April 15, 2024

Dear colleagues,

We hope that you are having a good spring semester and are preparing for a strong close to our academic year. The success of thousands of students educated at CU Denver every year is fostered by the many faculty and staff who guide and mentor them from the time they are a prospective student until they ultimately cross the stage at commencement—and sometimes beyond as they pursue additional degrees and begin new careers.

The professionals who compose CU Denver’s Division of Strategic Enrollment and Student Success (SESS) are an important part of the support network that provides vital services to our campus—and directly to our students. This division of nearly 200 team members committed to our students’ success helps recruit, enroll, and retain our students, providing them with financial, academic, and co-curricular support all along the way.

That work—and the leadership of the division and its critical function—is extremely important, which brings us to the search for permanent leadership of the division. Back in December, the interim appointment of Dr. Katie Linder was announced, and now we need to turn our attention to kicking off a formal, national search.

**Where We Are**

Given the importance of identifying the right path forward as we plan for permanent leadership, we have cultivated and considered perspectives from across the division and university leadership. We have synthesized and weighed the feedback carefully to arrive at key decisions about the organizational structure of the division and how to lead it, the principal attributes of the leadership profile, and the timing of the search.

**Leading the Organization Forward**

To continue strengthening SESS’s interconnectedness, which helps our students and teams across the division succeed, we have decided to continue with a single leader to oversee SESS, who will keep the division together, set and oversee the strategic direction of the division, and build on our momentum as we aim to provide exemplary service for our students. The position, Vice Chancellor for
Strategic Enrollment and Student Success, will have a direct reporting line to the Chancellor and a dotted line to the Provost. In making a change to the reporting structure, we intend to deepen connections to executive leadership and enhance the visibility and presence of the division and its teams in key meetings—all while maintaining a vital connection to the Provost and Academic Affairs, particularly for the parts of the division with the strongest direct ties to fostering students’ academic success.

We also heard SESS staff feel they are coalescing in new ways as a community of professionals and effectively coordinating across the division and across our campus community. We think that right now, there is more to be gained by keeping this division together, strengthening the way its units work together and with our community, and recruiting a single leader who can continue to unite and help advance complementary functions.

**Leadership Attributes**

Affirming our collective expectations about the leadership approach of the next leader is perhaps the most important outcome of this feedback process. Based on this feedback, our community wants a leader who:

- Is a leader of leaders and strategic thought partner—someone who understands and has experience leading teams and other leaders and subject-matter experts, and who can effectively draw upon the experience, ideas, and leadership across the division to advance shared goals
- Can nurture large, strong, and high-performing teams in complex environments
- Fosters collaboration within the division and across the university
- Has a demonstrated track record of leading with unimpeachable integrity
- Brings experience with change management
- Has direct experience working with students and a proven commitment to student success
- Is well-versed in the full student experience but has particular strength in strategic enrollment management, which is one of our greatest areas of need

We agree with the importance of these leadership attributes, and we will incorporate them into our leadership profile and ensure that the search committee we form uses this as a guide in its selection process.

**The Search Timing and Process**

Higher education talent experts across the country have advised us that a search of this caliber requires several months to get the search underway, attract and build a strong candidate pool, conduct interviews, make a selection, and finalize a
start date. As such, we will form a search committee and appoint a search firm in the next few weeks, formalize a position description, and use the summer to begin the search for qualified candidates. When students and faculty are back this fall, we will hit the ground running with candidate interviews, hoping to have a new leader start during the spring 2025 semester. We will have structured opportunities for SESS and other stakeholders on campus to participate in the process.

In Closing

We have an experienced and dedicated SESS division that is creating noticeable momentum and strengthening its connectivity every day. We have an opportunity to build on that foundation and progress as we serve our students into the future.

Please expect updates throughout the process as we move forward and have a wonderful rest of your semester.

Sincerely,

Michelle Marks
Chancellor

Constancio Nakuma
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs