

**Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity
Recommendations for the University of Colorado at Boulder**

**Final Report
March 1, 2006**

This report and its recommendations were developed and approved by the Blue Ribbon Commission members serving the University of Colorado at Boulder campus. The member names follow. Blue Ribbon Commission Members for the University of Colorado System: Mike Avritt, Sharon R. Bailey, Samuel Batey, Robin Bohannon, Jennifer Brooks, Paul Bureson, Gin Butler, Jim Bye, Kim Cameron, Jessica Peck Cony, David Davenport, Larry Davis, Bruce H. DeBoskey, Steve DelCastillo, Susana Escalante, Steve Farber, Francisco Figueroa, Neil Fishman, W. Harold Flowers, Regis Groff, Maria Guajardo Lucero, Alfred Harrell, Gary M. Jackson, Barclay Jones, Irene King, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Carlos Leal, Travis P. Leiker, Angela Lujan-Ogle, Brenda Lyle, James M. Lyons, Mary Lou Makepeace, Gregory B. McKnight, Sandra Moore-Mann, Rico Munn, Steven Otsuki, Katherine Peck, Charles E. Robertson, Laurie Vargas Short, John Sie, Richard Skorman, Sheldon Steinhauser, Wellington Webb, Leroy J. Williams, Robert G. Willis, Henry Wright, Al Yates, Louise Young. Student Members Serving for the CU-Boulder Campus: Adam K. Becenti, Jazmin Chavez, Emem Ekiko, Stephen Fenberg, Jarvis Fuller, Mebraht Gebre-Michael, Jeremy Jimenez, Bradford Long, Curtis Love, Shaina Miller, Ageno Oti, Federico Rangel, Karen Shimamoto.

The 61 Boulder Campus Blue Ribbon Commission members, including 48 community members appointed by President Hank Brown, ten CU-Boulder students at-large, and three CU-Boulder Tri-executive students, met at the University of Colorado at Boulder campus on January 21, 2006. Prior to the meeting, Blue Ribbon Commission members received information from the Boulder campus about recruitment and retention/graduation programs and statistics, and programs to improve climate on the CU-Boulder campus. Presentations were made in the morning by Phil DiStefano, Interim Chancellor; Susan Avery, Interim Provost; Ron Stump, Vice Chancellor; Eleese Robbins, Dean of Students and Associate Vice Chancellor; Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Equity; and Kevin MacLennan, Director of Admissions. In the afternoon, the Boulder campus Blue Ribbon Commission broke into six small groups to discuss and develop recommendations for the campus about recruitment, retention/graduation, and climate/learning environment. CU-Boulder faculty and staff members, representing a wide range of campus programs, were present in each discussion group to provide further information to the commissioners as they deliberated. The Commission then reconvened to share the primary recommendations of each discussion group and agreed on ten preliminary recommendations that emerged as a consensus.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 1:

Commission members felt that they could not possibly rank diversity programs based on their limited time and knowledge about the programs. The commissioners' overall impression was that the diversity programs that were presented (the 12 CU-LEAD Alliance programs and the Center for Multicultural Affairs) contribute to the retention and graduation of students enrolled, particularly students of color. These programs should be supported with additional financial support.

Input provided by the commissioners through the small discussion groups included the following:

- Retention programs, specifically designed for support of underserved populations, should not be cut; rather, they should be strongly supported by the administration.

- Diversity programs should be a high priority of the administration demonstrated by:
 - 1) increased funding, including stabilization of staff;
 - 2) increased scholarships for participating students;
 - 3) evaluating programs equitably with all other comparable programs on the campus;
 - 4) protecting budgets of diversity programs whenever budget deficits or cuts are sustained;
 - 5) consider bringing in a national consultant

Commission members requested more information about the programs, including what accountability systems are in place, and suggested that Native American students need more academic and social support in order for the University of Colorado at Boulder to be a place where they feel they belong.

Blue Ribbon Commission members expressed that they want the chance to engage with staff from the primary diversity programs in order to understand, observe, and study the programs. These programs should develop accountability measures for success by asking the students what five things they found beneficial from the programs: community, support, academics, friendships, and academic preparedness. The evaluations should include questions such as, “What was it like prior to coming to the University of Colorado at Boulder? What do you think it will be like after leaving the university?”

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 2:

The highest leadership of the university must express highly public and unequivocal support for diversity and inclusion at the University of Colorado.

It is critical that the University of Colorado develop and issue a values statement that comes from the top, from the Regents and President, which is highly publicized. This example of a potential values statement was generated during one of the small group breakouts and presented during the summary group reports to the convened group. “We will respect and value difference.” “At CU-Boulder, as well as the other University of Colorado campuses, we will foster an inclusive environment where differences are respected and valued. This is the highest priority of the university.”

The commissioners also indicated that the word “diversity” should be added to the mission statement of the university. Commissioners indicated that the University of Colorado at Boulder needs to make it clear to students what the university stands for with respect to diversity. The leadership needs to articulate clearly, concisely, and loudly what defines the university. Students who do not like the diversity values of the university should not enroll.

The commissioners further recommend that the President and the Board of Regents need to make a goal that CU be the first choice for students of color in Colorado. Once this goal is made there should be a public declaration and a plan created to make this goal a reality. Such a commitment will result in better collaborations between communities of color and the university which would open the way for increased dialogue.

The Boulder campus should develop stricter policies for perpetrators of bias-motivated incidents and/or acts of intolerance. The leadership, including the President, the Board of Regents, and campus leaders, including deans and department chairs, needs to express outrage when racial incidents and hate crimes occur.

The leadership (Board of Regents, President and campus leadership) needs to recognize good work in the area of diversity. Commission members called upon the President to make a statement that assures students that the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Commission is not to cut diversity programs.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 3:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that the University of Colorado at Boulder devise strategies to specifically address the barrier that the 103 index standard, set by the CCHE, has upon the relatively low percentage of students of color that apply, are admitted and matriculate at the CU-Boulder. The University of Colorado at Boulder should devise strategies that utilize the “window” for expanding the 103 index, it is unacceptable that there are only 66 African American students out of approximately 5,000 new freshmen.

Commissioners requested information about how the percentage used for students of color “in the window” is determined, whether the percentage use of the window dedicated to students of color could be increased, what the response of CU-Boulder and the CU System was to the decision by CCFIE to decrease the size of the window, and why CU-Boulder used 10% of the window this past year ahead of the CCHE schedule reducing the window from 14% to 10% and whether 4% more of the window be used to accept more students of color.

The University of Colorado at Boulder should work with the legislature to recreate Fort Lewis’ agreement to accept Native American students at in-state tuition rates.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 4:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends mandatory diversity training for the administration, faculty and staff.

Commissioners expressed the need to understand how the university as a whole (beyond undergraduate education) prioritizes diversity. Administrators of the university (including the President and the Regents) need training on diversity. Faculty need to address issues of climate, respect, and civility within the classroom. Mandatory training of faculty should begin in Fall 2006 and be completed within a two year time frame. Faculty should receive information about how to handle classroom settings with very few students of color, be reminded that the students of color should not be expected to represent the viewpoints of all people of the same race/ethnicity, and hear from students about insensitive remarks that occur on a daily basis.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 5:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends mandatory training for students at the beginning of their academic career.

There should be a mandatory class for incoming freshman on racial bias and/or multicultural training. It should be ongoing, not just at the freshman level. Cultural competence should be embedded in the core programs and in departments. This information should permeate campus life, rather than be an addition to it.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 6:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that the University of Colorado at Boulder engage the City of Boulder and surrounding cities and communities (Chambers of Commerce, businesses, etc.) to build bridges in order to enhance diversity and inclusion at the University of Colorado. This bridge-building must include the communities of color in Boulder.

The University of Colorado at Boulder should develop partnerships with City of Boulder and the Boulder community. Specific recommendations about partnering with the City of Boulder were made by the commissioners. Suggestions for enhancing a welcoming environment include more welcome events

and dialogues that involve students and community members. These efforts should be driven by the City of Boulder, not the university, to ensure that they can and will be sustained. The University of Colorado at Boulder should create a community relations commission to bring together the Boulder campus Chancellor with the school district, the mayor, hospital, etc. (all who represent City of Boulder) to talk regularly about how to improve the relationship between the university and the City of Boulder.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 7:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that interaction with the University of Colorado at Boulder must be more than a one day meeting. The recommendations, goals, and accountability measures need to be re-evaluated on a continual basis. The University of Colorado at Boulder should set some time frame for interactions with the Blue Ribbon Commission and articulate the process.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 8:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that the University of Colorado at Boulder address the issue of accountability of administration, faculty, staff and students and the need for better metrics around evaluation, particularly with respect to funding and finances of the \$1.7 billion dollar system.

The University of Colorado at Boulder should demonstrate its commitment to diversity by providing funds at the highest levels of leadership. The university's executives need to go "outside the box" by reaching out to big corporations and strategizing with them about developing mission statements of what the University of Colorado wants to become and what it will take to get there.

The commissioners want the University of Colorado at Boulder to have accountability mechanisms from the top-down for inclusion of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission. There should be a budgetary alignment with the strategic plan for diversity. The budget cannot be an after-the-fact default dedicated to diversity. For example, Admissions should evaluate their strategies and determine the effectiveness of these strategies. If the yield from 800 visits does not produce a net gain in minority admission, perhaps this should be cut to 400 visits and the budget be used on other strategies. Individuals at the university should be held accountable for achieving diversity goals. Deans and department chairs should be accountable for their progress towards diversity. Their contributions to the realization of diversity goals should play a role in tenure.

The efforts of diversity staff, operating as they are in a difficult economic environment with insufficient human and financial resources, should be acknowledged and supported, while recognizing that diversity must not be consigned only to diversity professionals and "formal" diversity programs but should be the responsibility of every member of the university community.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 9:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that strengthening the educational pipeline is a K-16 issue, not solely that of higher education. Cultural diversity and tolerance teachings should be infused in K-16 and money from the legislature should be allocated to this effort.

Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation 10:

The Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that the University of Colorado benchmark with other educational institutions and with industry that already have a history of success and lessons learned in areas of diversity.

The following are additional comments and suggestions from the commissioners that were not able to be fully discussed during the final plenary session.

The University of Colorado at Boulder needs to improve public relations.

Negative media creates fear of the university. The Regents and President need to publicize the positive accomplishments of CU-Boulder in the area of diversity. CU-Boulder needs to determine why the greater community has such a negative perception of its campus. It needs to spend money, time, and effort spreading the word about positive things that are happening on campus and in the surrounding community. CU-Boulder needs to establish a communication plan that goes beyond sending press releases and emails in order to engage the public. This does not mean that information about negative events should be withheld; all ethnic intimidation findings should be made public.

The commissioners made specific recommendations about retention programs.

The commissioners would like the University of Colorado at Boulder to identify the diversity retention programs that excel and stand out above the rest. They further request more information about funding in order to determine where the primary need for additional funding is, and how it would be spent if additional funding were acquired. Commissioners expressed a desire to help financially, but did not feel that they received enough information to know where their financial support would be most beneficial.

The commissioners felt that CU-Boulder needs to develop a better marketing strategy for their excellent retention programs. Because some students indicated that they were unaware of the programs, it is important to determine what avenues of communication are the most effective to market the programs and get information to students. The campus should consider doing information fairs for current students, not just incoming freshmen, and should share information at the beginning of the semester for current students.

Individual commissioners advocated for the increase of scholarship funding for Native American students and for African American students because the numbers in these groups are unacceptably low.

The Commissioners emphasized the important role that faculty of color have in creating a positive climate for students of color.

The University of Colorado at Boulder needs to increase the number of faculty of color. The campus should develop a strategic plan with goals for increasing the number of faculty of color.

Commissioners requested additional information about the recruiting process for faculty of color.

The faculty needs to play a leadership role in all aspects of diversity and they should be held accountable for aiding students in creating a supportive climate and combating hostility within the classroom setting.

Student commissioners commented that, in general, faculty members are not hostile, although they are sometimes insensitive. Faculty must demand an end to the use of racial slurs, racial epithets, and hate statements. CU-Boulder should develop a code of conduct for faculty and staff and include a statement about classroom civility. They further recommended expanding and supporting the ethnic studies department by hiring more diverse faculty members.

Commissioners made recommendations with respect to funding.

Across all small groups, commissioners acknowledged that additional scholarship dollars are needed for students of color. They recommended that CU-Boulder offer additional support and suggested looking to private donors for more contributions. They asked for the significant expansion of merit-based scholarship funding for students of color and recommended the adequate funding of retention programs. Any increase in recruitment should be matched with an increase in support of retention programs. The campus should ensure that recruited students receive the support necessary for retention and graduation. Adequate funding should be reallocated for diversity initiatives and should be consistent with the vision of the university. This reallocation of funds should consider the budget of the entire campus and should not

come only from currently existing diversity programs. The top-down commitment to improving the overall diversity climate must be backed by sufficient resources to encourage success, with both a short and long term time frame and goals that stretch but are achievable. The university should seriously consider a request for funding to support participation by students of color in leadership training. The Black Students Alliance made an appeal to send their leadership for leadership training at an estimated cost of \$16,000. Partnership with corporations could provide this type of funding.

Commissioners recommend setting enrollment/recruitment goals.

Blue Ribbon Commission members feel that the campus needs to develop a rationale for setting enrollment goals for students of color at CU-Boulder, and that these goals should be discussed with communities of color. CU-Boulder needs to have a strategy for creating relationships with community colleges. Students should be involved in visits to schools for recruitment.

Commissioners recommend developing community partnerships for improving recruitment.

Recommendations for forming these partnerships include a number of different strategies. Recruiting visits to schools should begin in middle school and should involve CU-Boulder students. CU-Boulder should make more connections with community groups so that they can help reach more schools and kids to personalize the recruitment. Examples include the Black Chamber of Commerce, Jack and Jill, Links, the James Beckworth Mountain Group, Owl's Club of Denver, Community of Color Fraternities and Sororities, and the Ministerial Alliance. CU-Boulder campus should have its alumni of color reach out to communities. The campus should consider partnering with more schools and working through programs such as AVID (Advancing Via Individual Determination), a program for first generation students across the school district. Companies and businesses can provide funding and recruit students into the workforce.

The Blue Ribbon Commissioners made recommendations to improve climate.

CU-Boulder needs to develop a specific program to address climate. Commissioners would like a copy of the harassment/nondiscrimination policy with a report of the number of student-related incidents. There appears to be a lack of reporting of bias-motivated incidents by students. There is a need to review the effectiveness and/or accessibility of the reporting process. The system in place must be easy, safe and known by everyone.

Classrooms should be free of racial epithets and hateful words, and restrooms cleared of offensive graffiti. Commissioners would like more of an opportunity to examine departments and programs before coming to the table to discuss diversity issues. Some commissioners expressed the opinion that students found to have used racial epithets and hate words should be suspended or expelled. Others were not as specific about consequences, but felt that a clearly articulated, serious consequence should occur if a perpetrator of a bias-motivated incident or hate crime is found. Some commissioners commented that CU-Boulder should establish a zero tolerance policy for slurs of hate. The City of Boulder should be involved in the development of this policy. The University of Colorado at Boulder should establish a rapid response team to hate crimes on campus. The rapid response team should come from the top-down. In addition, some commissioners expressed a need for students to have opportunities and spaces to share experiences.

Commissioners recommended that University 101 educate about the consequences of using racial slurs or committing hate crimes. However, the course should not focus solely on racial incidents. It must also teach mutual respect and appreciation that ultimately eliminate ignorance.

Some commissioners asked for more information regarding what is done in Housing as far as training for staff on diversity issues.

The campus needs to develop a program to determine why students do not stay. They should conduct exit interviews

Commissioners expressed a concern about the commitment from President Brown and the Board of Regents for diversity.

Commissioners expressed concern that only three Regents attended this January 21 Blue Ribbon Commission meeting. They felt that this lack of presence and participation indicates that there is a top-down problem. Commissioners are concerned that the Commission is merely a publicity stunt. The President needs to commit to goals of diversity and achieving results. The President should develop a revenue strategy working in conjunction with CCHE and the governor. Funding should not be shifted from diversity programs to scholarship programs. The President and Board of Regents should demonstrate their commitment to diversity with additional funding.

The commissioners made the following recommendations about recruitment strategies.

1. The President needs to give the flagship campus access to all of the schools in the state so that Admissions programs can have more help attaining a critical mass for Pre-Collegiate Development Program schools.
2. Students should write an essay for admission on diversity.
3. The CU-Boulder campus should target money for summer programs for 8th graders so that they can become familiar with the campus — and should connect to booster groups and alumni.
4. Financial aid should look at scholarships available at other institutions, such as the Daniels Fund.
5. Pre-Collegiate Development Programs should have a high priority for funding.
6. The campus should continue the Admissions home visit program.

Blue Ribbon Commission members had additional questions about enrollment, admission, acceptance, and matriculation, and requested information on the following:

1. What is the breakdown of students “in the window” by ethnicity.
2. What is the difference in success rates for those students “in the window” and those above the window?
3. What issues determine the percentage “in the window” that are used for students of color?
4. Can there be an increased percentage use of the window dedicated to students of color, (as long as this is tied into providing appropriate services and support for these students)?
5. What was CU-Boulder/CU System’s response to the decision by CCHE to decrease the size of the window?
6. Why did CU-Boulder use only 10% of the window this past year, ahead of CCHE schedule reducing the window from 14% to 10%? Couldn’t 4% more of the window be used to accept more minority students?
7. Where are the accepted students with 103 index going when they don’t matriculate at CU-Boulder?
8. Explain use of terms “color” “disadvantaged” “historically excluded.”
9. Explain recruitment of nontraditional students.
10. Is there reciprocity with community colleges?
11. What is the definition of “critical mass” and how many of these could be students of color, nontraditional, GLBT?