 80% of our operating budget comes from tuition paid by our students – those who are continuing as well as newly enrolled. This year we were grateful to receive a 12% increase in state support. That's a little over a \$4 million increase. In exchange for that, the state held our tuition rates flat. Meanwhile, mandated costs (those costs we do not control such as benefit increases, software licenses and the costs we pay to Auraria and the CU System) increased by \$5.7 million.

For Fall 2019, our student headcount is under what we projected by about 2%. We attracted the second largest freshman class in our history but we fell below what we had projected for returning students and new graduate enrollments. That translates to a fall 2019 revenue shortfall of \$2.2 million. If spring 2020 enrollment remains under budget, the annualized shortfall will be \$5 million. Our budget reality has been described as being on a razor's edge. The difference between being financially healthy or not can swing one way or the other with a difference of 300 students.

We've already begun the work with our schools and colleges and the central support units to address the shortfall. We've engaged the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Budget that is comprised of the leaders of our faculty, staff, and student governance groups as well as the deans and the cabinet. They have wrestled with tough decisions about our budget. This isn't the first time we've had to face this situation but we're now in a much stronger position to do so

because of our incentive-based budget model. We will address the shortfall with a combination of one-time central funds that have been set aside as an enrollment contingency and with permanent, strategic budget reductions in the academic and central support units.

And, we have time to positively impact spring enrollment with targeted recruitment and retention efforts. That will take all of us working together. Over the next six weeks, Provost Rod Nairn, Sr. Vice Chancellor Jennifer Sobanet, and I will be meeting with the faculty and staff of each school and college to answer your questions and seek your input. Also, we'll be holding a campus conversation on Friday, November 1 focused on the budget. That will be an opportunity for you to get more information and ask questions.

Longer term, we will be aided by developing a strategic enrollment management plan. We've redeployed resources and in early November, we'll have a new Assistant Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management to lead this effort. It's clear that higher education has entered a new structural reality with a downturn in birth rates and continued signs of decreasing state support. We must find new student pipelines and do a better job of retaining the students who enter and helping them graduate. Each one of us has our hand on the tuition-revenue tiller and each of us can make a difference.

While I'm certainly no David Letterman, I've prepared a Top 10 list that captures our priority action items for this year:

#### Elevate student success

1. Continue redesign of the student experience with the goal of streamlining our systems and processes so our students can focus on their learning and wellbeing
2. Further engage faculty in effective practices that improve student learning, persistence and career outcomes through the new Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence

#### Advance excellence and innovation in teaching, research and creative work

3. Implement Faculty Information System to assist in cataloging and increasing visibility of our faculty's research and creative work
4. Identify pool of resources to stimulate scholarly work, including that focused on urban issues

#### Strengthen our position as a vital community asset

5. Fully utilize LynxConnect to enhance our students' experiential learning opportunities and prepare them for the next steps in their lives and careers
6. Continue to align our academic offerings – degree programs, shorter-term certificates, and customized courses – delivered both online and face-to-face that reflect market demands

#### Create a more cohesive, collaborative and inclusive CU Denver culture

7. Initiate campus-wide dialogues to increase our understanding of and respect for differences among us while strengthening the connectedness and sense of belonging within our community
8. Use results of upcoming climate survey to develop and begin implementation of an action plan that addresses identified needs

#### Achieve long-term financial stability and sustainability

9. Develop and launch strategic enrollment plan with focus on growing both UG and graduate enrollment

10. Adopt continuous improvement processes that lead to better efficiencies, increased productivity and enhanced outcomes across the institution

You may have read in CU Connections that President Kennedy has launched a strategic planning process for the CU System. There are CU Denver representatives involved on the various system-wide working groups and there will be opportunities for others of you to engage with the campus teams as the work progresses. It's good to note that the priorities identified in the system plan are largely consistent with ours at CU Denver. That means our efforts will be amplified by what's happening at the system level and vice versa.

This coming year you'll also be hearing about preparations beginning for the reaccreditation of University of Colorado Denver| Anschutz Medical Campus by the Higher Learning Commission. This happens every 10 years and ours is scheduled for April 2021. Provost Rod Nairn and AVC Terry Potter will be leading this work.

And as you know, a search committee will soon be named to assist with the selection of CU Denver's next chancellor. President Kennedy has requested nominations from the campus for that committee. Venkat Reddy, Chancellor of UCCS, will serve as chair and there will be many opportunities for you to provide input to that process. I'm very confident that CU Denver will be well-positioned to attract a pool of highly-qualified candidates because here's what I know for sure.

The CU Denver I've come to know ... and love...is a place that matters. Our faculty and staff matter, our students matter, and our work matters. We are at the heart of a vibrant city that needs what we provide...new knowledge, insightful thought leadership, and a talent pipeline that reflects our changing demographics. This is a place with a strong history and an even more promising future.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your chancellor. I'm extraordinarily proud of the work we've done together and feel fulfilled knowing that I contributed in some small way to CU Denver's journey from success to significance. Always remember that no one can value us more than we value ourselves.

I've found in life that it's important that a person loves what they do and does what they love. Then it has meaning and value. When you truly love something, then you strive to do right by it. And you'll fight for it. You can expect that I'm going to keep the pedal to the metal until I leave next June. And after that, you can count on me to continue to be one of your strongest cheerleaders.

Know that I will be eternally grateful to each of you. I ask that you extend to your next chancellor the same generous spirit, patience, grace, and kindness that you have shown me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.