

4D Symposium 2026 – "A World of Purpose"

Day 1 Schedule

Welcome & Opening Session | 9:30-9:50 am

CCOM 1700

This opening session will kick off the Symposium events with an overview of where we've been and where we are headed as we collectively advance the Four-Dimensional (4D) Experience at DU.

Block 2: Concurrent Sessions | 10-10:50 am

Guiding Others, Finding Ourselves: Student Mentors Reflect on Purpose

CCOM Gallery

Panel Discussion

Presenter(s):

Allie Tookmanian, Assistant Director, New Student Experience

Undergraduate Peer Mentors

This panel discussion will explore how meaningful mentorship experiences shape students' developing sense of purpose. Through personal stories and reflections, panelists will discuss their experiences as a mentor to their peers and how those relationships helped them clarify what matters most. Conversations will highlight the moments that sparked self-discovery, the challenges they have navigated, and the insights they have gained. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how intentional, supportive peer mentorship can empower student mentors to build confidence, find connection, and pursue purpose-driven goals.

Designing Lives of Purpose: The Spiritual Side of the 4D Experience

CCOM 1700

Workshop

Presenter(s):

Ileya Grosman, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Communication and Leadership

Rolfe Larson, MBA, Adjunct Instructor, PSC

This interactive workshop invites faculty and staff to explore meaning, purpose, and the inner life that shapes how we teach, lead, and learn together. Drawing on Parker Palmer, Brene Brown, and Relational Cultural Theory, participants will reflect across roles and engage in practices that foster connection, emotional presence, and mutual care. Together, we will consider how higher education can move beyond transactional approaches toward more relational, purposeful, and human-centered learning environments.

Elevating Holistic Student Well-being

CCOM 1600

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Justin Stoeckle, MEd, Associate Director of Wellness and Prevention, Health Promotion

Jessie McGinty, MPH, MS, Louis Richard Girouard III Director of Health Promotion

This session highlights how Thrive Health Promotion is elevating student well-being as a core component of the University of Denver's 4D Experience. Using the Social Determinants of Health as a framework, the presentation explores how Thrive supports student well-being and how developing well-being enhances students' experiences across all four dimensions. Participants will be introduced to key strategies and initiatives, including the Student Well-Being Champion Badge, that equip faculty and staff to integrate well-being into their work. Attendees will leave with a high-level understanding of how centering well-being strengthens the student experience and supports success across the 4D Experience.

Bridging the Gap: Translating Study Abroad into Purpose at Home

CCOM 1600

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Casey Dinger, PhD, Executive and Academic Director for Internationalization

Audrey Townsend, PhD, 4D Director for Experiential Learning

DU offers a unique wraparound curriculum and micro-credential for students on study abroad that supports global and intercultural learning through a process of critical reflection and then application before, during, and after the experience. This session will outline the purpose and components of the micro-credential before exploring INTZ 2503 specifically. The presenters will demonstrate how this final course strengthens campus integration to support multipath areas of student development. This course leverages this collaboration and builds a bridge between students' experiences and future pathways including academic planning, career development, and civic or societal engagement.

Block 3: Concurrent Sessions | 11-11:50 am

4D Fridays: Embedded Career Readiness

CCOM Gallery

Panel Discussion

Presenter(s):

Cheryl Miller, JD, Associate Dean and COO, CAHSS

Andrea Stanton, PhD, Professor, Religious Studies | CAHSS Senior Associate Dean

Heather Queyrouze, Director of CAHSS Marketing

Lisa Pasko, PhD, Professor, Sociology and Criminology

Rocio Rubio Moiron, PhD, Teaching Assistant Professor of Spanish, Center for World Languages and Cultures

Sergio Macias, PhD, Teaching Professor, Spanish Languages, Literatures and Cultures

This session will illustrate how 4D Fridays are a core expression of the University of Denver's 4D Experience, helping students build durable, human-centered skills while exploring what matters most to them. Faculty from across the arts, humanities, and social sciences will share how they are pairing classroom learning with meaningful community and industry experiences to ensure that students graduate with the experience, confidence, and a clearer sense of the impact they want to make in their communities, careers, and the world. This session will also touch on the importance of articulating the value of 4D Fridays to current and prospective students.

The Purpose Paradox: Exploring Seemingly Intractable Situations

CCOM 2600

Workshop

Presenter(s):

Kristin Taavola, PhD, Associate Professor of Music Theory, Lamont School of Music

Stephen Scaringe, PhD, Entrepreneur and Independent Scholar

What happens when we feel we are leading with purpose but the people around us are not? This workshop will engage examples of seemingly intractable solutions: entrenched departmental disagreements, uncooperative team members, judgmental family dynamics. We begin with the premise that most people want to live good lives, whether by our standards or theirs. We then cultivate support for acceptance of immediate embodied experience of the situation. That experience creates an opening to see the paradoxes between our purpose and others', or between our purpose and well-being. Awareness of that paradox gives us new freedom to calibrate our choices.

Beyond the Game: Purpose-Driven Career Development for Student-Athletes **CCOM 1600**

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Sarabeth Wolbrom, EdD, Associate Director, Career and Professional Development

Student-athletes face unique challenges, balancing academic commitments, demanding training schedules, and identity formation beyond sport. This session introduces an innovative, purpose-centered career advising model that empowers student-athletes to translate athletic strengths into meaningful professional pathways. Through reflective exercises, mentorship structures, and experiential opportunities, the model supports student-athletes as they explore post-graduation options with confidence and clarity. Attendees will experience sample tools used to guide student-athletes in identifying transferable skills, aligning values with career interests, and cultivating purpose beyond athletics. This approach offers scalable strategies for supporting long-term well-being and life after sport.

Poetry Hands On

CCOM 2800

Workshop

Presenter(s):

Joe Hutchison, Colorado Poet Laureate (2014-2019), Teaching Associate Professor, PSC

Writing poetry is less a skill than a calling, although the skills tend to develop when we answer the call. Using a variety of images and sounds to focus our language, we'll set aside expectations of what a poem "should do" and focus instead on finding ways to set aside abstraction in favor of sense impressions. The goal will be to enter into dialogue with objects and sounds in ways that will help to silence our endless inner dialogue and woo us into a dimension of the real that we customarily overlook.

"Future of Work" Plenary Lunch Panel | 12-1:20 pm

CCOM 1700

Elizabeth Lobo, PhD, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Panelists:

Adrina Gibson, Executive Director, General Services, City of Denver

Anslem Elumogo-Gardner, Founder and CEO, Mind for Mission

Betsy Fischer, Senior Director, Alvarez & Marsal Corporate Performance

Peter Campbell, Founder and Managing Partner, Education Growth Partners

Featuring leaders from diverse sectors, this plenary panel will explore how we may leverage uniquely human strengths in a rapidly changing world of work driven by AI and emerging technologies, automation, shifting societal expectations, and more. How may we redefine our relationship with work and empower human-centric, purpose-driven leadership amid these seismic shifts?

Block 5: Concurrent Sessions | 1:30-2:20 pm

Purposeful Work in an Automated World

CCOM 1700

Dialogue

Presenter(s):

Mark Nussbaum, Career Advisor, Career and Professional Development

As AI automates more tasks in education and the workplace, students risk losing reflection, voice, and engagement in meaningful work. This session explores how educators can help students cultivate purpose, human-centered skills, and authentic career narratives while navigating an AI-driven world. Participants will examine real-world examples, discuss challenges in fostering reflection and voice, and explore strategies to guide students in using AI thoughtfully without outsourcing their identity or critical thinking. Attendees will leave with approaches to help students develop purposeful work, embrace uncertainty, and strengthen the human skills that technology cannot replace.

Cultivating an Authentic Professional Identity

CCOM 2600

Workshop

Presenter(s):

Austin Gane, Coordinator of Health Promotion

Deciding how much of yourself to put into your work can be challenging. Studies show people whose personal and professional identities are closely aligned tend to be happier, but many places of employment continue to cling to restrictive notions of the professional. This session will explore how to walk that line, providing participants with an opportunity to reflect on who they are and who they want to be. By the end of the session, attendees will have crafted a professional identity that is both authentic and congruent with their values.

Experiential Pathways for Purpose-Driven Careers

CCOM 2800

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Melissa Akaka, PhD, Associate Dean for Research and Strategic Initiatives

John Sebesta, PhD, Director of Entrepreneurship and Koch Chair of Entrepreneurship

Students involved in Entrepreneurship@DU and other Centers of Excellence

This session highlights how Entrepreneurship@DU and Daniels Centers of Excellence create experiential learning ecosystems that enable students to design careers and lives of purpose. Through applied research, industry partnerships, and venture-based learning, students engage in real-world problem solving while developing identity, direction, and impact. We showcase integrated models – from innovation labs to community-based ventures – that connect intellectual growth, mentorship, and experience. Attendees will gain insight into scalable approaches for embedding purpose into curricular and co-curricular design, positioning higher education as a catalyst for meaningful careers and societal contribution in a rapidly evolving economic and technological landscape.

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Molly Smith, PhD, Teaching Assistant Professor, PSC

This session shares how structured reflection in a leadership development course can make the 4D Experience more visible, memorable, and meaningful for students. By inviting learners to connect course concepts with the Four Dimensions, we help them "see" growth and development that might otherwise remain invisible. This session will highlight themes from students' end-of-term reflections and final leadership development plans, including how they connected course experiences, materials, and assignments to the 4D framework and their personal and professional growth. Participants will leave with simple, adaptable reflection prompts that can catalyze deeper, more intentional 4D-aligned learning in any course.

Purposeful Pathways to Higher Ed**CCOM Gallery***Panel Discussion*

Presenter(s):

Tamara White, PhD, Associate Dean of Students

Shana Alston, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Housing and Residential Education

Amber Cardamone, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement

Eric Hartman, Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, Risk Management

Darin Stewart, PhD, Professor of Higher Education

What inspires people to dedicate their careers to higher education, and what sustains that purpose over time? This panel brings together educators and leaders whose work is rooted in deep commitment to student success. Through personal stories and candid reflection, panelists will share what first drew them to the field, how they've continued to cultivate meaning in their roles, how clarity of purpose informs the ways they support, mentor, and inspire students. Attendees will leave with new insights into purposeful pathways in higher ed and the educators and professionals who shape our campus.

Block 6: Concurrent Sessions | 2:30-3:20 pm

4D Infusion Grant Popcorn Presentations

CCOM 1700

Popcorn Presentations

Infusion Grant Recipients:

Megan Chambers, Associate Director,
Graduate Career and Professional
Development

Christy Cobb, PhD, Associate Professor of
Christianity, Religious Studies

Stefan DuBois, Teaching Assistant Professor
of Spanish

Erika N. Trigos Rubio, Teaching Professor,
Geography

Katie Runkel, Director of Student Success,
Daniels College of Business

Alison McCarty, Senior Director of Career
Services, Daniels College of Business

Ellen Winiarczyk, EdD, Teaching Associate
Professor, College of Professional Studies

Jackie Jordan-Davis, MBA, Executive Coach,
College of Professional Studies

This session features 4D Infusion Grant recipients and their projects dedicated to cultivating character in DU undergraduate and/or graduate students. In line with the 4D Experience, projects elevate character to enhance students' life-long learning, engagement, and thriving across curricular and/or co-curricular environments.

Partners in Purpose: Student-Faculty Collaboration for Meaningful Impact

CCOM Gallery

Panel Discussion

Presenter(s):

Virginia Pitts, PhD, Director of University Teaching, Office of Teaching and Learning

Genesis Cabrera, Senior in Environmental Science

Heather Martin, PhD, Teaching Professor of Writing

Pras Sapkota, Graduate Student in Business Information Analytics

Rocio Rubio Moiron, PhD, Teaching Assistant Professor of Spanish

In DU's Student-Faculty Partnership Program, students and faculty work as partners in exploring how we can create more engaging, inclusive learning environments for our students. This program is premised on the idea that students and faculty members can learn much from each other regarding the experience of teaching and learning, and that it is through dialogue and sharing different perspectives that this learning can occur. Student and faculty panelists will share what they learned through this experience about themselves, each other, and the impact they can have, and reflect on how this experience fostered a sense of individual and shared purpose.

Playing with Purpose: DU's Play Fellows in Action

CCOM 1600

Innovation Session

Presenter(s):

Mia Sundstrom

Student Play Fellows

What happens when six students are handed a budget, a bold idea, and permission to make strangers play? This spring, DU's inaugural Play Fellows found out. Each fellow designed and launched an original play pop-up in a public campus space as a way to activate joy and community for their peers on campus. And here's the twist: those pop-ups are happening today, right now, as the 4D Symposium unfolds. In 20 minutes, hear directly from the students behind the experiences: what they built, what surprised them, and what the data is already revealing about play, well-being, and connection at DU.

Living Unscripted

CCOM 2600

Workshop

Presenter(s):

Justin Stoeckle, MEd, Associate Director of Wellness and Prevention, Health Promotion

Social scripts strongly influence college students' experiences and the expectations they feel. This session will highlight how Thrive Health Promotion is implementing the Unscripted campaign from Futures Without Violence and why challenging social scripts matters for student development. Participants will understand the various social scripts that college students might face, and ways they can support students as they navigate social pressures and expectations. By "ditching the script," students can live more authentically, make intentional choices, and connect more deeply with their purpose.

4D Faculty Teaching Fellows Showcase and Reception | 4-5 pm

Community Commons Fourth Story

This community reception features the 4D Faculty Teaching Fellows and their work as activators and ambassadors who advance practices that not only support faculty across lines in their respective colleges/schools/programs but also holistic student development in line with the 4D Experience.