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Social Climate Survey set to begin in April ^[1]

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University of Colorado leadership took the first step to encourage faculty, staff and students to participate in a social climate survey slated to distribute the first week in April, the first broad-based attempt to measure how well CU is progressing on diversity, one of its 12 guiding principles.

In a letter expected to be delivered today to the university community, Board of Regents Chairman Michael Carrigan and President Bruce Benson are asking for broad participation in the survey, which is aimed at determining how well CU is promoting diversity in all its forms. The principle states the university commitment to, "Promote faculty, student and staff diversity to ensure the rich interchange of ideas in the pursuit of truth and learning, including diversity of political, geographic, cultural, intellectual and philosophical perspectives."

The survey will be conducted by McLaughlin and Associates, an independent vendor hired after an RFP process. The firm developed the online instrument in collaboration with a joint committee of regents and faculty members experienced in research in the social sciences. It is the first systemwide survey of its type.

"While it's important to have statements that reflect CU's commitment to diversity, without data we cannot measure how well we are meeting our goals," Carrigan and Benson wrote. "We hope it will give us a complete picture of where we are succeeding and where we need to devote more effort."

Initial results are expected by mid-April. The board will then engage the administration and governance groups about next steps.

The survey began after the board voted unanimously last fall to gauge how well CU meets the guiding principle related to diversity. The initiative came on the heels of a change to the Laws of the Regents to protect members of the university community from discrimination. The change prohibits discrimination based on political affiliation, political philosophy, gender identity and gender expression.

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