Five questions for Katie Polidoro[1]
[2]

Throughout her career, Katie Polidoro, compliance and equity officer in CU's Office of Equity, Risk and Compliance (OERC), has been drawn to serving others. After earning her law degree from Northeastern University, she spent many years working for nonprofits doing everything from legal advocacy to crisis counseling to shelter work.

Because a number of Polidoro's early clients also were students, much of her work revolved around Title IX[3] and advocating for her clients' access to higher education. Seeing that colleges and universities often struggle to effectively administer policy, Polidoro shifted her focus to working from within – a drive that took her to Virginia Tech, where she served as the university's Title IX coordinator before joining CU in 2024.

In addition to responding to allegations of discrimination, harassment or misconduct for any system employee or affiliate, Polidoro's responsibilities at CU include overseeing the hearing and appeals processes for sexual misconduct cases systemwide, advising on policies and procedures, and assisting Vice President of Compliance and Equity and System Title IX Coordinator Valerie Simons in supporting the campuses' equity offices, which report to the OERC. Polidoro also co-chairs the Colorado Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee through the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

In the following interview for CU Connections, Polidoro shares her approach to a seemingly ever-shifting civil rights landscape, her definition of professional success and the one thing she wants the CU community to know about the OERC.

1. How do you navigate what seem like rapid-fire changes to federal and state laws surrounding civil rights and their impact on CU?

Change certainly happens! The first important thing is to accept that changes to the legal landscape surrounding civil rights are an inevitable part of the job. On a day-to-day basis, it's important to stay aware of the changes happening, and to understand the reasons behind those changes. It's helpful to know and hold onto CU's values, and from there adapt as needed to ensure that we remain compliant.

Finally, communication is essential. Helping our colleagues know and understand what is happening and why, receiving their feedback on how changes might impact them, and supporting them along a sometimes-bumpy path.

2. What are the OERC's top priorities?

OERC is responsible for CU's overall compliance with federal and state civil rights laws. The office administers CU's protected class nondiscrimination policy[4], sexual misconduct, intimate partner and stalking policy[5] and consensual amorous relationships policy[6], which means that we regularly review these policies and procedures for administering them.

Additionally, we support the campus-based equity offices and coordinate live hearings and appeals in sexual misconduct matters. OERC also receives and responds to all reports of protected class discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct related to CU system employees and affiliates.

Finally, we provide systemwide training to employees on reporting options, prevention and responsible employee reporting obligations.

3. What's one thing you'd like the CU community to know about the OERC?

If you need to report something, we're here to help and the folks on our team are deeply knowledgeable and engaged. We know these can be difficult situations for everyone involved, and we work hard to be sure that each person is treated fairly and with respect. If we don't know about an incident, we aren't able to offer help. For us, helping looks like starting with the impacted person and providing support to them to help meet some of their most immediate and basic needs, and then allowing them to make the choices that are best for them about which steps to

take next.

4. What do you consider one of your greatest professional achievements?

When I think about professional achievement, I think about the small bits of progress we see over time that add up to meaningful change. That can be building a process for addressing misconduct and discrimination that our community trusts and we can see working or achieving a collective understanding of and commitment to addressing discrimination and harassment seriously and equitably across the institution. It also looks like the student who, after nearly leaving school for some reason, accesses support and goes on to pursue their dreams.

5. In your role at CU, you focus on difficult issues and situations. How do you decompress?

Since moving here from Virginia, my family and I have had the best time getting outside and exploring Colorado. I love hiking, distance running and camping, so I try to take advantage of every opportunity to spend time outside with my husband, our daughter, and our dog, Flicker. We love Colorado's natural beauty!

CUriosity: How special are the Boulder Flatirons, really? [7]

Ask an expert: Can bees help scientists measure pollution in urban cities? [8]

Call for proposals: CU system Sprint Grant: AI for Teaching & Learning[9]

The fall 2026 call for proposals for the CU system Sprint Grant: AI for Teaching & Learning[10] is now open.

The grant is focused on improving course outcomes using AI with goals of supporting and accelerating innovative teaching practices that leverage AI to enhance student learning. It's designed to provide faculty with the resources and time needed to develop and implement AI-driven pedagogical strategies for the specific purpose of increasing student performance relative to the learning goals/outcomes of a single course.

The 'sprint' structure is designed to meet the pace of AI evolution, and in doing so, foster an environment of experimentation and growth with meaningful, of-the-moment outcomes toward improving student learning.

This fall 2026 call for proposals represents the second of three sprint grant cycles.

Eligibility: Tenured or tenure-track faculty and full-time and instructional series faculty are eligible to apply.

Amount: Up to $20,000 and may be used to cover project expenses, which can include support toward one course buyout.

Deadline: Apply by Oct. 16.

More information:grant details[10] and past recipients[11].

Keysight helps equip the future home of UCCS engineering [12]

CU Anschutz researchers identify how colorectal cancer can drive muscle and bone loss [13]

Federal update: FY27 appropriations, more[14]

From Aug. 31, this monthly update from CU Federal Relations includes information on FY27 Approps, UCCS AFROTC Detachment, Rep. Owens with CU Boulder, Rep. Neguse with AD Lovo, CU Campus Visits, Recent CO Events, and OGR on COBRT Roundtables.

Click here to read the post.[15]

From Aug. 28, this update from CU Federal Relations and Counsel includes information on ED Proposed Grant Administration Rule, DHS Proposed H-1B Visa Fee Rule, NIH Bio Safety, OSTP National Security Science and Tech Strategy, and NCAR Lawsuit.

Click here to read the post.[16]

For the latest communications and federal memos, please visit the CU System Federal Updates and Actions[17] page.

Kassebaum to retire in 2027 [18]

Hahn appointed as Aging Center Director [19]

Olympic gold medalist Glenn to visit CU Boulder Oct. 28[20]

How to Lose Weight on a GLP-1 Without Wrecking Your Bone Density, According to Experts[21]

Larimer Square pays tribute to preservation pioneer Dana Crawford[22]

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