The world of online education gathers at CU[1]

[2]

Coursera connects educators and learners around the world via online technology. But it was the lure of face-to-face networking and knowledge-sharing – not to mention the beauty of the University of Colorado Boulder campus – that drew more than 450 Coursera partners from across the globe to the company's fifth annual conference[3].

CU hosted the March 29-31 event, where attendees filled their days with an assortment of sessions in instruction, research, strategy and technology, presented by education and technology leaders from Coursera and from universities near and far.

CU first partnered with Coursera[4] in 2013; the university's 29 Coursera-hosted MOOCs[5] (massive open online courses) are taught by 25 faculty members from all campuses and have reached 194 countries. MOOCs for cybersecurity certificates are in the planning stages at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, while further significant plans are in the works between Coursera and CU Boulder.

Before beginning the work of sharing best practices, Coursera leadership and a prominent figure on the national education scene took stock of the recent history of MOOCs and Coursera, while also offering thoughts on how and where online education might be steering the future of brick-and-mortar universities.

After spotlighting many points of pride for the CU system and his own Boulder campus, Michael Lightner, vice president for academic affairs, recognized CU regents in attendance at the conference – Chair Irene Griego and Regents Jack Kroll and Stephen Ludwig – and introduced Daphne Koller. The co-chair of the board and co-founder of Coursera said the company is privileged to work with 150 of the world's best universities.

"We envision a world where anyone, anywhere can transform their life by accessing the world's best learning experience," Koller said. "This is not about lightweight little pieces of edutainment. … We really need to provide something that is a substantially better learning experience."

Coursera's growth curves have been impressively steep – from 10 courses five years ago to 2,000 today; from 150,000 learners to 25 million.

Among the lessons of the first five years: Online education means more than just online content. Some learners require access to local support with online learning, which led Coursera to establish what it calls learning hubs. They marry online education with face-to-face engagement, Koller said. One dramatic example: A University of Geneva learning hub took the form of a trailer that was airlifted to a Kenyan refugee camp; the solar-powered space is where schoolteachers help improve primary education.

Koller's keynote preceded one from Ted Mitchell, the former undersecretary of education in the U.S. Department of Education during the last two years of President Obama's administration. Mitchell touted the wide-reaching benefits of higher education – for individuals, economies, communities and businesses. He also pointed to how the changing nature of work and careers requires educators to catch up with current trends.

"Changes in the world of work make it more important to build opportunities for people to learn skills," Mitchell said. "In America over the last year, we have seen evidence of what happens when people don't feel that efficacy – that the economy just does to them – and people feel they have no ability to guide their own lives.

"We need to think more of learning as a lifelong enterprise (and) we have to understand that postsecondary education is no longer a destination."

Mitchell predicted a future where young people will enter the workforce sooner, later returning to being a student in order to gain new skills for emerging careers. He sees that pattern – learn, work, repeat – continuing throughout life for individuals.

"By 2021, lifelong learning will become an expectation and a reality," he said. That means new providers of education

will multiply and challenge the role of traditional institutions of higher education.

“I want to give you encouragement: Universities will prevail,” Mitchell said. “You have decades or centuries of creating quality brands that stand for intellectual independence. … That brand, that equity value, is important. It stands for fundamental quality. But universities are going to have to become more flexible in developing new business models.”

He commended CU and the other 150 Coursera higher education partners for “taking bold steps and aligning your institutions with the new demand.”

“As you build, we also have to reflect. I would hope that at your campuses, the folks who are the very best at teaching, researching and learning … are engaged in (online education),” Mitchell said. “That’s the way we’ll achieve progress.”

Rick Levin, Coursera CEO, followed with a keynote that also emphasized the need for higher education to address the needs of lifelong learners, though he disagreed with Mitchell on the extent to which online learning will diminish the role of traditional universities.

“I don’t think we’re undoing our traditional work,” said Levin, who joined Coursera in 2013 after 20 years as president of Yale University. “We’re expanding the scope of what we do. Today, we’re maintaining the high-quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campus. That’s our sweet spot. It’s what every university does. But we’re going to add more.

“In the long term, it’s likely that most of you will be offering high-quality, fully online master’s degrees. I also think we’ll be offering more undergraduate courses for credit online. Not pseudo-credit … but real credit, acceptable by an institution, toward a degree.”

Board of Regents April meeting coverage[6]

Regents unanimously approve 2.5 percent salary increases
The University of Colorado Board of Regents on Friday approved a 2.5 percent base-building salary increase for employees on its four campuses as part of the fiscal year 2017-18 budget, which begins July 1. The compensation increase matches the mandatory state increase for classified personnel, a 1.75 percent across-the-board increase with an additional 0.75 percent in merit pay increases.
Read more[7]

Board continues budget review, approving tuition rates for next year
While awaiting final approval from the General Assembly for the state’s 2017-18 budget, the CU Board of Regents continues to advance CU’s proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.
Read more[8]

Vice president for diversity position on hold
The CU Board of Regents on Friday indefinitely postponed the search for a systemwide vice president for diversity, inclusion and retention. The board instead directed its strategic planning committee to develop a white paper that identifies the best practices of organizational structures in systems of higher education with multiple campuses.
Read more[9]

DACA, ASSET students have support of Board of Regents
Following up on concerns raised by students and other CU community members at the February Board of Regents meeting, the board on Friday approved a resolution of support for students enrolled in DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and ASSET (Advancing Students for a Stronger Economy Tomorrow) programs.
Read more[10]

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The board's approval came in an 8-0 vote, with an abstention by Regent Jack Kroll, who is a staff member at CU Boulder.

The increases are more than those in the 2016-17 budget, in which employees at CU Boulder, CU Colorado Springs and CU Anschutz Medical Campus received a 2 percent increase and system employees received a 1.77 percent increase. CU Denver employees were not given base-building salary increases in 2016-17 because of the university's budget shortfall, however they were given an up to 2 percent non-base-building increase divvied up at the discretion of the department leadership.

CU Denver is now estimating it might be $3.4 million above budgeted revenue in FY 2016-17 because of higher-than-expected enrollment growth and an increase in indirect cost reimbursement. Regent Jack Kroll, D-Denver, asked whether it would be possible to use some of that money to make up for the past fiscal year's salary shortfall.

Chancellor Dorothy Horrell said it would not. CU Denver does not intend to expend the funds in FY 2016-17 and will wait until actuals are known, she said. "The budget was very conservative and not sustainable."

Todd Saliman, vice president and chief financial officer, said the increases as approved would add more than $23.3 million to the university's 2017-18 budget. The final budget will be voted on at the board's June meeting at CU Colorado Springs.

See more on the budget here.[11]

Board continues budget review, approving tuition rates for next year[8]

While awaiting final approval from the General Assembly for the state's 2017-18 budget, the CU Board of Regents continues to advance CU's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.

On Friday, during the second of its two days meeting at CU Denver, the board approved proposed salary increases for faculty and staff (see story)[7].

The board also approved proposed increases in tuition. For resident undergraduates, rates will rise 3.18 percent at CU Denver, 3.99 percent at UCCS and 4.91 percent at CU Boulder (for incoming freshmen and transfer students). Continuing students at CU Boulder won't see an increase, because of the guaranteed tuition structure introduced last year.

While the compensation and tuition votes were unanimous, other budget matters brought to the board by Todd Saliman, vice president and chief financial officer, were approved with mixed support.

Higher-than-expected enrollment at CU Boulder and UCCS led to revenue that exceeded budgets. Campuses must seek board approval when wishing to spend overages greater than 1.5 percent.

UCCS sought approval to spend $4.1 million, or 2.98 percent above its 2016-17 revenue budget, for salaries, benefit, financial aid and general operations. CU Boulder's revenue increase of .93 percent did not meet the 1.5 percent

threshold, but the campus still sought approval for adjusting its budget and spending the $7.1 million in additional revenue. The campus reported the overage would support enrollment growth, information technology infrastructure, human resources and increases in insurance premiums.

While both items were passed, Regents John Carson, Heidi Ganahl and Irene Griego voted against them.

“I feel like, when we have additional money over the budget, it ought to go directly into reducing tuition,” said Carson, R-Highlands Ranch. “I’m still not satisfied that we have gotten enough of a handle on tuition. … The middle class is just getting hammered by constant increases in tuition. We’ve got to get the budget growing slower than it is.”

Ganahl, R-Superior, said she hopes to see “innovation and new ways of thinking” to lower costs. “One thing I heard loud and clear on the campaign trail last year was that college is too damn expensive for everybody.”

Regent Glen Gallegos, R-Grand Junction, said he agrees that the current model is unsustainable and that some students are being priced out of higher education. But he said he wouldn’t vote against the spending items, partly because CU and other state institutions of higher education are disadvantaged by subpar state funding.

Finally, the board approved increases in student fees: for full-time students at CU Boulder, $75.10; CU Denver, $37; and UCCS,$8. The vote was 7-2, with Carson and Regent Sue Sharkey, R-Castle Rock, voting no.

Sharkey said that while she shares board members’ concerns about rising tuition and college affordability, she encouraged colleagues to take a closer look at fees that might result in “students paying for things they do not use.” Regent Jack Kroll, D-Denver, a former student government leader at CU, said he supports the student volunteers who “make sure they’re spending the students’ money wisely.”

When combined, tuition and fees for resident undergraduates will increase 3.14 percent at CU Denver and 3.43 percent at UCCS. While continuing students at CU Boulder won’t see an increase, the rate will be 4.82 percent higher than last year for incoming freshmen and transfers.

The final CU budget for 2017-2018 will be voted on by the board at its June meeting at UCCS.

See the full budget presentation here.[11]

Vice president for diversity position on hold[9]

The CU Board of Regents on Friday indefinitely postponed the search for a systemwide vice president for diversity, inclusion and retention. The board instead directed its strategic planning committee to develop a white paper that identifies the best practices of organizational structures in systems of higher education with multiple campuses.

Approved on a 6-3 vote, the resolution states that the strategic planning committee, chaired by Regent Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, will work with Patrick O’Rourke, secretary to the board and legal counsel, to “develop a request for proposals, review for proposals, develop an appropriate scope of work and consider retaining a consultant” to help research and create the white paper.

The resolution was approved after a friendly amendment introduced by Regent Kyle Hybl, R-Colorado Springs, that changed the original wording, which would have required retaining a consultant.

Like last September’s vote[12] that called for the university to establish a new vice president for diversity position, which passed 5-4, the discussion preceding the vote on the white paper illustrated sharp differences of opinion among board members.

Voting no on Friday were Regents Heidi Ganahl, R-Superior, John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch, and Sue Sharkey, R-

Castle Rock. They questioned the necessity for the endeavor, citing costs – especially those for outside consultants – and the speed with which the resolution came forward. Both items were added to the board's agenda on the second day of the two-day meeting.

Before the vote, President Bruce D. Benson also questioned the need for a white paper.

"I think we are working darn well together. I don't think I need to be told to fix something that I don't know that's broken," Benson said. "I would wait until we get a new president, talk to the president – do it at that time. I'm happy with the structure, and we have a great leadership with the campuses."

Sharkey said she was bothered by the political nature of the initial vice president for diversity proposal and the white paper resolution.

Ganahl said she opposed the choice to spend "precious CU dollars … to fix what I'm not sure is broken."

"I'm also uncomfortable with an open-ended check on this – how much it's going to cost and the scope of work. We just came off an expensive consulting gig over the vice president for diversity. I'm not comfortable diving into this."

Kathy Nesbitt, vice president for employee and information services, said the consulting work cited by Ganahl cost less than $15,000 and was covered by president's initiative funds. Carson said he doubted that a study such as the one called for in the white paper resolution could be achieved for less than $50,000.

"It's unclear to me what the objective is and what we're going to do with this. It's a good example of how costs grow," Carson said. "We haven't thought through what we want to achieve here as a board."

The resolution states that "while there is significant guidance that addresses the nature and operations of single campus institutions of higher education, there are few resources that have addressed how university systems can best structure the operations of their governing boards and senior executives to achieve an optimal balance of connectivity and autonomy.

"Recognizing that the University of Colorado is unique, even among university systems, because of its elected governing board and campuses with different areas of strengths and opportunities, the Regents believe it is necessary for it to commission a white paper that will identify best practices for the University of Colorado system."

Regent Stephen Ludwig, D-Denver, said that board members bringing the resolution forward could have better communicated in advance with fellow regents. But he said the recommendation to pursue hiring a consultant to develop a white paper wasn't done "on a whim."

"We haven't looked at how (CU is) structured in more than a decade," Ludwig said. "The reason that companies hire external consultants is to get away from inside bias … and have an impartial view as much as possible."

Shoemaker also defended the need for the study and consultant input.

"Any corporation that has doubled in size in 10 years wouldn't hesitate to spend $50,000 to hire a consultant," she said, citing CU's budget growth from one of $2 billion to one approaching $4 billion.

The board voted 8-1 to defer search for the vice president position after approving the strategic committee white paper, reserving for later discussion on monetary limits to be set if consulting is deemed necessary.

"Now that we have approved the study, we should wait to see what it says," Carson said.

Shoemaker voted against deferring action on the vice president position.

"This was a vote by the Board of Regents and we voted twice to have a vice president of diversity," Shoemaker said. "This seems to just say that we may or may not hire a vice president of diversity or any kind of system-level authority

on diversity and I think that goes against what we previously voted on."

O'Rourke clarified the deferment does not rescind a prior resolution of the board to hire a vice president for diversity, inclusion and retention. "What it does is defer the active date of implementation of that resolution. It would allow the Board of Regents at any point in time to put this back on the agenda."

In deferring the search for the vice president for diversity position, the board charged Nesbitt and Michael Lightner, vice president for academic affairs, to coordinate with officials at system administration and the campuses to identify and implement initiatives that improve diversity, inclusion and retention and report to the board quarterly.

DACA, ASSET students have support of Board of Regents[10]

Following up on concerns raised by students and other CU community members at the February Board of Regents meeting[13], the board on Friday approved a resolution of support for students enrolled in DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and ASSET (Advancing Students for a Stronger Economy Tomorrow) programs.

"These students have made valuable contributions to the University of Colorado, are working to achieve their goals, and will be productive members of society," the resolution states.

To punctuate the resolution's 9-0 passage, the board also announced the establishment of the University of Colorado Student Relief Fund[14], which will benefit DACA students and others at CU Boulder who face financial hardship or legal impediment to accessing federal or state financial aid.

Regent Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, said the fund will not be fueled by tuition funds or general funds, but strictly via private philanthropy – including her personal foundation, which is the first donor to the fund.

"I expect there will be a lot of other donors (now)," Shoemaker said. "We have other people in the Boulder community teed up to contribute."

Shoemaker thanked Republican regents Heidi Ganahl and Sue Sharkey for collaborating with her on resolution language that would be broadly accepted by all board members.

"I have to say, we really do have compassionate conservatives on this board," Shoemaker said. "We all had various opinions … about the language 'sanctuary campus.' … But we managed a compromise on a resolution."

As the board and university leaders previously have stated, CU won't label its campuses as sanctuaries, which might indicate a defiance of federal law.

"I think it's reckless to have the university declare itself a sanctuary, whatever that means," said Regent John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch. "But I will vote for this resolution and will continue to look at this issue."

Sharkey said she also opposes the notion of sanctuary campuses, but said she supports CU's DACA students.

"For any student accepted into this university, it's a great statement on that individual," she said. "It takes a lot of hard work and determination to get into college and work toward their hopes and dreams. That's what our country is all about."

Donations to the Student Relief Fund may be made through the CU Foundation[15], which manages the fund.

In other business at the Board of Regents meeting, held April 6-7 at CU Denver:
Shoemaker updated the board on the work of the strategic planning committee on a new strategic vision framework for the university. Campus meetings recently were completed and the committee now is assembling material for the

board's review later this spring. A new website[16] details the process and objectives. The board unanimously approved the purchase of 2369 Arapahoe Ave. in Boulder. See more in CU Boulder Today[17].

Benson town hall to air live on Facebook[18]

CU President Bruce Benson's town hall meeting this morning for CU system administration staff will be streamed live on Facebook for those who are unable to attend.

Benson's talk at Denver's Trinity United Methodist Church is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. The video stream may be accessed by visiting the CU system's Facebook page[19].

The president is expected to discuss a variety of topics, including an update on the university, state funding, legislative initiatives, diversity, university culture and more.

If time permits, he'll also answer questions submitted by staff members who registered in advance for the event.

CU delegation, including President Bruce Benson and First Lady Marcy Benson, visits leaders and alumni in Middle East[20]

Roser Piano and Keyboard Department named after gift from longtime music champion[21]

Chancellor search moves forward[22]

Balsells honored for donations in excess of $1 million[23]

Should we worry about fake news?[24]

Masterworks showcases masterpieces by Impressionists, Picasso, Rodin[25]

Repola named chief of police at CU Denver, Anschutz[26]

Police chief retires, reflects on education and career[27]

Church to present at Archaeological Institute of America[28]

BFA Excellence Awards recognize outstanding work in advancing university mission [29]

BFA Excellence Awards recognize outstanding work in advancing university mission[30]

Two professors honored with 2017 Sloan Foundation awards[31]

Two professors honored with 2017 Sloan Foundation awards[32]

Rothbauer inducted into Northern Kentucky's Hall of Fame[33]

Rothbauer inducted into Northern Kentucky's Hall of Fame[34]

CU Book Store employees awarded for outstanding performance[35]

CU Book Store employees awarded for outstanding performance[36]

Links

[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/world-online-education-gathers-cu[2] http://www.coursera.org[3] https://conference2017.coursera.org/[4] https://www.coursera.org/[5] https://www.cu.edu/office-academic-affairs/moocs[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/board-regents-april-meeting-coverage[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-unanimously-approve-25-percent-salary-increases[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/board-continues-budget-review-approving-tuition-rates-next-year[9] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/vice-president-diversity-position-hold[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/daca-asset-students-have-support-board-regents[11] http://www.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/AL7NNH60BE6C/$file/FY%202017-18%20Budget%20Proposal%20April%20BOR%20(Final).pdf[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-vote-create-diversity-vp[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/news-and-notes-board-regents-february-2017[14] http://www.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/AL7NBR5F2A06/$file/SYS17048%20-%20DACA%20presentation-e.pdf[15] http://www.cufund.org/[16] http://www.cu.edu/strategicvision[17] http://www.colorado.edu/today/2017/04/07/board-regents-approves-tuition-fees-2017-18-merit-pool-increases-daca-student-relief-fund[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/benson-town-hall-air-live-facebook[19] https://www.facebook.com/UniversityofColoradosystem/[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-delegation-including-president-bruce-benson-and-first-lady-marcy-benson-visits-leaders[21] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/roser-piano-and-keyboard-department-named-after-gift-longtime-music-champion[22] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/chancellor-search-moves-forward[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/balsells-honored-donations-excess-1-million[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/should-we-worry-about-fake-news[25] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/masterworks-showcases-masterpieces-impressionists-picasso-rodin[26] https://connections.cu.edu/people/repola-named-chief-police-cu-denver-anschutz[27] https://connections.cu.edu/people/police-chief-retires-reflects-education-and-career[28] https://connections.cu.edu/people/church-present-archaeological-institute-america[29] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bfa-excellence-awards-recognize-outstanding-work-advancing-university-mission[30] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bfa-excellence-awards-recognize-outstanding-work-advancing-university-mission-0[31] https://connections.cu.edu/people/two-professors-honored-2017-sloan-foundation-awards[32] https://connections.cu.edu/people/two-professors-honored-2017-sloan-foundation-awards-0[33] https://connections.cu.edu/people/rothbauer-inducted-northern-kentucky-s-hall-fame[34] https://connections.cu.edu/people/rothbauer-inducted-northern-kentucky-s-hall-fame-0[35] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-book-store-employees-awarded-outstanding-performance[36] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-book-store-employees-awarded-outstanding-performance-0