

BACKGROUND AND FAQs

CSU Pueblo President finalist announced

BACKGROUND

Decision

- Armando Valdez has been named as the sole finalist to become president of Colorado State University Pueblo. He will finish out the remaining 2.5 years of departing President Timothy Mottet's term; at the end of that period, he and the Board will assess how and whether to move forward.
- Following a robust national search, the Board of Governors interviewed three strong candidates brought forward by the Search Advisory Committee but did not agree on an acceptable finalist. From there, they considered a number of possible alternatives and chose to enter into discussions with Valdez, who has served as chair of the Board of Governors since June 2023 and as a member since 2018. Valdez was interviewed by the Board following his resignation.
- The Board identified Valdez based on his deep roots in Southern Colorado, passion for CSU Pueblo and its mission, and strong knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing the University through his leadership on the Board. He is an emeritus professor of business at Adams State University and has more than 18 years of teaching experience in higher education environments. He is currently state director for USDA-Rural Development in Colorado and operates Valdez Land & Livestock, LLC, his family farm and ranch operation near Capulin, Colo.
- In accordance with Colorado law, there is a mandatory 14-day notice and waiting period following the announcement of a finalist before the Board of Governors can enter into an employment agreement. In mid-December, the Board of Governors will meet to consider the formal appointment of Valdez as president.

About the Finalist

- Valdez is currently state director for USDA-Rural Development in Colorado. He also operates Valdez Land & Livestock, LLC, his family farm and ranch operation near Capulin, Colo., with his wife and children.
- A native of the San Luis Valley, Valdez is a 16th-generation American who can trace his roots back to northern New Mexico in the early 1600s. His family first arrived in southern Conejos County in the 1860s.
- Valdez is an emeritus professor of business at Adams State University, where he served for 15 years as an assistant professor of management in the School of Business. There, he created and served as the director of the Health Care Administration program and was integral in development of the agribusiness

program. He also served previously as a dean, department chair, program director, and faculty member at Front Range Community College.

- During his long tenure at Adams State, he received the Presidential Teacher Award in 2010; the Student Engagement in Teaching Award in 2008 and 2015; and the Excellence in Advisement Award in 2013.
- He is a two-time graduate of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, with a bachelor's in business administration and an MBA. He has completed the coursework for a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education and Human Resource Studies at CSU Fort Collins but has not yet completed his dissertation.
- In addition to his role as USDA Rural Development director for Colorado and running his family farm, Valdez has been a member of the Conejos County Land Use Planning Commission, chair of the Conejos County Board of Adjustments, chair of the St. Joseph Parish Finance Committee, Board president for the Guadalupe Parish Credit Union, a member of the 12th Judicial District nominating commission, and member of the Noxious Weed District for Conejos County.
- Valdez was appointed to the Board of Governors of the CSU System in 2018 and served as vice chair before becoming Board chair in June. When the Board was unable to reach agreement on a finalist for the CSU Pueblo presidency, the Board interviewed Valdez following his resignation.

Process

- A 14-member Presidential Search Advisory Committee began the nationwide search in July 2023. This committee was an inclusive group of stakeholders with representation from students, faculty, administrative professional and state classified staff, the Pueblo community, and the Board of Governors of the CSU System. A strong familiarity with Southern Colorado and the Pueblo community was repeatedly cited as among the most important qualifications. Public input also emphasized the need to sustain institutional momentum and continuity.
- After gathering input from the community in a variety of ways, including four public input forums and a stakeholder survey, the Search Advisory Committee worked with CSU System staff to develop a candidate profile and job description.
- Following recruitment of a deep and diverse pool of potential candidates, the committee considered and interviewed applicants, and then arrived at a consensus on three qualified candidates, each of whom the Search Advisory Committee felt could do the job. These candidates were forwarded to the Board of Governors, which is the hiring authority. The Board of Governors interviewed all three candidates, and after thoughtful discussion and consideration, the Board was not able to move forward with a candidate from the pool.
- At that time, the Board considered other options for ensuring consistent and steady leadership at the Pueblo campus. Valdez resigned his position from the Board and the Board interviewed Valdez in a manner identical to the interviews of the previous candidates. The Board recognized his knowledge of Colorado higher education and the CSU System, deep roots in Southern Colorado, and strong

community ties. The Board noted that his work on the Board of Governors has given him significant insight into the operations and finances of the institution, as well as understanding of the concerns, hopes, priorities, and opportunities facing its students, faculty, and staff.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Has Armando Valdez been hired as CSU Pueblo's president?

Not at this point, but the CSU System Board of Governors and the finalist are moving in that direction. The BOG has named Valdez as the sole finalist for the position. In accordance with Colorado law, there is a mandatory 14-day notice and waiting period following the announcement of a finalist before the Board of Governors can enter into an employment agreement.

If the Board votes to ratify his appointment, he will complete the 2.5 years remaining on outgoing President Timothy Mottet's term. At the end of that period, he and the Board will reassess how to move forward.

When will the finalist visit campus?

Once the Board formally appoints CSU Pueblo's next president, that person will be introduced on campus.

Will there be chances for university and community stakeholders to meet the new president?

Yes – once the new president is officially hired there will be a series of opportunities for people across campus, the broader community, and across the state to welcome the new president. When available, this information will be announced to campus and the community.

How much will the next president be paid, and what will be other terms of the contract?

That has not yet been finalized. The Board of Governors and the finalist will discuss those terms and the final employment agreement will be a public document.

When will the new president start working at CSU Pueblo?

The Board of Governors will work with the incoming president to determine a start date.

Who were the other candidates in the group of qualified applicants?

That information is confidential under Colorado law.

Did Armando Valdez participate in the evaluation of other candidates?

As then-Chair of the Board of Governors, Valdez participated fully in the efforts to identify and recruit the next president until such time as it was apparent that the selection of a sole finalist from the slate forwarded by the search committee was not going to occur. Valdez resigned his position as a Board member so that he could be interviewed and considered by the Board.

What is the relationship of CSU Pueblo's president to the Chancellor and the Board of Governors?

The president of CSU Pueblo is appointed by the Board of Governors, as is the Chancellor. The presidents of each of the three institutions in the CSU System report directly to the Chancellor and the Chancellor reports to the Board of Governors. The three distinct institutions of the CSU System include Colorado State University (the flagship institution with its main campus in Fort Collins), CSU Pueblo, and CSU Global.

Who was on the Search Advisory Committee?

The 14-member Search Advisory Committee was made up of people who represented a variety of campus and community stakeholder groups including faculty, staff, students, the Pueblo community, and members of the Board of Governors. More information about the Search Advisory Committee is available at: <https://www.csupueblo.edu/presidential-search-2024/index.html>

Did the university community have a chance to offer input in the process?

The Search Advisory Committee led a series of four listening sessions and stakeholder surveys. The information gathered through this process formed the foundation of the search to ensure that the entire effort was built upon input from the community. With the information gained through that process, the Search Advisory Committee worked with CSU System leadership to develop a candidate profile and job description. This public and campus input was also used to inform the decision-making and priorities of the Search Advisory Committee and the Board of Governors, as the hiring authority.

How can I weigh in on the selection of this finalist?

The public input happened intentionally at the beginning of the search process for the reasons mentioned above. The Search Advisory Committee and Board of Governors used that input to identify the characteristics sought in a finalist, and the Search Advisory Committee represented various campus and community stakeholder groups throughout the search process including interviews with the semi-finalists. Unfortunately, that search

process did not result in a candidate to move forward as a finalist, but the Board relied heavily on the community and campus stakeholder input from those initial meetings in identifying the named finalist.

Where can I learn more about the search?

More information about the search can be found at

<https://www.csupueblo.edu/presidential-search-2024/index.html>