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Regents officially kick off presidential search[3]
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CU successfully containing costs for students[4]
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Broadband a critical need in rural Colorado[5]
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The search commenced when the board provided a charge[9] to the committee that detailed what the board is seeking. It is looking for a leader to be "the chief executive officer of a diverse and complex organization," a person who recognizes the unique attributes of the four campuses while leveraging the collective power of the system. The new president will serve as chief spokesperson for CU and engage elected officials in a non-partisan manner. He or she must "lead change and innovation" while also serving as a key stakeholder in the shared governance process.

"The president must effectively communicate CU's mission, build and strengthen relationships both within CU and with our strategic partners, generate public support for higher education, and advance CU's research and philanthropic efforts," according to the charge.

The regents have been refining the presidential job description and articulating the qualities they would like to see in the university's next leader over the past few years in anticipation of a leadership transition. CU President Bruce D. Benson has announced he intends to retire from the university in July.

The regents had a get-acquainted meeting Thursday with most members of the search committee. Regents added an undergraduate student (Sierra Brown, chair of the Intercampus Student Forum, the system-wide student government organization) and a representative of the CU Foundation Board (outgoing chair Margaret Bathgate) after the board received requests to expand the committee. It now comprises 17 members, including the two regents co-chairing, Heidi Ganahl and Irene Griego. It will next meet in early December.

Members of the board said they welcome input[10] from people inside and outside the university about what they are looking for in a president and the issues facing the university. The board also invited recommendations[11] of people who may be right for the job.

CU successfully containing costs for students[4]

Despite market pressures and limited state support, University of Colorado campuses are effectively containing costs for students pursuing degrees.

The Board of Regents last week reviewed data showing that the average cost of attendance for resident undergraduates who apply for financial aid has stayed roughly constant, when adjusted for inflation, over the past five years at CU Boulder, UCCS and CU Denver.

Cost of attendance includes tuition and fees, housing, food, books and miscellaneous expenses. Comparing the 2014 and 2018 fiscal years, that annual amount rose just slightly at CU Denver (from $24,457 to $24,664) and UCCS (from $25,397 to $26,611); at CU Boulder, it dipped from $29,766 to $29,279.

The data from the CU system Office of Budget and Finance was presented by Todd Saliman, vice president of budget and finance and chief financial officer, during the board's Nov. 9 meeting at UCCS.

The presentation[12] also drilled down into out-of-pocket costs – defined as average cost of attendance minus average grant aid, adjusted for inflation – for resident undergraduates applying for financial aid. Those five-year figures also were reduced at CU Boulder in each of five household income categories and roughly flat (slightly up or down, depending on category) at UCCS and CU Denver.

"We need to get this message out more," said Regent John Carson. "This is an amazing legacy to President Benson and university leadership … particularly when you consider how little state aid we receive. It's a reflection of controlling costs and bringing in additional revenue. I am so pleased."

Regent Glen Gallegos said he, too, was encouraged by the achievement in affordability and access, but cautioned that the sticker price remains daunting to many Colorado families.

"A four-year degree is still costing $100,000," Gallegos said. "We're doing everything we can to cut those costs … but the argument is that college is too expensive and leaves students with too much debt. I don't want that to be forgotten."

Regent Heidi Ganahl agreed that the cost may be steep, but said it's important to be mindful of a college degree's return on investment. President Benson this week wrote about such value in his newsletter[13].

In other business on Nov. 9, the second day of the board's two-day meeting at UCCS:
The board approved a $45 million building addition that will connect CU Boulder's Engineering Center, home of the College of Engineering and Applied Science, to the Koelbel Building, home of the Leeds School of Business. Read more in CU Boulder Today[14]. The board approved splitting the UCCS doctoral program for engineering into three distinct doctorates (engineering, computer science and security). Read more in Communique[15]. Regents Kyle Hybl and Stephen Ludwig, both of whom were attending their last full board meeting, were honored as regents emereti. Read more in Communique[16]. Lesley Smith and Chance Hill, both of whom won election to the board last week[17], appeared briefly to introduce themselves to the board and others in attendance. They will be sworn in in January, as will Regent Glen Gallegos, who won re-election. Liz Concordia, president and chief executive officer of UCHealth, updated the board[18] on activity at the system, which launched a strategic plan two and a half years ago. Plans for 2019 include the expansion of Memorial Hospital North in Colorado Springs and the opening of new hospitals in Highlands Ranch and Greeley. "We have been aggressive in growing, but it's purposeful growth," she said.

Broadband a critical need in rural Colorado[5]

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During the Emerging Issues portion of its meeting Nov. 9 at UCCS, the CU Board of Regents spoke with a panel of rural leaders about big challenges faced by their small communities.

Hosted by Amy Humble from the Office of the Board of Regents, the panel comprised Christian Reece, executive director of Club 20 on the Western Slope; Konnie Martin, CEO of San Luis Health/San Luis Valley; and Myles Johnson, superintendent of the Idalia School District.

The scarcity or inconsistency of broadband is a critical issue in rural areas, panelists said. Lack of internet access reaches far beyond a need for Netflix. It could mean the difference between building a workforce that can work remotely, getting brain scans into the right hands for evaluation or enabling students to take state-required standardized tests.

"We still have some communities that use dial-up, think about that – it's 2018," Reece said. "When you talk about these small communities being economically competitive with the Front Range on dial-up? It's not possible."

There's a high cost to build out high-speed internet to some of the smaller communities and the return on investment isn't substantial, she said. The west slope is looking for help through state and federal dollars and old technology that's becoming new again, such as microwave technology.

"It is being deployed in some of the hard-to-reach communities because it's cost-effective and can reach down into canyons and hard-geographically-to-deploy areas," Reece said.

Board Vice Chair Jack Kroll, D-Denver, said the lack of access to education affects the university's mission to serve all Coloradans.

"We passed a 9-0 resolution to expand our digital educational offerings and if you all don't have access to it because you don't have broadband and internet, that's a problem," Kroll said. "It's vitally important that we offer a CU education no matter where a student lives."

Martin said in health care, broadband can mean life or death. "In our community, we depend on our internet connection to be able to have our radiology images read 24/7."

She said last year's spring fire knocked out some reception towers and the remaining towers became overwhelmed. "We went for about 30 hours at our hospital without internet connection – and we have the highest internet connection in the entire community as a priority provider."

Todd Saliman, vice president and CFO, said the Legislature has been working to resolve the issue and provide reliable internet access across the state. "This was a huge priority at the Capitol, and especially for the rural legislators," he said.

Gov. John Hickenlooper earlier this year signed legislation that calls for $100 million in allocations over the next five years to deliver high-speed internet to underserved rural areas around the state. That's still a fraction of the estimated $300 million to $400 million it would take to extend broadband service to the entire state.

In addition to internet access, some better-known challenges are hindering smaller communities, such as nursing, doctor, physical therapist and teacher shortages, the panel said.

A severe teacher shortage has hampered Johnson's school district.

"We're having a really, really hard time getting applicants, sometimes begging just for one or two applicants to fill a

position," he said. Increased pay and letting employees work fewer days could be part of the solution, he said. Some districts in the eastern plains and elsewhere in Colorado have gone to four-day weeks. "My district board does not support that. We're still on the five-day week and neighboring districts are on the four-day week, compounding the problem."

Chancellors Don Elliman, CU Anschutz, and Dorothy Horrell, CU Denver, highlighted programs on each campus that aim to fill teaching and health-care gaps in rural communities. CU Boulder's engineering programs through Mesa State University and Western State University also are reaching remote areas and educating rural populations, Reece pointed out. Venkat Reddy, UCCS chancellor, said the Cisco TelePresence courses have for years been assisting nursing and engineering programs in southern Colorado.

Regent Glen Gallegos, R-Grand Junction, stressed the importance of partnerships across the state and said the enhanced CU For Colorado[19] site – which features 800 outreach programs across the state – that will launch in February will be a boon to rural populations seeking CU programs and services.

Gallegos said part of the answer to the shortages lies in individuals who are willing to go back to their communities and serve. "But the only way they're going back home is if there's jobs and an economy."

Regents explore possibility of paying future board members[6]

The CU Board of Regents asked for further examination of the possibility of paying board members stipends, which would help offset the costs and time commitment of serving.

Regent policy currently states that no member of the Board of Regents shall receive any monetary payment from the university, other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses, consistent with university reimbursement policies, without prior approval of the board.

However, Regents Stephen Ludwig, D-Denver, and Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, asked the board to examine the idea because of concerns that time and monetary issues might discourage qualified candidates to run for office. As proposed, the stipends would go into effect after six years; elected board members serve six-year terms.

"I thought it was worth exploring," Ludwig said. "Not to make this a career but to make it less of a hit."

Patrick O'Rourke, vice president, University Counsel and secretary of the Board of Regents, led the discussion.

"The board has never approved any type of compensation for board members for their service as regent," said O'Rourke, adding that while there is no other board among peer institutions that provides such compensation, Colorado law doesn't prohibit it.

"But there are certain statutes in state law in Colorado that apply to public officers, meaning employees of the state … and those laws currently don't apply to the Board of Regents and the regents themselves," O'Rourke said. That could change if board members were provided stipends.

Board compensation could make regents accountable to the university's general statutory and ethics standards, which are not unlike the policies already imposed on the board, O'Rourke said. However, any violation of those ethics by the board could jeopardize the university's tax-exempt status.

Regents Sue Sharkey, chair, R-Castle Rock, and Jack Kroll, vice chair, D-Denver, were opposed to further exploring the stipends.

"I recognize the cost involved in our service, not only in our time but in financial commitments to serve on this board," Sharkey said. "I'm a bit torn. In saying that I don't believe we should move forward with this, I don't believe CU

should set that precedent."

Regents Kyle Hybl, R-Colorado Springs, Irene Griego, D-Lakewood, and John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch, said they thought the current system was sufficient, but saw no harm exploring stipends.

"I would have to be convinced. It seems to me the system we have in place has been working pretty well," Carson said.

Regents Heidi Ganahl, R-Superior, and Glen Gallegos, R-Grand Junction, were in favor of further examination.

The board asked O'Rourke to examine the state and universities laws and policies and consult specialized tax lawyers and report back at the next meeting of the regents' governance committee.

CU Boulder ranks best in world for geosciences, rises to No. 43 overall in global standings[20]

Chamber & EDC recognize School of Public Affairs for 25 years of partnership[21]

School of education impacts children through rural Colorado partnerships[22]

Researchers investigate suicide attempts and psychotropic drugs[23]

Hernandez, Miller, Sibray, Van Boven receive Employee of the Year Awards [24]

Braza to return to faculty [25]

Ray receives conservation award [26]

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