



TO: Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor

FROM: Shelly Miller and Ann Schmiesing, Chancellor's Task Force on Faculty Salary co-chairs

RE: Chancellor's Task Force on Faculty Salary Report

DATE: November 26, 2025

Dear Chancellor Schwartz,

We are pleased to submit this report on behalf of the Chancellor's Task Force on Faculty Salary ("the Task Force"). The report provides an overview of the Task Force's work in carrying out its charge, key observations, and recommendations for enhancing faculty salaries at CU Boulder.

1. Background and process

Lagging faculty salaries: The Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) identified compensation as a top priority for faculty in its 2024 Survey of BFA Priorities and Actions. Average CU Boulder tenure-track/tenured (TTT) faculty salaries have long trailed those of our Association of American Universities (AAU) public peers (see Appendix E for a list of AAU public universities).¹ This disparity has only grown in recent years: the average of CU Boulder TTT salaries was approximately \$17.2M below the AAU public peer average in academic year (AY) 2022-23, a gap that grew to \$19.9M by AY 2023-24 and \$23.6M by AY 2024-25. These figures are for budgeted, academic-year salaries and exclude benefits and additional compensation for duties such as administrative appointments, course overloads, and summer teaching or research. The widening salary gap makes it more difficult to attract and retain faculty and is of added concern because of the high cost of living in and around Boulder compared to some AAU public peers. More detailed comparative TTT salary data are provided below. Average CU Boulder teaching professor salaries are in alignment with average AAU public peer teaching professor salaries.

Formation of the Task Force: In response to these and related concerns, the Chancellor partnered with the BFA to form the Chancellor's Task Force on Faculty Salary in April 2025. The Task Force was charged with exploring how CU Boulder could offer more competitive compensation and address salary compression issues, with an initial focus on teaching professors and TTT faculty. The full committee charge and membership are provided in Appendices A and B.

¹AAU salary data are sourced from the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). The presentation of these data complies with the AAUDE Data Sharing Policy. For more information, visit www.aaude.org.

Definitions: Throughout our work, we have used the definitions of competitiveness and compression included in the [CU Boulder Compensation Glossary of Terms](#):

- **Competitiveness:** In line with relevant labor markets, the campus aspires to provide base salaries that utilize national, regional, and local market compensation data from sources such as AAU public peer institutions, CUPA-HR and other relevant salary surveys, and professional occupational data sources as appropriate for the employee population, discipline or occupation.
- **Compression:** Wage compression is a phenomenon that occurs when new employees are paid at or near the same rate as employees with longer tenure in the same job. For some occupations, this can also occur when the pay of subordinates encroaches upon the pay of the supervisor. Compression can also occur when the salaries of a group of employees are close in amount despite varying lengths of service, salary grade, requisite skills, and knowledge, or other factors of pay that traditionally result in greater differentiation.

Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group report: The Task Force’s emphasis on market competitiveness and compression differentiates its work from that of the 2022-23 Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group (FSPWG), which the BFA and the Provost charged with leading a “focused discussion to identify campus, college, and unit-level procedures and practices that contribute to faculty pay inequity, to recommend actions to improve faculty merit evaluation and pay equity procedures; to assure fairer practices going forward; and to strengthen transparency around merit evaluation and salary distribution procedures” (FSPWG charge, September 6, 2022). Although the FSPWG focused more on the merit evaluation and compensation pool distribution procedures and practices that can exacerbate or ameliorate salary inequities, the [FSPWG report](#) provided an essential foundation for our work; its detailed and thoroughly researched observations and recommendations remain accurate. Instead of reproducing FSPWG findings in our work, we refer to relevant passages of the FSPWG report below.

Timeline: The Task Force held its initial meeting on May 22, 2025. In summer and fall 2025, it met seven times as a full committee, with 12 additional subcommittee meetings, five follow-up sessions with individual members, and five co-chair meetings. Between meetings, Task Force members engaged in asynchronous planning and analysis.

In May and June, the Task Force reviewed CU Boulder’s [Compensation Philosophy](#), the FSPWG report and related documents, and the status of CU Boulder salaries in comparison to those of our AAU public peers.

In July, the Task Force split into three groups addressing different aspects of our charge: compensation levers and tools, retention and tenure/promotion increases, and teaching loads (see Appendix C). In September, subgroups submitted preliminary findings and recommendations for full Task Force membership review and input. Co-chairs Shelly Miller and Ann Schmiesing subsequently presented progress updates to the BFA Executive Committee, BFA Assembly, deans, and chairs/directors in

September and early October. The Task Force integrated feedback received from these groups into its recommendations.

2. Key Task Force Observations

- The typical *annual compensation pool is insufficient* to bridge the CU Boulder/AAU public peer TTT average salary gap. Although skimming from the annual compensation pool remains one way of addressing salary market and compression issues, it cannot solve the overall problem because the compensation pool itself has generally not been competitive with AAU peers. The 2022-23 Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group emphasized this core issue (see pp. 4-5 and 12 of the FSPWG report). Additionally, skims have been used to address compression and competitiveness at junior faculty ranks, thereby contributing to less competitive salaries at higher ranks.
- The *salary gap is largest at the full professor level*. Table 1 provides some information on the market differences and salary gaps. It is important to recognize that the total salary gap for CU Boulder full professors is influenced by both the higher number of faculty at this rank and the generally higher salaries associated with full professors compared to other ranks. However, the underlying causes of this gap are complex and have not been systematically studied.

Table 1. CU Boulder vs. AAU public peer salary gap by rank (AY 2024-25 salaries)

Faculty Rank	Market Difference (\$M)	% of Total Salary Gap	Rank as % of CU Boulder TTT FTE
Full Professor	-16.7	71%	43%
Associate Professor	-4.6	20%	32%
Assistant Professor	-2.2	9%	25%

- The *overall gaps cannot be attributed to faculty age*. If CU Boulder had a younger, earlier-career faculty compared to AAU public peers, salary gaps might be at least partly explainable. This might be the case in some individual departments, but it is not the case in general: the average age of CU Boulder faculty in each of the TTT ranks is the same or slightly older than the AAU public peer average (Table 2).

Table 2. CU Boulder (CUB) average age and salary by rank compared with AAU public peers (AY 2024-25 figures)

Faculty Rank	Avg. Age (CUB)	Avg. Age (AAU)	Avg. Salary (CUB)	Avg. Salary (AAU)	% Difference at CU Boulder
Full Professor	58	58	\$168,459	\$202,273	-17%
Associate Professor	49	48	\$121,471	\$135,000	-10%
Assistant Professor	38	38	\$117,381	\$121,397	-3%

- There is a *lack of clarity around faculty salary data*—what data exists, who has access to it, and how it might be used. This hampers efforts to identify and address competitiveness issues.
- There is a similar *lack of clarity around allowable uses of the annual compensation pool and other funding sources* to address salary competitiveness and compression.
- Approaches to addressing faculty salary issues are *highly fragmented* across the campus. For example, each department/program develops its own procedures for how to convert merit scores to salary increases (as detailed in the FSPWG report), and school/college practices and strategies for addressing competitiveness and compression vary significantly. While these differences may reflect disciplinary needs, they also appear to create disparities across campus.

3. Task Force Recommendations

Our key recommendations are as follows:

- Create a faculty-specific compensation philosophy and strategy.
- Invest in faculty salary competitiveness and equity.
- Formalize compensation expertise, training, and support.
- Standardize access to and use of CU Boulder data and external benchmarks.
- Create a formal process for salary adjustments beyond the annual compensation pool.
- Maintain competitive tenure and promotion increases.
- Develop a more rigorous and standardized approach to faculty retention salary increases.
- Communicate guidelines for supplemental pay beyond base salary.
- Develop and communicate guidance for deans regarding teaching loads.

We provide details for each recommendation below.

4. Create a Faculty-Specific Compensation Philosophy and Strategy

The [Campus Compensation Strategy](#) provides general guidance and resources for faculty and staff compensation (additional compensation, annual merit assessment, etc.). However, the campus does not have a *faculty* compensation philosophy and strategy to guide key items that are unique to the ways faculty are compensated for their work. At a minimum, a faculty compensation philosophy should use

AAU public peer institutions as the key comparator for salaries and consider cost-of-living factors, the impact of time in rank, promotional and faculty retention raises as related to overall faculty compensation, and forms of faculty compensation beyond base pay. Developing a faculty-specific compensation strategy should not delay the initial investment needed to correct the most acute salary competitiveness issues. Any delay will compound over time, leaving CU Boulder further behind.

5. Invest in Faculty Salary Competitiveness and Equity

Faculty have fallen significantly behind their AAU and other peer comparators. Some departments are well below the median and near the bottom decile compared with AAU peers. CU Boulder (including central campus, colleges/schools, departments, and institutes) should prioritize addressing salary competitiveness and compression issues in disciplines with pronounced discrepancies. Certain target areas, especially full and associate professor faculty in several departments, require immediate investment. The Office of the Provost, working with school/college deans, should create a multi-year plan to raise salaries to match AAU public peers (such as the average or upper range). The plan should start with units and ranks that have the largest salary gaps, then address other areas in stages. Salary increases beyond regular compensation pools should be used (as also recommended in the FSPWG report, p. 13), with timing that ensures alignment with budget constraints. Closing the gap for the 20 or so department-rank combinations (i.e. a specific rank—typically full and/or associate professor—in a specific department) that are most below the AAU average would require an investment of over \$7 million in continuing dollars, not including benefits. Salary investments should be paired with strategic reallocations of existing funds and involve rebalancing, as appropriate, of the academic department's TTT, teaching professor, TA/GPTI, and lecturer positions, as well as a review to ensure that the department's course offerings, teaching load capabilities, and research and creative work output are aligned. Implementation should match available campus, school/college, and unit-level funding and should not disproportionately burden departments. Corrections should begin on July 1, 2026, as delays will compound over time and leave units further behind. Progress against AAU benchmarks needs to be regularly assessed and reported to maintain accountability and transparency.

Any salary adjustments to bring a unit or rank up to market must consider the equal pay for equal work provisions of the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (CEPEWA). That is, instead of bringing all individual salaries in a department up to the AAU public peer average for the discipline and rank, experience, quantity, and quality of a TTT faculty member's research and creative work, teaching, and service must be examined. Many CU Boulder faculty earn more than the AAU public peer average for their discipline and rank, but still less than what their contributions merit – based on their research/creative work, teaching, and service compared to others in their unit. So, when investing in a unit, salary decisions should look at the full range of the unit's TTT faculty salaries, not just those below the AAU average, and make use of tools such as Academic Analytics.

Several individual schools, colleges, divisions, and departments have addressed teaching professor salary compression, particularly for teaching professors already promoted at the time that teaching professor promotion raises were instituted campuswide. This work should continue. Unfortunately, AAU data for teaching professor salaries is not broken down by rank or discipline, but it nevertheless provides

a useful overall benchmark. The Task Force also recommends addressing the disparate course loads borne by teaching professors who teach similar disciplines but are rostered in different schools/colleges (see Section 12).

6. Formalize Compensation Expertise, Training, and Support

From determining initial salary at the time of hire to translating merit evaluations into annual salary increases, faculty salary determination has historically been led by faculty unit leaders, with support from school or college administration, OFA, and/or HR, depending on the issue. Faculty unit leaders serve in time-limited appointments, so turnover is frequent. Staff members are not typically hired or trained as faculty compensation experts. As a result, salary decisions can vary widely across units and between unit leaders, leading to inconsistencies in how faculty compensation is set. There is also a lack of clarity about best practices for determining how to tie annual faculty performance evaluations to salary increases; for example, the Task Force heard varying approaches to the use of flat dollar, percentage, or hybrid flat dollar/percentage distribution models, and noted that the choice of method might contribute to both competitiveness and compression issues.

To address the lack of faculty compensation expertise, training, and support, CU Boulder could take several actions. The university should establish clearly defined roles for Faculty Compensation Professionals and prioritize hiring or training individuals with compensation certification. These professionals would be rostered within central campus HR and work closely with the Office of the Provost. In addition, faculty involved in salary decisions should receive required training, supported by clear processes and tools to guide planning. Because faculty unit leaders rotate regularly, this training must be updated at least every two years for continuing leaders, when processes are updated, or when new leaders are appointed, and tracked annually. It would be beneficial for compensation experts to work with faculty who are appointed as Faculty Fellows within the Office of the Provost and trained in compensation strategies and processes to advise deans, chairs, and salary personnel committees, providing a distinct faculty viewpoint about best practices.

7. Standardize Access to and Use of CU Boulder Data and External Benchmarks

Access to CU Boulder's internal data and external benchmarking sources – such as AAU public peer data and other data sets – has been inconsistent across campus. It is unclear how much detail faculty and staff, chairs, deans, and other administrators can access from the AAU Data Exchange (AAUDE) faculty salary data within the limits of the AAUDE Data Sharing Agreement. We recommend that Data & Analytics clearly define access levels and ensure that appropriate salary analyses are shared annually with schools, colleges, and campus leaders for further distribution as permitted (see also p. 21 of the FSPWG report).

A few units use other discipline-specific external market analyses for setting salaries, in addition to AAU public peer benchmarking. AAU comparisons do not apply to all CU Boulder disciplines; for example, since most AAUs do not have library faculty (only staff), AAUDE data may not provide adequate information about University Libraries' faculty salaries. In addition, some disciplines compete with industries beyond higher education to attract and retain faculty talent. Units should clearly document

and share any additional data sources used for salary benchmarking so that campus constituents understand how compensation decisions are made.

Starting in fall 2025, faculty data transparency efforts include publishing of all faculty salaries on mycuinfo.colorado.edu and distributing spreadsheets from the Office of the Provost that list base salary and other data for TTT and teaching professor faculty. These spreadsheets will be shared annually with schools and colleges by October 15, and each school or college is responsible for distributing them internally. In alignment with Colorado's Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, the campus now requires that salary ranges for new hires be published. Together, these practices help ensure that hiring salaries remain appropriate and equitable. Nonetheless, ongoing training is essential so that units can consistently interpret and address compression and equity concerns.

8. Create a Formal Process for Salary Adjustments Beyond the Annual Compensation Pool

The campus's annual compensation pool is "the amount of money allocated by the campus and approved by the Board of Regents for employee increases each year. It may be used for one or a combination of pay actions, including but not limited to merit, across-the-board, promotion and tenure, minimum wage, compression, pay range progression, equity, structural, and market adjustments. The pool may be applied differently across employee groups and adjusted each year to meet campus needs and priorities. An X% pool does not mean that all employees will receive that exact percentage as a pay increase" ([Compensation Glossary](#)). While this flexibility allows the compensation pool to address equity, cost-of-living, and compression concerns, this is not widely understood across campus. Moreover, CU Boulder lacks a comprehensive, campus-wide strategy for faculty salary planning and prioritization; however, the Office of the Provost is working to address this gap.

Skimming from the annual compensation pool has been a common way to address faculty salary issues, such as cost-of-living, compression, and equity. However, this practice reduces the funds available for true merit increases and has contributed to ongoing salary challenges, especially since CU Boulder's annual percent increases have often been below AAU peers. To prevent further negative impact, a separate compression salary pool should be established outside or on top of the annual compensation pool.

Units should also periodically apply categorical adjustments to address equity, compression, pay range progression, structural, and/or market adjustments, working with HR compensation professionals and the Office of the Provost. Market adjustments are particularly important and have not been accounted for by most units in their standard practices. Categories can apply to an entire unit or a faculty rank within a unit. These adjustments are generally funded through campus, college/school, and/or unit general fund budgets.

In the absence of a separate adjustment pool as recommended above, units can continue to use the annual merit pool as one of the levers to address equity and compression issues, as some units currently do, but this should not be the only lever available. Better training and tools should be developed to guide decision makers in how and when to use a skim for equity and/or compression.

9. Maintain Competitive Tenure and Promotion and Tenure Increases

Maintaining competitive promotion and tenure (P&T) increases is vital for overall salary competitiveness. Before July 2022, CU Boulder provided pay increases of \$2,000 to tenure-track faculty upon earning tenure and \$3,000 to tenured faculty upon promotion to full professor. These amounts remained unchanged for about a decade, dating back to at least 2011. To address widespread faculty concerns about the stagnant and uncompetitive P&T increases, the Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC) analyzed P&T increases at other institutions and recommended that CU Boulder raise its increases to \$6,500 for tenure and \$10,500 for promotion to full professor. Provost Russ Moore approved this recommendation, which went into effect on July 1, 2022. A compression pool for full professors within five years of having received promotion to full professor was also distributed. The approved ARMAC recommendations included indexing the P&T increase amounts to the trailing January merit pool each year. As a result, in fiscal year 2026, the increases are \$7,242 and \$11,698, respectively, reflecting annual merit pool percentages of 3% for FY24, 4% for FY25, and 4% for FY26. ARMAC also recommended that the P&T increase amounts be reassessed regularly, though no specific time frame was set.

In response to a BFA resolution calling for promotion increases for teaching professors, Provost Moore charged ARMAC with studying teaching professor promotion increases at AAU public peers and other CU campuses and making recommendations. ARMAC endorsed the BFA recommendation that increases for promotion to associate and full teaching professor be established as \$4,000 and \$6,500, respectively. Provost Moore approved this recommendation, which went into effect on July 1, 2024. These amounts, like those for tenure-track faculty, are adjusted annually in alignment with the merit pool percentage, and as of 2025, the promotion increases are \$4,160 and \$6,760. ARMAC recommended regular review of the promotion increase amounts, as for TTT P&T raises.

The Task Force recommends that TTT and teaching professor promotion increases be reviewed every five years or as determined by the Office of the Provost in consultation with campus constituents. This review should assess the raise amounts, comparisons to peer institutions, and impacts on equity, compression, and overall salary competitiveness. Further analysis is also needed to determine whether campus-stipulated P&T increase amounts should remain flat amounts, be a percentage of base salary, or a combination of both. A percentage of base salary with an annually adjusted flat dollar minimum might be advisable, considering associate and full professor market competitiveness issues. Review of options should commence as soon as possible, and should also consider Distinguished Professor salary increases.

Clearer policies explaining how units can augment P&T increases and how P&T increases relate to defined faculty salary ranges are desirable. The campus considers P&T increases a floor, and units may request to supplement them as needed. However, current analysis of these supplements is difficult because some units implement them off the P&T increase cycle (e.g., in January instead of July). Faculty should be regularly informed that P&T increases are adjusted annually in alignment with the campus compensation pool. To improve transparency and data tracking, any supplemental P&T increases should take effect at the same time as the standard P&T increase cycle (July 1), and any amounts above the campus minimum should be approved by the Office of the Provost.

Providing P&T increases assumes sufficient revenue is available to fund these amounts. The Task Force strongly recommends that these increases continue to be prioritized, noting that other budget adjustments may be required in years when there are resource constraints. Pausing the increases for a particular cohort during a time of resource constraints would create equity and fairness issues.

Units should also support faculty advancement as soon as promotion criteria are met. The time from associate to full professor has an impact on salary, since the longer someone stays in the associate professor rank, the more they miss out on the base-building full professor promotion raise. From 2019 to 2024, the mean number of years that faculty at CU Boulder stay in the associate professor rank is 7.7 years, but this varies significantly across campus:

Table 3. Years that faculty stay in the associate professor rank by college (2019-2024)

Unit	Mean Years	Median Years
A&S	8.4	8
AH	10	NA
NS	6.5	NA
SS	8.8	NA
BUS	8.7	6
CEAS	5.5	5
CMDI	9	9
EDUC	7	8
LAW	4.6	5
LIB	9.4	7
MUS	9	8

The considerable differences in time spent at each rank, as shown in Table 3, may be attributable to variations among academic disciplines. We do not have comparable data on time-in-rank at AAU public peer institutions.

10. Develop a More Rigorous and Standardized Approach to Faculty Retention Salary Increases

CU Boulder’s retention of outstanding faculty depends in part on the ability to offer salary adjustments to faculty with external job offers. Currently, all retention offers are evaluated by the Office of the Provost, ensuring that each case is reviewed from a campus-wide perspective to maintain general consistency across the university. Nevertheless, the Task Force has several recommendations to ensure that retention practices become fairer and more transparent.

In 2023, the Office of the Provost provided [faculty retention offer guidelines](#). These should be updated and communicated regularly to schools, colleges, departments, and programs. In addition, units should develop specific parameters, aligned with the campus guidelines, to inform internal decisions regarding retentions, including teaching professors and pre-emptive retention offers. A pre-emptive retention offer is a salary or compensation adjustment provided to a faculty member before they receive an external job offer, to proactively address salary equity, compression, or competitiveness concerns and

retain valued faculty. These offers are typically used as a strategic lever to prevent faculty from seeking or accepting positions elsewhere, and their use should be guided by clear campus parameters to ensure fairness and transparency.

Data should continue to be collected centrally by OFA and the Office of the Provost, so that retention practices are assessed routinely to ensure that they are unbiased and fair. Details about non-monetary components and unsuccessful retention offers should also continue to be collected. Currently, OFA requests that schools and colleges' deans' offices fill out a "Retention Information Sheet" for each retention offer, as well as each resignation (not including retirements). However, units do not always fill out the information sheet. The Task Force recommends that the Office of the Provost direct all deans to establish a consistent mechanism for the Retention Information Sheet to be filled out fully for each faculty member who is retained or resigns, regardless of whether a retention offer has been made. This information is crucial for understanding the effectiveness and impact of CU Boulder's retention strategies. Additionally, the campus should gather more comprehensive information on the reasons for faculty departures to help inform responsive policies and programs. More broadly, attention should be given to factors that may influence retention, such as non-financial compensation and the intellectual and social climate and culture of the institution. The Task Force suggests that a comprehensive campus review of retention processes and their implications for broader faculty salary issues should be conducted every five years.

Clarity and equity regarding the source of funds for retention offers are essential. Retention funding typically comes from a mix of the Faculty Actions Pool portion of the campus budget allocation model and unit-level budgets. Any preemptive retention strategies must align with a broader compensation framework. As with TTT P&T raises, the Task Force recommends that the Faculty Actions Pool be adequately funded each year to ensure that retention raises can be supported.

11. Communicate Guidelines for Supplemental Pay Beyond Base Salary

CU Boulder should maintain clear and ongoing communication regarding guidelines for supplemental pay, which is compensation provided in addition to base salary. The "[Additional Compensation Guidelines for Faculty](#)" should be regularly updated and communicated. To promote transparency and equity in how these supplemental pay tools are administered, it is essential that the university also provides consistent training for faculty and staff. Supplemental pay may take various forms, including but not limited to:

- Summer Salary: Faculty on 9-month appointments can earn up to 3/9ths of their academic year (AY) salary during summer months through summer teaching, sponsored research, and service activities. Depending on the specific work, these can be funded through a variety of sources, including general funds, research funds, and gift funds.
- Consulting: Faculty must limit external consulting to one-sixth of their time, obtain prior dean approval, report all compensated outside activities, and avoid using university resources for external work without special permission.

- Academic Year Stipends: Units may provide AY stipends (additional compensation beyond base salary) for administrative responsibilities or honorific appointments. These can be funded through a variety of sources, including general funds, research funds, and gift funds. It is important that all stipends, whether for leadership positions, endowed faculty positions, or other roles, are administered transparently and fairly.
- Overload Teaching: Faculty can teach overloads for additional pay as governed by campus and unit policies. In general, this can only be done on a case-by-case basis.
- One-Time Bonus: Units can establish a policy for faculty salary bonuses. These can only be awarded within the guidelines of this policy.
- Faculty Recruitment Incentives: Units can establish a policy for faculty recruitment incentives (signing bonuses). Amounts must be advertised in job postings, and awards must be made within the guidelines of the unit policy.

12. Develop and Communicate Guidance for Deans Regarding Teaching Loads

According to [Regent policy 4.A.1](#), “Each dean shall be responsible for matters at the school or college level, including [...] faculty assignments and workload.” The Task Force sought to understand how teaching load issues relate to overall work and compensation issues in units, because we heard widespread concerns that a lack of comprehensive inventory and guiding principles has led to siloed teaching load decisions that affect faculty across units, schools, and colleges. For example, we heard concerns that legacy decisions made years ago to raise or lower teaching loads in certain disciplines or ranks have created disparities with other ranks or units, and that past lowering of teaching loads in some disciplines may have led to the need to hire more teaching professors, lecturers, or graduate students, thus adding to costs and further impeding the university’s ability to improve base pay for TTT and teaching professor faculty. We also heard that some TTT teaching loads at CU Boulder are higher than and thus not competitive with loads at peer institutions. Although peer benchmarking of teaching loads was part of the Task Force’s charge, this information proved impossible to gather in the time we had available for the Task Force’s work; in addition, we learned from Data & Analytics colleagues that some national data-gathering pilots are underway that may facilitate benchmarking of teaching loads in the future.

To better understand teaching load issues and help with eventual peer institution benchmarking, the Task Force collected information on standard loads, course load adjustment policies and practices, and factors affecting how teaching is factored into faculty workload across schools and colleges at CU Boulder. An anonymous survey (see Appendix D) of chairs and directors yielded a wide variety of thoughts about current teaching load practices. Some respondents mentioned the challenge of considering class size, contact hours, course level (upper vs. lower division), and other responsibilities in determining teaching loads, while others voiced confidence in the fairness of their unit’s teaching load practices. Some recommended that teaching loads be adjusted to better reflect departmental needs and faculty roles; these respondents expressed confusion or concern about why teaching loads differ across certain departments and requested more clarity and fairness. Many emphasized the importance of maintaining strong student contact and support to foster student success and engagement. Units with

high enrollments find that this student demand pressure affects teaching load distribution. Except for faculty with administrative duties, [differentiated annual workloads](#) are rarely used because of their potential to negatively impact a faculty member's ability to keep up with research and creative work.

The Task Force was not charged with recommending that teaching loads be raised or lowered. We do recommend, however, that the Office of the Provost, with input from faculty governance, work with deans to develop guidelines and principles to use in discharging their responsibility to set faculty teaching loads. A dean exploring raising or lowering teaching loads for an entire department, program, division, and/or rank should ensure that other deans are aware and that the provost approves any such changes.

13. Summary

In summary, the Task Force recommends the following actions, which are ranked in two broad areas of priority:

Immediate priorities:

- Address market and compression issues in units with particularly large salary gaps compared to AAU public peers
- Hire and/or train faculty compensation professionals; provide regular training and support to units
- Develop a specific faculty compensation philosophy and strategy

Also needed:

- Clarify access to and use of CU Boulder data and external benchmarks
- Enhance data collection processes for retention offers; update and communicate retention offer and pre-emptive retention guidelines
- Maintain and regularly assess the competitiveness of tenure and promotion increases
- Create formal processes for salary adjustments beyond the annual compensation pool
- Communicate guidelines for supplemental pay beyond base salary
- Convene deans to discuss teaching load philosophy

For further analysis:

Benchmarking total faculty compensation—including retirement contributions, insurance coverage, and paid leave—would help contextualize AAU public peer salary comparisons. Preliminary analysis suggests that CU's retirement benefits are more favorable than at some public AAU institutions, while less favorable than at others. We also note that changes to CU Boulder benefits in the last decade include the [enhancement of paid parental leave](#). In addition, Task Force members drew attention to the variety of ancillary benefits with which CU Boulder faculty might not be aware, from fitness center discounts to access to online national newspapers through University Libraries. However, the Task Force determined that a holistic benchmarking of CU Boulder faculty benefits against peer institutions requires dedicated

faculty compensation expertise that the campus does not currently possess. This is a further reason to hire and/or train faculty compensation professionals.

Many constituents consulted during the Task Force’s work emphasized the impact of housing costs and availability on CU Boulder faculty and staff. We note that CU Boulder has taken steps toward addressing faculty and staff housing since the 2018 CU Boulder Academic Futures report, which called for “possible solutions including blocks of faculty/staff/post-doc/grad students housing and improved transportation services” ([Academic Futures Report](#), p. 8). In September 2021, Boulder City Council annexed CU Boulder South, a property the university has owned since 1996. City of Boulder residents voted to uphold the annexation in two successive referenda in November 2021 and November 2022. A portion of the site will eventually provide some housing available to CU Boulder faculty and staff. In 2023, the CU Board of Regents approved [CU Boulder’s purchase of the Cinebarre site](#) (1164 W. Dillon Road) in Louisville, which is planned for mixed-use, transit-oriented development that includes some housing for faculty, staff, and possibly graduate students. Making progress on these development plans remains essential to recruiting, retaining, and supporting CU Boulder faculty and staff. The fact that these planned housing solutions are years away makes enhancing the market competitiveness of CU Boulder salaries—the Task Force’s main area of focus—that much more important.

14. Appendices

Appendix A. Task Force Charge

Dear NAME,

I am writing to invite you to serve on the Chancellor’s Task Force on Faculty Salary. The Boulder Faculty Assembly has identified compensation as the top priority for faculty in its 2024 Survey of BFA Priorities and Actions, and I share the BFA’s commitment to exploring how CU Boulder can offer more competitive compensation and address salary compression issues. To this end, I am convening the Task Force on Faculty Salary to make recommendations to me regarding compensation enhancement options and strategies, with an initial focus on teaching professor and tenure-track/tenured faculty. The Task Force will be co-chaired by BFA chair Shelly Miller and Interim Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives Ann Schmiesing.

Specifically, I am charging the Task Force with the following actions and assessments:

- **Market and cost of living comparison:** Benchmark CU Boulder tenure-track/tenured faculty and teaching professor salaries against our AAU public peers and make recommendations regarding ranks and disciplines at CU Boulder in greatest need of market adjustments.
- **Promotion and tenure raises:** Assess the impact of current tenure-track/tenured and teaching professor promotion raise levels, including in relation to market and to positive and negative

effects on salary compression. Make any pertinent recommendations about adjustments to raise amounts and/or decompression processes.

- **Retention offer processes:** Evaluate current retention offer processes to determine appropriate criteria for retention offers, and make recommendations for updating or implementing CU Boulder faculty [retention offer guidelines](#) as necessary.
- **Budget model:** As preliminary work to assist with review of the CU Boulder Budget Model, assess aspects of the budget model that positively or negatively impact faculty compensation practices; include consideration of the Faculty Actions component of the model and make relevant recommendations.
- **Total compensation vs. salary compensation:** Benchmark total compensation against salary compensation to ensure comprehensive and competitive faculty compensation packages.
- **Teaching loads:** Conduct an AAU public peer comparison of tenure-track/tenured and teaching professor teaching loads, by discipline, and review existing policies and best practices to provide recommendations for optimal teaching loads. Assess utilization of [differentiated workloads](#).
- **College/department planning tools:** Develop or recommend planning tools for use at the college and department levels to better manage faculty salary and workload planning.
- **Compensation levers:** Recommend a range of department/program, school/college, and central administrative levers for achieving enhanced faculty compensation.
- **Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group:** Draw on the recommendations of the 2022-23 [Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group](#) to address items above, as relevant; coordinate recommendations with Faculty Fellows for Faculty Salary Procedures.

For all items above, Task Force members will make recommendations in alignment with CU Boulder's [compensation philosophy](#), which "lays out the values and principles in which the university's compensation structure and practices are grounded. The values and principles themselves derive from the university's mission and the campus' strategic imperatives. The key values include fairness, transparency, consistency, equity, competitiveness, and merit. These values and the values of Shared Equity Leadership inform the guiding principles and compensation practices." The Task Force will utilize the compensation philosophy, including [compensation terms](#) and [guiding principles](#), and ensure that recommendations comply with the [Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act](#).

The Task Force will be supported by HR, Budget & Finance, Faculty Affairs, and Data Analytics staff. The anticipated time commitment is a weekly meeting, with pre-reads, from late spring 2025 through fall semester 2025. Committee members who do not have a summer administrative appointment (i.e., committee members who are not chairs, directors, deans, associate deans, or full-time staff) will receive a \$1000 stipend for summer committee work. The committee's recommendations will be due to me on October 15.

I appreciate your dedication to this important task and look forward to your thoughtful and thorough recommendations. Your efforts in this regard will be instrumental in shaping faculty compensation initiatives and policies and improving overall faculty satisfaction and retention.

Please let me know by Monday, April 14, if you are willing to serve on this important committee.

Sincerely,

Justin Schwartz

Chancellor

University of Colorado Boulder

Appendix B: Task Force Members

Co-chairs:

Shelly Miller, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Boulder Faculty Assembly former chair

Ann Schmiesing, Senior Vice Chancellor of Strategic Initiatives and Professor of German

Members:

- **Lori Bergen**, Founding Dean of the College of Media, Communication, and Design, and James E. de Castro Chair in Global Media Studies, Professor of Journalism
- **Irene Blair**, Dean of the Natural Sciences Division, College of Arts & Sciences, and Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience
- **Danielle Brunner**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Budget and Finance, Office of the Provost
- **Yonca Ertimur**, Tandean Rustandy Esteemed Professor of Accounting, Leeds School of Business
- **Robyn Fergus**, Vice Chancellor of Human Resources
- **Stephanie Gillin**, Associate Dean of Administration and Finance, Leeds School of Business
- **Carrie Howard**, Assistant Dean for Budget, Finance & HR, College of Music
- **Lori Hunter**, Director of the Institute for Behavioral Science and Professor of Sociology, A&S
- **Jerry Jacka**, Faculty Fellow for Faculty Salary Procedures and Professor of Anthropology
- **Keith Molenaar**, Dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and K. Stanton Lewis Professor of Construction Engineering and Management
- **Michele Moses**, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of Education
- **Silvia Nogueron-Liu**, Associate Professor and Program Chair, Literacy Studies, School of Education
- **Venessa Ortega**, Director of Budget Administration, Budget and Fiscal Planning
- **Kelly Reel**, Assistant Director of Position Management and Compensation, Human Resources
- **Yumi Roth**, Chair of Art and Art History and Professor of Sculpture and Post-Studio Practice, A&S
- **Fernando Rosario-Ortiz**, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Resource Management and Professor of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering, CEAS
- **Warren Sconiers**, Associate Teaching Professor, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, A&S

- **Harry Surden**, Professor of Law
- **Rob Stubbs**, Director of Institutional Research
- **Glenda Walden**, Chair of Boulder Faculty Assembly Teaching Professor Advisory Committee and Teaching Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, A&S
- **Gabby Wiersma**, Associate Professor, University Libraries
- **Carlos Sepulveda**, Director of Strategic Initiatives (Project Manager)

Appendix C: Subcommittee Objectives and Members

1. Subcommittee on Compensation Levers and Planning Tools

Objectives: This subcommittee focused on addressing two topics, compensation levers and planning tools. The objectives were to recommend (1) a range of department/program, school/college, and central administrative levers that could be used for achieving enhanced faculty compensation, and (2) planning tools that are needed at the college and department levels to better manage faculty salary and workload planning. Subcommittee recommendations were based on current practices, with some practices being used widely across campus, while others are used less uniformly (either used infrequently or only by a few individual units).

Members: Keith Molenaar (chair) Robyn Fergus, Stephanie Gillin, Carrie Howard, Jerry Jacka, Venessa Ortega, Kelly Reel, Shelly Miller, and Gabrielle Wiersma

2. Subcommittee on Promotion & Tenure, Retention, Faculty Actions Pool

Objectives: This subcommittee reviewed current P&T increase amounts and practices, as well as retention salary increase practices and guidelines. It also considered the funding of these increases through the Faculty Actions Pool of the campus budget allocation model.

Members: Fernando Rosario-Ortiz (chair), Yonca Ertimur, Robyn Fergus, Venessa Ortega, Warren Sconiers, Shelly Miller, Lori Bergen, Lori Hunter, Kelly Reel, Jessica Keating, Carlos Sepulveda, Danielle Brunner

3. Subcommittee on Teaching Loads

Objectives: This subcommittee compared tenure-track/tenured and teaching professor teaching loads, by discipline, and reviewed existing policies and best practices for optimal teaching loads.

Members: Yumi Roth (chair), Irene Blair, Shelly Miller, Michele Moses, Silvia Nogueron-Liu, Glenda Walden, Jessica Keating, Harry Surden

Appendix D. Teaching Load Survey

Teaching Load Survey for Chairs and Directors

Thank you for completing this short survey. Your answers will be recorded anonymously. As part of its charge, the Chancellor's Faculty Salary Task Force is collecting data on standard teaching loads, course load adjustment policies and practices and factors affecting teaching loads for tenure-track/tenured and teaching professors. This will help us understand how teaching is factored into faculty workload across schools and colleges at CU Boulder and to begin to benchmark this against peer institutions. Please note that the task force is not charged with recommending that teaching loads be raised or lowered; instead, we are seeking information about how teaching loads are determined in accordance with Regent Policy 4.A.1 ("Each dean shall be responsible for matters at the school or college level including [...] faculty assignments and workload"; <https://www.cu.edu/regents/policy/4>). Thank you again for providing this vital information to enhance our understanding of teaching loads at our university.

1. What school/college is your unit in? [drop-down menu]:
 - a. A&S Arts and Humanities
 - b. A&S Natural Sciences
 - c. A&S Social Sciences
 - d. College of Communication, Media, Design and Information
 - e. College of Engineering and Applied Science
 - f. College of Music
 - g. Continuing Education
 - h. Graduate School
 - i. Law School
 - j. Leeds School of Business
 - k. School of Education
 - l. University Libraries
2. **Unit size:** What is the total number of tenure-track/tenured, teaching professor, and clinical faculty in the unit with a 50% or higher appointment?
 - a. 1-10
 - b. 11-20
 - c. 21-30
 - d. 31-40
 - e. 41-50
 - f. 51-60
 - g. 60+
3. Standard teaching load: What is the contractual course load per academic year for a 100% appointment? Use numbers (e.g. 4/4 or 2/1) for distributions for the academic year.
 - a. Tenure-track faculty? [Short text]
 - b. Teaching professors? [Short text]
 - c. Clinical faculty? [Short text]
4. Course load adjustments:

- a. Many units provide teaching reductions for a variety of reasons (administrative roles, course size, heavy service load, etc.). With that in mind, approximately what fraction of your faculty is typically teaching the number of courses mentioned in question 2 above? [Short text]
 - b. Are there standard practices in the unit for determining and approving course releases or equivalents?
 - Yes No
 - If yes, briefly describe or link: [Short text]
 - c. Apart from administrative assignments, have any faculty in your unit received differentiated workloads in the past 5 years where there has been a rebalancing among research, teaching, and service for tenure-track/tenured faculty?
 - Yes No
 - If yes, how many faculty? [Short text]
 - d. In the last 5 years, have any teaching/clinical professors in your unit received a differentiated workload semester after promotion?
 - Yes No Not applicable
 - If yes, how many? [Short text]
5. What is the most important thing we should know about how teaching loads are related to overall work/compensation issues in your unit? [200 words maximum]

Appendix E: AAU public institutions

Arizona State University
 Georgia Institute of Technology
 Indiana University
 Michigan State University
 The Ohio State University
 The Pennsylvania State University
 Purdue University
 Rutgers University – New Brunswick
 Stony Brook University – The State University of New York
 Texas A&M University
 University of Arizona
 University at Buffalo – The State University of New York
 University of California, Berkeley
 University of California, Davis
 University of California, Irvine
 University of California, Los Angeles
 University of California, Riverside

University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Florida
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of Maryland at College Park
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri, Columbia
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of South Florida
University of Texas at Austin
University of Utah
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin – Madison

Appendix F: List of websites referenced in Task Force report

[Academic Futures Committee Report](#)

[Additional Compensation Guidelines for Faculty](#)

[Cinebarre site \(1164 W. Dillon Rd.\)](#)

[CU Boulder Compensation Strategy](#)

[CU Boulder Enhancement to Paid Parental Leave \(2018\)](#)

[CU Boulder Glossary of Compensation Terms](#)

[CU Boulder South](#)

[Differentiated Annual Workload for Faculty](#)

[Differentiated Workload Guidelines](#)

[Faculty Retention Offer Guidelines \(Office of the Provost\)](#)

[Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group Charge](#)

[Faculty Salary Procedures Working Group Report](#)

[University of Colorado Board of Regents Policy 4.A.1](#)