Board of Regents to meet virtually today for coronavirus update[1]

The Board of Regents has announced a meeting set for 8 a.m. today in order to receive the latest updates on how the new coronavirus, COVID-19, is affecting the community and operations of the University of Colorado.

The board has asked leadership for frequent updates, currently set for every other week as virtual meetings that will be livestreamed. Links for viewing live and archived meetings are posted here[2].

The agenda for today's meeting includes an update from President Mark Kennedy on the university response to COVID-19 and an update from Chancellor Don Elliman on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Jon Samet, dean of the Colorado School of Public Health at CU Anschutz, will report on epidemiology modeling. Todd Saliman, vice president of budget and finance and chief financial officer, will present information on financial impacts and planning.

Regents will fight verdict in open records lawsuit[3]

Note: An earlier version of this story appeared as breaking news on April 10.

The Board of Regents on Friday voted to appeal a court's decision that the university violated open records law last year by not releasing a list of presidential candidates.

In a special meeting that was held remotely and livestreamed, the board voted 5-4 along party lines to pursue the appeal. A video recording of the meeting is posted here: https://cu.new.swagit.com/videos/51692[4].

"University counsel has recommended we appeal, not because we are opposed to transparency, but because we want to maintain the autonomy of the Board of Regents (in choosing a president)," said Chair Glen Gallegos. He and his four Republican colleagues voted in favor of appealing; the four Democrats voted against it.

"I believe the court's decision is in the best interest of the people of Colorado," said Vice Chair Irene Griego, stressing a desire for governmental transparency.

The March ruling by Denver District Court Judge A. Bruce Jones stated that the board failed to show cause that it properly denied the (Boulder) Daily Camera's requests, via the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA), for the names and application materials of finalists for CU president. The Camera's lawsuit against CU was filed last September.

Regent Heidi Ganahl proposed early in the meeting that the board request a delay in deciding on an appeal because of more pressing concerns over the coronavirus. That motion failed 6-3.

CU Faculty Voices: A reflection on ageism in the time of coronavirus[5]
[6]

Editor's note: This is one in a series of commentaries[7] by CU faculty, presented by the Faculty Council Communications Committee and CU Connections. Learn more here[8] and submit your own column pitch.[9]
[10]

As I write, I am staying with my mother, age 95. We are practicing social distancing in a retirement community. The spread of COVID-19 highlighted the topic I have been mulling over for some time now: ageism, or the discrimination against people of older age. As an aging researcher, I have been working with our faculty and curricula to reduce ageist language, and improve knowledge, skills and attitudes around working with older people in health care.

I read that coronavirus, according to some younger people, is being called the “Boomer Remover,” along the lines of survival of the fittest. This meme is even more disturbing than “OK, boomer.” Frankly, the first time “OK, boomer” was directed at my spouse, I was shocked! What had we done to deserve this?

Then, I remember a younger family member’s less-than-enthusiastic reaction to a video I had sent out poking fun at millennials some months back (I apologized). Photos of spring breakers crowding the beaches during the pandemic have fanned angry op-eds and shaming language. Given that older people do not use as many social media avenues, they may not see how many other younger people are also staying home, their outreach to each other, and their acts of neighborly kindness.

Ageism certainly isn’t new, and cuts both ways. Certainly, the pandemic has highlighted the controversy of allocation of scarce resources, the unbalanced attack of the virus on people older than 65, and those who have underlying conditions. This pandemic is an opportunity to modify our attitudes, beliefs and language to be less binary when it comes to aging, more inclusive, and less ‘othering.’

We, as educators, encounter traditional and diverse nontraditional students. During this time, we have an especially teachable moment to address ageism, and provide opportunities for intergenerational discourse. By changing our internal and external dialogue, our practices in and out of the classroom, we can contribute to a more just and compassionate society that doesn’t define people by age group.

Starting with ourselves, let us consider our possible implicit biases around aging. Does ‘being young’ sound better than ‘being old’ to you? The median age for faculty in 2019[11] was 49 when compared with all working adults, with a median age of 42. Given the data on age, I think I am addressing myself and some others who may be a little reluctant to admit that we are aging. Think of some of the terms we may use about ourselves – “Looking good for my age” or “having a senior moment”?

I recognize I do not speak for all ‘older’ faculty (perhaps ‘old’ is someone older than we are). We treasure our roles as professors, curate our wisdom, and continue to learn whatever is needed to connect with our students. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked over spring break, making sure that we are taking care of the rest of the semester online.

Next, let us consider our students. When talking about students in our classes, whether face-to-face or online, have you ever wondered if the ‘older’ student would take extra coaching or time, assuming they will not be tech-savvy? Have we thought or said about our students in general, “These students can’t write a full sentence; all they know is how to think in sound-bites/to text?” We can reframe that language by considering what we know about older or younger students, and simply ask an ‘age-neutral’ question such as, “What resources are needed for students in my class, given their diversity in age/language/experience?”

Watching the media around the coronavirus conversation highlights the need for reframing aging[12] conversation to one of “Common Good[13].” We use terms that invite stereotyping, like “seniors” or “the elderly” instead of more age-neutral terms like “older adult,” “older people” or “people over 65.” We can talk about age in terms of a sliding scale, perhaps, with younger adults on one end to older adults on the other, and life as a continuum. In all of our classes, we can uncover stereotypes about aging, and encourage students to dialogue with each other and with older family members and friends. I share this video in all of my classes, and you may find it useful: What is old?[14]

Even in the ‘hard sciences’ there are opportunities to talk about aging: normal aging, pathology of aging, and developmental aging. I can imagine having a debate about some of the research that will extend lifespan. What are the opportunities and the challenges about a longer, presumably healthier lifespan? In terms of economics, who benefits and who pays, when it comes to ageism (wrinkle cream manufacturers)? Our students, the older people of the future, will provide us with many needed resources: affordable hearing aids that work, accessible housing models, intergenerational work, driverless travel and customized health care.

Finally, consider our universities. Several faculty at UCCS have formed a workgroup to assess our university for its age-friendly status, as part of our diversity and inclusivity strategy. This movement is part of AARP’s Age-Friendly Communities, which aims to make our cities and counties livable for people of all ages. Denver, Boulder and Colorado

Springs are all designated as Age-Friendly Cities. We may join other universities around the country in assessing how our institutions serve students, staff and faculty who are of older age. Age Friendly University principles[15] align with our core principles as a university.

In closing, remember that a just society should treat all members of society as equals. This pandemic has put ageism out in the public eye. This can be an opportunity for us to advocate for more productive conversations about aging, to avoid stereotyping, and to advance the concept of aging as continuous, not a binary process.

Judith Scott, Ph.D., R.N., is assistant professor in the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing at UCCS. She researches aging in place of older adults in retirement communities, examining the ways that sensory and cognitive impairments affect well-being. She teaches population health for nontraditional R.N. to B.S.N. students, guiding their academic and clinical work. In addition, Scott engages with students and faculty using novel geriatric simulations in the classroom to improve student knowledge and perceptions on aging.

Resources:

https://www.aarp.org/disrupt-aging/stories/ideas/info-2016/what-is-old-video.html?intcmp=AE-DA-STR-R4-C4[14]

https://www.leadingage.org/sites/default/files/Comm%20Guide%20Prompting%20Disc%20Age%20%20Ageism_FINAL.pdf[16]

https://thischairrocks.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ConsciousnessRaisingBooklet.pdf[17]

https://frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/aging/elements/items/aging_bp_quickstart.pdf[12]

Applewhite, A. (2020). This chair rocks: A manifesto against ageism. Celadon Books. ISBN: 978-0-9969347-0-1

Ayalon, L., & Tesch-Romer, C. (2018). Contemporary perspectives on ageism. Springer Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-73820-8

Lytle, A., & Levy, S.R., (2017). Reducing ageism: Education about aging and extended contact with older adults. The Gerontologist, 00(0), 1–9. doi:10.1093/geront/gnx177

Nolan, M., Brown, J., Davies, S., Nolan, J., & Keady, J. (2006). The senses framework: Improving care for older people through a relationship-centered approach. Getting research into practice (GRiP) Report No.2. Project Report. University of Sheffield. Retrieved from http://shura.shu.ac.uk/id/eprint/280[18]

Get a healthy dose of information at virtual Open Enrollment sessions[19]

[20]

Employee Services' annual Open Enrollment Sessions and Fairs[21] are going digital, as a result of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. Virtual sessions and resources will give you a healthy dose of vital information from the comfort of your own home – just what the doctor ordered.

Open Enrollment begins at 8 a.m. Monday and runs until 5 p.m. Friday, May 8.

Presentations, handouts and contact information from Employee Services and CU plan carriers will be available starting April 20. Take the time to sit down, learn more about what's changing[22], examine your options and consider your benefits as part of your overall financial plan.

Details from Employee Services and the following carriers will be available:

Employee Services will deliver presentations on the Basics of CU Health Plans and this year's plan changes Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield (CU Health Plan - Exclusive, CU Health Plan - Extended and CU Health Plan - High Deductible) Kaiser (CU Health Plan – Kaiser) CVS (pharmacy services for Anthem-administered CU Health Plans) Delta Dental (Essential and Choice) ASI Flex (Health Care and Dependent Flexible Spending Accounts) Optum (Health Savings Account) Sleepio (a new program coming in July) The Standard Insurance (Life and Disability Insurance) Whether you are interested in learning more about your current plans or would like to explore your options, help is available. The Open Enrollment website[23] will provide full plan information, rates and resources starting Monday.

To speak with a benefits professional, email benefits@cu.edu[24] or call at 303-860-4200, option 3.

Online course: Become a CU sustainability champion[25]

Scientists developing COVID-19 test that knows you're sick before you do [26]

Earth Day to be celebrated with week of virtual events[27]

Educational resources for community available online[28]

GRIT creates toolkit to build individual, community resilience against COVID-19[29]

Does coronavirus grief exist?[30]

CU doctors work to treat COVID-19, now and in the future[31]

Inaugural hackathon a success[32]

Bliss to lead UCCS cybersecurity programs[33]

Bodine, Kwan take on new leadership roles at CCTSI [34]

Cullinan encourages families to 'Stay at Home' with an original song[35]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/board-regents-meet-virtually-today-coronavirus-update[2] https://cu.new.swagit.com/views/92/[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-will-fight-verdict-open-records-lawsuit [4] https://cu.new.swagit.com/videos/51692[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-faculty-voices-reflection-ageism-time-coronavirus[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cufv_logo_hdr_0.jpg[7] https://connections.cu.edu/tag/cu-faculty-voices[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/faculty-invited-contribute-new-cu-connections-commentaries[9] https://connections.cu.edu/cu-faculty-voices[10] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/fac-voices_scott_01.jpg[11] https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/01/27/aging-faculty[12] https://frameworksinstitute.org/toolkits/aging/elements/items/aging_bp_quickstart.pdf[13] http://frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/COVID19/framing-c19_-were-in-this-together_2.pdf[14] https://www.aarp.org/disrupt-aging/stories/ideas/info-2016/what-is-old-video.html?intcmp=AE-DA-STR-R4-C4[15] https://www.geron.org/programs-services/education-center/age-friendly-university-afu-global-network[16] https://www.leadingage.org/sites/default/files/Comm%20Guide%20Prompting%20Disc%20Age%20%20Ageism_FINAL.pdf[17] https://thischairrocks.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ConsciousnessRaisingBooklet.pdf[18] http://shura.shu.ac.uk/id/eprint/280[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/get-healthy-dose-information-virtual-open-enrollment-sessions[20] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/oe_top_0.jpg[21] https://www.cu.edu/oe[22] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/open-enrollment/whats-new[23] http://www.cu.edu/oe[24] mailto:benefits@cu.edu[25] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/online-course-become-cu-sustainability-champion[26] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/scientists-developing-covid-19-test-knows-you-re-sick-you-do[27] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/earth-day-be-celebrated-week-virtual-events[28] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/educational-resources-community-available-online[29] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/grit-creates-toolkit-build-individual-community-resilience-against-covid-19[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/does-coronavirus-grief-exist[31] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-doctors-work-treat-covid-19-now-and-future[32] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/inaugural-hackathon-success[33] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bliss-lead-uccs-cybersecurity-programs[34] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bodine-kwan-take-new-leadership-roles-cctsi[35] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cullinan-encourages-families-stay-home-original-song