

aaup

Colorado State University Fort Collins

February 4, 2026

Dear Board Members,

We are writing to express our grave concern about the procedure you have implemented for selecting a new chancellor. The selection process was outlined in the December 18, 2025 statement by the Board of Governors and is problematic for the following reasons:

- The search for the highest ranking administrator in the CSU system is internal rather than being open to the most qualified candidate.
- There is no independent search committee. The December 18 memo states that “the Board of Governors Evaluation Committee will serve as the advisory committee for this search.” This begs the question of who, exactly, is making the selection. The current chancellor? That would seem to be the case given that applicants are instructed to send their materials directly to his office, not to the BOG or an independent body.
- There is no participation by faculty or other affected parties. This contravenes AAUP guidance as well as CSU’s stated commitment to shared governance.
- The search was announced immediately before the winter break and specified a deadline just six weeks later. This very short turn-around time – that occurred between Faculty Council meetings -- made it difficult for the university community to respond to the way in which the search was being conducted. The accelerated timeline is particularly unreasonable given that Dr. Frank is not retiring until June of 2027.

All of the above suggests that Dr. Frank is, in fact, naming a successor rather than conducting an objective search for a new chancellor to lead the CSU system. It is part of a broader pattern of administrative behavior that includes the presidential “searches” for CSU-Fort Collins and CSU-Pueblo, both of which resulted in the appointment of people close to the current chancellor with little to no input from stakeholders in the broader university communities. The latter, it should be noted, ultimately resulted in major embarrassment to the system. The current situation cannot be attributed to ignorance of national precedents or the best practices outlined by AAUP; Dr. Frank and the BOG have been informed in the past about the problematic nature of this course of action by local AAUP chapters, and, in the case of Pueblo, also by the national AAUP Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance.

The Colorado State System is a public institution that serves almost 50,000 students and employs over 7,500 faculty and staff. We deserve a chancellor who has undergone a rigorous selection process that is based on nationally recognized best practices.

We respectfully request that a new search be implemented so that a national pool of qualified candidates can be reviewed by a committee that includes faculty, among other stakeholders, subject, of course, to final Board approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Van Buren".

Mary Van Buren
President, American Association of University Professors – Fort Collins
On behalf of the Executive Committee of AAUP@CSU