

## News Release

*For Release:* Oct. 12, 2015

*Contact:* DU Media Relations

*Phone:* 720-608-0240

*Email:* [dumediarelations@gmail.com](mailto:dumediarelations@gmail.com)



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

## University of Denver Offers Remedy for U.S. Citizens' Mistrust of Modern Politics

*Strategic Issues Panel releases findings of legislative accountability report Oct. 12*

Oct. 09, 2015 – DENVER – In an era of polarized politics, finger-pointing and gridlock, U.S. citizens are becoming increasingly frustrated with the performance of their legislatures, both at the federal and state levels—and many people feel powerless to hold these institutions accountable.

It is this troubling trend—declining public trust in a vital, but unaccountable social institution—that led the University of Denver to engage the 2015 Strategic Issues Panel in exploring legislative accountability and its connectivity to regaining public trust. In the course of its work, the panel spent several months gathering insights from former public officials, political scientists, journalists and additional experts to find prescriptive solutions to this mounting dilemma.

The panel's recommendations are, in a sense, deceptively simple. The panel calls for legislative leaders from both parties to develop a collaborative annual legislative agenda for the institution, rather than separate party agendas as is the current practice in many legislatures. The agenda identifies the most important issues facing the nation, state or locality—matters of strategic importance—and is publicly presented at the beginning of the annual legislative session. At the conclusion of the session, the legislature reports on actions taken to address the issues identified in the agenda.

This process, which the panel called Clear Legislative Accountability Reporting (CLEAR), offers a unique institutional accountability mechanism for legislative bodies. It is an approach that encourages bipartisan cooperation on vital issues and has the potential to break the logjam of legislative gridlock. It gives the legislature an opportunity to assume leadership on important issues, demonstrate political capability, and educate the public on strategically significant matters. And, importantly, it presents a thoughtful basis for citizens to assess legislative performance, thus providing a foundation for rebuilding public trust.

“In an age of grave distrust of the fundamental institutions of our democracy—and amidst a crisis of political polarization and gridlock—it is as important as ever to talk openly and honestly about political processes and how we might move beyond the gridlock,” said Chancellor Rebecca Chopp.

To view the full report please visit: [www.du.edu/issues](http://www.du.edu/issues)

-30-

*Founded in 1864, the University of Denver is committed to engaging with students in advancing scholarly inquiry, cultivating critical and creative thought, and generating knowledge. The University strives to educate the 21<sup>st</sup>-century citizens and leaders needed in its organizations and communities. The University of Denver ranks among the country's top 100 national universities, and the Institute of International Education ranks it No. 1 among national doctoral and research institutions in the percentage of undergraduate students participating in study abroad programs. For additional information, visit the University's Media Relations [website](#), or follow the University on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*