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President Amy Parsons

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Colorado State Community,

Over the past several months, we have had the opportunity to engage the campus community through town halls, open forums, executive office hours and many direct conversations on the financial headwinds facing Colorado, institutions of higher education and Colorado State University next year. Those conversations have been productive and valuable. I am grateful to everyone who has shown up, asked hard questions and offered thoughtful input, particularly shared-governance partners from the Faculty Council, Administrative Professional Council and Classified Personnel Council. Your engagement makes this work better. We will share details in April about the university's plans for the coming fiscal year.

This message is about looking beyond today's immediate budget challenges. It is an update on and overview of the myriad efforts that have been completed, are already underway or will be kicking off in the coming months to further modernize and strengthen CSU as we look toward the future. This broad set of initiatives are all aimed at taking steps now to make the university more resilient, stabilize our financial footing and build a strong foundation for the next decade and beyond.

These efforts are not reactive but are part of a deliberate strategy to sustain our strong upward trajectory, even in the face of challenges, as the university emerges as a national model for a modern land-grant university. By taking the steps outlined below, we'll be better positioned to protect and grow our core academic and research functions in the face of what are almost certain to be persistent headwinds. It's going to take hard work from every corner of campus, but ultimately it will make CSU more durable, stable and impactful in the long run.

The work is organized around three priorities: streamlining and modernizing our

administrative infrastructure, augmenting revenue streams that support our mission and investing in our greatest asset – our people.

Streamlining and Modernizing Administrative Processes

- **Finance and HR Administrative Alignment:** Vice President for University Operations Brendan Hanlon and Vice President for Human Resources Eric Ray have been leading an effort to align Finance and Human Resources functions across the university. They have been working with campus stakeholders for months. The initial structure takes effect July 1 and will evolve over the next year. In the coming weeks, both will continue conversations with college and division leadership and employees whose roles will be affected. They are also working with Vice President for Research Cassandra Moseley to ensure that the new systems and structures will serve the unique needs of research and sponsored projects. We are committed to approaching those conversations with transparency and care. The goals continue to be to provide great service to protect and advance the academic enterprise, foster career growth and mobility for staff, streamline operations and the use of resources and shift from reactive to strategic support of the university and our people.
- **IT Alignment:** The Division of IT recently completed a successful alignment of select IT functions to strengthen our cybersecurity posture, a process that was done thoughtfully and in close partnership with campus. In the new fiscal year, under the leadership of Vice President for IT Brandon Bernier and in close collaboration with college and divisional IT partners, the Division of IT will extend that work to align the remaining IT functions across campus. The goals of this initiative include improved coordination of IT functions, increased efficiencies around cost and resource allocation and strengthened enterprise capabilities to support the future of AI. Together, these efforts will ensure all IT units are collectively positioned to support our campus's long-term strategic and operational needs, including our core mission areas of research, teaching and extension.
- **Communications Alignment:** Also in the new fiscal year, Vice President for Marketing and Communications Kyle Henley will begin working with deans, vice presidents and campus communicators to envision what a more coordinated communications structure could make possible – including shared enterprise tools that improve quality and consistency, stronger brand alignment and reduced redundancy across the institution. This is the beginning of a conversation, not the announcement of a conclusion, and we want the people closest to this work to help shape it.
- **Spur Campus and Colorado State Forest Service:** As part of our broader effort to streamline organizational alignment, we will transition management of CSU Spur and the Colorado State Forest Service into the Office of Engagement and Extension under the leadership of Vice President James Pritchett. This shift reflects the strong, natural fit between these programs and OEE's community-centered mission, which is rooted in statewide service, public education and partnership building. Aligning Spur and CSFS with OEE will create clearer leadership pathways, strengthen coordination across CSU's engagement and outreach efforts and better connect these units to the programs and expertise that share their purpose. This transition also positions both Spur and CSFS to deepen their impact, expand

collaboration with communities across Colorado and contribute more directly to the modern land-grant university we are building together.

- **Hybrid RCM Budget Model:** CSU has been working toward a new budget model designed to provide greater incentives for revenue growth across campus. The Hybrid Responsibility Centered Management model will run next year in parallel to our current budget model, allowing units to view the old and new models side by side. Based on our learnings during this parallel year, we will finalize policies and procedures before fully transitioning to the new model on July 1, 2027. This is an important structural change that will give colleges and units clearer line of sight into revenue and expenses and better tools to make strategic decisions.
- **Workday:** Earlier this year, CSU successfully launched Workday – a new, unified platform for HR and payroll that replaces multiple legacy systems across CSU and the CSU System. Workday gives employees one tool for payroll, time tracking, performance management and more. This is a significant step toward the kind of modern, integrated administrative infrastructure our university needs, and we are grateful to the WorkSTATE project team for their work in bringing it to life.

Growing Revenue

- **Rethinking and Relaunching CSU Online:** We recently announced the repositioning of our Learning Innovation unit – including CSU Online, Professional Education and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute – as a stand-alone division reporting directly to the President's Office. CSU Online is a tremendous resource that has significant potential to further grow and scale. An interdisciplinary team of campus leaders has already begun work on this initiative, with a focus on expanding online access for a variety of in-person and remote students, growing program offerings and enhancing Learning Innovation's position as a significant and sustainable revenue stream. This is going to require time and a shared commitment to doing it well; we are committed to its success.
- **University Advancement and CSU Foundation Merger:** We are merging University Advancement and the CSU Foundation into a single, unified fundraising enterprise. The decision followed an external review, multiple discussions between Foundation board and university leadership and formal board action last fall. The "why" is straightforward: one strategy, one accountable leader, one operating model. A unified structure improves donor experience, strengthens accountability and builds the capacity to scale our fundraising enterprise. As part of the transition, Vice President for Advancement Scott Roberts is stepping into the interim Foundation president and CEO role to lead the unification. Development officers will remain focused on serving their colleges and units; the transition work is primarily about the enterprise back end.
- **Strategic Enrollment:** The enrollment landscape is shifting in ways that make proactive planning essential. Falling birth rates in the years after the 2008 financial crisis have produced fewer traditional college-age students – a "demographic cliff" that will increase competition among universities for prospective students over the next decade. Institutions with strong enrollment pipelines and a proactive, campus-wide approach to strategic

enrollment planning will be better positioned than those that wait and react. Interim Provost Lise Youngblade and Vice President for Enrollment and Access Kevin MacLennan will lead development of a multi-year Strategic Enrollment Plan in collaboration with our deans and campus partners. The plan will identify programs where CSU has a competitive advantage, the faculty depth and physical capacity to grow and then build targeted marketing strategies to reach prospective students in those areas. This is a growth framework that builds on our academic strengths and improves our financial health through targeted enrollment gains.

- **Curricular Innovation:** In close collaboration with faculty, the Office of the Provost is actively reimagining CSU's academic offerings – rethinking what we teach, how we teach it and how we prepare students for the world after graduation. A university-wide task force is examining our Core Curriculum and will recommend changes so that our academic foundation better reflects our institutional excellence, meets our learning objectives and builds skills students will need in their majors and beyond. We are also working with colleges and departments to evaluate and potentially wind down low-enrollment courses and programs, allowing us to, where appropriate, redirect faculty expertise toward areas of growth. In addition, we want to expand experiential learning through internships, research experience, mentorships and employer connections that give students direct pathways into careers.

As we modernize, we are focused on how we become more agile in the development of new curriculum, including an effort to cut the time required to build a new academic program from two years to one. As part of a strategic effort to adapt to the fast-moving evolution of AI, the Provost's Office is establishing a standing working group – with representation from Faculty Council, the Division of IT, TILT and others – to address AI in teaching and learning, educational technologies, curricular design and academic integrity. The Office of the Vice President for Research will launch a related effort for AI in research.

- **Research Excellence:** Even in an environment with heightened uncertainty for the research enterprise nationally, CSU researchers have leaned into their work, broadening their approaches to adapt to the shifting landscape. The OVPR and the colleges have been modernizing core facilities, including garnering funding for critical new equipment and increasing collaboration across colleges and Colorado to bolster services while winding down those no longer needed. The OVPR has launched seed funding programs and research development assistance to support interdisciplinary collaboration and researchers who need to shift approach to extramural funding. In the coming weeks, the OVPR will announce capacity-building grants to support faculty who want to incorporate AI into their work, positioning us for extramural funding into the future.
- **Spur Start and Ram Transfer Academy:** Two existing programs represent some of our most promising near-term enrollment opportunities and deserve continued investment. Spur Start gives Colorado students a smart, supported way to begin their CSU journey – completing their first year in Denver, where they can save money on housing, stay close to family and support networks and build the academic foundation they need before making a successful transition to Fort Collins to complete their degree. The

Ram Transfer Academy works in a similar spirit, providing students at Front Range Community College with academic preparation, advising and a clear, structured pathway to CSU. Both programs work, and we intend to grow them.

Investing in Our People

- **Compensation Committee:** We are launching the President's Task Force on Compensation which will include representatives from Faculty Council, APC and CPC. The committee's charge will be to develop a long-term strategy for delivering competitive compensation and benefits – even in the face of ongoing financial challenges. We know that limited compensation growth over the past several years has been felt across campus, and we are committed to working with shared governance partners to develop a path forward that is sustainable, equitable and transparent.
- **Career Pathways:** The administrative realignments described above are not only about operational efficiency – they are also an investment in the people doing this work. The current fragmented structure of administrative functions across colleges and units means that career pathways for many staff are narrow and disconnected. A shared-services model creates something that doesn't consistently exist today: clear pathways for advancement, consistent job titles and compensation benchmarks and equitable access to professional development. The people doing this work deserve that – and CSU is a stronger institution when we can grow and retain talented professionals across every function.
- **A Growing, Transforming Campus:** Even as we navigate financial challenges, CSU is in the midst of one of the most significant periods of physical transformation in our history – and that matters for the people who work and learn here. The Veterinary Hospital and Education Complex is nearing completion on our South Campus and will open in the coming months, revolutionizing how we teach veterinary medicine and providing state-of-the-art spaces for faculty, staff and students. The Clark Building revitalization – the heart of our main campus, where 99 percent of CSU students take at least one class – is underway, with the renovated A Wing expected to reopen in fall 2026 and a transformative new four-story B Wing scheduled for completion in 2027. The Don and Susie Law Engineering Future Technologies Building, made possible by a lead gift from the Laws, a landmark investment from our students and a generous matching gift from the Walter Scott Family Foundation, will be an interdisciplinary hub for engineering and AI education when it opens in 2028. And on our Foothills Campus, the ATLAS facility – a public-private partnership to build one of the nation's most powerful laser research facilities – is on track to open at the end of 2026. These investments will improve the working environment for our employees and the educational experience for our students and the capabilities of our researchers for decades. They are a tangible expression of confidence in CSU's future.

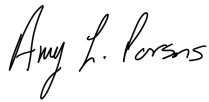
Moving Forward Together

I want to close by reinforcing that the underlying fundamentals of Colorado State University are strong. We have extraordinary faculty and staff, a rising national profile, a deeply loyal alumni community and an access mission that remains as

urgent and relevant as ever. The work I have described here will ask a great deal of this community – discipline, openness to change and a willingness to think beyond the immediate moment. But it is exactly the kind of work that universities with genuine long-term ambitions undertake when they are focused not just on the next year, but on the next decade.

I believe in what we are building together, and I am grateful for the partnership of everyone across this university who makes it possible. The path we are on – modernizing how we operate, growing the revenues that support our mission and investing in our people – is not simply a response to the challenges of this moment. It is how we become what we have set out to be: a national model for a modern land-grant university. That goal belongs to all of us, and I am confident that this community has what it takes to achieve it. We will continue to share updates on each of these efforts in the months ahead.

Thank you,



Amy Parsons
President



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