



Date: October 12, 2020

To: President Mark Kennedy and CDO Theodosia Cook

From: Faculty Council Chair Joanne Addison

Re: White House Executive Order of September 22, 2020

Faculty are seeking leadership from the President's Office in response to the Executive Order of September 22 banning certain types of diversity, equity, and inclusion training. The Executive Order violates CU's commitment to freedom of expression and academic freedom. Further, it is designed to derail efforts to dismantle systemic oppression based on race and sex.

CU has a mission to serve Colorado, the nation, and the world through leadership in high-quality education and professional training, public service, research, and state-of-the-art health care. We abide by the guiding principles of promoting faculty, student, and staff diversity to ensure the rich interchange of ideas in pursuit of truth and learning including diversity of political, geographic, cultural, intellectual, and philosophical perspectives. We ask the President to adhere to these principals and condemn the Order as other leaders have done.

President Kennedy's October 7th Statement on the Order takes advantage of our shared commitment to viewpoint neutrality to question the content of trainings intended to advance the University's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Doing so undermines efforts to create and maintain the sense of belonging that CU claims to support. Indeed, these efforts are more important than ever as students, faculty, and staff have intensified attention to the history of systemic racism at CU and now that hard-won rights for our LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, and students have been reversed at the national level with more rights in imminent danger of being taken away.

Given President Kennedy's initial reluctance to include diversity, equity, and inclusion as a pillar in his strategic plan, the recent requirement that communications on issues such as anti-racism be routed through the President's office (the "purple ink" protocol), and that CU has not committed to a meaningful land grant acknowledgement, the fact that this Executive Order has not been clearly condemned is yet another missed opportunity to signal true commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The goals of the third pillar of our strategic plan, "Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Access," will not be realized without strong leadership. We call upon our President to unequivocally denounce the White House Executive Order, to stand strong against all similar efforts, and to recommit CU to becoming a place where everyone truly belongs.

OCTOBER 7, 2020

University of Colorado Statement on Sept. 22 Executive Order

The University of Colorado has questions regarding the Executive Order issued on Sept. 22 regarding “Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping” and related guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, which aim to limit certain types of diversity training.

The University of Colorado has questions regarding the Executive Order issued on Sept. 22 regarding “Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping” and related guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, which aim to limit certain types of diversity training. The order is directed at “federal contractors” and “grant recipients,” both of which apply to CU. The university engages in various types of diversity training and education to further an environment that advances the institution’s values and guiding principles regarding diversity.

Fostering diversity at CU is essential to a living, learning and working university community that lives up to its ideals and promotes our values. The trainings we offer are aimed at that end. The notion that those trainings would introduce divisive concepts or denigrate individuals or groups on the basis of race or sex runs counter to their intent, content and goals.

CU Regent Law establishes that the university does not discriminate on the basis of race and sex. Trainings that denigrate any particular race or sex are not consistent with the university’s established laws and values. Regent Law also articulates an obligation to uphold freedom of expression and the principle of viewpoint neutrality, meaning the university shall not prohibit or restrict speech based upon the content of the speech or the message it conveys, or because of the reaction or opposition of others to such expression.

CU is confident that it adheres to federal, state and Regent laws regarding discrimination, and it will continue to, while also delivering training that allows the institution to meet its mission and live up to its values and guiding principles.