Positive forces at CU and beyond: Four honored with Service Excellence Awards[1]
[2]

Four University of Colorado staff members were honored on Friday for their contributions to the university and their communities during a luncheon ceremony, hosted by the University of Colorado Staff Council, which sponsors and selects the winners of the Service Excellence Awards.

The honorees – one each from CU Boulder, UCCS, CU Denver l Anschutz and system administration – received a plaque and a $1,000 award at the All Staff Conference event in Boulder.

Those recognized for exemplary service were:

Gaylynne von der Nuell | CU Boulder
Employee development coordinator in Housing and Dining Services
[3]

Von der Nuell's nomination letter described her as an "amazing employee, coworker and proud CU Boulder campus member." Her nominator, Nola Salisbury, manager of program and events in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, wrote that "she always is trying to streamline and help employees. She is fluent in Spanish (although sometimes she is shy) and always finds a way to help anyone … regardless of her workload and her other responsibilities."

Von der Nuell's job duties are many, but some include assisting with employee professional and personal growth through the coordination of training opportunities and development needs, employee recognition and staff appreciation. She also conducts the New Employee Orientation for newcomers to the department, a process that is invaluable to helping staff feel welcomed and part of a large, distributed and diverse team.

Her service to the university and the Boulder campus includes volunteer work with the Diversity and Inclusion Summit Planning Committee. One of her biggest strengths, said her nominator, is the way she advocates for her staff. Von der Nuell has helped educate committee members about the unique working environment of the staff, which is accountable on a minute-by-minute basis, and about the many different cultural layers that employees and work teams deal with on a daily basis.

She led colleagues in creating a session where people could visit to meet Boulder Staff Council representatives and learn how the council works for staff. She also helped a staff member enroll in an educational program, a time-consuming process because of extenuating circumstances.

In addition, she serves on the Boulder Staff Council, the Strengths Advisory Committee, the Employee Development Team and the HDS (Housing and Dining Services) Front Line Task Force Committee.

She is active in several community organizations, volunteers at her daughter's school by reading in classrooms and joining field trips, and teaches a monthly, hourlong class for her faith-based group. In addition, she and her husband write screenplays, several of which have been honored as quarter finalists in the PAGE International Screenwriting Awards.

"Her calm presence and her quiet confidence are her gifts that allow her to connect to people who don't seek help and who want to stay in the background, yet they are the ones who make the campus run. She is the embodiment of service excellence at the University of Colorado," Salisbury said.

Naomi Nishi | CU Denver
Associate director for Education Outreach, Office of Research Development and Education
[4]

Nishi's expertise in grant development and adult education allow her to understand and meet the needs of a diverse faculty to elevate the university's research position. She designs educational programming for research faculty at the

CU Denver and CU Anschutz Medical campuses and for affiliates to help them be competitive for external research funding via grams. The programming includes seminars, research collaborative initiatives, and grant proposal review services.

She also writes a weekly grant development blog and represents the campuses in the National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP), where she has presented at conferences and served on committees. Last year, she recruited a renowned grant development expert to offer workshops on both campuses, and initiated boutique-style research initiative groups on the Denver Campus to spur collaborative research on topics such as immigration, stress and security. In the fall, she worked with internal scientific and grant writers on the Anschutz Medical Campus to offer a Scientific and Grant Writing Symposium.

Nishi was invited to serve as a staff representative for the Denver campus on the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), an advisory group to the Faculty Council last year. She worked with EMAC and the system LGBTQ+ committee to plan, develop and facilitate the systemwide Diversity Summit on the campus in November. The summit brought speakers from all CU campuses to discuss issues of equity and inclusivity relating to gender, sexuality, and race. She also participates in EMAC's CU policy and statement reviews to offer a perspective related to racial and ethnic equity and inclusion.

As an EMAC representative, she is also part of the CU systemwide Inclusive Excellence Taskforce. The group has been tasked with developing programming and policy for CU's Inclusive Excellence initiative. Nishi has researched the "Making Excellence Inclusive" initiative launched by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), as well as how other higher ed institutions have applied the initiative on their campuses.

In addition, she is a co-founder and leader of the CU Denver-based organization, Research Advocacy in Critical Education (R.A.C.E.). R.A.C.E. was created in 2013 as a space where students, staff, faculty, and community members could come together to discuss and move forward issues of racial justice, including inclusivity and equity. In 2017, R.A.C.E. held a national conference on racial justice at CU Denver and Nishi led the peer-review process for all paper proposals and for the selection of five R.A.C.E. Fellows, who were given a small stipend. She currently is planning and facilitating R.A.C.E. meetings and has taken the lead in applying for grants to fund R.A.C.E.'s spring 2018 event. Nishi also co-authored a paper on R.A.C.E., which she and colleagues presented at the 2017 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference to offer a toolkit to other institutions interested in beginning an organization like R.A.C.E. on their campuses.

Outside of the university, she is a member of the Denver Women Bridging Borders (WBB) organization, which focuses on local social justice issues through learning, action, and service. In 2016, WBB's work included a "Dismantling Whiteness toward Racial Justice" initiative. Nishi developed and facilitated an educational series on whiteness, and this year, is developing another discussion-based educational series on the topic of "Recognizing Oppression: Acknowledging Intersectionality."

In addition, she led a workshop on "Whiteness and How It's Working in Higher Education" for the Higher Education Diversity Summit (HEDS) held on the Auraria Campus in 2017. She developed and delivered a TED talk-style presentation and facilitated a workshop for higher education professionals from across the state.

"As Naomi's supervisor, I've admired her passion as she serves as a professional, a mother of small children, and a selfless social justice advocate in the Denver community. Her commitment and service to her community and higher education are exemplary," wrote Lynette Michael, who nominated Nishi for the award.

Melanie Sidwell | System administration
Senior communications manager, Advancement
[5]

In her position as a senior communications manager for CU Advancement, Sidwell imagines and manages fundraising marketing that connects donors to the CU programs that inspire them. She supports and leads marketing and communications projects, strategies and relationship-building for CU Advancement across all campuses, within central CU units and at the CU Foundation. She writes and edits, manages print and digital projects, develops creative

concepts, fine-tunes logistics and processes, promotes philanthropy's value through various public editorial channels and builds relationships with Advancement partners.

As part of the first Broomfield staff committee, she drafted a budget proposal that was approved by the president's office in 2015. She saw a need to build camaraderie and pride in CU's newest office location. To this day, this funding allows staff to plan employee appreciation events for Broomfield-based staff, said her nominator, Keri Ungemah, senior director of marketing, communications, and strategic initiatives, School of Law.

She earned a CU Employee Leadership and Management certificate in 2017, with classes in leadership, ethics, strategic planning and project management – all while working full-time, being a single parent and starting her master's degree in media studies at CU Boulder. One of her recent media studies projects was chosen by Inside Energy for publication on its website and social media channels.

Outside the university, she has volunteered with Longmont Arts in Public Places, first on a selection panel in 2015 and as a commissioner since 2016. Selected by the City Council, she is part of a group of residents who work to make public art available and accessible to the community. She uses her expertise to help the commission use social media to engage to public, and this year she is part of group partnering with Longmont Police to help prevent graffiti through a mural/street art initiative.

Since 2017, she has volunteered as a mentor with CHOICE, a new state mentoring program that pairs adults with teens who are in foster care through structured monthly activities. This is a way that teens can have a positive adult role model in their lives outside the traditional adoption route. She hopes to be an advocate for foster care teens as they transition into adulthood.

Skyler Rorabaugh | UCCS
Director of campus recreation
[6]

"Skyler works well beyond the average 40 hours a week and still finds time to volunteer with his church, children's sports teams, children's schools, local coalitions, and a national governing body. Skyler believes in giving back through hard work, dedication, and sharing his passion for what he does," wrote Rorabaugh's nominator**,** Stephanie Hanenberg, executive director of Health and Wellness at UCCS.

As director of campus recreation, Rorabaugh is responsible for all Recreation Center programming, including club and intramural sports, aquatics, fitness, outdoor programs and trails, kids programming, large-scale events and wellness initiatives. He has developed a team

with a strong focus on customer satisfaction that routinely uses survey results to rotate equipment options, fitness classes and expand hours. After feedback from his student advisory board, he built a new climbing wall. He also encouraged the new outdoor programs coordinator to expand trip options, which resulted in 100 percent of all trips being sold out and the first ever skydiving trip selling out in less than five minutes. This support for his coordinator is one example of how he supports all of his staff in their creativity to expand services and programs.

He also is responsible for marketing, membership services, budgeting, building management and maintenance, and staff supervision, and manages a $4.6 million budget.

"His passion for what he does drives each of his decisions to provide quality services and programs for students, faculty and staff. He is also a firm believer in being a role model in his area," wrote Hanenberg. He plays on multiple intramural leagues composed of staff and students; plays noon basketball with staff, faculty and students; often goes for a run during his lunch break; and is an active contributor and participant in all student trainings and large-scale events.

He has volunteered to co-facilitate a group of students on campus called the "A-Team," who have great leadership potential and are provided with a development opportunity once a month. Rorabaugh and his co-facilitator are responsible for planning the monthly development opportunities, which consist of visiting other leaders and

departments on campus. The monthly event also has an educational component, which the facilitators create.

“Skyler believes that student development opportunities outside of the classroom are extremely important and are directly responsible for keeping students engaged on campus. These opportunities also provide students with lifelong skills to help them throughout college and all future endeavors,” wrote Hanenberg. His passion for this work has resulted in the creation of numerous opportunities for his student employees, advisory board members, and now this additional group of students. He will also assist with an internship program for the Department of Communications to provide a student a semester of experience in the department.

In addition, he participated in the campus “clean the stream” volunteer project and the Adopt a Family program. Not only did he encourage staff to adopt a UCCS family to support this year, he also encouraged student staff to participate as well. This resulted in the Recreation Center student staff adopting their own family and the entire Recreation and Wellness Center staff being able to adopt two additional families. This project supports UCCS students and staff that need assistance providing gifts and food for their families during the holiday season. He also teaches in the GPS freshmen program to help with student retention and has used that opportunity to expose students to wellness routines that will help them be successful in school.

Outside the university, he is actively involved with many volunteer projects, including through the Austin Bluffs Community Church where he teaches a weekly Boys Club and serves as a deacon on the board of directors. He also is involved with his children’s sports efforts and serves as a volunteer head coach for the Vista Ridge Power Zone Elementary School League and the Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation fast pitch softball.

In addition, he volunteers at his children’s school, especially for events and activities, including the annual Field Day. In the greater Colorado Springs community, he serves on the Trails and Open Space Coalition Board and is an ADT Marathon volunteer. He also is involved with the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA).

Benson Society gala salutes CU’s most generous benefactors[7]
[8]

CU celebrated the inaugural class of its most generous benefactors at a black-tie gala on Saturday.

The Benson Society honors donors who have invested at least $1 million in lifetime giving, and it recognizes President Bruce and Marcy Benson for their personal and professional dedication to philanthropy.

“The Bensons have made a commitment to the culture and importance of philanthropy at CU that has had a transformative impact on our university,” Jack Finlaw, CU Foundation president, said in remarks.

It is CU’s first university-wide giving society that marks philanthropy at the million-dollar level. Its first class is composed of 378 individuals and family foundations. More than 200 guests attended the gala at the Four Seasons in downtown Denver.

“It is the collective nature of your investment, infused through the potent institution that is CU, that provides incredible power,” Finlaw told attendees. “You are smart, savvy investors because you understand so completely how CU is an enterprise of enormous worth.”
[9]

The Benson Society aims to strengthen the dialogue of philanthropy at CU by highlighting the immense societal outcomes benefactors create with their giving. Members invest significantly in each of CU’s four campuses and at the system level across every discipline: academics, medicine, research, athletics, student programs, construction and more.
[10]

Attendees received engraved sterling silver compasses as a gift — to signify their philanthropic adventure with CU — and were treated to a musical performance by iconic singer-songwriter Judy Collins, a former university employee. Actors and musicians, many of them CU graduates, performed an original three-act play that tells the story of CU's philanthropic journey through the years.

Finlaw also announced on Saturday a new endowed chair in President Benson's name that will provide the president's office with the resources to address pressing societal issues today and in the future.

No monthly premium increases in faculty and staff health plans[11]
[12]

Monthly health plan premiums will not increase – zip, zero, zilch – for University of Colorado faculty, staff and regular retirees when the new plan year begins on July 1.

CU faculty, staff and retirees may select their plans during Open Enrollment, from April 23-May 11. Early retirees may see slight increases of a dollar or two in their monthly dental premiums.

"The University of Colorado provides excellent benefits to its employees. The fact that we're able to provide quality benefits coverage with no cost increases for the upcoming plan year is just one example of our commitment to employees," said Felicity O'Herron, chief human resources officer for CU system. "CU gives employees excellent options to choose from, including medical and dental coverage options with no monthly premiums. We encourage employees to learn about their options to make the best choices."

The average national medical and pharmacy increases are estimated at 8 percent for the 2018-19 plan year, according to Aon Hewitt's annual premium trends survey. That includes an average 7 percent increase in medical cost and an 11 percent increase for pharmacy costs.

Aon's survey looks at more than 1,000 employers across a variety of industries, including public universities. The monthly average cost for public university premiums was $81 for employee-only coverage and $136 for family coverage. The average deductible is $1,500 for an individual and $3,000 for families.

CU offers four plan options to its employees, and it makes an 85 percent-90 percent contribution to employees' total health care premium costs, depending on the plan.

CU Health Plan – Exclusive charges $39.50 for individual coverage and $215.50 for families. Its annual deductibles are $250 for individuals and $750 for families of three or more. The Anthem-administered plan lets participants choose from a statewide network for care.

CU Health Plan – Extended's monthly rates are $73 for individual coverage and $291.50 for families. Its annual deductibles for in-network providers are $750 for individuals and $1,500 for families of three or more. The Anthem-administered plan gives employees access to national network of providers.

CU Health Plan – High Deductible charges $0 for individual and $19 for family coverage. Its annual deductibles are $1,500 for individuals and $3,000 for families, in-network. The Anthem-administered gives employees broad access to health care services inside and outside of its national network. Once an employee has met the annual deductible, the plan charges coinsurance for care.

CU Health Plan – Kaiser's monthly rates are $101 for individual coverage and $353.50 for families of three or more. The plan does not have an annual deductible and gives access to providers in Kaiser's network.

Costs for CU's two employee dental plans will remain the same, with CU Health Plan – Essential Dental costing $0 monthly for employee-only coverage and $47.50 for family coverage and CU Health Plan – Choice Dental costing $16

monthly for employee-only coverage and $98.50 for family coverage.

Make the smart calls

Employee Services encourages employees to make smart calls on benefits coverage by reviewing 2018-19 plan changes and rates at www.cu.edu/oe[13]. Full plan details will be available at 8 a.m. April 23. During Open Enrollment, Employee Services campus sessions and carrier fairs will spread the word on the best ways to use your plans to stay healthy and save money.

Employees do not need to take action during Open Enrollment to be re-enrolled in their current medical, dental, vision, disability and life insurance plans. Employees who want a Health Care Flexible Spending Account and the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account must re-enroll.

Aly Raisman reflects on sexual abuse, Olympics [14]

Library receives Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant[15]

The real cost of driving while distracted[16]

Celebrating 10 years and National Public Health Week[17]

TIAA is giving away $1 million in donations to 100 difference makers[18]

To celebrate its 100th anniversary, TIAA is recognizing outstanding individuals who spend their time inspiring others in the nonprofit sector with TIAA Difference Maker 100[19]. They want to honor people who are making a difference through their professional or personal pursuits by sharing stories of how they make an impact.

Until June 12, University of Colorado faculty and staff may nominate themselves or others who work at a nonprofit organization (like CU) and make a positive impact. Here's how it works:
100 recipients will be recognized with a $10,000 donation from TIAA made in their name to the nonprofit organization through which they made a difference. The contest is open to applicants and nominees currently employed at a nonprofit organization. Candidates need not be TIAA customers.
To enter, tell TIAA how the nominee is making a difference. Nominations will ask about the important work completed, its impact and challenges faced. Don't forget to upload either a video or a photo of the nominee.

To be eligible, nominees must work for a not-for-profit organization, but the way the nominee makes a difference can be through work or volunteer efforts. The judges will consider motivation, perseverance, creativity and impact.

Winners will be announced by Oct. 1. Submit nominations here[19].

Carusos give $2 million to support CU Boulder entrepreneurial ecosystem[20]

CU Denver faculty members honored for 25 years of service [21]

Surprise! UCCS staff throw 90th birthday party for Herbst[22]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/positive-forces-cu-and-beyond-four-honored-service-excellence-awards[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/svs-excellence_feat.jpg[3] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/svs-excellence_von-der-nuell.jpg[4] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/svs-excellence_nishi.jpg[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/svs-excellence_sidwell.jpg[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/svs-excellence_rorabaugh.jpg[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/benson-society-gala-salutes-cu-s-most-generous-benefactors[8] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/benson-society_top.jpg[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/benson-society_01.jpg[10] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/benson-society_02.jpg[11] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/no-monthly-premium-increases-faculty-and-staff-health-plans[12] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/oe_top.jpg[13] http://www.cu.edu/oe[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/aly-raisman-reflects-sexual-abuse-olympics[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/library-receives-eisner-graphic-novel-growth-grant[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/real-cost-driving-while-distracted[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/celebrating-10-years-and-national-public-health-week[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/tiaa-giving-away-1-million-donations-100-difference-makers[19] https://www.tiaadifferencemaker100.org/?subscriberid=et_52831381[20] https://connections.cu.edu/people/carusos-give-2-million-support-cu-boulder-entrepreneurial-ecosystem[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-denver-faculty-members-honored-25-years-service[22] https://connections.cu.edu/people/surprise-uccs-staff-throw-90th-birthday-party-herbst