

TO: Justin Schwartz, Chancellor
FROM: Jon Leslie, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, and Ann Schmiesing, Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives (CTFO co-chairs)
RE: Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Outreach
DATE: August 15, 2025

Dear Chancellor Schwartz,

We are delighted to submit this report on behalf of the Chancellor's Task Force on Outreach (CTFO). This document outlines the process the CTFO followed in carrying out its charge, provides an overview of the current state of outreach and engagement at CU Boulder, and conveys the task force's recommendations for enhancement and improvement.

I. Process

Facilitated by Associate Vice Chancellor for Organization and Employee Development Merna Jacobsen, the committee followed the Appreciative Inquiry model in carrying out its April 2025 charge. (See Appendix A: CTFO Members and Charge.) The "define, discover, dream, design" stages of Appreciative Inquiry enabled members to work from a strengths-based assessment of the current state of CU Boulder outreach and engagement to arrive at recommendations for improvement.

The CTFO met six times from May to August. During the "define, discover, dream" phases, task force members met together as a group. For the "design" phase, the task force split up into four working groups (Principles; Inventory; CU Boulder Brand; Structure) and then reconvened to share and finalize recommendations.

To inform the work of the task force, co-chairs Jon Leslie and Ann Schmiesing met in May 2025 with CU System Vice President for Outreach and Engagement Tony Salazar and Senior Vice President for External Relations and Strategy Danielle Radovich Piper to discuss the System and campus partnership for outreach and engagement, including respective roles. In addition, Ann Schmiesing met with incoming Boulder Faculty Assembly Chair Alastair Norcross in June 2025 and with Staff Council co-chairs Crystal Cyr, Leah McDaniel-Parvez, and Jessica Sandoval in July to brief them on the Outreach effort and related initiatives. To garner as much information and input as possible, Ann Schmiesing and CTFO member Nils Halverson invited over 70 chairs and directors to meet individually to discuss their unit's outreach and engagement activities and the gaps and opportunities they see for improvement. 45-minute meetings were held with each of the 34 units that responded to the invitation. (See Appendix B: Meetings with Academic Units.)

The CTFO's work was informed by materials including published research on outreach and engagement in higher education and CU Boulder's April 2025 application for Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement. (See Appendix D: CU Boulder's 2025 Application for Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.) The CTFO's work also built on a meeting of System and campus outreach leaders convened by Chancellor Schwartz in October 2024.

II. Current state

Outreach and engagement activities typically span several overlapping areas and efforts in flagship public research universities like CU Boulder. These include, but are not limited to:

- Community service (e.g. volunteerism, civic engagement)
- Public scholarship (e.g. community-based and public-interest research and teaching; adult and community education; public performances and lectures)
- Advocacy (e.g. public, business, and government relations; alumni; public policy; community advocate programs)
- Advancement (e.g. donor relations, corporate partnerships, alumni and parent relations)
- Recruitment (e.g. admissions, pre-collegiate programs, athletics, continuing education)
- Relationship building (e.g., fostering relations with the broader community, community leaders, elected officials, nonprofits, etc.)

Multiple administrative and academic units at various levels of the institution are often involved in any one of these functions. Operating definitions and understandings of what constitutes “outreach” and “engagement” may also vary depending on discipline, function, and unit.

In view of these and related factors, it is not surprising that outreach and engagement activities at CU Boulder are not—and could not possibly be—centralized in one entity. The decentralized nature of CU Boulder’s current structure has allowed organic innovation and pockets of excellence to arise. Indeed, CU Boulder’s application for the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement draws attention to the many impactful programs and units that have flourished under the current structure. Conversations with individual academic departments and programs in summer 2025 have yielded further evidence of outstanding outreach and engagement work. To give just a few examples, the Physics department’s PhET Interactive Simulations program has delivered over 1.7 billion interactive simulations for science and math for teachers and students worldwide; the Shakespeare and Violence Prevention project has reached nearly 140,000 students in 30 counties and more than 300 schools across Colorado; Computer Science’s capstone course for seniors and master’s students engages 35 to 55 industry and nonprofit partners each year; the Center for Humanities and the Arts co-sponsors a “Difficult Dialogues” public events series with Colorado Chautauqua to foster mutual understanding and respectful discourse around complex topics; Fiske Planetarium reached nearly 15,000 K-12 students in 2024 through field trips and outreach visits (including visits to over thirty Title 1 schools and programming for individuals with disabilities); Journalism faculty assist rural news outlets with honing their business model to survive current economic challenges; and the Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization, with support from Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship (PACES) and CU Boulder’s Heterodox Academy Community, established a partnership agreement with Colorado Mesa University (CMU) to bring high profile speakers to both Boulder and Grand Junction in a cross-sector effort to promote civic dialogue and intellectual diversity. Faculty across the university give public lectures and performances, serve as mentors to K-12 students, offer their expertise to the media, and provide testimony related to public policy. In these and many other ways, CU Boulder’s outreach is positively impacting Coloradans.

Nevertheless, the highly decentralized nature of current outreach and engagement offices and activities at CU Boulder has arisen by default, not design. Its lack of intentionality and coordination has several disadvantages:

- In the absence of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and campus outreach priorities, one unit's decision-making may duplicate or be at odds with another's. There is also an opportunity for increased efficiency with strategies, tactics, and budget. Overall, CU Boulder's outreach work at the administrative level relies too exclusively on goodwill, negotiation, or even happenstance instead of being driven principally by a coordinated outreach and engagement strategy derived from CU Boulder's mission, vision, strategic priorities, and values. Internally and externally, knowledge of existing outreach activities and resources is fragmented and occurs too frequently through word of mouth. As a result, internal support structures may be underutilized, and CU Boulder may miss opportunities to serve communities, geographic areas, and audiences where it currently has little presence or has a history of poor engagement.
- Many academic units express uncertainty about how to reward or incentivize faculty outreach and engagement work and whether CU Boulder administration values this work. Some units struggle with logistics associated with outreach and engagement activities (e.g. venue scheduling, reimbursement, event publicizing) and with how to assess impact. Familiarity with campus resources varies significantly.
- Decisions made about the viability of particular outreach and engagement programs can appear uncoordinated, arbitrary, and/or overly reliant on a unit's particular budgetary situation. Precarity of funding can lead to partnerships being discontinued in a manner that erodes community trust. Some units express concerns about whether the campus understands what it takes to develop and sustain community partnerships. As the Carnegie application points out, "the coordinating and support infrastructure supporting CE [community engagement] programs often occupies a liminal space that does not fit neatly into campus organizational structure and traditional categories of research, teaching, or student services. This can lead to a misalignment of resources and priorities that must be addressed to ensure support for key initiatives that contribute to advancing the university's mission and community impact" (p.21).
- Previously established principles for CU Boulder outreach and engagement are not well known, rely overly on dated campus strategic framing, and are in need of updating. Without common standards, principles, and practices informed by outreach and engagement research and best practices, CU Boulder faculty, staff, administrators, and students can inadvertently erode the trust of and negatively impact the communities they seek to serve or partner with.
- The fragmented approach to outreach and engagement makes addressing public misconceptions about CU Boulder, particularly around accessibility and affordability, more difficult.
- With respect to the CU Boulder brand, a disconnect between academic and athletic branding has at times led to confusion, diluted outreach effectiveness, and contributed to an overall lack of clear awareness and understanding of CU Boulder's presence, work, and value to communities (particularly in relationship to the CU System and other CU campuses). It has likely complicated efforts to recruit students in communities where

outreach is taking place, hindered affinity for CU Boulder and the Colorado Buffaloes, and diminished opportunities to increase licensing revenue.

To address the issues identified above while maintaining existing areas of excellence, the CTFO submits the following recommendations related to outreach and engagement structure, principles, inventories, and the CU Boulder brand.

III. Recommendations: Structure

With no cuts to positions or budgets, the CTFO recommends transitioning from the highly decentralized nature of current CU Boulder outreach and engagement activities to a hub and spoke model. This model balances strategic direction and coordination with localized innovation and execution. It is not a centralization model, for reasons stated in Section II (“Current State”) above.

CU Boulder has already taken some steps in recent years toward a hub and spoke model for activities related to outreach and engagement. Examples include the following:

- The Office of Government and Community Engagement moved in 2021 from Strategic Resources and Support to the Chancellor’s Office.
- In 2025, Aquetza moved from the School of Education to Enrollment Management.
- Recognizing the expertise in Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship (PACES), the faculty director hired in 2025 by Strategic Relations and Communications to direct the programming for the annual Conference on World Affairs reports to the executive director of PACES.

In the points below, we describe how existing offices and entities would function or be recognized in the new model with respect to outreach and engagement activities. We also provide recommendations specific to these units.

A. Academic schools, colleges, departments, programs, centers, and institutes:

In the hub and spoke model, academic units would continue to engage in various outreach and engagement activities, but with increased clarity regarding who to go to for logistical support; what other outreach and engagement activities exist in academic departments and programs; how to assess impact; what campus resources are available to support outreach and engagement efforts; what options exist for rewarding and incentivizing faculty outreach and engagement activities; what campus-level priorities have emerged for outreach and engagement and how to participate in prioritization; and what principles, practices, and policies to adhere to when engaging with external partners and communities. Academic units would continue to be the owners and stewards of curricular offerings involving community engagement (e.g. service learning anchored in coursework), and faculty would continue to pursue their public and community-engaged research and creative work in accordance with the principles of academic freedom and shared governance.

B. Office of Government and Community Engagement (OGCE): Note: OGCE currently includes Local Government and Community Engagement; External Partnerships; Native American Affairs; Government Policy.

Recommendations:

1. Rename OGCE to “Office of Outreach and Community Engagement” (OCE) or a similar title that foregrounds engagement and outreach while still recognizing the importance of local government relations. *“Office of Outreach and Community Engagement” (OCE) will be used in the recommendations below, recognizing, however, that it is provisional and may change.* Make clear in the unit-level mission, vision, and values of the renamed unit the University’s commitment to community engagement in accordance with the principles set forth in Section IV below.
2. Designate OCE as the principal outreach and engagement hub at CU Boulder. This designation will enable internal and external constituencies to know who to contact with outreach and community engagement questions, help coordinate and incentivize the upkeep of outreach and engagement inventories, and better streamline CU Boulder’s partnership with CU System outreach and engagement.
3. Charge OCE with providing guidance to units related to outreach and engagement-related logistics, principles and practices, impact assessment, and outreach plans. OCE should establish guidelines for how to conduct outreach and community engagement in a way that is ethical, builds trust, and creates lasting partnerships. OCE will also need to strategically resource select activities to make them sustainable, so that CU Boulder enhances its reputation as a reliable long-term partner.
4. Amplify and elevate the work of Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship (PACES) by moving PACES to Outreach and Community Engagement. Co-locate PACES staff with current OGCE community relations, government relations, Native American Affairs, and external partnership staff.
 - a. Rationale: This move would raise PACES’s visibility across campus and give it a greater voice in planning and prioritization related to outreach and engagement. It would enable PACES to better leverage adjacencies and synergies with current OGCE areas (Native American Affairs, community engagement and partnerships, government relations and policy) and lend its expertise to their work; in addition, the move would facilitate relationships with offices such as Advancement (including Alumni Relations) and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Sustainability, while also enhancing PACES’s collaborations with academic units, the Research and Innovation Office (RIO), the Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA), Strategic Relations and Communications, and other offices. In accordance with academic freedom and shared governance, PACES would retain its governance structures (e.g. faculty grant board).
 - b. Implementation: Next steps would include working with: HR to update PACES position descriptions and titles if needed (with no cuts to positions or salaries); Budget and Fiscal Planning on budgetary aspects of moving PACES; and Infrastructure & Resilience to determine a central space and timeline for co-location.

5. Charge OCE with partnering with the Alumni Association and other relevant offices to establish a community advocate program to support CU Boulder's mission and vision in service to Coloradans and the broader public good.
6. Charge OCE, in collaboration with Enrollment Management, with developing an annual scope of work with CU System outreach and engagement.
7. Support Native American Affairs in identifying meaningful ways to engage with Indigenous communities, including collaborative initiatives and support programs.
8. Once OCE is established and includes PACES, charge OCE with convening a standing Executive Advisory Council for Outreach and Engagement (EACOE), to be co-chaired by the Associate Vice Chancellor for External Partnerships, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Local Government and Community Engagement, and the Executive Director of Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship. Other members would include a representative from each of the following: Boulder Faculty Assembly, Enrollment Management, Student Life, Faculty Affairs, Research & Innovation, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Leadership Support and Programming, Native American Affairs, Strategic Relations and Communications, Athletics, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Sustainability, Continuing Education, and Advancement/Alumni Relations. EACOE would receive its charge from the Chancellor. Its principal purpose would be to ensure alignment of outreach and engagement activities with CU Boulder's mission, vision, strategic priorities, and values and with the outreach and engagement principles set forth below in Section IV. It would also assist OCE with logistical support, including messaging and training, to units seeking to engage in outreach and engagement activities; developing an annual calendar of key outreach and engagement events; maintaining inventories of CU Boulder outreach and engagement activities; facilitating meetings for CU Boulder faculty and staff serving similar geographical areas and demographic groups; and establishing and maintaining a CU Boulder outreach and engagement community of practice, a student advisory board, and a school and college advisory board with at least one faculty representative from each school/college.
9. Charge and support OCE and specifically PACES with offering an annual CU Boulder Engaged Scholar Award, a CU Boulder Engaged Staff Award, a CU Boulder Advocate Award, and a CU Boulder Volunteer Award, with input from the Boulder Faculty Assembly, Faculty Affairs, RIO, Staff Council, Student Life, and other relevant offices.
10. To facilitate coordination in the hub and spoke model, charge and support PACES with developing a faculty fellows/directors program that embeds public and community-engaged scholarship practitioners in relevant offices and coordinates with existing faculty directors in offices such as Faculty Affairs.

C. Division of Enrollment Management: Note: Enrollment Management currently includes the Office of Precollege Outreach and Engagement, among other offices.

Recommendations:

1. Designate Enrollment Management as the hub for student recruitment and precollege programming.

2. Charge Enrollment Management and OCE with developing an annual scope of work with CU System outreach and engagement that delineates roles and includes strategic priorities.
3. Implement the recommendations in Section V: Recommendations: Outreach and Engagement Inventory below, to ensure that Enrollment Management has better visibility into K-12 outreach and related activities led by academic and administrative support units across the campus. Charge OFA with participating in the Outreach and Engagement Inventory actions as specified and OFA, PACES, and Continuing Education with building and maintaining connections regarding academic/public and community-scholarship programs.

D. Division of Continuing Education: Note: Continuing Education currently includes PACES, Science Discovery, and ACCESS, in addition to online courses/programs and other lifelong learning opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. For reasons articulated above, move PACES to OCE. This move would enable Continuing Education to focus on taking the lead in lifelong learning and educational offerings for nontraditional students.
2. Noting synergies between Science Discovery and other STEM-related K-12 programming in academic units, Chancellor's Task Force on Outreach members recommend further assessment of whether and how such programming might be better coordinated, without stifling existing areas of excellence.

E. Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA): Note: OFA includes the Faculty Data and Impact team, which in partnership with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) is the steward of the Faculty Information System (FIS), the system of record that includes the Faculty Report of Professional Activities (FRPA); Faculty Affairs also includes a Public Scholarship Faculty Director.

Recommendations:

1. Charge OFA with participating in the Outreach and Engagement Inventory actions noted in Section V: Recommendations: Outreach and Engagement Inventory below.
2. Encourage OFA and PACES to further augment coordination between the Public Scholarship Faculty Director role and PACES.
3. Several academic units consulted in summer 2025 expressed a need for help as they consider how to incentivize and reward faculty outreach and community engagement activities in annual merit reviews and tenure and promotion criteria. To address this need, CTFO members recommend that OFA take a lead role in offering guidance.

F. Research and Innovation Office (RIO): Note: RIO currently includes Innovation & Partnerships; Research Impact and Engagement; Public Scholarship Initiative (events such as the Elevating Colorado Voices: Public Scholarship Workshop); Industry Research Partnerships (includes Workforce Development); and Industry and Foundation Relations (with Advancement), among other offices.

Recommendations:

1. Charge RIO with participating in the Outreach and Engagement Inventory actions noted in Section V: Recommendations: Outreach and Engagement Inventory below.
2. Maintain RIO's strong partnership with OCE entities (OGCE, PACES), including but not limited to areas such as connecting broader impacts of research to community engagement work.

G. Division of Student Life: Note: Student Life includes Service Learning and Impact in Community Engagement (SLICE), among other offices.

Recommendations:

1. Charge Student Life with participating in the Outreach and Engagement Inventory actions noted in Section V: Recommendations: Outreach and Engagement Inventory below.
2. In partnership with other EACOE members and drawing on inventory efforts, create new opportunities for volunteerism and other community service that align with outreach and community engagement goals and priorities.

H. Advancement/Alumni Relations:

Recommendation: Through membership on EACOE and implementation of the inventory recommendations in Section V below, ensure that Advancement and Alumni Relations have greater visibility into outreach and engagement activities at CU Boulder and that units engaged in outreach and engagement activities are generally aware of relevant Advancement and Alumni Relations efforts.

I. Office of the Vice Chancellor for Sustainability (VCS): Note: this is a new office established in spring 2025 with the hiring of the Vice Chancellor for Sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. Since this is a new office, ensure that OCE, RIO, SRC, and related offices provide coordinated support as the VCS establishes sustainability-related outreach and engagement activities and goals.
2. Through membership on EACOE and implementation of the inventory recommendations in Section V below, ensure that the office of the VCS has visibility into outreach and engagement activities at CU Boulder, both to ensure coordination with sustainability-related outreach and engagement activities launched by the VCS and to provide sustainability guidance as relevant to non-VCS outreach and engagement projects and partnerships.

J. Strategic Relations and Communications: Note: Strategic Relations and Communications (SRC) advances CU Boulder's outreach and engagement mission by embedding strategic events, public scholarship and brand stewardship into the campus's annual integrated marketing communications plan. SRC ensures that high-profile events—such as the Conference on World Affairs (CWA) and related public scholarship opportunities—are not only executed well but also leveraged as strategic assets that amplify CU Boulder's public value and visibility.

Recommendations:

SRC's contributions to the hub and spoke model for outreach and engagement will include:

- Embedding strategic events like CWA, research-related events, and other relevant community events into the university's annual integrated marketing communications calendar.
- Collaborating with outreach hubs (e.g., OCE, Enrollment Management) to align messaging and maximize impact.
- Supporting faculty public scholarship through media training, writing support, and placement services.
- Stewarding CU Boulder's brand identity—in collaboration with CU Athletics, CU system and campus units—to enhance public recognition and engagement.
- Conducting annual reputation marketing campaigns—in collaboration with campuswide partners—to raise visibility and engagement around CU Boulder's outreach, research and creative work value.
- Developing metrics, dashboards, and polling to assess the impact of outreach-related communications on public engagement and campus objectives and key results.
- Serving as a partner in building the web ecosystem of outreach and engagement activities and units.

Position and Office Titles

As an overall recommendation, the CTFO encourages campus leaders to examine other position and office titles with outreach and engagement wording to see if these titles need updating in light of the structural recommendations and proposed principles in this report.

IV. Recommendations: Principles

Establishing and communicating principles for CU Boulder outreach and engagement work is key to better coordinating this work and ensuring that it positively impacts the communities we seek to serve. CTFO members developed the following principles as a starting point and suggest that these be used as the basis for conversations with campus and community partners. Our suggested principles align with the Carnegie community engagement framework, as evidenced in our recent first-time application. They are also authentic to CU Boulder's unique history, character, and strategic priorities.

Faculty, staff, students, and community partners should have the opportunity to discuss these draft principles and to respond, make suggestions, and raise concerns. This discussion could take place as part of already scheduled activities, such as the focus group conversations with partners around the state that PACES has planned, or as a workshopping element of the "Celebration of Engagement" scheduled in January 2026.

We also acknowledge that further refinement of these draft principles should continue as the hub and spoke model for outreach and engagement work at CU Boulder takes shape.

A. One University Approach

We envision a university where outreach is not an extension, but an active expression of our mission – where engagement is a shared act of learning, reciprocity, transformation, and problem solving. Guided by collaboration, equity, and mutual respect, we aim to be a unified, inclusive institution that listens deeply, responds authentically, and builds partnership rooted in shared benefit. Our outreach reflects institutional values and thoughtfully responds to the histories, perspectives, and needs of diverse communities. We prioritize collaboration across campus and with communities to ensure all voices are heard.

Thematic Components

Component	Core Idea	Institutional Implications
Mission-Centered, Reflectively Adaptable	Outreach aligns with CU Boulder’s mission while adapting to community insights.	Programs and partnerships are shaped by ongoing community insights.
Collaboration and Synergy	Cross-unit collaboration amplifies outreach effectiveness.	Prioritize and incentivize interdisciplinary partnerships to maximize impact.
Advancing the Public Good	Engagement is purpose-driven, rooted in reciprocity, and combines university and community expertise to accomplish shared goals.	Outreach is integral to the university mission, advancing shared goals through reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships with community constituents.
Everyone Counts	Perspectives of various communities, including students, staff, faculty, and external partners are solicited, welcomed and integrated.	Equity in participation, voice, and recognition across all outreach initiatives.
Shared Equity Leadership	Outreach leadership and responsibility are shared and inclusive.	Accountability is embedded in decision-making.
Welcoming, Inclusive, Accessible	Outreach is open and inclusive to all communities across CU Boulder’s local, state, national, and global communities.	Practices and language across programs affirm dignity, build trust, and eliminate barriers to participation.

B. Civically Engaged Students

We envision a university where students are not just recipients of outreach but co-creators of a more just, inclusive, and interconnected world. Outreach fosters civic identity, cross-cultural engagement, and ethical leadership. Rooted in CU Boulder’s vision to authentically reflect and serve Colorado, student-centered outreach connects academic learning and cutting-edge research with real-world impact, honors lived experience, and prepares all students to serve the public good. We recognize student organizations, volunteerism, and grassroots efforts as vital to this work. Through civic learning, global engagement, dialogue, and community-centered leadership, students develop the critical consciousness and practical experience needed to solve the difficult issues in our world throughout their lifetime.

Thematic Components

Component	Core Idea	Institutional Implications
Preparing Students for a Diverse Democracy	Outreach helps students thrive by building civic, ethical, and interpersonal skills needed to lead in a diverse and just democracy.	Programs will foster inclusive leadership and civic fluency while honoring student organizations and lived experiences as critical learning spaces.
Civic Learning & Engagement	By engaging in public problem-solving, service, and dialogue, students develop a sense of agency, belonging, and responsibility.	Outreach will marry academic content and cutting-edge research to community engagement, leveraging student-led efforts, volunteerism, and public service as essential learning functions.
Global Engagement	Outreach provides opportunities for students to build relationships across borders and equitably engage with global issues.	Students will engage globally while developing cultural humility, sensitivity, and global civic responsibility.
Community-Centered Leadership	Outreach allows students to practice leadership that uplifts community voices, prioritizes relationships, addresses community problems and responds to lived realities.	Students will co-create outreach initiatives and lead with community, practicing equitable, reciprocal, and participatory leadership.
Dialogue & Critical Consciousness	Through honest inter (intra) group engagement and reflection, students develop critical consciousness and empathy essential to democratic participation.	Embedding dialogue in outreach experiences will foster reflection, connection, and understanding of systemic inequalities and provide opportunities to address these inequalities.

C. Data-Informed Outreach

We envision an outreach culture that is rigorous, responsive, and grounded in meaningful data use that advances equity, fosters accountability, and drives continuous learning. Outreach must be purposefully designed, informed by diverse data sources – including community knowledge, lived experience, and traditional metrics. Our data-informed approach centers on collaboration, transparency, and cultural responsiveness. Recognizing that data is shaped by power and perspective, we co-create goals and success metrics with the constituents in the communities we serve. We build literacy across the institution and with partners, promoting ethical data use,

interpretation, and application. Success is measured by impact, relationships, and our collective capacity to learn, adapt, and grow.

Thematic Components

Component	Core Idea	Institutional Implications
Audience-Centered	We must engage communities as co-creators of knowledge, valuing their experiences and expertise in shaping CU Boulder's outreach goals and measures of success.	Outreach will be shaped by community-informed metrics and feedback, ensuring programs are relevant, collaborative, and grounded in local knowledge and lived experience as well as focused on local needs and local priorities.
Data Use	Build shared data literacy and culturally responsive evaluation to guide transparent outreach. Practice equitable ownership: individuals own their personal data; CU Boulder stewards institutional records; partner datasets are co-owned – especially with historically disenfranchised communities.	Staff, students, faculty, and partners will share responsibly – aggregate/de-identify by default; record-level access only with consent and tiered roles. Codify rights and benefits via cross-partner governance and standard MOUs/DUAs, with accessible dashboards and participatory interpretation.
Decision-Making Transparency	We must practice transparency in how strategic decisions are made and how data is used – sharing findings in accessible formats and clarifying their impact to guide continuous improvement.	Outreach leaders will communicate data-informed decisions clearly and ethically, closing the feedback loop and building trust across campus and community partners.
Equity-Driven Metrics	Data must be applied to identify and address disparities in access, participation, and outcomes across communities.	Outreach assessments will use disaggregated data and community-defined indicators to reveal gaps and drive equity-focused improvement.
Learning and Adaptation	Outreach should evolve through cycles of inquiry, feedback, and innovation.	Continuous improvement will be built into outreach design, with programs adapting responsively based on feedback, reflection, and outcomes.

V. Recommendations: Outreach and Engagement Inventory

To establish, maintain, and effectively utilize a comprehensive inventory of CU Boulder's Outreach and Engagement (O&E) activities, CTFO members submit the following three strategic recommendations:

A. Align Data Collection with the Carnegie Framework

Recommendation:

Structure data collection and reporting in accordance with the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement framework.

1. Rationale: The Carnegie framework serves as the national benchmark for institutional commitment to community engagement in higher education. Aligning our practices with this framework will streamline future classification and reclassification efforts while maximizing the utility of existing platforms such as Collaboratory and GivePulse.
2. Key actions:

1. Charge OCE (OGCE, PACES), OFA/Provost's Office, RIO, SLICE, Registrar's Office, and Alumni Association with:
 1. Reviewing Carnegie application requirements.
 2. Assessing current data sources for alignment.
 3. Implementing necessary updates to data collection and reporting practices, including developing an official campus definition of *community engaged learning* for purposes of tracking courses.
 4. Identifying key metrics for short- and long-term assessment and accountability, and points of implementation.
2. Specific unit responsibilities:
 1. Bursar, Registrar & Curriculum Committees: Promote and revise the use of the "Community Engaged (CE)" course designation, based on campus definition.
 2. OFA: Update the FRPA outreach and engagement module to reflect Carnegie criteria.

B. Leverage Existing Data Collection Mechanisms

Recommendation: Optimize the use of current institutional systems—particularly Collaboratory and GivePulse—for collecting and managing outreach and engagement data.

1. Rationale: CU Boulder already utilizes several robust platforms designed to support campus-wide data collection and Carnegie alignment. These include:
 - a. Collaboratory and GivePulse: Comprehensive platforms for tracking engagement activities.
 - b. FRPA: Faculty reporting tool with an outreach module.
 - c. Course Designation System: A "community engaged" designation available through the Registrar.
2. Key actions:

Charge PACES, SLICE, OFA and other units to:

 1. Clarify and communicate the distinct functions, audiences, and users of each platform.
 2. Work with SRC, OIT, and Data Analytics to explore connections with CRM and Salesforce and the possibility of improved data visualization, as well as to leverage new functionalities developed by vendors (e.g., current work to incorporate AI "dragnet" function to regularly identify and update activities based on public websites and other data). Assess platform licenses, user expansion support needs, and related issues to determine feasibility of options.
 3. Develop a web-based ecosystem with cross-linking and consistent messaging.
 4. Collaborate with campus and unit leadership to:
 1. Increase awareness and participation.
 2. Identify unit-level activities and ensure that these are captured and up-to-date in the Collaboratory and GivePulse databases. Create action plans for college, school, department, institute, and center-level reporting, including identifying a representative for each major unit who will be charged with supporting adoption and use of data platforms.

3. Establish support agreements with service-unit staff.

C. Address Data Collection Gaps

Recommendation: Identify and develop mechanisms to capture outreach activities not currently represented in existing platforms, especially those related to recruitment, public and government relations, and advancement.

1. Rationale: While the Carnegie framework emphasizes reciprocal community engagement, CU Boulder's broader outreach efforts—such as donor relations and public affairs—may fall outside its scope. These activities are essential to our institutional mission and should be included as appropriate in the inventory.
2. Key action: Engage leaders in Enrollment Management, Advancement, Government Relations, and Workforce Development to:
 - a. Collaborate with PACES, SLICE, and OFA to assess which relevant activities are not captured.
 - b. Design alternative data collection methods.
 - c. Ensure alignment with campus-wide engagement priorities and goals.

VI. Recommendations: CU Boulder brand

CTFO members recommend the following with respect to CU Boulder's brand identity:

- A. Clarify Strategic Direction: Ensure CU Boulder's outreach goals align to its mission, vision, and strategic priorities—as developed with the Chancellor's Cabinet and Deans during AY 24-25—to ensure consistency across objectives and key results.
- B. Strengthen Brand Identity: Foster brand awareness through the impacts of outreach and community engagement with various audiences, constituencies, and geographic areas. Explore opportunities to simplify the university's visual branding elements (e.g., system vs. campus vs. athletic logos) to reduce confusion and enhance public recognition across CU Boulder's academic and athletic domains.
- C. Enhance Public Engagement and Trusting Relationships: Use CU Boulder branding assets as part of the campus' annual integrated marketing and communications model—including community-engaged strategic events—to communicate CU Boulder's impactful community engagement efforts, to improve public perception, strengthen connections and deepen CU Boulder's relationships with communities across the state.
- D. Leverage Athletics for Visibility: Expand outreach efforts through athletics-related events and campaigns to engage broader audiences and promote the university's mission, vision and value to Colorado communities.
- E. Optimize Licensing and Brand Assets: Review, simplify and manage brand assets to ensure more consistent usage, and maximize revenue opportunities and community awareness/understanding of CU system, CU Boulder, University of Colorado and the Buffs through the connections between system and campus-level outreach campaigns and the university's overall strategic licensing and branding programs.

VII. Conclusion

This report represents the consensus view of CTFO members and does not imply that each member agrees with every specific observation or recommendation.

As a next step, the CTFO recommends that Task Force co-chairs Ann Schmiesing and Jon Leslie present the key observations and recommendations in this report to groups including Chancellor's Cabinet, University Executive Leadership Team, BFA, Staff Council, CUSG, and GPSG. Schmiesing, Leslie, and Nils Halverson should also present findings to chairs and directors.

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A: CTFO Members and Charge

CO-CHAIRS: Jon Leslie, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, and Ann Schmiesing, Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives

FACILITATOR: Merna Jacobsen, Associate Vice Chancellor, Organization and Employee Development, HR

MEMBERS:

Sarah Adderholt, Assistant Vice Provost for Events, Protocol and Outreach

Scott Battle, Dean of Continuing Education and Vice Provost

Lori Call, Associate Vice Chancellor for Local Government and Community Engagement

Darren Chavez, Office of the Chancellor

Ryan Chreist, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations

Tanya Ennis, Director of Research Impact and Engagement - RIO and the Institutes, Research and Innovation Office

Brian Groves, Assistant Vice Chancellor for FBS Auxiliary and Business Operations

Nils Halverson, Associate Dean of Natural Sciences and Faculty Fellow for Outreach and Global Strategy

Cory Hilliard, Senior Associate Athletic Director, Athletics

David Humphrey, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Leadership Support and Programming

Amy Hutton, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management

Andrew Mayock, Vice Chancellor for Sustainability

David Meens, Executive Director of the Office for Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship

Chris Panetta, Brand Research Program Director, Strategic Relations and Communications

Eli Sacks, Faculty Director for Public Scholarship in the Office of Faculty Affairs

Kirsten Schuchman, Associate Vice Chancellor for External Partnerships

Benny Shendo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Native American Affairs

Amanda Thein, Dean of the School of Education

Lane Washington, Senior Advisor to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Dear NAME:

I am writing to invite you to serve on the Chancellor's Task Force on Outreach (CTFO), which will be co-led by Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications Jon Leslie and Interim Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives Ann Schmiesing. Merna Jacobsen, Associate Vice Chancellor for Organization and Employee Development, will provide facilitation. The CTFO will consist of representatives from units including Enrollment Management, Government & Community Engagement, Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship (PACES), Research & Innovation, Strategic Relations and Communications, CU Boulder Alumni Association, Advancement, and Student Affairs.

By August 15, 2025, the task force will submit preliminary recommended actions and associated timelines to me for maximizing the impact of outreach efforts at the University of Colorado Boulder. This timeline enables recommendations to be shared with campus leaders and shared governance for input at the beginning of the fall semester. The primary goal of the Outreach Task Force is to develop strategies and structures that authentically reflect and serve Colorado through meaningful, data-informed outreach. The CTFO's recommendations should enable CU Boulder outreach activities to better develop and cultivate relationships across Colorado that:

- Increase positive awareness, understanding and perceived value of CU Boulder's direct and indirect impacts on the economy, culture, health and workforces of communities across our state;
- Generate pride, engagement, investment and advocacy for CU Boulder among key constituencies across the state, including business leaders, government officials, educators, public sector partners, alumni and donors;
- Feature our research and creative work, academics, athletics, and community-engaged events, with a focus on preparing students and learners of all ages and types to benefit from CU Boulder's public mission and to participate in Colorado's vibrant economy and society;
- Collectively demonstrate that CU Boulder is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive, for example by strengthening engagement with rural and urban areas, with diverse communities, and with constituents across the political spectrum.
- Optimize the relationship with outreach efforts from the CU System office.

To accomplish the above, the CTFO will focus on ensuring that:

- Outreach-related offices and programs on campus are appropriately structured and housed;
- CU Boulder outreach budgets and investments are aligned with the University's values, goals, and government and community relations strategy;
- Work in progress to secure Carnegie Elective Classification as a Community Engaged Institution is supported and leveraged;
- Existing inventories of outreach activities (including on-campus and off-campus programming) and school/college external advisory boards are updated and maintained;
- CU Boulder appropriately reaches each county and congressional district in Colorado, matching CU Boulder strengths with specific community needs and interests;
- Outreach partnerships with Colorado institutions across the state are amplified and/or scaled as relevant;
- Coordinated messaging and training are provided to units, faculty, and staff engaging in outreach activities, and an annual calendar of strategic outreach events is developed;
- Potential opportunities to better impact the state of Colorado are identified;
- An annual scope of work is developed with CU System that defines System and Boulder roles, goals, and collaborations.

Throughout its work, the CTFO will be guided by the vision statement developed during outreach stakeholder conversations in October 2024: “Our vision is to authentically reflect and serve Colorado through meaningful, data-informed outreach that strengthens engagement with diverse communities. We do this through problem-solving, educating students, employment, research and innovation, and investment. Our vision is to develop and cultivate relationships across the state that feature our academics and focus on preparing students to participate in democracy. Our outreach efforts collectively demonstrate that we are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive. We desire to be a valuable and trusted partner such that our state wants to support CU.” The work of the CTFO should also be informed by the many ideas and insights generated by the October 2024 meeting participants.

The Chancellor’s Task Force on Outreach will play a crucial role in ensuring that CU Boulder’s outreach efforts are impactful, coordinated, and aligned with the university’s strategic goals and mission as a comprehensive flagship institution that serves the public good. Through collaboration, innovation, and dedicated effort, the task force will help CU Boulder to be a valuable and trusted partner to communities across Colorado.

Please let me know by Monday, April 14, if, as I hope, you will accept this invitation to serve on the task force.

Sincerely,

Justin Schwartz
Chancellor
University of Colorado Boulder

Appendix B: Meetings with Academic Units in Summer 2025

At the May 2025 Chairs and Directors meeting, Ann Schmiesing invited chairs and directors to meet with her and Nils Halverson in summer 2025 to discuss their unit-specific outreach (local/state/regional) and international activities and any gaps and opportunities they have identified with respect to CU Boulder’s support for these activities. A follow-up email was sent to over 70 chairs and directors in June, inviting them to individual 45-minute Zoom meetings. 34 chairs/directors accepted this invitation. Units with whom Schmiesing and Halverson met are:

Applied Math
Asian Languages and Civilizations
Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences
Benson Center
Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS)
Center for Asian Studies (CAS)
Center for Humanities and the Arts (CHA)
Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies (CNAIS)
Chemistry
Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts
College of Music
Communication

Computer Science
 Electrical, Computer, and Energy Engineering
 English
 Environmental Studies
 Fiske Planetarium
 French and Italian
 Geography
 Geological Sciences
 History
 Integrative Physiology
 International Affairs
 Jewish Studies
 Journalism
 Latin American and Latinx Studies Center (LALSC)
 Math
 Religious Studies
 School of Education
 Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences
 Spanish and Portuguese
 Speech, Language, and Hearing Studies
 Theatre and Dance
 University Libraries

Conversations with each of the units above centered on the following questions:

1. What are your unit's principal outreach (local, state, regional) activities, programs, initiatives, partnerships, etc.? Are there websites or other materials used to promote, track, or coordinate these efforts that you would like to familiarize us with? Please feel free to send us links or attachments.
2. What are the main audiences (specific communities, demographic populations, geographical areas) your outreach efforts reach? Do you have information you'd like to share with us on the impacts of this outreach work (metrics, testimonials, survey results, etc.)?
3. In carrying out your unit's outreach activities, have you partnered with or received support (logistical, financial, etc.) from campus offices (such as the [Office for Public and Community Engaged Scholarship](#), [Office of Government and Community Engagement](#), [Office of Advancement](#))?
4. In carrying out your unit's outreach activities, have you received logistical, financial, etc., support from any external bodies? If so, which?
5. What, if any, gaps and opportunities do you see with respect to your unit's existing or desired local/state/regional outreach activities? How could the University better support your efforts?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Appendix C: List of Principal Units and Programs Referenced in "Structure" Section of CTFO's Report

Note: This list is not representative of reporting lines; some programs and offices listed here are housed within other units on this list.

Alumni Association

<https://www.colorado.edu/alumni/>

Division of Continuing Education (CE)

<https://ce.colorado.edu/>

Division of Enrollment Management (EM)

<https://www.colorado.edu/enrollment-management/>

Division of Student Life

<https://www.colorado.edu/studentlife/student-life>

Industry & Foundation Relations (IFR)

<https://www.colorado.edu/industry/>

Office of Advancement

<https://www.colorado.edu/advancement/>

Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA)

<https://www.colorado.edu/facultyaffairs/>

Office of Government and Community Engagement (OGCE)

<https://www.colorado.edu/ogce/>

Office of Precollege Outreach and Engagement

<https://www.colorado.edu/precollege/>

Office for Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship (PACES)

<https://www.colorado.edu/outreach/paces/>

Research and Innovation Office (RIO)

<https://www.colorado.edu/researchinnovation/>

Science Discovery

<https://www.colorado.edu/sciencediscovery/>

Service Learning and Impact in Community Engagement (SLICE)

<https://www.colorado.edu/volunteer/>

Strategic Relations and Communications (SRC)

<https://www.colorado.edu/strategicrelations/>

Appendix D: CU Boulder's 2025 Application for Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement (separate attachment)