

September 15, 2025

Dear Campus Leaders,

We are writing on behalf of the Center for Asian Studies, one of the most dynamic and visible centers at CU Boulder, in response to the non-continuation of the CAS National Resource Center (NRC) and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) grants. The U.S. Department of Education's decision not to make continuation awards in these highly competitive programs will result in a loss to CAS of \$537,765 in expected funds. This loss threatens to halt critical programs and undermine CU Boulder's global educational mission. We urgently request your assistance to sustain CAS through this crisis.

CAS is the only National Resource Center ever in Colorado, and the only Asian Studies center in the state. It supports a wide variety of events across campus that bring together faculty, students, staff, and community members. CAS has over 100 affiliated faculty members involved in Asia-related research and teaching across campus, many of whom are showing their support by signing onto this letter. With 60% of the world's population, and countries such as China and India playing increasingly powerful global economic and political roles, Asia is a crucial region for CU Boulder engagement.

CAS's mission is to connect our campus with Asia and make Asian studies accessible to all, resulting in crucial contributions to internationalization at the University:

- **Undergraduate Education.** CAS-rostered faculty offer interdisciplinary Asia-related courses enrolling hundreds of students from across campus, enhancing the curriculum by adding crucial thematic courses on Asia. The Tibetan and Himalayan Studies teaching initiative and certificate has built upon the university's strength in this region by increasing related undergraduate offerings. The Climate and Society in Asia certificate (awaiting final approval) will resonate with the Chancellor's sustainability priority.
- **Research Initiatives.** CAS drives cutting-edge research that fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration. We have hosted 13 annual research symposia, a robust speaker series averaging over 40 events per year, and the Luce-funded China Made project in recent years, bringing together faculty, visiting scholars, and students across departments. CAS regularly hosts visiting scholars and convenes diverse academic gatherings in ways that encourage innovative, cross-disciplinary inquiry. CAS-affiliated faculty are advancing research at the intersection of energy and society; for example, Assistant Teaching Professor Shae Frydenlund and Professor Bri-Mathias Hodge (ECEE and RASEI) received a Planning Phase Award from the RIO New Frontiers Grant program for their project *Mapping Technological and Social Dimensions of Geothermal Development in Colorado*. This project has been invited to compete for a Launch Phase Award in June 2026.
- **Community Outreach.** CAS's K–14 teacher workshops and public events have engaged thousands of educators and community members from within Colorado and beyond.
- **Scholarships.** CAS offers graduate and undergraduate scholarships and fellowships including FLAS (for intensive language and area studies programs), Tang (for Global Seminars in China) and Asia Internship Program awards (for summer internships in Asia).
- **External Funding.** Since 1999, CAS has brought nearly \$30 million in grants and gifts to CU Boulder, elevating our national visibility and demonstrating a remarkable return on investment for the campus.

CAS has contributed to CU's reputation and proven itself through rigorous external grant competitions; by providing leadership in various on-campus programs and initiatives; and through proactive, productive, and positive coalition building throughout the Rocky Mountain West and nationwide. A recent piece in *Inside Higher Ed*¹ notes, "While most area studies programs are small, their loss would ripple through a wide range of disciplines, impoverishing teaching, research and scholarship across the humanities and social sciences." CAS is now in need of ongoing campus support that will allow for continued activity and engagement without concerns about the unit's very existence.

At risk due to the loss of funding:

- Without university support, four experienced staff members whose salaries are fully or partially dependent on the grants may experience reduced FTE or layoffs, including Executive Director Danielle Salaz, who is celebrating her 20th anniversary at the Center this month. Without additional funding, this will begin as early as spring semester.
- The positions of two teaching faculty, one focusing on Climate and Society in Asia and another focusing on Tibetan, Buddhist, and Contemplative Studies could be lost after this academic year; 168 students are enrolled in their fall 2025 classes.
- NRC-funded programming, including Asia-related lectures and events, faculty professional development opportunities, grants for new Asia-related courses, undergraduate scholarships for summer internships in Asian countries, and professional development programming for K-12 teachers and community college instructors, will end after summer 2026 without new grants or funding commitments

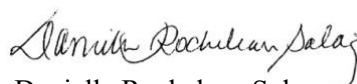
Forcing CAS to wind down due to the loss of these federal grants would be a major loss to the university's ability to sustain and expand activities related to global education. Given the centrality of CAS to the teaching, research, and outreach missions of the university, we respectfully urge the university to take immediate action to provide funding to fully cover staff salaries for academic year 2025-26 as well as stepped-up operational funding for the following three years. CAS has prepared a rough 4-year budget that can be shared as appropriate. Prior to this academic year, CAS received a yearly operational budget of \$50,000 from the College of Arts and Sciences. Unfortunately, this amount no longer covers even a half-time staff member. We respectfully request a bridge commitment for 2025-26, and a multi-year plan to stabilize CAS going forward to maintain the faculty and staff capacity required to compete for grants and attract private donors.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



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Danielle Rocheleau Salaz
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¹ Amanda Lanzillo, "Why Area Studies Matters," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 3, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/views/2025/09/03/why-area-studies-matters-opinion>

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