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Meeting the Regents [1]

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In hopes to better familiarize all faculty with the crucial role the CU Board of Regents fulfill, we answered some commonly asked questions.

Who are the Regents of the University of Colorado?
The Regents compose the governing board for the University of Colorado (CU). This board was established in the Colorado Constitution in 1876. The Regents are composed of 9 voting members.

How are the Regents chosen?
The regents are elected by the voting constituents of Colorado. There is one Regent for each congressional district and one At-Large member. Regents can also be appointed by the governor of Colorado. A Regent must be a resident of Colorado.

How long do the Regents serve?
Each regent serves a term of 6 years. They may serve up to 2 consecutive terms (12 years). These terms are staggered.

What is the function of the Board of Regents?
The Regents oversee the general supervision and appropriation of funds, university's budget, manage tuition and student fee setting, approve faculty compensation rates, and approve new degrees. Regent laws and policies dictate the functioning of the University. Members participate in committees including the Governance Committee, Finance Committee, University Affairs Committee, and the Audit Committee. These committees review and recommend policies to improve the effectiveness of the Board, exercise fiduciary responsibilities, plan academic program review and recommendations, and assuring oversight of internal and external auditor performance.

In a recent request, newly elected Regent-at-Large, Elliott Hood, answered the Faculty Communications Committee questions thoughtfully.

As a new regent, what are your top three priorities during your term?
My biggest priority right now is to ensure that CU can continue to achieve its education and research mission, and stand up for its values, despite huge uncertainty from Washington, D.C. We as regents are dedicating significant time and resources, along with our administrators and faculty and student leaders, to achieve this goal. Second, I'd like to see us improve our graduation and retention rates across the system. We've made progress on these two metrics, but there is still a lot of room for improvement and more consistency among our four campuses. Third, we need to be more sustainable; I'd like to see the university commit to carbon neutrality and make investments in clean and renewable energy now that will reduce our carbon footprint and environmental impact while also saving us money in the long run.

Of all the responsibilities the regents uphold, which do you think are the most crucial?
Our most important job is to set the direction and priorities for the CU System through our Regent laws and policies and our management of the President. In that sense, we set the tone for the whole university, and we take that very seriously.

What do you feel is the role of the regents in supporting academic freedom for faculty within the University of Colorado system?
We do this in two ways. First, we have established very clear laws and policies protecting academic freedom, which is one of the core pillars of higher education. Second, we as regents don't meddle with curriculum or research. We leave that to the academic professionals and leaders on our campuses who will decide what should be taught, how it is taught, and what research to pursue.

In the wake of the changes with the US Department of Education, do you have concerns regarding federal funding for the University?
I have several concerns. First, I fear that the Department's significant and rapid reduction in force will adversely impact its ability to provide much-needed federal funds. Second, I'm worried that the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will be weaponized to punish universities for engaging in perfectly legitimate and important programs that don't fit within the current administration's priorities, or that it will simply pull federal funding from universities without due process or opportunity to cure any potential issues, which has been OCR's longstanding practice.

Given recent events do you have concerns about student and faculty safety on campus, especially in regard to student protests, immigration status, or freedom of speech?
Sadly, yes. We have had multiple international students lose their student visas without warning, and at other universities we have seen students deported for seemingly doing nothing more than exercising their right to free speech. I am deeply troubled by this.

Do you have thoughts regarding changes within K-12 and special education and the longer term effects on establishments of higher education?
The single most important thing we can do as a community is to provide a good public education for everyone, regardless of where they grow up or how rich their parents are. All students should feel safe and supported in school so they can focus on learning. And our universities should continue to be places where free thought and inquiry can thrive without political pressure. As a lawyer serving K-12 public schools, and as a regent of this university, I will continue to dedicate myself to this cause.

The Faculty Communications Committee appreciates Regent-at-Large Hood's thoughts on these important issues. For more information on the University of Colorado Board of Regents, please visit https://regents.cu.edu/meet-the-regents [3].

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