Colorado's best minds + CU innovators = A better future [1]

Regents zoom in on strategic plan's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion emphasis[2]
[3]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents took the first of what will be a series of deep dives into pillars of the recently completed Innovating for the Future systemwide strategic plan. The board on July 13 heard from campus representatives about initiatives and progress related to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) pillar of the plan.

The presentation came as part of the board's summer retreat in Tabernash, the first time the regents have met in person in more than a year. The session was led by the planning co-chairs Sharon Matusik, dean of the Leeds School of Business at CU Boulder, and Todd Saliman, whom the board appointed as CU system president in May while it conducts a search for a permanent president.

More than 600 people from across the system, as well as shared governance groups, engaged in the strategic planning process over the past two years, Matusik said. The regents are expected to formally adopt the plan at an upcoming public meeting.

The panel discussion featured specific efforts on campuses, in addition to a video in which system Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook outlined her office's major areas of focus, including efforts to create a collaborative environment across campuses, community outreach, promoting pay equity, and engaging in legislative relations, particularly the successful push to grant resident tuition to members of Indigenous tribes with historic ties to Colorado.

The panelists were Patrick O'Rourke, chief operating officer at CU Boulder; Regina Richards, vice chancellor for diversity, equity, inclusion and community engagement at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus; Antonio Farias, vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion at CU Denver; and Joshua Dunn, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at UCCS.

Their discussion ranged from how to increase diversity among faculty and staff to the particular diversity needs of an academic medical center to supporting students to ensuring free expression remains an integral part of campuses.

"When we're talking about diversity, equity and inclusion, words matter," O'Rourke said. "We're talking about three different things. We shouldn't just treat people as numbers.

"We're not going to hire and recruit our way into better diversity; we've got to hire and recruit people and then support them," he said.

The Board of Regents has established diversity, equity and inclusion as core values of the institution through its guiding principles and implements those principles through regent policy, but the board has an important role in articulating CU's commitment, he said.

O'Rourke added, "You set the tone and you should be asking us not just, 'Are you making the numbers?' But, 'What are you doing to promote the values of DEI across CU?'"

Richards agreed, talking about building a culture across the CU Anschutz Medical Campus that values and embraces DEI. She talked about building partnerships not only on the campus, but also in the surrounding community.

“I had to engage. I had to admit that we haven’t done everything right,” she said. “We had to ask, ‘How do we make the community feel like they belong?’”

It was especially important to connect with students, she said.

“It’s about openness and creating a culture where they understand it’s OK to have different views,” Richards said.

The students were important contributors to the DEI and community engagement strategies that guide how the campus will proceed, she said. The newly formed Chancellor’s DEI and CE Leadership Council used the Black Student Collective Resolution document[4] – presented to Richards, Chancellor Don Elliman and Shanta Zimmer, senior associate dean of the School of Medicine – as a launching pad for developing the campus-wide DEI and CE Strategic Initiatives.

CU Denver’s Farias said students should be the focal point for DEI efforts, but those efforts should extend beyond their time on campuses.

“We need to be talking about the student experience from the first touchpoint through the time when they are alumni,” he said.

He also noted CU Denver’s efforts to become an equity-serving institution and their implications.

“What is equity serving? Equity means leveling the playing field,” Farias said. “Fundamentally, equity is about feeling valued and adding value to one’s educational experience. Students from different backgrounds have different experiences and needs.”

He used the analogy of offering every student who walks on campus a new pair of shoes. “One-size-fits-all doesn’t work. Not everyone wears a size 9,” he said. “We have to recognize that different students have different needs.

“We really need to move beyond the numbers, but we’re not going to move beyond the numbers until we have a system about what we’re going to do,” Farias said.

CU Denver’s recently developed strategic plan[5] will help create that system, he said.

The discussion also touched on ensuring that free speech continues to thrive on CU’s campuses. UCCS Political Science Professor and Department Chair Josh Dunn said public universities have a particular obligation to model how informed discussion on controversial topics can happen.

“I hope what we do in the CU system is produce students who go out in the real world and be models for how this can work,” Dunn said.

He pointed to UCCS’s Center for the Study of Government and the Individual as a vehicle for making that happen.

“It teaches students to address controversial topics in a civil way on issues they disagree about,” he said.

The center hosts at least one major event annually that examines a facet of the public free speech discussion. He also pointed to seminars the center hosts for faculty, on campus and in K-12, on First Amendment protections.

“We think it’s important to spread this message to the broader community,” Dunn said, “and I think there’s reason for optimism.”

CU community well-represented at Tokyo Olympics [6]

[System DEI office launches summer internship program][7]

The University of Colorado system Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) has announced the launch of its inaugural summer internship program.

ODEI interns work under the leadership of Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook and contribute to the entire office. Collectively, interns assist in promoting an environment free of discrimination through advocacy, education and the implementation of DEI strategies. These strategies cover programs and campaigns designed to enhance the success, retention and development of CU's diverse community.

The goal of the internship program is to provide student professionals the opportunity to sharpen DEI skills and learn how to navigate the nuances of DEI work. Interns bring their skills and expertise to the DEI office, working on important system DEI initiatives with projects that have real impact on the CU community. Interns participate in weekly professional development and mentorship to support them as professionals and scholars.

ODEI internship positions were open to all CU undergraduate and graduate students and were posted on the Handshake job boards of each of the four campuses. The office is excited to welcome this summer's interns and plans to have more internship opportunities in the future.

Meet the interns

All three interns – Ajah Mejia, Aldo Ruiz and Ruth Woldemichael – expressed their enthusiasm to participate in the internship program and for the opportunity to build upon their previous experiences working around DEI issues as well as explore their career interests and goals.

Ajah Mejia (she, her, ella) is the programs intern with the CU system Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, supporting programming related to training, education and professional development in DEI. An undergraduate student of ethnic studies and international studies at CU Denver, Mejia is a 2020 recipient of the Chancellor Lesh-Laurie Continuing Scholarship and a 2021 recipient of the Rosa Parks Diversity Award. She works in the university's Center for Identity and Inclusion (CII) as the multi-heritage programming coordinator. In that space, Mejia developed 28 events in the last two years addressing intersectionalities relevant to the multi-heritage and greater BIPOC community. Mejia also serves her community as president of the Multiracial Biracial Student Alliance at CU Denver.

Mejia said she recognizes the importance of understanding the "intricacies of the larger system at play." She is excited to learn more about navigating institutions of higher education, to become more connected with DEI leaders and study their experiences and perspectives, and to be part of projects this summer "that will have a powerful impact on the university."

The work aligns with her career goal of having her own DEI-framed consulting firm focused on advocacy and restorative justice. She said this experience is helping her "to locate my own ideas of what needs to change to make our society learn, heal and evolve from of the atrocities of the past, and to prevent those of the future."

Aldo Ruiz (he, him, his) is the marketing and communication intern and supports ODEI's goal of increasing transparency and communication about system-level DEI initiatives and ODEI programming through digital communication strategies. Ruiz is pursuing a bachelor's degree in digital design at CU Denver. His background includes work as a graphic designer with the Center for Identity and Inclusion at CU Denver, and he has worked on marketing materials for multiple CU campuses.

Ruiz's experience as a designer in DEI has given him contact with topics requiring unique visuals to promote campaigns for student success or community engagement. He has experience advocating for students by means of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, and assisted with the creation of a culture survey intended to analyze a college's efforts to create thriving environments for students, faculty and staff.

Ruiz said he is excited to be working in the DEI space, as it brings him meaningful experiences and interactions and allows him to leverage his design skills and expertise to "tackle issues that I personally care about in small ways towards a larger goal." He looks forward to learning more about communication practices and strategies at the CU system level and to strengthen his skills in navigating such spaces. He hopes to explore during the internship "what additional career paths can be for [him] after graduation" and "make meaningful impacts in the world."

Ruth Woldemichael (she, her, ella) is the engagement and community outreach Intern. She will use research, critical analysis and program development to support efforts related to sustainable, authentic partnerships with community-based organizations and institutional awards and grants programs.

She is a fourth-year undergraduate pursuing bachelor's degrees in International Affairs and Ethnic Studies and a Spanish minor from CU Boulder. Woldemichael is a co-founder of CU Boulder's first Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS, or the Cause) and former president of the CU Boulder Black Student Alliance.

Woldemichael has a background in community engagement work including in secondary education as a Teaching Fellow with the Denver School of Science and Technology at Cole High School.

Woldemichael said she was "intrigued by the ODEI team and their vision for what the CU community could look like with a focus on DEI initiatives." She knew this was a space she wanted to be a part of: "I am so excited to be here as a contributor, visualizer, and builder."

She believes education can be transformative and is excited to be part of work to ensure education is accessible and equitable, and to reimagine communities. Woldemichael knows her time with the ODEI "will challenge and teach [her] as a thinker, communicator and leader." Influenced by global socio-political liberation movements, she aspires to attend law school or graduate school soon after working in the education field for a couple years.

Diversity conversation focus of upcoming virtual fireside chat[8]
[9]

The University of Colorado System Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) invites you to a "Fireside Chat: Unpacking Bias, Navigating Conflict and the Art of Being Goodish," at 1:30 p.m. Aug. 3.
[10]

The virtual event[11] will feature a screening of the Stanford Women in Leadership Innovation Lab's conversation with Dolly Chugh, Ph.D., "The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias." During the event, attendees will participate in facilitated discussions that will analyze and expand upon Chugh's theories presented in the recorded discussion

CU system employees are invited to attend. Register[11] before July 27, as space is limited.

Chugh is a Harvard-educated, award-winning associate professor in the Management and Organizations Department at New York University Stern School of Business. Her research integrates the theories and methods of social psychology, behavioral economics, judgment and decision making, sociology and education. Her work focuses on the psychology of "being a good person" and how this concept interacts with our daily lives, and particularly in the workplace, which she writes about in her 2018 book, "The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias."

Read more about Chugh through her biography[12] on New York University's webpage.

The Stanford Women in Leadership Innovation Lab program began out of the stall in gender equality in leadership positions. The VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab at Stanford University generates foundational research to advance women's leadership by diagnosing barriers, developing and evaluating interventions to get beyond barriers, and disseminates research-based solutions by bridging the gap between research and practice. You can learn more about Stanford's Women in Leadership Innovation Lab here[13].

Questions: systemdei@cu.edu[14]

Explore 'Sleeping Your Way to Health and Happiness' in upcoming webinar[15]
[16]

Sleepio, a sleep wellness program offered by the CU Health Plan, next week presents a webinar on the importance of sleep and how it can improve your overall health and well-being.

"The Science of Sleep: Sleeping Your Way to Health and Happiness"[17] is hosted by Big Health, the makers of Sleepio, and is set for noon-1 p.m. July 28 exclusively for CU Health Plan members. In the webinar, learn about different sleep needs at different life stages, gain information about sleep disorders, and discover specific ways to optimize your sleep through good sleep hygiene, a regular sleep/wake schedule, and understanding the bed/sleep connection.

The event also will feature a discussion of ways to protect sleep, including an overview of the Sleepio program, available to CU faculty and staff.

The webinar will be led by Jennifer Kanady, clinical innovation lead for sleep at Big Health. She has been involved in the sleep field for over a decade, and has over a dozen peer-reviewed publications. In addition to her research endeavors, Kanady has a strong background in the administration of evidence-based sleep interventions, with a particular expertise in cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia.

A recording of "The Science of Sleep" webinar will be distributed to all registered participants, allowing anyone unable to attend to review the presentation. The CU Health Plan and its wellness program vendors will continue to facilitate wellness webinars, so stay tuned.

Registration: https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1333590372904284428[17]

Neguse to discuss student advocacy at COLTT 2021[18]
[19]
[20]

The upcoming Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology (COLTT[21]) Conference is hosting Rep. Joe Neguse [22] in conversation with student leaders to address the power of student advocacy in shaping policy on today's most pressing higher education issues.

Neguse, a Lafayette Democrat representing Colorado's 2nd Congressional District, is a CU Boulder alumnus and former member of the Board of Regents.

This plenary session, set for 11 a.m. Aug. 4, will be followed by an open session for COLTT attendees to speak with student leadership.

This year's virtual conference will again feature leading-edge innovations and supportive education. For years, COLTT has been convening leaders and novices from across the state, as well as building a systemwide CU community of practice. This ongoing connectivity leads to the sharing of knowledge and practices, builds a network of practitioners and has actionable outcomes.

View the full COLTT schedule [23]for information about additional plenaries, featured speakers, topic tracks and more.

To secure a spot at COLTT 2021, register now[24] for the Aug. 4-5 event. Registration is $25; student registration is free.

Questions: coltt2021@executivevents.com[25].

Nominate a top leader for the Excellence in Leadership Award[26]

The Excellence in Leadership Program (ELP) is calling for nominations for its Excellence in Leadership Award, which recognizes the contributions of an outstanding graduate of the program.

Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Aug. 31. All ELP alumni[27] who are currently working at CU are eligible to be nominated; self-nominations will not be accepted.

ELP, a systemwide program for faculty and staff, is designed to identify top talent at the university and support them in enhancing their leadership skills and their knowledge about CU. The program cultivates a cohort of leaders who can successfully address the key challenges of a dynamic university.

The Excellence in Leadership Award recognizes an ELP alumnus who has shown exemplary leadership at the university in one or more areas:
Leadership of organizations, departments or teams Leadership of projects, programs and/or research Fiscal management and/or fundraising Student instruction
The award recipient and the nominator will be recognized at the Excellence in Leadership Luncheon and Lecture on Nov. 19 at Denver's Brown Palace Hotel.

Nomination details

Nominations will be accepted from any CU employee who has worked or is working with the nominee. Lists of all ELP graduates and past award recipients, as well as the nomination form, are available on the ELP nomination page[28].

Questions: elp@cu.edu[29].

Second season of Buff Innovator Insights podcast underway [30]

Harner asks (and answers): What is the essence of Colorado Springs? [31]

New method developed to detect and adjust population structure in genetic summary data [32]

An underused lifesaver for COVID-19 patients [33]

CCTSI announces new leadership roles in clinical research [34]

Schoffstall celebrates 55 years at UCCS [35]

After 42 years of deadlines, Curtin to retire [36]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/colorado-s-best-minds-cu-innovators-better-future[2] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-zoom-strategic-plan-s-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-emphasis[3] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/reg_stratplng_pillar.jpg[4] https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:abfed4b0-f7f8-431d-a6a4-824dadf65817[5] https://www.ucdenver.edu/strategicplan[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-community-well-represented-tokyo-olympics[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/system-dei-office-launches-summer-internship-program[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/diversity-conversation-focus-upcoming-virtual-fireside-chat[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/diversity-fireside-chat_top.jpg[10] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/dei_event_chugh.jpg[11] https://web.cvent.com/event/3433c05c-afcc-49e7-b82f-d728979133f1/summary[12] https://www.stern.nyu.edu/faculty/bio/dolly-chugh[13] https://womensleadership.stanford.edu/[14] mailto:systemdei@cu.edu[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/explore-sleeping-your-way-health-and-happiness-upcoming-webinar[16] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/sleep_list.jpg[17] https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1333590372904284428[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/neguse-discuss-student-advocacy-coltt-2021[19] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_top_0.jpg[20] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/neguse_01.jpg[21] http://www.cu.edu/coltt[22] https://neguse.house.gov/[23] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/coltt-2021-schedule[24] https://web.cvent.com/event/51f79b8f-c49c-40b1-a909-fe704b8aa8c6/websitePage:f8da4d0d-4ed9-4c67-a06f-493deb38ce5d[25] mailto:coltt2021@executivevents.com[26] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/nominate-top-leader-excellence-leadership-award[27] https://www.cu.edu/doc/elpalumni2021pdf[28] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/forms/excellence-leadership-award-nomination-form[29] mailto:elp@cu.edu[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/second-season-buff-innovator-insights-podcast-underway[31] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/harner-asks-and-answers-what-essence-colorado-springs[32] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-method-developed-detect-and-adjust-population-structure-genetic-summary-data[33] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/underused-lifesaver-covid-19-patients[34] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cctsi-

announces-new-leadership-roles-clinical-research[35] https://connections.cu.edu/people/schoffstall-celebrates-55-years-uccs[36] https://connections.cu.edu/people/after-42-years-deadlines-curtin-retire