Community connections strong among Staff Council honorees[1]

Service Excellence Award Winners and their presenters, from left: Kaylene McCrum, director of Human Resources Operations and award-winner Christine Gillen; Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Leonard Dinegar and system award-winner Teena Shepperson-Turner; UCCS award-winner Steve Linhart and presenter Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak; and CU-Boulder award-winner Kenneth Nelson with Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano.

Service Excellence Award Winners and their presenters, from left: Kaylene McCrum, director of Human Resources Operations and award-winner Christine Gillen; Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff Leonard Dinegar and system award-winner Teena Shepperson-Turner; UCCS award-winner Steve Linhart and presenter Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak; and CU-Boulder award-winner Kenneth Nelson with Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano.

Four University of Colorado staff members received Service Excellence Awards for their contributions to the university, their campuses and communities during the University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC) Retreat at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics at CU-Boulder.

One person each from CU-Boulder, UCCS and CU Denver l Anschutz Medical Campus, as well as system administration, received the honor during an April 18 luncheon ceremony.

The honorees are:

Steve Linhart, the dean of students at UCCS, who one nominator described as having an “impeccable worth ethic” and “selfless approach to serving others.” Linhart has been employed at the university since 2000, serving in numerous roles: police officer, instructor, executive director of Judicial Affairs and Student Support, and student conduct officer and director of emergency management. He became Dean of Students in 2012.

“Steve can be found on campus pushing stuck cars during a snowstorm, at the store to buy groceries for students who are in financial hardship, in front of a student’s apartment to help them move, on the phone with a parent to coordinate care and support for their student,” said nominator Benek Altayli, director of the University Counseling Center. “There are few people who are as deserving of this small token of appreciation from the organization he has served with such selfless dedication.”

Linhart is a regular volunteer with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute, where he contributes to the efforts of conservation and stewardship of public lands in southern Colorado. He also organizes events, practices and races for the Manitou Springs High School Girls’ Swimming Program.

He serves on 12 UCCS committees, including the student response team, which helps design and deliver appropriate responses for youth who have been identified as students of concern; the Emergency Preparedness and Action Committee to help prepare the campus community for possible emergencies; and THINK, for the prevention of alcohol abuse and related issues on campus.

Kenneth Nelson is a police administrative supervisor at CU-Boulder. He serves as a communications dispatcher, including serving as a 911 operator who takes initial emergency calls from the public, and also oversees hiring processes, payroll and personnel issues. Nelson has worked at the university for four years and also is a student; he’ll graduate with a master’s degree in business administration.

In addition to his duties with the university, “Kenny … is an equal-opportunity volunteer,” said Police Chief Melissa Zak.

He regularly donates blood to the Bonfils Blood Center, and it’s estimated that those contributions have touched the lives of at least 75 people in the state. He also donates his time to the city of Thornton’s Snowbusters program, which pairs volunteers with seniors and disabled residents who have difficulty removing snow from their sidewalks after winter storms. During the 2013 flood, Nelson and his wife volunteered on weekends to help Longmont residents with clean-up efforts. He also volunteers with the Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center, and volunteered more than 304 hours in 2013.

“When we talk about giving back to our community, Kenny does just that – he gives back, without expected compensation or quid pro quo,” Zak said. “He gives without complaining and understands the hardships and plight of others. He exemplifies a sustained commitment to the Front Range community, which includes the Boulder campus.”

In January 2014, he received both the Bronze and Silver Presidential Volunteer Service Awards.

He is a member of the Employee Wellness Committee and is designing the written protocols as well as identifying the various genres associated with employee wellness. He also personally assists employees during times of crisis.

Christine Gillen is the business services program director in the offices of Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Vice Chancellor for Research at CU Denver l Anschutz Medical Campus. She has worked for CU since 2011.

Gillen is a mentor for Colorado Youth at Risk, a program that stresses the importance of feeling connected to your community. She acts as a role model and has found ways to encourage teens to stay in school and graduate. She also is an animal activist and fundraiser for the Denver Dumb Friends League, and advocates through education against animal neglect and abuse.

Gillen is a member of CU Advocates. For the past three years, she has served as the point person for CU Denver’s Recognition Committee and is a member of the Campus Life Committee and the Colorado Combined Campaign Committee.

“Christine is able to add her own personal touch to events that bring her fellow employees joy,” said nominator Ashlee Powers, human resources manager. “She enjoys witnessing fellow community members achieve milestones in their careers at recognition events; supports local, small businesses and fellow employees at the craft fairs and jewelry shows; and enjoys bringing a little joy to the campus by getting the word out about social opportunities on campus.”

Teena Shepperson-Turner is the assistant director of finance and administration, University Risk Management, system administration.

She is a board member of Strive Preparatory Schools, a Denver-based network of free public charter schools, and is an active member of the Strive Family Council, which supports teachers and develops activities for students. In addition, she serves as a member of the Denver Public School Superintendent Forum; Jack and Jill of America, an African-American family organization that sponsors cultural, social, education and recreational activities; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; P.E.A.K. Partnership for Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment; and the New Hope Baptist Church Usher Board.

She was a member of System Staff Council from 2009 to 2013 as well as liaison to UCSC during the same time period. She is a current fellow in the University of Colorado Excellence in Leadership program, and serves on the University of Colorado Security Advisory Committee.

“I am always impressed by her enthusiasm and believe she demonstrates the work ethic and character of a person dedicated to service,” said Terry Lee, Assistant Vice President and Chief Risk Officer, who nominated Shepperson-Turner for the award.

During the retreat, council members also engaged in a communications training session with Mark Augustine, former director of employee development at CU-Boulder.

Council members discussed ways to make meetings more efficient and effective, including engaging more with constituents and other councils at the university; overcoming frustrations that occur before, during and after meetings; and strategize for the future.

Search underway for next academic affairs VP[3]

University leadership has begun the work of determining the next Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Colorado system.

Vice President Kathleen Bollard recently announced that she will leave the post to return to her role as a faculty member at CU Denver in August.

A detailed job description is posted on the Jobs at CU website[4], where interested individuals also may submit an application. The initial application deadline was this week, but applications will continue to be accepted until the position is filled.

President Bruce D. Benson asked Leonard Dinegar, senior vice president and chief of staff, to chair the search committee, which will convene for its first meeting on Wednesday.

The committee will include representatives of Faculty Council, Staff Council, three provosts and others from CU campuses.

The president aims to have the post filled by Aug. 1.

A member of the president's executive team, the Vice President of Academic Affairs also works closely with the campus provosts to achieve the goals of the chancellors, president and the Board of Regents. At the direction of the president, this person develops and implements systemwide academic policy initiatives and directives.

Social Climate Survey set to relaunch[5]

A revamped CU Social Climate Survey is expected to be distributed this week after the Board of Regents and administrators made changes to the instrument in the wake of concerns about the previous version's level of identifying information.

The survey initially launched April 2. Regents and administrators soon heard a variety of feedback from Faculty Council and others that the amount of detailed demographic information the survey asked for could potentially identify particular respondents. Because of the perception, faculty leaders suggested that some members of the university community might not take the survey.

"The survey is a priority of the Board of Regents, and we appreciated that the faculty brought us their concerns through the shared governance process," said Michael Carrigan, chair of the Board of Regents. "We want to be sure the survey is as accurate as possible.

"Even though members of the CU community may have taken the previous survey, I strongly encourage them to take the revised version," he said. "It's important that everyone's voice is heard."

Regents, administrators and faculty members (including Faculty Council Chair Melinda Piket-May) worked with the vendor administering the survey, McLaughlin and Associates, to revise the demographic section and some questions. The primary changes are combining administrative and academic units, making the groups larger, to address concerns that responses at a departmental level would identify respondents. Additionally, some demographic data was revised. For example, rather than ask a responder's specific age, the survey now provides ranges such as 46-55.

Data from the first survey has been destroyed, said Patrick O'Rourke, general counsel and secretary to the Board of Regents. He echoed Carrigan's comments that even though members of the university community may have taken the previous version, they should take it again.

Boulder Faculty Assembly Chair Paul Chinowsky said he believes faculty concerns have been addressed in the revised version.

“We as faculty really appreciate the board taking our concerns seriously and addressing them through modification of the survey,” he said. “Suspending the survey and rewriting the demographic part was a great example of shared governance and we hope that will continue throughout the survey process.”

The survey is expected to be open for the next two to three weeks. Carrigan said the board has no preconceived notions about how it may act on results.

“The data are intended to be a benchmark to understand if the university is meeting its goal of being a tolerant and inclusive learning and working environment,” he said. “The board anticipates that there may be additional surveys in the future to measure against that benchmark to see how we are faring.”

Chinowsky said faculty anticipate continuing engagement in the process.

“We look forward to working with the board and administration in addressing any climate concerns that emerge as part of this process,” he said.

The Social Climate Survey originated with a regent resolution in September, which passed unanimously, that aims to determine how well the CU community is meeting the university’s guiding principle and core value of promoting diversity in all its forms. While surveys have been conducted previously on campuses, this is the first that attempts to measure progress on a systemwide basis.

CU Health Plan rates increase modestly for 2014-15 fiscal year[6]
[7]

Starting July 1, the university will contribute the same standard amount toward the monthly rates its faculty, university staff and classified staff pay for benefits plans.Currently, CU provides two different employer contributions toward benefit premiums for employees: one benefits plan contribution rate for faculty and university staff, and another for classified staff employees with appointments of 50 percent or greater.Starting July 1, part-time classified employees (less than 50 percent FTE), will also be eligible for CU Health plans. The state of Colorado plans for part-time employees will be eliminated, and the university will contribute equally to all employees’ CU benefits plans. This change is in response to the Affordable Care Act.
The CU Health Plan will increase the overall cost of its benefits plans to a rate below the state and national averages—meaning CU employees will see modest increases to their health care rates in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

The overall cost of CU’s 2014-15 benefits plans will increase an average of 7.8 percent. That modest rise—coupled with the university’s contribution to employees’ health care premiums—means employees will not pay significantly more for their health care this plan year.

In some cases, employees will pay rates that are only a dollar or two more than what they are currently paying. In most cases, these new rates will be lower than those paid by employees in the 2012-13 fiscal year.

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 state of Colorado plans (8.3 percent – 10.9 percent), Denver-Boulder area plans (9 percent), and higher education nationwide (8.7 percent).

They attribute relatively low health care costs, in part, to our focus on preventive care and wellness and offering services that are customized to the needs of the people they serve.

Rates for CU Health Plan High-Deductible **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.

Other changes include:
Members of CU Health Plan - Exclusive will see an average increase of $6.87 to their premiums. CU Health Plan - High Deductible will increase modestly for surviving spouses only, with a maximum increase of $1 from the 2013-14 rates CU Health Plan–Kaiser increased its 2013-14 rates by an average of $9.76. Some of the largest rate increases will be felt by members of CU Health Plan – Access, a higher-cost, deductible-free plan that's open only to current enrollees.
Prepare for Open Enrollment—Monday, April 28, through Friday, May 16—by reviewing specific rates for the 2014-15 plan year at www.cu.edu/oe/rates[8].

Learn more about plan changes and Open Enrollment sessions at www.cu.edu/oe[9].

Three exceptional CU educators awarded high honors[10]

Three faculty members from across the University of Colorado system have been named 2014 President's Teaching Scholars, each recognized as an educator who skillfully integrates teaching and research at an exceptional level.

The title of President's Teaching Scholar[11] 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.

New scholars this year are:
[12]
Lisa Keränen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Communication, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, CU Denver [13]
Helen Norton, J.D., Associate Professor, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, University of Colorado School of Law, CU-Boulder [14]
Raphael Sassower, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Philosophy, UCCS
Keränen specializes in studying and teaching the rhetoric of medicine, health care and bioethics. As Director of Graduate Studies in Communication, she also teaches the introduction to graduate study seminar for her department. She has authored numerous publications, including an award-winning book, "Scientific Characters: Rhetoric, Politics, and Trust in Breast Cancer Research" (University of Alabama Press); her other publications address topics such as end-of-life discourse and biodefense, and she is working on a second book.

Keränen, who joined CU-Boulder in 2003 and CU Denver in 2009, says her goal is to "empower students to become lifelong learners equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed as effective, ethical contributors to our interconnected and mediated world." Her nominator, Sonja K. Foss, professor and past department chair, wrote that although Keränen is "a first-rate researcher and is someone who does a great deal of service in our department, on campus, and in the communication discipline, she is outstanding as a teacher."

Norton, who joined the Colorado Law faculty in 2007, previously served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice and as Director of Legal and Public Policy at the National Partnership for Women & Families. She has been honored with multiple Excellence in Teaching Awards. Her scholarly and teaching interests include constitutional law, civil rights, and employment discrimination law. She is frequently invited to testify before Congress and federal agencies on civil rights law and policy issues.

Her nominators, Professor Mimi Wesson and Dean Phil Weiser, noted in their letter that when Norton agreed to serve as the school's associate dean, she declined the customary reduction of course load. Her commitment to teaching, they wrote, "has multiplied the credibility of her efforts to place teaching at the center of our shared mission, no matter what other contributions we may be making."

Sassower's main area of interest is postmodern technoscience as applied to all the sciences and cultural studies. His

scholarly publications, including 18 books, examine economic and medical theory and methodology, science and technology, postmodernism, education, aesthetics, and Popperian philosophy. His latest book, “The Price of Public Intellectuals,” just came out from Palgrave Macmillan. His upcoming book, “Has Science Sold Out?,” will be out later this year from Polity Press.

Since joining UCCS in 1986, his accomplishments include founding the Center for Women’s Studies, the Film Studies Program, and the Center for Legal Studies. In recent years, he has mentored assistant professors, instructors and lecturers.

“Professor Sassower’s commitment to his academic pursuits is evident in his excellent teaching evaluations, lengthy publication record, and testimonies from colleagues and students,” wrote Mary Ann Cutter, professor and past chair of the department. She calls him “an exemplary teacher, researcher, and role model to students and colleagues.”

Faculty, staff, students recognized for inclusive excellence[15]

Faculty, staff and students from across the University of Colorado have been named recipients of the annual President’s Diversity Award, which recognizes significant achievements of individuals and academic or administrative units in developing a more culturally diverse, compassionate university community reflective of inclusive excellence.

Awardees for 2014 will be recognized at a reception from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. May 2 in the first floor conference room at 1800 Grant St. All are invited to attend; RSVP by Tuesday, April 29, to academicaffairs@cu.edu[16].

The 2014 honorees are:

Faculty Award

Leonard Baca, Ed.D., Professor, School of Education, CU-Boulder
Professor Baca is one of the founders bilingual special education. His innovative work in this field has had a significant impact on how scholars and teachers understand and educate diverse learners. His pioneering work ended the erroneous placement of language learners being referred to special education services. In addition, his work enabled language learners with real disabilities to have better access to special education services.

Staff Awards

Dominic Martinez, Ed.D., Director, Office of Inclusion and Outreach, CU Anschutz Medical Campus
Dominic Martinez has reached across all University of Colorado campuses and the Front Range community to create a pipeline of underrepresented pre-health students for the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. He has spent countless hours on each campus counseling underrepresented undergraduate students who are hoping to move on to graduate school at CU Anschutz. He created an Undergraduate Pre-Health Program (UPP) where undergraduates learn about health careers while spending the summer on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Furthermore, his outreach extends to middle and high school students, pairing them with undergraduate mentors that can relate to these young students and demonstrate a path to success. His project has been duplicated by the CU Denver School of Education for aspiring teachers.

Peggy Lore, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Success, Division of Student Affairs, CU Denver
Peggy Lore has been an integral part of the CU Denver community for 30 years and has demonstrated superior leadership and commitment to diversity. She has developed opportunities for students to create leadership teams and organizations that promote a diverse and inclusive culture and has promoted programs, initiatives and projects in the area of diversity and inclusion. In addition, her involvement and leadership with countless community organizations has enhanced CU Denver’s image as a school that promotes diversity with a caring staff and a commitment to serving underrepresented students. Most significantly, she is never too busy to help any student who is struggling, or to congratulate one who is excelling.

Student Awards

Jeffery Almeda, Student, CU Denver
Jeffery Almeda has worked with and across multiple racial and ethnic populations, student groups and political organizations to create awareness around issues of diversity. He was pivotal in establishing the Latino Professional Network (LPN), a student group aimed at helping participants receive public speaking skills and other forms of professional development. In addition, he has served as president of the Muslim Student Association of Auraria and is a former president of the Native American Student Organization (NASO). He has been active on community committees, events and organizations voicing concerns about immigration reform, voting rights and higher education access.

Juedon Kebede, Student, CU-Boulder
Through Impact the Youth, Juedon Kebede has extended CU's reach into the surrounding community, making a positive impact on youth of color and helping them envision themselves as CU students. The program matches a CU student with a local high school student for weekly mentoring sessions about higher education opportunities. He is also an active presence in the University of Colorado Student Government and has completed a minor in the Leadership Studies program.

Suzuho Shimasaki, Student, CU Anschutz Medical Campus
Suzuho Shimasaki performs multiple roles in building the capacity for diversity and inclusiveness in organizations, encouraging and providing opportunities to improve diversity on the CU Anschutz campus and in the Colorado School of Public Health. She has played a leadership role in developing an innovative approach to creating a safe space for students to seek guidance by facilitating an "Explore Public Health" program to support students of color as they discover possible careers in public health. She also serves on the Health Equity Commission of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Board of Directors of the Colorado Public Health Association, the Board of Directors of the Mile High Japanese American Citizens League, and The Denver Foundation's Inclusiveness Project Committee and Basic Needs Committee.

Group Award

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), CU-Boulder
Counseling and Psychological Services has been a pivotal resource in advancing diversity and inclusion throughout the Boulder campus. The unit provides culturally competent counseling, outreach and prevention services that reflect a strong commitment to diversity. Highlighted among its many initiatives is the Implicit Attitudes program, which has offered extensive presentations on issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, international students, women, ability status, etc. The Implicit Attitudes program has resulted in the delivery of over 2,000 consultations, presentations and events, as well as the development of video series to address implicit attitudes in the classroom.

Also receiving commendations in 2014:
Archie Dalton, Student, CU Denver Bhawana Mohan, Student, CU-Boulder Le (An) Tran, Student, CU Denver Karen Rosenschein, Staff, CU-Boulder Jacquelyn Sullivan, Faculty, CU-Boulder James Walsh, Faculty, CU Denver Student Worker Alliance Program (SWAP), CU-Boulder

Mary Mercer bequest to help medical students in need[17]

[18]

With only $250 to her name for tuition upon enrolling in the University of Colorado School of Medicine in 1932, Mary E. Mercer ('43) several times had to suspend her medical education to earn money in various jobs before finally graduating 11 years later, at a time when few women earned M.D.s.

To honor the support that helped her resume her medical education, Mercer upon her death last year left more than $500,000 to support School of Medicine students inconvenienced by personal emergencies, such as family health issues, that might otherwise prevent them from graduating. This bequest adds to more than $100,000 in gifts she made to this fund starting in 2000.

“She was a wonderful human being that was very appreciative of the CU School of Medicine and the opportunities she had so she wouldn’t have to permanently drop out of medical school,” says Marsha Dawe, a retired CU planned giving officer and decade-long acquaintance of Mercer. “She was a lovely person—very knowledgeable and very highly regarded.”

Born in Connecticut in 1911, Mercer was influenced by her mother, a nurse, and her father, a country doctor. During World War II, female physicians were in high demand as U.S. hospitals sought to replace male physicians serving overseas. So, after her School of Medicine graduation, Mercer accepted a pediatric internship at Cornell Medical Center, where she ultimately headed the division of child development at the center’s Department of Pediatrics.

Among Mercer’s patients was renowned author Carson McCullers, who befriended Mercer and introduced her to other writers and artists from whom Mercer drew inspiration.

Mercer’s experiences are reflected in her own 1997 book, “The Art of Becoming Human.” In that book, which mixes her pediatrics experience with detail from her private life, Mercer wove in quotes to inform insights into dealing with love and separation.

“The purpose of a long life is to recover from the dark, secret love of our own opinions, and to acknowledge the blaze of truth in every moment, which helps us to become wiser and more understanding and compassionate with each other," Mercer wrote.

Though briefly married, Mercer devoted her energies to treating patients, even seeing children of former patients into her 80s at her Nyack, N.Y. practice. Mercer’s was a full life lived with compassion and selfless generosity. Though she began supporting “special-situation” students at CU more than a decade ago, she never met her student beneficiaries so that students would never feel they owed her anything.

About her book’s title, she wrote: “The key word in the title, ‘The Art of Becoming Human,’ is, of course, becoming. To be human in its best sense is to treat others as we wish to be treated.”

Research shows impact of Facebook unfriending[19]
[20]
Two studies from the University of Colorado Denver[21] are shedding new light on the most common type of `friend’ to be unfriended on Facebook and their emotional responses to it.
The studies, published earlier this year, show that the most likely person to be unfriended is a high school acquaintance.

"The most common reason for unfriending someone from high school is that the person posted polarizing comments often about religion or politics,” said Christopher Sibona, a doctoral student in the Computer Science and Information Systems program at the CU Denver Business School[22]. “The other big reason for unfriending was frequent, uninteresting posts."

Sibona’s first study examined `context collapse and unfriending behaviors’ on Facebook and his second looked at `the emotional response to being unfriended.’

Both studies were based on a survey of 1,077 people conducted on Twitter.

The first study found that the top five kinds of people respondents unfriended were:

High School friends Other Friend of a friend Work friends Common interest friend
“We found that people often unfriend co-workers for their actions in the real world rather than anything they post on Facebook,” Sibona said.

One reason he believes high school friends are top targets for unfriending is that their political and religious beliefs may not have been as strong when they were younger. And if those beliefs have grown more strident over time, it becomes easier to offend others.

“Your high school friends may not know your current political or religious beliefs and you may be quite vocal about them,” Sibona said. “And one thing about social media is that online disagreements escalate much more quickly.”

The second study looked at the emotional impact of being unfriended. Sibona found a range of emotions connected to unfriending, from being bothered to being amused.

The most common responses to being unfriended were:
I was surprised It bothered me I was amused I felt sad
“The strongest predictor is how close you were at the peak of your friendship when the unfriending happened,” said Sibona, who has studied the real world consequences of Facebook unfriending since 2010. “You may be more bothered and saddened if your best friend unfriends you.”

The study found four factors that predicted someone’s emotional response to being unfriended. Two factors predicted that a user would be negatively affected - if the unfriended person was once a close friend to the one who unfriended them and how closely the person monitored their own friend’s list.

Two other factors predicted that a user would be less negatively affected - if difficulties were discussed between the friends before the unfriending and if the person unfriended talked about it with others after the unfriending.

The research showed that unfriending happens more often to friends who were once close than to those who are acquaintances.

“Despite the preponderance of weak ties throughout online social networks, these findings help to place unfriending within the greater context of relationship dissolution,” the study said.

Sibona said that the ‘one size fits all’ method of ending digital relationships is unique but with real world consequences that warrant additional research.

“If you have a lot of friends on Facebook, the cost of maintaining those friendships is pretty low,” he said. “So if you make a conscious effort to push a button to get rid of someone, that can hurt.”

The two studies were published in the 2014 47th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences.

Sibona is currently investigating why people either stay on or leave Facebook. Those interested in helping him can take his anonymous survey at: https://businessucdenver.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bKJlBiKySkI872t[23]

Prof sees great future in (malleable) plastics[24]

Researchers at CU-Boulder have discovered a new kind of plastic, called “malleable polymers”, that can be reshaped or recycled either by heating or soaking in water. At top left, a piece of the material molds itself to a ball after being soaked in water. At lower left, the dried polymer assumes its new shape and is harder than it was before being modified, as seen at right. Photo courtesy of Wei Zhang.

Researchers at CU-Boulder have discovered a new kind of plastic that can be reshaped or recycled either by heating or soaking in water.

Wei Zhang, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry at CU-Boulder

Wei Zhang, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, led an interdisciplinary team of researchers that published its findings in the journal Advanced Materials[26] late last month. Philip Taynton, a graduate student in Zhang's research group, was part of the team.

Zhang's research group [27]collaborated with a team led by H. Jerry Qi[28], a University of Colorado Boulder professor of mechanical engineering who recently moved to the Georgia Institute of Technology. Their work was funded by the National Science Foundation.

The new material is a type of plastic called "malleable polymers." Also known as "covalent adaptive networks," these materials' properties stem from reversible chemistry, which allows chemical bonds between the atoms in the polymer structure to trade places at elevated temperature.

Wei Zhang, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry at CU-Boulder

Zhang's material is unique in that the chemical reaction is also catalyzed - accelerated – by water.

"This means that our material can be recycled at room temperature using only water and pressure," Zhang said. "After being ground to a fine powder, the material is pressed while wet to reform a coherent solid."

Taynton noted that other malleable polymers have some similar properties. But "the advantages of what we have are, 1, it doesn't need a catalyst, and 2, this crazy interaction with water that we discovered is pretty novel."

It's so novel, in fact, that the CU Technology Transfer Office has filed a patent application on the discovery, listing Zhang and Taynton as co-inventors.

Most materials, once they wear out, they are no longer useful, but our stuff, most of the things we're going to be making, after its initial use, people can just heat it up and mold it into something else they want to use it for."

One expert who reviewed the journal article commented, "The literature is filled with attempts at 'green chemistry,' but this manuscript reports the truly green self-healing of the polymer network."

The material displayed "impressive recyclability." It was recycled using mild heating and then ground to a powder through four generations.

The result: The material only got stronger. "The material became slightly more elastic as it was recycled, and its tensile strength also increased slightly," Zhang said.

While the material can be recycled, it appears particularly well-suited to being reused, Taynton said. "Most materials, once they wear out, they are no longer useful, but our stuff, most of the things we're going to be making, after its initial use, people can just heat it up and mold it into something else they want to use it for."

In theory, based on the group's observations, Zhang said, a piece of plastic equipment made from this type of malleable polymer could be remolded with water or a hair dryer to another form or, if cracked, repaired.

"Because it can be processed at such low temperature, it can be molded directly onto your body without burning you, but it's actually stronger than the materials they currently use for prosthetics and orthopedics," Taynton said. "So this could really change the way things are done in that industry."

Further, the malleable polymer could open the door to customized sporting goods such as “pads that you can mold directly on (to the body), that fit perfectly, that don’t have to be bulky and can be lower-profile,” he added.

In the case of a sports team, “you could basically have one set of pads, and every year you have a different team, you can remold those pads onto the new team. So they’re custom fit, but they can be custom refit.”

Zhang said: “This field is emerging. … It really has a bright future.”

Taynton added, “I hope so, because it’s better.”

Apart from the future, malleable plastics have a past, Taynton noted. For decades, researchers have known that some plastics could be malleable. But at that time, the goal was to create hard plastics that would not lose their shape.

Malleable plastics were said to have had “creep,” and “it was not looked favorably upon,” Taynton said. “Only recently, people have looked back, and it’s exactly the same phenomenon, this ‘creep,’ and ‘creep’ sounds bad.”

“But under our noses all this time was the ability to reuse and recycle (hard plastics), but it’s just not the direction industry went at that time. Now that our society has changed and our outlook has changed, we’re looking back at old papers,” as far back as 1954, that document different types of malleable polymers.

The CU-Boulder team’s discovery is elegantly simple, Zhang said. “It sounds like it’s straightforward, but it works really well. And that’s why industry will also show interest in that kind of technology, because they have an interest in something not exotic, not fancy, but scalable, reliable.”

The researchers are also exploring several other promising applications for their technology.

“The great thing is that this discovery is related to the chemical bond that holds the polymer together. By simply using different starting materials, one could potentially generate malleable polymers with limitless combinations of mechanical, chemical, optical, or electrical properties,” Zhang said.

Taynton noted that one of the pioneers in the field of covalent adaptive networks is another CU-Boulder faculty member, Christopher Bowman, distinguished professor of chemical and biological engineering.

Zhang has been recognized for other work as well. Last year, he won a prestigious Sloan Research Fellowship. That award recognized Zhang’s work in developing novel materials with potential applications in gas separation and storage, solar-energy conversion, chemical sensing and catalysis.

The gas-separation work could lead to new and improved mechanisms of “clean coal”—or carbon capture and sequestration—in which carbon dioxide is captured and pumped underground, where it can become inert.

Groundbreaking planned for latest housing expansion[30]

An architect’s rendering shows an aerial view of The Village at Alpine Valley.

The campus community is invited to attend groundbreaking ceremonies for a $74.5 million, 515-bed expansion to campus housing at 11 a.m. April 25.

About 20 university and student leaders and general contractor representatives are expected to dig a few inches into former parking lot 9 and officially begin a two-year project to build the Village at Alpine Valley housing complex on the west side of campus. CU Regent Kyle Hybl and Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak will lead the shovel brigade. Susan

Szpyrka, vice chancellor, Administration and Finance, will serve as the event emcee.

Refreshments will be served in the lobby of Antero House and there will be a souvenir giveaway for those who attend. Reservations should be sent to Iryse Naro, executive assistant, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, inaro@uccs.edu[32] by April 23.

The project calls for construction of more than 200,000 square feet of additional housing with space for 515 students. The new housing will be a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom suite-style student housing and will be located in what is currently Parking Lot 9 near the Alpine Village student apartments.

The new housing village will focus on the First Year Experience and will include a large multipurpose classroom, as well as four small classrooms and a dining hall. As has been the recent campus practice, the building will be constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold standard.

Plans call for the construction to occur in two phases. The first phase, scheduled to open in Aug. 2015, will include space for 292 students, a new dining hall and additional academic programming areas. A second phase, scheduled to open in Aug. 2016, will include space for 223 more students to live.

When complete, UCCS will have space for 1,640 students to live on campus.

In fall 2013, UCCS opened Copper and Eldora Houses, adding space for 192 students. The expansion of student housing was identified as a priority in the 2012-2010 UCCS Strategic Plan.

Related articles

Campus housing expansion moves forward[33]

Regents approve new housing finance plan[34]

Housing crunch puts students into UCCS-managed space on North Nevada[35]

TV transformation begins at Anschutz Health and Wellness Center[36]

[37]
The ABC Television Network will air 13 two-hour episodes of the hit series "Extreme Weight Loss," a unique, non-competitive show about weight loss transformations. Unlike previous seasons, the first three months of the participants' journey were spent at University of Colorado's Anschutz Health and Wellness Center (AHWC).

The show documents the 365-day journey of 17 "super obese" people. The participants, whose lives have become unmanageable because of their weight, undergo a transformation not only of their bodies, but of who they are as individuals.

Holly Wyatt, MD, medical director at AHWC and on the show, is a guiding force in helping "Extreme Weight Loss" participants safely lose up to half their body weight. She works alongside transformation specialist and trainer Chris Powell.

"Taking this journey with participants as their doctor, cheerleader and biggest fan is one of the most memorable and meaningful aspects of my career," said Wyatt, the medical director for "Extreme Weight Loss." "I also struggled with weight in my teens and twenties so I can empathize with the physical and emotional challenges they face."

The Anschutz Health and Wellness Center offers some of the country's most advanced research and science-based expertise, focusing on a comprehensive wellness approach including weight loss and management, fitness and

nutrition.

“It was incredible. In just one year with Holly and her team, we learned so many new things about weight loss, scientifically - as well as psychologically and emotionally,” said Matt Assmus, executive producer of “Extreme Weight Loss.”

“The most amazing thing is that even though Holly’s team consists of the foremost obesity experts in the world, they wanted to learn from OUR experience. It’s that desire to keep learning that will help Holly and her team lead the field of health and wellness,” said Assmus.

Added JD Roth, executive producer of “Extreme Weight Loss” and CEO of the show’s production company Eyeworks USA, “Season four of “Extreme Weight Loss” highlights a new and evolved approach to our process, which we owe largely to the commitment and expertise of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center. We’re so gratified to have partnered with this driving, innovative institution, and look forward to growing that relationship over the life of the EWL franchise.”

In conjunction with the new season’s launch, the CU Advocates program is hosting an informational event about the center featuring CU’s James Hill, Ph.D. The May 14 presentation includes a tour of the center, an educational program and “State of Slim” book signing. Free, though registration is required – click here for details[38].

Molnar honored as 2014 Distinguished Research Lecturer[39]

[40]

Peter Molnar of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences and the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder has been selected as the 2014 Distinguished Research Lecturer.

Few scientists have consistently tackled as broad a spectrum of challenging problems in the physics of the Earth at a fundamental level. What distinguishes Molnar from any other leading Earth scientists is the remarkable range of tools that he brings to his work: his observational skills in seismology, tectonic physics and geological field work and his extensive theoretical contributions in related heat and mass transfer in the solid earth, the oceans and the atmosphere. Molnar's exemplary scholarship and service reflect the best this university has to offer.

The lecture will be presented by Molnar on Sept. 5 at 4 p.m. in Old Main Chapel, and will be followed by a reception in the Heritage Center.

Bauer named Outstanding Staff Member of Year[41]

Photo by Philip Denman
Photo by Philip Denman

Ida Bauer’s generosity, knowledge, emotional support, and caring attitude make the UCCS Family Development Center a destination for families throughout Colorado Springs, according to her colleagues.

Bauer, director of the Family Development Center, recently was selected as the UCCS Outstanding Staff Member of the Year. She’ll accept her award as well as a $1,000 bonus during a May 7 campus ceremony.

“Ida Bauer, simply put, is the best supervisor I have ever had,” Sally Ziegler, supervising teacher at the center, wrote

in her nomination letter. “[She] works directly with the families of the children in our center, supporting them when they are faced with challenging behaviors from their child and offering insight and suggestions.”

According said her greatest accomplishment during her 20 years at UCCS has been implementing Conscious Discipline at the Family Development Center. Conscious Discipline is a teaching technique that integrates social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation so teachers spend less time policing behaviors and more time teaching vital life skills.

Bauer is the only certified Conscious Discipline instructor in Colorado Springs and regularly hosts workshops for Colorado Springs teachers and parents.

“Conscious Discipline teaches us to change our approach to discipline from something we do to children to something we develop within them,” Bauer said. “This gives the children coping skills they can take with them for their whole lives.”

While working with children is one of Bauer’s favorite aspects of her job, one of the most fulfilling aspects came as a surprise.

“Unlike most centers, at the FDC I have had the opportunity to work with college students and they have enriched my life in ways I never anticipated. They keep me young by exposing me to all of the latest trends,” Bauer said. “It gives me hope for the future to see the young frightened freshman coming in and the mature adults they become as their bright minds and skills are honed by our wonderful campus.”

Students, faculty, staff, alumni and Colorado Springs community members may all send their children to the FDC, which runs full-time programs for 1- to 5- year-olds, and a full-day summer camp for 6- to 11 year-olds.

Tomback receives prestigious fellowship[43]

[44]
Diana Tomback, professor and associate chair of integrative biology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at CU Denver, is the recipient of a Charles Bullard fellowship in Forest Research from Harvard University.

Tomback will be spending the spring semester and summer of 2015 based in the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology collaborating with a colleague at Harvard, and then two months working at Harvard Forest in Petersham, Mass., collaborating with another colleague.

This fellowship will provide Tomback with the opportunity to write research synthesis and policy papers in collaboration with colleagues, as well as interact with other members of the Harvard University faculty.

Dropping names ...[45]

Schroeppel

Ken Schroeppel, instructor and director of Professional Engagement for Planning at the College of Architectue and Planning at CU Denver, recently gave three one-hour walking tours of the Denver Union Station project. On March 20 and 22, he guided 75 people as a fundraiser for the Denver Architectural Foundation and, specifically, Doors Open Denver (DoD). Schroeppel also was interviewed by Colorado Public Radio station KUVO during their morning First Take news program about urbanism and Denver's growth and revitalization. … **Fernando Feliu-Moggi**, associate professor in the Department of Languages and Cultures at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, presented "Roberto Cabrera in Guatemalan Visual Arts" in late March at Casa de Cervantes, the leading cultural center in Guatemala City, Guatemala. He explored the work of one of the leading figures in the development of contemporary art in Guatemala since the 1950s. He also participated in the 22nd International Congress of Central American Literature, March 26-29, where he presented a paper on contemporary Guatemalan poet and filmmaker Julio Serrano. … Three university research groups have been awarded patents. A research group led by **Malik Kahook** and **Naresh Mandava** (School of Medicine, ophthalmology, and University of Colorado Hospital Eye Center) have been awarded a patent for artificial intraocular lenses made from shape-memory polymers. By making use of "smart" polymer materials, these lenses offer a patient-customized, less invasive lens replacement when natural lenses in the eye must be removed due to cataracts or other eye diseases. Along with related intellectual property, this patent is being commercialized by ShapeTech LLC, a CU startup company based in Denver. The CU Technology Transfer Office began prosecuting this patent portfolio on behalf of the university in March 2011. The patent (U.S. 8,685,089, "Shape Memory Polymer Intraocular Lenses") was issued on April 1, 2014. Other inventors on this patent are CU Denver bioengineering researchers Robin Shandas (bioengineering chair) and Bryan Rech. Two groups of chemical and biological engineering (ChBE) researchers led by **John Falconer** and **Richard Noble** have been awarded patents for methods to make improved gas separation membranes, which have great potential in chemical and petrochemical industries for large-scale separations, such as natural gas sweetening and CO2 sequestration. U.S. Patent 8,679,227 ("High flux SAPO-34 membranes for CO2/CH4 separation and template removal method") was issued on March 25, 2014; TTO filed the initial patent application on behalf of CU in April 2010, and related patents are pending in several key oil-producing countries. In addition to Falconer and Noble, inventors on this patent include ChBE research associate **Begum Tokay** and former ChBE researcher Yanfeng Zhang (now of the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute). U.S. Patent 8,685,143 ("Method of making a high-performance supported gas separation molecular sieve membrane using a shortened crystallization time") was issued on April 1, 2014, with an initial filing date of May 2009, and related patents pending in several countries. In addition to Falconer and Noble, inventors on this patent include ChBE researcher **Hans Funke**, former ChBE researchers Moises Carreon (now of the University of Louisville) and Shiguang Li (now of the Gas Technology Institute), and collaborators from Shell Global Solutions.

Applications for PTLC Faculty Researchers being accepted[47]

Funding is available as part of the the President's Office for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: 2014-2015 President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative (PTLC).

Applications for the 2014-2015 cohort of PTLC Faculty Researchers are now being accepted.

Central to the work of the Collaborative is creating and publishing scholarship in teaching and learning that contributes both to theory and effective teaching practice in and across disciplines. To this end, each Faculty Researcher designs and undertakes an investigation aimed at deepening understanding of disciplinary pedagogy and related to an important issue in learning.

Faculty Researchers design, carry out, and publish research on a particular aspect of learning in a specific course. Each investigator is supported by a Coach and short seminars in how to do education research. Faculty researchers will receive funding totaling $1,550 for their research that may include a student research assistant and travel to present one's research.

All application materials must be submitted electronically to elizabeth.lawrence@colorado.edu[48] by May 16, 2014. Complete details are posted at:

http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/PTLC_Call.html[49] For information on participants and their research: http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/ParticipantsandResearch.html[50] To see successful proposals from past years: http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/proposals/ResearchProjects.html[51]

CU-Boulder student inventions to be demonstrated Saturday at Engineering Design Expo[52]

A deployable fire hose stand designed for the Longmont Fire Department and a heat-resistant mask designed to protect firefighters and fire victims from poisonous fumes will be among more than 90 student inventions showcased at the University of Colorado Boulder's Engineering Design Expo on Saturday, April 26.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will feature a wide range of student-built devices including adaptive technology for people with disabilities, Rube Goldberg machines and even hovercrafts.

The Design Expo will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory on Regent Drive south of Colorado Avenue. Projects will be exhibited both indoors and outdoors on the adjacent plaza.

The annual event is a popular educational activity for families and will showcase the work of about 350 students, including first-year engineering students as well as graduating seniors and local high school students.

Volunteers from industry, government and the community serve as judges for the Engineering Design Expo, rating each project on its originality, craftsmanship, grasp of engineering principles, effectiveness and presentation. An awards ceremony will be held at 12:30 p.m., and prizes will be given to the best project in each category. Attendees can vote for their favorite project to win the "People's Choice" award.

Free parking is available across the street in lot 436. For more information, call 303-492-7222 or go to http://itll.colorado.edu[53].

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/community-connections-strong-among-staff-council-honorees[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/staff-award_top1.png[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/search-underway-next-academic-affairs-vp[4] https://www.jobsatcu.com/postings/81455[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/social-climate-survey-set-relaunch[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-health-plan-rates-increase-modestly-2014-15-fiscal-year[7] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/oe1415.png[8] http://www.cu.edu/oe/rates[9] http://www.cu.edu/oe[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/three-exceptional-cu-educators-awarded-high-honors[11] http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/[12] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pts_Keranen.png[13] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pts_Norton.png[14] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pts_Sassower.png[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/faculty-staff-students-recognized-inclusive-excellence[16] mailto:academicaffairs@cu.edu[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/mary-mercer-bequest-help-medical-students-need[18] https://connections.cu.edu/file/mercerpng[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/research-shows-impact-facebook-unfriending[20] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ucd_unfriend.png[21] http://www.ucdenver.edu/[22] http://www.business.cudenver.edu/[23] https://businessucdenver.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bKJlBiKySkI872t[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/prof-sees-great-future-malleable-plastics[25] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-

content/uploads/2014/04/ucb_malleable-plastics.png[26]
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291521-4095[27] http://chem.colorado.edu/zhanggroup/[28]
http://mse.colorado.edu/faculty/h-jerry-qi/[29] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ucb_malleable-plastics_Zhang.png[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/groundbreaking-planned-latest-housing-expansion[31] https://connections.cu.edu/file/uccshousing-expansionpng[32]
mailto:inaro@uccs.edu[33] http://communique.uccs.edu/?p=9845[34] http://communique.uccs.edu/?p=10838[35]
http://communique.uccs.edu/?p=7623[36] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/tv-transformation-begins-anschutz-health-and-wellness-center[37] https://connections.cu.edu/file/anschutzhealth-and-wellnesspng[38]
https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/UCO/event/showEventForm.jsp?form_id=173052[39]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/molnar-honored-2014-distinguished-research-lecturer[40]
https://connections.cu.edu/file/molnerppng[41] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bauer-named-outstanding-staff-member-year[42] https://connections.cu.edu/file/pbauerpng[43] https://connections.cu.edu/people/tomback-receives-prestigious-fellowship[44] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/p_tomback.png[45]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/dropping-names-88[46] https://connections.cu.edu/file/p-dnschroeppelpng[47]
https://connections.cu.edu/stories/applications-ptlc-faculty-researchers-being-accepted-0[48]
mailto:elizabeth.lawrence@colorado.edu[49] http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/PTLC_Call.html[50]
http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/ParticipantsandResearch.html[51]
http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/proposals/ResearchProjects.html[52] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-boulder-student-inventions-be-demonstrated-saturday-engineering-design-expo[53] http://ucolorado.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d%3e3529%26JDG%3c95%3a473%3b%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=MC&RI=4100720&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=9787&Action=Follow+Link