Staff and Contact Information for Government Relations

Todd Saliman, Senior Vice President for Strategy, Government Relations and Chief Financial Officer

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Todd Saliman was named president of the University of Colorado in June 2021. He will serve in the interim as the CU Board of Regents conducts a national search for a permanent president. Before serving as president, Saliman was CU’s senior vice president for strategy, government relations and chief financial officer. He has 30 years of experience working on public policy in Colorado. He served in the Cabinet for two governors and is a former member of the Colorado General Assembly. Before joining CU, he worked with a private government affairs company in Colorado. He has more than 10 years of experience advocating on behalf of CU with Colorado higher education and policy leaders.

Prior to being named senior vice president, Saliman served as CU’s vice president for budget and finance and chief financial officer, where he led the budget team through many state fiscal challenges. As senior vice president, he continues with his CFO duties and now helps guide CU system strategic initiatives and oversees CU’s state and federal governmental affairs operations.

From 2007–10, Saliman was a member of Gov. Bill Ritter’s Cabinet and senior staff team. He was director of the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting. As director, he led the direction of the state’s budget, legislative and strategic initiatives. He also developed the governor’s budget request – submitted annually to the Colorado legislature – and developed and implemented plans to keep the budget balanced throughout the fiscal year. His office also prepared quarterly economic forecasts for the state. He guided the state budget during the great recession.

When Governor Hickenlooper was elected, Saliman continued on as a Senior Advisor during the Governor’s first legislative session to provide guidance and support on state budget and policy issues.

From 2003-06, Saliman owned and operated his own lobbying firm, Todd Saliman and Associates, which represented some of the most prominent organizations and governmental entities in Colorado, including the University of Colorado.

Todd served eight years in the Colorado legislature (1995–2002), four of which were spent serving on the Joint Budget Committee. He also served on the Appropriation, Finance and Local Government committees. Saliman was also appointed to various special committees...
that focused on specific issues.

Saliman is a native of Colorado and attended the University of Colorado Boulder. He graduated cum laude with a degree in political science. He and his wife Michelle have two children, Max and Mira.

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**FEDERAL RELATIONS TEAM**

**Natalie Barry, Assistant Director of Federal Relations**

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Bio:  
Natalie Barry is the Assistant Director of Federal Relations. She has been with the University of Colorado since 2011, and supports a broad range of administrative, research, writing, and analytical duties that are designed to support CU’s federal relations efforts. She prepares and sends out the Government Relations department newsletter. She also works closely with each congressional office to schedule Hill visits and assists with constituent requests regarding issues on campus. Natalie helps plan and coordinate federal events on CU campuses. Additionally, she makes travel arrangements, drafts correspondence, and prepares department expense system reports.

Natalie received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She and her husband Tyler enjoy living in Colorado and traveling as much as possible.
Heather Bené, Associate Vice President of Research and Federal Policy

Bio:

Heather Bené is the Associate Vice President of Research and Federal Policy for the University of Colorado and represents CU in Washington, DC. Bené has worked in government relations for public research universities for nearly 15 years, including over six years at CU. Bené represents the university with federal officials, national organizations and government entities on funding and policy issues related to higher education and scientific research. Her policy portfolio encompasses budget and appropriations; immigration; higher education; tax; and research policy including for the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Standards and Technology, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Departments of Energy and Defense.

Bené has served in numerous national leadership roles, including most notably as President of The Science Coalition, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of more than 50 of the nation's leading research universities, including CU Boulder, which is dedicated to sustaining federal investment in fundamental scientific research. Bené has served on the leadership boards for the Association of American Universities' (AAU) Council on Federal Relations and the
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' (APLU) Council on Governmental Affairs. She chaired AAU's Immigration Task Force from 2016-17, a particularly complex period in immigration policy impacting universities, and as the association's energy policy lead in 2020. She is the 2020 recipient of AAU's "Ripple Effect" Impact Award, which recognizes her public service and mentorship contributions both within AAU and across the higher education community.

Previously, Bené worked in the Government Relations Office at her alma mater Oregon State University on state and federal policy and advocacy. Bené managed legislative affairs for Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the organization with oversight for Oregon's higher education and student aid systems, in 2014. She also served on the presidential and vice presidential advance teams for the Obama Administration. Bené has a master of public policy degree from OSU. Her graduate thesis analyzed university student voting behavior over six election cycles. She also has bachelor of arts degrees from OSU in English and political science.

Kathleen Drew, Federal Relations Associate

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Bio:
Kathleen Drew serves as Federal Relations Associate for the University of Colorado System's Office of Government Relations, representing CU in Washington, DC. Kathleen has worked in both higher education and electoral politics, having worked as an intern in the Office of Economic Development and Community Engagement at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and as both intern and staff for numerous campaigns, including races for the House of Representatives, Senate, Michigan House of Representatives, and Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer. During her tenure at APLU, Kathleen maintained a policy portfolio including workforce development, science and technology, and higher education. As a campaign staffer, Kathleen worked on campaign communications, fundraising, and policy, with specific focuses on higher education, climate change, and health care. Kathleen is a graduate of the University of Michigan with a Bachelor’s in political science and communications.

Jack Waldorf, Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations and Outreach

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Bio:
Jack Waldorf serves as Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations and Outreach for the University of Colorado System’s Office of Government Relations. Based in Denver,
Jack is responsible for federal activities impacting the University of Colorado System, and its campuses. This includes representing the university on issues related to federal higher education and research policy and serving as a direct contact between the university and federal officials, including Colorado’s congressional delegation. Prior to joining CU in early 2013, Jack worked in both the United States House of Representatives in Colorado and the United States Senate in Washington, D.C. serving as a policy advisor for a number of issues, including education, health care, and transportation, and has a deep understanding of public policy and the federal legislative process. Jack is a graduate of CU Boulder with a Bachelor’s in Political Science and History, and earned his Master’s Degree in Public Administration at CU Denver. Jack and his wife live in Erie, Colorado with their three sons and black lab.

Jack Waldorf, Associate Vice President of Federal Relations & Outreach

Cyrus McCrimmon

STATE RELATIONS TEAM

Allison Kohn, Director of State Relations

Contact:
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Bio:

Allison Kohn is the Director of State Relations and Policy Analysis. She is responsible for analyzing and tracking legislation during the state session, as well as preparing fact sheets for use with legislators. She also organizes state legislator tours and events and works with state legislative offices on constituent issues. Additionally, she helps prepare correspondence and updates to the university community on legislation. She assists the lobby team with coverage of committee hearings and stakeholder meetings. Allison previously worked as the State Scheduler in the Denver office for U.S. Senator Cory Gardner. She has a Master’s in Public Policy from the University of Denver. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Kansas.

Allison Kohn, Director of State Relations

Cyrus McCrimmon

Angela Rennick, Assistant Director of State Relations

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Bio:

Angela Rennick is the Assistant Director of State Relations. She supports a broad range of
administrative duties that are designed to support CU’s state relations efforts. She also assists with the state legislative session by drafting and updating legislator biographies, running reports on legislation being tracked, filing lobby reports, assisting with research requests and coverage of committee hearings. She helps coordinate CU System leadership outreach events across Colorado. Angela has a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from Colorado State University and a Master in Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs.

Angela Rennick, Assistant Director of State Relations

Cyrus McCrimmon

Heather Retzko, Senior Associate Vice President of State Relations

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Bio:

Heather Retzko is the Senior Associate Vice President of State Relations. She serves all four institutions in the CU system by lobbying many pieces of legislation affecting CU. She also takes special interest in CU’s issues related to Title IX, research, academic programs and administration. Heather worked in the office as a student assistant for three years. She also served as Executive Assistant to our state and federal lobbyists, and Special Assistant to the Executive Director and Policy Analyst of State Relations. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Master in Public
Heather Retzko, Associate Vice President of State Relations

Cyrus McCrimmon

**ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

**Tony Salazar, Assistant Vice President of Engagement**

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Bio:

Tony Salazar is the Assistant Vice President of Engagement, leading the Office of Engagement, for the President’s Office at the University of Colorado. Tony is responsible for leading initial outreach and continued engagement efforts that strategically build and sustain relationships with key constituents in communities across Colorado and beyond.

Tony is an experienced non-profit and for-profit C-suite executive. Tony served as the Chief Affiliate Officer for the NEA Member Benefits Corporation, an affinity marketing company based in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Tony also served as the Executive Director of the Colorado Education Association (CEA), the state’s largest labor union with over 38,000 members at the
Tony began his career as a Policy Analyst at Colorado Legislative Council, a non-partisan support office for the Colorado state legislature. Later in his career, Tony served as an education lobbyist for CEA, where he also managed successful ballot issue and candidate campaigns.

Tony is the Board President of the Latin American Educational Foundation, a 72-year-old, Denver-based scholarship organization for Latino youth. Tony also serves on the board of directors for the South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, and the Fitzsimons Innovation Community. In addition, Tony serves on the board of advisors for the CU Denver Business School. Prior to taking his current role at CU, Tony was on the University of Northern Colorado’s Board of Trustees for two terms as a gubernatorial appointee.

Tony is a northwest Denver native and fifth-generation Coloradan. Tony received a full scholarship to attend the University of Denver, as a first-generation college student, where he graduated with Honors. Tony is also a 2018 graduate of the Latino Leadership Institute Fellowship and a 2021 graduate of Leadership Denver.
Tony Salazar

Hear Tony discuss how *CU Engagement Builds Relationships that Meet the State’s Needs* with [CU on the Air Podcast](http://cuontheair.blubrry.net/2021/07/27/cu-engagement-builds-relationships-that-meet-the-states-needs/) [here](http://cuontheair.blubrry.net/)

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