

A Message from the Chair: Alastair Norcross ^[1]

December 18, 2024 by [maria.lewis](#) ^[2]

The Faculty Council has had a busy semester. I thank my fellow officers (Vice Chair—Jorge Chavez, Secretary—Vicki Grove, Immediate Past Chair—Cindy O'Bryant), and the four leaders of our campus assemblies (Anschutz – Greg Kinney, Boulder – Shelly Miller, Colorado Springs – Joel Tonyan, Denver – Sasha Breger Bush) for their continued hard work and dedication. I also thank all the committees, especially their hard-working chairs, for their excellent work this semester. Faculty governance relies on the efforts of all of us, and it is truly heartening and inspiring to see the care, effort, and attention supplied by so many of my fellow CU faculty. I also thank the hard-working staff of Faculty Council—our Administrator Maria Lewis and our Student Assistant and Recording Secretary Jacqueline Nolly—without whom we would be entirely lost!

It has been quite an eventful semester on our campuses. Boulder welcomed new Chancellor, Justin Schwartz, who has been busy visiting the schools and colleges. His presence, combined with the work of the Boulder Faculty Assembly, inspired the CU Buffaloes football team to a 9-3 record, and an invitation to the Alamo Bowl, for a game which will be long remembered. Provost Russ Moore announced his upcoming retirement, and the search process for his successor is underway. In Colorado Springs, Chancellor Sobanet began her first full year in the position, and the search for a new Provost is nearing completion as I write this. In Denver, Chancellor Marks announced over the summer that she was stepping down. Ann Schmiesing, Vice Chancellor for Academic Resource Management on the Boulder campus, has been serving as interim Chancellor while a search has been underway for a permanent successor to Chancellor Marks. That search is also nearing completion as I write this.

At its August meeting. The Faculty Council approved sending out the revised Faculty Senate Constitution for ratification by the entire Faculty Senate. The ballot was open for 60 days, and the revisions were overwhelmingly approved. The newly approved Constitution revises the governance and elections structure of the Faculty Council itself, replacing the Vice Chair with a "Chair Elect", who will become Chair after serving one year in that role, and formalizing the role of the Immediate Past Chair. For the next elections in April, we will be electing both a new Chair and a Chair Elect, and Secretary (as usual). Thereafter, we will only elect a Chair Elect each Spring (and Secretary), because the Chair Elect will automatically become Chair the following year. Please consider running for one of the officer positions in the spring.

The Faculty Council continues to be concerned about the situation of IRC and contingent faculty on the campuses. The Boulder campus recently announced a plan to comply with Policy 5060 on Faculty titles, addressing the overuse of the lecturer title. That plan provides a three year limit on the hiring of temporary faculty who have positions of at least 0.5FTE. Thereafter, such faculty members will either have to be hired to teaching track (or tenure

track) positions, or leave their positions at the university. For the plan to succeed, many current lecturers (whose titles will change, starting fall 2025) will have to be hired into more permanent positions. This will clearly require fiscal resources. With added recent media scrutiny of the treatment of IRC and contingent faculty, and continued scrutiny by Faculty Council and the campus assemblies, we are optimistic that CU may set a (good) example for other universities to follow.

Unless you have been living under a rock, you are aware that the US had an election last month. Faculty Council has been diligent in advocating for both free speech rights and academic freedom rights for faculty, staff, and students. Many of you may be somewhat apprehensive about what the upcoming change in federal administration may mean for higher education in general, and higher education in Colorado in particular. Faculty Council has assured the university administration that the faculty are overwhelmingly supportive of the university's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment, which values equity in its treatment of all students and employees. We stand firm in our commitment to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, free from censorship. We also stand firm in our commitment to the most vulnerable members of our community. Whatever challenges the next few years may bring, we will face them together.

Finally, I thank all faculty at CU for their work, and encourage you to contact either the Faculty Council or your campus assembly, if you have concerns relating to any shared governance issue. Also, please consider serving in shared faculty governance in some role, if you don't already do so. We are always in need of faculty from all four campuses to serve on our committees. It is our responsibility, as faculty members, to advocate for our interests, and to work with the university administration in the interests of all members of the university community.

I hope you all have an enjoyable and restful winter break, whether in Colorado or elsewhere (maybe in San Antonio on December 28th).

Alastair Norcross

Faculty Council Chair

Department of Philosophy, CU Boulder

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