



Faculty Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

May 6th, 2025

Hybrid

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Jamie Hodgkins, Sarah Fields, Wendy Bolyard, Diana White, Maryam Darbeheshti, Katy Mohrman, Amy Hasinoff, Tom Beck, Jose Ibarra, Vivian Shyu, Peter Anthamatten, Alejandra Medina, Jeff Schrader, Kristin Kilbourne, Manish Shirgaokar, Rachel Stein, Karen Sobel, Bryn Harris, Shuyang Peng, Philip Joseph, Larry Erbert, Eric Baker, Jessica Valdez, David Bondelevitch, Jim Lopresti, Matt Shea, Rashmi Gangamma, Katy Divittorio, George Quansah, Traci Sitzmann, Anthony Villano, Kelly See, David Liban, Chris Weible, Erin Hauger, Joanne Addison, Gisella Bassani, Pam Jansma, Turan Kayaoglu, Dan Maxey

Chair's Update (Sasha Breger Bush)

- **Approve minutes** (April 1, 2025)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results for April 1, 2025, Minutes: approved by a majority.
- **CAP Policy 1006- Compensation**
 - Policy includes grievance procedures for salary related concerns, professional development funds and faculty compensation. Many thanks to FA's Academic Personnel Committee (APC) which has completed its review.
- **External Review Letters for Comprehensive Review**
 - Contrary to previous belief, external letters are not mandatory. Determination of their use is at the discretion of schools/colleges. APC currently has this on their agenda (final meeting tomorrow). General sentiment is supportive of removing the requirement, aiming to reduce administrative burden. Future process may involve informal communication (e.g., memos). There could be a formal policy update. Implementation for this cycle is unlikely due to timing, hopeful for next AY. Leadership will communicate any adopted approach clearly to faculty.
- **Campus Digital Accessibility Plan**
 - Required by the state by July 1; aims to show progress toward accessibility goals. FA Chair negotiated a deadline extension to June 1 for initial feedback. Concerns have been raised about potential surveillance implications (use of Anthology Ally scores), ensuring any metrics used respect faculty consent and are not punitive. FA Chair plans to flag potentially contentious items for deeper faculty review next year. Faculty are welcome to review the document before June 1 on a voluntary basis (respecting end of year workloads).
- **Equal Pay for Equal Work Resolution**
 - An email was sent this morning containing the final resolution passed by Faculty Council in April. Outcome of vote: 96% in favor, 4% abstained, 0% opposed. Approximately 90% of members were present. The resolution passed with minimal discussion, indicating strong consensus and support.
- **2024/25 FA Award**
 - FA Chair presented the annual FA Award to Colleen Donnelly for her tremendous service.
- **FA Coordinator Position**
 - Search for a new coordinator is underway. The search committee includes Wendy Bolyard, Sasha Breger Bush, Elizabeth Pugliano, and Aubrey Thorburn. The position description has been submitted through HR and expected to be posted by June. Targeting an August 1 start date.
- **Provost Search**

- There were four Provost candidates last week. If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to FA Chair.

Student Government Associate (SGA) Resolution (Sasha Breger Bush)

- The FA Chair introduced a resolution and accompanying memo drafted in response to SGA's request for faculty support regarding student privacy and legal compliance. SGA rep attended the last Executive Committee meeting to discuss the resolution and outline students' concerns. The resolution, originally submitted in January and not previously reviewed by FA, was brought forward following Chloe East's visit and subsequent follow-up.
- Students are seeking affirmation from faculty that they will not provide student information to law enforcement or immigration agents without a court order and that faculty will refer all such requests to university legal counsel or Auraria Police. They will also not share personal medical or educational information.
- Request is not for a new policy, but rather an affirmation that faculty understand and commit to existing legal protections and procedures.
- FA Chair's memo was drafted to summarize and clarify the faculty's support, referencing system level guidance and statutory law. FA Executive Committee supports endorsing the memo and sharing it broadly with faculty to strengthen the message of support to students. A live link to system guidelines was included in the memo for reference.
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results: approved by a majority.

AI Update (Katy Divittorio)

- Each AI Working Group is conducting a SWOT analysis, identifying resources, and preparing policy recommendations. Report and updates will be posted on the official AI strategy webpage: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/ai-strategy>. The website includes tabs for each working group, member lists, group charges and focus areas. Over the summer, the university legal team will begin drafting formal policies based on working group input. Broader campus engagement and discussions are expected in the fall semester. An extension will be requested, as progress is somewhat behind schedule. Faculty and staff are encouraged to share examples of university AI policies from other institutions that may serve as models.

Mutual Defense Compact (Sasha Breger Bush)

- Faculty have reached out to FA Chair regarding the Mutual Defense Compact. Multiple petitions and letters have been circulating statewide. CU Denver was looped into a broader Colorado-wide faculty email chain, initiated by Western Colorado University, whose Faculty Senate approved a version of the resolution. Other participating institutions include CSU, UNC, MSU. FA Executive Committee expressed strong support for bringing resolution to the full assembly. The general faculty response was warm and supportive, despite the broader political context.
- At the April Faculty Council meeting, CU President Todd Saliman indicated he would not sign onto any national mutual defense compacts, citing the lack of specificity and potential ineffectiveness

for CU. He emphasized a preference for directing his political capital toward actions with tangible, CU-specific impact.

- FA member expressed disappointment with CU's absence from the national compact, AACU letter, noting peer institutions have signed. FA member proposed adding language to the current memo in support of the AACU letter. FA chair agreed to incorporate this amendment pending faculty support. Consensus in the room to proceed with this addition. The FA Chair will work with FA member to finalize language before public posting.

- Another FA member raised whether this faculty resolution could create a perception of division between faculty and university leadership. FA clarified that faculty were not consulted on the administration's decision, and this resolution is not binding, but rather an expression of faculty's values.
- A motion was made to approve the mutual defense memo with added AACU letter language, motion was seconded; Poll posted.
 - Results: approved by a majority.

Draft Workplace/Space Guidelines (Cary Weatherford and Sabrina Simurdak)

- CU Denver is developing institution-wide workplace (space) guidelines, aligning with common practices in higher education. Goals are to improve space management, equity, and alignment with institutional mission and values. Similar policies exist at CU Anschutz, Boulder, UCCS.
- In early development stage, policy specifics are to be presented in Fall 2025. Initiated rollout of a space request form and began documentation of space agreements.
- Goals: ensure space supports the values of departments and institution and establish a uniform process for growing programs that need more space.
- Developing a governance team for review and oversight. Incorporating feedback mechanisms to involve impacted staff/faculty in decisions. Intention to add grievance process for those affected by top-down decisions.
- Ongoing concerns: parking, shared amenities, etc.
- This effort continues over the summer toward a full policy draft for Fall 2025.
- Further details contained in the slide deck presented to FA.

Provost's Update (Pamela Jansma)

- **Graduate Education Update:** An email will be sent out regarding updates to graduate education. The CGS (Council of Graduate Schools) report will be linked to the email. The report is unedited and original. A corresponding website will host the report and future updates. Over the summer, faculty-led working groups will form to address various aspects of the CGS report. Some key takeaways from the report: need for consistent, baseline graduate policies across programs; participation in any additional policies is opt-in with no opt-out for baseline standards; clarification of the Graduate Council's role. Existing efforts include examining tuition remissions. Details about faculty fellow application processes and compensation are forthcoming.
- **Student Success Initiative (NISS Report):** The university has worked with NISS (National Institute for Student Success) from Georgia State. NISS evaluated institutional policies and procedures; recommendations will be introduced via upcoming town halls led by Chancellor Christensen and Provost Jansma. Four summer working groups will address: Standardization of academic advising; First-year student experiences; Early interventions for academic challenges; DFW (Drop, Fail, Withdraw) rates. A new website will be created to share updates on this initiative.
- **Search Process and Confidentiality Concerns:** Multiple faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the confidentiality and transparency of recent executive searches (e.g., Provost, VC for Enrollment and Student Success). Issues cited include:
 - Lack of access to candidate recordings or information.
 - Inability to compare finalists due to sequential disclosure and removal of prior materials.
 - 8 AM forum scheduling causing equity/accessibility challenges.
 - Lack of standardized or equitable audience questions during public forums.
 - Technological failures affecting access.
 - Concerns over search committee engagement, nomination transparency, and selection input.
 - General discomfort with how confidentiality was emphasized.
- Concerns were raised about the perception of confidentiality as a quasi-legal requirement. Faculty members reported fear and confusion due to language used in communications from leadership. Several noted

inconsistencies with other universities that openly list finalists. Suggestion made to reframe future communications using terms like "sensitive" rather than "confidential."

- Provost Jansma emphasized there was no intent to hide candidates; scheduling was tight due to expedited search timelines. Provost acknowledged access and communication problems. Provost noted that while full confidentiality isn't possible at the finalist stage, discretion is encouraged to maintain a strong pool. Provost agreed to revisit policy language and procedures in follow-up meetings.

Open Discussion: Fall Agenda Items and Suggestions

- **Equity and Work Hours:** Suggestion to define the standard workday as 9–5 to ensure equitable participation in meetings and forums (especially concerning 8 AM scheduling).
- **Collective Action Strategy:** Proposal to move beyond symbolic resolutions and develop a strategic plan to respond to perceived attacks on science and academic freedom.
- **Search Process Reform:** Suggestions for increased transparency, consistent candidate information availability, and use of internal platforms (e.g., intranet) to support broader faculty access.
- **Confidentiality Policy Revisions:** Encourage the administration to revise formal policies if current expectations no longer align with institutional practice.

FA Chair Celebration

- FA recognized and celebrated Sasha Breger Bush. The FA Executive Committee presented Sasha with an Appreciation Award for her steadfast, insightful, and courageous advocacy for faculty, especially during challenging times.

End Meeting