

## **April 13, 2026 Town Hall Recap**

*All was utilized to support the development of this document. All questions asked were kept in their original format, and the responses from leadership were revised only for clarity while preserving the accuracy of what was shared during the April 13, 2026 Town Hall.*

*The recording of the Town Hall opening remarks and the PowerPoint shared can be found on the Healthy Campus website. Because of the sensitive nature of the Q&A, the town hall Q&A session was not recorded. Below is a summary of remarks, questions, and answers.*

### **Opening Remarks**

Senior campus leaders opened the Budget Town Hall by reaffirming their commitment to transparency, care for the campus community, and long-term financial sustainability. Since the previous town hall, updated guidance from the State of Colorado and the CU System Office has clarified revenue and expense projections, resulting in a significantly improved financial outlook. Forecasted revenues are now higher than expected and projected expenses lower, reducing the remaining budget gap by approximately \$1.5 million. As a result, employee salary reductions have been removed from consideration. While acknowledging that budget reductions within colleges and divisions remain difficult and have real impacts, leadership emphasized that these decisions are grounded in a shared commitment to the university's mission and its students.

The Senior Leadership Team described the collaborative work undertaken with deans, vice chancellors, and shared governance representatives to identify additional base reductions and close the remaining gap. Through careful review, \$1.37 million in additional reductions were identified, with the remaining \$238,000 expected to be addressed through natural attrition by June 30, 2026. Leaders also outlined steps being taken to mitigate impacts where possible, including a more rigorous strategic review of vacancies, and reiterated their intent to restore positions and operating funds when fiscal conditions allow. Looking ahead, leadership shared plans focused on enrollment growth, strategic planning, process improvement, and long-term institutional sustainability, alongside several positive developments related to state funding, tuition setting, capital investments, philanthropy, and a planned one-time payment for faculty and staff in FY2027.

### **In-Person and Live Q&A**

**Question 1:** How do you plan to rebuild trust with your employees after the fiasco of the past few weeks taking salary that's off the table is not a victory it is the removal of a threat.

**Response:** Senior leaders acknowledged the significant strain that the past several weeks placed on employee trust and morale. Leadership reiterated that salary reductions were always viewed as a last resort and that, at every decision point, the leadership teams actively sought pathways to close the budget gap without resorting to that measure. Leaders described the context in which these decisions occurred, noting that the budget shortfall became clear in late January and required rapid action amid evolving information from the state and the CU System Office. During that time, leadership pivoted repeatedly based on community feedback, new data, and changing forecasts. Leaders acknowledged that the compressed timeline contributed to uncertainty and frustration across campus and committed to reflecting on how communication, engagement, and pacing can be improved going forward.

Rebuilding trust, leaders emphasized, will take sustained effort and shared work. Leadership framed the path forward as a collective process: defining what the “UCCS of the future” should be, aligning decisions with that shared vision, and committing to more deliberate planning cycles rather than crisis-driven decision-making. Leaders underscored that higher education nationally is facing structural challenges and that UCCS is not alone, but committed to navigating them transparently and collaboratively with its campus community.

**Question 2:** I was watching the meeting minutes from the university budget advisory committee meeting...could you explain how tuition increases help with the deficit...and why rebranding is the right decision for right now.

**Response:** Leadership explained that the projected \$5.3 million increase in revenue for FY2027 comes primarily from two sources: a redesigned tuition structure and a 3.5% tuition rate increase. The revised tuition model replaces a complicated system of multiple tuition tables with a clearer and more consistent structure, allowing the university to more accurately forecast revenues while also making tuition easier for students and families to understand. The 3.5% increase aligns UCCS with CU Denver and remains below the state-authorized cap of 4%.

To mitigate impact, leadership emphasized that students currently enrolled under the existing tuition model will be held harmless for two years. This decision was made intentionally to protect continuing students while still allowing the university to move to a more sustainable and transparent model. Leaders also noted that this approach was strongly encouraged by the CU System Office to improve alignment and long-term financial stability across campuses.

Regarding rebranding, leaders clarified that the effort did not originate from the budget situation alone. It began with a market study conducted in fall 2024 and aligns with the Strategic Enrollment Plan, the university's differentiator work, and efforts to strengthen recruitment and retention in an increasingly competitive environment. Leadership emphasized that the institution is exploring whether modest brand alignment could amplify visibility during existing marketing cycles, particularly as recruitment materials for Fall 2027 are developed. Importantly, leaders stressed that no final decision has been made and that feedback from the campus community is actively shaping the evaluation process.

**Question 3: So you are saying that there will be no additional budget at all in this rebranding process.**

**Response:** Leadership confirmed that there is no new or separate base funding allocated for a rebranding effort. Any potential changes would occur only through existing maintenance, replacement, or update cycles that are already budgeted, such as resurfacing facilities, refreshing signage, or updating digital platforms. In some cases, donor funding or one-time funds may be used to support specific updates.

Leaders stressed that this approach is intentional and designed to avoid large, immediate costs. The goal is to ensure fiscal responsibility by integrating any changes into work that would occur regardless of branding considerations.

**Question 4: Can you please post the results of the branding survey...please use the feedback given to rethink the name.**

**Response:** Leadership committed to sharing the results of the branding survey with the campus community. They emphasized that the survey was intentionally broad, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, to ensure a wide range of perspectives. Leaders acknowledged concerns raised by students and affirmed that discomfort expressed in the feedback is a critical part of the evaluation process.

**Question 5: What would it take for leadership to decide not to move forward with the rebrand...what needs to happen for feedback to be taken seriously.**

**Response:** Senior leaders reiterated that no decision has been finalized and that survey results to date do not show a clear consensus in any direction. Feedback is being reviewed carefully, and leadership emphasized that the purpose of gathering input is to inform, not justify, an outcome. The next steps will be shaped by what the data indicate, and leaders committed to sharing findings before any recommendation is advanced.

**Question 6: Why did leadership believe moving HR into the Sustainability House was the best move.**

**Response:** Leadership explained that the Sustainability House was explored as one of several possible options during a broader effort to reduce leased space costs, address program deficits, and preserve jobs and services. The campus farm, funded through Dining and Hospitality Services, has been operating with a significant deficit, while the university also faces pressure to vacate leased space off campus, saving substantial annual costs.

As part of this process, multiple campus locations were evaluated for suitability based on square footage, ADA accessibility, parking, and operational needs. Leadership emphasized that the Sustainability House was not singled out, nor was a final decision made; it was one of many exploratory options considered to balance fiscal responsibility with preservation of sustainability programming.

**Question 7: If the decision was not final, why were communications sent indicating a move timeline.**

**Response:** Senior leaders stated they were not aware of the specific communication referenced. Leadership acknowledged that information sometimes travels informally during planning processes and that this can lead to confusion or premature conclusions.

Leaders elaborated that space planning efforts stem from a larger initiative to consolidate services, reduce leased space, and improve the student experience by centralizing offices. Proposed options consider confidentiality requirements, accessibility, program preservation, and the stewardship of campus assets such as art collections. Leaders emphasized that no final relocations would occur without careful review of impacts and communication with affected groups.

**Question 8: Do employee salary reductions remain a lever for future deficits.**

**Response:** Leadership stated clearly that they hope salary reductions will never again be required and emphasized the significant effort taken to remove them from consideration this year. While leaders acknowledged the importance of maintaining fiscal flexibility, they expressed a strong intention to pursue other strategies first.

**Question 9: Is the predicted enrollment growth worth the cost of renaming the campus.**

**Response:** Leadership reiterated that this question had already been addressed and emphasized that detailed information outlining the scope, timing, and cost considerations of the branding exploration is available on the campus website. They again stressed that no major financial investment is planned or approved at this time.

**Question 10: What will the faculty and staff engagement process look like this summer.**

**Response:** Leadership shared that a formal engagement process has not yet been designed and that the summer will be dedicated to building that framework. The intention is to avoid another rapid, high-pressure cycle by developing a clear, transparent, year-long process that launches in the fall. Once developed, leadership plans to bring a structured roadmap to the campus outlining timelines, decision points, and opportunities for engagement throughout the academic year.

**Question 11: Why have salary increases gone to ELT positions and not others.**

**Response:** Leadership from UCCS as well as CU System explained that salary adjustments occur across campus when position descriptions change and are managed by Human Resources according to established processes. In the case of the Chancellor's recent salary adjustment, the decision was made by the CU System President to align compensation with peer institutions and ensure compliance with equal pay requirements. Importantly, this adjustment was funded by the System Office and did not affect the UCCS campus budget.

Leadership also acknowledged concerns raised by employees and shared that the Chancellor voluntarily took a 5% salary reduction to support divisional budget reductions. Leaders emphasized that improving compensation across employee groups is a long-term priority embedded in the Healthy Campus framework and guided by Board of Regents compensation philosophy.

**Question 12: How will UCCS become a more compelling and valuable campus experience for students.**

**Response:** Leadership emphasized that improving the student experience is central to retention and enrollment efforts. Examples shared included expanded campus programming, increased student participation in events, investments in residence life and

social spaces, and ongoing efforts to make campus services more accessible and student-centered through space consolidation.

Leaders also highlighted UCCS's academic strengths, including applied learning, undergraduate research, internships, and strong ties to the local community. These opportunities allow students to integrate academic study with professional experience in ways that distinguish UCCS from many peer institutions. Leadership expressed hope that students will continue sharing these experiences with prospective students and peers as part of strengthening campus community and belonging.