[Two CU-Boulder faculty join ranks of President's Teaching Scholars][1]

The title of President's Teaching Scholar signifies CU's highest recognition of excellence in and commitment to learning and teaching, as well as active, substantial contributions to scholarly work. CU President Bruce D. Benson solicits annual nominations of faculty for the designation, which is a lifetime appointment.

This year's class of scholars:
[2]
[3]

Neupauer's research focuses on groundwater hydrology, contamination and remediation, all key in the sustainable use and protection of the planet's largest accessible freshwater source. She uses mathematical models to improve existing models of groundwater management and remediation. Her 30-plus journal publications include 15 in the field's leading journal, Water Resources Research. On the CU-Boulder faculty since 2005, her many honors include the national Walter L. Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize from the American Society of Civil Engineers (2006), the national ExCEEd New Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award (2006) and the Boulder Faculty Assembly's Excellence in Teaching Award (2011). She mentors not only her students but junior faculty in her college and across the country.

"Dr. Neupauer is an active and energetic scholar; a caring and inspirational teacher and mentor; and a constructive colleague with a passion for fostering the highest standards of scholarship and pedagogy in the academic environment surrounding her," wrote Harihar Rajaram in his nominating letter.

A physics education researcher, Otero explores the dynamic nature of the learning environment and its relationship with the evolution of learners' ideas. Her teaching interests are in the areas of science teacher education, laboratory-based physics classrooms, history and philosophy of physics education, and learning theory. She mentors faculty and K-12 science teachers in the community to help them build learning environments that empower students. At CU since 2001, she serves as executive director of the Colorado Learning Assistant Program and is co-director and co-founder of the Center for STEM Learning. Her many awards include the national Woman Physicist Accomplishment Award and the Boulder Faculty Assembly Award for Excellence (both 2013).

"Valerie is committed to education at all levels," wrote Steven J. Pollock in his nominating letter. "She cares deeply about students, about science education, and about educational change. And, she puts her energy into action."

[CU Denver students earn regents' quick approval of wellness center][4]

In an emotional, unexpected vote — followed by cheers and a standing ovation from meeting attendees – the CU Board of Regents on Friday approved a CU Denver student fee increase of up to $12 per credit hour to help fund a new wellness center on the Auraria Campus.

The 7-2 vote (Regents Glen Gallegos, R-Grand Junction, and John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch, voted against the proposal) at the CU Denver Student Commons Building during the board's regular meeting helped advance the project. The campus student body earlier this month voted in favor of the fee by 61.1 percent. More than quadruple the typical number of students – 20.4 percent – voted. The outcome represented a shift by the regents, who had expressed skepticism when the CU Denver Student Government Association (SGA) presented the proposal at the February board meeting, a significant step in the nearly two-year process initiated by students. In the two months between board meetings, SGA representatives met with regents, administration, CU President Bruce Benson and others to determine ways to minimize the cost to students through partnerships and donors, and by compromising on some features. The center's estimated cost was reduced to $42.4 million from $53.8 million; the per-hour fee went to $12 from $16; and

the size of the building was trimmed to 85,000 square feet from 105,000 square feet. The approved student fee increase takes effect this fall at $6 per credit and continues until fall 2017, when it rises to $12 per credit hour. In an email sent after the meeting, CU Denver Chancellor Jerry Wartgow noted that the Auraria Board still must approve the plan, and the regents' capital subcommittee must approve a detailed construction plan. During the meeting, Benson said CU is working to secure potential external partners for the facility as a way of further reducing project costs and student fees.

"We have done a tremendous amount with this project since we last met," said Scott Cao, president and chair of the CU Denver SGA, while addressing the board. "We heard your concerns about the student fees and we made some modifications. We tried to find a balance between the student fees with a building that our students so desperately need."

Student Allie Kriese, chair of the center's initiative and project team, said the facility will provide more than 100 student-employment opportunities, increased long-term health, a fitness garden, group fitness rooms and nutritional consultants. Center programs will include student loan and financial responsibility seminars and counseling sessions.

"It's really going to be an amazing building that's available to all of our students," Kriese said. "Our students come here to learn, and while they have chosen CU Denver for our excellent academics, it's really important that we equip them with skills outside academics."

The students' final presentation to the regents is linked here. Though expected to only be an informational update for the board, Friday's report was enough to convince regents that a vote for approval was in order. The enthusiastic endorsement generated big smiles and happy tears from several students who had gathered to witness the meeting. Regents and university leaders offered personal congratulations to student leaders during a meeting break. Regents who voted for the proposal commended the students' vision and the breadth of their investment in the project. Chair Kyle Hybl, R-Colorado Springs, said a new partnership with University of Colorado Health was instrumental in gaining his support. Michael Scialdone, interim strategy officer for UCHealth, said the collaboration has been rapidly evolving.

"In about a two-week time period, I think we have got a pretty solid plan together around how we work collaboratively around expanding access to health to the students as well as faculty," Scialdone said. "It's a commitment we're very excited to make here at CU Denver."

At least two board members had changed their position between the February and April meetings.

"I was a pretty hard 'no' on this thing for a number of reasons," said Stephen Ludwig, D-Denver. "But the work you've done to come back and reduce the cost, and the partnership that you've made, I am pretty much blown away with what you've done and you have my support."

Regent Sue Sharkey, R-Castle Rock, also changed her mind. "Wow. I was a strong 'no' and it wasn't because I didn't believe in what you were doing or believe in the need for this center here on this campus," she said. "To take on a project like this was beyond words for me. You listened to our concerns and you responded; you've made this happen."

Regent Irene Griego, D-Lakewood, commended the vision of the students. "I'm so proud of the way you articulated your plans to us, how you took on the charge and the concerns the Board of Regents had, and you demonstrated to us how to follow through with that," Griego said. "Your accountability has been outstanding."

Said Regent Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, "I've been on your team from day one." Referencing state funding challenges, she added, "It's pathetic that students have to build this kind of facility with their own fees."

In voting against the center, Regents Gallegos and Carson said they recognized the need, but were concerned about the burden on students.

"It feels to me like it's not a good vote when we're going to build this to help the entire university, the city and county of Denver, so on and so forth, on the backs of students and student fees," Gallegos said.

Five questions for Ken Schroeppel[5]

Downtown is the one place in a community with the highest concentration of uses and where the community's most important institutions and businesses are clustered, says Ken Schroeppel, an instructor of planning and design and the director of professional engagement in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program at CU Denver. Cities and downtowns always have fascinated him, even as a young child.But it wasn't until after he bought his first home and became involved with his neighborhood association that he decided to turn urban planning into a career. He earned his MURP degree from CU Denver and worked as a planning consultant and project manager, specializing in redevelopment and urban renewal planning, community planning, and military base planning.A few years after graduating from CU Denver, he taught a course in the MURP program as a lecturer, and in 2012, joined the planning faculty at the university on a full-time basis.

"I love being able to share my professional planning experience with students and to give back to the program that enabled me to have a career in urban planning," he says. "My passion is to help communities thrive and, specifically, to work with my fellow citizens to make Denver the best city it can be for everyone."

During free time, you might finding him posting to his blogs, DenverInfill and DenverUrbanism (visit http://denverinfill.com/blog/ and http://denverurbanism.com/[6]), giving presentations about Denver's growth and development to civic and business groups, serving on planning and community boards, and leading public walking tours that highlight the complex issues relating to city-building and Denver's rich urban legacy. He also enjoys exploring many of the great cities across the United States and around the world, which he says is critical to being a better urban planner and educator. This summer he'll explore Krakow, Prague and Budapest.

1. What makes a city great and what do you consider to be some of Denver's high points and low points?

There are thousands of great cities and towns in the world and the one thing they all have in common is that they were designed for pedestrians. Since the dawn of civilization, we built cities to be easily walkable because walking was the primary means of transportation for everyone. This naturally resulted in cities having dense, mixed-use development patterns because, since most people had to walk everywhere, it only made sense to put housing and shops and schools and all of life's needs as close together as possible. It was only in the post-World War II era that we started building cities in a radically different way. We built low-density, sprawling communities with segregated land uses that required people to drive automobiles to get everywhere. That resulted in all sorts of significant negative consequences, so re-orienting our communities to be great walkable places is a major focus of urban planning today.Denver is a great city, specifically because we have a solid urban core that was built during the walkable-cities era and a dedicated citizenry who cares deeply and has invested heavily in keeping that urban core strong and vibrant. But like most other cities in the U.S., we lost our way after World War II and built sprawling automobile-dependent neighborhoods as well. Our challenge as a city is to transform more of Denver into great walking, biking and transit-friendly areas while recognizing the fact that a lot of people still need or want to get around by automobile. Denver is booming right now and a lot of the growth is caused by people seeking denser, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

2. This weekend, people will have an opportunity to get an enhanced view of some of Denver's classic buildings through the 11th annual Doors Open Denver event. What is your role in this event?

I'm on the board of directors of the Denver Architectural Foundation. As an organization, our mission is to encourage people to explore their city, experience the importance of planning and design, and to envision a great future for Denver. Our premier public event each year is Doors Open Denver. I'm on the DOD planning committee and the walking tours that I've led in the weeks before DOD weekend help raise money for DOD and get people excited for DOD and Denver's rich architectural and planning heritage. This weekend, during DOD, there are dozens of interesting buildings — both old and new — that will be featured. Many are open sites available for people to explore on their own for free, while others that include a guided tour will require a ticket which can be purchased online in advance. Many of the featured buildings are those which the public generally doesn't have much access to, so it's a great way for people to see the interiors of many of Denver's cool buildings. Every building has its own story to tell.

3. What aspect of urbanism are you currently researching and what do you hope to achieve with your findings?

One of the aspects of urbanism that I'm most interested in is the way in which the urban form of cities changes over

time and the environmental, economic and cultural forces that cause those changes to occur. As a field of study, it's called "urban morphology." My particular focus is researching the urban morphology of downtown Denver. By using historic photographs, maps, and other resources, we can document how downtown has physically changed from original settlement to today. That knowledge informs future planning efforts in the downtown area and illuminates the fascinating legacy of downtown's urban fabric. I intend to eventually share my research with the public in some manner as a community resource.

4. Why did you start the blogs DenverInfill and DenverUrbanism and who are your readers?

I created DenverInfill and DenverUrbanism for several reasons. DenverInfill came first (2004) and was designed to give me and anyone else who was interested a way of keeping track of the numerous infill developments being built in the downtown Denver area. I also wanted to spotlight Denver's growth and revitalization to the world and promote it as a great place for investment, as evidenced by all of the infill development that was occurring. Finally, I thought it would be cool to learn how to build a website and to get involved in blogging. The whole thing started off, and remains today, as a personal hobby. In 2010, I launched DenverUrbanism as a companion blog to DenverInfill, where we talk about other aspects of urbanism such as transit, walking/biking infrastructure, public spaces, etc. While it was never my intention, my blogs have grown to become quite popular, not just with planning and design professionals, but really with the general public, as people in Denver are interested in and excited about the remarkable way in which Denver is growing and transforming into a phenomenal city. I'm particularly proud of winning (for DenverInfill) a Downtown Denver Award from the Downtown Denver Partnership. Those are often awarded to big worthy projects, programs or events to which a lot of people contributed, so I'm honored that they also value how one person's passion and dedication expressed through a hobby can make a significant contribution to the success of downtown Denver.

5. From a personal perspective, some of Denver's recent building projects are lacking in architectural interest when compared to those that were built in previous years. Are there restrictions on the types of edifices that can be constructed in the city?

The issue of quality architectural design in the new buildings going up in Denver is a topic of much public debate, which is overall a good thing. Generally, I think there's too much focus on what a building looks like, and less understanding of the building's urban form — its mass, scale and relationship to the street. I believe the new Denver zoning code, which is form- and context-based, is doing a fairly good job of producing the building forms we want to see. I think what people object to in some of the new buildings in Denver are the façade design attributes: things such as color, materials, patterns and articulation. These are more subjective and open to interpretation about what looks good and what doesn't. While I definitely expect that every developer and their architect aspire to design an attractive building of high-quality materials, I also know that the vast majority of buildings in a city are (and should be) "background buildings" that constitute the bulk of the city's urban form and otherwise don't call too much attention to themselves. Therefore, as long as a building is well-proportioned and built with quality materials, has an appropriate form for its location and role in a growing city, and has ground-floor uses or design features that engage the pedestrian, then I don't worry too much if the building looks "boring" or not. I'll take a boring-looking building over a surface parking lot every time. A surface parking lot is a soul-sucking black hole in the urban fabric of the city. A boring building is still an economically productive, human-activated and form-giving component to the city.

Regents won't divest; call for report on options for future investment[7]

The CU Board of Regents said it won't move to divest from fossil fuels.

In a 7-2 vote April 16 at CU Denver in the Tivoli Turnhalle, during the board's regular meeting, regents passed a resolution[8] stating that the university will stay its investment course; the resolution also asks the treasurer later this year to provide a report on the university's current and potential future investments in sustainable energy.

The resolution came about after months of activism by students, faculty and others who have appeared before the board at its meetings and asked that the university move toward an investment portfolio absent of any and all funds tied to the fossil fuel energy industry.

At last week's meeting, support for Fossil Free CU[9] was voiced in the public comment period by members of Green Alpha Advisors, a Boulder-based asset management firm that deals only in fossil fuel-free portfolios. Public comment

also included input from several students and community members who expressed support for Colorado's oil and gas industry and urged the board not to divest. The motion that passed was introduced by Regent John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch, and seconded by Regent Sue Sharkey, R-Castle Rock.

"All of us want to do what's best for our children … what's best for the planet, what's best for our university," Carson said. "But I think the way to approach this issue is from a scientific angle. … I do not think that divestment is the best approach to this."

The resolution[8] cites regent policies and state rules that prohibit university ownership of individual companies[10], require institutional neutrality[11] on social and political matters and uniformity of prudent investment[12], which stipulates a diversity of investments by the institution.

Carson also said that the board "(by) taking positions on issues of the day … could potentially have an impact on academic freedom."

Sharkey said while she believes in responsible stewardship of the environment, "it's a ridiculous case to make that this university divesting from fossil fuels is going to make a difference toward climate change or global warming."

"The University of Colorado is not going to divest from fossil fuel, but what I think we will do is look for alternatives and support companies in sustainable energy," she said.

The original resolution did not include the direction that the University Treasurer provide a report in November on how university investments reflect CU's "commitment to sustainability." That addition was offered as a friendly amendment by Regent Michael Carrigan, D-Denver.

"This amendment shows we are willing to look into this issue further," said Carrigan, adding that he wants the treasurer to report on what options are available to the university going forward. "This board really ought to hear about those, as we did today (from Green Alpha Advisors)."

"I do not envision a scenario where we support total divestment," Carrigan said, "but I don't see this as a black-and-white issue."

Regent Steve Bosley, R-Longmont, also introduced an amendment affirming the continuation of the board's Investment Advisory Committee, established in 1993.

Two of Carrigan's Democratic colleagues, Regents Irene Griego, D-Lakewood, and Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, said they felt the resolution didn't go far enough in examining the issue, and therefore voted against it.

After that vote, Shoemaker introduced a resolution calling for the establishment of a Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee[8], which she called a "moderate, middle-ground resolution" that doesn't call for divestment, but one that would enable the pursuit of movement away from fossil fuel investments and toward more renewable energy sources.

Carrigan suggested that a vote on such a committee be delayed until the board hears the treasurer's report in November, but Shoemaker declined. Carrigan said he wasn't opposed to the formation of the committee in principle, but because he didn't agree with the time table, he joined the board's five Republicans in voting against it. Shoemaker, Griego and Regent Stephen Ludwig, D-Denver, voted for it.

CU moves to improve data management[13]

Data touches on virtually every activity at the university, but CU has not always effectively managed the innumerable bits of information on its internal and external constituents, according to a presentation to the Board of Regents Friday. Large databases in areas such as student information, human resources, finance and fundraising don't always

communicate with one another, much less provide effective interactions with those whose data is stored there.

The university is aiming to change that with a move to a systemwide constituent relationship management (CRM) data platform. The regents heard a presentation about the initiative from Vice President for Communication Ken McConnellogue.

“We need consistency in our interactions with our key audiences and we need to make it easy for them to interact with us,” McConnellogue said. “A CRM organizes, automates and synchronizes interactions with constituents, each of whom will have a single record, while increasing our knowledge of them each time. It pulls from multiple CU data sources and meets multiple data needs.”

The impetus for the project was the need for a more effective advising system on the Boulder campus and the November phase-out of the product now used in the systemwide eComm program (how the university sends mass emails, hosts alumni communities and manages most events). Leadership on the campuses, including chief information officers, and at system agreed on a single platform and selected industry leader Salesforce as the vendor.

The need also dovetailed with CU President Bruce Benson’s priority to ensure effective data management, academic success and communication by having centralized data that is current, accurate and secure.

McConnellogue said a team is building the data infrastructure to support advising in Boulder and the eComm program. The CRM database will be fed by CU’s primary systems of record HRMS, ISIS, Advance and FIN (human resources, student information, fundraising, finance) and will provide frequent two-way data sharing. Once the initial two projects are functional and the data infrastructure built, other projects from units across the system will come on board.

The initiative is governed by a systemwide group with representatives from academic affairs, finance, communication and information security. It also includes the chief information officers from each campus and system administration.

The CRM will provide a 360-degree view of constituents, including students, faculty, staff, donors and alumni. McConnellogue used himself as an example of someone with multiple touch points at the university. He is an alumnus, a donor, a staff member, a parent of a CU student, grateful patient from services at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus and CU Advocate. He said no database at CU connects all those dots and that many constituents have a similar story.

An initiative running parallel with the CRM initiative is an effort to improve the Advance database, CU’s fundraising and alumni database that has become the de facto system of record for external constituents. It is important to the success of the university’s changes to its fundraising operations two years ago. As a key feeder of the CRM database, there is an effort underway to ensure the quality of the data being transferred.

Between the optimization of Advance and the advent of a CRM database, CU should be able to improve how it manages data, McConnellogue said.

“This is a large initiative but one that is essential to our success as a university,” he said.

Regents roundup[14]

Four new degrees earned the approval of the Board of Regents during its regular meeting Friday at the CU Denver Student Commons Building on the Auraria Campus.

Two of the degrees will be offered by CU-Boulder’s College of Engineering and Applied Science: a master’s and doctorate in Environmental Engineering. The other two are at UCCS: The College of Business will a master’s degree in accounting; read more on it in Communique[15]. The other new degree at UCCS – a bachelor of science in Engineering Education – wasn’t expected to be voted on at the meeting, as the regents typically hear a presentation for discussion at one meeting and take a vote at the next one. The new degree will be an interdisciplinary offering with

curriculum from the UCCS College of Engineering and Applied Science and College of Education in coordination with the acclaimed UCCSTeach program. It's aimed at boosting the pipeline of workers in science, technology, engineering and math – STEM – fields.

"This is probably one of the most exciting degree programs I've heard about in quite a while," said Regent Sue Sharkey, R-Castle Rock, who brought a motion for the regents to approve the degree Friday. UCCS leaders said the quick approval would help them begin to market the program, which is slated to begin in the fall. Read more on the new degree in Communique.[16]

The regents approved name changes to three degrees offered by CU-Boulder's Department of Art and Art History from "studio art" to "art practices"; they also approved a name change of the CU Anschutz Medical Campus Graduate School's "physiology" doctorate to "integrated physiology."

A lengthy discussion by the board focused on a CU-Boulder proposal to change Women and Gender Studies from a program to a department. Provost Russell Moore explained that the program is in its 40th year, has conferred bachelor's degrees for 18 years and boasts a faculty of internationally known distinguished scholars. Chancellor Phil DiStefano said the move to confer official department status should have been made much sooner. Moore stressed that the change would not entail any additional costs. Still, at least one board member expressed reservations about the appearance of such a move. Board Chair Kyle Hybl, R-Colorado Springs, said he was encouraged to hear of the cost neutrality, but that the appearance that the institution is growing could be damaging in an environment calling for reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

"It's an optical enlargement of the institution … and optics are important, too," Hybl said. "As the university moves forward, we really need to be cognizant of not expanding our footprint but instead consolidating it and making us more efficient."

Said Moore, "There are the optics, but then there's the right thing to do. … The elimination of (revenue-positive) programs like this would actually increase the overhead on campus."

Regent Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder, praised the "academically rigorous" program. "I would be very upset, as a woman, if we were not able to confer departmental status on this program," she said.

The board is likely to vote on the proposal at the next regents' meeting, June 22-23 at CU Anschutz.

In other action at Friday's meeting:
The board voted 7-2 in favor of revisions to the regents' Presidential Search Policy (3.E.), including the stipulation that a presidential search committee be chaired by a member of the board and joined by a committee vice chair who also is a member of the board. The committee's four faculty members must be members of the Faculty Senate. The board also reserves the right to appoint additional committee members if deemed appropriate, beyond the representatives called for in the policy. The standing members still include deans, students, staff members, alumni and community members. A faculty-requested revision to the policy that called for additional faculty members to be included with any additions made by the board failed in a 2-7 vote. The board heard from chancellors on the status of the online initiative, scheduled to launch in August. CU Denver Chancellor Jerry Wartgow told the regents the campuses had completed the inventory of online offerings and the technology committee is now working on website. All committees associated with developing the online initiative will be meeting together in May and Wartgow said he expects to report more specific data at the June board meeting.

Grants totaling $18 million bring new names to Depression Center, Beth-El College[17]

Gifts of $10 million and $8 million will boost the CU Depression Center at CU Anschutz and UCCS' Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, new names for which will honor the family and legacy of Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson.

One of the nation's premier research and clinical centers for mood and anxiety disorders will be immeasurably bolstered by the Denver-based Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation's $10 million grant, one of the largest program gifts in the history of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

The commitment builds an endowment that will provide stable and perpetual funding — $400,000 the first year, likely more in later years – to support a broad array of mental-health program priorities.

To honor this gift, the CU Board of Regents during its meeting Friday at CU Denver voted to rename the seven-year-old center the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center.

Read more about the grant to the center here.[18]

The regents also recognized the foundation's $8 million grant to the Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and voted to rename it the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences. This is the first UCCS academic college to be named in recognition of a donor.

Nursing education and practice in Colorado and beyond will take a significant step forward following the gift, which will be placed into an endowment that should benefit the college in perpetuity.

Read more about the grant to the college here.[19]

For the Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation, the gifts continue a legacy that began in 1948. That year, the Johnson family started a philanthropic tradition of thoughtful giving that has thrived for nearly seven decades and four generations of family members. Through financial support and strategic guidance, the private family foundation has helped hundreds of outstanding nonprofit organizations make a lasting impact in communities throughout Colorado and beyond. Click here for more information[20].

Since 1979, the Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation has provided $2.9 million in support for programs and projects of the University of Colorado.

Tenure list: April 2015[21]

At its meeting Friday at the University of Colorado Denver, the CU Board of Regents approved two appointments with tenure:
University of Colorado Boulder Jeffrey Reuer, Leeds School of Business, effective Aug. 17. **University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus** John Reilly, School of Medicine, effective April 17.

Cyber security conference comes to UCCS[22]

CU Health Plan rates increase modestly during Open Enrollment[23]

The overall cost of CU's 2015-16 benefits plans will increase an average of 5.6 percent. This increase is lower than last year's 7.8 percent increase. Officials of the CU Health and Welfare Trust — the funding vehicle for the CU Health Plan — say the Plan's overall, average increase is well below those that Mercer Research projects for Colorado plans (11 percent) and Denver-Boulder area plans (9 percent) but slightly more than higher education nationwide (4 percent). The university's 85 percent-90 percent contribution to employees' health care premiums, paired with a minimal rise in rate costs, means employees will not pay significantly more for their health care this plan year.

“The CU health plans are considered rich in benefits as compared to many other employer plans, so the fact that we are able to experience a small increase in premiums this year was positive news,” said Michelle Martinez, director of Benefits and Payroll Administration at CU Employee Services.

Rates for medical, dental, vision, life insurance and disability options were released last week and are available at www.cu.edu/rates.[24]

Medical Plans

Rates for CU Health Plan – High Deductible (HSA compatible) will not increase for faculty, university staff, classified staff and retirees, who currently pay as little as $19 a month for a family plan and $0 for an employee-only plan. This year, CU will debut a health savings account to help cover the cost of qualifying health care expenses not covered by this plan. (Learn more at www.cu.edu/hsa[25].)

Monthly rate increases for CU Health Plan – Exclusive will range from $2.51 for an employee-only plan to $15.32 for a family plan.

Monthly rate increases for CU Health Plan – Kaiser will span from $3.87 for an employee-only plan to $19.19 for a family plan.

Rates are posted for the newly introduced CU Health Plan – Extended. Rates for this plan fall between those for CU Health Plan – Exclusive and CU Health Plan – Kaiser.

Dental Plans

Most dental plan costs for faculty, university staff, classified staff and retirees will not increase. If they do, the increase will be a few cents each month.

Vision Plans

Rates for CU Health Plan – Vision will increase by 1 cent, if at all. Remember: Enrollment in this plan requires a two-year commitment.

Life insurance and disability

Rates for short-term and long-term disability have not changed, nor have rates for optional term life insurance, children’s optional term life insurance, or voluntary accidental death and dismemberment coverage.

Prepare for Open Enrollment by reviewing specific rates for the 2015-16 plan year at www.cu.edu/oe/rates[26].

Learn more about plan changes and Open Enrollment sessions at www.cu.edu/oe[27]. Employee Services’ benefits professionals are available to answer questions at 303-860-4200, option 3.

Researchers produce first atlas of airborne microbes across United States[28]

Knell named Employee of the Quarter[29]

Lindsay Knell’s dedication – whether overseeing the daily operations of the office, managing course schedule preparation, orienting new lectures to campus, and supporting an employee search – was recently recognized as the program assistant for the School of Public Affairs at UCCS was named Employee of the Quarter.

“[Lindsay] is responsive to all of our constituents – students, faculty, staff, and guests – and she does so with utmost professionalism on a day-to-day basis,” Crista Hill, outreach student services specialist, SPA, said.

While Knell’s duties may be spread out, she will be the first to tell you where her passion lies: working with the

students, faculty and staff.

“I’ve worked in higher education since 2004 and can’t imagine a better work environment,” Knell said. “Every day on this campus, students are connecting with mentors, developing skills, and discovering new interests. They are here to better themselves and that’s very inspiring to be around. I am also lucky to work with talented staff and faculty who are making a positive impact both on- and off-campus.”

Knell joined the SPA team in November 2013 after previously working for the University of North Carolina School of Law.

While she says there is no such thing as a typical day, Knell acts as the school’s liaison to support human resource and payroll functions, updates the course inventory and academic catalog, and serves as the unit coordinator for textbooks, syllabi, course evaluations, and faculty reappointment, promotion, and tenure.

“Lindsay knows what is needed to keep SPA running smoothly and is able to head off potential problems in advance,” Pam Sawyer, director of strategic initiatives and alumni relations, SPA, said in a nomination letter. “She’s effective, efficient, and completely prepared.”

Alongside her usual duties, Knell has repeatedly gone above and beyond to fill in.

“The summer of 2014 was very challenging semester for all of us for a number of reasons, primarily due to the fact that our five-person staff office was reduced to three due to circumstances beyond our control,” Mary Lou Kartis, finance and operations manager, SPA, said. “Lindsay volunteered immediately to help; she not only took it upon herself to learn how to upload documents to our webpages, she also went through several trainings on UCCS’s website content management system so that she could understand the coding and other items related to keep the content on our pages current.”

“These are tasks that are outside of [Lindsay’s] responsibilities and comfort zone, yet she still stepped up to fill the void.”

Outside of work, Knell is an avid hiker who regularly volunteers to help maintain Colorado Springs’ trails, parks and open spaces.

Anderson named 2015 Hazel Barnes Prize winner[30]

Fred Anderson, professor of history at CU-Boulder, has been awarded the 2015 Hazel Barnes Prize, the most distinguished award a faculty member can receive from the university.

Since 1992, the Hazel Barnes Prize has been awarded each year to a CU-Boulder faculty member who best exemplifies the enriching interrelationship between teaching and research, and whose work has had a significant impact on students, faculty, colleagues and the university.

“Professor Anderson’s combination of scholarly rigor and his passion for mentoring and engaging students is inspiring to all of us,” said Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano. “Colleagues and former students across the nation are effusive in describing the positive impact he has had on their lives, both professionally and personally. He demonstrates what it means to be both a distinguished scholar and a superb teacher.”

Nominators from CU-Boulder and other major universities described Anderson as “the quintessential scholar-teacher”

a “historian’s historian” and “one of the single top historians of early America.”

Anderson joined the CU-Boulder faculty in 1983. He earned two degrees in history from Harvard University, a Ph.D. in 1981 and a master’s degree in 1973. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Colorado State University with highest distinction in 1971. He served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged from the Army Reserve as a captain in 1981.

Anderson specializes in early American history. He is the author or co-author of several books, including “Crucible of War: the Seven Years’ War” and the “Fate of Empire in British North America,” for which he won the Francis Parkman Prize for the best nonfiction work of history on an American theme. The 862-page book is described as a “truly field-shaping work” and Prince Philip of Great Britain was photographed carrying a copy in his hand a few years ago.

Several former CU-Boulder undergraduate honors students who worked with Anderson wrote letters in support of his award nomination. Anderson was director of the Honors Program in the College of Arts and Sciences between 2009 and 2012.

“Professor Anderson proved a skillful and compassionate discussion leader who took great pains to include all students in the conversation,” wrote a former member of his honors thesis seminar who is now a tenured professor of history at another university. “He was especially dedicated to managing the gender dynamic of the classroom so that quieter female students, myself included, felt empowered to speak.”

And another nominator added, “If there is a more loyal, decent, responsible and simply good human being, I have not met him or her.”

Anderson has received dozens of awards and honors for his scholarship including Guggenheim, Rockefeller and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships. He currently is working on a volume for the prestigious Oxford History of the United States and has given about 125 public and invited lectures. In 2010, he was named a Professor of Distinction within the College of Arts and Sciences.

The prize includes a $20,000 cash award and an engraved University medal. The medal will be presented at the May 9 spring commencement. Anderson also will be recognized at a reception in the fall that will include former Hazel Barnes Prize recipients, family members, colleagues and students, and will be invited to be the December commencement speaker.

The Hazel Barnes Prize is named in honor of philosophy Professor Emerita Hazel Barnes, who taught at CU-Boulder from 1943 to 1986 and is noted for her interpretations of the works of French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre. She died in 2008 at the age of 92.

Nesbitt chosen for Alumni Hall of Fame at Southern University Law Center[31]

Kathy Nesbitt, vice president of employee and information services, was inducted into the Southern University Law Center’s Alumni Hall of Fame during the center’s annual Alumni and Friends Round-Up on April 11 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Nesbitt, a 1996 graduate of the law center, and seven other graduates were honored for their distinguished careers. Before coming to CU, Nesbitt served in a variety of public and private sector positions. She served as Gov. John Hickenlooper’s chief personnel director, human resources director for Kaiser Permanente, staff attorney for the Mountain States Employers Council, and an attorney for Qwest Communications. She is an alumna of the University of Colorado Boulder and also completed the Executive Program at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.

Fenn book wins Pulitzer Prize[32]

The chair of the University of Colorado Boulder history department on Monday won the Pulitzer Prize for history for her book Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People[33].

Associate Professor **Elizabeth Fenn** said she first learned of the prize when she received an email from a New York Times reporter. A short while later, she received official notification from her editor. In the meantime, her phone started ringing and people started showing up at her office door.

“I’m stunned, I’m delighted, I’m really, really honored and very humbled by this,” she said.

Fenn worked on the book for 10 years.

“The book is a history of a remarkable Plains Indian tribe known as the Mandan people, who had villages in what is today North Dakota.” she said. “They are most widely known as the people Lewis and Clark stayed with in the winter of 1804-05.

“They had to deal with a whole series of environmental challenges — drought, infectious disease from Europe including whooping cough, smallpox and measles, and they also had to deal with Norway rats, a new species from China arriving via Europe,” she said.

The Pulitzer judges called her work “an engrossing, original narrative showing the Mandans, a Native American tribe in the Dakotas, as a people with a history.” The prize includes $10,000.

Fenn specializes in the early American West, focusing on epidemic disease, Native American and environmental history. Her 2001 book Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82, unearthed the devastating effects of a smallpox epidemic that coursed across the North American continent during the years of the American Revolution.

She is now at work on an expansive biography of Sakagawea, using her life story to illuminate the wider history of the northern plains and Rockies. Fenn is also the co-author, with Peter H. Wood, of Natives and Newcomers: The Way We Lived in North Carolina before 1770, a popular history of early North Carolina which appeared in 1983.

Fenn joined the CU-Boulder faculty in 2012 and also is a faculty affiliate of the CU-Boulder Department of Ethnic Studies. She previously taught at Duke University and earned her PhD at Yale University.

In a 2012 story highlighting Fenn in Colorado Arts and Sciences Magazine, Susan Kent, previous chair of CU-Boulder’s Department of History, said the hiring of Fenn and Thomas Andrews further broadened key strengths in the history department. Along with cultural environmental historians Phoebe Young and Paul Sutter the department is now a “powerhouse,” Kent said, adding:

“It’s an extraordinary lineup, and enables us to position ourselves as one of the premier institutions in America for the study of environmental and Western/borderlands history.”

The Pulitzer Prize finalists in the history category were “Empire of Cotton: A Global History” by Sven Beckert and “An Empire on the Edge: How Britain Came to Fight America” by Nick Bunker.

CU-Boulder, CU Denver team awarded grant[34]

Derek Briggs, professor in the CU-Boulder School of Education; **Bud Talbot**, professor in the CU Denver School of Education and Human Development Professor; and **Jenny Knight**, instructor in the CU-Boulder Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (MCDB), have been awarded a $300,000 grant from the W. M. Keck Foundation to study the usefulness of popular "concept inventories" as assessments of undergraduate student learning.

"Concept inventories are used to assess students' understanding of big picture ideas in the sciences, mathematics and engineering," Talbot explained. "Research on these inventories, specifically their validity, has not kept pace with the rapid growth of their use in the STEM fields. This grant affords us the opportunity to conduct systematic and timely work using an existing high quality concept inventory from a very important field within STEM–Genetics."

This project will examine the relationship between student performance on the Genetics Concept Assessment–a rigorously developed concept inventory–relative to performance on newly developed open-response items and to instructor-developed final exams.

"This is a unique opportunity for biologists to collaborate with education specialists to scrutinize what different kinds of assessments can tell us about student learning," Knight said. "Biology professors are on the brink of major changes in how introductory students are taught. These kinds of projects help bring faculty from different disciplines together to ultimately improve undergraduate student learning."

The project will be conducted through the Center for Assessment, Design, Research, and Evaluation (CADRE), directed by Professor Briggs and housed in the School of Education.

"This study of concept inventories provides a unique opportunity to find out how well professors are able to capture evidence of student learning when they write a final exam. We're going to be doing a lot of work to figure out if there are important principles to follow when writing assessments that provide rich information about a student's depth of conceptual understanding," Briggs said.

Through this 2-year project, Briggs, Talbot and Knight aim to help instructors think about the quality of their assessment items and to inform the development and validation of new concept inventories across all disciplines.

Frazee retiring as director of faculty relations[35]

John Frazee, CU-Boulder director of faculty relations, has announced his retirement. In this unique role, Frazee worked with faculty members, department chairs and deans across academic units on campus, helping to resolve issues of conflict and conduct in the work lives of faculty.

Frazee said part of the job—addressing issues of conflict and conduct in all their variety and complexity—is one for which academic administrators often feel underprepared.

"I thought that when I became a dean, I would be able to focus more on other types of work, but instead I found that I was dealing with these issues more than ever," he said. "The idea of the director of faculty relations position is to designate one person who can serve as a resource to resolve issues among the faculty and who can draw from institutional knowledge and experience."

Frazee said the university is looking for someone to replace him that has both faculty and administrative experience who understands the challenges of both roles and who recognizes that conflict is inherent to the academic mission of a university—something that shouldn't necessarily be eliminated but rather resolved productively.

"In different phases of my career, I had served as a faculty member and then later as a director, dean, and an academic VP," Frazee said. "In my different administrative roles, I came to understand just how much of my time I

would need to spend ensuring that conflicts and other personnel issues within my unit were being productively resolved."

The role helps reduce the load on deans and department chairs, allowing them to focus more of their time on the strategic leadership of their colleges and departments, Frazee said.

Dropping names ...[36]

Julaine Field, associate professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Services, College of Education at UCCS, recently received the Outstanding Counselor Educator Award from the Colorado Counseling Association. Field received the award at the CCA conference in Denver. Each year, the group recognizes members who have gone beyond the call of duty within their institution of higher learning or in the field. The counselor educator award was one of six awards given.

Niraj Chaudhary, head of Information Technology Department at the Auraria Library, has been named to the Leading Change Institute Class of 2015. This EDUCAUSE program engages emerging leaders in the academic information sector who can inspire, advocate, and advance needed changes in higher education. Fellows in the Institute hear from speakers from a wide range of backgrounds who share real-life problems from across the higher-education landscape. Institute participants then design solutions during a May 2015 weeklong program in Washington, D.C.

Reema Wahdan-Alaswad recently participated in the 50 Leaders of Tomorrow Summit in Washington, D.C. Wahdan-Alaswad is a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Ann Thor in the Department of Pathology, CU School of Medicine. The 50 Leaders of Tomorrow were selected from hundreds of highly qualified applicants through a competitive selection process. The applicants included postdoctoral fellows, entrepreneurs, graduate students, law students, policy fellows and medical students. Wahdan-Alaswad participated in a group that proposed a novel idea/product called FEMITRA, an oral-based capsule that would be used to treat Clostridium difficile infections (CDIs) that currently pose a major healthcare burden costing more than $4.8 billion annually. FEMITRA uses engineered bacteria that will replace fecal microbiota transplantation.

JFK Partners: 50 years of Service and Success[37]

CU Denver to Assist Communities in Large-scale Sustainability Efforts[38]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/two-cu-boulder-faculty-join-ranks-president-s-teaching-scholars[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/pts_neupauer.jpg[3] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/pts_otero.jpg[4] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-denver-students-earn-regents-quick-approval-wellness-center[5] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-ken-schroeppel[6]

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https://connections.cu.edu/stories/tenure-list-april-2015[22] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cyber-security-conference-comes-uccs[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-health-plan-rates-increase-modestly-during-open-enrollment[24] http://www.cu.edu/rates[25] http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/health-savings-account[26]
http://www.cu.edu/oe/rates[27] http://www.cu.edu/oe[28] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/researchers-produce-first-atlas-airborne-microbes-across-united-states[29] https://connections.cu.edu/people/knell-named-employee-quarter[30]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/anderson-named-2015-hazel-barnes-prize-winner[31]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/nesbitt-chosen-alumni-hall-fame-southern-university-law-center[32]
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