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CU Federal Relations Monthly Update - 2.27.26 [1]

February 27, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

President Saliman DC Visit

CU President Todd Saliman and Danielle Radovich Piper, Senior VP for External Relations & Strategy, traveled to Washington D.C. to advocate for the University of Colorado. During their trip they met with Sens. Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, Reps. Joe Neguse, Jeff Hurd, Jeff Crank, Frank Lucas (R-OK), the Department of Education, NASA, and staff from the House and Senate Appropriations committees on Feb. 25 and 26. President Saliman also hosted a breakfast meeting on Feb. 25 that was attended by members of the Colorado delegation and congressional staff.

FY26 Appropriations Update

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shutdown remains ongoing, with negotiations between Democrats and Republicans at a standstill. Current negotiations are focused on immigration enforcement reform. Employees in the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Coast Guard, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will miss paychecks in the following weeks absent a deal. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) are currently funded via funds provided by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).

CU Boulder at Genesis AI Event in DC

Massimo Ruzzene, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at CU Boulder, attended [3] a Department of Energy (DOE) Genesis Mission [4] summit on Feb. 18. Genesis Mission aims to bring together the DOE, national laboratories, the private sector, and academic institutions to advance scientific discovery. Read more about the summit in the AAU *Leading Research Universities Report* [5].

UCCS Hosts Rep. Crank's Veterans' Issues Roundtable

UCCS was honored to host Rep. Jeff Crank [6], staff members for the U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and members of the community to discuss veterans' issues and share insights on Feb. 18. UCCS Chancellor Jennifer Sobanet; CU Regent Board Chair Ken Montera and Regent Frank McNulty; Crista Hill, UCCS Director of Military and Veterans' Affairs; and Charles Benight, Executive Director of the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience [7], spoke about CU's commitment to supporting veterans and the great work being done at UCCS and the partnerships in the Pikes Peak region.

Rep. Neguse Speaks at CU Boulder Events

Rep. Joe Neguse spoke at a ceremony hosted by the Bench by the Road Project [8] honoring Charles and Mildred Nilon, the first Black professor and first Black librarian at CU Boulder, on Feb. 16. The Bench by the Road Project is an initiative of the Toni Morrison Society to expand public memorials for significant moments in the history of the African diaspora. Additional speakers at the event included CU Boulder Chancellor Justin Schwartz and Reiland Rabaka, founding director of the Center for African and African American Studies at CU Boulder. Read more at the Center for African and African American Studies' news page [9].

Rep. Neguse [10] also spoke at the "Ecocide in Wartime Ukraine [11]," a pop-up exhibit at the CU Art Museum on Feb. 20. The exhibit utilizes images and interactive displays to depict the environmental effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Recent Capitol Hill Visits

Barbra Sobhani, Director of the NASA Colorado Space Grant Consortium [12] (COSGC) at CU Boulder, and COSGC Program Manager Annie Strange met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette, Neguse, Hurd, Crank, Pettersen, and Evans on Feb. 24.

Cathy Bodine, Director of the Center for Innovative Design and Engineering [13] at CU Denver, met with staff from the offices of Rep. DeGette and Crow on Feb. 24.

CU student government leaders met with staff from Sen. Sanders (I-Vt.), Reps. DeGette, Neguse, Crank, Pettersen, and Kean (D-N.J.), and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) on Feb. 23 and 24.

Vik Bebarta, Chair of the CU Anschutz Department of Emergency Medicine, met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Rep. Crow on Feb. 19.

Linda Barlow, Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology at CU Anschutz, met with staff from the offices of Sen. Bennet and Reps. Neguse, Crow, and Pettersen on Feb. 18.

Keith Molenaar, Dean of the College for Engineering and Applied Science at CU Boulder, and Martin Dunn, Dean of the College of Engineering, Design and Computing at CU Denver, met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette and Neguse on Feb. 11.

Members of the Colorado School of Public Health's Centers for Health, Work, and Environment

[14] (CHWE) met with staff from the offices of Sen. Bennet and Reps. DeGette, Neguse, Crank, Crow, Pettersen, and Evans on Feb. 9 and 10.

Recent Colorado Events

Congressional staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette, Crow, and Evans participated in National TRIO Day at the Colorado State Capitol on Feb. 20. The staff joined over 100 participants, representing TRIO programs from around the state, including CU Denver and CU Boulder. The students participated in a day of civics education and told their stories about how TRIO programs helped them, as first generation college students, achieve their educational success.

James Moore, Assistant Director at the National Science Foundation's Directorate of STEM Education [15] (NSF EDU), visited UCCS on Feb. 12. While there he held workshop discussions with faculty across campus, visited laboratories, heard from student researchers, and gave a presentation with a Q&A moderated by Joe Wehrman, Dean of the College of Education. Provost Lynn Vidler opened the presentation and Chancellor Jennifer Sobanet closed the event. CU Denver and CU Boulder staff and faculty were also in attendance, including Karen Marrongelle, Provost and Executive VC for Academic Affairs CU Denver; Philip DeLeon, Associate VC for Research; and Karen Regan, Associate VC, Research Development and Strategic Initiatives.

Danielle Radovich Piper, Senior VP for External Relations & Strategy; Kerry Tipper, VP of University Counsel; and Annie Larson, Assistant VP for Federal Relations & Outreach joined the State Relations team to speak about CU's government relations work at the CU Excellence in Leadership Program [16]'s (ELP) Day at the Colorado State Capitol on Feb. 11.

Brett Roude, Assistant VP of Federal Relations and Health Policy, presented at CU Anschutz on Feb. 11. The presentation included federal policy updates and information on funding strategies

Federal Updates [17], Federal Monthly Updates [18]

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