

STRATEGIC PLANNING | PHASE 2

VISION TEAM REPORTS

EMPOWERED BY OUR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



University of Colorado **Denver**

THEME

EMPOWERED BY OUR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

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What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

CU Denver embodies a bold commitment to inclusive excellence and to building our reputation as a dynamic, responsive, and flexible equity-serving institution that ensures the success of our diverse students, staff, and faculty. This represents our commitment to inclusive excellence and our awareness of the value of diverse voices and experiences to our collective success as a major public, urban, research institution.

CU Denver aspires to be **an** exemplar equity-serving institution. Here, we courageously humanize our systems and policies to foster a diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus dedicated to the success of every member of our community. We actively identify and eliminate barriers caused by social, racial, and economic injustices, as well as those caused by the privileging of dominant forms of knowledge and ways of being (evident in white supremacy, sexism, racism, heteronormativity, ableism, and other forms of discrimination). We endeavor to create and sustain a culture of belonging for all.

In particular, CU Denver will:

- Lead with our commitment to EDI and ensure integrity in achieving EDI goals.
- Always align our EDI mission, values, and goals through the work of staff and faculty.
- Be courageous when identifying and addressing any forms of inequality, hate, and harm that impact CU Denver students, staff, and faculty.
- Continue to learn about ourselves, about one another, and from one another, and continue to redefine our university identity and our practices to reflect that inclusive excellence is dynamic, adaptive, and aspirational.
- Utilize all of our resources in bold and courageous ways to ensure that we do not cause, shelter, or sustain harm to our immediate university community or to other communities.

What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE EXCEL

CU Denver is a richly diverse community of lifelong learners, educators, researchers, and higher education professionals.

Students want to come to CU Denver because they see it as a place of opportunity, affirmation, and authenticity. Our inclusive excellence is reflected in a uniquely diverse student body, faculty, and staff. At CU Denver, we are student oriented, and we value the supporting roles of staff who enable student success, along with the research and creative accomplishments of faculty that make our institution a forward-thinking hub of innovation. We celebrate our diversity and prioritize the affirmation of our identities through student organizations and faculty and staff affinity groups. Together, we recognize the critical importance of further embedding the values of EDI within our growing, dynamic institution.

CU Denver educates with vision and prioritizes access and awareness.

CU Denver strives to provide opportunities for students, from the moment they first make contact all the way to graduation day. Whether students matriculate here in their first year or transfer from another institution, CU Denver strives to provide the right paths to success. We offer students the most up-to-date technologies and modalities of learning. Whether students are full-time, part-time, or online, we are committed to being a nimble and innovative institution of higher education that meets students where they are. We aim for inclusion and accessibility so that nothing impedes student success.

CU Denver promotes a holistic approach to the student experience and environment.

CU Denver not only offers opportunities to learn, but also opportunities to belong. Our students are highly conscious of a constantly changing world and have the ability to enhance their experiences outside the classroom with a variety of student organizations and student-driven initiatives that reflect the values and importance of identities and intersectionalities. Students benefit not only from various EDI initiatives within their academic units, but also from a highly engaged Center for Identity and Inclusion that offers programming, training, and developmental opportunities, all while receiving a world-class University of Colorado education in the heart of downtown Denver.



What We Aspire To Look Like In 2030

WHERE WE STRUGGLE

CU Denver must further prioritize the value of our people and better reflect our diverse composition.

While we celebrate a diverse student body, faculty, and staff, the leadership of the university must better reflect that diversity in school, college, and business units, as well as in top-level administration. We share a committed interest in further diffusing EDI across the university. However, administrative functions have traditionally fallen to a singular administrator, rather than an administrative team that could better support the advancement and progress of EDI. We must be more inclusive with regard to family support systems that support CU Denver students. We must decentralize whiteness and decolonize our pedagogy to be more inclusive of other cultural, non-Western ways of learning and knowledge. We must pursue equity in pay, provide professional development opportunities for our historically disadvantaged communities, and construct better avenues for conflict resolution. In an ever-changing world where tragedy and evil occur, we must also be vigilant and ready to support our diverse communities when they are afflicted.

CU Denver must reduce and remove institutional barriers to educational success.

Enabling and emboldening student success will require ongoing evaluation of various curricula and pedagogical techniques. Doing so may help identify potential biases, inaccuracies, or dated and ineffective modalities of learning that may impede success. CU Denver must find ways to better communicate available resources, enhance physical access as well as access to technology for disabilities communities within the university, and more equitably equip our students with the right tools for success.

CU Denver must better establish and embed EDI as a shared institutional value and responsibility.

Our unique position as Colorado's only public urban research university gives us ample opportunity to better define EDI in a place-based context, and to create a greater awareness of the shared responsibility we have to confront challenges and advocate for systemic changes to systemic problems. As such, deepening our knowledge and awareness of that identity will enable us to be better advocates of the university within the CU system and with state government entities that provide resources to CU Denver. Equity, diversity, and inclusion should be viewed as an opportunity to value our people and further invest in them. The diffusion of EDI principles must be university-wide and transcend academic and unit silos. We must prioritize proactive EDI norms rather than reactive norms, while infusing our decision-making processes with objective assessments of data and re-evaluate success metrics to ensure they do not ignore or further any forms of bias. We must be open to feedback and learning—as individuals and as an institution—and be willing to reframe and adjust accordingly.

Goal 1: Redefine Success

CU Denver's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion prioritizes, informs, and incentivizes the evaluation and definition of student, faculty, and staff success. By empowering our inclusive excellence, we unlock the potential for everyone to succeed.

STRATEGY 1.1

Define and boldly communicate our commitment to EDI.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.1.1** Build a shared understanding of EDI and normalize the language of EDI within the institution.
- **Initiative 1.1.2** Identify bold, courageous, and attainable EDI goals and invest in continuous learning and improvement to accomplish and sustain these goals.
- **Initiative 1.1.3** Develop and regularly update EDI goals and accomplishments dashboard that keeps members of the CU Denver community aware of the university's progress.
- **Initiative 1.1.4** Equip and provide resources to CU Denver EDI work through adequate permanent budget allocations, fundraising, and knowledge-sharing structures.

STRATEGY 1.2

Create and fund an Institutional Equity Advocacy Council.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.2.1** Fund and staff an Institutional Equity Advocacy Council to continue the work of the Equity Task Force to ensure efficacy, success, and sustainability of EDI initiatives and goals. Include CU Denver staff, faculty, and students and empower them to ensure timely university response to EDI-related challenges across campus.
- **Initiative 1.2.2** Leverage the team to lead the university in accomplishing EDI goals and support the CU Denver community in achieving inclusive excellence.

STRATEGY 1.3

Redefine CU Denver's educational experience to infuse EDI throughout the curriculum and student life.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.3.1** Conduct a full, formal review of the entire core curriculum that includes construction of new knowledge area(s) that are well-aligned to CU Denver's EDI goals.
- **Initiative 1.3.2** Redesign curricula to decenter whiteness and other sources of oppression, and support improvement of graduate and major curricula to represent EDI commitments.
- **Initiative 1.3.3** Strengthen the Center for Identity and Inclusion with adequate resources, including increased funding and staff to be more responsive to student needs.
- **Initiative 1.3.4** Redefine higher education at CU Denver by integrating instructional practices, professional learning, and institutional learning goals into our unique university identity.



Goal 1: Redefine Success

STRATEGY 1.4

Embed EDI in recruiting, hiring and retention policies and practices.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.4.1** Develop innovative and/or alternative pathways for promotion and advancement.
- **Initiative 1.4.2** Identify, train, and resource current faculty and staff to serve as success coaches and mentors to support historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff.
- **Initiative 1.4.3** Set targets for diverse candidate pools and keep job openings active until filled.
- **Initiative 1.4.4** Reduce income gaps among faculty and staff by leveraging current and other pay equity legislation and through ongoing salary compression correction.
- **Initiative 1.4.5** Develop a plan to create a cluster hiring funding pool to incentivize schools, colleges, and business units to hire diverse faculty and staff.

STRATEGY 1.5

Recognize faculty, staff, and students for Advancing EDI.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.5.1** Incorporate EDI performance goals into performance evaluations for faculty and staff.
- **Initiative 1.5.2** Recognize, support and award schools, colleges, business units, faculty, staff, and students for advancing EDI goals by expanding current recognition programs and developing additional university-wide EDI recognitions and awards.

STRATEGY 1.6

Build EDI culture by investing in formal and informal professional and organizational learning.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 1.6.1** Incorporate a significant EDI focus into onboarding new staff and faculty.
- **Initiative 1.6.2** Offer existing faculty and staff training opportunities in EDI-based instruction and learning.
- **Initiative 1.6.3** Develop necessary partnerships to build university capacity in support of EDI culture and practice.



Goal 2: Share Responsibility

CU Denver's faculty, staff, and students share the responsibility for creating and sustaining a just, safe, and inclusive campus, workplace, and community. Sharing this responsibility lessens the burdens of those harmed by social inequality, promotes a spirit of solidarity, and engages the entire community to ensure transformative justice.

STRATEGY 2.1

Ensure sustained physical, technological and financial access.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.1.1** Leverage Auraria Higher Education Center to improve physical spaces and accessibility.
- **Initiative 2.1.2** Strategize and secure funding to support student access.
- **Initiative 2.1.3** Develop additional student work-study opportunities.
- **Initiative 2.1.4** Maintain current fixed cost of tuition.
- **Initiative 2.1.5** Restructure the linear tuition model.
- **Initiative 2.1.6** Secure captioning system and translation strategy to ensure language access for deaf and hearing impaired faculty, staff, students, and speakers of various languages.
- **Initiative 2.1.7** Provide technology resources for students demonstrating need or interest.
- **Initiative 2.1.8** Lead the coordination of CU Denver's business and service units to ensure adaptive, responsive, and flexible practices to support ease of access for all students, faculty, and staff and ensure their success throughout their engagement at CU Denver.

STRATEGY 2.2

Courageously practice accountability to those we impact and acknowledge the role of various forms of harm, including displacement, invalidation, silencing, and retaliation.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 2.2.1** Develop and employ a CU Denver land acknowledgment statement developed by members of Indigenous and Native American communities.
- **Initiative 2.2.2** Develop and communicate clear pathways to resolve conflicts and disputes that negatively impact the successes of LGBTQ+ and BIPOC¹ students, staff, and faculty, as well as those with physical disabilities, neuro-diversities, and mental illnesses.
- **Initiative 2.2.3** Broaden collective understandings of harm caused by CU Denver and support development of knowledge and practice to remedy, and ultimately eliminate, harms caused.

¹BIPOC = Black, Indigenous and People of Color

Goal 3: Develop Systems

We develop, utilize, and continuously improve systems that value relationships, create community, and actively support and serve people of historically marginalized identities in order to reduce bias, create and sustain equity, and ensure broad and inclusive access to CU Denver.

STRATEGY 3.1

Diversify CU Denver leadership.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.1.1** Emphasize and value EDI scholarship and experience in administrative and leadership position postings.
- **Initiative 3.1.2** Qualify the importance of experiences and wisdom of candidates from historically marginalized backgrounds in campus administrative and leadership position postings.

STRATEGY 3.2

Improve CU Denver safety practices.

INITIATIVES

- **Initiative 3.2.1** Collectively define physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual safety.
- **Initiative 3.2.2** Partner with the Auraria Higher Education Center, Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the Auraria Campus Police Department to invest in the development of human-centered safety strategies, including mental health training for campus safety officers and mental health professionals accompanying the Auraria Campus Police Department.
- **Initiative 3.2.3** Develop annual campus-wide wellness and recovery events to encourage community-building, reconciliation, and social integration within and across various CU Denver communities.
- **Initiative 3.2.4** Broaden the CU Denver criteria for wrongdoing and injustice beyond those that are law-qualifying.



ABOUT THE PROCESS



ABOUT THE PROCESS

LETTER FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dear Chancellor Marks,

When you charged our strategic planning steering committee you told us that CU Denver has built incredible momentum in the last 50 years and that there is great pride among our community about our progress. I was also struck by your comment that across your 100 Days of Listening tour nobody told you that we were done, but rather, our community is ready to capitalize on our unique strengths to become the type of university our city, state, and nation need.

During Phase 2 of our strategic plan, we brought together a team of 130+ exceptional students, faculty, staff, and friends that broadly represented the university community. They were organized in eight Vision Teams and a Steering Committee and asked to engage in an inclusive, innovative process to envision our future.

In the following pages you will find their work – the ideas conceptualized, articulated, and conveyed by our own community. These are dreams of what CU Denver can become by 2030 and high-level strategies for how we might get there. The work is phenomenal and I could not be prouder of our team!

I am immensely impressed by, and grateful for, the work of our Vision Teams, Steering Committee, and the Comcast Media Technology Center/Inworks Design Innovation team that facilitated this process with creativity, flexibility, and unmatched professionalism. I am confident that their work delivers on your charge to dream big and determine how we can carve out our unique and impactful future.

I look forward to working with you over the next several weeks to take these ideas and shape our community's very best thinking into a cohesive strategy for CU Denver that will guide us over the next decade. I could not be more excited for our future, and truly believe we will be the university the world needs in 2030!

Sincerely,

Marty Dunn

*Dean, College of Engineering, Design and Computing
Chair, Strategic Planning Steering Committee*



ABOUT THE PROCESS

BACKGROUND

CU Denver embarked on an ambitious [strategic planning process](#) in January 2021 to create a bold, exciting vision and strategy that will differentiate CU Denver by 2030.

After Chancellor Michelle Marks' [100 Days of Listening](#) tour, it was clear that our university community has tremendous pride and momentum, as well as a strong desire to launch CU Denver to national recognition as a leading public urban research university.

In January 2021, Chancellor Marks charged a team of faculty, staff, and students with collaborating on the development of a refreshed outlook for CU Denver, one that would capture a vision for 2030, strengthen and differentiate the university. The process was human-centered and inclusive by design and engaged hundreds of participants and generated thousands of ideas.

With the right vision, plan, execution, CU Denver can become a model university that truly meets the needs of all.

THE PROCESS

The strategic planning process used a unique method called design innovation (see page 5) that encourages big, bold idea generation, and the participation of the entire campus community. The process was divided into three phases:

Phase	Timing	Goal of Work	Format
PHASE 1 Our Vision for 2030	January 2021	Set the Vision	Broad community input was invited via multiple channels; 3,674+ ideas generated.
PHASE 2 Strengthen and Differentiate	February – April 2021	Develop the Themes	Eight multidisciplinary, cross-functional “Vision Teams” were charged to focus on themes informed by the 100 Days of Listening tour; they imagined, distilled, and recommended 4,000+ bold ideas.
PHASE 3 Synthesize & Deliver Our Strategic Plan	April – June 2021	Build the Strategy	Based on Vision Team reports and community input, a cogent and integrated strategic plan will be developed and released.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

PHASE 1: OUR VISION FOR 2030

Phase 1 consisted of foundational work around CU Denver's purpose, vision, values, and graduate characteristics. This began with gathering input from the CU Denver community through a series of community sessions and an online survey. The information-gathering process was rooted in appreciative inquiry – an inclusive, strengths-based approach to identify the most important attributes of our identity and ambitions — and served as a “north star” for the rest of our strategic planning work.

PHASE 2: STRENGTHEN AND DIFFERENTIATE CU DENVER — CURRENT PHASE

Phase 2 brought our community together to think big, dream, and strategize to determine how we can take CU Denver to the next level by 2030. This phase launched eight Vision Teams, organized around major themes informed by Chancellor Marks' 100 Days of Listening tour. These multidisciplinary, cross-functional teams were diverse and represented all corners of the university, bringing tremendous institutional knowledge to the table. They were charged with digging deep into our institution in order to develop goals, strategies, and initiatives to strengthen and differentiate CU Denver around their theme. A team of faculty, staff, and students from CU Denver's Comcast Media Technology Center/ InWorks, facilitated their work by co-creating a customized design innovation process with each of the Vision Teams.

The Phase 2 work represents the culmination of significant thought, discussion, data collection, and research that will inform the strategic plan for the future of CU Denver. The Vision Team reports are featured in this document.

PHASE 3: SYNTHESIZE AND DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

In Phase 3, the Vision Teams' work is being reviewed, synthesized, and distilled into a bold, exciting, integrated, cohesive strategic plan for CU Denver in 2030. We will present working drafts of this strategic plan through a series of community feedback sessions in early- to mid-May 2021. Following these sessions, we will begin the process of writing the final report, which will be a top-line synthesis of the community's work focused on high-level goals and strategies. The report is expected to be delivered to the CU Board of Regents in June 2021 and shared with the community shortly thereafter. Operationalizing the plan will follow in Fall 2021.



ABOUT THE PROCESS

HOW WE DID IT: PHASE 2

Phase 2 Participation



2,000+
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



8
VISION TEAMS



130
VISION TEAM MEMBERS



4,000+
STORIES, IDEAS, AND
ASPIRATIONS GENERATED
BY VISION TEAMS

ABOUT DESIGN INNOVATION

[Design innovation](#) (DI) is a human-centered approach that blends the mindsets, methods, and languages of design thinking, systems thinking, engineering design, and business innovation to discover, define, develop, and deliver innovative solutions to complex problems. The process centers the concepts of creativity, openness, mindfulness, adaptability, empathy, and freedom to explore radical and impactful ideas about our future.

A team of faculty, staff, and students from CU Denver's Comcast Media Technology Center/InWorks, co-led by Professor Kristin Wood and Lauren Hebert, facilitated the VisionT Teams' work. At a high-level, the teams:

- Kicked off their work by broadly engaging our community to understand individual points of view related to their theme.
- Analyzed what they heard to identify the opportunities where CU Denver could make the greatest impact.
- Generated initial ideas about how we could best make that impact and tested those ideas again with our community.
- Incorporated the community's feedback and created bold, differentiating ideas to take CU Denver to the next level by 2030.

This process was built around four sessions that intentionally brought together all eight Vision Teams in order to facilitate cross-collaboration and inspire new and bold ideas at the intersection of the distinct teams.

