

Federal & State Government Relations

Video Transcript

Welcome everybody.

My name is Alan Abbott.

I'm an internal organizational development consultant with the central HR L and D team here at Anschutz.

And today I have the pleasure of introducing four members of the CU government relations team who help connect CU Anschutz to key decision makers at the state capital across Colorado and in Washington D.C.

These professionals work tirelessly to ensure the work we do on this campus is understood and supported by policymakers.

Let me start with the person who helps everyone make sense of the dollars behind the policies.

Tobin Bliss. Tobin is the Assistant Vice Chancellor of fiscal planning within the budget planning and campus strategy office here at Anschutz.

As part of Tobin's role, he serves as one of two Anschutz campus legislative liaisons to the systems office of government relations.

His liaison work includes focusing on determining fiscal impacts of proposed legislation.

Tillman has worked for CU for 18 years, including 10 years at CU Systems CU Denver and CU Anschutz From the fiscal side of things.

Let's move to how we show up in the community and with state leaders through the work of Neil Krause.

Neil is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Initiative and Community Engagement, and has worked with CU Anschutz since 2011, primarily focusing on projects and initiatives for leading leaders, including facilitating responses to bills affecting the campus and the Colorado legislature, and partnering with the CU lobbyists to advocate for CA for the campus by working with state legislators and their staff as well as Colorado's Con Congressional Delegation.

Also was involved in co-leading the campus community engagement efforts with Dr. Regina Richards vice Chancellor for access and Engagement.

And it is also worth noting that Neil spent five years at the State Capital as a legislative staffer with the Legislative Council of Colorado.

Next, focusing on the broader CU system perspective at the state capitol, we're joined by Rebecca Massey.

Rebecca is the senior advisor for state relations and public policy for the Office of Government Relations at the University of Colorado.

She is part of the state relations team, which is responsible for C'S advocacy efforts at the state, including budget and capital requests, legislation of impact, and representing all four campuses at the Capitol.

As a registered lobbyist for the university, she develops, coordinates and maintains necessary relationships on a campuses as well as developing strategy to assist in attaining the university's legislative priorities.

Prior to coming to see you, Rebecca worked at the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a lead finance analyst and as budget and policy analyst at the Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

In the governor's office. Rebecca is active with the Junior League of Denver, where she focuses on public policy around housing, food access, and women's issues.

And to round out our speaker slate at the federal level, joining us remotely, we have Brett Rud, who represents CU in Washington DC on health policy and medical research issues.

Brett is the assistant vice president of federal relations and health policy for the University of Colorado and represents CU in Washington D.C.

He represents the university with federal officials, national organizations and government entities on health policy issues, medical research and public health funding, as well as health workforce development and coverage issues.

Prior to joining CU in early 2022, Brett worked for the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities where he focused on health equity, workforce development and issues impacting students.

He's a graduate of the University of Delaware with a bachelor's degree in political science, and he earned his master's in political management from George Washington University, a native New Yorker.

Brett currently resides in dc Please help it.

Help me welcome Tobin, Rebecca, Brett, and Neil. Neil.

Hi everyone. Thank you, Alan.

It's our pleasure and honor today to have our boots on the ground at the federal and state capital buildings.

Brett and Rebecca really are the experts that campus leadership relies on in both Washington and Denver.

Brett works in tandem with the CU system, senior Vice President for external relations and Strategy, and that's Dan RA Piper.

They navigate the often turbulent federal political waters.

Today, Brett is going to help untangle the web of federal policy development and implementation.

He'll walk you through his office's charge, show you what he does, go over the legal requirements.

We all have to abide by, give a tutorial on law making clarify the differences and authorizations, appropriations and rulemaking processes.

Finally, he'll explain what actually budget reconciliation means.

Rebecca is our senior advisor for state relations and public policy.

As you all know, CU Anschutz is one of four campuses in the CU system.

So Rebecca works with Heather Rezko, the CU Vice president for state relations to sort out the complicated political machinations relating to the CU system and our campus priorities vis-a-vis the state's priorities.

He serves really as our eyes and ears and has to walk a really difficult and oftentimes a moving tightrope to help forge our priorities through the process.

Rebecca's gonna talk us through C'S role in the state process and how priority setting is made downtown, as well as talk a little bit about what occurred this year in the special session and what the outlook looks like in the coming legislative session in January, Tobin will discuss our campuses, how our campus sets its priorities, the feedback loop that's required during the legislative session.

And lastly, I'll walk you through the campus protocol for engaging legislators.

Brett,

Thank you so much, Neil.

Well, it's really a pleasure
to be joining y'all virtually today from chilly Washington
DC. We've officially entered winter here,
so it's a lot different than in Colorado,
but we're, they don't handle the cold as well here.
But really excited to be able to kind of give a little bit
of overview about what the CU Office
of Federal Relations does
and what role we play with Anschutz, as well
as just some overview of how the process works
because it is incredibly complicated here in DC
and it's a much different process than

what Rebecca works on downtown.

It's a joke that we always talk about.

So just happy to kind of do some clarity and go over that

and I'll answer any questions at the end,

but just wanna initially provide a little bit of an overview

of what the Office of Federal Relations does.

We view our role is we are here to bring CU to DC

and DC to CU.

So whether we have any leaders or faculty or staff

or students here in DC that wanna meet with federal

agencies, lawmakers, staff of congressional offices,

things like that, we are here to help support all

of our faculty and staff at all four campuses.

And on the flip side, we also have any time we wanna have our delegation or government officials want to come tour any of our campuses or meet with specific research projects or things like that, we tend to have folks come over to there.

Our team is a split between Denver and Washington DC so we have three folks here in DC and two in Denver.

So we have coverage on the ground, whether things are happening back home in the state when the members are federal officials are back in Colorado or here in DC.

I had a fun time going through some pictures
to see some different federal engagement we had this year,
but we have, we've had engagement with almost
with every single member of Congress.

So all 10 members of our delegation we have met with,
with different folks or faculty from CU Anschutz.

We have a great collage here,
whether we have Senator Hickenlooper touring a lab,
Dean Samson meeting with Jeff Herd, Mr.

Cranks on here. We have folks from the Center of Health,
health Work and Environment

and School of Public Health meeting with Mr. Evans,
meetings with Ms.

Ette, as well as Senator Bennett.

So we are constantly meeting with these officials

so they know the amazing work

that's happening at CU Anschutz, as well as engaging

with our faculty and staff, which was one

of my favorite events that we had this year was

with Congressman Crow, our local representative from

Congressional district six in Colorado did a town hall

with chancellor Elliman and about 200 of our faculty staff

and students was able to answer questions just

about what's happening.

And so to show all the work that he's been doing

to support us in DC during this last year, as well

as hear from us about

what the biggest concerns are moving forward.

So this is all stuff that worked on really closely

with campus leaders to make sure

that events like this happen

and make sure that we are properly advocating for the

for this, for the university in dc.

Next slide please. So just really quickly,

just going over what federal lobbying procedures are all

official contacts with Congress

or the administration much go

through the federal relations team.

This includes signing letters on behalf of the university,

discussing legislation on behalf

of the university in official settings.

That includes writing, op ed meeting with members,

things along those lines, same with meetings with staff

or members of Congress, as well as inviting any member

or their staff or government official to campus

for an official event.

That all is under federal lobbying procedures.

I am a registered lobbyist similar to Rebecca

with the federal government.

We have to go through hours of reporting each quarter

to make sure that we're in compliance

and it's really crucial for CU lobbying efforts.

Happy to answer any questions anyone may have about

what is lobbying, what is not lobbying.

We can work through it on an individual case by case basis,

but my emails down there, please reach out to make sure

that we are in compliance so we can continue to make sure

that we're advocating on behalf of CU Anschutz as well

as the rest of the universities in our system

during this critical time.

Next slide please. Not

Going rolling. There you go.

So this is one of my favorite slides that I get

to do in every single one of my presentations

because I feel like we all learned about

how a bill becomes a law just similar to

what we learned in Schoolhouse Rock,

but it's really an actual complicated process from bill

introduction to committee work to debate

and amendments on the floor

and in committee then going

to the other chamber and things like that.

So the snake with all the different issues

on when you can put in input to a law,

when things need to come to together, how to do that, that's

what the role of federal relations is.

And it doesn't even stop after a bill becomes a law

because then you have to actually do federal rulemaking

around new laws where there's also opportunities

to comment along those lines.

So this is a really complicated process

and our job is to be here to help our faculty, staff,

and leaders understand this process

and engage in ways that we can at each point of it.

So just a little bit of how it is really not black

and white here in DC and it's only getting murkier each day

and each month that we move forward.

So really here to just kind of figure out

how we can make sure that CU
and CU Anschutz is being properly
represented at each stage in this process.

Next slide. A lot of what we do,
and a lot of what I'm gonna be talking about today is
regarding the federal budget.

It's really where we spend a majority of our advocacy work
to make sure that programs are robustly funded,
whether it's NIH, Medicare, Medicaid, department
of Education, student loan Programs, pick an agency.

That's where where we spend a lot of our time,
our government is split up in

between different sorts of funding.

So we have man mandatory funding, which is funding that has
to happen regardless every year.

There's about 61% of our budget in fiscal year that includes Medicare,
Medicaid,

affordable Care Act subsidies, social security, things

that are just really ingrained into law

and not changed on a year to year basis.

Discretionary funding, which is where we spend a lot

of our time and which we'll be spending the majority

of our this presentation talking about

is our year over year funding for the federal government.

So that includes the appropriations bills, whether it's

for our NIH, department of Defense, department of Education,

that's about 26% of our budget.

So it's a really small amount of our budget,

but it really is what's crucial to make sure

that our federal government is best serving

the university moving forward.

Then about 13% of it is on interest and debt payments

and things along those lines.

So it's a really interesting skew of our budget about

how much a lot

of these mandatory programs actually do take up on

our year to year budget.

Next slide. So

before we get into the appropriations process,

there's a difference between authorizations

and appropriations in in Congress,

and I think this is a really great example of why

authorization is what establishes a program

and appropriation is what funds a program.

We have seen many pro programs established but not funded

and a lot of programs that have been funded

but never formally established.

So in order for something to be done, we need to make sure

that there is some sort of funding secured.

So those are the appropriations bills, those are the ones

that tend to move

and a lot of times we tend to see authorizations move

with appropriations to show that funding

can move forward along those lines.

So this is something that we really work on really closely.

So just because a bill is signed into law doesn't mean

that it's actually gonna be practicing law if the

appropriators do not fund it,

only the appropriations committee can fund,

can can do funding,

and we'll talk about the way the appropriations committee

works, but that's, that's one of the key difference

between what's happening here in DC here in DC

and about the differences between both sides of the process.

So the, so just

because a bill that we really care about becomes law,

that doesn't mean that it's actually gonna be enacted if

there's no money behind it.

Next slide please. So the federal appropriations process

is something that happens every fiscal year

and it's what funds that 26% of the government, there are
appropriations bills all stated over here

that have jurisdiction over different federal agencies.

The one of the bills that we really key in on a lot is the

labor, health and human services education

and related agency bills.

It is the second largest bill on here

as it funds all HHS agencies,

but the exclusion of the FDA,

which is in the agriculture bill, as well as the Department

of Labor and the Department of Education.

It is, like I said, the second largest bill

after the Department of Defense bill

that gets done every year.

When we talk about bills getting passed and mini buses

and omnibuses and cromnebuses

and CRs, it all relates to these 12 bills.

They all do initially move independently

and then they get packaged together into different portions.

Continuing resolution is

what we're currently under right now,

and that's what was established for fiscal year 2025,

which essentially just said all fiscal year 2024 numbers

will exist for all 12 of these bills for fiscal year 2025.

We are now in fiscal year 2026, we'll talk about

that a little bit after they actually did pass three out

of these nine bills.

So that five federal agencies are currently funded

for fiscal year 2026.

But if we actually look at any government funding bill,

it is divided out by these 12 sections

and these 12 bills.

So we engage very closely with these committees

and these appropriators as they roll out their bills

to ensure that we have robust funding

for agencies that we care about.

Next slide please.

So as I said, we have nine out of our
appropriation bills are fully funded

through January 30th, 2026.

That is where we currently stand.

That was a result of a deal that was struck

after the longest shutdown

in US government history of 43 days.

We actually, president signed the bill last week
to reopen the government. In this bill,
the military construction and VA agriculture and FDA
and legislative branch bills are fully complete.
So that means anyone that has any work with the VA
or the Department of Agriculture, anything related
to the FDA, they're fully funded
through September 30th, for the remainder of the fiscal year.
We all other agencies have their funding expire on
January 30th, 2026.
Wanna talk about what a shutdown is?
A little bit, a shutdown occurs when there's a lack

of an agreement on an appropriation bill

or any of the appropriation bills.

We have seen government-wide shutdowns, which is

what we just came out of where there was agreement on none

of the 12 appropriation bills.

So every agency in the government shutdown for 43 days.

In and 19, there was a 35 day government shutdown,

which only impacted six out of the 12 appropriation bills,

which was a agency specific shutdown,

which impacted about a third of the government agencies

because a lot of the bigger agencies were already funded.

So we have seen it back and forth.

If there is a lack of consensus

to fund the government on January 30th, 2026,

we could see a partial government shutdown

and bills that are already funded.

So three bills that were done previously

or any bills that they may complete between now

and then will move forward and be working as normal.

So that's why there's a big difference between partial

and agency specific shutdown.

We are optimistic that there won't be another shutdown again

and we'll kind of we're closely monitoring

and advocating to make sure that agencies

that we care about are funded.

There's rumors going around
that the Senate actually might consider of the bill
that would deal with the departments of Labor Health
and Human Services education related agencies this week,
which would kind of kick off the bipartisan process to
to fund the government.

One of the things with appropriations is it does require
votes, so it does in the Senate.

So it does need necessitate, bipartisanship
and consensus to actually agree to fund the government.

You can't do it in a partisan fashion.

I know we're about to talk about budget reconciliation,
which is a completely different process,

but right now you do need that 60 votes, which is

what was the struggle over the last 43 days

and it shut down really shut down.

So I think they started out at 53 votes

and they got to 54, then they got up to
and then they finally got up to 60. 40,

about 41 days into it, which which allowed the Republicans

to move forward with the democratic minority in support

of the appropriation bills. That happens

with all appropriation bills

and it's something that really important to make to ensure

that programs are funded robustly

and not completely gutted in partisan ways.

So I know that's something that senators from both sides

of the aisle have fought to protect.

And even during the shutdown you heard more

and more about blowing up the filibuster, trying

to just pass it with the simple majority,

and we heard Senate majority Leader Thune kind of rebuffed

that saying that it's important to have a

a robustly bipartisan appropriations process.

So that is something that will continue moving forward.

Next slide please. So now we're talking about

budget reconciliation.

Budget reconciliations,

a completely different process than the appropriations

bills, but yet has huge impact on our campuses as well
as the way our government functions.

So budget reconciliation is a special legislative process
that allows certain budget related bills to pass
with a simple majority in the Senate.

There is limited time to debate in filibuster
and everything must have a positive
or negative impact on our federal budget.

Budget reconciliation is actually a tool
that is used when one party controls both the house,
the Senate, and the presidency.

It allows them to pass a bill with a simple majority

and get a lot of the President's

priorities passed through.

We've seen it used a lot recently.

It was used most recently

with the one big beautiful Bill Act.

We saw President Biden use it

for the Inflation Reduction Act

and the American Rescue Plan Act

and President Trump in 2017 used it

with the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Some of the unique things about budget reconciliation

is it involves every single congressional committee

but the appropriations committee.

So it's the one time
that you can actually allocate money without
going through appropriators.
If you use the special legislative vehicle
that is budget reconciliation,
you can also go into mandatory programs.
It's why you see why a lot of changes
to Medicaid were made in the one big beautiful bill act
to pay for other actions
to why they actually go into tax policy, mostly
through the budget reconciliation process
because it allows you to pass that with the simple majority.

So it's not just constrained to, for providing funding

for \$300 million

for the defense advanced research Projects agency or darpa.

They need to kind of find an offset back and forth to it

and make sure that everything does have a positive

or negative impact on the budget.

That is what is called the bird rule or the bird bath.

It is one of my favorite things here in dc.

It is two people sitting down

with the Senate parliamentarian fighting to say

that each policy that they have has a positive

or a negative impact on the budget.

If the parliamentarian decides they have,

it has a budgetary impact, it is in the bill.

If the parliamentarian decides it does not have a budgetary

impact, it's actually out of the bill.

So we've seen many different policies get kicked out

of the bill through this process back and forth.

But this is supposed to, to supposed to be, to ensure that

all policies that are included in the bill are maintained

under the rules of budget reconciliation.

Like I said, budget reconciliations happened four times

in the last eight years.

It comes around every so often.

We have midterm elections coming up next year.

If the Democrats are able to take back the House
of Representatives or the Senate in 2026,
that means budget reconciliation will be up, will not happen
for the rest of president Trump's term
because they will not agree to a lot
of the terms under this.

So it's a really special vehicle that we engage in
and really took up a lot of our time this summer.

But it all, but it's something that is used as a tool
to do reforms that are not necessarily
have bipartisan consensus all the time.

Next slide. I think this might be the end
of my presentation.

That's right Brett, thank you.

I'm happy to answer any questions anyone has at the end.

Okay. Okay, great. Next we're gonna move over

to Rebecca Massey

to talk about the CU system state

legislative engagement process.

Hello everyone. As Neil said, I'm Rebecca Massey

and to kind of reintroduce my title, it's Senior Advisor

for State Relations and Public Policy.

But to make it simple, it boils down to one

of the state lobbyists.

So the office of governmental relations

supports the University of Colorado

by building effective partnerships between the university

and state and federal and governments.

So on the state side, we are working directly

with the elected officials in the state government.

So it's going to be house members, senate members,

it's going to be the treasurer, the ags office, et cetera.

So anybody that you see on a ballot on the state side are

going to be people that we interact with.

And if I were to boil kinda a lobbyist position down

to kinda three simple buckets,

I would say it's relationship building, it's strategizing

and it's executing.

So in the relationship building,

we are again working directly with members.

We are kind of the intermediary between campuses,

between policy makers, between anybody that is trying

to push for policy in our space.

It would be again, the campuses,

it would be programs, et cetera.

And those people that are helping make those decisions.

Governor's office, again, the house and senate, et cetera.

On the strategizing piece, we are working directly

with those campuses and programs

and system office to determine what policy we need,

what changes need to happen, what our priorities are.

And then on the execution it's going to be again, working

with those policy makers

and our folks on our side to say, what are those changes?

How are we going to make them?

And then now we're going to work on amendments,

we're supporting, we're trying to kill a bill, et cetera.

So that's kind of a simple way to explain lobbying

because I think a lot of people are always asking

what is a lobbyist?

So I like to try and simplify it that way.

We achieve a lot of this through central representation

and advocacy, lobbying of CU needs

and interests with state officials.

So as I explained, we are here to do that work with all of

that policy that we see go through the state.

And again, Brett is at the federal level doing the same

thing just in a very different way.

The state team advocates at the state legislature's for CU's budget.

So that's gonna be for us primarily

higher education funding.

And then we also have specific program funding capital.

So it's going to be all

of our buildings that we have on campus.

We have to go through the state for those

and policy requests.

So again, those are just going to be those bills that we see

that could impact us in any way, shape or form.

We also monitor all bills impacting CU's four campuses.

So like I said, it could be something that we see come

through and it may not impact us directly,

but in on this campus's case, it would be something

that could affect the hospitals.

And so we have to work with the hospitals to understand

what their impact is

and how it could indirectly impact us as well.

Individual campus legislative priorities

and system leadership inform overall CU

legislative priorities.

So we work through leadership both at the system level
and at the campus level to understand what priorities are
and then how we are going to prioritize them in
that system side.

And then again, work with the legislature on those.

So we've run multiple bills throughout multiple years.

For example, we had on this campus the Rural Health Pipeline
bill, which creates funding for students in rural track.

So that was a bill that we ran
with legislators at the state level to get funding
to help support those students

and the the faculty doing that work.

We also help guide advocacy and lobby efforts.

So that's going to be if anybody on campus, if any

of our programs are wanting to get involved.

And so we say, okay, you know,

from a leadership perspective,

because again we have to run everything through leadership.

They say, you know, we're good to support, we're good

to testify on this bill, we are here to help support you all

to take you to the committee where you'll be testifying

to help you get signed up, to help you with talking points,

to kind of help you work that system so

that you can understand exactly what the needs are

and if you have any questions, we are here to support that.

So on the system bill feedback process

and official bill positions piece,

we read every single bill that comes through.

So it could be in a year.

I think in this past session we saw over 600 bills come

through and a member of our team

or multiple members of our team will read those bills

to determine do we think that CU is gonna have an impact?

And we actually end up getting impacted by quite a few bills

because CU is one of the largest employers in the state.

And so we are impacted by not just higher education bills

or healthcare bills on this campus, we are impacted

by employment law, we're impacted

by any building requirements, et cetera.

Because again, we are working in

all of these different spaces.

So we look to see what those potential impacts could be

and then we send those out to campuses.

So some of you may be on some of those listservs

where you receive an email from one of our team members,

Angela Renick, to say, Hey,

we're sending this bill out for feedback.

Let us know what that feedback could be.

Then we gather that feedback

and we essentially put it in a list

and we send it to the legislator to say,

this is what our feedback will be.

And then we work as lobbyists directly

with those members again to say, Hey,

this could impact us in a positive way or a negative way,

and these are the changes that we need to see,

or this is how we can help support you in this process.

So some of that feedback can include, again,

those potential issues with the bill where we would say,

Hey, we think we need an amendment on this bill,

or desired outcomes.

So again, that could be testifying in support of a bill

to say, Hey, this is great.

We're really excited about it.

Let us know how we can support you

and be there for you throughout the process.

Or if we want this bill to fail, so we wanna kill a bill

and say, Hey, this is gonna be really bad for us.

How can we make sure that we work with a lot

of the other people that are seeing these same impacts

to come together and say, you know,

this isn't the time for this.

If we can't make changes, let's either push it off

until we can, or let's kill this bill entirely.

It's a vital part of determining the position on the bill.

So again, this feedback tells us exactly

what we need from subject matter experts.

As much as we can work with you all

to understand the issues, we will never be the as close

to the issues as you all will be in these spaces.

So that's why for us, feedback is so important

because we take that feedback

and then we essentially have to melt it down into something

that a legislator can understand

because they too are not exactly subject matter experts,

especially in spaces like healthcare on exact campus,

higher education needs, faculty issues,

staffing issues, et cetera.

So we are going to say, Hey, please give us this feedback.

We'll determine, we'll help to determine the position.

And then we will again push that to these members

that we are working with.

Especially when we are in a kind of a crunch time on bills,

we end up coming to our folks on campus

and we'll say, we have a tight turnaround,

we need this really quickly.

So we'll probably have something like,

it could be 10 minutes, it could be an

hour, it could be days.

It's just a really fun part of the position as well

of we never really know what our timing's like.

We kind of say that we start at a certain time,

but we never know what our end time is going to be.

Because during session, which

Colorado State session is 120 days straight through January

to May, so this year it starts on,

I believe it's January 14th,

and then it'll end in the first week of May.

We are usually starting around 8:00 AM

and then again, committees could start, they break

for afternoon, then they come back.

So we are kind of always having to determine

what their needs are, when they're gonna be back in the

building, how we can communicate with them,

finding them on the floor,

finding them, walking around the halls.

So that's why, again, that feedback is so important for us

because it helps us to communicate what our needs are.

Again, as I said, these positions further guide our lobbying

efforts and advocacy.

So again, as soon as we have that feedback,

we determine the position and we'll push it

out to those members.

And then once that feedback is received, we work

with leadership to determine that position.

So again, we take the feedback, we go to leadership, we say,

Hey, this is what we're hearing from campus, is this kind
of your understanding too?

Especially from finance, especially from legal, et cetera.

We work with kind of all of the different branches
to make sure that we have a full understanding
of the legislation

and then we will again go
through the same process on the system side
and then that determines our official position
where we will communicate that out.

All right, and I'm gonna pass it to Tobin,

Take over here. Thanks

for having us by the way.

I'm gonna go ahead and talk a little bit about the CU

Anschutz internal state legislative engagement process

and how that fits underneath that larger system umbrella.

A lot of this material might be familiar to some of you,

especially if you were attending our presentation last year.

We thought it was a good idea to bring it back, even just

to talk about it at a high level, given

that the legislative session is roughly two months

away, like Rebecca said.

So it's always nice to have those friendly reminders

of our internal process as well.

So prior to the legislative session,

our campus leadership goes

through a legislative priority process

and legislative policy change

ideas that impact our campus are developed at multiple

levels throughout our organization.

It can be from campus leadership,

but it also can be from deans.

Faculty and staff.

Faculty and staff

with legislative policy ideas though should collaborate

with their school or unit leadership first

to assess the potential as a larger campus wide priority.

Each school and college legislative priorities are set

by the dean in early fall

and sometimes before that, depending on what the issue is.

And then the deans will collaborate with campus leadership

to assess the broader policy, the fiscal impacts, wanting

to make sure they're not any downstream

impacts to the rest of the campus.

And then once they agree to

what those legislative policies will be

or their priorities will be, they submit that to the office

of government relations for the upcoming session.

It's really important that we do this prior to the session because if we wanna bring forward legislation, we want to have time to create that bill, draft those bills, and then find the appropriate sponsors for those bills that can then shepherd it through the legislative process.

And then once the sessions actually starts, our attention really turns to providing policy and fiscal impact feedback on any proposed legislation that might have an impact on our campus.

And so, as Rebecca said, they go through all of the 600 plus bills that are introduced each session, and thank God because that is boring.

But they do that for us and we so appreciate that.

And then they can whittle those down to the, the bills

that might have an impact on our campus, which is typically

between 50 and a hundred each year,

depending on what the session looks like.

They provide that to campus leadership

and the campus liaisons, Neil and myself.

We'll then route that for feedback

to the appropriate impacted constituents

that can be at all levels of the organization as well,

leadership, program leadership, faculty and staff.

The feedback that we're, we're looking for, as Rebecca

outlined is that we're looking for potential issues, issues

that might have significant impacts on our campus,

whether positive

or negative, any fiscal impacts as well in that space.

Suggested amendments, things that we think

that could make the bill better.

Those those things.

And then some recommended positions, whether we wanna say

as a campus, hey, we're opposed to this bill,

or we support it with, if we change this

or that within that bill,

we're working under the

legislative timeline as Rebecca said.

So we, they don't give us a ton of time

to provide feedback on all of these bills.

It's really a quick turnaround timeframe between one

to five days initially when we get the first,

the bills when they're introduced.

But in recent years, we've seen that to one to two days.

And so if you ever get an email from Neil

or myself, just know we are on a tight timeline

and we so appreciate all of your work and

and effort to get that done because it is important to us.

'cause this is our voice in the process.

There are countless bills, you know,

or so that could have significant impacts on our

campus, positive and negatively.

So we wanna make sure we get that information to Rebecca

and her team so they can appropriately advocate

and lobby on our behalf.

And then as the bills make their way

through the legislative session, through all

of those multiple committees, through the house,

through the Senate, the system office will keep us informed

all along the way at

where those bills are within the calendar,

what the bill status are,

and then they're gonna also provide us with any amendments

that are made in, in any of the committees.

It's not uncommon to find bills that have 3, 4, 5 amendments
that are attached to them at any point
through the committee process.

And we don't really know what these amendments do
unless we take a look at it and re review them.

They may or may not have material implications.

So we wanna make sure that we're routing those amendments
through that process as well.

And as Rebecca said, sometimes it's,
it's incredibly quick turnaround time.

It can, I think we've had some that it's been 15 minutes
because they've taken a picture of something

and send me a picture and said, what do you think of this?

So it's very quick and,

and pretty interesting process there.

But the other thing

that is interesting about the legislative session,

it's a lot of hurry up and wait.

And so we do a lot of work on the front end

of the legislative session.

First month we're providing feedback on all

of those bills that are introduced.

They may get through a committee and then they may stall

and they may hang on that

calendar to the end of the session.

And what that means for that end of the session is it,

it gets pretty crazy.

The build changes can come very frequently,

they can come unexpectedly

and they can happen at any hours of the night.

I'm sure Rebecca can tell us stories about being at the

capitol at 1:00 AM 2:00 AM following different committees,

just making sure that we have all

of the information we need as a campus.

So we appreciate that as well.

I'm gonna go ahead and turn it back to her

so she can talk a little bit about the upcoming state

legislative outlook

and what that next session will look like.

All right, so also, as Tobin said, again, we do work

with you all throughout the fall.

So we typically, Brett and I will come to campus

and spend a few days here meeting with every program,

all the deans, leadership to understand

what those priorities are.

Also, it's helpful for us to understand,

especially on the state side,

if you're working in affiliation groups,

advocacy groups throughout your different programs,

if you're hearing of legislation that can come up,

how it could impact campus, how we can get involved,

if it's good, if it's bad, things like that.

Those are things that we also love to hear.

So it's also very helpful when we meet with you all

to understand kind of what you all are hearing as well.

Because again, for us it's a lot of, you know, what we hear

before, what we know, especially kind

of in these months leading up to session

because we don't get to see all the bill titles until,

you know, the first day when a bunch of them start dropping.

And so that's kind of how we get

to start the process in the fall with you all

and with kind of those advocacy groups

and an affiliation groups

because they, again,

everybody starts working on their legislation then.

So again, in this current session

or in this past session in 25, we bounced the budget

by the end of the year, we had a lot of bills come through

and then suddenly HR one passed

and we had a budget gap of 1.2 billion

because of tax changes.

So the governor had to call out special session in August

to address some of those issues.

It was called the end of August,

and they met for five days,

they met over the weekend as well.

And it actually ended up being funnily enough, more

of an AI special session than an

actual budget special session.

They did pass 11 bills to help fill some

of the gaps of the budget.

And then the governor had cutting authority

because they took from the reserve to fix kind

of against some of those budget holes.

And then he ended up cutting some

of our programs, which is unfortunate.

But on the AI side, I think, you know, we're having a lot

of interest around this in all of our campuses,

but on this campus especially as well,

because of the healthcare aspect, understanding,

there was a bill two sessions ago that was passed

that was trying to regulate ai.

We haven't seen a lot

of regulation obviously on the federal side,

which is probably where it should start,

but I think it's such a big beast that we haven't had

that opportunity to really see that come down yet.

And so the state has taken up upon itself to determine what

that looks like, even though I think as we know,

AI is constantly evolving.

And so a bill was passed, gave a two year runway,

and it was supposed to start in February of with regulations going through a committee task force

to determine what that was gonna look like.

And so we worked with members to say, you know, we're,

we don't think we're ready for this.

And there were obviously a lot of different opponents

to some of those bills and proponents to say, I don't think

that the state is ready for these changes.

So they pushed out the actual implementation till the end

of June of 2026 to give a little extra time this session

to determine, okay, do we need to pass a bill that will,

again, give us a longer runway?

What do some of those regulations look like?

They've put together another task force

that doesn't involve lobbyists or lawmakers

because they want it to truly be the people working in AI

rather than the people advocating around it.

So we'll see some of those changes likely coming

through this session, which I can talk about after this.

But again, I mentioned that the governor had cutting

authorities, so he ended up cutting higher ed, 12.8 million,

which we saw cuts on this campus.

We saw cuts on all of our campuses,

but it did impact some of our programs like Rural Health,

the geriatric program, et cetera.

And then are now seeing the next session bills

again starting to come forward.

The governor presented his budget, which we are now seeing,

they're probably going to have

to cut about 850 million worth.

And it, I think it's actually even moved up

with the economic forecast to almost a billion.

And so we are now looking at more cuts this year.

It's going to be a tough session in that sense

because we, as I think Tobin

and Neil know, we are letting all

of our campuses know we are not in a space

where we can ask for more funding.

So it's really just determining

how we can keep the lights on

as is without taking more cuts.

We're working with the legislature

to say those exact same things, saying, you know,

don't cut our programs because these support students

or these support faculty or research, et cetera.

But we also are saying, you know,

we understand we can't increase funding,

which essentially on a lot of our campuses as we know, is a,

is a cut anyway because our costs do continue to increase.

We are also going to see a lot of cuts on the Medicaid side.

So we are working again, closely with our hospital partners

to understand what their impacts are going to be

1and how we can support each other in those spaces.

And I think other topic areas

that we'll see this legislative

session will be accessibility.

It's always been a big issue

in the legislative session on healthcare accessibility

and affordability, workforce development.

I think, you know, we have what we call lame duck governor

because it is his last session.

We are seeing obviously a lot of chatter
around the primary coming up next June with,
we have Phil Wiser
and Michael Bennett on the DEM side, kind
of our close partners on the JBC,
Barb Kirkmeyer on the R side.

And so I think we're going to see a lot
of interesting discussion around that.

But I think a common theme even in the upcoming races is
workforce development.

We have meetings constantly
with leadership at the legislature on

what workforce development means, how we can do that.

I think in this space, a lot

of the focus they've had is on nursing too.

And so they say like,

how can we push people into the workforce faster?

How can we get people in

and out of programs quickly

to get them into these high demand spaces?

And so we are always constantly

facing some of those changes.

So whether it be fast tracking programs,

whether it's giving authority

for two year mission, et cetera.

So sometimes we're fighting them,

sometimes we're supporting them.

But again, it comes back to helping us

with the feedback in those spaces too.

I also think that insurance is going

to be a common theme that comes up.

We're talking about the purchase

of Pinnacle at the state level,

and then again, I think we've seen insurance costs increase

and so they're constantly talking about how to make sure

that it's affordable in the state.

And again, AI will be one

of our biggest discussions this session as well.

All right. And I will pass it back to Neil.

Thanks Rebecca. So, as you heard, this is kind

of a complicated process, right?

There's a lot of moving parts

and there are a lot of political implications for any

general policy or policy idea

and for moving forward with any policy idea, there are a lot

of different interest groups.

So, the CU system has established

protocols for state lobbying

and there's a cu administrative policy statement that guides

what faculty and staff

and you know, those of us who work

with legislators can talk about and,

and how the process works.

So in general,

state lobbying the definition involves both written

and oral communication aimed at influencing legislative

and regulatory actions with his estate.

It includes engaging with the governor, lieutenant governor,

any member of the general assembly

that may affect drafting, introduction

and consideration of bills, amendments, passage,

or vetoes of legislation.

This is regardless

of whether this general assembly is in session

or not, the policy statement that

provides the guidance is to double zero nine.

And it essentially says

that no person may engage in state lobbying on behalf

of the university except for the following, the University

of president and chancellors and any university employee

or outside hired lobbyist delegated by the president

or chancellor to engage in state lobby.

It's important to know though that the

policy statement is not intended to restrict

or prevent protected expression by university employees.

University employees just must make it clear
when they are speaking with a legislator
or testifying that,
that if they're not speaking on behalf of the university,
that they are expressing that they are,
that they are not expressing an official position
of the university and they are expressing their own opinion.
Does that make sense? So one other thing that's important is
that university funds
and resources cannot be used
for private lobbying activities
and employees must take personal leave to lobby

during work hours.

This, so this would include as an example,

somebody who's a member of an organization

and the organization wants to advocate

for a particular policy or for a bill, a staff

or faculty member can't use their email or their,

or their campus computer to advocate on behalf

of that organization.

Some additional state lobbying considerations.

State lobbying does not include certain communications

by university employees under specific conditions.

Examples are that are mandatory responses.

These are communications that are required by statutes,

regulations, or orders that are exempt,

including testimony mandated by subpoena.

Or if you are part of a program that's required

to provide a report to the legislature,

his official duty at university employee can share

information with the state official or a member of the board

or commission as part of their job.

But I need to notify the office

of government relations beforehand.

The communication's important

because it's related

to the employee's duties

and our representatives both on the ground at the state

capital as well as the federal capital.

They need to know if there's somebody from the university

that's coming down to the capitol.

And lastly, a university faculty member can discuss topics

related to their expertise or courses,

but they need to clarify

that they're not representing the university views

unless of course they've gotten university approval.

And that usually comes from university leadership

and either way we've gotta notify that the office

of government relations before doing so.

So with that, here's some additional information

and our contact information

and we're gonna open the floor for any questions.

Yes sir.

Operations in DC look like Brett a one man show.

Do we have a physical office with staff out

There? Brett,

I could not hear the question.

If you could refer me, that would be awesome.

Can you talk about the, what type

of office you have?

Do we have a physical office?

What type of staff we have there? Sure. So,

So similar to the way the office state relations is built,

we have a physical office here in Washington DC.

Our team has five folks on it for the system

advocating for everything from funding

for any program at any of our campuses that really matter.

Also do a lot of work with Tobin

and Neil as well as other leadership, constantly advocating

for it and as well as we have other folks who are designated

to lobby on our behalf here down in dc.

So we do have a pretty mighty team, especially for

the size of public universities comparatively.

So we are here and fighting

and have a robust network to make sure

that we're advocating on our behalf.

Did that answer your question? Okay. Any other questions?

Yes. So the question, Brett, is how can faculty and staff

and students keep up with what's going on

and bills that might be affecting us?

Sure. I think a great way is our website.

We've been putting out weekly updates about everything

that's happening with the federal government on a regular

basis, as well as we do a monthly update on different bills

and different actions just highlighting the work

that we're doing in dc.

So that's a really great way to do that.

If there's any bills

or any issues that anyone is specifically

concerned about, please reach out to me.

We can see where it fits into our legislative priorities

and how we can work along those lines.

But like I said, happy to, like I said,

every Friday we post a weekly update about everything

that's happening with the administration

and new policies that are produced

and other bills that could get introduced

that have an impact for cu.

But like I said, and Rebecca mentioned this too, a lot

of this is if you guys hear of something that is important
to you or a program that is really important to you all
to ensure that's getting funded, please reach out
and we can make sure that it is in line with our,
with our federal lobbying and advocacy priorities
and see how we can work it in
and make sure that we're fighting on your behalf.
And on the state side, we keep our website pretty updated
as well and we, again, work so closely
with our leadership team, so Neil
and Tobin are constantly in communication with us.
So if there's ever anything that you have sent feedback for
or you've heard about on campus that you want follow up for,

I think you're welcome to reach out to our office.

You're welcome to reach out to them

or all of us, you know, just to get those updates.

We continue to provide updates to them

as we are going through them in the moment.

But I think, you know, and,

and if we're behind on updating the website for any reason,

again, they will have the most up-to-date

information as well as us.

So I think always feel free to reach out as Brett said,

because we are happy to work with you.

Provide whatever you need, help answer questions.

Anyone else? All right,

Well thank you very much. There,

there are two landing pages.

So there's a state landing page as well

as a federal landing page

and we can send those to send it out

to anybody who came today.

Thank you all very much.