

[Coronavirus continues to cloud budget outlook](#)^[1]

[2]

With days until the governor submits a state budget request to the Joint Budget Committee, CU President Mark Kennedy joined the Oct. 22 meeting of the Faculty Senate to look ahead to the 2021-22 fiscal year.

“Clearly, the COVID is a wildcard for what the year looks like,” Kennedy said at the meeting, held remotely. “The vaccine timing is something that will make a difference.”

Uncertainty caused by the pandemic led to a drop in freshman enrollment across the CU system this year – on average, down 12%, Kennedy said.

“That is going to be a challenge for us as we have a smaller freshman class rolling through the next two, three, four years,” he said.

Those would-be freshmen may be taking a gap year, intending to instead enroll next fall.

[3]

“The real challenge is, how do we go after them after their gap and get them back in the schools?” said Kennedy, who noted that CU Boulder is actively engaging students who deferred their enrollments this fall.

“We need to have a key focus on retention,” Kennedy said.

The president acknowledged that Gov. Jared Polis may request a further cut to higher education institutions in the coming budget year; the governor must submit a budget recommendation by Nov. 1. Still, Kennedy said, revenue forecasts are encouraging, while ballot measures to be decided by voters in Tuesday’s election also will affect the budget outlook for the state.

In other business at last week’s Faculty Senate meeting:

[4]

The governance group heard updates on consideration being given to pay equity across the system. Felicity O’Herron, chief HR officer for the system, and consultant Ken Abosch of Aon described the effort, which includes Abosch leading a team focused on compensation policies and practices across the four campuses and system administration. Pay equity analytics are being gathered, too. “We haven’t seen specific results yet, but as soon as we know, we’ll put together a plan for moving forward,” O’Herron said. Sandy Martin, chair of the Faculty Senate Privilege and Tenure Committee, also reported to the group. Martin said the committee has considered five grievance inquiries this year, including two that carried over from the previous year, from across the four campuses. The committee also is working on revising its bylaws. Brenda Allen, professor emerita of communication and former vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion at CU Denver, continued her work with the Faculty Senate on diversity, equity and inclusion.

[CU develops first systemwide Lands Acknowledgement Statement](#)^[5]

[6]

The University of Colorado has its first [systemwide statement](#)^[7] acknowledging that the lands where the four campuses are located were originally home to Indigenous peoples. While there are some campus units that have had such statements, the discussion about a systemwide statement was initiated by the CU Board of Regents.

“A year ago, Regent (Lesley) Smith and I met with students from our CU Indigenous community. They shared with us the importance of acknowledging that we reside on the homeland of Indigenous people,” said Regent Irene Griego. “At that time, I shared with President (Mark) Kennedy the importance of respectfully acknowledging the history and building a meaningful relationship with our Indigenous community. I am thankful that our administration has open the door to this effort. I support and look forward to building a collaborative, meaningful relationship and partnership between the University and Indigenous and Native communities.”

Regent Sue Sharkey shared a similar sentiment.

"I'm a strong believer in the importance of history and recognizing the good and the bad inherent in our shared history," Sharkey said. "The Lands Acknowledgement Statement reflects that, by demonstrating respect and honoring the original inhabitants of the lands where CU's campuses now stand."

System Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook worked with campus chief diversity officers, chancellors' teams and departments and programs that focus on Indigenous studies to gather input on the statement. Members of the Board of Regents provided perspective as well. She also reviewed statements from other colleges and universities.

[The Lands Acknowledgement Statement](#)[7] will be posted on system and campus websites, as well as be used in selected publications and at events. Campuses will determine whether they will tailor it for their specific uses.

Andrew Cowell, director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies at CU Boulder, said the statement should serve the community and university well.

"The Land Acknowledgement is an important step toward strengthening the CU system, as it signals a willingness of the entire CU community to work in support of Indigenous knowledge, studies and community in Colorado," Cowell said. "As a non-Indigenous person whose research focuses on the Arapaho and other peoples of this region, I look forward to helping build awareness, relationships and opportunities that will enrich all our lives, and that will especially serve the Indigenous people of this region more fully and justly."

Cook said the effort to craft the statement was wide-ranging.

"We appreciate the engagement and conversations we had around the development of this statement and the input we received," Cook said. "This is an important step for CU and it will help us take other important steps in the future."

[Latino Coloradans, allies invited to share stories at virtual forum](#)[8]

[9]

The University of Colorado is a sponsor of the [Seventh Annual Our Story Forum](#)[10], a civic engagement event presented by the Latino Community Foundation of Colorado (LCFC).

The LCFC is a state-based, philanthropic foundation that pursues civic, economic and cultural opportunities for Latinos.

The theme of the virtual event, which begins at 10 a.m. Saturday, is "Rebuilding Our Future Together." A [preview event](#) [11] is at 4 p.m. today.

[Registration](#)[12] for the event is free, and members of the CU community are encouraged to take part.

This is CU's first year sponsoring the event, building on a partnership between the university and the LCFC.

During the forum, speakers and participants will share their personal stories and insights as ways of inspiring bold, meaningful change. Organizers say the event will be a space of learning and connectedness, providing tools for bringing about change, regardless of the language you speak, the city you live in or the country you come from.

For more information, go to <https://www.latinocfc.org/forum2020>[10].

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