



Chief Diversity Officer

Leadership Profile

November 2024



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Northern Colorado invites nominations and applications for the leadership position of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). This is an excellent opportunity for a collaborative, strategic, inspiring, and proven leader to join a dynamic university community that celebrates and nurtures diversity and works to ensure learning occurs through meaningful discussion of shared and different experiences, viewpoints, and ideas.

Founded as a teacher's college in 1889, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) has graduated generations of educators, more than any other Colorado university. While UNC's roots remain strong as a leader in preparing teachers and school administrators, the university has diversified its academic portfolio to include programs that prepare students to be leaders in a variety of fields, including health sciences, business, the humanities, and performing and visual arts. Today, the university is a public, doctoral research and educational institution that is home to approximately 9,000 students and more than 200 undergraduate and graduate programs housed across five colleges: Education and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Monfort College of Business, Natural and Health Sciences, and Performing and Visual Arts. In response to a current and growing need for new doctors, the university is also pursuing the creation of a sixth college that is on track to welcome its first class as early as 2026: the University of Northern Colorado College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Recognized as a top university for social mobility, UNC is committed to supporting its students and providing them with a high-quality education and a community where they can thrive. The university's expert faculty and tradition of research and hands-on learning give students exceptional opportunities and a personalized education. UNC is proud to be Colorado's newest Hispanic Serving Institution and to be recognized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a First Generation-Serving Institution.

The university's 260-acre main campus is located in the city of Greeley, a vibrant town of nearly 115,000 in the heart of northern Colorado. According to 2020 census data, Greeley is one of the fastest-growing locations in the country ranking the first fastest in Colorado and the fourth fastest in the nation. Through the university's Extended Campus, students also have access to a UNC education online or at off-campus centers located in Denver and Loveland.

Reporting directly to President Feinstein and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, the CDO will join UNC at an exciting time as President Feinstein launched in July 2024 the next phase of the *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030* strategic plan, which articulates a comprehensive vision and desired outcomes for the university's future. At its core are five vision elements, each of which describes an institutional priority: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, and Connect & Celebrate. The university seeks an innovative leader to join in partnership with President Feinstein, the senior leadership team, and all members of the university community to continue to make progress toward these strategic priorities.

The successful candidate will be a seasoned leader with previous experience in senior/executive diversity officer roles coupled with in-depth knowledge of recent research and best practices relevant to the role. They will also bring past experience effectively developing and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in a collaborative and consensus-building environment. In collaboration with the university community, the CDO will reimagine and articulate a strategic vision for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion; assess and determine structures to meet the university's goals while also building relationships and fostering collaboration; provide leadership to a team of dedicated professionals; and serve as an ambassador in the university and local communities. UNC seeks candidates whose personal and professional experiences reflect a commitment to and knowledge of the experiences and needs of students, staff, faculty, and the higher education landscape.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Chief Diversity Officer

The Chief Diversity Officer serves as the senior institutional administrator responsible for planning, leading, and collaboratively implementing the University of Northern Colorado's strategies to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Reporting directly to President Feinstein and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, the Chief Diversity Officer will be a thought partner, a resource, and a strategic leader for the entire university.

The Chief Diversity Officer will cultivate an organizational capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion; facilitate the sharing of best practices; and identify opportunities for alignment and unified efforts across the university. Working with the appropriate Cabinet member or university leader, the Chief Diversity Officer will ensure that elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded throughout the full range of institutional operations, including teaching; research, scholarship, and creative works; community engagement; recruitment, hiring, and evaluation; university communication; and more.

The Chief Diversity Officer will be a proactive and visible leader, providing guidance and inspiring change. The individual will lead the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer and collaborate with faculty, staff, administrators, students, and external partners to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice across the university. From policy design to organizational development to the creation of communities of learning and practice, the Chief Diversity Officer will lead measurable progress in the advancement of strategic priorities, including those specifically aligned with the Empower Inclusivity vision element as part of the university's [*Rowing, Not Drifting 2030*](#) strategic plan.

The successful candidate must have a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities present at a regional comprehensive university or comparably complex enterprise; a record of championing diversity, equity, and inclusion; and enthusiasm for advancing the University of Northern Colorado's strategic priorities.

Primary Responsibilities

- Develop and oversee the implementation of a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion plan aligned with the university's strategic plan.
- Develop and lead diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, initiatives, plans, and partnerships across the university.
- Oversee operations of the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, including managing office budget and staff.
- Advise and inform the President and other senior leadership on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and university community initiatives.
- Provide direct leadership to advancing the university's strategic plan and ensure divisional alignment with goals and objectives.
- Collaborate with university leadership including members of the President's Cabinet, deans, chairs and directors, faculty, and others throughout the university to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice.
- Pursue external funding opportunities to support diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and initiatives at the university, including those specifically available to universities designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution.
- Oversee delivery and analysis of climate surveys at appropriate intervals. Based on results, develop action plans and engage with key university partners and the broader university community to enhance the climate for students, faculty, and staff.

- Maintain an awareness of the latest findings, trends, insights, and policy conversations in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Chief Diversity Officer serves as a student-centric leader with strategic responsibility for coordinating and synthesizing activities across the university aimed at promoting and enabling diversity, equity, and inclusion. While the needs to advance diversity and equity at the university are many, early in their tenure the CDO will be asked to advance the following priorities, among others:

- **Provide leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion to the UNC community:** The university community seeks in this CDO a strategic partner who can communicate a clear and holistic vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion, one that actively addresses structural barriers to increasing systemic change and equity for historically marginalized groups that is universal, sustainable, and transformational. Recognizing, guiding, and contributing to the tremendous knowledge base that currently exists within the university community across diversity, equity, and inclusion, the CDO will build bridges and serve as mentor and guide to identify and scale effective programs, practices, and initiatives for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the broader community and network connected to the university.
- **Lead development of a comprehensive university-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan:** The CDO will lead a collaborative process to develop a plan aligned with the university's strategic plan that prioritizes actions and tactics to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. The CDO will also serve as a partner to units across the university in aligning their own goals with the university-wide plan.
- **Strategically lead and collaborate with university partners in creating a responsive, communicative, and engaged community:** The CDO will lead and champion collective efforts toward a shared and deep commitment to equity and inclusion. They will promote collaborative events to amplify and leverage shared resources to achieve the sustainability and ongoing delivery of the university's strategic plan and imperatives. An active convener and participant in campus dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the CDO will be visibly present and engaged in the agenda items most critical to advancement of the mission of the university.
- **Review and assess the impact and effectiveness of programs:** An important priority for the new CDO is to use data to assess the impact and effectiveness of diversity efforts across the institution, quantitatively and qualitatively, and use that data to support informed and collaborative decision-making. It is also expected that there will be consistent reporting of data and of diversity and inclusion efforts to hold all UNC stakeholders accountable for improving climate for students, staff, and faculty.
- **Serve as a strategic leader and partner in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice learning:** The CDO will independently and in collaboration with others design and deliver workshops, onboarding, and professional and curricular development programs that support the diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice learning of faculty, staff, and students across units and divisions.
- **Foster an inclusive environment and leverage infrastructure that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion where diverse populations can flourish:** UNC's success depends on partnerships across equity-minded stewards in its community, collectively responsible and accountable for creating learning spaces rooted in respect and inclusivity. The CDO will work as resource in supporting and affirming units, programs, and efforts across the university, as well as individual students, staff, and faculty.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The University of Northern Colorado seeks in its next Chief Diversity Officer a courageous leader who has a track record of building programs and partnerships. Successful candidates will bring demonstrated experience in improving organizational culture along with the emotional intelligence, communication, and conflict-resolution skills to engage multifaceted and charged issues. Ideal candidates will have familiarity with an academic setting and the requirements of shared governance as well as a deep commitment to the academic public mission.

Ideal candidates will also have demonstrated skills in collecting and using data to assess programs and in cultivating shared accountability, supervisory experience and demonstrated strengths in coaching and mentoring, and a record of bringing together community resources in support of institutional change and growth.

The CDO will be a confident, high-energy leader who has most, if not all, of the following characteristics, qualities, and experiences:

Minimum Qualifications

- A master's degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution is required; a terminal or doctoral degree is preferred.
- Substantial and proven record of broad, progressive senior level administrative management and leadership experience in higher education or a comparably complex enterprise over a period of at least ten years.
- Experience developing and executing a strategic plan, including creating and tracking progress toward measurable goals.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills that reflect effective listening, humility, transparency, and authentic engagement with a wide array of constituencies.
- Ability to facilitate and sustain a culture of trust and confidence.
- Collaborative, highly visible, transparent, and approachable student-centered leader who is willing to engage in leading the UNC community toward the shared goals identified in the university's strategic plan.
- Full-time experience supervising professional staff for a minimum of five years.
- Demonstrated commitment to promoting a vibrant university culture with proven strength in fostering an environment that promotes, supports, and values diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Knowledge of contemporary issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity, including the current scholarship and pedagogical approaches that inform and address these issues.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Deep understanding of the higher education landscape, including trends, challenges, and opportunities facing public universities.
- Proven analytical skills and ability to provide oversight for assessments related to campus climate, diversity, and inclusion.
- Demonstrated experience in utilizing institutional data to benchmark and promote accountability that aligns with institutional mission and supports/creates institutional change.

About the University of Northern Colorado

Overview

Set in an ideal location, 50 miles north of Denver, 50 miles south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and 50 miles east of Rocky Mountain National Park, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) has maintained a strong tradition of serving the community and the state as one of the original educational institutions in Colorado. Founded in 1889, UNC is a public, doctoral research university offering more than 200 undergraduate and graduate programs, many of which are nationally recognized. UNC is currently home to five colleges: Education and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Monfort College of Business, Natural and Health Sciences, and Performing and Visual Arts. The university is also pursuing the creation of a sixth college: the University of Northern Colorado College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNC COM).

The university's just-right size; expert faculty; and tradition of scholarship, active learning, and inclusive pedagogy give students exceptional opportunities and a personalized education. UNC offers a 14:1 student-to-faculty ratio with a strong focus on innovative teaching, learning in and outside the classroom, and individualized encouragement and support.

UNC welcomes an increasingly diverse student body of approximately 9,000 students, including over 2,300 graduate students. Among the undergraduate population, 39% identify as underrepresented minorities, 41% are Pell-eligible, 44% identify as first-generation, and 27% identify as Hispanic/Latine. In March 2024, UNC achieved designation by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic Serving Institution. The recognition follows a consistent, steady increase in the number of Hispanic/Latine students in recent years, and it acknowledges the significant work the university has done to celebrate and support cultural diversity and create a sense of belonging for all students.

Strategic Plan

Rowing, Not Drifting 2030 is the university's ten-year strategic plan that was developed following an extensive, collaborative process with a wide array of stakeholders. Launched in 2020, the plan articulates a comprehensive vision and set of outcomes to pursue over the course of a decade. At its core are five vision elements, each of which describes an institutional priority: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, and Connect & Celebrate.

Since the strategic plan was introduced, UNC has made steady progress toward the 2030 outcomes by pursuing distinct priorities set out in two-year phases. Each phase includes several key actions, along with specific tactics to achieve each action, in support of the university's overall vision. The first phase of the plan focused on building a strong foundation by investing in the people, processes, technologies, and tools necessary to support efforts in subsequent phases.

The second two-year phase built on the foundational work and achieved significant accomplishments across each institutional priority. This work was led by a newly formed Institutional Planning Group charged by the President, led by the Provost, and composed of leaders across the institution with the charge to coordinate work across efforts tied to the strategic plan. In addition, a focus of the second phase was the implementation of a more robust approach to measuring progress toward UNC's 2030 vision and outcomes.

Now in the third phase, UNC is poised to build on the momentum generated during the first four years of implementation. Evidence of the university's momentum is visible in many ways, from achieving designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution to strengthening enrollment guided by the goals of the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan to realizing UNC's most successful year of fundraising to date — thanks, in large

part, to the more than \$200 million raised through a transformational gift by The Weld Trust and the historic investment by the state of Colorado to support the UNC COM.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University of Northern Colorado embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational values. With Empower Inclusivity as one of the five pillars of the vision articulated in the university's *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030* strategic plan, a commitment to these values is centered as a core institutional priority.

At UNC, advancing a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is a shared responsibility. While it is the role of the CDO to plan, lead, and implement university-wide strategic initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students, faculty, and staff, the leader in this position will do so in collaboration with many partners within and outside of UNC. This will include, for example, overseeing efforts to assess the campus climate, providing direction to the university's initiatives as a Hispanic Serving Institution, and designing and delivering opportunities for learning and professional development.

An example of UNC's enduring commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is its seven cultural and resource centers and the Stryker Institute for Leadership Development. For example, the César Chávez Cultural Center first opened its doors in 1985. The Marcus Garvey Cultural Center was established in 1983 in response to the unique needs of students who identified as Black and/or African American. The Center for Women's and Gender Equity (formerly the Women's Resource Center) was opened in 1994. Each of the centers continues to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of today's students through exciting programs and a wide range of services.

Between 2021 and 2024, the Cultural and Resource Centers were part of a Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. With the search for a CDO, and a parallel search to fill the position of Vice President for Student Affairs, the centers will return to the Division of Student Affairs, where they were housed prior to 2021. The realignment provides the opportunity to bring together the leaders and co-curricular programs and services that strengthen networks of support for students and foster diverse, inclusive communities.

Doing so also provides the ability for the next CDO to focus on efforts to advance UNC's university-wide strategic priorities. The CDO will have the opportunity to partner with President Feinstein, the Cabinet, students, faculty, and staff to assess current and future needs and recommend the office structure and resources necessary to advance the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the grounds upon which our university stands are inextricably tied to the history and culture of indigenous peoples. The University of Northern Colorado occupies the lands in the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota peoples. Further, we acknowledge the 48 tribes that are historically tied to the state of Colorado. Consistent with our values of community and inclusion, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the land we inhabit and to honor and pay respect to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

Leadership



President Andy Feinstein

Since becoming the 13th president of the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in 2018, Dr. Andrew “Andy” Feinstein has spearheaded transformative initiatives to strengthen the university’s impact in Colorado.

During his first year as president, Dr. Feinstein initiated a collaborative process to articulate a new shared direction for UNC, which led to the creation of the university’s ten-year strategic plan, *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030*. The first phase of the plan focused on building a strong foundation by investing in the people, processes, technologies, and tools necessary to support efforts in subsequent phases. The second two-year phase built on the foundational work and led to significant accomplishments across each institutional priority. Now in the third phase of implementation, President Feinstein is leading UNC to realize a bold set of strategic priorities to ensure the university continues its strong trajectory of success.

Under Dr. Feinstein’s guidance, UNC has made remarkable progress toward establishing Colorado’s first public osteopathic medical college, addressing critical healthcare workforce needs and earning him recognition as a 2024 Powerbroker by the *Denver Business Journal*. This includes securing a \$25 million transformational gift from The Weld Trust and a historic investment by the state of Colorado of nearly \$170 million to support construction, startup, and accreditation expenses. In total, Dr. Feinstein has led UNC to raise over \$200 million for the project.

Central to his “Students First” vision, Dr. Feinstein’s leadership for the establishment of the UNC Tuition Promise, which offers free tuition to Colorado high school graduates from families earning under \$65,000, and the Colorado First-Year Admission Guarantee, which qualifies eligible students for automatic admission, expanded access to higher education for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, Dr. Feinstein led UNC to achieve federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, reflecting his commitment to inclusivity and support for all students.

Throughout his presidency, Dr. Feinstein has sought to enhance the fundamental characteristics and commitments that make UNC a great place to live and learn. As UNC’s president, Dr. Feinstein has recommitted the university and its leadership to design and activate new approaches that honor and celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that the university sustains a nurturing and supportive environment where all students, faculty, and staff thrive.

Emphasizing transparency, communication, and collaborative decision making, Dr. Feinstein meets frequently with the Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Professional Administrative Staff Council, Classified Staff Council, and other organizations serving UNC’s students, faculty, and staff. He also regularly travels throughout the state to meet alumni and friends, higher education leaders, legislators, and policymakers.

His positive influence over higher education in Colorado extends well beyond UNC. Through an active agenda to coordinate efforts among the presidents and chancellors of Colorado’s public colleges and universities, Dr. Feinstein has helped to ensure institutions advocate for the needs of higher education with one voice. The result has been increased state support for higher education — benefitting institutions and students across the state.

Dr. Feinstein’s career in higher education spans 25 years. He most recently served five years as Provost and Senior Vice President at San Jose State University. Prior to that, he served in roles including Professor, Department Chair, Associate Dean, Dean, and Senior Advisor to the President at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He has published numerous journal articles and books on topics such as student success, strategic management, simulation modeling, purchasing, and foodservice operations. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UNLV and a Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University.

Greeley, Colorado

UNC's history has been intertwined with Greeley's since the creation of the State Normal School in 1889, when the town's citizens recognized the value that increased access to education would bring to their community.

Greeley is a vibrant, friendly, and genuinely diverse community of nearly 115,000 residents in the heart of northern Colorado. According to 2020 census data, Greeley is one of the fastest-growing locations in the country ranking the first fastest in Colorado and the fourth fastest in the nation. Economic growth and development provide an abundance of opportunities for an active lifestyle, along with emerging career opportunities for UNC's graduating students. UNC and the city of Greeley have been active partners in revitalizing the neighborhoods and businesses around campus for over a decade, establishing a University District in 2009 and the Greeley Creative District in 2014. The sun shines more than 300 days a year, summers are pleasant, and winters are picturesque. Situated along the Front Range Urban Corridor, Greeley is about an hour north of Denver and an hour east of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Northern Colorado in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Mercedes Chacón Vance and Jevon Walton

UNCoCDO@wittkieffer.com

Compensation and Benefit Information

Compensation range: \$165,000 - \$185,000

Benefits: The University of Northern Colorado provides a wide range of benefits for its employees. Information on University benefits programs, including eligibility, is available at <https://www.unco.edu/human-resources/employee-resources/benefits/>

UNC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action/Title IX employer committed to a culturally diverse staff, faculty, and student body. In accordance with established laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, or political affiliation for employees in all aspects of employment and for students in academic programs and activities. Please visit <https://www.unco.edu/institutional-equity-compliance/> to learn more.