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President Amy Parsons

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear CSU Community,

Over the course of this academic year, we have been on a budget journey together.

From the beginning, we knew the state of Colorado was facing a significant fiscal challenge, with a projected shortfall now approaching \$1.5 billion. That reality made it clear that we would need to plan carefully, make thoughtful choices and prepare for difficult decisions ahead.

Since I [first shared that CSU](#) was entering a phase of detailed scenario planning, hundreds of colleagues across every college and administrative unit have stepped forward. In partnership with our shared governance councils, you submitted ideas, evaluated tradeoffs and engaged in countless hours of discussion about how best to move forward.

From that work, three priorities consistently rose to the top.

- Prioritizing **compensation** and recognizing the importance of supporting our people after several years of rising costs and limited salary growth.
- **Protecting the academic and research mission** that defines CSU and continues to elevate our national standing.
- Keeping **student success at the center** of every decision we make – ensuring that access, affordability and the support systems our students rely on remain strong.

I am deeply grateful for the care, seriousness and collaboration that brought us to this point. Because of that work, we have been able to build a plan that holds true to these priorities – even in a very challenging environment.

At the beginning of this month, the Joint Budget Committee recommended essentially flat funding for higher education and a 3.5 percent cap on resident undergraduate tuition increases. While this outcome is better than we initially anticipated, a flat budget that does not keep pace with mandatory cost increases still represents a real reduction in resources.

In response, we are moving forward with a budget that reflects our shared priorities:

- Continuing to increase financial aid in step with tuition, ensuring that students with the greatest need are held harmless.
- Protecting student-facing programs and services that support persistence and graduation.
- Moving forward with a 3 percent merit-based salary increase pool for faculty and administrative professionals. Classified staff compensation continues to be negotiated at the state level.
- Continuing to invest in the academic and research enterprise, including the major capital projects and long-term vision outlined in our [Strategic Roadmap 2035](#).

At the same time, meeting these priorities in the face of significant state budget pressures requires difficult decisions that none of us would choose to make.

To close our budget gap, we are implementing a combination of actions totaling approximately \$54 million in reductions, including:

- \$35.8 million in strategic budget reductions.
- \$3 million to be saved through position reductions that are anticipated to become vacant in the coming year
- Utilization of \$15 million in one-time funds

The strategic budget cuts include some level of staff reductions across nearly every division and unit, through a combination of layoffs and the elimination of vacant positions. While final numbers are still being determined, less than 1 percent of our workforce will be affected.

This is the hardest part of this process.

Our colleagues who will be impacted have contributed meaningfully to CSU, and their absence will be felt. These decisions were made with great care, in close consultation with deans and vice presidents. Our leadership team worked diligently to minimize layoffs wherever possible.

Conversations with affected employees will take place in the coming days. We are committed to approaching this with compassion, respect and support for those navigating this transition.

Many universities across Colorado and the country are facing similar challenges. What I believe sets CSU apart is how we have approached this moment – grounded in our values, guided by shared priorities and shaped by the collective effort of this community.

There is still some uncertainty ahead. The General Assembly and Governor must

finalize the state budget in the coming weeks, and the CSU Board of Governors will formally approve our budget later this spring. The plan we are sharing today is designed to position CSU on stable footing regardless of those final decisions. As I [messed on March 11](#), we are hard at work on several important short- and long-range plans to grow revenue, align and contain expenses, and invest in our ambitious future as outlined in our Strategic Roadmap.

We will continue to keep you informed.

To provide an opportunity for questions and dialogue, we will have a budget town hall at 1 p.m. today. This will be a hybrid meeting at the Lory Student Center and via [Teams](#). Recording and meeting information can be found on the [University Operations](#) website.

Thank you for your engagement in this process, for your care for one another and for the work you do every day on behalf of CSU.



Amy Parsons
President



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