

**To:** Joyce McConnell, President Colorado State University  
Lynn Johnson, Vice President for University Operations  
Robyn Fergus, Executive Director of Human Resources



**CLASSIFIED  
PERSONNEL COUNCIL**  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

**From:** Meg Skeehan, Chair, Classified Personnel Council

**Date:** June 2021

**Re:** FY21 Annual Report – Classified Personnel Council

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The Colorado State University Classified Personnel Council (CPC) was proud to contribute to the continued practice of shared governance at CSU during FY21. This summary report is intended to highlight the FY21 CPC activities and accomplishments, as well as highlighting some continuing efforts for the FY22 Council.

**About the Council:**

Representing ~1,800 State Classified employees, the Council began FY21 with a membership of 28 representatives, and two ex-officio members: Bob Schur, Executive Director – Policy, Risk & Environmental Programs, and Robyn Fergus – Executive Director of Human Resources. In September 2020, Magedeline Hall (College of Liberal Arts) left the university, and Rachel McKinney (VP of Diversity) took on the role of Secretary. We also lost Tammy Hunt (VP of University Operations, to a change from State Classified to an AP position), Kathy Dahlin (HDS – Dining), and Chuck Richards (CSU PD, left the university) in the fall semester. Two vacancies were filled in special elections by Brian James (CSU PD), and Abby Hanouw (the Registrar’s Office). Kristin Stephens left the university at the end of December 2020 after winning her election to be a Larimer County Commissioner and Lourdes Zavala (the Access Center) rejoined the CPC filling Kristin’s open representative seat. We then lost Rachel McKinney (VP of Diversity) who left the university in February 2021, who was replaced by Alisha Zmuda (Student Disability Center) as secretary. Laura Snowwhite (BUFIN) stepped down from her representative position in February 2021, and Anselma Lopez (VP of Enrollment and Access) left the university. Dustin Pothour (Facilities Management) left the university in June of 2021, leaving us with a final total of 23 members as of June 2021.

CPC representatives and volunteers came from 14 different university departments including: ACNS, the Access Center, Business & Financial Services, Campus Recreation, Chemistry, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Business, the CSU Police Department, CVMBS, EHS, Extension Offices, Facilities Management, Housing & Dining (Dining and Operations Management), the Health Network, the LSC, the Registrar’s Office, Statistics, Student Disability Center, VP for Diversity office, VP for Enrollment and Access, and the VP for University Operations.

We suffered many losses to our membership, but I am incredibly grateful for the individuals that participated in special elections to help fill some of our membership losses. And I am extremely grateful to have had volunteers, twice, to step into the role of the Secretary position in our executive committee as we lost talent from our council and university.

### **Innovation and New Challenges:**

In a year unlike any other, we were challenged to work in new and unique ways. We could not hold in-person meetings, and 80% of our council was working from home through the 2020-2021 academic year. The council met via Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 Pandemic . Our annual planning retreat was on July 28<sup>th</sup>, featuring keynote speaker Victor Wooten, a world class musician, record producer, educator, and five-time Grammy-winner and founding member of Bela Fleck and the Flecktones. While we had to navigate building community and planning for the unknown in a virtual space, we had a successful launch to our year and found our stride as we continued to adapt to new work realities.

- In August, some CPC representatives were able to sign up for School is Cool hours, a volunteer event we love participating in annually.
- We worked with APC, FC, and Institutional Research to develop a COVID Pulse Survey – results of which are summarized in an executive summary attached.
- We worked with CSU Events, the Administrative Professional Council, Faculty Council, and the Employee Appreciation board to host two employee appreciation events, one in the fall and one in the spring, where CSU employees could go to any Human Bean in Northern Colorado and get a free beverage (the spring event included two cafés on campus).
- While we were not able to hold in person appreciation events, we were able to partner with Mugs on the Oval to set up a special CPC member appreciation day on February 16, 2021.

### **CPC Committees:**

Much of the work and the many contributions of CPC representatives happens through participation in committees. The CPC has five standing committees: Communications, Employee Engagement and Experience, Employee Recognition, Legislative, and the Executive.

The CSU practice of shared governance additionally allows CPC representatives to serve on many University committees, initiatives, and ad hoc groups – serving the interests and as the voice of our State Classified colleagues. This year, there was a significant pause in university committee work initially, as things settled in the wake of the national shut down. There were several groups that continued to move work forward, and some new groups were initiated to navigate the unknowns. Committees, groups, and commissions where CPC members participated include: University Benefits, COVID Recovery – Workforce (new – May 2020), Assessment for Diversity Issues, Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning, President’s Council on Culture, Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, Campus Bicycle Committee, Commitment to Campus Advisory Committee, Employee Appreciation Board, Employee Hardship Loan Fund Committee, Housing Task Force (restarting June 2021), Trans and Non-Binary Support, Professional Development Award Committee, President’s Task Force on Campus, President’s Sustainability Commission, Physical Development Committee, Community and Personal Safety (New August 2020), the Housing Task Force (beginning June 2021) ,and the Leave Bank Committee. Our council, along with APC and FC have partnered with Janelle Beavers to review a list of working university and presidential committees and commissions to

assess effectiveness, potential for cross collaboration, and to identify areas where support may be needed to make the work more effective across campus.

A new effort initiated this year by Vice-Chair, Jim Abraham, was to have regular bi-weekly meetings with all chairs and vice-chairs of the CPC committees to have discussions on our work, providing a space for collaboration and future planning. These meetings helped our committees work together and gather additional information and insight to help one another through the last year.

### **Communications:**

The Communications Committee is charged with developing ways to disseminate information about the Council and pertinent information to State Classified employees. For FY21, the committee was Chaired by Leah Bosch and Vice-chair was Rachel McKinney (who left CSU in February 2021). The committee met eleven times and conducted most of the work via email. Accomplishments for FY21 included:

- Five issues of the CPC Communicator were sent to 450+ self-subscribed campus employees – highlighting important campus opportunities, news, and events
- CSU Life – six articles about CPC and issues relevant to State Classified employees. These articles were also published in the SOURCE
- SOURCE – six additional articles authored/co-authored by committee members (and/or external relations staff) about CPC and our Council activities
- The communications team launched a Facebook page to quickly and easily share information to state classified personnel. With an average of 1-2 postings per week, the page currently has 94 followers and growing.

The Communications Committee included Kristin Berthold, Leah Bosch, Eva Hybiak, Rachel McKinney, Dustin Pothour

### **Employee Engagement and Experience:**

The Employee Engagement and Experience Committee researches, suggests, plans, executes, evaluates, and reviews Council outreach events, and the Council's involvement with University events and service projects that increase the visibility of the Council to State Classified employees and enhance the employee experience at CSU. For FY21, the committee was chaired by Meg Skeehan and Laura Snowwhite (who left CPC February 2021) and Vice-chairs Amber Lobato and Alisha Zmuda. Accomplishments for FY21 included:

- Updated Mission and Vision for the committee and began exploring how Employee Engagement and Experience can adapt to a virtual, hybrid, and in person model.
- Began planning a Mindfulness and Resource fair for State Classified Employees for Summer of 2021.
- Employee Appreciation Day - With the move to a virtual campus, we needed to shift the event to a virtual setting. EEE and CPC helped fund an event where personnel could

participate, but not gather. We chose to partner with the Human Bean Café as well as the LSC to sponsor a free coffee day event. CSU employees could pick up a 20oz coffee from the Human Bean or two cafés on campus.

- This event is rooted in an Employee Appreciation Event first organized in 2010 by CPC, which was hosted in the Trial Garden by the University Center of the Arts. Starting in 2016, the CPC Employee Appreciation Event was merged with a community Ice Cream Social (which was also the same day as a Lagoon Concert Series), partnering with CSU Events. Over the next 3 years, this event had grown thanks to the collaboration of CSU Events, APC, CPC, FC and the Employee Appreciation Board, in addition to the generous funding from the Vice President of University Operations, Lynn Johnson.
- The chair of CPC, Meg Skeehan, continued to participate in outreach and other training events virtually (both live and recorded), partnering with Housing and Dining Services and Facilities Management to host a total of 4 sessions through the year.
- We coordinated with Canvas Credit Union to continue the financial literacy courses via virtual event through the year
- We assisted in planning of the January CPC team building event held virtually during our normal meeting time
- We provided mini-grants to retirees in HDS – Facilities to host a small gathering celebrating their retirement

The Employee Engagement and Experience committee included Emma Chavez (volunteer), Emily Farrenkopf, Joseph Gallegos, Abby Hanouw, Tammy Hunt, Valerie Lewis, Amber Lobato, Kate Sherman, Meg Skeehan, Laura Snowwhite (who left CPC February 2021) Lourdes Zavala, and Alisha Zmuda.

### **Employee Recognition:**

This CPC committee, Chaired by Anselma Lopez (July 2020 – April 2021) and Vice-chair Nancy Cowley (who stepped up into chair in April 2021), manages four special awards created by the CPC that are exclusive to State Classified employees. This year, the committee has focused on making the Educational Assistance Award more accessible to employees. The Educational Assistance Award is funded by an anonymous donor whose intent is to improve educational opportunities for State Classified Employees. The Employee Recognition Committee strives to meet the charge intended by the donor. The ERC also rolled out a new communication project with articles called “Day in the Life” spotlighting positions and work groups across campus to that show the diverse responsibilities, duties, and stories of CSU’s State Classified Employees. The “Day in the Life” article was created and led by Julia Innes. Additionally, this committee was able to partner with the LSC and HDS to present recipients of the Everyday Hero Awards with coffee and lunch vouchers. During FY21, CPC recognized:

- Five (5) – Outstanding Achievement Awardees (this award was first given in 1976, and now includes a \$1,000 award and recognition at Celebrate! CSU, these awards are funded by the VPUO)
- Two (2) – Positive Action Awardees

- Sixteen (16) – Everyday Hero Awardees
- Nine (9) – Educational Assistance Awardees, (\$500 per award given to help State Classified employees further their education or professional development) made possible through a donor funded account
- Six (6) Day in the Life articles (published on SOURCE)

Recipients of these awards were:

OAA: Courtney Hensel, Kathy Krell, Kevin Nolan, Sandra Dailey, Jan Lee Cordova

PAA: Lory Student Center Custodial Staff, and Residential Dining Services

EHA: Janet Porter, Lynsey Bosch, Paul Knowles, Simone Listmann, Kayde Low, Keith Abercrombie, Julie Sinkovitz, Charla Waity, Albert Cones, Carina Pfenning, Linda Crawford-Burns, Terry Adams, Mike Shortall, Kristi Buffington, Kathy Krell, Dottie Cartrite

EAA: Fall – Stacey Baumgarn, Sonjia Graham, Lani Williams, Matthew Whitehead, Mike Broadbent. Spring – Melanie Anderson, Ellen Audley, Anselma Lopez, Lori Williams

Day in the Life: Steve McCarthy, Alisha Zmuda, Sarah Istre, Stephanie Freier, HDS Facilities-Dining Maintenance, FM Space and Mapping

More information about CPC awards can be found here: <https://cpc.colostate.edu/annual-cpc-awards/>

The Recognition Committee included Anselma Lopez, Nancy Cowley, Julia Innes, Brian James, Meg Skeehan, and Stacey Baumgarn.

### **Legislative:**

Chaired by Adrian Macdonald, and Vice-chaired by Wayne Hall - the CPC Legislative Committee began the year with several attempts to connect with Colorado WINS, the union that gained bargaining rights to represent all State Classified worker in collective bargaining negotiations with the State of Colorado. COWINS gained the rights to bargain on behalf of state employees through the Colorado Partnership for Quality Jobs and Services Act that was signed into law in June of 2020.

In February, the Committee organized a meeting with State Senator Joann Ginal and State Representatives Cathy Kipp and Jeni Arndt over Zoom. CPC used this meeting to continue the discussion on expanding leave benefits, discuss the possibility of raises and gather information about Colorado WINS and the collective bargaining process. The Reps informed us that the most effective way to realize our requests is to work with Colorado WINS and they were able to connect us with a representative.

The Legislative Committee then organized a few meetings with Colorado WINS representatives to learn about the Union, how the collective bargaining process would work, and to explore how the relationship with CPC could work. After initially running into conflict about the lack of communication during the Fall, the Committee learned that the Union had many of the same goals as the CPC when it came to raises, leave benefits and working conditions. We also learned

about the various groups and procedures that would lead to a new collective bargaining contract in the Fall of 2021 and other benefits of Union membership.

Representative Jeni Arndt's election to the Mayor's Office of Fort Collins resulted in Andrew Boesenecker being appointed to her seat in the Colorado House of Representatives. The Committee initiated contact with him and shared the data we had collected on leave benefits. We hope to meet with Representative Boesnecker, Senator Ginal and Representative Kipp in the summer after the legislative session ends.

Also of note was the 3% cost of living pay increase that was approved within the Long Bill. There was no CPC member trip to Denver this year due to COVID-19.

The Legislative Committee included Adrian Macdonald, Wayne Hall, Jim Abraham, Brian Gilbert, and Brian James.

### **Executive:**

The Executive Committee is comprised of the four CPC officers: Meg Skeehan – Chair; Jim Abraham – Vice-chair; Magdeline Hall/Rachel McKinney/Alisha Zmuda– Secretary; and Adrian Macdonald– Treasurer. The Executive Committee meets monthly to plan and review the next meeting agenda and to track and manage the work of the Council and our committees. Magdeline Hall started the FY21 year as secretary before leaving the university in September 2020, Rachel McKinney stepped in and was secretary until leaving the university in February 2021, and a big thank you to Alisha Zmuda for stepping in as our secretary for the remainder of the year. Moving into FY22, our leadership team will be: Adrian Macdonald – Chair; Jim Abraham – Vice-Chair; Alisha Zmuda – Secretary; Meg Skeehan – Treasurer.

Our group worked hard over the last year navigating losses to our council and navigating the virtual conditions. The Executive committee focused on the following:

- Coordinating with CSU HR on the transitions through the COVID-19 pandemic response, particularly related to state and federal leave and work changes
- Employee recognition and professional development opportunities
- Connecting employees to campus and community resources
- Planning and executing a diverse group of guest speakers on various topics that are pertinent to the work of CPC throughout the year
- Continued tracking of the CSU budgeting process
- Policies affecting all CSU employees
- Meeting with COWINS to determine their priorities and efforts in the state collective bargaining process and to determine the reason for a lack of communication to CSU employees on collective bargaining

The Chair and Vice- Chair met regularly throughout the year with: Lynn Johnson, the Vice President for University Operations; Nik Olsen, President's Office; Robyn Fergus, Executive Director CSU HR; Sue Doe and Ruth Hufbauer, Chair and Vice-chair of Faculty Council

(respectively); Catherine Douras and Tori Anderson, Chair and Vice-chair (respectively) of the Administrative Professional Council; Jenelle Beavers, VP of Strategic Initiatives; and, on a few occasions, direct conversations with Provost, Mary Pedersen, and CSU President, Joyce McConnell.

**Additional Efforts:**

**Asset Library – Acquisition of Laptops and Cases**

With a planned roll out for FY22, the CPC spent \$9,857.45 of our budget in FY21 to acquire 16 laptops and cases, to establish an asset library for State Classified employees at CSU. We will work through the summer to determine an application process, partnering with Facilities Management and Housing & Dining Services to assist in identifying levels of need and rolling out a bilingual application process that will also include some responsibility to attend basic computer classes at the Morgan Library.

**In conclusion:**

The mission of the Classified Personnel Council is to promote, improve and protect the role of State Classified employees within the University system. The most effective means to accomplishing this mission is to maintain active participation in shared governance at CSU. The University depends on the CPC to represent State Classified perspectives, ideas and concerns in University planning and decision-making. Moreover, State Classified employees also depend on the CPC to be a strong advocate and ensure their voices are invited, heard, appreciated, valued, and included.

In FY22, CPC will continue efforts and involvement with ongoing Council and University committees focusing on campus initiatives, especially in response to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. CPC must continue to represent the needs of State Classified employees at CSU, focusing on wages and on medical and leave benefits. As well, the CPC needs to navigate new connections at the state level and with the new State Classified union COWINS

Too many CSU State Classified employees find themselves unable to achieve financial independence due to wage stagnation and increased cost of living and benefits. The ongoing issue of lower than market wages is an underlying and exacerbating aspect of our State Classified employees' job satisfaction, livelihood, health, and overall well-being. State wages must improve to allow CSU and State Classified employees to remain competitive in the work force – attracting and retaining the best talent available, and we cannot let the prior economic downturns in the last 20 years be an excuse for not keeping pace with the rising costs of living. We are losing talented and dedicated employees at CSU, reflected in our losses of CPC representatives and invested employees in FY21 who left the university, and we will struggle to attract and retain new employees as we begin the process of replacing positions open due to retirement.

Leave benefits for State Classified employees continue to highlight the lack of equity on our

campus as we accrue considerably less leave than our AP and Faculty counterparts. With the loss of COVID-19 leave options, it may require State Classified employees to use a great deal of their leave accumulated if they or their family members become ill, or default into leave without pay options.

In addition, the Council will provide input toward issues such as (but not limited to):

- Identifying the impacts of House Bill 20-1153 – Colorado Partnership for Quality Jobs and Services Act across the state, but particularly at CSU
- Continue coordinating with CSU HR and State of Colorado DHR and DPA toward a transition from a 3-point rating scale to a 5-point scale for State Classified evaluations. Continue working with CSU HR on developing a comprehensive performance management philosophy at CSU and as well, push for the addition of service work on campus to be considered in evaluations as a benefit, not a hinderance.
- Track and review assessment of the roll out of the new Teleworking Policy and identify opportunities for cultural shifts of supervision and employee management.
- Continue to push for expanded leave benefits, particularly sick leave accrual at the state level.
- Identifying employee recognition and professional development opportunities that are modified to meet the public health guidelines.
- Connecting employees to campus and community resources through in person and virtual modes.
- Continued involvement with the CSU budgeting process, helping identify shortfalls and inequities in professional and personal development due to tighter budgets.
- Focus on diverse recruitment of CPC representatives and increasing the knowledge of and exposure to DEI trainings and philosophies. To not only bring in diverse voices, but to foster a space that is inclusive and does not perpetuate harm of our most vulnerable employees.

Since 1972, our Council members have represented the best of CSU – committed, dedicated, and caring – and they are ready to work and to contribute to the continuous improvement of Colorado State University. The FY21 year was unlike any other in our history, but the Classified Personnel Council persevered, like the rest of our campus, in continuing work that makes a difference for State Classified employees.

Prepared by Meg Skeehan, Chair

Approved for submittal by a vote of the Classified Personnel Council on June 17, 2021