

To: President Mark Kennedy, Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook, Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Lightner, Vice President for University Communication Ken McConnellogue  
From: Faculty Council Executive Committee  
Re: The "Purple Ink" Protocol  
Date: August 25, 2020

This morning the Denver Post reported on the "purple ink" protocol below which lays out CU's misguided attempt to stifle speech on a range of topics including COVID19 Science, Health Insurance, DACA, Climate Change, Academic Freedom, LGBTQ+ and "Race Relations." This protocol mandates a "measured," "evenhanded," and "purple ink" approach to communication that "cascades" down to "colleges, schools, units, etc." and requires the President's Office be notified of a campus communication on such issues 24-48 hours in advance of dissemination. The administration's claim that this does not impact faculty is misleading at best, given that the protocol regulates the speech of our academic leaders and given its intent that this approach "cascade" to "colleges, schools, units, etc."

We find it unfathomable that a public university would direct its leadership and community members to have an "evenhanded" response to racism and homophobia as well as threats to safety and academic freedom. We stand with those on our campuses who have suffered the effects of institutional racism for far too long, time and time again, and will not be complicit through "purple ink" or "measured" responses.

Faculty Council rejects any attempt by the President's Office to suppress the speech of colleges, schools, and units as well as individual faculty, staff, students, and administrators. We ask that this protocol be rescinded.

Shared Communication Protocol  
Updated 7.21.20

The Office of the President and the Chancellors will collaborate where appropriate to work toward communications that are coordinated (recognizing that individual campuses have their own imperatives) and evenhanded, particularly those on sensitive political topics. The upcoming election will magnify many issues. While recognizing that the president and chancellors have myriad audiences, and that some issues require strong leadership stands, the goal is for measured communications that avoid partisan language and/or overt editorializing.

The system vice president for communication and campus vice chancellors for communications/media relations, as well as respective executive writers, have met to share a common understanding on the approach. The campus vice chancellors will cascade awareness and the approach to colleges, schools, units, etc. The intent is to collaborate on sensitive communications in as timely a way as possible, understanding that many communication issues are fast-moving. One goal is to not surprise the regents on communications. In general, the approach will be:

- Any campus communication on what may be deemed a sensitive topic will be shared with the President's Office 24-48 hours in advance of its release (while recognizing that some emerging issues do not allow for those lead times).
- The President's Office will immediately (in advance of distribution) share with the Regents selected communications.
- Regents will not be asked to edit communications.
- University administration will improve its efforts to anticipate and notify the Board on hot button issues, rulings or upcoming events that may require a statement (DACA, Title IX, etc.)
- The administration will work with the legal team to create a calendar to anticipate issues in advance, (i.e., DACA, Title IX court rulings), so that we are better prepared.
- Because of the make-up our state and our Board of Regents, the administration should "write in purple ink, not blue or red when drafting statements on potentially controversial issues – we are not looking to make political statements, but we want to stand up for what is best for our faculty, staff and students.
- The administration will take stands on issues that are aligned with our mission.
- In addition to alerting the Board to potential stories that may appear in the main stream media, the administration will improve its efforts to alert the Board on issues trending on social media that directly impact CU. This may cause us to alert the board immediately to an issue affecting CU, but a response or statement may need to soon follow.
- System/campus communicators will refine social media monitoring to provide more timely warning about trending and/or controversial issues.
- Topics that require heightened attention include, but are not limited to:

## Public Health

- Health Insurance
- Marijuana
- COVID19 Science
- Campus reopening processes

## Funding

- International research funding
- Corporate research funding
- Divestment

## Immigration

- International student visa
- DACA

## First Amendment/free speech

## Climate change

## Academic freedom

## D & I

- Race relations
- LGBTQ+