

CU Boulder Chancellor Addresses New Initiatives and Budgets on Campus

On Tuesday morning Phillip DiStefano announced his commitment to enhance the CU Boulder environment. Students, faculty, and community members listened as the chancellor stated his stance on issues such as free speech policy, mental illness, diversity and inclusion, tuition concerns, and graduate housing plans.

“We are in an environment of being 48th in state funding,” said DiStefano, “so we are working towards being the top innovators with the funds we have.”

CU Boulder prides itself on a four year fixed tuition, the elimination of course and registration fees, and its automatic scholarships for outstanding low-income students. This year CU funded education for 246 underprivileged students who received both the CU esteemed scholars and promise grant.

Emily Schweitzberger, one of the students receiving both grants, was able to continue her education despite her family situation. She said, “When I was choosing between either CU or DU as an in-state school, CU was the clear choice because they gave me the funds that allowed me to further my education.”

DiStefano talked about his wishes to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment. This year CU welcomed its most diverse class so far. The class of 2022 includes 1800 underrepresented students along with 8% of minority and ethnic undergrads. DiStefano said, “Diversity makes us better.”

Sharon Matusik, the dean at the Leeds School of Business, also commented on the inclusivity initiatives concerning women in higher education. “What we’re trying to do is get our female population to be 50 percent across all of our programs,” Matusik said. “We all feel very strongly that we want to open more women’s eyes to the opportunities that a business education can provide.”

Along with inclusivity, the dean also addressed concerns for graduate housing. According to a CU graduate survey, graduate student’s pay on average \$970 on housing around campus. This forces some graduate students to live in neighboring cities away from the university. DiStefano said, “we acknowledge the issue and are currently working with the city of boulder for the annexation of southern campus.”

At the end of the speech, DiStefano touched upon mental illness and free speech initiatives. According to DiStefano, the need for counseling and mental illness services has increased by 40 percent. Due to the stressful environment of college, more and more students find themselves coping with depression and anxiety. While DiStefano did not comment on how CU funds could create more opportunities for mental illness awareness, he did highlight accessible places to find help, such as Wardenburg, who offers six free counseling sessions to new students.

The new free speech amendment allows CU to invite speakers who don’t always align with the political or ideological values of the majority on campus. Last year, CU invited controversial speaker Ann Coulter, who caused protests on campus. DiStefano stood firm on his belief in inviting controversial speakers stating, “we want to teach students how to think not what to think.”

While DiStefano believes CU could always use improvement, he stressed the ways in which CU stands out. “We are the top research school, and a leading in-state

school,” DiStefano said, “we want to keep it that way and make sure that the top in-state students recognize this as well.”

Story Memo

Resources:

CU Boulder student data: <https://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/student-data>

DiStefano speech

Sources:

Phillip DiStefano (CU Chancellor)

Sharon Matusik (Leeds School of Business Dean)

Emily Schweitzberger (CU Esteemed Scholar and Promise Grant Recipient)