



One Size Fits One: An Equity-Serving Digital Education Strategy

Background

Capitalizing on our [2030 strategic plan](#) that positions CU Denver as a “university for life” for learners of all backgrounds, careers, and ages, the Digital Strategy Task Force was launched in October 2021 to create a vision of the future for digital education and infrastructure at CU Denver. Our digital presence has long been integrated within the brick-and-mortar university, so the task force was asked to engage with our history and our present to help inform our future. Members of the task force included faculty at all levels, staff from a range of campus units, and undergraduate and graduate students, with additional stakeholder groups engaged throughout the process.

Chaired by Dr. Katie Linder, Associate Vice Chancellor for Digital Strategy and Learning, the task force met throughout the fall and spring of the 2021-2022 academic year, engaging the campus community in a series of discussions focused on the following questions:

- What is our vision for the future of digital education at CU Denver?
- Who are the unique audiences we should serve and what learning environments will best support their learning?
- How can CU Denver differentiate its digital offerings in an already-crowded market?
- What institutional characteristics will CU Denver need to be successful with our digital efforts?
- What do faculty and staff need to be supported with program exploration, design, launch, and delivery?
- What are the most pressing curricular and co-curricular needs of our future learners?
- How does being an equity-serving institution influence our digital education models?
- What technology infrastructure is needed to help us achieve our digital education vision?

2030 Strategic Plan

Goal Two: University for Life

The shelf life of new knowledge is getting shorter, people are living longer, and expanded populations of learners are seeking a college education and development that requires new ways to access affordable learning across their lives and careers. Our new model for academic and learner success adapts to these changes to catalyze social mobility and provide a diverse workforce for the future.

This report is guided by the university’s strategic plan and outlines an equity-serving digital education strategy, actualizing the “university for life” goal through a series of recommendations and actions organized around four themes.

The Need for Evolution of Education

The strategic plan's purpose of making education work for all is grounded in the idea that every learner should receive a high-quality, relevant education that fits the reality of their lives. A relevant education is a means to promote social mobility, address equity gaps, meet shifting demands of our workforce, and face the ongoing global disruptions of the last several years.

Our student body, unlike other universities across the state and nation, is enormously diverse. Over half of our undergraduates are students of color and half are the first in their families to attend college. Half of our students transfer into CU Denver from other institutions. One-third of our learner population is graduate students. Many of our learners work while completing their education.

As we explore what the future of digital education will look like at CU Denver, we've identified the following diverse learning populations that we will serve:

Our current learners, post COVID.

There has been a fundamental shift in the online space because of the pandemic that disrupted previous models with a clear distinction between the online and on-ground student. As we move forward, our traditional and online students will not be set apart, but instead served in a more integrated way. We will need to work toward an established ecosystem that ensures student support structures that effectively serve each of our unique populations across all digital and physical spaces.

Diverse Learners.

Leaning into our equity-serving institution ambitions, we must ensure our digital education strategy serves students of diverse backgrounds, particularly those who have been historically underserved by higher education. This should leverage our role as a pending Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American-, Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) to focus and catalyze our efforts on curricular designs that support all our diverse students. Our work should be driven by market intelligence and community partnerships, bringing greater career opportunities, and increased social mobility to the learners we serve.

Adult Learners.

**“It’s not one
size fits all, it’s
one size fits
one”**

**Joni Dunlap
Digital Strategy Task
Force Member**

Many adult learner populations enroll in academic offerings with a strong career orientation. By increasing the volume and variety of stackable credentials within formal degree opportunities, we can provide a range of degree and credential offerings to meet the needs of our diverse student population. We can utilize strategic program design and pricing models to reduce time to degree and student debt load. Our efforts will need curricular structures that enable degree-seeking students to complete their respective program within timelines that work for their lifestyle and educational needs.

International Students.

Digital learning opportunities expand our options for serving international communities and markets. In addition to creating more affordable options, these opportunities increase the accessibility of higher education. We can respond to the inherent diversity of international markets by serving students in their home countries and offering students the flexibility to shape their education around life events and cultural needs.

Transfer Students.

Our approach to designing a sustainable digital infrastructure will also allow for nimble responses to a changing marketplace. Thus, learners at any stage of their educational journey will find their place at CU Denver. The prioritization of intentional access to structured degree pathways that maximize conveyable credits will provide transfer students with a clear understanding of how to meet their educational goals through flexible digital offerings.

High School and Dual Enrollment Learners.

To serve learners at all stages of their personal and professional development, we need to develop personalized online and on-ground educational programs and services. As a “university for life” we welcome pre-collegiate learners seeking expanded educational offerings. This includes a growing dual enrollment student population, who are introduced to CU Denver early in their collegiate journey. Our flexible digital offerings will enhance early access to courses from a reduction in logistical challenges faced by our pre-collegiate market. Our digitized offerings will further reduce time-to-completion rates for students who take advantage of dual enrollment.

Re-skilling/Up-skilling Professionals.

Learners need opportunities to acquire new skills after completing bachelor and master’s degree programs. Lifelong learning across a student’s professional career will require valued credit and noncredit offerings delivered in flexible and just-in-time formats. We will design relevant programs using an agile, data-informed infrastructure that anticipates learner and workforce needs. Partnering with industry and community stakeholders will allow for nimble program development and an innovation pipeline that will prioritize relevant content, focused skill development, and impactful experiential learning. Collectively, we will provide career enhancing educational experiences that will support lifelong learning.

Rural Coloradans.

As we explore a range of education partnerships, learners in our own backyard will be a top priority. Through our inclusive digital education offerings, we endeavor to become a sought-after education provider for Coloradans across the state, particularly those in rural communities who might benefit from a distinctive collection of digital offerings.

Alumni.

As a “university for life,” we will need to continue to create strategies to deliver innovative and effective ways for alumni to re-engage with the university through alumni networking, student recruitment efforts, campus events, mentorship, professional development and career growth, and philanthropic opportunities to support future learners. By offering alumni a platform to share their unique needs we will continue to optimize learning outcomes for future, current, and past students. This enhances the value of CU Denver degrees and educational opportunities.

Post-Primary Career Learner Populations.

Colorado is one of the most rapidly aging states in the country. Many older Coloradans want, or need, to remain engaged in the workforce, and the majority are interested in changing careers or industries. To meet the needs of this growing population, we will develop programming for older adults in career transition and to help them prepare for their next stage and create a new definition of what “work” means to them.

If our goal is to build an opportunity ecosystem that removes barriers for all learners, our digital strategy must align with our institutional enrollment strategy and be rooted in our purpose of being the nation’s first equity-serving institution. In many ways, we are serving the “new majority learner,” or the population for which higher education was not originally designed to serve.

Where We Want to Go

CU Denver will leverage digital education to realize its goal of becoming an equity-serving university for life. We seek to build digital education environments and structures that equip learners with future-ready skills to amplify career and community impacts. We will provide a culturally responsive curriculum at the nexus of industry needs and institutional values. We will empower faculty and staff in their adaptation to the digital environment. Through our digital strategy, CU Denver will continually evolve its equity-serving digital education offerings and provide a unique resource for differentiation in the higher education marketplace.

A detailed set of recommendations follows later in the report. A high-level summary of recommendations and support strategies are listed below.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1	Ensure appropriate classroom technology for teaching across modalities.
Shore up the foundations that allow for digital education innovation and flexibility.	<p>Ensure technology access for all faculty and learners across modalities.</p> <p>Offer a wide range of faculty training and support options for cross-modality teaching.</p> <p>Make CU Denver a “best place to teach and learn.”</p> <p>Define and implement guidelines and policies for the procurement and usage of classroom technologies and related data.</p>

Recommendation 2	Enhance our enrollment marketing strategies to include cross-marketing learning opportunities that emphasize flexible modality choices, stackable credentials, and noncredit offerings for non-degree seeking audiences.
Develop a hybrid campus model to ensure a more consistent student experience that prioritizes equitable, personalized support.	<p>Embed digital learner supports into existing university offices so that all students can benefit from these services.</p> <p>Create quality learning experiences for students across modalities.</p> <p>Design a learner experience that creates communities across modalities.</p>

Recommendation 3	Develop infrastructure to scale credit and noncredit offerings.
Coordinate the efforts of credit and noncredit offerings toward a scalable, portfolio-level approach that serves students for life.	<p>Develop a comprehensive website strategy that incorporates the content of the CU Online domain into our larger marketing and recruitment efforts.</p> <p>Create flexible learning environments and academic programming options that help students meet their varied educational goals.</p>

Recommendation 4	Innovate in program development to create flexible learning offerings for students.
Create more efficient and effective models for designing and launching leading-edge stackable degrees, credentials, and certificates.	<p>Create a support structure for developing new programs informed by predictive modeling of evolving employment market trends.</p> <p>Incentivize the (re)development of new and existing degrees and programs.</p>

CU Denver has been a pioneer in online education and led the creation of the CU Online website and brand.

What We Aspire to Look Like in 2030

To realize this vision, we make the following commitments:

- We will focus on **flexibility** to strengthen a university culture that strives to serve students where they are to achieve the goals that will take them where they want to be.
- We will focus on **hybridity** by designing adaptable opportunities that allow for courses and programs in a range of modalities that serve learners throughout their lifetimes.
- We will focus on **inclusivity** by serving diverse populations in accessible ways that value their origins, foster a sense of belonging, and embrace unique contributions to our community.
- We will focus on **affordability** by controlling costs for educational materials and making decisions that reduce time to completion.
- We will focus on **innovation** by supporting risk-taking and learning from our experiences as we implement a results-oriented change management culture that values the voices of our faculty, staff, and learners.
- We will focus on **relevance** by listening to the needs of employers and our students and building courses that serve both.

Where We Are Now

CU Denver has been a pioneer in online education and led the creation of the CU Online website and brand. The institution currently offers a wide range of online offerings with fully online undergraduate and graduate programs in five of our colleges and a growing noncredit portfolio of offerings. Knowing the diverse communities that we seek to serve, we recognize both the strengths that will help us develop our equity-serving digital education strategy, as well as the challenges that we will need to mitigate to fulfill this vision.

Strengths

While the digital education work ahead of CU Denver will require time and resources, the foundation from which our efforts will launch is strong.

Commitment to Serving Diverse Populations

Chief among our strengths is a long-held commitment to serving diverse populations through accessibility, flexibility, and equity-serving mindsets. Our institution's widespread desire to become an innovative "university for life" sets a north star to guide our work around digital education, compelling us to think ahead, forecasting the needs of learners not just tomorrow, but decades from now. Unlike many institutions, CU Denver's physical location uniquely positions us to engage in partnerships that serve populations from 17-117, through abundant P-12 pipelines, a robust CU Succeed program, and a thriving economy across the Front Range that provides ample opportunities for lifelong learning.

History of Online and Digital Innovation

Achieving this bold vision will require that we call upon other notable strengths, such as our decades-long history with online/digital education, our culture of innovative and experimental pedagogies, and a willingness from faculty, staff, and students to engage this work with open minds and optimism about our future. New commitments to collaboration between digital education, communications, strategic enrollment and student success, and academic leaders, will need to be coupled with a with a clear commitment from leadership to invest in the innovations that will be required to fully achieve the vision of an equity-serving digital education strategy.

Challenges and Opportunities

As we embark on evolving our digital education landscape, we also note some of the challenges that could impede this work.

A Crowded Market Makes Differentiation Key to Success

Higher education as an industry is changing rapidly. The landscape for digital education is becoming more crowded each day, making it imperative that CU Denver identify and leverage clear differentiators that will draw students to the institution. Beyond attracting students, collaborations and partnerships with external organizations and community stakeholders are required for universities to be successful in this space. While our vision and proposition as an institution is of interest to industry leaders seeking to diversify and upskill their talent, the crowded nature of the market means our entire operation must be best in class.

Effective Organizational Infrastructure is Required for Success

Currently, our institutional infrastructures make it challenging to recruit and retain students who themselves face a litany of challenges posed by the world over the last several years. The flexibility of our programs, including offering them in multiple modalities, is not always clearly marketed on our website. Some services, such as coaching, are currently offered to students taking classes in the online modality, but not in all modalities. There is concern that students enrolling in traditional programs will be cannibalized by online offerings, pointing to a need for greater flexibility between modalities as a student progresses through their coursework. Thus, we sometimes see our programs in competition with each other. This competition is exacerbated by a budget model and information systems that disincentivize, or simply do not allow for, innovative and interdisciplinary coursework.

Change and Innovation Requires Support

Additionally, we have developed a constellation of disconnected support structures that are impeding our goal of a synergistic ecosystem of support for faculty and students. Fundamentally, it is confusing for faculty to know where to go for support and guidance, leading to varying degrees of success and preparedness for using a multitude of tools and systems that support digital education across the schools and colleges. Students, in turn, struggle to adapt to these different experiences and need additional training and support to succeed in digital education spaces. Exacerbating these issues, our classrooms have broken or insufficient hardware, leading to inconsistent learning environments across our shared campus model. Our technology support staff are overloaded and under-resourced.

Legacy Models Hinder the Evolution of Current and Future Programs

Lastly, our pipeline for program development also operates from a legacy model that is inefficient. Faculty do not feel that they have the time to learn new modalities and tools for

innovative teaching, let alone the time to develop new courses and programs. If an idea exists, there is not currently a mechanism nor support to perform market research, which leads to ill-informed decision making and undercapitalization of limited resources. For programs that successfully launch, we currently lack the infrastructure for credit and noncredit programs to scale and grow. To take a nimble approach to program development and curricular refreshes, and ensure that our curriculum covers content that is leading edge, we will need to invest in new systems and processes.

What It Will Take to Achieve Our Ambitions

We have a significant amount of work to do to achieve the vision of an equity-serving digital education strategy that supports our ambitions to be a university for life. Changes to our systems, our training, our marketing, our services, our classrooms, our pedagogies, and much more will all be required. We believe this work is worth it. It will result in better serving our learners, offering more flexible pathways to accessible education, and will prepare CU Denver to lead in the digital education space within a competitive higher education environment.

Recommendations, Supporting Strategies, and Initiatives

To help us achieve the vision of an equity-serving digital education strategy, we offer the following recommendations, supporting strategies, and initiatives.

Recommendation 1: Shore up the foundations that allow for digital education innovation and flexibility. Aging infrastructure and a lack of investments in our technologies and related resources put us at a disadvantage. We must ensure our classrooms, faculty, and students have the right support and resources to thrive in a digital environment.

Strategies & Initiatives:

- 1) Ensure appropriate classroom technology for teaching across modalities.
 - Complete a classroom audit that informs a roadmap for technology upgrades and infrastructure to support flexible modalities.
 - Evaluate current academic technologies and identify gaps in tools and services.
 - Provide enterprise solutions for appropriate academic technologies to promote cost savings and improve support and training across schools, colleges, and units.
 - Create consistent training for all faculty teaching in flexible modalities.
 - Improve the process for room assignments at the school and department-level so that faculty can request the rooms that they need more easily and efficiently.
 - Develop a model for shared governance and funding of classroom technologies for Auraria Campus.
- 2) Ensure technology access for all faculty and learners across modalities.
 - Implement the infrastructure needed for modern Wi-Fi in all classrooms and university spaces.
 - Complete an equity audit for faculty and staff regarding their access to the technology needed for teaching and learning in flexible modalities.
 - Create more “landing zones” for students who are working on online or hybrid courses while on campus.
 - Explore partnerships to offer students discounted prices on internet and other technologies that directly impact their learning and educational success.

- 3) Offer a wide range of faculty training and support options for flexible modalities.
 - Define effective evidence-based strategies and practices for flexible teaching modalities, including best practices for synchronous and asynchronous environments.
 - Create additional scaffolding, incentivization, and recognition structures for pedagogical innovation and creativity that allows for learning from failure.
 - Increase faculty training in hybrid pedagogies and Canvas tool use across modalities.
 - Provide instructional design support for course development across modalities.
 - Expand the Learning Assistant (LA) program for use in online and hybrid learning environments.
 - Incorporate faculty professional development support related to teaching in flexible modalities into offer letters & New Faculty Orientation.

- 4) Make CU Denver a “best place to teach and learn.”
 - Improve the experiences of IRC faculty by adjusting the timing of reappointments and hires to offer adequate time for effective course design and training.
 - Improve the experiences of IRC faculty by creating equitable loads and pay structures.
 - Create a system for faculty to share about their classroom experiences and request changes or improvements.
 - Define what it means to be a premier urban teaching institution.

- 5) Define and implement guidelines and policies for the procurement and usage of classroom technologies and related data.
 - Create an ethical procurement policy that involves shared governance with Faculty Assembly.
 - Support principles of accessibility for learners across modalities through Universal Design for Learning training and support.
 - Ensure the accessibility of course content (e.g. digital media is appropriately captioned, etc.).
 - Update the intellectual property policy as it relates to digital education environments.
 - Define data ethics as they relate to uses and engagement with learning analytics.
 - Train faculty in inclusive pedagogy practices.

Recommendation 2: Develop a hybrid campus model to ensure a more consistent student experience that prioritizes personalized support. A fundamental shift in the online space following the pandemic has disrupted previous models that created a clear distinction between the online and on-ground student. We now need to ensure student support structures that effectively serve each of our unique populations across all digital and physical spaces.

Strategies & Initiatives:

- 1) Enhance our enrollment marketing strategies to include cross-marketing learning opportunities that emphasize flexible modality choices, stackable credentials, and noncredit offerings for non-degree seeking audiences.
 - Integrate marketing and recruitment functions into appropriate units that will serve prospective students for all modalities.
 - Redesign the website and reset our digital marketing strategy with a holistic, user-first approach that enables learners to explore offerings by program, interest, career aspirations, and preferred modalities.
 - Provide learners with real-time or near real-time information about credit and noncredit educational opportunities.
 - Create a website experience that offers relevant content based on the learner's needs over a lifetime.
 - Present distinct skill alignments between industries, careers, and CU offerings.
 - Distinctly align with industry partners and create a pipeline from CU Denver to specific workforce pathways for our learners.
- 2) Embed digital learner supports into existing university offices so that all students can benefit from these services.
 - Create a dedicated proctoring center where students can take online exams and receive individualized support.
 - Have weekend and evening (24/7) technology support available for all students.
 - Offer integrated services and support for all learners through flexible modality formats—e.g., tutoring, mentoring, coaching, and advising.
- 3) Create quality learning experiences for students across modalities.
 - Define and implement quality learning experience expectations that are consistent for each modality, and for synchronous and asynchronous environments.
 - Offer clear definitions to students about the different flexible modality options they have available to them.
 - Provide a student feedback mechanism if they are experiencing challenges in their classes.
 - Encourage course-specific Canvas shell overview videos in all online and hybrid classes.
 - Offer consistent training for advisors who are working with students across modalities.

- Create baseline standards for Canvas use with all classes such as uploading a syllabus and using the gradebook.
 - Pro-actively leverage Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Open Educational Practices (OEPs) across disciplines, program designs, and market strategies.
- 4) Design a learner experience that creates communities across modalities.
- Increase the quantity and quality of co-curricular events that span modalities, geographies, and time zones through both synchronous and asynchronous environments.
 - Create, host, and promote hybrid events that “bring” remote participants to campus, creating a sense of being-there, being-included, and having a unique campus experience.
 - Develop a multi-faceted strategy to build community within and among current students, faculty, and alumni through mentor networks and other relationship-based approaches.
 - Provision and promote training centered on learning-community pedagogies, practices, and development.

Recommendation 3: Coordinate the efforts of credit and noncredit offerings toward a scalable, portfolio-level approach that serves students for life. As a “university for life” we strive to provide educational opportunities to learners across their career and professional lifecycle. To achieve this ambitious goal, we must coordinate efforts across the schools and colleges to ensure a diverse and relevant curriculum.

Strategies & Initiatives:

- 1) Develop infrastructure to scale credit and noncredit offerings.
 - Utilize the CRM for credit and noncredit enrollment and streamlining communications with all learners.
 - Create a coordinated infrastructure for increasing community and industry partnerships and collaborations in degree programs, and continuing and professional education.
 - Develop systems for staying in touch with students after they leave CU Denver to share new programs (including noncredit) that might be of interest to them as alumni.
 - Evaluate the registration system for credit and noncredit programs to identify bottlenecks and obstacles, and to ensure ease with enrolling in all educational offerings.
 - Improve the overall website experience for all credit-based programs to offer consistent experience for seeking information about degree programs.

- 2) Develop a comprehensive website strategy that incorporates the content of the CU Online domain into our larger marketing and recruitment efforts.
 - Embrace digital education as a differentiator for CU Denver.

- Redevelop noncredit web presence to be more user-focused.
 - Use the website to showcase CU Denver’s wide range of programs, their features and benefits, and their modalities, creating opportunities for learners to explore and filter their searches in multiple ways.
- 3) Create flexible learning environments and academic programming options that help students meet their varied educational goals.
- Implement a contemporary model that is inclusive of student transcripts of credit and noncredit learning experiences.
 - Allow CU Denver employees to take classes without having them associated with a degree plan.
 - Offer continued tech training support options (e.g. LinkedIn Learning and Skillshare) as an alumni benefit.
 - Create flexible processes and consistent policies for credit for prior learning assessments that are embedded within colleges, schools, and departments.

Recommendation 4: Create more efficient and effective models for designing and launching leading-edge stackable degrees, credentials, and certificates. In a crowded digital education landscape, we must be prepared to adjust and modify our curriculum and educational opportunities to ensure their relevance. A robust and efficient process for program development will ensure our capacity to forecast and respond to industry and community needs

Strategies & Initiatives:

- 1) Innovate in program development to create more flexible learning offerings for students.
 - Increase the volume and variety of stackable and alternative credentials within formal degree pathways that offer students industry-specific skills.
 - Create self-paced learning options for learners at all career stages.
 - Create scalable, low-cost noncredit programming that is aligned with industry needs.
 - Explore learning experience subscription models and platforms aligned with the new majority learner, including our alumni community.
- 2) Create a support structure for developing new programs informed by predictive modeling of evolving employment market trends.
 - Create a central intake portal through which new program ideas originating from anywhere within the institution can be channeled to appropriate units for consideration and action.
 - Offer centralized market research support for new and existing programs that department, college, and school stakeholders can use to enhance decision making.
 - Launch program development trainings that support faculty teams in cross-disciplinary program design.

- Create a project management support model for developing new programs.
 - Create a decision-making toolkit dashboard for tracking new program development through the pipeline from idea to launch.
- 3) Incentivize the (re)development of new and existing degrees and programs.
- Incentivize a continuous cycle of redevelopment for existing degrees and programs to ensure relevance with current learner needs.
 - Incentivize and incubate the development of new degrees and programs that differentiate CU Denver, align with institutional goals and values, and meet industry and community needs.
 - Provide instructional design services for new curriculum and program development.
 - Create a pool of “start-up” funds to support new credit and noncredit program launches.

Our Top Ten List

Looking at the list of initiatives included in this report, and based on feedback the task force heard from our community about what we should prioritize first, we are highlighting the following ten initiatives as starting points for creating a strong foundation for the digital strategy work ahead:

- 1) Complete a classroom audit that informs a roadmap for technology upgrades and infrastructure to support flexible modalities.
- 2) Increase faculty training in hybrid pedagogies and Canvas tool use across modalities.
- 3) Provide instructional design support for course development across modalities.
- 4) Offer centralized market research support for new and existing programs that department, college, and school stakeholders can use to enhance decision making.
- 5) Define effective evidence-based strategies and practices for flexible teaching modalities, including best practices for synchronous and asynchronous environments.
- 6) Pro-actively leverage Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Open Educational Practices (OEPs) across disciplines, program designs, and market strategies.
- 7) Improve the overall website experience for all credit-based programs to offer consistent experience for seeking information about degree programs.
- 8) Increase the volume and variety of stackable and alternative credentials within formal degree pathways that offer students industry-specific skills.
- 9) Create a central intake portal through which new program ideas originating from anywhere within the institution can be channeled to appropriate units for consideration and action.
- 10) Launch program development trainings that support faculty teams in cross-disciplinary program design.

Closing Thoughts

As we continue to explore our emerging digital strategy with the CU Denver community, we are building on a strong foundation of passionate support for all learners. Our faculty are excited to grow and iterate existing credit and noncredit opportunities through innovative program design. We also have a strong digital ecosystem of collaborators at the Auraria Library, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, the Digital Pedagogy Lab, affiliated cohorts such as the Inclusive Pedagogy Academy, the Faculty Assembly Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship (LETTS) Committee, Office of Information Technology, and ThingStudio.

Appendices

Charge

CU Denver has a strong opportunity to create a vision for our campus-level digital strategy, maximizing our deep and decades-long expertise in online learning and capitalizing on our [2030 strategic plan](#) that positions us to be a University for Life for learners of all backgrounds, careers, and ages. As Chancellor Marks [communicated on September 16](#), we know that successfully serving all Coloradans will require expanding learner support models that cross all modalities, including campus-based instructional design and integrated student services. Whether dual-enrollment students still in high school, learners who need upskilling and retraining later in life, or college students balancing school, work, and families, all will require integrated services, some virtual and some in-person, tailored to meet their unique needs.

As higher education continues to change and evolve, our campus conversation about the future of our digital strategy could not come at a better time. We have learned many valuable lessons about online learning during the past 18 months of the pandemic, and we continue to gather information about how best to serve our learners with flexibility and hybridity in mind. Together, we are ready to build on a strong foundation of experience and knowledge in digital learning to create the vision for how best we can support our current and future learners in the years and decades to come.

To this end, the Digital Strategy Task Force will be launched in October 2021 as an extension of the campus strategic planning discussions to create a vision of the future for digital education and infrastructure at CU Denver. Chaired by Katie Linder, AVC for Digital Strategy and Learning, the task force will engage with the campus community, internal and external data sources, and relevant scholarly and market research to develop a set of recommendations for next steps that address areas of both opportunity and priority.

Guided by our values and goals from the recent strategic plan, as well as lessons we have learned from our past experiences, campus conversations for our digital vision will be organized around a series of guiding visioning questions:

- What is our vision for the future of digital education at CU Denver?
- How can CU Denver differentiate its digital offerings in an already-crowded market?
- What institutional characteristics will CU Denver need to be successful with our digital efforts?
- What do faculty and staff need to be supported with program exploration, design, launch, and delivery?
- Who are the unique audiences we should serve and what learning environments will best support their learning?
- What are the most pressing curricular and co-curricular needs of our future learners?
- How does being an equity-serving institution influence our digital education models?

- What technology infrastructure is needed to help us achieve our digital education vision?

The Task Force's work will conclude on March 31st with the presentation of recommendations to Chancellor Marks and Provost Nakuma.

Process

Launching in October 2021, the Digital Strategy Task Force engaged the CU Denver community through eight campus conversations and various stakeholder meetings that took place throughout fall 2021 and winter 2022. The campus conversations served as broader listening sessions for faculty, staff, and students in the community to share their perspectives on the future of digital education at CU Denver. Specific stakeholder sessions were also held with members of the following groups:

- Advisors across colleges
- Auraria Library staff
- Cabinet leadership
- CLAS student advisory council
- Continuing and Professional Education staff
- Deans and associate deans
- Faculty Assembly Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship (LETTS) Committee
- Institutional Equity Advocacy Council
- Office of Digital Education staff
- OIT staff
- Online program administrators across colleges
- Staff Council members
- Student Success leaders
- ThingStudio members
- UCDAI members

Members

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