

# Korbel 2030

## *Meeting the Moment*

A Strategic Vision for  
The Josef Korbel School of  
Global and Public Affairs



Josef Korbel School of  
Global and Public Affairs  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER







## A New Name for an Enduring Legacy

As a centerpiece of **Korbel 2030**, we have renamed ourselves the **Josef Korbel School of Global and Public Affairs** to better represent our mission and vision.

The new name reflects the continued evolution of the Korbel School from our origins as primarily a PhD-granting institution focused on producing future international relations scholars to a policy-oriented professional school that trains practitioners to work on all levels from global to local, and a liberal arts undergraduate program that prepares future citizens for engagement in public life. The change will be helpful in signaling who we are today to prospective students, academic leaders, policy makers, and the broader public.



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# Introduction

As we plan for the future of the Korbel School, the only thing that seems certain is that these will be uncertain times, filled with challenges abroad and at home. The liberal international order devised in the wake of the Second World War, imperfect and incomplete as it was, appears to be on its last legs. What will emerge may well be less open, less rules-based, less democratic, and less favorable to the United States. Here at home, this nation is embroiled in a bitter contest between radically different views about both the means and the ends of government, a contest that threatens to fracture the polity and challenge its democracy and the Constitution.



How should we at the Korbel School meet this moment? A starting point is staying true to our values and our heritage and being creative in their application to the imperatives of today. We occupy a unique niche in the pantheon of schools of international and public affairs. From our beginning, we have worked on the great issues of global affairs: democracy and human rights, peace and security, and shared economic prosperity and quality of life. Our location in Colorado has always enabled a critical distance from the breathless day-to-day of Washington or other world capitals and a welcoming environment for pragmatic problem solving. And with the addition of the public policy program, we now actively address issues on scales from global to local.

Our legacy is a great asset at this moment, as are the strength of our faculty and the quality and commitment of our staff. Our relatively small size means we can and do engage with each other across disciplinary lines. Our culture encourages and supports problem-oriented research and policy relevance. We are embedded in an institution that embraces being a private university for the public good. All of this underlies the remarkably high reputation of the



Korbel School among our peers. But, as we plan for the immediate future, we also need to recognize the constraints within which we operate, among them a considerably less resource abundant university setting than our peers, our relatively small size for our scope, and an uncertain market for global affairs and public policy training that could impact us more than others.

This document offers a strategic vision for the Korbel School for the next five years, a vision that is true to our history and values, and responsive

to the moment in which we find ourselves. It is intended to provide useful guidance to inform our decision making in the coming years, ambitious in its aims, but pragmatic in its recommendations. The vision laid out here represents the culmination of a year-long conversation among the faculty and staff of the Korbel School. It is a testament to the commitment of the Korbel community that so many engaged in the effort. I am particularly grateful to the faculty and staff co-chairs of our working groups on academic programs, faculty and research, marketing and communications, and the character of our community.

*Dean Fritz Mayes*



# Our Mission

**To educate effective, ethical, public-minded professionals and citizens for lives and careers of purpose, advancing the public good in all sectors of society.**

**To produce scholarship of exceptional quality, integrity, and relevance that addresses major societal issues.**

**To inform and engage effectively and responsibly with stakeholders in government, business, civil society and broader publics in Colorado, the nation, and the world.**



# Our Vision

**In 2030, the Korbel School is among the best schools of international and public affairs in the world, known for:**

**Extraordinary teaching, mentoring, and student support**—Our elite faculty teaches small classes that integrate innovative theoretical frameworks with robust analytic and communication skills and equip students with tools to serve them for a lifetime. Our student affairs and career services staff provide unmatched student support.

**Impactful research that challenges conventional thinking**—Our faculty generate outstanding research that impacts both scholarly discourse and public understanding on the great issues of our time.

**Deep engagement with practitioners and publics**—Our engagement as scholars, teachers, and administrators reflects both our commitment to inform policy makers and publics and, equally, our recognition that these interactions improve both our teaching and our research.

**Inclusive, vibrant, supportive community**—We are a community that celebrates diversity, in which all feel welcome, respected and supported, and in which we share a common commitment to academic freedom and respectful exchange.

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**The objective of this document is to provide strategic guidance, consistent with our mission and values, that will enable us to realize our vision of the school we seek to be.**

**It is organized into five sections.**

- Academic Programs
- Research
- Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Faculty and Staff
- Marketing, Communication, and Public Events
- Building Community

Each section provides a set of goals and possible actions to achieve them.

**Example:**

**Goal #4:**  
***Enhance Student Support***

# I. Academic Programs

In 2030, we will be offering world-class undergraduate, master's and PhD degree programs, as well as certificate and other micro-credential programs, all of which are well-positioned to meet student demand, enjoy a very high degree of student satisfaction, and prepare students for careers of purpose. Academic programs will continue to be characterized by an unrivaled faculty commitment to teaching and mentoring, a highly flexible curriculum, and outstanding student support services.





## Goals and Possible Strategies

### ***Goal #1: Offer world class professional master's programs aligned with Korbel's mission and distinctive strengths, market demand, and career pathways.***

We offer excellent professional master's programs that are ranked among the world's best. To maintain our strong reputation and remain competitive for top graduate students, the Korbel School must continue adapting to a rapidly changing market. As a relatively small school compared with our peer competitors, we need to be strategic about the menu of programs we offer to ensure quality, appeal to prospective students, and value to future employers.

- Conduct or commission a comprehensive assessment of our master's and certificate programs to better align with Korbel's mission and distinctive strengths, market demand, and career pathways.
- Continue fostering small classes and high levels of student engagement, supported by dedicated faculty and support staff.
- Expand skills training based on market demand, with particular attention to rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Consider skills certifications in the form of badges or other recognitions.
- Deepen experiential learning opportunities through simulations, lab courses, practicums, and capstone projects.
- Strengthen connections between academic programs and career pathways, including exploring possibilities for co-op programs.
- Provide a robust cohort-building experience (through Great Issues or another vehicle) that includes all graduate students (MA and MPP), creates shared knowledge among students, and generates respect among the many degree programs through mutual exposure.
- Explore increasing course offerings during the interterm, summer, and weekends, as well as expanding online options to provide greater flexibility.
- Explore demand for joint degree programs and develop such programs when evidence supports their value and sustainability.
- Deepen international partnerships to maximize learning opportunities for our master's students and to increase the number of international students attending Korbel.
- Evaluate the JumpStart program and modify it if necessary to make completion of a combined BA and MA (or MPP) degree in five years more feasible.
- Obtain certification of our MPP program from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA).

# I. Academic Programs

## ***Goal #2: Strengthen and Expand Undergraduate Programs***

Korbel School undergraduate programs are co-equal in importance with its graduate programs. Recently ranked 20th nationally for undergraduate programs in international affairs, we consistently earn outstanding student evaluations, attract the brightest students on campus, and maintain the highest retention rate of any undergraduate program on DU's campus. However, we have had declining enrollments over the past few years, which not only threaten the quality of the major but also have significant financial implications. To sustain our high ranking and grow revenues, we will need to attract more students to both international affairs (INTS) and public policy (PPOL) undergraduate programs.

- Evaluate the INTS major and its course offerings to make both more legible and appealing to prospective students as they decide whether to matriculate at DU and what major(s) to declare.
- Strengthen and grow the PPOL undergraduate program as a first or second major, or as a minor.
- Define undergraduate pathways through robust concentration options in both INTS and PPOL.
- Develop courses likely to attract significant numbers of non-majors on topics of broad general interest. This could include additional F-Sems, Honors courses, or A-Sems in addition to larger courses on hot topics such as climate change, AI and international affairs, and the like.
- Foster a stronger sense of community and connection to Korbel among our undergraduate majors by increasing both social and academic events specifically for undergraduates.

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## ***Goal #3: Consider Developing Mid-Career and/or Executive Degree and Certificate Programs that are Net-Revenue Generating***

Although we currently have a high number of degree and certificate programs, we need to evaluate whether there are opportunities for net-revenue-generating new programs.

- Evaluate market demand for a mid-career master's program or programs.
- Open current certificate programs to non-degree seeking students.
- Explore demand for new certificate and micro-credential programs for DU master's students and mid-career professionals.

## **Goal #4: Enhance Student Support**

One of the hallmarks of the Korbel School is the quality and level of student support we offer at both the graduate and undergraduate level through the Office of Career and Professional Development and Student Services Office. We do this notwithstanding our limited staffing and significant resource constraints. It will be important to maintain at least the current level of student support despite the increasingly austere financial situation of the University.

- If possible, restore lost capacity in Student Services for both undergraduate and graduate programs, including support for international students.

- Add capacity in Career Services to serve undergraduate students and, possibly, to manage future co-op and other career pathways programs.
- Create better and more opportunities for current students to engage with recent alumni.
- To enhance faculty-student engagement, provide faculty members with greater incentives for advising and mentoring students, including opportunities to engage over meals or outings with students.

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## **Goal #5: Relaunch a PhD Program**

Because our PhD program as previously structured did not adequately support students and because the University's budget model made the provision of adequate support financially impossible, we suspended our PhD program in 2023. It would be highly desirable to relaunch it if we can find a sustainable financial model. A PhD program would enhance the intellectual life of the school, strengthen our research efforts, and likely help attract master's students who might be interested in continuing into a PhD program.

- Develop a sustainable financial model that adequately supports PhD students. This may involve a mix of students with tuition funded by governments or other parties.

- Structure the degree requirements so that the degree can be completed in three or four years for students focused on positions in government agencies, think tanks and multilateral institutions, and build a reputation for Korbel's PhD program as a pipeline into non-academic research careers.
- Attract students dedicated to the Korbel mission of conducting impactful research that challenges conventional thinking.
- Ensure a sufficient cohort to create community among doctoral students.
- Provide administrative and career services support for PhD students.



## II. Research

Research is at the core of what we do at the Korbel School. The reputation of our faculty and the impact of its scholarship contribute significantly to the high regard with which we are held by our peers. We have developed a particular identity around multi-disciplinary, engaged scholarship that drives conversations and speaks to big questions on scales from global to local. In 2030, Korbel will be known for producing high-quality, problem-oriented, policy-relevant research that engages academics, policy practitioners, and the public; advancing inclusive and ethical research practices that engage Korbel students and staff; and delivering innovative, forward-looking expertise to the next generation of researchers and practitioners.



## **Goals and Possible Strategies**

### ***Goal #1: Foster an environment that supports problem-oriented, policy-relevant research, drives important conversations, and values different forms of knowledge production and exchange.***

- Center research as a core element of the Korbel School's identity, both internally and externally.
- Support greater research collaboration and cross-pollination across Korbel's faculty, centers and institutes, and faculty from across campus through both structured and informal dialogue.
- Develop new partnerships and bolster existing partnerships with other schools and universities, including through visiting lecturers at Korbel and at partner institutions.
- Broaden efforts to secure substantial research funding that brings together members of the Korbel community and connects them to scholars and practitioners around the world.
- Develop and sustain curricular options that emphasize research geared toward addressing contemporary challenges.
- Strengthen linkages between tenure and teaching/clinical/professional faculty to enhance integration of research and teaching.

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### ***Goal #2: Increase Financial and Administrative Support for Research***

Although the Korbel faculty is highly productive, our research effort is underfunded relative to many (if not most) of our competitors. If we are to attract and retain outstanding faculty researchers, we will need to find ways to increase the research support available to them.

- Increase and diversify internal research funding to ensure timely support on research opportunities that advance the Korbel vision and mission.
- Support staff efforts to bolster Korbel's research profile both internally and externally.
- Create a more streamlined grant-seeking and grant support process, including through more shared resources within Korbel and greater autonomy from ORSP.
- Provide professional development opportunities to elevate the ability of faculty, staff, and students to secure research funding and conduct innovative research.

## II. Research

### **Goal #3: *Strengthen Korbel's Research Institutes and Centers***

Korbel's institutes and centers are important to our research mission and for the research reputation of the School, and increased resources are needed to fully realize their impact. We seek to expand center and institute resources and support, elevate their research profiles, and bolster the public events that are an important part of their mission.

- Secure greater core funding for centers and institutes to build research programs.
- Build the modeling and research capabilities of the Pardee Institute and more fully integrate it into the intellectual life of the Korbel School.
- Enhance the reach of the regionally focused research of our faculty and area centers.
- Foreground research opportunities for students in marketing and recruitment.
- Sponsor dedicated institute and center seminar series that promote scholarly exchange among researchers.

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### **Goal #4: *Better Publicize and Disseminate Korbel Research***

We have recently made considerable strides in promoting Korbel's research output, but there are opportunities to do more to share the work that is happening at the school.

- Give greater emphasis to Korbel's research in our marketing and communications.
- Integrate Korbel School research into co-curricular and community-facing programs, including more public events that feature faculty research.
- Increase support for book workshops and increase the visibility of scholarly publications by financially supporting open access dissemination.





# III. Faculty and Staff

The heart of the school is our people: our faculty and staff, who are talented, dedicated, and mission-driven. In the next five years it will be imperative to maintain that strength by recruiting, retaining and supporting our faculty and our staff.



## **Goals and Possible Strategies**

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### ***Goal #1: Maintain, Strengthen, and Support a Diverse, Inclusive, and Agile Research Faculty***

The quality and reputation of our tenure-line faculty is one the Korbel School's greatest assets, responsible in large measure for the high regard in which we are held by our peers. However, it is likely that several distinguished scholars will retire within the next five years. Our ability to remain an elite school of international and public affairs will depend critically on whether we can recruit their successors.

- Recruit faculty members at both junior and senior ranks with diverse backgrounds, research specialties, and pedagogical approaches. Faculty should

aspire to be leaders in their fields who are eager to learn from colleagues, engage with practitioners on real-world issues, and develop creative ways to translate their expertise into educational programming and public action.

- Foster a highly supportive and collegial environment, particularly for junior faculty on the tenure track.
- Increase research support, including both internal grants and support for securing external funding (SEE RESEARCH SECTION ON PAGE 12).

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### ***Goal #2: Recruit and Retain Superb Teaching, Clinical and Practitioner Faculty***

The quality of our students' experience depends heavily on the quality of our teaching, clinical, and "of the practice" professors (henceforward "teaching faculty"). We currently have an excellent cohort. At a time of financial cutbacks at the University, however, it will be important to maintain an optimal balance between teaching faculty and tenure line faculty.

- Consider teaching needs in faculty hiring, balancing between tenure lines and those more focused on teaching.

- Expand internal support for the practice of teaching by establishing a regular colloquium on teaching innovation.
- Expand opportunities for non-tenure line faculty to conduct research.
- Provide greater professional development opportunities for teaching faculty.



### III. Faculty and Staff

### Goal #3: *Maintain Best-in-Class Staff*

The staff of the Korbel School are crucial to all we do. We are fortunate to have an excellent staff across all our operations: career and student services, enrollment, marketing and communications, research and events support, budget and finance, and institutes and centers. The demands on staff, however, are considerable, and DU's low level of compensation and campus-wide cutbacks threaten our ability to maintain that quality.

- Provide competitive compensation for Korbel staff.

- Involve staff members in school governance and decision making.
- Help the faculty better understand the work done by staff.
- Recognize staff accomplishments along with those of the faculty.
- Increase staff professional development opportunities.





# IV. Marketing, Communications, and Public Events

Effective marketing, communications, and public events are essential for recruiting students, establishing the school's reputation, and having an impact on public affairs. In the past few years, we have made great strides in strengthening our efforts, including notably by building a new website. In 2030, our outstanding marketing, communications, and public events will effectively tell the Korbel School story to prospective students, peers at other institutions, public officials, other societal stakeholders and the wider public, helping us recruit students, accentuate the impact of our scholarship, and enhance our international reputation. Our internal communications will be timely, effective, and facilitate community building.



# IV. Marketing, Communications, and Public Events

## Goals and Possible Strategies

### ***Goal #1: Improve External Communication to Raise the Profile of the Korbel School***

The Korbel School has significant opportunities to expand its public visibility. Recently, we have been improving our communications and can continue to do so, but given our dependence on tuition revenue, we need to invest more.

- Refine Korbel’s “brand” to more clearly articulate what makes the Korbel School distinctive, grounded in our history, people, programs, and location.
- Develop a structured content strategy for the website, newsletters, and social media to improve information dissemination targeted to key audience groups.
- Align institute and center communications with the core Korbel School narrative.
- Provide faculty and staff with training and resources for media engagement to amplify their expertise.

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### ***Goal #2: Develop Best-in-class Marketing to Meet Graduate Enrollment Goals***

Marketing to prospective graduate students is perhaps the most essential task of our marketing, communications and enrollment team. Notwithstanding the improvements we have made, we remain deeply underinvested in marketing, with considerable opportunity to invest more.

- Significantly increase visibility and reach through targeted, tested, and data-driven advertising and other marketing strategies.
- Maintain and improve our state-of-the-art website.
- Develop a year-long marketing calendar to guide outreach based on the higher-ed cycle.
- Substantially increase targeted advertising to industry standard cost per acquisition.
- Provide market analysis for possible new master’s and other graduate and executive training programs.
- Leverage international partnerships, particularly in growth markets, to attract more international students to our master’s programs.

### ***Goal #3: Strengthen and Expand Undergraduate Programs***

Given the new DU budget model, undergraduate enrollment is vital for the financial stability of the Korbel School. We have excellent programs, but our number of majors and class enrollments has been decreasing in the INTS major. We will need to recruit more students to DU with interests in international affairs and public policy, while also attracting more current, undeclared students to Korbel.

- Work with the University's Undergraduate Admissions Office to promote Korbel to prospective students, beginning early in the search and application process and continuing through matriculation.
- Strengthen marketing to undecided DU students.

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### ***Goal #4: Maximize the Impact of Public Events***

Public events are an essential part of our mission, providing forums to educate the DU community and wider publics, enhance our reputation, and supplement our marketing efforts. Given limited resources, however, we need to maximize the impact of those events.

- Emphasize high-profile, signature events in priority areas consistent with Korbel's brand.
- Position Korbel School events as dynamic platforms for intellectual engagement.
- Develop unique event formats that encourage discussion, debate, and diverse perspectives.
- Streamline and improve event support procedures and services. This includes developing an event planning manual with templates and best practices.
- Research what improves attendance and builds diverse audiences and implement those strategies to best meet event goals.

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### ***Goal #5: Improve Internal Communication to Faculty, Staff, and Students***

- Create more effective internal communication platforms to enhance coordination among faculty, staff, and students and to foster a sense of community.
- Provide guidance and templates for institutes, centers, and faculty to align their messaging with Korbel's brand while providing support for their distinctive work.
- Improve transparency in decisions for faculty and staff through regular updates and engagement.



# V. Community

In 2030, we will be a community with a shared sense of mission that is inclusive of all and celebrates diverse lived experiences and perspectives, in which faculty, staff, and students treat each other with respect, kindness, and civility. Our community extends beyond the halls of the Korbel School to guests, alumni, friends, community partners, donors, volunteers, parents, and families.



## **Goals and Possible Strategies**

### ***Goal #1: Support Academic Freedom and Free Expression by Faculty, Staff, and Students***

Academic freedom and free expression are core values of the Korbel School that we need to champion and defend.

- Commit firmly and publicly to protecting academic freedom and, to the extent of our ability, assuring that those researching, teaching, or speaking on contentious issues will not face retaliation.
  - Further support academic freedom by giving visibility to all work, even that which may be considered contentious, through outreach, marketing, and when appropriate, event promotion.
  - Given the lower levels of job protection and fears of retaliation for staff and students, provide more opportunities for them to give anonymous input on sensitive matters.
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### ***Goal #2: Maintain a Strong and Visible Commitment to an Inclusive Community***

At a time when many programs intended to foster greater sense of inclusion and belonging are under attack, it is imperative that we remain committed to that goal.

- Publicly reinforce our commitment to fostering an inclusive community.
- Maintain current level of staff support for those efforts.
- Support students from diverse demographic groups, including students struggling to afford sufficient food and housing.
- Improve the accessibility of all communications and course materials.

## V. Community

### **Goal #3: *Promote Inclusive and Participatory Decision-making***

Our efforts to be inclusive should extend to decision making within the School, providing opportunities for all in our community to have a voice.

- Ensure that Korbel faculty and staff share in setting Korbel School goals through

our faculty and staff councils and by soliciting a wide range of input on key decisions.

- Strengthen relationships between staff and faculty through more regular communication and community-building events.

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### **Goal #4: *Improve Students' Sense of Belonging to and Identification with Korbel***

Student affinity to the Korbel School is important for student recruiting, retention, and engagement.

- Invest in more social events such as receptions, watch parties, and game nights that allow students to get to know one another and to build affinity with the school, including among our undergraduate majors.
- Support a greater role for the Korbel student government in the orientation program to engage student interest at the outset.

- Leverage the curriculum for students to meet and connect with one another through group projects, field trips, and off-campus retreats.
- Build community in the Great Issues course more intentionally and explore opportunities for second year students to engage in shared learnings and experiences.
- Strengthen our capacity to facilitate student-to-student interactions through direct teaching of how to listen and engage with others who think differently than oneself.





## V. Community

### **Goal #5: *Strengthen Korbel's Engagement within Denver & the Mountain West***

As an institution shaped by the Mountain West, we seek to connect with communities in Denver, Colorado and beyond, both to strengthen these communities and to be an asset to them.

- Cultivate strong relationships with policymakers and stakeholders in the region.
- Strengthen alumni engagement, including via unique engagement opportunities for

Korbel alumni from sub-communities such as the Sie Fellows, MPP cohorts, the International Career Advancement Program, and more.

- Recognize and support faculty, staff, and students who work with community partners in the Denver metro area and beyond.

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### **Goal #6: *Make Additional Building Improvements***

The space in which we work should remind us of our mission, values, and vision and enhance our ability to engage with each other.

- Continue to improve the Cherrington Commons as the school's "living room" by improving food options, adding art and exhibits that reference the work of the school, and other means.

- Similarly, include more art and exhibits throughout our buildings that reflect our values and remind us of our mission.
- Renovate the Cherrington Building, improving the East entrance, and providing better space for faculty.







Visit [korbel.du.edu](http://korbel.du.edu)



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