Putting Our People at the Center
Vision Team Report
April 8, 2021

Vision Team

Co-Chairs
- Joann Brennan | Professor of Photography & Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs Denver | Anschutz
- Michelle Larson-Krieg | Interim Executive Director, Office of International Affairs & Chair, CU Denver |CU Anschutz Staff Council

Strategic Thought-Partner
- Scott Bauer | Professor & Associate Dean, SEHD

Team Members
- Laurie Barnes | Principal Compensation Consultant
- Sarah Buller | Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement
- David Daley | Battalion Chief at South Metro Fire Rescue
- Leo Darnell | Assistant Dean of Academic Services and Extended Studies, CAP
- Mary Dodge | Research & Instruction Specialist, Auraria Library
- Sharon Grant| Organizational Change Program Manager
- Christy Heaton | Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Transitions and Family Engagement
- Justin Jaramillo | Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Enrollment Operations and Compliance
- Jesse Kuroiwa | Visual Resources Center Program Manager & Lecturer, CAP
- Kristen Kushmider | Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health, Wellness, Advocacy and Support
- Jered Minter | Campus Architect
- Ariadne Ochoa Magallanes |Success Advisor, Center for Undergraduate Exploration & Advising
- Elizabeth Pugliano | Instructor of Art History, CAM
- Tina Schlichte | Office of Advancement
- Karen Sobel | Associate Professor & Director, Center for Faculty Development & Advancement, Library
- Yang Wang | Assistant Professor of Art History, CAM

Stakeholder Engagement Approach and Data

Over the course of this Strategic Plan Phase II work, our vision team reviewed and analyzed the feedback provided by an estimated 2019 people representing two phases of stakeholder engagement work accomplished throughout this effort. Phase 1 centered on reviewing and analyzing the stakeholder feedback we already had. Representing a total of 1,522 participants. In Phase 2, vision team members developed and deployed a stakeholder engagement plan which centered on 1) providing multiple approaches in which stakeholders could give feedback, 2) intentional outreach to BIPOC and historically underrepresented faculty and staff, and 3) intentional outreach to front line employees and teams. Representing a total of 497 participants.

Our team reviewed and considered a significant amount of reference and resource articles, videos and reports that related to workplace culture, employee satisfaction and success, higher education, and pandemic impacts on employees and workplaces.

Phase 1: Review stakeholder feedback we already have
We reviewed and analyzed feedback provided by 1,522 participants
- *Our team reviewed and analyzed data previously gathered in the Chancellor Marks' 100 Days of Listening Tour – we reviewed the final report and the raw stakeholder feedback gathered in that process. 1000+ participants provided feedback in this process.*
- *We reviewed the Equity Task Force Feedback Summary Report. 522 individuals participated.*
- *Individually and collectively, our team reviewed and analyzed all of the employee-centered comments included in the document titled "Our Vision for 2030 Idea Board" which emerged from Strategic Planning Phase 1 effort. This document captures all of the comments provided by stakeholders in the form of miro board comments. Our team noted a rich variety of suggestions and recommendations regarding the workplace as it relates to staff, faculty, and student employee and identified major themes – work culture, the work itself, compensation, advancement and career progression, diversity, human-centered approaches and more.*
- *We reviewed and analyzed the Strategic Planning Phase I report*

Phase 2: Seek feedback from key stakeholders
We gathered feedback from 497 participants
NOTE: This number likely includes duplicate individuals as we believe some participants provided feedback via the survey and via focus or 1:1 stakeholder meetings.
- Our engagement strategy approaches included 1:1 conversations, facilitated focus group meetings, facilitated design thinking sessions, zoom office hours, and the creation and deployment of a campus-wide survey.
- Our team members conducted 33 conversations with key stakeholder groups and individuals - 80+ individuals participated.

- Stakeholder groups engaged included: The Academic/Assistant Deans and Academic Support Group, Associate Deans Group, individual BIPOC Staff, individual BIPOC faculty, CU Denver Events Team, Ethnic Studies Group, Disability Services Staff, Ombuds, International College of Beijing faculty and staff, Equity Office Staff, Individual IRC faculty, Program Assistant Groups, Staff Council, Student Employee Groups, Lynx Connect Team, Lecturers, Human Resources Group, Wellness Team.

Our engagement strategy approaches
- We created and conducted a campus-wide survey designed specifically for faculty, staff and student employees
- 417 individuals responded to at least some parts of the survey; Of these:
  - 90% are full-time employees; 10% are part-time
  - 10% are "upper level management or supervisor"
  - 56% are non-supervisory, and 33% are mid-level supervisors or managers
  - 17% are administrators, 30% are faculty, and 53% are staff
  - 24% identify as BIPOC or other under-represented group

Resources and References Utilized by Our Team
Articles:
- *Creating an Agile Workplace and Inclusive Workforce* - published by GLOAT
- *Designing an Organization for a Differentiated Customer Experience* – published by AlignOrgSolutions
- *Yes Your Employees can Become Your Greatest Asset if you Let Them* – published by People Productivity Success
- *What's Next Starts Now* – published by Workhuman
- *The Power of Putting People First* – published by Forbes
- *The Seven Habits of Organizations Who Truly Value People* – Huffpost
- *The Changes you Missed in 2020 will Define 2021* - published by Workhuman
- *The Associate Professor Trap* - Chronicle of Higher Education
- *Innovation in Higher Education, Case Study Georgia State University*
- *Reimaging Higher Education in the United States* – published by McKinsey & Company
- *Beyond Burned Out* – published by Harvard Business Review
- *Tragic Optimism The Antidote to Toxic Positivity* – published by the BBC Worklife
- *Same Needs Same Feeling* - PDF

Strategic Plans:
- Arizona State University
- Georgia Tech
- George Mason University

Videos:
- Michael C. Bush, *This is What Makes People Happy at Work* - TED Talk
- Martin Danoesastro, *What are you willing to give up to change the way we work?* - TED Talk

What We Aspire to Look Like

We were asked to consider what would make CU Denver an exceptionally good workplace and an employer of choice for faculty, staff, and student employees. "Our people" comprise these groups.

We aspire to fully embrace our identity as a Public Urban Research University and transform CU Denver into a diverse, equitable, and inclusive human-centered workplace where employees at all levels reflect the diversity, in all of its forms, of our student body and community. All faculty, staff, and student employees feel a sense of belonging and safety. They participate in meaningful work and engage in relevant career-enhancing professional development. Physical and mental health and wellness are an integral part of campus life. Employees' contributions to the successful advancement of our shared mission are fairly compensated, readily acknowledged, and consistently celebrated.

All CU Denver faculty, staff, and student employees understand our campus' vision, mission and strategic priorities, and their role in achieving our shared goals. Employees are empowered by organizational structures, systems, processes and approaches that enhance agility, reduce bureaucracy, and inspire innovation and collaboration. We provide the support and opportunities necessary for all employees to reach their full potential. We respect time as a critical resource. We are optimally resourced to successfully execute our collective priorities. Employees have the technology, tools, and training they need to be efficient and effective. We offer flexibility, focus on outcomes and impact, and share accountability.

Transparency prevails. All employees at every level have access to the information they need to be effective. Faculty, staff, and student employees have opportunities to provide meaningful input on decisions that impact them. We embrace and accelerate change where it advances our cause, and proactively manage change to maximize positive outcomes. Trust is pervasive and all employees work hard to build and maintain it. We openly discuss challenges and issues. Everyone, from the Chancellor to front-line workers, understands how to give and receive constructive feedback and recognition.

Our people are our greatest asset.

Where we Excel

Today, CU Denver faculty and staff are fully committed to serving students and each other to the best of our ability. We are resourceful and resilient. We are dedicated to the institution and consistently go above and beyond our duties and responsibilities to advance the mission. We do impactful and cutting-edge research. We are innovative, creative and collaborative where possible and when we feel safe to do so. We embrace the opportunity to address challenges and contribute to positive change in our city, region, state, nation, and the world.

The Chancellor and cabinet-level leaders, along with a critical mass of faculty and staff, are committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are becoming more transparent. The campus and broader community are now included in high-level position searches. Shared governance leaders and groups receive regular updates. Town halls are a regular occurrence, and we have continuously updated websites on important topics such as COVID-19 vaccines and the institution's plans for Fall 2021.

Our location in the heart of Denver in the state of Colorado creates an opportunity to make enjoying our natural environment and vibrant city an important part of our culture. We are uniquely situated to purposefully combat the tyranny of the urgent, recharge our energy, and take time to play, contemplate, and reflect.

Where we Struggle

The challenges to putting our people at the center can be categorized into three areas: 1) organizational structure; 2) infrastructure; and 3) culture.

Structural Challenges
- CU Denver is one of four campuses that make up the University of Colorado System. We are one of the two that form the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus. We are one of three institutions that comprise the Auraria Higher Education Center. This complexity creates jurisdictional ambiguity and can make identifying and resolving issues more challenging.
- Schools, Colleges, Student Services Units, and Administrative Offices largely operate within discrete siloes. Because everyone is used to doing their own thing, it can be hard to build consensus around collective priorities and get everyone to work together. Our siloed structures prompt us to operate with suspicion of the unknown and to feel threatened when change, collaboration and combination are suggested.
- CU Denver's overall organizational structure and the divisional structures that separate us largely by function are multi-layered and hierarchical, while also being highly decentralized. This "organized anarchy" typical of many institutions of higher education leads to complicated chains of command, which slow down decision-making; inconsistencies in management, which cause confusion and resentment and can lead to legal and regulatory compliance issues; and delays and lack of clarity in communication as messages must travel vertically through the levels and horizontally between teams.

Infrastructure Challenges
- Our Human Resources infrastructure is not optimal. "Double decentralization" aptly describes human resources functions. "Employee Services" is housed at the CU System Office, CU Denver has a "Central Human Resources" function, and each School/College, as well as organizational units, have their own staff who are responsible for performing Human Resources functions. This staff reports to the Dean, the Provost, or another university officer. Neither Central HR nor HR Business Partners at the unit level have sufficient time to devote to talent management, developing career pathways, or other critical people-supporting functions that many organizations deem essential in building great places to work. We need to invest in this critical function.
- Our communications systems are not robust enough to overcome the challenges created by our complicated organizational structure. Individuals in closer proximity to leadership may feel informed, included, and valued, but many of our people do not.
- CU Denver has a history of technology-related misadventures. In many instances the end-users were never consulted before purchase and implementation. To conserve limited resources, certain features were stripped out of the versions that we purchased causing frustration, creating the need for time-wasting workarounds, and compromising our data integrity and regulatory

compliance. We've begun implementing systems and then changed our minds mid-stream. Change management processes were non-existent or poorly resourced.

Culture
- CU Denver, like so many U.S. institutions of higher education, struggles with the negative impacts of white dominant culture. See "Why Higher Ed Can't Change," by Michelle Pacansky-Brock, published on August 20, 2020 at *brocansky.com*.
- Specifically, we operate with a continuous sense of urgency that seems unsustainable; react to criticism or questioning with defensiveness; engage in zero-sum thinking; hoard power and withhold information; fear and avoid open conflict; narrowly define growth as the only measure of progress; over-prioritize objective "facts" over subjective "feelings;" and protect those in power from interactions that could be uncomfortable or difficult.
- People often mistrust each other and leadership at all levels. Shaming and blaming are actively employed in efforts to draw attention to issues and call for change. We do not always, or even often, assume the best of each other and are often quick to divide into us versus them camps.
- We do not routinely invite or openly share ideas. Nor are we good at providing and/or receiving constructive feedback and recognition. While so many of the faculty, staff, and student workers with whom we engaged were genuinely grateful to be asked for their views and opinions, several individuals – often from lower levels within the organization or those who were members of under-represented groups – expressed discomfort with sharing their identities and asked to participate in our focus groups and surveys anonymously. Some individuals indicated that they had concerns about retaliation.
- Power dynamics, among faculty ranks, between faculty and staff, and between the administration and everyone else, create fear and stifle employees' willingness and ability to contribute their best ideas and effort. There is a perception that those in positions of power are not held accountable for their behaviors and actions.
- Front-line staff are not often valued as the critical resource they are and as the representatives of the institution to our students, the public, and other community members. Some even reported feeling dehumanized.
- There is widespread perception among Instructional, Research, and Clinical (IRC) faculty, especially Lecturers, that neither they nor their work is truly or adequately valued.

In many ways, these three areas are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Features of a loosely coupled system make it possible for there to be many and conflicting HR offices and functions; silos make it more likely that accountability for results will be segmented and invite shame and blame across units; loose coupling and silos both engender situations in which people may be treated inequitably or unfairly as compared with others who do the same job in another unit; a lack of trust means that we are more reliant on bureaucratic rules and regulations to govern how we interact with each other.

Consequently, the recommendations that follow cut across these three challenge areas, which may be addressed holistically.

GOAL 1
We embody diversity, equity and inclusion. Our faculty, staff and leaders, value and reflect the diversity, in all its forms, of our student body and the communities we serve.

We will know we've succeeded when our faculty, staff, and leaders are representative of the diverse identities of our students and the communities we serve with respect to ability, age, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual differences, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Strategy 1: Increase diversity of faculty and staff to reflect our student body and the broader community
Initiatives
    1.1: Identify, confirm, and annually monitor the diversity of our faculty and staff against the diversity of our community.
    1.2: Grow diverse representation in leadership positions.
    1.3: Identify and address issues that create barriers for diverse populations even when doing so is uncomfortable.

Strategy 2: Provide opportunities and clear pathways for advancement
Initiatives
    2.1: Within a new Career Center for CU Denver staff, develop mentorship, retention, and growth initiatives designed specifically to support historically underrepresented staff.
    2.2: Within the Center for Faculty Development and Advancement, grow professional development and mentorship programs designed to specifically support historically underrepresented faculty.
    2.3: Review and assess evaluation criteria and processes to identify areas of change needed to support historically underrepresented faculty and staff.
    2.4: Create and communicate pathways for rank/career advancement for faculty and staff, while allowing sufficient flexibility to capitalize on employees' unique strengths.
    2.5: Engage in sophisticated talent review and succession planning to grow from within.
    2.6: Transform faculty annual review evaluations, and rank and promotion criteria and processes to ensure inclusivity, reduce bias, and reflect the unique characteristics of our faculty body.

Strategy 3: Support the needs of a diverse workforce, in all its forms, of CU Denver faculty, staff and student employees
Initiatives
    3.1: Establish affinity groups focused on supporting faculty and staff.
    3.2: Deploy strategic cluster hires.
    3.3: Require all faculty and staff to develop and achieve annual DEI goals.

3.4: De-stigmatize and streamline the process of providing workspace accommodations for faculty and staff with physical and mental health disabilities.

GOAL 2

We EMPOWER, value and support all employees to exercise authenticity and take risks in their work.

For our people to feel empowered, everyone needs to be respected, valued, know they belong, and feel supported to take risks as critical to fueling innovation.

We will know we've succeeded when employees willingly take risks toward achieving goals and priorities on a regular basis and when both they, and the community, are comfortable with success and failure and are willing to take full responsibility for positive and negative outcomes.

Strategy 1: Redesign top-down decision-making to ensure shared governance, shared solutioning, shared ownership of actions and shared accountability.
Initiatives
> 1.1: Train supervisors and teams in collaboration strategies, teamwork, shared governance and shared accountability.
> 1.2: Establish meaningful ways in which the organization demonstrates value and respect for all employees' time, expertise, and contributions, especially for the most vulnerable/humble positions and eliminate language that devalues employees (menial, unskilled, entry-level).
> 1.3: Require all leaders and supervisors to be trained in distributive leadership and processes for developing and growing employees.

Strategy 2: Ensure that our people are set up for success.
Initiatives
> 2.1: Develop and deploy a strategic comprehensive onboarding experience for all new hire and internal job changes as an organization and within departments.
> 2.2: Each has the tools and resources necessary to do the job successfully.
> 2.3: Transform the evaluation process to promote greater impact on employee growth and development through consistency, reliability, and validity.
> 2.4: Annually and collaboratively assess the alignment of job descriptions to roles, responsibilities and workloads and ensure employees know their roles, responsibilities and what is expected of them.
> 2.5: Establish a continual feedback culture, reinforcing positive behaviors and giving room for risk-taking and failures that may result from taking risks.

Strategy 3: Create consistent, effective and efficient processes that reduce steps and layers, and empower people to make decisions at the point of delivery benefiting both our people and those served.
Initiatives
> 3.1: Unpack, define, align and communicate how our "federated" (centralized and decentralized) model operates and identify changes needed to ensure employee success and the ability to achieve our strategic priorities.
> 3.2: Map the connections between and across the spokes (decentralized) to the hub (centralized) to ensure that support is provided where and how it is meant to

be, eliminating the need to create unit-specific processes, reducing inequities and confusion.

GOAL 3

We COLLABORATE to engage diverse expertise and achieve impactful solutions. Our people drive our decisions.

We will know we've succeeded when the results of our collaborative efforts are broadly recognized and our people are proud of their contributions to work that advances the institution in innovative and strategic ways; feel a deeper connection to and appreciation for colleagues; value and tap into each other's strengths and expertise; and our work together contributes to a sense of belonging. We will know we've succeeded when employees regularly provide input into the decision-making process and that input is openly shared and celebrated.

Strategy 1: Achieve Reimagined Hierarchies.
Initiatives
> 1.1: Flatten power structures and empower faculty and staff to initiate collaboration across the organization.
> 1.2: Commit to radical transparency by implementing open communication channels that give all employees at all levels the information and perspective needed to identify opportunities for collaboration.
> 1.3: Reduce the number of layers in decision-making structures and empower cross-pollination horizontally among practitioners.

Strategy 2: De-Silo Institutional Structures.
Initiatives
> 2.1: As a catalyst to ignite collaboration and foster interdisciplinary work, create an intentional program with a real or virtual space to encourage employees to gather and share ideas.
> 2.2: Objectively Identify institutional roadblocks to collaboration and collaborative decision-making opportunities, and to help re-imagine structures and processes to increase collaboration.
> 2.3: Establish awards for successful interdepartmental/inter-unit collaboration that achieve impactful results.

Strategy 3: Cultivate a people-centered culture that reflects our values of inclusion, unity, authenticity, humility and continual improvement.
Initiatives
> 3.1: Expect and reward knowledge sharing, including giving and receiving multi-directional (horizontal AND vertical) constructive feedback.
> 3.2: Develop interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence and reward faculty and staff who demonstrate these skills. Place a high value on humility, authenticity and respect.
> 3.3: Create a results-oriented change management culture that incorporates our people's voices and values our people's input in everything we do.

GOAL 4
We INFUSE trust, accountability and transparency in all that we do.

We will know we've succeeded when employees at all levels of the organization are able to contribute ideas and raise concerns without fear and with confidence that they will be heard; all employees are held accountable for upholding CU Denver's values and achieving desired outcomes; and information and the rationale for decisions are readily and broadly shared.

Strategy 1: Promote a culture of transparency in decision-making.
Initiatives
> 1.1: Require that information sharing is frequent, systematic, expected, and rewarded so that input is regularly received and valued.
> 1.2: Share clear, honest reasons/rationales for decisions and openly report decisions in a timely fashion.

Strategy 2: Promote a culture of individual and organizational accountability.
Initiatives
> 2.1: Establish a process of continuous feedback from employees through surveys, focus groups, and other means and report results and action steps being taken.
> 2.2: Expect and reward risk-taking that is goal driven, focused, and results in continuous learning even if the effort does not achieve the intended result. Reframe "failed" attempts that result in learning and experience as "successes."
> 2.3: Institute 360 evaluation processes.
> 2.4: Mandate people-leading training for all supervisors.

Strategy 3: Promote a culture of trust between and among employees at all levels.
Initiatives
> 3.1: Value and trust people to do their best work and recognize outcome excellence and ownership of work at all levels, especially for non-leadership positions.
> 3.2: Define, establish and apply CU Denver Trust in the Workplace Norms and Expectations.
> 3.3: Establish and maintain equitable policies and practices so that employees in distinct parts of the organization experience similar opportunities, outcomes and consequences for the same actions.

GOAL 5

We COMMIT to the professional growth and financial, physical and mental health of our people. Our commitment enables everyone who works here to reach their full potential.

We will know we've succeeded when we meet established employee retention goals, when our people are able to successfully advance in their chosen career path, and when our people meet their physical and mental health goals.

Strategy 1: Provide a comprehensive Employee Wellness Plan.
Initiatives
> 1.1 Create a CU Denver-specific Employee Assistance Program to address and support employee mental health.
> 1.2 Repurpose sick leave as "well" leave. Employees can use sick leave to work out, meditate, get a massage, or engage in other wellness activities. They can use excess sick leave to volunteer. Employees can donate their sick leave to others in need.

Strategy 2: Ensure Competitive, Equitable Salaries.
Initiatives
> 2.1 Offer additional compensation for additional work that is outside the scope of an employee's current role.
> 2.2 Offer multiple tracks for promotion and professional growth.
> 2.3 Publish salary structures and compensation philosophies and practices in an easily accessible place.
> 2.4 Reimagine and realign Human Resources to make them accessible and comprehensive to support the organization and its people, and that data integrity is high.

Strategy 3: Support Work/Life Balance.
Initiatives
> 3.1 Right-size jobs for all employees. Each employee has the tools and resources necessary to do their job successfully.
> 3.2 Focus on productivity and outcomes versus scheduled hours and the location where work is performed.
> 3.3 Increase number of tenure track faculty positions.
> 3.4 Allow all faculty and staff to apply for research time.

Strategy 4: Support the professional development and career growth of our people.
Initiatives
> 4.1: Purchase and integrate the full suite of Interfolio Faculty Life Cycle products.
> 4.2: Establish and communicate progressive career pathways in all position types.

4.3: Fund and support "micro-sabbaticals" for staff and faculty to be used to advance strategic priorities, work on larger projects, devote time to accomplish goals outside of usual duties and responsibilities.

4.4: Create and adopt Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for Faculty and for Staff.

Interactions

Dynamic Convergence

As Vision Teams progressed in their work, we began noting that several teams identified similar strategic goals (see examples below). As each vision team worked independently throughout this phase of our strategic planning efforts, all shared, or similar, goals that emerge across teams represent a unique opportunity for our campus. Converging and overlapping goals are impactful strategies that can accelerate change across multiple high-priority categories at one time – powerful levers to pull. In addition, these goals represent resonance, alignment, and the desire of our collective community to advance transformational change in key areas. We suggest that converging and overlapping goals should be prioritized and weighted as significantly impactful.

We encourage the creation of a visual map that describes and illuminates converging goals. We also encourage the creation of a visual map that highlights all initiatives that are shared across multiple teams. Such an approach would visually communicate the weight, importance, and opportunity that these goals and initiatives have toward accelerating progress toward 2030.

> The *Empowered by our Inclusive Excellence* team identified strategic priorities that center on 1) ensuring that our people achieve their full potential and 2) diversifying our faculty and staff.
>> Our aligned "people" goal: *We commit to the professional growth and financial, physical and mental health of our people. Our commitment enables everyone who works here to reach their full potential.*
>> Our aligned "people" goal: *We embody diversity, equity and inclusion. Our faculty, staff and leaders, value and reflect the diversity, in all its forms, of our student body and the communities we serve.*

> The *Better the World Through Research and Creative Work* team identified a strategic priority that centers on supporting our people to collaborate across teams and the institution.
>> Our aligned "people" goal: We collaborate to engage diverse expertise and achieve impactful solutions. Our people drive our decisions.

> The Amplify Innovation and Entrepreneurship team identified a strategic priority that centers on creating the space and time needed for our people to innovate and finding creative ways to communicate and reward innovation.
>> Our aligned "people" goal: We Empower, value and support all employees to exercise authenticity and take risks in their work.

Supporting Information

Throughout our work on this project, CU Denver employees consistently shared a deep commitment to serving others, serving students, and they are energized by the belief that education transforms lives. They choose to work for CU Denver because they believe their contributions have a positive impact. Our community also shared challenges and barriers that they feel we cannot overcome. We move too slowly. We say we are going to change, but we don't take action. We don't have the human or financial resources needed to advance creative solutions. We can't easily or independently change policy. Workloads continue to grow and there is never enough time to be proactive or creative. Leaders continually change, which means continually changing priorities that we never have time to achieve. Employees are not trusted. **There is a significant amount of deficit thinking and skepticism to overcome.**

CU Denver employees have a certain degree of uncertainty regarding the commitment by the Chancellor and cabinet-level leaders to support and drive meaningful change. Our Chancellor has actively increased communications, transparency and inclusive collaboration. Thus far, the impacts of these positive actions haven't made their way down to many employees within units, teams and offices that are organizationally located under layers of leaders. While those of us who interact with the Chancellor regularly have a great degree of confidence in her commitment and ability to enact sweeping changes, this confidence has not yet permeated the entire organization. **Building employee trust and confidence in our campus leaders, for all employees at all levels of the organization, is critical to achieving transformational change.**

As we prepare to welcome a new Provost, it is important to acknowledge that two of our three highest-level leaders are new to their roles and new to employees. It is also important to note significant changes within the cabinet (new Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, new Vice Chancellor for Communications, new Vice Chancellor for Information Technology, and new Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Enrollment and Student Success). Many employees have the impression that leadership ranks are increasing even as resources remain strained. From a "lean" perspective, we potentially have too many layers of leaders in the executive levels of our organization. Further, many employees believe that these new hires signal a future split with CU Anschutz, and they find these actions confusing and inconsistent with messaging about accreditation and collaboration between the two campuses. **Clear and consistent communication regarding the rationale for decisions and how incoming leaders will help us fulfill our mission and reach our strategic goals is critical.**

The stakes are high. As the strategic planning process has engaged so many people who have dared to dream big about the future, who have experienced scarcity over time, and who now serve under leaders they do not yet know or trust, our ability to align and pull in the same direction is of concern. Because resources – financial, human,

creative energy, goodwill – are limited, we all must work together, but there is a history at CU Denver of individual units going their own way. We must create meaningful ways in which our people can get to know our new leaders, demonstrate early wins, engage our collective community as change agents, hold ourselves accountable toward making progress, and transparently communicate the results of our efforts. We anticipate that the process of change will have both positive and negative impacts on our people.

Many of our stakeholders express a desire and interest in participating in meaningful decision making, asking for actions to be decentralized to units, and wanting improvement strategies that are outcomes-based and tolerant of different strategic paths – while we are engaged in a centralized strategic change process. Balancing centralization and decentralization is hard in all organizations, maybe especially so in higher education. **It is critical that we utilize an effective and intentional change management approach while closely monitoring the well-being and morale of our community as we proceed ahead.**

Things to Consider

- Support both a leadership track and a non-leadership growth and development track that is accessible to all levels of employees. (*We heard from stakeholders that not everyone wants to work toward a leadership track. Many want to grow within their current job or move across a technical track.*)
- Establish and consistently require DEI hiring and retention practices
- Seek out faculty and staff with diverse talents and provide opportunities for these unique talents to be utilized, recognized, developed and rewarded.
- Increase funding for DEI programs.
- Continually monitor and adjust BIPOC faculty and staff workloads and engagement to ensure that they are not over extended. Give full credit for the additional and emotionally taxing work that BIPOC faculty and staff take on to mentor students and colleagues, support students, serve on committees and task forces, etc.
- Provide regular opportunities for BIPOC faculty and staff to network with campus leadership.
- Grow Networking and Meetup opportunities.
- Require DEI and unconscious bias training for all faculty, staff, and student employees.
- Require all faculty and staff to develop and achieve DEI goals as part of the annual review process.
- Provide flexible accommodations for faculty and staff who are parents and/or caregivers.
- Provide a platform and mechanisms for employees to provide feedback regarding the success of shared governance and suggest changes for improvements.
- Adopt an outcomes-based framework that allows all employees to shape their own.
- Require all leaders and supervisors to set annual goals centered on growing their employees and enhancing teamwork within their units.
- Identify and deploy tools that support and enhance continuous improvement efforts.
- Require all leaders and supervisors to take Speed of Trust Training.
- Require all leaders and supervisors to collaborate with their teams to develop, establish, and enact team norms.
- Establish monthly 1-on-1 outcomes-based meetings focused on discussing progress toward goal achievement, challenges or barriers hindering efforts, and strategies needed to advance success.
- Establish Quarterly Performance check-in meetings.
- Establish Quarterly Think Tanks to promote creativity.
- Identify what and where grass-roots ownership of processes, approaches and decision-making is at the unit-level and how they roll-up and align to processes, approaches, and decisions made beyond the unit.
- Eliminate duplication of central and decentralized work.
- Re-evaluate our institutional structures that obstruct collaboration and undervalue/de-value our people.

- Redistribute responsibilities and reallocate the resources of departments/units that are deemed inefficient, redundant, or "top-heavy" so that rewards and opportunities become available to others who are less visible.
- Reduce the number of layers in decision-making structures and empower cross-pollination horizontally among practitioners.
- Introduce and deploy, within leadership development and evaluation processes, metrics that measure how leaders improve team/unit culture.
- Ensure that all levels of leadership hold regular information sessions with "ask me anything" segments.
- Increase the visibility of governance groups and increase the transparency of the work they are doing to the broader campus community.
- Establish an ecosystem of Town Halls at all levels for leaders to share information and create ways for employees to provide feedback within this communication structure.
- Establish and apply norms centered on communicating how and why decisions are made, timelines involved, who can and should be involved and who is responsible for results.
- Promote norms and provide training to encourage everyone to play a role in developing their colleagues by providing meaningful feedback and coaching.
- Institute continuous improvement process for teams and projects based on clear and measurable goals and show results through dashboards.
- Create ways in which employees can provide meaningful shout-outs and reward to individuals that act, engage in, and grow accountability.
- Establish quarterly check-ins on goals, course corrections and progress.
- Define, establish and apply CU Denver Trust in the Workplace Norms and Expectations.
- Provide training for all employees on Speed of Trust to ensure a common vocabulary and framework.
- Provide equitable Health and Wellness access: Employee access to the Wellness Center is funded and supported by the University.
- Publish salary structures and compensation philosophies and practices in an easily accessible place.
- Require all employees to have career goal plans as part of the annual review process and meaningfully incorporate them into work plans and expectations.
- Create and adopt Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for Faculty and for Staff.
- Establish a leadership mentorship program – match leaders with emerging leaders.
- Grow leadership development programs for staff and faculty.