

[Five questions for Irene Griego](#)[1]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents made history in September when it elected Irene Griego as board chair. She is the first Latina to serve in the position in the university's 140-year history. The board also elected Glen Gallegos as vice chair, propelling Latinos to the top two leadership positions on the board.

Griego is a lifelong resident of Colorado whose career in public education took root with degrees from CU. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Colorado Boulder and a doctorate in school administration from the University of Colorado Denver, as well as a master's in educational administration from the University of Northern Colorado.

Griego, a Democrat, was sworn in as a regent in December 2011 after being appointed by Gov. John Hickenlooper to represent the 7th Congressional District. The seat formerly was held by Regent Monisha Merchant, who resigned to work for Sen. Michael Bennet; Griego's appointment continued through the general election in 2012. She was elected in 2012, serving until the 2014 general election, and re-elected to serve from 2015-21. Colorado is one of only four states to elect members of the governing board for the state's flagship higher education system (the others are Nebraska, Nevada and Michigan).

In her 38-year career in public education, Griego worked as a classroom teacher, elementary school principal, community superintendent and instructor for aspiring school administrators. She established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in Jefferson County Public Schools and served as its director after retirement. She spent a decade as community superintendent for Jeffco Schools, responsible for overseeing 37 elementary, middle and high schools in central Jeffco.

1. What is your goal as chair of the Board of Regents?

My top priority is developing a spirit of collaboration and working in a bipartisan manner to focus on the best possible education for CU students. Our work must focus on education, not politics. The regents should serve as role models, listening with respect and seeking to understand all views to reach consensus on issues that affect the future of our university and our students.

The regents represent a rich diversity of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds, and we can make better decisions if we problem solve together. To ensure the best possible outcomes, we also should work in partnership with our administration and faculty, taking advantage of their expertise and experience.

We are also an important link to the people of Colorado, who elect us to serve as their voice. CU has a substantial impact on the quality of life in our state in so many ways – economic, cultural, health and wellness, and innovation, among others – so it's important that the board's viewpoint is both internal and external to the university.

2. Diversity issues have been a common thread throughout your career. How do you see CU doing in that regard?

As a lifelong educator, I have learned firsthand the importance of providing opportunities that support all students and help them succeed. At CU, we have made some good progress but still have work to do.

I continue to be an advocate for diversity and inclusion and championed the appointment of a new system-level vice president who will focus on these issues. In today's global economy, that role is as critical as any other position at CU. We need experts – educators who have a national perspective and a deep knowledge of research-based data – to develop a welcoming environment for all faculty, staff and students where everyone feels valued, supported and included.

The vice president will also be charged with ensuring that CU has a diverse workforce. To accomplish all this, the person will need to collaborate closely with leadership on the campuses, particularly the chief diversity officers, to ensure we are sharing best practices, collaborating across CU and leveraging some of our successful programs.

Another role will be reaching out to students from diverse backgrounds across our state and encouraging them to make the decision to attend CU.

Furthermore, we should focus on providing the support needed to retain students from all backgrounds, so they can graduate and become active participants in our society.

3. What do you see as the significance of being the first Latina to serve as chair of the CU Board of Regents?

I hope to be a role model for all students, not just Latinos. It's important for people of all ethnicities to have role models, and I'm humbled and honored to be in this position for our students. My goal is to represent all students, staff and supporters of the university. The Board of Regents has a diverse membership representing different facets of our society, which is a strength because we look at issues through multiple lenses.

4. You're an advocate of continuous improvement. How can that manifest itself at CU?

Continuous improvement means taking a critical look at our system and honestly assessing where we are and how we can be better. We need to start with the regents and reflect on our operation as a board. What are our roles and responsibilities as policy makers? How can we be most effective and efficient? How should we work with the president and chancellors to create the best possible outcomes for our students? For continuous improvement to succeed, we need to be honest, open-minded and receptive to positive change.

5. What are some of the short- and long-term issues on the Board of Regents' radar screen?

Short-term issues include the budget, funding and impacts on student tuition. As already discussed, creating a diverse and inclusive environment for faculty, staff and students is another short-term goal.

For the long-term the most critical questions are – What is the role of the university in the future of our state and society? What are our obligations and responsibilities to our students and our state? What kind of learning needs to take place to prepare students for the future? To address these issues, the Board of Regents is in the process of developing a strategic vision. As part of that endeavor, we will be engaging various parts of the university community this fall and in the spring. My greatest hope is that we can work collaboratively to create a vision that will provide a roadmap for our university for at least the next decade.

[Feedback invited for proposed revisions to Regent laws, policies](#)^[2]

A [recently launched website](#)^[3] provides University of Colorado faculty and staff the opportunity to engage in the current systemwide review of CU Regent laws and policies.

The board last year passed a resolution calling for the formal review of the 98 Regent laws and policies. Through evaluation, policies are being simplified where possible and reorganized for clarity and consistency. Subsequent to this effort, necessary changes to Administrative Policy Statements (APSS) and campus policies will take place. Outdated or irrelevant policies will be deleted and some language will be updated.

Patrick O'Rourke, vice president, university counsel and secretary of the board, is leading the review – expected to take about two years – in coordination with Leonard Dinegar, senior vice president and chief of staff. Representatives from system and campus administrations and shared governance groups also are involved.

A steering committee has been at work in early stages of the review, which is divided into four categories: University Counsel and Board Secretary; Academic Affairs; Budget and Finance; and other.

Members of the CU community and public may track the process and provide input at a new website, <http://www.cu.edu/regents/rpreview>^[3]. It displays a list of laws and policies under review along with any draft revisions

that have been suggested and other notes about each document.

Michael Lightner, vice president for academic affairs, is leading the review of academic policies; currently on display are Article 4 and related policies, which pertain to organization of academic units.

“We’re seeking questions and concerns, not edits – these are not Word documents where you’re going to cross something out,” Lightner told the Faculty Council earlier this fall. “What we’re requesting is that faculty governance – through the Faculty Council and faculty assemblies – will provide a consolidated, prioritized list of comments and concerns from the faculty.” Feedback also is being sought from individual faculty, staff, students and the public.

[Staff Council using survey to gauge interest in issues, benefits](#)[4]

University and classified staff members, as well as working retirees, this week received a work and benefits survey developed by the [University of Colorado Staff Council](#)[5]. The email survey is designed to assess how employees use benefits offered by their respective CU campuses.

Responses and data gleaned from the survey will help the council determine the issues staff members consider important in their work lives and also will help the governance group better represent, communicate with and advocate for employees, said Council Chair Denise Thomas.

Results of the survey will be shared with campus administration and the Board of Regents.

The survey asks questions about professional development activities, dependent tuition benefits, paid parental leave, and Administrative Policy Statements.

Council members have been working on the survey for several months. Thomas said questions were pared down to only include those that council considers “actionable” or those that will help determine how benefits are used or could be used.

For instance, a Staff Council committee has been researching paid parental leave policies and the council hopes respondents will indicate whether they consider such a policy important.

Council also would like to find out if constituents understand the Administrative Policy Statement review process and the role governance groups play in that process.

Staff members have until Nov. 15 to complete the survey. Respondents also may choose to be entered into a drawing for one of four \$75 Amazon gift cards.

Council hopes to have data from returned surveys compiled by the end of the year.

[Faculty Council honors Regent Carrigan, hears update on FCQ review](#)[6]

The CU Faculty Council welcomed Regents Michael Carrigan and Kyle Hybl to the governance group’s Oct. 27 meeting at 1800 Grant St., where the officials discussed the university’s diversity efforts.

The council also honored Carrigan, recognizing his service to the university and cooperation with faculty during his two six-year terms, which come to an end in January. Council Chair Ravinder Singh presented Carrigan with an award and certificate of appreciation.

“You are what the university is,” Carrigan said in expressing his thanks. “It all comes down to you and the tremendous quality of faculty we have at CU. ... Shared governance is what makes this place work.”

Carrigan encouraged faculty leaders to cultivate relationships with members of the Board of Regents. “I’m a firm believer that you should build a relationship before you might have a concern,” he said.

During discussion with the council, Hybl, a Colorado Springs Republican, invited Carrigan, a Denver Democrat, to detail Carrigan’s effort to [establish a vice president for diversity position](#)[7] at the system level. Hybl noted that he was among those who voted against Carrigan’s proposal, which was approved 5-4 in September.

“I wanted to make sure that diversity remained a priority,” Carrigan said. “We’re making progress. What we haven’t done well enough is increase diversity among senior faculty and administration.”

Carrigan said he envisions the position entailing a combination of academic responsibilities and human resources responsibilities. The vice president would focus on increasing diversity at the system level as well as spur existing efforts at the campuses.

Partly because of those existing efforts, some council members expressed surprise at the movement to establish the VP post rather than pursue smaller intermediate steps. Others said that without more abundant resources, recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty body will be an ongoing challenge.

Hybl said he agrees that diversity is important and that CU needs to “reflect the state we serve.” He said he voted against the notion of a vice president for diversity “because it is the board telling the president he has to hire an individual to do a job. ... I think we have a strong presence on each of the campuses to address these issues.”

Also at last week’s meeting, the council heard an update on the Faculty Course Questionnaire (FCQ) Redesign Project, which may launch a pilot phase in the coming weeks. Mary Kraus, co-chair of the project’s executive committee, and vice provost and associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education at CU Boulder, said the project aims to improve the FCQ – addressing faculty concerns about systematic bias in such evaluations by students, while relying more on technology and less on paper and administrative staffing.

See the [project website](#)[8] for more information.

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