

Jan. 17, 2024



Denver

Message from Chancellor Marks



Dear faculty and staff,

I hope you had a rejuvenating winter break and are off to a good start to the new semester and new year. In 2023, our campus and our world saw many notable achievements as well as challenges, and I am looking forward to a strong 2024.

We accomplished a lot last semester, and we can continue to build on this momentum as a Lynx community. For example, we kicked off vital [academic transformation](#) conversations; completed a meaningful renovation of our historic [Centennial House](#); and packed the Jake Jobs Event Center for our [first DEI Symposium](#). Here are a few other pride points that inspire me every day:

- Six Lynx alumni were just included in the [Denver Business Journal's 40 Under 40](#) list: Casey Guber, Nazia Hasan, Michael Macias, Tyler Svitak, Patrick Walton, and Danaya Wilson.
- CU Denver's fundraising numbers continue to grow as our community recognizes more and more the value of investing in our students and programs. Our Advancement team is planning a series of workshops to get the community more involved in this work as we prepare for a campaign; more details will be shared soon.
- We're continuing to make good progress implementing our [2030 Strategic Plan](#), and I'm especially excited about our strides toward becoming a best place to work. The Comprehensive Compensation Collaborative is [midway through](#) the two-year project; we refined the holiday schedule through an inclusive process, introducing a floating holiday of each employee's choosing; and we've ramped up an employee retention initiative with improved HR training and processes, including [recruitment, exit, transfer, and stay interviews](#), as we try to equip employees with the tools to be successful and fulfilled at CU Denver.
- Research continues to be a strength, coming off a 10-year high for research grant awards. The Grand Challenges Research Symposium is on Feb. 2, and we just opened [seed grant applications](#) that will set the stage for more innovation.
- Our [Smart Futures Lab](#) graduated the first class of companies to participate in our incubator and accelerator programs, fueled by a \$2

Jan. 17, 2024

million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to support startups and entrepreneurs in the civic innovation space.

We have so much to be proud of at CU Denver.

Over the last semester, we have also been focusing hard on our strategic budget initiative, including a [one-time-only voluntary retirement incentive program](#) that allows eligible employees to make career changes that are right for them while providing the university with financial flexibility. We have already received strong interest in the program, and remember that the application period officially closes Friday, Jan. 19.

Contributing significantly to our financial health and mission are enrollment and retention, which are always top of mind for me and so many across campus. While our overall enrollment has declined (we will have a clearer picture of the spring semester in early February), we have done great work to improve retention, better serving the students who do enroll. The immediate challenge is to focus on increasing enrollment while continuing our positive momentum on retention.

My confidence in our ability to improve our enrollment outlook is very high, particularly with the leadership and team members we have in place. I've noticed how energized our Strategic Enrollment and Student Success (SESS) colleagues are to take swift and solutions-oriented actions to get us on the right course. Earlier this month, SESS hosted a highly productive meeting with the deans to talk through how we can expedite admission and registration, among other tactics, and we're organizing innovative workshops to strengthen our graduate student recruitment processes—a first-of-its-kind effort for CU Denver.

I appreciate all of the leaders and faculty and staff who are engaging in this work, contributing to our culture of driving enrollment across the university, and sharing what's working to help scale the most effective strategies. We will continue to communicate about SESS's priorities of enrollment, financial aid, and student mental health, and we'll continue our momentum toward the transformations I outlined in my [fall semester welcome](#) as well. Lastly, I want to share a few things I'm really looking forward to this spring.

- I'm excited about next week's public launch of CU Denver's "Meet Your Moment" brand, which was completed in-house by the University Communications team with input from so many of you across campus. This is an essential step to show the external community what we already know: that CU Denver is an amazing place that helps students and alumni meet their moment again and again throughout their lives and careers. The refreshed brand puts Lynx success stories front and center, reminding us all why we do what we do.

Jan. 17, 2024

- I can't wait to watch the Feb. 4 Grammys to cheer on the College of Arts & Media! Two CAM faculty were recognized by the [2024 Grammy nominations](#), Senior Instructor Greg Garrison and Associate Dean Mark Rabideau. The self-titled album of Garrison's band Mighty Poplar was nominated for Best Bluegrass album, while Rabideau produced the album Stillpoint, which has a track created by composer Jessie Montgomery that was nominated for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.
- Later this spring, I will have the pleasure of participating in my annual visits to each college and school to hear from faculty and staff. And toward the end of the semester, we'll host a variety of employee recognition events—which include [new awards this year](#)—and then conclude with my favorite event of each semester: commencement.

I can't wait for 2024 to bring new triumphs to CU Denver. I wish you great success and happiness, and thank you for all you do.



Michelle Marks

Chancellor

[@MarksMichelleA](#)