Thank you to President Trevino and all of Legislative Council for working with us to accommodate our Fall 2015 State of the Student Body Address into tonight’s Legislative Council meeting.

Thank you also to everyone who supports the work of our government: our cost center directors, staff and joint board members, 20 Executive Staff, two professional staff, and countless student employees and staff spread throughout all of our cost centers.

At this point in our terms as CU Student Government (CUSG) Tri-Executives, we have a little less than seven months under our belt and a little more than five months to go. In that time, we’ve been blessed to have the opportunity to realize some of our policy ideas as well as create the kind of path moving forward that CUSG deserves and that students rightfully expect from us.

This year, we lobbied on behalf of the UMC Board for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Housing and Dining Services over the transfer of UMC Food Services. This document isn’t perfect, but it provides the strongest possible foundation for making sure student voices, and concerns around sustainability in food production are addressed.

After learning about the issue, CUSG passed a resolution to address the serious public health concerns around Meningitis B, an issue that CUSG helped raise the dialogue on by bringing it to the attention of national immunization experts at the Center for Disease Control.

We hired a Historian as part of our Executive Staff and prioritized the recording of our history as a student government. We hope that the collected and analyzed wealth of historical knowledge of CU’s student government will come to serve as a primary tool of future students to access, celebrate, and learn about our shared history as Buffs.

We attended the PAC-12 Leadership Conference at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and decided with our counterparts from across the PAC-12 that we would take tangible steps to address issues related to sexual assault on campus and mental health. In keeping with that pledge, we finished a successful Movember campaign to address stigmas around mens’ mental health and began to organize around sexual assault on campus.

The three of us brought together different areas of CUSG in order to collectively do a significant amount of outreach during Election Week. Our Executive Staff tabled in areas across campus. Areas of CUSG including SOAC and Freshman Council chalked in dozens of locations. CUSG created a viral guerrilla marketing campaign using clothespins, and published stories in our campus publication several times.

Voter turnout was low, 3.75%. We know the task of creating a culture where students want to vote and want to be involved in their student government is a task that will outlive us and the next Tri-Executives and the Executives after them. Creating that culture is important, and it is something we should all aspire to do. CUSG passed the most comprehensive outreach bill in recent memory, and we will continue to lead inclusive outreach efforts in order to help create an active and engaged culture on campus.

Relating to outreach, we brought together cost center directors and joint board chairs for the first meetings they’ve had as groups in years in order to help make the budget process easier for them moving forward.

We signed an MOU to establish a zero-waste initiative across campus as well as a Zero Waste Board of Directors that will be tasked with keeping all of us accountable for the goals we make around reaching zero waste at CU. Related to sustainability, we also attended the grand opening of our new recycling center, an exciting new
endeavor students and CUSG have been at the forefront of.

CUSG led one of the most involved homecomings in recent memory. Though we lost our homecoming game against the University of Arizona, the community came out and celebrated its Buff pride by hosting the homecoming parade on Pearl Street. CUSG also supported engaging campus events such as the MGC Yard Show and Radical Something in Balch Fieldhouse, which we co-hosted with Program Council.

CUSG hosted the university’s official debate watch party during the Republican presidential primary debate. With over 770 people in attendance, it was one of the largest events CUSG Proper has run in recent memory. During this event, CUSG invited media from all over the state and around the world to join us, and they did. NBC Universal sponsored the event with food and graphics design support.

Our partners at NBC Universal and the New York Times supported the event with merchandise to give out. The work done to support this event was a model example of how well a good team can work, with Strategic Relations, the UMC and its Events, Planning, and Catering office, the Center for Student Involvement, and CUSG coming together to give students a lively environment to enjoy on Debate Day.

We prioritized the revival of the Appellate Court, supporting the Chief Justice by quickly nominating Justices to the Court who were intelligent, qualified, and dedicated to constitutional principles. We believe the Appellate Court, with changes it has enacted, will bring new life and active participation in CUSG through careful reviews of CUSG actions through a constitutional lens.

As busy as CUSG has been, we have not addressed every issue students have raised nor have we addressed every issue CUSG must deal with in order to position itself as a strong, autonomous body moving forward. There remains before us all great work to be done, and the spring semester provides us no respite from it.

Together, CUSG can set a new and honorable standard for how it ought to be run. If we all pitch in as one team working together, we can use the spring semester to address the serious challenges before us, because we must do more. We certainly intend to use the remainder of our term to elevate the dialogue on as many issues as we can.

First and foremost, we have to protect our own autonomy when it comes to decision-making and financial management. What that requires of us all is an effective, transparent set of policies and guidelines that allows us to conduct business efficiently while also allowing for mechanisms that ensure all of those processes are transparent and openly critiqued. We firmly believe we can advance this most important cause over the next semester with the help of Legislative Council, Finance Board, and our student body.

Last year, University Libraries launched CU’s open access repository, allowing CU to prominently join an international movement to make research and other scholarly work available to the public for free. CUSG is supporting this effort by helping to implement the campus-wide open access policy that gives CU and the global academic community the ability to review the scholarly work of our faculty and researchers.

In the spring, we will make necessary changes in various bylaws and other binding documents in CUSG in order to make sure we create the most effective governing structure possible while holding it all up for transparency and scrutiny.

Our student union is severely deficient in student art showcased around the building compared to many of our peer institutions. CU ought to be a leader in that field, and CUSG’s role in that is clear. This spring, we will pilot a public arts program in collaboration with the Art & Art History Department, the Technology, Arts, and Media Program, the UMC Board, and other project partners. This program will bring together intersectional communities on campus and connect them in a way that seeds creative expression through the development of student works of art.

Building on the results produced from last year’s social climate surveys, CUSG is leading efforts to address concerns raised in them. For example, the survey revealed that the accuracy of information that incoming graduate students receive seems to significantly impact their experience here at CU. So, we are working with the Graduate School to make sure all graduate students receive thorough information on funding and graduation rates in a standard format.

By the time we leave office, we will follow through with a plan for returning our student government’s historical
archives back to their rightful home in University Archives at Norlin Library. In their place are new regulations aimed at protecting those archives and encouraging the collection of records from current years for our archives.

Students at CU are very likely to be targeted by the predatory practice of preleasing, which is when tenants are either given the opportunity or pressured to sign a lease early in the fall for the next fall. This practice hurts the most vulnerable students, and we will continue our efforts to work with City Council to enact an ordinance in the spring that not only protects students from preleasing, but addresses other issues students have raised around housing in Boulder for years.

In the spring, we will continue to work to create a network of dentists in the Boulder area that will provide reliable and affordable dental care options to CU students, most of whom on the Gold Plan do not have separate dental insurance already.

Recently, we released a statement listing nine clear actions the three of us would commit ourselves to undertaking in order to advocate more effectively on behalf of students of color. We have made progress on many of these actions, and will make progress on all of them during the spring semester.

The brash of gun violence in communities around the country is unfortunate and reprehensible. Gun violence affects our students in communities they live in both here in Boulder and elsewhere, and we must act on their behalf. We offer our prayers and well wishes to families in San Bernardino, in Colorado Springs, and in the 353 other locations where a mass shooting has occurred in the United States this year alone, but prayers alone don’t solve the issue. Enough is enough. Whether it’s supporting stricter gun safety legislation at the state or federal level, the three of us will continue to advocate on behalf of policies that keep our students

We will also push for a statewide sexual assault task force, a citizen review board to review cases of police brutality, automatic voter registration laws, phased wage increases for low-wage employees, and increased funding for higher ed.

CUSG is committed to gender-inclusive housing on this campus, and will continue to be a prominent player in the process of making all residence halls on campus gender-inclusive because students have repeatedly told us they want it, but also because it is the right thing to do.

In an effort to improve the affordability of a CU degree, we will lobby for an increase in free online textbooks and other low-cost education materials such as those offered through the CUSG-supported access to the New York Times for students.

Our student government is strong and the state of the student body is strong. Looking forward, we don’t have any doubts about that being the case, but it’s up to us. CU Student Government got to be as large and powerful as it is because students were passionate about the work we did, and we were passionate about engaging them in that work. We have to continue to find ways to advocate for students in partnership and allyship with them. We have to continue seeking ways to create regular and meaningful ties with students and student groups based on their interests and concerns.

If we can all come together and continue to build a stronger student government more knowledgeable and capable of dealing with issues that arise, we can do great things. We’re excited about all of the opportunities for hard work in the spring semester, and hope to have your support.

Thank you.