

March 17, 2026 Town Hall FAQs

The following FAQs were developed based on the questions received during the March 17, 2026 Town Hall. All recommendations and feedback that were provided in the Q&A section of the Town Hall were shared with the Senior Leadership Team.

How accurate and reliable is UCCS data, and how will the new multi-year budget model ensure better data and accountability moving forward?

Answer: UCCS leaders rely on institutional data to guide budgeting, enrollment, and academic decisions. We have confidence in the accuracy of the data used within the colleges and divisions. The SLT acknowledges that data interpretation can be complex and that apparent discrepancies often reflect differences in context, such as cross-listed courses, faculty teaching across units, timing of data pulls, or differences between state-reportable data and internal planning data, rather than errors. During this budget process, unprecedented collaboration among Academic Affairs including the Colleges, the Budget Office, Institutional Research, Human Resources, and the Controller's Office have strengthened shared understanding, reconciled inconsistencies, and increased confidence in common data sources.

The new multi-year budget model does not ensure better data. That is not the purpose of the multi-year budget model. The multi-year budget model is a planning tool that gives us a lens into the future and allows us to make strategic decisions now that take into consideration different future scenarios. Later this spring, we will embark on a project with the CU System Office that will help us improve the data we collect, analyze, and use for our daily operations and decision making. This effort builds on the work we have already accomplished this semester by emphasizing clearer data standards, consistent definitions, shared protocols, and improved systems. These changes will involve the divisions and colleges and will improve data collection, data definitions, analysis, reporting, auditing and will support more reliable, data-informed planning over time.

The current UCCS mission and vision statements are not specific enough to provide a valuable framework for budget cut decisions. What strategic framework and metrics are being used for this process?

Answer: The framework guiding current reductions is collaborative and iterative, led by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT is using multiple data points, including unallocated base funding, vacancies, operating budgets, and filled at-will positions, to inform decision-making. Vice Chancellors and Deans work closely with their teams to analyze this data, understand unit-level impacts, and shape recommendations. These insights are then brought back to the SLT, where collective review ensures that decisions are informed by both data and a clear understanding of operational and academic impacts across the institution.

See FAQ section Budget Context & Process: What data was provided by the Budget and Controller Office to the Senior Leadership Team (Deans & Vice Chancellors) to inform budget decisions

Can the university achieve the required budget reductions without cutting people or programs?

Answer: As the university works toward closing the gap between its revenue and expenses, we have to consider all options.

What accountability or cost-sharing measures will ELT take, including salary reductions, position cuts, and turnover explanations.

Answer: Over the past two years, the ELT has reduced in size (via position eliminations) from 8 Vice Chancellors to 6 Vice Chancellors, a 25% reduction in positions. For the FY2026-27 budget year, the chancellor is reducing her compensation by \$75,000. Both proposals for salary reductions in FY 2026-27 have higher percentage impacts on the senior leadership team. As for turnover, it is not unusual for a cabinet/Executive Leadership Team to evolve with new leadership. Along with turnover, retirements (two members of the ELT have chosen to retire with over 20 and 30 years of service to UCCS) are a natural course of change. Interim leadership helps stabilize the cabinet during the transitions. Interim employees are selected for their skills and have the university's best interest in mind and are dedicated employees.

Will academic programs, faculty roles, or research be reduced, and how will program metrics account for student and community value?

Answer: As part of addressing our financial challenges, all areas of the university are being carefully reviewed, including academic programs, faculty roles, and research activity. Our goal, however, is not to make across-the-board reductions, but to take a strategic and evidence-based approach that prioritizes student success, academic quality, and long-term institutional sustainability.

In terms of academic programs, any consideration of reduction or discontinuance will follow established policies and shared governance processes, including those outlined in APS 1015. Decisions will be informed by multiple measures rather than any single metric.

This multi-factor approach is intended to ensure that programs providing high value to students and the community, especially those critical to our mission, are appropriately recognized, even if they are not the largest or most revenue-generating.

Ultimately, while some changes may be necessary, decisions will be made thoughtfully, transparently, and with input from shared governance to ensure we are strengthening the university's academic portfolio rather than simply reducing it.

How will enrollment be strengthened, including the use of the \$3M marketing investment, EMSA stability, staffing levels in recruitment areas, and student experience impacts

Answer: One of our main initiatives that the \$3M marketing investment will go towards is optimizing the UCCS website for AI compatibility. This will ensure that when prospective students or their families search for our site, an AI-generated summary appears at the top of their results. Achieving this will require a dedicated website optimization process, but it's a vital step to keep us visible and competitive as AI-driven search becomes more prevalent. We also plan to revise our websites, aligning content with what students and their families find most appealing when researching colleges. This helps ensure our information connects with their needs and interests.

Another priority for these funds is expanding our brand awareness and marketing reach. We're targeting a diverse group: prospective freshmen, adult learners, transfer and graduate students, online students, and employers. We're collaborating closely with EAB and Greenhouse Partners, our external partners, to craft strategic brand and marketing campaigns that leverage new platforms and maximize visibility across these populations. This will also include the rollout of our new campus differentiator.

Additionally, we'll use funds to create new videos featuring deans and faculty, which will be distributed to students interested in their programs. We're also looking at a partnership with an external group to produce videos that guide prospective students through the application and FAFSA process, followed by personalized congratulations videos once they are admitted. These will provide cost estimates if a student has identified a program of interest and highlights what aid they are eligible for if a FAFSA was submitted. This personalized approach has proven to boost yield rates at other colleges, so we're excited to explore it for UCCS.

Expanding resources for outreach and campus events is another focus, as we aim to deliver a more personalized experience for prospective students and their families. Over the past year, our partnership with EAB has included a strategic analysis to assist us in prioritizing target markets based on our history and growth potential. These funds allow us to strategically focus some expanded outreach and yield events in those identified locations as well as on campus.

Over the past several years, reductions in Admissions staffing and budgets have limited our capacity to recruit new students. Admissions is foundational to UCCS's overall success, and in

response to these constraints, we are pursuing new and more strategic ways to connect with prospective students beyond traditional recruiter-based models. This includes closer collaboration with external partners to identify effective outreach strategies, optimizing our social media presence, implementation of a new CRM platform that will significantly enhance and personalize communications, and working with the system office to elevate UCCS's distinctive strengths in statewide outreach across Colorado.

At the same time, we recognize the critical importance of improving student retention, which is significantly more cost-effective than recruitment alone and better supports students in completing their degrees rather than leaving UCCS without realizing the full value of their investment. Student retention is directly tied to the overall student experience, which is shaped by every interaction students have both inside and outside the classroom. As such, retention is a shared responsibility across the institution and requires continued investment in student safety, compliance, engagement, sense of belonging, and comprehensive support services.

The search for a new Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs has therefore focused on identifying a leader who can provide stability for the division and guide deliberate decision-making. This includes helping each area assess which initiatives should be continued, refined, or discontinued, with a clear focus on maximizing return on investment and enhancing the student experience.