



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

MAY 13, 2025

Message from the Provost & Executive Vice President



Dear Colleagues:

The flurry of actions coming from Washington over the past few months has upended higher education and left us navigating a sea swell of uncertainty around executive orders, directives, and Dear Colleague letters. But it also has created a sort of gravitational pull, which has drawn us toward each other as a community in new ways as we have assessed potential impacts, collaborated to protect our students and colleagues, strived to uphold our institutional values and practices, and worked to safeguard the integrity of our academic and research missions.

This has required enormous coordination and effort across our institution, and I want to thank all of you who have contributed through meetings, public fora, and other means of sharing your insights and expertise. I want to give a special acknowledgment to those who are serving on several work groups to help support the Incident Management Team as it adapts its structure and processes in response to impacts stemming from federal actions. These IMT Engagement Working Groups are designated across five focus areas: Academic Freedom, Tenure & Promotion, Institutional Values & Access, Campus & Community Impact, and Research Continuity.

In reflecting on this semester and the unease it has created for our community, especially our students, I keep revisiting an article I read last month by Frank Bruni, an opinion writer and long-time contributor to *The New York Times*. Bruni is also the Eugene C. Patterson Professor of the Practice of Journalism and Public Policy at Duke University. His article was titled, [“What Do You Tell a College Student Graduating Into This America?”](#)

Bruni tells the story of a student who came to his office with tears in her eyes and a deep, penetrating question, “Where do you find hope?” His column walks the reader through his own contemplation of the heaviness of this moment for humanity, a profound understanding of all the student is witnessing, and what to say in answering her question.

Here is how he described his response:

“I said that her shock at the current turn of events is a reminder that we never know what’s coming next, and while that question mark can be terrifying, it can also be a solace. I said that the unpredictability of the story reflected its many authors, she and I among them. We have by no means reached a point of helplessness, but we will most certainly get there if we declare defeat too soon. Hope isn’t an option. It’s an obligation.”

As we near the end of this challenging semester, I would encourage you to have hope and try to inspire your students to do the same. They are watching you and hanging on your words and your wisdom as they try to figure out their place and their plan in this complex world.

I also encourage you to take heart from Bruni’s words: “the unpredictability of the story reflected its many authors.” As our faculty, you will continue to be important authors of the story for how CSU navigates the challenges we face. As I said at the end of last week’s budget forum, I am full of hope for our university because of the spectacular talent of our faculty and staff and students, our willingness to work together to innovate and to create our CSU of the future, our strong shared governance, and our fervently held Principles of Community.

Please take care of yourself, celebrate your graduating students and your own achievements, and enjoy the summer.

Sincerely,
Marion

Connect with the Provost & EVP: [LinkedIn – Marion Underwood](#)

IMT Engagement Working Groups

CSU faculty and staff support IMT through working groups.

IMT Engagement Working Groups composed of faculty and staff have been established to support CSU’s Incident Management Team in specific areas of concern relevant to the stability and sustainability of the academic and research enterprises: Academic Freedom, Tenure & Promotion, Institutional Values & Access, Campus & Community Impact, and Research Continuity (in development).

- [Updates on Federal Actions](#)
- [Federal Updates Impacting Research](#)

The Power of CSU Research

CSU is elevating its research enterprise front and center.

The [CSU homepage](#) now prominently highlights groundbreaking research that reflects the university’s impact and innovation. A newly redesigned [CSU Research page](#) offers a dynamic overview, featuring powerful stories, key stats, and achievements from across all colleges. The new [SOURCE High-Impact Research Stories](#) hub provides an ever-growing collection of research features, updated regularly to showcase the breadth and depth of CSU’s discovery and scholarship.

Academic Leadership Updates

We enthusiastically welcome Dr. Michael Galchinsky, who began his new role as Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Affairs on May 1. Many thanks to former Interim Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs Michelle Stanley, who will serve as Special Assistant to the Provost & EVP through August.

Four finalists have been selected in the [search for Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs, CSU Spur](#). Finalist interviews conclude May 19, and the university community is invited to submit feedback on the candidates by May 27.

Semifinalist interviews have nearly concluded for Senior Director of the Accessibility Center, and finalist interviews and open forums are expected in June. Open forum dates and locations will be shared with the campus community.



Dr. Michael Galchinsky
Vice Provost & Dean for Undergraduate Affairs

Electronic Accessibility Guidance and Resources for Faculty

New state and federal laws require that all of our university’s electronic content be made accessible, including but not limited to academic and course content, websites, electronic documents (including PPT, PDF, etc.), social media, and videos across the university. It is the responsibility of the content creator to ensure that their content is accessible, yet we realize that this work cannot be done overnight. It will require engagement from all faculty and staff to bring our electronic content into compliance with state and federal laws in a manner that allows everyone in our community to learn, thrive, and succeed.

CSU recently released [guidance and resources to aid faculty in bringing electronic materials into compliance](#) following the **RAM: Remove, Adapt, Make** accessibility framework.

Remove content that does not need to be shared right now.

Adapt current content to meet accessibility standards.

Make new content with accessibility in mind.

Faculty Success

Workload Equity Toolkit

The new [Workload Equity Toolkit](#) features a suite of customizable templates for departmental policies and procedures. Chairs/heads and faculty members can use this toolkit to inform departmental codes and policies related to workload distribution, evaluation, promotion/tenure, etc.

Many of the tools were developed by and for CSU faculty and generously shared by chairs/heads from all colleges. The tools are not intended as “one-size-fits-all” solutions, and departments are encouraged to thoughtfully adapt these tools through shared governance processes to ensure alignment with their unique teaching, research, and service contexts. The toolkit is designed to develop and evolve over time; community feedback is encouraged and can be provided via the form on the webpage.

Workload Equity. an intentional approach to cultivating fair divisions of labor within and across units by emphasizing clarity, transparency, and accountability in how workload is assigned, valued, and evaluated; that makes visible and rewards the diverse contributions of faculty; and that is intended to promote faculty productivity, satisfaction, and retention.

Student Success

Sustaining Key Initiatives

In the [September 2024 newsletter](#), we announced that following the conclusion of one-time student success support from the CSU System Board of Governors, some student success initiatives had been sustained due to their demonstrated impact on closing opportunity gaps and improving student retention. We are pleased to share additional support for:

- The [Learning Assistant Program](#) as coordinated by the Institute for Learning and Teaching: The LA Program is a peer-to-peer education model in which faculty and undergraduate LAs work together to increase student engagement and active learning in high-enrollment courses.

A Banner Year for MURALS

In its milestone 10th year, the MURALS research and artistry symposium continued to provide a platform for nearly 180 undergraduate students of all backgrounds and academic disciplines to present their research, scholarly work, and world-changing ideas. Bringing the campus community together to celebrate these students, MURALS was gratefully supported this year by more than 200 graduate students, faculty, and staff!

Announcements

- **Faculty/Staff Commencement Information:** CSU's first university-wide commencement in 27 years is only a few days away! Read this [faculty- and staff-specific SOURCE story](#) for information such as remote work recommendations, campus parking logistics, and commencement tickets and livestream.
- **Ram Leadership Collaborative:** The Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President, in collaboration with Talent Development, is pleased to invite applications for the new Ram Leadership Collaborative, a professional development program designed to identify and cultivate emerging leaders within our CSU community. [Learn more and apply for the Ram Leadership Collaborative](#) by May 12.
- **TILT Summer Conference on UDL:** Join colleagues from across campus May 21–22 for TILT's annual Summer Conference on *Engaging Students Through Universal Design for Learning* (UDL). This year's theme explores how to create learning environments that support all learners, including electronic accessibility workshops and practical strategies for engaging more students through flexible teaching approaches. Keynote speaker Lilian Nave will also share valuable UDL insights during a hands-on workshop. [Register for the TILT Summer Conference today!](#)
- **Writing to Engage:** This June, a four-session [Writing to Engage Community of Practice](#) will explore integrating writing for engaged learning across disciplines. Participants will examine writing beyond traditional papers – focusing on reflection, metacognition, classroom engagement, and assessable outcomes – and will consider writing's evolving role in the age of Generative AI. Participants may later apply for TILT funding for writing-based research. Space is limited; priority goes to diverse disciplines. [Email kelly.bradbury@colostate.edu](#) by May 21 to express interest.
- **TILT Assessment Survey:** TILT is inviting faculty (tenure-track and CCA) and staff members who teach credit-bearing courses to complete a survey on how well current TILT programming and services meet their needs and to provide input for future professional development offerings. Both those who frequently interact with TILT and those who do not are encouraged to respond. [Complete the anonymous, 10-minute survey](#) before May 23 and help shape the future of TILT professional development services!
- **CHHS Teaching Excellence Colloquium:** The College of Health and Human Sciences will host its second annual [Teaching Excellence Colloquium](#) on September 17, with interactive exchanges of pedagogical effectiveness to promote student achievement.
- **Symposium Save the Date:** The Symposium sponsored by the Office for Inclusive Excellence will be November 4–6.
- **Provost's Ethics Colloquium Save the Date:** The Fall 2025 Provost's Ethics Colloquium on *Finding Equilibrium: The Future of Higher Ed* will be September 18.



Higher Education News

Federal impacts have continued to dominate news about higher education throughout the spring semester. Please see the suggested readings below on various related subjects:

U.S. News & World Report's May 9 article, titled, "[Most Americans Disapprove of Trump's Treatment of Colleges, a New AP-NORC Poll Finds,](#)" cites a new poll that found 56% of Americans surveyed disapprove of the president's handling of issues related to higher education. According to the report, "The poll shows a disconnect between the Trump administration's targeting of universities and an American public that sees them as key to scientific research, new ideas and innovative technology."

Inside Higher Ed published an article on May 6, titled, "[Education Dept. Tells Colleges to Advise Struggling Borrowers.](#)" The Department of Education reminded universities that they have a role in ensuring their former students repay student loans, and that universities can be held accountable if a large number of those loans fall into default. The department started efforts to withhold payments from social security checks or tax refunds from the 5.3 million borrowers who have missed at least 270 days of payments.

The New York Times' May 9 article looks at potential long-term implications for Harvard as a result of its legal battle with the Trump administration. That report is titled, "[Harvard Leaders See Only Bad Outcomes Ahead as They Battle Trump: Harvard could choose to either keep fighting or seek a deal with the administration. Its leaders are starting to realize that any path will very likely change the identity of the school.](#)"

Points of Pride

- **Dr. Temple Grandin** (Dept. of Animal Sciences) received the prestigious [2025 American Veterinary Medical Association Humane Award](#).
- **Dr. Eugene Kelly**, Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, has been named a [2024 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#), the world's largest multidisciplinary scientific society.
- College of Business accounting students and non-student volunteers [completed 175 federal tax returns and 149 state tax returns for free](#) for eligible taxpayers as part of its **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program**, for a total of \$430,859 in refunds.
- Three CSU undergraduates – **Natalie Calahan** and **Josh Kates** (Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering) and **Michael Weiss** (College of Natural Sciences) – earned [one of the country's top scholarship awards](#) dedicated to fostering the next generation of research leaders in natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics from the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation.
- The **Occupational Therapy Program** jumped to [3rd in U.S. News and World Report rankings](#). The new OTD program earned the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education's maximum accreditation of seven years.
- **Dr. Matthew Cooperman** (Dept. of English) was named a [2025 Guggenheim Fellow](#), becoming the third poet in CSU's creative writing program to receive this fellowship (along with Camille Dungy and Dan Beachy-Quick). He will use the fellowship to complete his latest book, *Time, & Its Monument*.
- Interim director for the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory and research scientist **Dr. Dennis Ojima** was elected as a [2025 Fellow of the Ecological Society of America](#). The Society's fellowship program recognizes the many ways in which its members contribute to ecological research, communication, education, management and policy.
- **Dr. Eric Ross**, Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and **Dr. Delphine Farmer**, Dept. of Chemistry, were awarded the [College of Natural Sciences Professor Laureates](#). The Professor Laureate is the highest honor bestowed on faculty from the College.
- **Dr. Dean Hendrickson** was recently awarded the prestigious American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges [Distinguished Veterinary Teacher Award](#). [Read more in SOURCE](#).
- Eight Graduate School staff members – including the dean and associate deans – recently completed **Crucial Conversations training**. This marks the first phase of a broader effort to provide the training to all Graduate School staff, with the goal of enhancing both customer service and internal communication.
- The Graduate School's **Graduate Center for Inclusive Mentoring mini-grants program** continues to successfully support graduate student needs. A recent example is the CHHS Ph.D. Networking Event, which featured a guest speaker, lunch, and networking opportunities. The Graduate School is proud to support such pilot initiatives that show potential for long-term sustainability. [See photos here](#).
- Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs and Associate Professor **Dr. Tod Clapp** (as well as Professor **Dr. Amy Prieto**) was selected as a [senior member of the National Academy of Inventors](#). Dr. Clapp has developed virtual reality-based curriculum for teaching anatomy that has been used successfully at CSU and adopted around the country.
- **Faculty in the Department of Computer Science** are leading the development of artificial intelligence systems as part of a [\\$25 million research project](#) that seeks to bridge gaps in rural health care by equipping mobile clinics with smart technology.
- CSU's **Colorado State Forest Service** and **Colorado Forest Restoration Institute** have created the state's first public forest management central database. [The Colorado Forest Tracker](#) will inform strategies for improving forest health and reducing wildfire risk, and policymakers can use it to help guide funding decisions to best meet state needs.
- Assistant Professor of Dance **Grace Gallagher** was named one of three winners of the 2025 Sharon Prize Colorado. She will receive financial support for the creation of a new evening-length work titled, *There Is No Planet B*, a dance piece that addresses the urgent need for climate action through a blend of live movement, film, and sound design.
- The College of Health and Human Sciences hosted its **6th annual Research Day** on March 11. [Feel the day's creative and scientific energy](#) via video, photos, and award-winning posters.
- Atmospheric Science Assistant Professor **Dr. Maria Rugenstein** was awarded the prestigious [2025 Outstanding Early Career Award](#) by the American Meteorological Society Committee on Climate Variability and Change. Dr. Rugenstein was cited "for contributions to understanding of climate sensitivity and community leadership."
- The **College of Business** recently hosted the CORE Business Challenge Case Competition, with 23 students participating across six teams and \$20,000 total awarded to the top three teams. Notably, 30% of the participants identified as first-generation college students.
- **Jerry Sonnenberg, Sarah Hinkley** and **Dr. Juan Velez** joined Bob Mattive in representing CSU on the national [Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching](#). CARET reps serve as volunteers who advocate agricultural research, extension, and education to federal policymakers.