



# United Government of Graduate Students

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

## **Resolution Regarding Presidential Finalist Mark Kennedy**

**[Date Resolution Passed]**

**April 17th, 2019**

**Sponsored by:**

|                       |                                               |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Juan Garcia Oyervides | UGGS President                                |
| Varsha Rao            | UGGS VP of Internal Affairs                   |
| Sarah Fahmy           | UGGS VP of External Affairs                   |
| Elana Friedland       | UGGS Director of Communications               |
| Danica Petrovska      | UGGS Social Chair                             |
| Emily Jensen          | UGGS CUSG Co-Senator                          |
| Robert Wilson         | UGGS Representative of Mechanical Engineering |
| Anthony Pinter        | UGGS Representative, INFO                     |
| Jennifer Reeve        | UGGS Representative of Geological Sciences    |
| Matthew Vondrasek     | UGGS Representative, Law School               |
| Elise Collins         | UGGS Representative, Theatre and Dance        |
| Lange Simmons         | UGGS Representative, Physics                  |
| James Drumm           | UGGS Representative, Leeds School of Business |
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**Authored by:**

Matthew Vondrasek  
Juan Garcia Oyervides  
Sarah Fahmy

UGGS Law School Senator  
UGGS President  
UGGS VP of External Affairs

**Resolution Summary**

The purpose of this resolution is to express graduate and professional students' concerns with the selection of Mark Kennedy as the sole finalist for the office of president for the University of Colorado System. The United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) demands closer attention and an expansion of the vetting process to ensure the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado (the Regents) appropriately incorporates student input.

**Whereas,** Mr. Mark R. Kennedy has been named the sole finalist for president of the university system by a unanimous recommendation the Regents,<sup>1</sup> and without significant input from graduate or undergraduate students,

**Whereas,** Mr. Kennedy spent six years in the U.S. House of Representatives pushing nationwide, highly controversial policy,<sup>2</sup> including three resolutions that proposed a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman at the federal, state and local levels,<sup>3</sup> usurping the rights of states to govern matters of family law in order to facilitate a policy which would deny fundamental rights to LGBTQ+ people, and queer and trans students make up 11% of the graduate student body at CU Boulder,<sup>4</sup>

**Whereas,** Mr. Kennedy also voted for a number of measures which would deny reproductive justice by restricting access to and funding for reproductive healthcare and which would equate the rights of fetuses with the rights of the people who carry them,<sup>5</sup> and voted against the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, and the University of Colorado, particularly at the Anschutz campus, uses stem cells to research cancer treatments and diabetes treatments,<sup>6</sup> and the University of Colorado system encompasses more than 100 researchers who focus on stem cell biology,<sup>7</sup>

**Whereas,** during his tenure as president of the University of North Dakota (UND) Mr. Kennedy received feedback in 2019 from his supervisors at UND that he needs to improve his “abilit[ies] to connect with, communicate and take input from stakeholders,”<sup>8</sup>

**Whereas,** in February of 2018, Mr. Kennedy announced his application to become president of the University of Central Florida, 20 months into his tenure at the University of North Dakota, and in March of 2018, the University of Central Florida’s Board of Trustees chose not to hire Mr. Kennedy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cu.edu/news/university-colorado-names-mark-r-kennedy-presidential-finalist>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ontheissues.org/House/Mark\\_Kennedy.htm](http://www.ontheissues.org/House/Mark_Kennedy.htm);  
[https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/mark\\_kennedy/400214](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/mark_kennedy/400214)

<sup>3</sup> The text of the proposed amendment read, “Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the constitution of any State, shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman.” H.J.Res. 56 (108th Congress, 2004); H.J.Res. 106 (108th Congress, 2004); H.J.Res. 88 (109th Congress, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Graduate Student Social Climate Survey, Appendix D: Summary for Master’s Students: Sexual Orientation [https://www.colorado.edu/oda/sites/default/files/attached-files/appendixe\\_0.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/oda/sites/default/files/attached-files/appendixe_0.pdf); and Appendix E: Summary for PhD Students: Sexual Orientation <https://www.colorado.edu/oda/sites/default/files/attached-files/appendixd.pdf> (2014).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/member/mark-kennedy/K000358>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/centers/StemCell/Pages/StemCell.aspx>  
<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/centers/StemCell/research/researchprograms/Pages/researchprograms.aspx?&&p\\_Last\\_x0020\\_Name=Yi&&PageFirstRow=1&&View={C04CF99B-91CE-4F16-8D9C-B574B0F6E94B}](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/centers/StemCell/research/researchprograms/Pages/researchprograms.aspx?&&p_Last_x0020_Name=Yi&&PageFirstRow=1&&View={C04CF99B-91CE-4F16-8D9C-B574B0F6E94B})

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.grandforksherald.com/news/education/4577201-kennedy-receives-midyear-review-chancellor>; Though the views in his review were generally positive, UND Chancellor Hagerott admitted he was not candid about concerns or issues about Mr. Kennedy’s performance.

for the president position, citing his divisive political career as an unnecessary level of risk and what has been described as a “funding disaster” at the University of North Dakota,<sup>9</sup>

**Whereas,** Mr. Kennedy’s employment experience is not comparable to the experience necessary to lead the University of Colorado System which has more than 68,000 students enrolled and four separate campuses,

**Whereas,** Mr. Kennedy's visit to CU Boulder does not allow sufficient time for meaningful engagement with graduate or undergraduate students,<sup>10</sup>

**Whereas,** Mr. Kennedy is not scheduled to visit the Boulder campus until the 13th day of the 14-day waiting period which the Regents must observe before voting on his nomination.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.grandforksherald.com/news/education/4415499-mark-kennedy-not-chosen-central-florida-president>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cu.edu/presidential-search/finalist-open-forum-schedule>

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the United Government of Graduate Students THAT:**

**Section 1:** The Regents withdraw the nomination of Mark Kennedy as the “sole finalist” for the president of the university system.

**Section 2:** The Regents give further consideration to Mark Kennedy's contribution to the University of Colorado's values.

**Section 3:** The Regents give further consideration to the possible impacts of Mark Kennedy on science research and its role as a Public Research One Institution.

**Section 4:** The Regents exercise further review of Mark Kennedy's employment history and performance during his tenure at the University of North Dakota.

**Section 5:** The Regents consider the impact of Mark Kennedy's controversial public profile on fundraising initiatives.

**Section 6:** The Regents give further consideration to Mark Kennedy's ability to lead a diverse community of the size and breadth of the University of Colorado.

**Section 7:** The Regents extend the vetting process of Mark Kennedy's nomination to include significant input from undergraduate and graduate students and the CU Boulder campus communities.

**Section 8:** The Regents allow for and provide instances for undergraduate and graduate students to interact with Mark Kennedy during his visit to CU Boulder.

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**Juan García Oyervides**

**PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED GOVERNMENT  
OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

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**Varsha Rao**

**VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED GOVERNMENT  
OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

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**Sarah Fahmy**

**VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED GOVERNMENT  
OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**