

**Faculty Senate’s Moniker Report:
Contextualizing the 2021 Resolution
June 2022**

*Prepared by Faculty Senate in collaboration with multiple partners. Presented to Chancellor Haefner,
Provost Clark, and the Board of Trustees’ Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee*

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1. Introduction

Executive Summary

This report is prepared by the University of Denver’s Faculty Senate for the Chancellor, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees’ Faculty and Educational Affairs Committee. Emerging within the context of Shared Governance,¹ it arises by the invitation of the Chancellor as a supplement to the Faculty Senate’s Resolution of March 2021 (henceforth, the “Resolution”; see Appendix A) in which Faculty Senate voted by overwhelming majority for DU to “retire the pioneer moniker and related uses of the pioneer word.”

In particular, the Resolution specifically cited as a key factor faculties’ “commitment to creating an equitable learning environment for all students.” Drawing on research from across multiple interdisciplinary fields of study, this report aims to more fully (but by no means comprehensively) clarify the link between the moniker and negative learning outcomes for our students.

Towards this end, we emphasize four broad areas for consideration:

1) Classroom Equity and Wellness for All Students.

Many of our students—and disproportionately, students from traditionally underrepresented groups—are telling us that they are feeling unwelcome at DU. And many of them are telling us that the moniker directly and deeply contributes to this.

To help see this, we start this section by considering some of DU’s own student voices in the form of:

- 2020-21 findings of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) project through Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence (SAIE)

¹ As summarized in DU’s Impact 2025 report: “Shared governance, a hallmark of American higher education, ensures that faculty, administrators and board members work together to enrich our academic community” (Impact 2025, PDF page 14; find link in Appendix B).

- two focus groups we conducted in 2022 with Alumni of Color.

To help establish the link between students' negative experiences of a campus climate framed by the moniker, negative equity and wellness outcomes for students, and negative outcomes for learning in our classrooms, we consider:

- Research on the experience of minoritized students and faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and how institutions fail to afford them a sense of belonging. This includes considering:
 - The value placed by many Native and Indigenous students on wholeness and integration contrasted with not feeling welcome in higher ed
 - The desire of many students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds to feel like part of a group, not like a “first of their kind” such that even *this* meaning of the moniker is out of step with what many of our students need to feel included and supported
- Research on the negative effects of divisive mascots alongside research on the importance of university values, missions, symbols and slogans unifying—not dividing—a university community. This includes:
 - Case studies of mascot changes at Miami University and the University of Illinois
 - A study suggesting negative donation outcomes when universities feature race-based, divisive symbols

- Research on the harmful mental and physiological health outcomes that can arise when members of a community feel unwelcomed, unheard, and even silenced by status quos and institutional structures that do not take their experiences into account—with inequitable implications for our classrooms. In this regard, we consider research on:
 - Fight-or-flight adrenal responses and other bodily responses to experiencing threats to one’s social well-being, including feeling that one’s social identity is being stigmatized, discriminated against, devalued, or excluded
 - How such social threats negatively impact students’ ability to learn by leading them into states of:
 - long-term physiological dysregulation (“allostatic overload”) with negative health effects (including depression, anxiety, increased blood pressure, digestive problems, and poor sleep)
 - interference by bodily overload with cognitive capacity and with higher order skills of analysis and synthesis
- Research on the negative psycho-physical effects on Native students when schools use Native American stereotypes such as mascots
- Research on Students of Color feeling unsafe at PWIs

2) Faculty Workload Equity: “Invisible Labor” in Support of Students.

In this section, we connect the moniker to faculty workload inequity itself in direct relation to student learning outcomes. In this regard, we consider the following topics:

- Research showing that Faculty of Color, women faculty, and faculty from other traditionally underrepresented groups disproportionately take on uncompensated work—including sacrificing their own time and research to take on needed care-giving relational work in support of students whom DU fails to help feel included, including through DU’s ongoing framing of the campus climate with a non-inclusive moniker.
- This means that in addition to the inequity of not fully supporting minoritized students in their mental and physical wellbeing, when DU retains a divisive moniker, it also inequitably puts a disproportionate number of our most minoritized faculty into the uncompensated role of helping those students hold any hope for equity and wellness—experiences that again (as addressed in section 1) it is the institutional role of DU to provide to all students.
- This can itself lead to more faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups wanting to leave—and in some cases leaving—DU which itself places further obstacles in the learning path of students from those same underrepresented groups for whom it is often extremely important to learn with and from faculty who look like they do (something which White students and other students in non-minoritized positions can often simply take for granted).

3) The Character of Effective Teachers.

- Leaning into 4D’s own emphasis on the intersection of lives and careers of purpose and the role of character in that equation, we consider the character of effective teachers and the particular connection across existential, pedagogical, and social organizational literature between the vocation of being an effective classroom teacher and the likelihood of having an authentic and empathetic character both in one’s life and in one’s approach to learning—which is to say, effective teachers are more likely than not to be moved into action by the plight of even a single student in their classroom.
- When even some of our students suffer in the context of an inequitable campus frame supported by the moniker, many teachers will—in precise relation to their empathetic

character as teachers—be moved not only to help those students (as we’ve already addressed in section 2) but to help change the institutional cultures which are causing students—and in particular, the most minoritized students—to feel unwelcome.

- In this section, we not only draw on a teaching leader like Parker Palmer for guidance on what makes for an effective—because authentic and empathetic—teacher, but we also draw on our very own PLP student leaders for insights on the character of good leaders (and we suggest relatedly, also good teachers).
- In short, the very same character traits that can often make good teachers good at teaching can also make many of them more disposed to ensuring that their students whose voices are least heard (or even: most silenced) are precisely supported in having their voices heard and honored. And this includes working to ensure that no student feels marginalized by a divisive and non-inclusive moniker.
- If an institution wants to support good teaching, in other words, it should be working to support teachers who bring the strengths of authenticity and empathy into their classrooms and as such also into a Senate Resolution calling on DU to retire the moniker.

4) The DU Context.

Section 4 is more of a framing overview for the report and can in that regard be read last, but also if one prefers, first. It lays out some of the background against which to consider the research details in sections 1-3. In this regard:

- We share a reminder about the American capacity to commendably diagnose and denounce acts of injustice everywhere and anywhere, just never in relation to its own history—including notably in the American West.

- We also consider some of DU's own pronounced emphases on DEI values that seem to many members of the community at odds with continuing to embrace the moniker; here we cover wide-ranging contexts from Impact 2025 to DU's Strategic Imperatives to Senate's own 2020 work in support of the Chancellor's and Provost's mandate for faculty trainings in inclusive pedagogy.
- Next, we turn to a reminder about the impending enrollment cliff in higher ed which experts both on and off campus agree ought lead campuses now more than ever to reach out to a wider range of students in general, and Students of Color in particular—in other words, separate from even the (essential) issue of equity for students and faculty, there are at this time in the higher ed landscape practical and economic reasons for DU to retire the moniker.
- And lastly, we end section 4 with a reminder about 4D's own emphases on wellness and character—ideas which we specifically and in the spirit of DU's own frame use as part of our framing of section 1 (on student wellness) and as part of our framing of section 4 (on the character of effective teachers).

The report ends with two appendices—one with the full text of the Resolution to which this report is the supplement, and the other with links to additional supporting materials (many of which can be found on 'DEI' tab on the Faculty Senate website).

Authors and Methodology

This report was assembled by a number of faculty and staff working from within a wide range of disciplinary and methodological areas of expertise as part of a robust cross-campus partnership. We are exceedingly grateful to all the offices and individuals who graciously shared of their time to assist in researching and writing this report. The Senate President co-curated and co-oversaw the project with the help of Senators and other colleagues drawing on faculty and staff to help with literature reviews, data gathering, and original research. Faculty of Color and Indigenous Faculty with expertise in core areas of the report were consulted and helped frame and vet the report and we worked with faculty

across campus—and with the support of multiple offices—to assemble and review existing studies and reports around the moniker, college mascots, psycho-physical-social wellness, authenticity and empathy in the vocation of the teacher, and effective, transformative, and inclusive classroom environments.

We also commissioned two focus groups and have engaged with thought partners around the campus and country to better understand the nature of the challenge around the moniker. Working with Institutional Research & Analysis as well as other offices, we reviewed DU data from recent DU surveys which asked about the moniker and related equity and inclusivity topics (e.g. a 2018 HR ModernThink survey, a 2021 Staff Advisory Council survey, and a 2020 MarComm survey on DU branding). We also reviewed many letters from faculty and staff groups across campus calling on DU to retire the moniker (these are posted on the Senate website [here](#)), the RAHR student group call to retire the moniker, a 2021 Staff Advisory Council report on the moniker (based on the SAC survey showing over 300 staff—over 60% of those who filled in the survey—in support of retiring the moniker), as well as notes from a Fall 2020 SOCA meeting with the Chancellor and Provost at which participants spoke out strongly against the moniker. Additional materials we reviewed and on which we focused in particular include 2020-2021 data from DU’s Cultural Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) project, a multi-year study connected to Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence (SAIE) which examined students’ sense of belonging during their entire tenure at DU; data from two focus groups that members of our team conducted with members of “Alumni of Action” (an alumni group for DU Alumni of Color); and data from students, faculty, staff in DU’s undergraduate leadership program named after the moniker (PLP).

Here, it might be added that in consultation with faculty and staff experts, we actively chose not to conduct focus groups with current DU students out of our due care for them (regarding which, see section 4 on effective teachers’ relation to empathy); many of our students are adversely impacted by the ongoing culture of DU’s moniker and have already shared their painful firsthand experiences in multiple contexts.

Methodologies engaged in this study correspond to areas of research and expertise of faculty and staff involved in this study, which include (but are not limited to): higher education, organizational psychology, DEI, communications, intercultural communications, ethics, social and political theory, research design and discovery, student experience, law, social work, sociology, history, human rights, inclusive pedagogy, philosophy, cultural anthropology, rhetoric, cultural studies, critical theory, virtue theory, value theory, effective teaching practices, and curriculum.

Context, Scope, and Goals

Framed by the value of Shared Governance, and written at the invitation of the Chancellor, this report of the Faculty Senate serves as a supplement to the Faculty Senate’s 2021 Resolution calling on DU to retire the moniker (see Appendix A for the full Resolution). Rigorous and interdisciplinary in its approach, the report helps further contextualize faculties’ legitimate and deep concerns around the moniker’s negative impact on their classrooms. In the spirit of shared governance and in light of the details addressed in this report, we trust that the Chancellor, Provost, FEAC, and all members of the DU community will agree that a faculty Resolution about student wellness and classroom outcomes—moreover, one that is passed by 89% of Faculty Senators—merits close consideration even as we acknowledge that there are those in the DU community who support the moniker.²

As a supplement to the Resolution, this report aims to convey the urgency of retiring a symbol which many faculty deem at worst inconsistent with DU’s own DEI values and at best highly divisive with negative implications for the classroom and student well-being in either case. As DU’s own 4D framework reminds us, we aspire to be members of communities for whom life, learning, and dedication to the public good intersect; and when even just some of our students and colleagues suffer

² For example, data from a 2020 community-wide MarComm survey shows a small percentage of DU constituency are fully in support of the moniker and a small percentage believe it should be eliminated altogether with other less pronounced views roughly divided 50-50. We understand that the moniker has historically served as an important brand to the university and source of identity, particularly those associated with its athletic programs. In this regard, we also know that some alumni go so far as to finance the perpetuation of the now officially retired Boone mascot at athletic events across the country, as we also find vociferous support for the moniker on the alumni-populated “Let’s Go DU” website which has in the past engaged in menacing activity such as the targeting of Faculty and Staff of Color. Given its goal of contextualizing the existing Resolution through research from a variety of fields, this report does not provide an overview of all points of view on the moniker.

outside the classroom in a campus climate framed by a highly divisive non-inclusive moniker, that impacts all of us—a point supported by systems theory, organizational psychology, and other bodies of research. By creating a climate which makes members of the community feel unwelcome it can lead (and has led) some of us to leave altogether, and it can even discourage new talent from coming to DU to begin with. In this regard, faculty leaders overseeing the undergraduate student leadership program named after the moniker (PLP) report prospective students/parents conveying that they will not be considering the program because of their objections to DU's use of the moniker in the program's name. In all of this, and of primary concern to this particular report, the moniker and responses to it—both the negative responses, and even just the presence of such a divisive symbol where there is an opportunity to create a sense of belonging—create a climate that at once frames and enters into DU classrooms with negative implications for students, including disproportionately worse implications for students from traditionally underrepresented groups.

The report provides four broad frameworks within which we urge the Chancellor, Provost, and FEAC to consider the original Resolution:

- Classroom Equity and Wellness for All Students;
- Faculty Workload Equity: “Invisible Labor” in Support of Students;
- The Character of Effective Teachers;
- The DU Context.

2. Classroom Equity and Wellness for All Students

In supplementing the Senate Resolution, one concern we want to highlight regards classroom equity and wellness for all students. DU is and remains into the foreseeable future a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and if we take equity and student wellness seriously, we need to pay particularly

careful attention to how the moniker is experienced differently by different groups, and how such experiences directly impact learning. The learning experience of Native American and Indigenous and Latinx students in particular is most likely to be negatively impacted by DU's continued use of the moniker. Nevertheless, whether one is Indigenous, Latinx, Black, Asian American Pacific Islander, or White, the emotional and existential harm of students to which the moniker contributes and the obstacles it creates for creating inclusive classrooms is the concern of every member of the DU community. Furthermore, as we address in section 4, the character of effective teachers will often go hand-in-hand with an especially strong capacity and willingness to hear, feel, and respond to student needs. While the CECE and Alumni of Action data speaks for itself in reminding us just how unwelcome many of our current and graduated students feel at DU in light of non-inclusive and inequitable frames like the moniker, it is worth noting in particular just how deeply many classroom teachers feel when even one student in even a single classroom of theirs feels this unwelcome.

On the topic of classroom equity and wellness for all students, we draw in this section on multiple scholarly studies outlining three significant ways that symbols like the moniker can disproportionately affect BIPOC student, especially in the context of a predominantly white institution like DU: sense of belonging, division, and mental & physical health. And we preface that research by first documenting the current DU deficit when it comes to supporting equity and wellness for all of our students: In this regard, we share (1) data from DU's Cultural Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) project, a multi-year study in connection with SAIE examining students' sense of belonging during their entire tenure at DU; and (2) data from two focus groups that members of our team conducted with members of "Alumni of Action" (an alumni group for DU Alumni of Color). That the data we share in this regard is not illustrative of every student's experience at DU is indeed part of the point: Ensuring equity and wellness for all students involves paying special attention to marginalized voices. And as we address in section 4, this particular capacity—to hear those whose voices are often given least priority—is often part of the character of an effective teacher. Furthermore, as it relates to broader questions of leadership, Stewart 2018 provides eight proposals for enacting institutional transformation, and shares the following summary reminder of the differences between broad calls to "diversity and inclusion"

and the hard work of justice which redress a culture’s—including a campus culture’s—worst ongoing inequities:

Diversity and inclusion asks...	Equity and justice responds...
Who’s in the room?	Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?
Have everyone’s ideas been heard?	Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?
How many more of a [minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?	What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?
Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?	Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?

[Part of a chart in Stewart 2018, 2]

In the context of a call to “value minoritized voices,” Stewart adds:

A diversity and inclusion paradigm prioritizes having multiple perspectives present while putting all those points of view on equal footing. Such faux democracy is vulnerable to false equivalencies that do not recognize or take into account the validity or quality of the perspectives represented (Stewart, 2017b). An equity and justice focused paradigm alternatively considers the presence of ideas that will not be taken as seriously under majority-rules decision-making processes.

Understood in the context of real institutional change, taking special care to listen to the counter-narratives of minoritized voices is an essential part of an institution’s most rigorous and evidence-based equity work.

Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Findings

In way of supporting the Resolution, and to help emphasize that the research findings about student wellness and equity in this section of the report have direct relevance to DU, it is important to consider

the 2020-21 findings of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) project through Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence (SAIE). A multi-year scale created by former DU Professor Sam Museus, it measures the sense of belonging experienced by students (Museus, Zhang, and Kim 2016). The purpose is to help universities have data to better understand *what* factors contribute to more positive campus and classroom environments, thus leading to higher rates of persistence, retention, and long-term positive identification with a school (Museus 2014).

Not surprisingly, the moniker appeared in CECE data, including in response to the question, “is there anything else not captured by this survey that you think we should know”; even in that context, students responded specifically to the moniker:

- “DU needs to get rid of the pioneers because it is insensitive to our indigenous community. I will never feel accepted until they do, even though I am a Latina.”
- “When DU’s chancellor and the institution effectively says that the discussion surrounding the “pioneer,” is over, then it signals that it doesn’t really care how BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students feel.”
- “Address the PIONEER monicker [sic] topic to create for a more inclusive environment”
- “Why is DU absolutely married to the pioneer? In so many of my classes, DU’s role in settler-colonialism is talked about. We often talk about how DU doesn’t really do anything other than huff and puff and throw buzz words like “inclusive excellence”. So when folks says DU causes harm to BIPOC students, it does so by standing firmly in white supremacy.”
- “It also does not value its cultural diversity if they refuse to divest from the Pioneer Moniker. Students carry all the weight of organizing, participating, and educating people on their cultures. Not the Institution.”

- “When I think about the word pioneer, I think of paving a way to future possibilities and pushing boundaries that haven’t been crossed yet. I think of fighting whatever stands in my way of getting there and focusing solely on the goal of achieving excellence. But at what cost? Should I pave a way forward for the purpose of my own success by tearing apart and destroying everything in my path? This is what pioneer has come to mean to me. I find that paving a way forward by bulldozing over my opponents has been the way of our founders. As the chancellor has said, there is irrefutable evidence for our founder’s role in the “pioneering” of our university at the cost of hundreds of lives. The school took up this title as a badge of honor to be worn with pride, but what we’re showing our enemies is that we don’t mind playing dirty to get what we want. Is this the message that you want to be giving your students? I agree that we should pursue our dreams and find new paths forward, but I do not agree that we should necessarily harm others on our path to get there. I feel ashamed to be considered a pioneer.”
- “I told a charming story on my interview day a few years ago, about how I loved Laura Ingalls Wilder and how excited I was to be a Pioneer. Learning more about the legacy of abuse of Pioneers, particularly DU's founders, and my opportunities to congregate with DU Native Student Alliance members, and my increased understanding have helped me change my mind. While I am not an indigenous Native student, I stand **STRONGLY IN SOLIDARITY** with a call for MY University to use our famous "pioneering spirit" to pioneer a **NEW MONIKER, MASCOT, AND BRANDING SCHEME** for DU. The Trustee's dismissiveness toward the right decision, DU students, and particularly DU Native students is disappointing, infuriating, and highlights a massive disconnect between the values and goals of students, faculty, and staff at DU and some trustees who love the term Pioneer so much they risk internal revolution and external decries against the Trustees' decision as last stated. How will DU students, faculty, staff, chancellors, and trustees be able to form and maintain culturally supportive communities when we can't even stop painful moniker-calling that directly harms our community?”
- “We need to change our mascot and recognize how refusing to change the mascot is insulting students of all backgrounds, not just those with a cultural or historic connection to the violent

legacy of pioneers/settlers/colonists. Sidelining voices in the DU community who are asking for compassion and change will continue to degrade the educational and communal experience of the entire faculty and student body. I hope the administration recognizes that failing to address this issue is harming and will continue to harm DU's reputation domestically and abroad.”

We choose to let these words stand on their own as they represent the harm and disappointment our students experience with the continued use of the moniker. Also worth noting is that the CECE data did not reveal one single instance where a student expressed support or described how the moniker benefitted them as a student. On the contrary, where students could reflect on what makes them feel like they belong at DU, they expressed frustration and exhaustion over the institution’s continued embrace of the moniker despite its commitments to DEI.

Focus Group Findings

In way of supporting the Resolution, and to help emphasize that the research findings about student wellness and equity in this section of the report have direct relevance to DU, it is also important to consider data from our focus groups with Alumni of Color, held in March 2022, where participants shared arresting counter-narrative reports of structures of inequity related to deep experiences of not feeling welcome at DU.

The participants in the focus groups stated how challenging their time at DU was when they felt alone or without a community. One participant, J, said they felt like an outcast and they didn’t fit in. M stated that during their time at the university, they created space for students outside the dominant culture because they didn’t have a space where they felt comfortable. M recalled one time that they attended Undergraduate Student Government meeting and was told that they and other students of color only got into DU because of affirmative action.

Another participant in the alumni focus group, D, works with students and said they have seen some of these psychosocial effects on the students. D has had students crying in their office because students

feel hopeless about belonging at the university. D said it was disheartening to come to work and be a student when you know your community is not thriving.

One participant worked in relation to student conduct and the honor policy. They noticed that organizational policies were used most often against Native students and students of color during the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. Charges of trespassing, agitation, and physical misconduct were used against students protesting. They also saw white students unpunished for similar activities: when the hockey team won and students burned beds and mattresses in the streets, police protected them. The participant asked, “what are the priorities of this institution?” Seeing the unfair treatment created psychological harm in them because they knew they didn’t get the same protection as white students.

One of the participants stated that when they viewed the Let’s Go DU website and social media platforms, they felt particularly unsafe. The site mimics the DU website closely and when students and staff are named on the site, their safety is at risk.

These and similar stories shared over years by current and past students help contextualize just how inequitable and unwelcoming it is to continue to invite students of color into our community under the banner of a divisive moniker which makes many feel that they do not belong.

Sense of Belonging

As the above two sections make clear—and as is clear to faculty from a vast number of additional student interactions as well as a wide range of studies across multiple fields of study—not all students feel supported in environments framed by non-inclusive symbols like the moniker. In this context, support for the Resolution can be found in research on the experience of racially minoritized students and faculty at PWIs: Paying attention to students’ and faculties’ first-hand accounts can often shed troubling light on institutional failures to create environments which welcome all community members. In some cases, the students end up leaving the university before completing their degree program.

In this regard, research shows that for many Indigenous students who value wholeness and integration, “education chops us into pieces: it teaches us to divorce soul from body and mind from heart (Rendon 2014, 131). In other cases, even if they graduate from the institution, they do not leave with a positive impression of the institution. In both situations, the students often share the harm they experienced at the university, helping to build a negative reputation for the university with future potential BIPOC attendees.

Given the impending enrollment cliff, universities must actively expand their net of potential attendees, including those from historically underrepresented groups. In order to do so, universities must actively confront their history and culture, including making reparations for indigenous students and community members (Heinecke & Beach 2021). Increasing the sense of belonging includes culture change aimed at recognizing that students arrive from diverse backgrounds, including cultures that value group dynamics and the wellness of the whole (Morrison & Morrison 2010).

BIPOC students report feeling “like frontier explorers who are ‘largely on their own’” (Santa-Ramirez, et al. 2022). Already feeling like outsiders on a PWI campus, BIPOC students want to see and interact with more students and faculty who look like them and have similar backgrounds or life experiences. In other words, aside from the other harmful associations with the term ‘pioneers,’ BIPOC students do not want to be ‘pioneers’ even in the sense of ‘the first of their kind’ on a PWI campus as that makes them unsafe and unwelcome. Pioneers is in this sense not a welcoming term for multiple reasons.

Division: Mascots, Monikers, Symbols, and Slogans

Support for the Resolution can also be found in research on the negative effects of divisive mascots alongside research on the importance of university values, missions, symbols and slogans unifying—not dividing—a university community.

For starters, a more unified university community helps attract a more diverse student body (Santa-Ramirez, et al. 2022). Surveyed BIPOC students who attend PWIs report divisions on campus rooted in

beliefs and values, reinforced by symbols. Such division impacts their student experience, making them feel unsafe (Adams & McBrayer 2020).

The presence of race-based symbols—such as mascots and monikers—has been shown to cause division on campuses between those that support the symbols and those that find them offensive. While this is most often seen when the symbol is a stereotypical representation of a historically underrepresented group, it is not uncommon for such campus divisiveness to persist when the symbol is a representation of the dominant group. In both cases, it is not just a division between the dominant group and the underrepresented group(s), but a division between those who support the race-based symbol, and those who do not. The group of those who do not support the divisive symbol includes not just the students, faculty and staff from underrepresented groups, but their allies in the dominant group.

The campus division that exists due to a race-based symbol extends to the process of choosing to change the symbol to one that is not race-based. The decision is not an easy one to make, often for economic reasons. Miami University and the University of Illinois are two examples that have in recent years changed their mascots. These schools held multiple community discussions between administrators, educators, students, alumni, and tribal members. At the University of Illinois, when the mascot continued to appear at events after it had been officially changed, the Chancellor held community town-hall like conversations to determine how to collectively move forward. These instances demonstrate that by having direct and repeated conversations, focused on listening to those who are most negatively impacted by the presence of a race-based symbol, greater understanding of and empathy with the BIPOC student experience led to the decision to change the symbol, demonstrating support for all students by eliminating the divide that symbol caused (Bergmark and Danker 2022).

The campus division created by race-based symbols also has economic implications. One study found monetary donations to be fewer when the university symbols are race-based. Study participants were provided with the symbols from various universities, some of which were race-based symbols, and

given a stipend to donate to the institutions of their choosing based on the symbols provided. The institutions with race-based symbols received 5.5% less from the study participants than the institutions with non-race-based symbols. The majority of participants in the study were White, demonstrating that the division made by such symbols extends beyond the directly affected underrepresented groups (Krauss, Brown, Swoboda 2019). In other words, not changing race-based symbols can lead to missed gift opportunities across a range of potential donors.

Physical and Mental Health

DU really focuses on supporting students' health and well-being, as evidenced by the Health and Counseling Center, the Health Promotion branch of the HCC, and one of the branches of the 4D model focusing on well-being. To help ensure that this focus extends to all students, we need to be mindful about not inadvertently prioritizing students from the dominant culture while ignoring specific harms being experienced by underrepresented students. In this section, we engage research on the negative health impacts that can arise from feeling threatened, unsafe, or minoritized. To the extent that DU's ongoing commitment to the moniker leads some DU students to feel unwelcome it runs the risk of contributing negatively to those students' health outcomes and, as such, it runs the risk of reducing those students' access to equitable learning opportunities in our classrooms.

When humans face threats, our bodies trigger our fight-or-flight adrenal response (Hammond 2014 and Menakem 2021). Whether the threat is physical or an abstract threat to our social well-being or sense of self, our bodies will create a state of hyperarousal to deal with the threat (Kabat-Zinn 2013). The autonomic nervous system (ANS) regulates the internal states of your body, and triggers the branch of ANS, the sympathetic nervous system, when faced with threats.

Kabat-Zinn found that there is evidence that when the sympathetic nervous system is constantly stimulated, it can lead to long-term physiological dysregulation, "resulting in problems such as increased blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmias, digestive problems (usually due to inflammatory processes), chronic headaches, backaches, and sleep disorders, as well as to psychological distress in

the form of chronic anxiety, depression, or both. When this level of damage happens, we call it “allostatic overload” (Kabat-Zinn 2013).

When students feel a sustained stereotype threat or an unsafe environment where their stigmatized social identity is relevant, they may experience this “allostatic overload,” or hyperarousal of the ANS and sympathetic nervous system. This constant state of hyperarousal leads to the detrimental psychosocial and physiological effects described by Kabat-Zinn. Students who do not feel included in the Pioneers—not to mention students whose communities were oppressed and often brutally massacred by Pioneers—can face these physical problems.

In fact, research further shows that just being worried about experiencing prejudice or discrimination can trigger the ANS to send one’s body into a state of hyperarousal (Sawyer, et al. 2012). This anticipation can increase vigilance, or a hyperawareness for cues of mistreatment (Inzlicht et al. 2009; Kaiser et al. 2006). The perception that one has experienced discrimination was a stronger predictor of depression and anxiety than age, gender, level of education, social class or general stressors (Sawyer 2012).

Here we might also consider the work of Zaretta Hammond and Johnathan Haidt on the impact of emotions in our lives (see Hammond 2014 and Haidt 2012). Hammond talks about the “amygdala hijack” where the fight, flight or freeze impulse toward safety takes over; in short, when our students’ amygdalae are inflamed little to no learning associated with the higher order skills of analysis and synthesis can occur. Haidt uses the metaphor of the “elephant and the rider” to capture the two aspects of the human brain: The elephant is the emotions, older and geared to protection, and when the elephant is frightened or unsettled it will take the rational brain wherever the elephant wants to go. This is why it is so important to ensure that when we create the kinds of challenging and rigorous learning environments that help students grow, we design and plan them to ensure that students feel as welcome and supported as possible: Where students feel like outsiders, they are physiologically prevented from the learning they would otherwise be capable of. This situation is made all the more

unjust once one additionally considers that a divisive symbol like DU's moniker will disproportionately disadvantage students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Research into the dynamics of psycho-physiological function like the research we've seen above renders somewhat unsurprising the results of studies that show the negative psychological effects on Native students when schools use Native American stereotypes such as mascots; in particular, research shows "lower self-esteem, lower community work, less capacity to generate achievement-related possible selves, and greater levels of negative affect" (Davis-Delano, Gone & Fryberg 2020). Relatedly—and similarly unsurprisingly in light of the research we have seen above—there are no studies that show Native American mascots foster beneficial psychosocial effects for Native Americans. Students who are faced with mascots that reinforce their outsider status are more likely to face negative physical and mental health ramifications (Davis-Delano, Gone & Fryberg 2020). While we understand that the DU moniker is not a mascot of a Native person, it does represent for many—and is experienced by many as representing—the historic oppression of Native Americans in relation to histories of oppression of Native and Indigenous peoples. Especially when taken together with the reminder that students from underrepresented groups already come into the university facing prejudice from the broader society—including stereotypes about Native American people being "savage, crazy, alcoholic" or aggressive (Burkley, Burkley, Andrade & Bell 2017) alongside a history of Native oppression "justified" by such discriminatory frames—it stands to reason that the moniker creates for many of our students a similarly corrosive environment with similarly negative physical and mental health ramifications.

In this regard, we are also well served to consider Inzlicht, Aronson, and Mendoza-Denton (2009) who explore the subtle and commonplace psychological effects on individuals entering environments where "their cultural identity is devalued and stigmatized." Environmental clues—like the moniker—can seem benign to some, but they can communicate social devaluation and exclusion to others. When individuals with stigmatized identities receive these messages, they can suffer from underperformance, mistrust, disidentification, and self-uncertainty.

In environments where individuals feel that their stigmatized social identity is relevant, their cognitive function is diverted to hyperarousal and away from other necessary areas. They can have impaired cognitive capacity that can affect their classroom performance, since their brain is trying to protect them from a threat with “fight or flight.” Intrusive thoughts about their social identity or how they are perceived can drain their working memory to the detriment of intellectual performance (Inzlicht, Aronson & Mendoza-Denton 2009).

Adams, Lawson, and McBrayer interviewed first generation students of color at a well-regarded Predominantly White Institution, and one of the four major themes they encountered was that a “Heightened Sense of Safety Concerns Exists.” Students described “On a normal day on campus, participants expressed feeling safe. However, over the past few years, there has been an increase in certain events and activities that are taking place on campus that has placed their sense of safety at risk (a shooting that was supposed to occur on campus a week before the interview, rally day after the presidential election, White supremacist showing up on campus, altercations on campus, calling out of racial slurs),” (Adams, Lawson & McBrayer 2020). One subtheme that stood out was “Biased incidents against marginalized groups” where several students recalled incidents where they were profiled because of their race. And returning to Sawyer, et al. 2012, even being worried about such profiling can trigger deleterious health and learning outcomes.

It is hard not to connect such accounts with many disturbing events on the DU campus, including the April 2022 desecration of sacred tipi poles. While we applaud DU’s denunciation of that hateful act, by upholding the moniker, DU sends a confusing counter-message to our community about the actual value of the experience—including mental and physical wellbeing—of our Native and Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and community members.

3. Faculty Workload Equity: “Invisible Labor” in Support of Students

Continuing this inquiry into equity for members of our learning community related to classroom outcomes, support for the Resolution can also be found in research that helps link inequitable faculty workloads to the persistence of the moniker and other factors that most negatively impact the DU experience of a disproportionately high percentage of students from Indigenous and traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Such research can be summarized as a 5-part arc of injustice: (1) Faculty of Color (including of all gender identities and expressions), women faculty, and other faculty from minoritized and/or underrepresented positionalities, are more likely to take on the “invisible labor” of relational care work in support of students who feel least welcome at DU—including due to factors like the moniker. (2) This faculty work is essential to the university as it supports students, making them feel like they belong, which directly impacts retention, recruitment, and university success (Reid 2021). And yet (3) this faculty work goes uncompensated, resulting in (4) unacceptably inequitable workplace experiences for many of our faculty sometimes leading to deep feelings of disconnection from themselves and in turn from their classrooms (for reasons we explain in section 4), and even leading some to leave DU. All of this (5) further diminishes student experience—including student learning outcomes—especially for students who feel least welcome at DU to begin with. These students then suffer the double loss of not feeling welcome, followed by either losing their strong connection with—or simply actually losing entirely from their educational experiences—some of the few faculty on whom they most rely for support. (On the context of faculty from minoritized and/or underrepresented positionalities related to “invisible labor” and related inequitable frames, see, for example, O’Meara 2016 and 2018; Misra, et al. 2012; and Gonzales and Griffin 2020).

One interdisciplinary study by DU faculty (Gordon, Willink, and Hunter 2022) finds that associate professors report exclusionary institutional messaging and symbols, like the moniker, contribute to a climate in which some students feel that they don't belong. This in turn leads many faculty—including a disproportionate percentage of Faculty of Color and other minoritized faculty—to take on “invisible labor,” including: student and faculty mentoring; department work not formally recognized or

adequately compensated; emotional labor (El-Alayli, et al. 2017); work on curricular innovation and interdisciplinary projects; and work toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (Truong, 2021).

Set within the context of a reward system that undervalues service and care-oriented labor and overvalues research productivity in line with competitive individualism (Terziev & Bogdanova 2019), the above study also finds that tenure-track faculty who take on the “invisible” work—including supporting students who feel unwelcome—are put in a special bind: their extra (uncompensated) service burden competes with their imperative to produce scholarship/creative work. Of course, this also sends a clear message to minoritized faculty and staff that they are not important either and that DEI is not an actual core value of the university. This all contributes to uneven faculty and staff workload, at a time when faculty and staff retention (especially with cost of living in Denver) is a major concern at DU. The study’s interview data demonstrates that major negative contributors to campus climate, like the moniker, task minoritized faculty with performing more care work for students *and* fellow minoritized colleagues, and creates not only a hostile work climate but also an increased workload that is unsustainable for faculty and staff.

The study also finds that minoritized faculty don't feel that this work is *discretionary*; they cannot simply refuse to do this work, since minoritized student (and colleague) retention and well-being is inevitably bound up with their own vocation and characters as effective, empathetic, and engaged faculty who care about their students’ well-being and success. For many minoritized faculty, saying “no” actually creates even more invisible labor for them down the road. Either way, the work that faculty do to retain marginalized students amounts to cultural taxation (Joseph and Hirshfield 2011). It is work that is simultaneously meaningful and vital for minoritized faculty, but also exploitative and exhausting.

The study goes on to note a further irony and injustice: Faculty who take on a larger share of this work are often perceived as academically unproductive resulting in negative consequential reviews (Gutierrez y Muhs et al. 2012).

As we seek a more diverse student body, this invisible labor will become even more vital to the survival of the university as a tuition-dependent institution. We can lessen this workload and the burden this puts on faculty and staff by addressing large-scale DEI climate issues proactively. Retiring the moniker would be an important step in this direction.

And again, in its impact on many of DU's faculty, this sort of inequity left unchecked also threatens to negatively impact student learning—both in terms of contributing to some of our most important faculty leaders leaving DU and in terms of contributing to others of our valued faculty becoming disconnected not just from DU but from themselves—and as such, from their classrooms—in ways we address in section 4 to which we now turn.

4. The Character of Effective Teachers

In supplementing the Senate Resolution, we additionally wish to consider how DU's innovative 4D frame invites us to think about the character traits of effective teachers. Delving into this topic serves as a useful further frame through which to consider why so many faculty respond so strongly to the needs of students—even if (and indeed, especially because) those students are in the minority.

Powerful Words on the Character of Leaders from our 'PLP' Student Leaders

A good place to start is by taking guidance from our own student leaders' insights on the character traits of good leaders—traits which arguably apply also to good teachers. In this regard, we draw in this section on letters written by undergraduate students in the undergraduate student leadership program named after the moniker (PLP) in the context of their own calls on DU to retire the moniker in the name of their program.

In that context, our student leaders cite characteristics like bravery and integrity as precisely the kind of traits that they take seriously and that lead them to call on DU to retire the moniker in the name of a program about which they care so deeply:

We have been taught since our first lesson as PLP students that we have the capacity and most importantly, the responsibility to stand for not only our beliefs but our integrity as human beings. This has bestowed upon us the responsibility to uphold the values of our university and our PLP Family to protect the dream of “A Great Private University Dedicated to The Public Good” and being “Participants and active leaders in the DU, the greater Denver community and the globe”.

To us as students, this dream is not a marketing slogan nor a ploy to recruit passive participants in the existing state of our world. We see this to be a rallying cry to improve this place for which we hold so much reverence.

Furthermore, we find additional inspiring words—and deep insights about character of good leadership—from one Indigenous student member of the PLP:

As an Indigenous student I have seen fellow students of color abandon the Pioneer Leadership Program because it was not the program that it said it was. I have watched good friends, good people, leave behind this amazing opportunity because it was not a place for them. I do not believe that this has to be the case. I believe that we are strong. I believe that we are brave. Let us not be silenced in the conversation of how we can improve. Is that not the true quality of a leader? To be able to see their faults and work to make them right.³

³ To note: This student specifically emphasizes that they are not calling on DU to retire the moniker, but to remove that term from the title of the PLP program. While none of the other students offered this point of emphasis, it should be recalled that all the quotes in this section are from PLP students asking DU to remove the term from the title of the PLP program. We aim simply in this section to take guidance from student leaders on the character of good leaders.

In like regard, a Student of Color in the program reflects further on the “power to be better” and the willingness to “tak[e] part in the movement for equality and justice” as key character traits of good leadership:

We are leaders, peers, and friends of all, and should be promoting ourselves as an organization of innovation. We have the power to be better and show our community that we are taking part in the movement for equality and justice of minorities in America. There is always room for improvement in any organization, and there are various approaches that PLP can take, but changing our name and removing “Pioneer” is a monumental start. If we are trying to be the best leadership program that we can be and embrace diversity on campus, why would we not take action?

In this regard, a student who self-identifies as White in the writeup reflects on the character of good leadership as well:

We are supposed to be leaders, so now we need to lead and show our program, our school and people across the world that a real leader never stops making themselves better. My white privilege is not an excuse to be compliant in our name hurting my friends and peers and I will stand with them to make this program one that we can all be proud of and one that shows the world who we really are.

Another student adds an insightful further understanding of the character trait of empathy along with other core values as part of a consideration of why it is so important for the PLP to finally move beyond the term ‘pioneers’; this student also helps emphasize the gaps that can occur within a classroom learning environment in relation to such a divisive name which can indeed be experienced as more deeply painful for especially some of our students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds based on their own first-person lived experiences and family/cultural histories:

PLP students come from all over the world and from all kinds of backgrounds but are expected to use an image and idea of colonization to be their identity. The same students who have to say they are students of the Pioneer Leadership Program also come from cultures that were harmed, hurt and sometimes destroyed by Pioneers. Those students carry the weight of this conflict into classrooms that teach about communal leadership and empathy. Classrooms that do not show that same empathy towards their students from different places and cultures. I believe that if we want to be a program that really practices what we preach then we shouldn't have a name that represents the colonization and oppression of the identities of our students.

Especially within the context of 4D's emphasis on character, this report is in part framed by the wise insights of PLP student leaders on the character traits and values of strong, inclusive, innovative, and compassionate leaders. When faculty support the Resolution in support of students, they manifest some of the leadership traits valued by our own PLP students.

Authenticity and Empathy

There is a wide body of literature across multiple disciplines, times, and places that emphasizes the importance of authenticity as a core character trait for those seeking to live lives of purpose. Living with authentic character means living into one's commitments even when it is hard—and even when it flies in the face of popular opinion; indeed, living authentically is often specifically a matter of being willing to push for change against the tides of popular opinion. We can see this in centuries of existentialist, spiritual, psychological, and phenomenological traditions, whether it's Viktor Frankl on the "will to meaning" (Frankl 1946/2006), Martin Buber's emphasis on the power of the "I-Thou" relationship (Buber 1923/1970), Gloria Anzaldúa's account of the difficulty of living into multiple identities and hybrid positionalities across the many literal and figurative personal and political borders inside and outside of ourselves (Anzaldúa 1987/2007), and bell hooks' call to a "love ethic" of compassion that connects us more fully to others and in so doing also connects us more fully to ourselves (hooks 2000). And in this regard, we can also return to what we have seen to the value placed by Indigenous students on wholeness and integration related to concerns with an educational

environment which “chops us into pieces” and “teaches us to divorce soul from body and mind from heart” (see above in section 2; Rendon 2014, 131).

Indeed, it is the context of such rich traditions that we can understand why a contemporary scholar of education like Parker Palmer speaks of authenticity—set against the “inner landscape”—of the effective teacher (see Palmer 2007). Indeed, Palmer highlights authenticity—which he describes as the meeting of “identity and integrity”—as one of the most important character traits of effective teachers. In authentic teaching, says Palmer, there is a core interaction between a teacher’s deep commitments and the instructional decisions they make in their classrooms. To foster a teaching and learning environment in which an educator is made to choose one over the other is to divide the teacher, threatening both their authenticity and their identity. But when teachers become divided in this way—less whole, less authentic—Palmer’s work shows that they struggle to connect intellectually and relationally with students in their classrooms which in turn makes them less effective teachers. Students need faculty to arrive to the classroom as their most fully authentic selves because learning is a delicate exchange that relies on so much more than exchanging piles of data or information:

Behind their fearful silence, our students want to find their voices, speak their voices, have their voices heard. A good teacher is one who can listen to those voices even before they are spoken—so that someday they can speak with truth and confidence (Palmer 2007/2017, ch. 2).

Because of the subtle intersections of student learning, effective teaching, and teachers finding authentic connections to their places of work, students pay the price when workplaces force faculty into choosing between their own deepest held commitments and the way they show up in their classrooms.

Palmer also notes that reform-minded teachers who are living out their vocation from deep authenticity might push for institutional reform, but they are not interested in tearing down their institution. Rather, they are actually working to help develop deeper ties with “the institution they love”. In pushing against workplace policies that impede their own access to authentic lives and

careers of purpose, faculty—says Palmer—should be understood as calling the institution back to its greater purpose: to change and transform lives.

In this regard, we might also consider the work of David Hansen (2021), the author of a foundational text on calling and vocation. Hansen argues that educators have a moral and ethical commitment to serve others, including an obligation to critically examine themselves and teaching practices that limit human development. His working definition of authenticity is “witnessing,” a paying attention to the deep conscious and unconscious commitments of the educator. Other educators can witness and offer “testimonials” about the practices of colleagues, helping them be true to their calling and vocation. Students are witnesses too, and when in the presence of deep moral and ethical commitments become engaged in the great human questions of life, meaning, and purpose.

We may in this spirit—and in the spirit of many other traditions of ethics and pedagogy—connect the effective teacher’s trait of authenticity with the effective teacher’s trait of empathy: When teachers teach from a calling, their work in the classroom often stems from and is offered up in support of their deepest senses of self, world, and others; it is no surprise that in such a context, faculty would feel empathy and compassion for their students in general, and for their least advantaged students in particular. The teacher who looks out for students is fueled in intertwined ways by authenticity, by ethics, and by empathy. This is the character of many an effective teacher—and it is a character that aligns well with our PLP students’ own sense of good leadership.

Returning to our discussion in section 3 of Workload Equity, this helps frame all the more so the importance of the relational care-work that faculty—and often especially Faculty of Color of all gender identities and expressions, women faculty, and other minoritized faculty—invest in our students. This relational “invisible” labor is the work of the authentic, ethical, empathetic teacher/leader who helps ensure that all students feel welcome in our classrooms and on our campus.

And it is in this same spirit of authentic, ethical, empathic leadership—taken up, moreover, in the context of all the details cited in this report and countless other bodies of research—that so many of

our faculty and the majority of our Faculty Senators are calling on DU to retire the moniker in support of student wellbeing and effective learning in our classrooms.

5. The DU Context

The American West

Much has already been written about DU’s direct connection to the violence against and ultimate dispossession of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples in what we now call Colorado.⁴ Recently, historians have begun to more directly detail how public monuments and related ideas surrounding the term and images that use pioneer “erase the inconvenient truths” of these histories (Cynthia Culter Prescott 2019). Commendably, the university leadership recently denounced the legacy of White Supremacy in relation to the racial terrorism in Buffalo New York. But scholarship highlights the disconnect that we in the American West have when it comes to understanding that our pioneer monikers, monuments, and images are no different than the Confederate monikers, monuments, and statutes on college campuses all across the American South. Despite ongoing support by some for retaining Confederate symbols, many institutions of higher education have recognized the importance of thoughtfully reconsidering and in many cases, retiring divisive symbols and imagery as they build a more inclusive future (Cox 2021).⁵

With this context in mind, the remainder of this section further considers the problematic nature of the moniker for DU’s future in relation to three other frameworks: DEI values, the enrollment cliff, and DU’s 4D framework.

⁴ In this regard, we are thankful to our colleagues for assembling The John Evans Report (Clemmer-Smith, et al. 2014): <https://www.du.edu/equity/john-evans-report>

⁵ In this regard, one might consider the number of institutions of higher education who have changed their monikers and related imagery; see, for example <https://www.changethemascot.org/history-of-progress/> and <https://jayrosenstein.com/pages/honormascots.html>. Here too we might point to George Washington University where they have created a “Special Committee on the Colonials Moniker” chaired by a faculty and made up of faculty, students, staff and alumni representatives charged with “researching and evaluating the merits of the request for reconsideration of the naming of the Colonials moniker”; see <https://president.gwu.edu/special-committee-colonials-moniker>

DEI Values: On the Campus, In the Classroom

Support for the Resolution can be found in DU's public priority of DEI values including as indicated in Impact 2025, DU's Strategic Imperatives, DU's approach to Public Good, and DU's 4D framework. In this spirit, the Resolution itself follows on the Faculty Senate's 2020 vote in support of the Chancellor's and Provost's own call for mandated DEI pedagogy for all DU faculty (which gave rise to the Faculty Institute for Inclusive Teaching, or FIIT), and the Faculty Senate's 2016 Inclusive Learning Environments Initiatives.

Below, please find some of DU's stated values in these regards:

DU's Impact 2025 (note: all page references in this section are to the PDF pages, not the internal document pages; the link to the Impact 2025 PDF can be found in Appendix B):

In her opening letter to the report, Chancellor Chopp speaks of the importance of inclusivity: "Our diverse and inclusive community is known regionally and nationally as a best practice environment for all who work and learn here and as a welcoming place that engages all who visit. Say DU and people think, "a culture of 'yes' to relationships, responsibility and engagement" (Impact 2025, PDF 7).

In like regard, the report opens with "Promises for the Future" framed in terms of inclusive community: "This plan outlines a vision of a modern urban global university dedicated to the public good—an institution that cultivates an inclusive community to prepare students to lead lives of impact and benefits Denver and society through its research, teaching and service. The four transformative directions that make up this plan are united by common themes that reflect our history, strength and values" (Impact 2025, PDF 10).

In its framing pages, Impact 2025 calls out the importance of DEI further, noting: "Diversity and inclusive excellence strengthen our community and are at the heart of our mission of teaching and learning, research and designing knowledge, and service to the public good. Recent progress has

increased the diversity of our student body and faculty, and several highly effective groups on campus are moving us closer to our aims. We recognize that we have far to go to become a truly inclusive community and to educate students to live and work in a diverse, inclusive 21st century. We are committed to supporting our increasingly diverse student body, promoting new methods of teaching and inclusive pedagogy and creating a community in which all can thrive” (Impact 2025, PDF 14).

DEI values abound in Impact 2025’s framing “Transformative Directions” and “One DU” frameworks. Transformative Direction Two—Discovery and Design in an Age of Collaboration—devotes its first full section to “Faculty Talent, Excellence and Diversity Initiative” and includes a call to developing unit plans for “faculty diversity and inclusive pedagogy.” And the “One DU” frame includes calls overtly for “A Community of Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Excellence”—including a call to “cultivate leaders committed to inclusivity.”

DU’s Strategic Imperatives

The third of DU’s Five Strategic Imperatives is to “Cultivate an exceptionally diverse, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming community”; the importance of this is described [here](#) as follows:

“Diverse communities are stronger, more resilient and more productive. The University of Denver champions diversity, equity and inclusion because it is our moral obligation and because we believe, without question, that society thrives when we collectively welcome the voices and ideas of individuals from all backgrounds. We commit to providing the structures and support to ensure the DU community and campus becomes an example for others seeking to lift up marginalized voices. A key part of this commitment is reckoning with and learning from our own institutional history. We make this commitment in no small part because we want a deep sense of belonging to define the experience of every single one of our community members, and that is impossible without confronting existing barriers. We work toward this lofty goal through continued listening and the perpetual evaluation of our policies, culture and structures.”

Public Good

DU's Public Good work provides further emphasis on DEI values as can be seen by even a quick review of many of its recent funded projects including Grand Challenges projects and including work on "Amplifying University-Community Voices." Indeed, the Public Impact newsletter of our Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning notes (in 2020):

"CCESL affirms antiracist work for racial equity and justice. We recognize that anti-black violence, racial injustice, and other forms of oppression are rooted in power and policies. We believe community organizing is an essential strategy for building power and changing policies. Further, we believe that antiracism must be central to community-university collaboration for the public good. Community organizing and community engagement require that we think, connect, act, *and* reflect through collaboration that centers community leadership. Our promise is to think, connect, act, and reflect to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression by working at multiple levels, from policy to practice. Of course, making promises is easy. Therefore, we commit to providing evidence in the weeks, months, and years ahead of actualizing that promise."

4D

DU's 4D experience is rooted in a commitment to "inclusive community"; as shared in a recent presentation with Senate, the 4D vision is about "fostering an institutional culture and inclusive community that collectively promotes and integrates the four dimensions of advancing intellectual growth, exploring character, promoting well-being, and pursuing careers and lives of purpose." In this regard, we find emphases in the 4D materials on personal and social responsibility, ethical leadership, and holistic wellness, as well as a particular focus on DEI as one of the "4D Guiding Values" described in a 2022 campus presentation in terms of the following two points:

- "Integrating critical reflection on identity, intersectionality, positionality, bias, and an understanding of power and privilege."
- "Ensuring that all students have the frameworks and tools to thrive at and beyond the university."

Faculty Senate

Lastly in way of broader framing, Faculty Senate voted in 2020 to support the Chancellor's and Provost's own mandate that all faculty be educated in inclusive teaching through DU's Faculty Institute for Inclusive Teaching (FIIT) program; click [here](#) for the note in which the Chancellor and Provost announce this new project. The Senate's vote of support in this regard stems from at least as early as its 2016 Inclusive Learning Environments Initiative which was framed as follows: "The Inclusive Learning Environments Initiative is the result of the Senate Student Relations Committee's yearlong conversation about how DU faculty can take a leading role in responding proactively and productively to one of the most significant questions facing our campus and American higher education today: How do we foster a truly inclusive educational experience, one wherein all students feel equally welcome and empowered to learn? That this is a crucial question for American higher education generally and for DU specifically is amply demonstrated by recent events: Across the country, university students from historically marginalized communities have been voicing a powerful call for transformative institutional change. That call can be heard here at DU, too, as the recent campus climate report and public testimony from DU students readily attest" (see Appendix B for link to full document).

These are just a few small reminders DU's own emphasis on DEI in whose context the Resolution emerges. We might here also note DU's increased emphasis on Land Acknowledgment at the start of some of its most important events (for example: The Chancellor's Installation ceremony; the Faculty and Staff Awards Luncheon; et al.). In this context, it is worth thinking about a recent study by DU students (a cohort of graduate and undergraduate students from the Departments of Anthropology and History) exploring the importance of coupling Land Acknowledgements with concrete institutional change; in this regard they write with inspired vision (see Dillard et al. 2020, 9) of a time in which:

Institutions will lose their overly simplistic historical narratives but gain the foundation for a multi-vocal critique of history that frames a more honest—though often disappointing—story that can bring us to a more inclusive and less disappointing future.

The Enrollment Cliff: Broadening Who Belongs

Support for the Resolution can be found in enrollment cliff research which shows that it is more important than ever to make Students of Color feel a deeper sense of belonging.

Based on the work of economist Nathan Grawe (see Grawe 2018), all of us in higher ed are preparing for the “2026 enrollment cliff,” an upcoming period of startling declines in college enrollment based on lower birth rates, rising costs, and other factors. Regional colleges and universities are being forecasted to be more likely to be harder-hit than elite institutes of higher learning (see Barshay 2018; Kline 2019, as featured by CUPA-HR, the association for HR professionals in higher ed). Responding in particular to Grawe’s recommending that universities take a “nimble” and proactive approach to “beat[ing] the odds by carefully adjusting recruitment efforts to auspicious new student pools,” a 2021 [Higher Ed Pulse Report](#) about “Futureproofing Institutes Against the Demographic Cliff” encourages a market expansion approach along multiple lines, including the following lines:

- **Cultivate other student populations that add to the mix of enrolled students:**

Diversify your enrollment by recruiting students of color (a population that will not be declining as much) as well as international students. Similarly, non-traditional college-age students, foreign students, and growth in online, professional, and graduate programs can also offset projected enrollment losses.

Indeed, this point was emphasized in a PPT “roadshow” shared across campus in 2019/20 by Todd Rinehart (Vice Chancellor, Enrollment Management) and Corinne Lengsfeld (Sr. Vice Provost, Research/Graduate Education; Interim Provost at the time).

DU’s 4D Framework: Wellness + Character

Support for the Resolution can also be found in DU’s innovative 4D approach to whole-person development which emphasizes the importance of wellness and character development. As we have addressed in section 2, when students feel like outsiders—including in response to the unwelcoming environment created for some by racially inequitable monikers and mascots—they experience a wide

range of negative health outcomes. This compromises student retention, engagement, and success in the classroom and stands in direct conflict with stated 4D support of student wellness. Furthermore, in its emphasis on character development, DU's 4D frame invites us to think not only about the character traits of engaged students, but the character traits of effective teachers. As we have addressed in section 4, approaching the vocation of teaching through the lens of character development can help shed light on why faculty are often primed to respond to the needs of students even if (and indeed, especially because) those students are in the minority. As we have explored, it is often this very trait of teachers that gives students their best experience at DU—a point directly related to student retention, engagement, and success.

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Appendix A: 2021 Moniker Resolution

The Senate resolution (below) was passed by Faculty Senate on 3.2.21 with an 89% majority; it can be found on the Faculty Senate website here:

https://www.du.edu/sites/default/files/3_5_21_senate_moniker_resolution_with_amended_language-3_0.pdf

Resolution on 'pioneers' moniker

Whereas University of Denver faculty are committed to DU's own principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion;

Whereas University of Denver faculty are committed to creating an equitable learning environment for all students, including marginalized and minoritized students;

Whereas marginalized and minoritized students are most adversely impacted by monikers like "pioneers" in general and in relation to gaining equitable access to education in our classrooms; and

Whereas the University of Denver Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has observed the following:

The pioneer moniker does harm to members of our community who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), especially the Native American communities on whose land the University of Denver stands, the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute.

Students, community organizations, faculty, departments, and units have penned multiple letters to demand the removal of the pioneer word as the moniker of the university.

The Faculty Senate resolves:

The University of Denver should retire the pioneer moniker and related uses of the pioneer word.

Appendix B: Additional Supporting Documents

John Evans Report (Clemmer-Smith, et al. 2014): This report, conducted by DU scholars, details violence against Native and Indigenous community in DU's institutional history:

<https://www.du.edu/equity/john-evans-report>

"A century and a half later, as an educational community that has inherited Evans's positive legacies along with his deadly decisions, we have the opportunity to face this history honestly. It is impossible now to celebrate the founder with the amnesia we have shown in the past, but we can see him—and perhaps ourselves—more accurately situated in the complexity of history."

-- John Evans Study Committee, Nov. 2014 (95)

Faculty Senate's partial log of letters from offices, departments, and groups across DU calling on DU to retire the moniker:

<https://www.du.edu/facsen/content/faculty-senate-diversity-equity-inclusion-justice>

Letters are from:

- Staff Advisory Council (4.5.21)
- Spanish Language, Literary and Cultural Studies (2.11.21)
- Writing Program & University Libraries (11.3.20)
- IRISE, Latinx Center & DU Center for Immigration Policy and Research
- Indigenous Alumni Affinity Group (10.26.20)
- College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (10.30.20)
- Indigenous Faculty (10.29.20)
- John Evans Study Committee (10.28.20)
- CWC Leadership Scholars (10.29.20)
- Computer Science (10.30.20)

At the above link, also find:

- Staff Advisory Committee's moniker report (2021)
- SAIE's 2020-21 Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Report- Executive Summary

Faculty Senate 2016 Inclusive Learning Environments Initiative:

<https://www.du.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/inclusivelearningenvironmentsinitiative2016.pdf>

DU's Impact 2025 document:

<http://impact.du.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DU-IMPACT-2025-010516-LoRes.pdf>

Chancellor's and Provost's announcement of mandate that all faculty be educated in inclusive teaching through DU's Faculty Institute for Inclusive Teaching (FIIT) program:

<https://www.du.edu/news/announcing-faculty-institute-inclusive-teaching>