Five questions for Alastair Norcross[1]
[2]

Philosophy professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at CU Boulder, Alastair Norcross today will lead his first meeting as chair of the systemwide Faculty Council, the governance group comprising faculty representatives from the four campuses. He was elected in April; Vice Chair Jorge Chavez and Secretary Vicki Grove will join him on this year's slate of leaders.

Among Norcross' roles on campus is director of the Center for Values and Social Policy, which hosts series of talks that are open to the community and hosts visiting scholars who work with Philosophy Department faculty and graduate students. The center also helps coordinate the annual Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress[3], which brings scholars from all over the world to Boulder to give presentations on ethics and political philosophy.

Until July, Norcross was director of CU Boulder's Philosophy, Arts, and Culture Residential Academic Program[4] (RAP), formerly Farrand RAP, which recently was discontinued.

"This is a great loss to the students and the university," said Norcross, who laments declining support for RAPs. "The Residential Academic Programs are one of the best features of CU Boulder. RAPs build a great sense of community, and have been shown to promote retention, especially among students from traditionally underrepresented groups."

1. How did you first arrive at CU Boulder?

I taught in Texas for 15 years: 10 years at Southern Methodist University, and five years at Rice University. While I was at Rice, I was approached by the Philosophy Department at CU Boulder, and invited to apply for a tenured position here.

I had never visited Colorado, and knew pretty much nothing about Boulder, beyond the facts that it was home to Mork and Mindy and was where all the good people went after the plague wiped out most of the population in Stephen King's "The Stand" (the bad people went to Las Vegas!). But as soon as I first set eyes on Boulder, I knew I had to move here. Anyone who has ever spent any time in Houston will understand my desire.

2. How do you define shared governance, and how did you get involved with Faculty Council?

Faculty and Administration cooperate in crafting policies and making meaningful decisions (subject to Regent approval) that affect the running of the university. Faculty take the lead and have primary responsibility for certain areas of policy and decision-making (those most closely associated with the academic and pedagogical mission of the university), while the Administration take the lead in matters of internal organization and fiscal policy, but in all cases both Faculty and Administration work together. The rough division of responsibility is spelled out in the Laws and Policies of the Regents (Article 5).

I have been involved with faculty governance at CU for over 10 years. First with the Arts and Sciences Council (ASC, since changed to ASFS) and then with Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA). I was chair of the BFA Faculty Affairs Committee for six years, which put me on the BFA Executive Committee, then a member-at-large of the BFA Executive Committee, and then (and now) Vice Chair of BFA. BFA asked me to serve on Faculty Council, too, a couple of years ago, both in the EPUS Committee and on the Council itself. Last year, the BFA Chair asked me to consider running for Faculty Council Chair, because Boulder was next up in the customary rotation.

3. What priorities do you expect Faculty Council to address this coming year?

I expect FC to play a large role in the university's efforts to increase diversity of all kinds and at all levels in the university community. I also expect us to continue to advocate for faculty control of the curriculum, and to continue to protect academic freedom in all its guises. I expect us to continue to advocate for the interests of all faculty, but especially of those faculty with the least power and privilege. And I expect us to continue to press for transparency in decision-making.

4. What's the current focus of your teaching and research?

Both my teaching and research is divided between, on the one hand, quite abstract theoretical issues in ethics (what philosophers usually call 'metaethics'), mostly having to do with articulating and defending my own version of utilitarianism, and, on the other hand, the very practical applied issue of how humans treat other animals. I have written quite a lot in both areas, but my most-read piece is an article arguing against the consumption of meat and other animal products. Humanity's treatment of other animals dwarfs in monstrosity its treatment of other humans.

5. How do you enjoy spending free time?

I run quite a lot (marathons, half marathons, shorter distances) with my wife. We are members of a great running group, Revolution Running, and have been for the past 14 years.

We are also heavily involved in a local theater group, the Rocky Mountain Revels, which puts on a show around Christmas/Winter Solstice every year, involving singing, dancing and storytelling, and celebrating a different culture each year. I am the Stage Director, writer and one of the actors. I don't usually sing, but I was persuaded to in last year's show (a French-Canadian story), because we had a traditional French drinking song that I grew up singing with my siblings in the back of the car on long journeys to stop us killing each other.

I also read a lot of detective fiction, and watch too much television ("Succession" was, perhaps, the best television show of all time).

Are you prepared for the CU Data Center move? [5]

'A fitness tracker for brain health': Headband seeks early signs of Alzheimer's during sleep [6]

Procurement Service Center asks CU buyers to think local[7]

CU's Procurement Service Center[8] (PSC) is aiming to make the university's already strong habit of doing business locally an even greater strength.

CU spent $546.3 million at local vendors in 2020-21, not including spending with purchasing cards and travel cards. CU defines local spending as doing business with a vendor or supplier based or locally owned in Colorado or with a physical presence in the state.

The PSC encourages those in the university community making purchases on behalf of CU to seek out Colorado companies when possible. The center also invites members of the CU community to suggest local businesses that the PSC might consider.

"By choosing local businesses, CU directly supports the communities we serve," said Ed Mills, associate vice president and chief procurement officer. "In this way, CU can expand its already strong contribution to the Colorado economy and build deeper relationships with community partners."

CU does business across the state, primarily along the Front Range. Among individual counties, CU in 2020-21 relied most on vendors in Denver County (1,137 unique suppliers), Boulder County (794) and Arapahoe County (516). The three top categories for local spending were transportation, food and entertainment; construction, manufacturing and facilities; and public service/administration/public utilities.

The PSC is a CU system office charged with administering purchasing and payable functions for all campuses. The PSC helps departments obtain the best value for every dollar while complying with applicable rules.

For more information, visit the PSC website[8] or submit a question to psc@cu.edu[9].

Regents Governance Committee hears update on Laws and Policies review[10]

With a long-running formal review of all Regent Laws and Policies nearing completion, university leadership is working with the Board of Regents to begin formally reviewing Regent Laws and Policies on an ongoing basis.

An update on the review[11] was presented Aug. 24 to the Regents Governance Committee during its first meeting of the academic year at 1800 Grant St.

Dan Montez, director of the Office of Policy and Efficiency, said 91% of Regent Laws and Policies had been reviewed as of July 1; the process launched in 2016. Almost all of the 139 completed laws and policies underwent at least minor changes. Before the seven-year project, some laws and policies hadn't been reviewed formally since the 1970s, Montez said.

Leonard Dinegar, senior vice president for internal operations and chief of staff, presented a draft vetting-and-approval process for consideration going forward. It includes a new Preliminary Notice of Review, intended as a "heads up" in order for regents to be aware and for key stakeholders to be engaged. Further steps include review by the Governance Committee, notification to the full Board of Regents and a second review by the Governance Committee. Proposed changes are subject to approval by the full board.

The committee forwarded recommended changes to Regent Policy 10.A, 10.E, 10.H and 10.P for consideration by the Board of Regents at its Sept. 7-8 meeting.

The committee also advanced proposed changes to Article 2.A, Policy 2.C.1, which would shift the board's election of chair and vice chair from the June board meeting to the February board meeting.

Also at last week's meeting, the Governance Committee approved its work plan for 2023-24.[12]

The next Governance Committee meeting is scheduled for Oct. 26.

Administrative cleanups to three systemwide administrative policy statements made, approved[13]

The Office of Policy and Efficiency (OPE) has announced administrative cleanups to the following administrative policy statements:
APS5002-Faculty Appointment Process APS5053-Multi-Year Contracts for Instructional, Research and Clinical Faculty (formerly Multi-Year Contracts for Instructional, Research and Clinical Faculty with Teaching Responsibilities or Librarian Appointments) APS5062-Leave
Cleanups to APS5002-Faculty Appointment Process were needed after changes to APS5060-Faculty Appointments were adopted in June.

Cleanups to APS5053-Multi-Year Contracts for Instructional, Research and Clinical Faculty and APS5062-Leave were needed to comply with newly approved state law.

These administrative cleanups became effective Aug. 3, 2023.

For more detailed information, go to https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/latest-changes[14].

For additional information on systemwide APSs, go to: http://www.cu.edu/ope[15].

Gun violence prevention panel features CU Boulder expertise, research [16]

UCCS?leads CU-wide?virtual center to forge next-generation Cyber Rangers [17]

CU Denver kicks off the fall semester[18]

CU Boulder, CIRES welcome new geodesist Ghobadi-Far[19]

Gold selected as National Academy of Medicine Fellow[20]

Deickman named as honoree in Student Veteran Leadership Awards [21]

CU Boulder develops new method to produce clean fuel[22]

600-thousand-year-old stone tools inherited by UCCS from artist[23]

How to diversify Colorado’s behavioral health workforce? A new effort starts by training teens[24]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-alastair-norcross[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/norcross1_portrait_five_questions_08-31-2023.jpg[3] https://www.colorado.edu/cvsp/events/rocky-mountain-ethics-congress[4] https://www.colorado.edu/pac-rap/[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/are-you-prepared-cu-data-center-move[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/fitness-tracker-brain-health-headband-seeks-early-signs-alzheimer-s-during-sleep[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/procurement-service-center-asks-cu-buyers-think-local[8] https://www.cu.edu/psc[9] mailto:psc@cu.edu[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-governance-committee-hears-update-laws-and-policies-review[11] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/CUSPFD63F5A6/$file/D.1_Items%20for%208-24-23%20Gov%20Comm%20Mtg%20(Updated%208-10-23).pdf[12] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/CUSPA963A02F/$file/2023-24%20Governance%20Committee%20Work%20Plan%20.pdf[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/administrative-cleanups-three-systemwide-administrative-policy-statements-made-approved[14] https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/latest-changes[15] http://www.cu.edu/ope[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/gun-violence-prevention-panel-features-cu-boulder-expertise-research[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-leads-cu-wide-virtual-center-forge-next-generation-cyber-rangers[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-denver-kicks-fall-semester[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-boulder-cires-welcome-new-geodesist-ghobadi-far[20] https://connections.cu.edu/people/gold-selected-national-academy-medicine-fellow[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/deickman-named-honoree-student-veteran-leadership-awards[22] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cu-boulder-develops-new-method-produce-clean-fuel[23] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/600-thousand-year-old-stone-tools-inherited-uccs-artist[24] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/how-diversify-colorado-s-behavioral-health-workforce-new-effort-starts-training-teens