Regents begin considering budget scenarios for 2025-26[1]

The Board of Regents last week began considering budget scenarios for the 2025-26 fiscal year, including possible increases in state funding, tuition and fees, and compensation.

Chad Marturano, vice president and chief financial officer for the CU system, presented the budget proposals[2] during the second day of the board's Feb. 6-7 meeting[3] at CU Boulder. Details varied among three scenarios, differing based on potential variations in state funding, tuition and fees, and compensation.

Depending on the amount of state investment, undergraduate resident tuition rates at CU Boulder could range between 2.3% and 4.0% for new, incoming students; continuing students are assured of no increases because of the campus tuition guarantee. At CU Denver, undergraduate resident tuition increases may range between 2.3% and 4.4%. At UCCS, undergraduate resident tuition increases may range between 2.3% and 4.5%. At CU Anschutz, a tuition increase for undergraduate resident nursing program students is planned at 2.1%.

"It is important to note the connection between state funding and keeping tuition in check," said CU President Todd Saliman. "When state funding is higher, tuition increases are lower."

Proposed fees vary by campus.

Compensation increases of 2.5% are proposed across the system, with caveats. Classified employees would see a 2.5% increase, based on the state pending action. CU Boulder and CU Anschutz are assuming a 2.5% merit increase, plus a 1.5% pool for compression, retention and equal pay. At CU Denver and UCCS, increases of 2.5% for merit, compression, retention and equal pay would take effect by meeting enrollment revenue thresholds. CU system administration is considering a 2.5% merit pool increase.

Hourly minimum wage rates for most staff and student employees are planned to increase at varying amounts at the four campuses.

Challenges affecting budgeting across the campuses and system include uncertain state and federal funding, enrollment, market pressure on compensation, increases in mandatory costs brought on by inflation, increased need for student financial aid and student support services, deferred maintenance, and information technology needs.

While enrollment projections will be refined in the months ahead, overall enrollment at CU Boulder is projected to rise 1.3% in the fall of 2025 primarily driven by improved undergraduate student retention. CU Denver is projecting a 1.8% decrease in overall enrollment in 2025-26. UCCS is projecting a 1.9% decrease in overall enrollment in 2025-26. CU Anschutz is projecting an overall enrollment increase of 3.1% for 2025-26.

At its April meeting, the board will receive budget resolutions with recommended tuition, compensation and fee changes. A final vote on the budget is expected at the June regents meeting.

In other business at the Feb. 6-7 meeting, the Board of Regents reelected Callie Rennison as chair and Ken Montera as vice chair, both by acclamation, for the coming year.
[4]

Two regents whose terms on the board ended in January were honored and named regents emereti. The board passed resolutions of appreciation for Regent Lesley Smith[5] and Regent Glen Gallegos[6].

The board formally recognized five members of the newest cohort of Distinguished Professors, first named last November[7]. Four CU Boulder faculty members – Hanspeter Schaub, Lee Niswander, Pieter Johnson and Robert Erickson – and CU Denver's Christopher Weible attended and received the official awards, CU's highest honor for faculty across the system's four campuses.
[8]

CU Distinguished Professors are tenured faculty members who demonstrate exemplary performance in research or

creative work; a record of excellence in promoting learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and outstanding service to the profession, the university and its affiliates. The remaining four members of the 2024 cohort of Distinguished Professors – Nancy F. Krebs, Donald Y.M. Leung, Jill M. Norris and Kurt R. Stenmark – will be recognized at a Board of Regents meeting later this year.

A panel discussion with faculty members from each of the four campuses delved into the ethical questions posed by the rise of AI. Michael Lightner, vice president of academic affairs, moderated the panel and Q&A session with the board.

Planned improvements at CU Boulder's University Memorial Center received board approval. Read more in CU Boulder Today[9].

Regents approved the UCCS 10-Year Facility Plan. Read more in Communique[10].

CU Denver Chancellor Kenneth T. Christensen took part in his first board meeting since taking his leadership post this month. Read more in CU Denver News[11].

New biography chronicles rise of President Emeritus Benson[12]

CU President Emeritus Bruce Benson is the subject of a new biography that traces his life from his upbringing on a World War II-era farm outside Chicago through his 11-year tenure as the university's leader. "Bruce Benson: Oilfield Roughneck to University President" was written by Ken McConnellogue, retired CU vice president for communication.

"Bruce Benson had an interesting and eventful life from childhood to his time as CU president, and I was pleased and honored to be able to tell his story," McConnellogue said. "He had a deep commitment to education at all levels and an abiding love for the University of Colorado.

"His CU presidency was a time of remarkable growth and challenge for the university," he said.

Dating to his student days in the early 1960s, Benson's affiliation with the university spanned more than a half-century. During that time, he was connected to CU as a student, alumnus, donor, volunteer and president. He retired as CU president in 2019.

The book features interviews with a variety of civic, education and political leaders who worked with (and sometimes against) Benson, including Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, businessman and philanthropist Philip Anschutz, Colorado State University Chancellor Tony Frank and former Gov. Bill Owens.

Born on the Fourth of July, 1938, Benson overcame an early family upheaval and educational difficulties to attend Cornell University. Unsatisfied with a curriculum that didn't offer the soft-rock geology that interested him, the 20-year-old Benson hitchhiked west and began working as a roughneck in the oil patch around Big Piney, Wyoming. He learned rigs from the ground up before leaving the oilfields to pursue a geology degree from CU Boulder, which he earned in 1964. With the knowledge he gained of what was below the ground, he started Benson Mineral Group in 1965. After early struggles, it became a prosperous oil and gas company.

BMG's sustained success allowed him to pursue his passion for making a difference in education, politics, philanthropy and community service. He served as chair of the board for several organizations in Colorado and beyond, including the Denver Public Schools Foundation, the Denver Zoo Foundation, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and Berkshire School (Massachusetts) Board of Trustees.

He became CU's 22nd president in 2008 after a contentious selection process. During his presidency, the four-campus system experienced a period of remarkable growth and success. Over his 11 years, CU set records in

attendance, degrees awarded, fundraising, research funding and economic impact. Over the same period, it was also plagued by anemic state funding, which was $227 million when he started in 2008, then slashed to a low of $144 million in 2011-12 (in the aftermath of the Great Recession), before creeping back to $194 million in 2017-18.

Benson and his wife, Marcy, co-chaired two billion-dollar-plus fundraising campaigns for CU, Beyond Boundaries (completed in 2003) and Creating Futures (completed in 2013). The Bensons are among CU's largest donors. Former CU first lady Marcy Benson worked for Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush before meeting Bruce and marrying him in 1993. Both Bensons received honorary doctorates from CU, Bruce in 2004 and Marcy in 2020. Benson is the namesake of the Benson Earth Sciences Building at CU Boulder, for which he led the fundraising drive and was its largest donor.

Benson's 11-plus year tenure made him the longest-serving CU president in 65 years at his retirement, and only three of the university's 21 previous presidents served longer.

C3 Innovation Lab officially revealed[13]

What is 'romantasy,' and why can't readers get enough? [14]

New Women's Leadership Program furthers connections and career insights for faculty and academic staff [15]

CU Anschutz steps back into the spotlight with new marketing campaign [16]

Suding named a 2025 Franklin Institute Bower Award winner [17]

Pharmacy Dean Altiere to return to faculty [18]

In memoriam: Jarrod Hanson [19]

CDPHE upgrades map that could help communities understand impact of environmental factors on health[20]

3 Questions on ‘The Post-Pandemic University’[21]

Pikes Peak regional economy remained robust in 2024, despite indicators of slow down[22]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/regents-begin-considering-budget-scenarios-2025-26[2] https://cu.diligent.community/document/ca5774f1-ac03-473f-b261-060fef8b78eb/[3] https://cu.diligent.community/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Org=Cal&Id=538[4] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/saliman_smith_gallegos_emeritus_honor_bor_crop_02-13-2025.jpg[5] https://cu.diligent.community/document/c1cd3eda-efbe-4ce8-84d2-9383f81966e8/[6] https://cu.diligent.community/document/9675e923-52fe-46b4-82c3-f04db83564fb/[7] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/nine-faculty-members-join-ranks-cu-distinguished-professors[8] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/bor_distinguished_professors_crop_02-13-2025.jpg[9] https://www.colorado.edu/today/2025/02/07/regents-consider-2025-26-budget-proposals-and-more[10] https://communique.uccs.edu/?p=161930[11] https://news.ucdenver.edu/regents-welcomed-chancellor-christensen-and-new-members-honored-distinguished-professors-and-reviewed-budget-proposals-at-february-meeting/[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-biography-chronicles-rise-president-emeritus-benson[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/c3-innovation-lab-officially-revealed[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/what-romantasy-and-why-can-t-readers-get-enough[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-women-s-leadership-program-furthers-connections-and-career-insights-faculty-and-academic[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-anschutz-steps-back-spotlight-new-marketing-campaign[17] https://connections.cu.edu/people/suding-named-2025-franklin-institute-bower-award-winner[18] https://connections.cu.edu/people/pharmacy-dean-altiere-return-faculty[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/memoriam-jarrod-hanson[20] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cdphe-upgrades-map-could-help-communities-understand-impact-environmental-factors-health[21] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/3-questions-post-pandemic-university[22] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/pikes-peak-regional-economy-remained-robust-2024-despite-indicators-slow-down