

To: The Buffs Undergraduate Success
(BUS) Team

Akirah Bradley-Armstrong, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Katherine Eggert, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment
Jon Leslie, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Communications Officer
Marin Stanek, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

Subject: Your Charge

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, the central goals of major visioning efforts recently undertaken by the CU Boulder community of students, staff, and faculty include the success of undergraduate students. These efforts include Foundations of Excellence; the IDEA Plan; the Strategic Facilities Visioning process; and Academic Futures and its subsequent working groups such as the Online Strategy Working Group. In addition, many of CU Boulder's academic and administrative offices, departments, and programs are engaged in efforts whose fundamental objective is to promote the success of our undergraduate students. Some of these efforts are longstanding, some new, and they are taking place or taking shape both on the campus level and on the college/school level.

We are proud of and thankful to the members of the CU Boulder community who have helped focus our university on the crucial issue of undergraduate student success and to all the talented and resourceful staff and faculty who devote their time, expertise, and creativity to supporting our undergraduates' successful navigation of their progress toward their degrees. At the same time, however, we recognize that many of our student success efforts have been hindered by a lack of coordination, role clarity, prioritization, alignment, assessment, and strategic resource allocation. Other promising ideas for furthering student success have not gained traction because they have not had a clear path to gaining executive leadership support.

The result is that we are not seeing significant change in many common indicators of student success at CU Boulder, including, for example, retention, time to degree, and students' satisfaction with their educational and campus experience. We are not at the level of our peer institutions in most of these measures, even though we are devoting as large a proportion of our resources to undergraduate student success as our peers are, and even though we are well versed in "best practice" principles for furthering undergraduate student success. We are a great university, but we are not serving our students in the way a great university should.

The desired future state is one in which we are able to allocate resources and create a campus community of practice around student success that will achieve the goals of enhancing the student experience and their sense of academic and social belonging; increasing retention and graduation rates; and providing more stability and direction to our enrollment management strategy and curricular planning. To help the university achieve that future state, we are charging you as the Boulder Undergraduate Success (BUS) team

to design and implement a process to analyze, prioritize, and make resource recommendations for undergraduate student success efforts. This process must make it possible for CU Boulder to make and implement needed decisions surrounding student success efforts and priorities in a timely, effective, and transparent manner.

Specifically, we are asking the Buff Undergraduate Success leadership team to:

1. Engage campus-wide stakeholders in an inventory of undergraduate student success efforts (both current and planned), as well as available data and assessment information (e.g., HelloCampus, Financial Futures, and other sources of data) to inform the work ahead of us.
2. Structure a Buff Undergraduate Success Leadership Implementation Team (BUS-LIT) with cross-functional working groups assigned to prioritize, sequence, and manage efforts in key areas described by elements of our working [definition of undergraduate student success](#): "A successful CU Boulder undergraduate student completes their degree program with a **high-quality, meaningful** education in a **reasonable amount of time**, feeling like they have **belonged** at CU to a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive **social** and **academic community**."
3. Within the BUS-LIT and working groups above, develop a rubric by which to analyze the current or likely effectiveness of the inventory of current and planned undergraduate student success programs or proposals referenced above, including their likelihood of
 - improving student retention and graduation rates;
 - improving students' sense of social and/or academic belonging and academic confidence;
 - improving the effective integration of technology, data, and communications to enhance the digital student experience and bolster student success; and/or
 - aligning student success outcomes with the undergraduate curriculum and the improvement of teaching and learning, as driven by the faculty
4. Develop an agile workflow for BUS-LIT, including a clear and visible timeline for assigning projects, tracking progress, launching deliverables, and providing updates to CU Boulder leadership and campus stakeholders on a sustained basis each semester.
5. Within the above, develop a process for analysis of resource use and prioritization needs and requests.
6. Adopt and implement an effective change management process through which the BUS-LIT and its working groups will embrace, promote, and champion changes in student success efforts based on CU Boulder leadership decisions.
7. Socialize the work of the BUS-LIT with leadership and campus stakeholders as a continuous working model that will not sunset, but instead will enable ongoing measurement and assessment of our progress, as well as shared ownership, decision-making, and reporting of our outcomes in pursuit of the success of our undergraduate students.

With this charge, we authorize you to work with appropriate groups of students, faculty, staff, shared governance, and other campus and community constituents to advance the objectives of the Buff Undergraduate Success leadership team. We also authorize you—within the leadership implementation team and cross-functional working group structure described above—to make the decisions necessary to make tangible progress toward CU Boulder’s student success goals. We ask you to work closely with these constituents, in a systematic way, to identify solutions, remove barriers, and align existing resources. If there are any policy changes or other official actions for which you need our approval, please bring them promptly to our attention, but we do not intend to exercise day-to-day oversight over the decisions we have authorized you to make. To that end, we will require campus constituents to work with you regarding implementation details, rather than to seek our intervention over decisions that are within your purview.

As you work through designing and implementing the BUS-LIT process, we ask that you keep these guiding principles in mind:

- **A student-centered foundation**—Student success must be the key focus in how BUS-LIT decisions are made.
- **Fidelity to existing goals and priorities**—Student success efforts must remain faithful to the goals of the CU Boulder community as outlined in Academic Futures, IDEA Plan, and Foundations of Excellence and as prioritized by CU Boulder leadership; the BUS-LIT process is not intended to set new or different goals.
- **Faculty-driven courses, curricula and degrees**—As per Regent policy and the university’s principles of and commitment to faculty governance, faculty have the principal role in originating academic policy and standards related to the initiation and direction of all courses, curricula, and degree offerings.
- **Persistent engagement**—The ongoing work of BUS-LIT should be done with the direct engagement and input of our students and other stakeholders and with clarity and transparency regarding its goals, priorities, projects, resources, deliverables, and how we are measuring and reporting our outcomes, challenges, and ongoing progress.
- **Inclusive process**—CU Boulder’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion must be integral to every BUS-LIT decision and recommendation.
- **Open-mindedness and curiosity**—A learning mindset must underlie the work of BUS-LIT, including a culture of assessment, exploration, and continuous improvement that should drive the willingness of the group to find new ways to accelerate our progress, as regularly measured through key performance indicators (KPIs).
- **A pledge to debate, decide, commit, execute, and assess**—BUS-LIT must rigorously examine its priorities, with a bias toward action, and make difficult prioritization decisions that all members will uphold, support, execute, and measure to the best of their and their teams’ abilities with a “university first” attitude of collaboration and constructive accountability to each other.

We direct you to proceed with this charge expeditiously and to complete the following tasks by the conclusion of the fall 2021 semester. If significant adjustments to this timeline are needed, we direct you to obtain our approval.

- Translate this charge document into an overarching charter document and name a project manager to structure this work.
- Name the initial members of BUS-LIT to review the overarching charge, charters, and organizational structure, building in fluidity over time as student success priorities change and initial goals are achieved.
- Orient the BUS-LIT and working groups through the inventory process and guiding principles described above.
- Leveraging existing resources within the campus, establish a transformation team to enable change management, business analysis, data tracking, KPIs, and communication expertise in support of the BUS-LIT's work.
- Working with the BUS-LIT and the transformation team, commit to a timeline for student success efforts.
- Initiate communications with the campus to obtain buy-in and build a culture of persistent engagement and input.
- At regular intervals during the fall semester, report to the Chancellor's Cabinet on priority projects, deadlines, and progress made.

Sincerely,

Philip DiStefano
Chancellor

Russell Moore
Provost

Patrick O'Rourke
Chief Operating Officer