From Pokémon to MOOCs, COLTT races between tech topics[1]

In the summer of 2016, a discussion of technology would be incomplete without a mention of the ubiquitous game Pokémon GO. That's true even when the tech focus is education, as it was during the Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology conference, or COLTT.

"I tried Pokémon GO and I loved it," said keynote speaker Brenda Allen. "But then I got home and I deleted it. I said to myself, 'This will not control my life!'"

Allen, vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion and professor of communication at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus, attracted a large audience during the first of COLTT's two days, Aug. 3-4 at Wolf Law on the CU Boulder campus. She was among the 450-plus attendees and presenters from across the CU system and other colleges and universities throughout the state.

In her talk, Allen asked attendees to consider the promise of technology – efficient communication, precision delivery of information, improved understanding and quality of life – and to be aware of barriers that block that promise.

"There are barriers of awareness," Allen said. "There is information we can't access because we don't know about its existence in the first place. In my mind, there also are barriers to the awareness of the existence of certain tools and technology that we might use."

Her wide-ranging talk also noted a topic that has trended up and down in recent years, MOOCs. "Although the MOOCs have not taken off as people seemingly thought they would, they've shifted the conversation about pedagogy and how to assess student learning," Allen said.

In one of the conference's lively panel sessions, educators shared lessons from their own experiences in developing MOOCs. The title of the talk: "Put Down Your Forks, Folks. MOOCs Aren't Done Yet!"

"I'm passionate about what I do," said CU Denver's John Byrd, an economist. "I wanted to share it and leave a handprint. I wanted to have a bigger audience than I could get in our MBA program.

"Our MOOC has got a huge social side to it. I would love to have those people who go through the course to come back and share their ideas and teach the course. There are incredible opportunities here. … MOOCs can be a lot more than educational – they can be an enormous source of social good and social change."

Roger Martinez of UCCS said his work on developing a MOOC on the study of manuscripts from the middle ages has given him new perspective on the speed at which education is traveling.

"With MOOCs, I can see that what I taught in 2014 doesn't work in 2016," Martinez said. "Videos of lectures have to be, instead of 30 minutes, five to seven minutes. That might be disturbing to a lot of academics – it's disturbing to me – to think that all that content went out the window. It's not about that; it's about delivering content in compact pieces. I'm being much more choosey about the readings I'm providing students. The MOOC has fine-tuned by thinking in terms of understanding that I have limited time with my students."

Other COLTT sessions took irreverent turns while maintaining sharp focuses on thought stimulation. For the popular Shark Tank, COLTT Conference Executive Director Deborah Keyek-Franssen enticed competitors with $750,000 in "shark dollars," requiring the educators to pitch their disruptive technology ideas to potential investors and Professor Curmudgeon, played by Michael Lightner, vice president for academic affairs. And in the Academic Pundit Showdown, CU Denver's David Thomas played emcee for a rapid-fire, game-show-style discussion of gamification and robots infiltrating higher education.

At dozens of other sessions, faculty and staff shared tips, tricks and tools, suggestions for the newest apps and online resources, and best practices for making the most of technology in higher education. During breaks, there was time for networking – and perhaps a walk around campus to catch 'em all on Pokémon GO.

President Benson to receive Courage in Education Award[2]

For his dedication to encouraging intellectual diversity and the free and robust exchange of ideas, CU President Bruce D. Benson will receive the inaugural Courage in Education Award from the Steamboat Institute[3] at its 2016 Freedom Conference, set for Aug. 26-27.

“In recent years, we have observed many universities caving to the pressures of ‘political correctness’ and, in the process, stifling free speech and intellectual diversity on college campuses,” said Jennifer Schubert-Akin, chairman and CEO of the Steamboat Institute. “Fortunately, for the citizens of Colorado and the students at CU, President Bruce Benson has demonstrated courage and leadership by encouraging intellectual diversity and free speech at CU.”

Benson’s leadership has enabled the culture on the campus to evolve to welcome intellectual diversity and the free and robust exchange of ideas, she said.

“Under his leadership, CU has made huge strides in advancing conservative thought and policy. Because of President Benson, CU is setting an outstanding example for other universities by encouraging open inquiry, vigorous debate, and the free exchange of ideas. The Steamboat Institute takes great pride in recognizing President Benson’s courage and leadership by presenting him with a special ‘Courage in Education’ award.”

Said Benson, “I’m honored to be the first recipient of the Steamboat Institute’s Courage in Education Award. It recognizes the important work we are engaged in at CU to ensure that diversity of thought is a part of our institutional culture. It’s critical that we teach students how to think, not what to think, and that our university is a place that values and promotes debate, discussion and, above all, free speech.”

Benson will be honored at the closing luncheon of the Steamboat Institute’s eighth annual Freedom Conference and Festival[4] in Steamboat Springs on Aug. 27.

Hundreds move their feet at Be Colorado, CU Health Plan 5K run[5]

Get some exercise, earn $25 monthlyCU Health Plan primary members can earn a $25 monthly incentive for exercising 30 minutes for 12 days with Be Colorado’s Move. program.

Get moving today.[6]

CU Health Plan and Be Colorado took another step in their movement to promote a holistic approach to wellness by hosting the recent Feel the Heat and Move Your Feet 5K! in Denver’s Washington Park.

With cool, slightly humid mid-60s temperatures the morning of Aug. 7, no one at Washington Park seemed to feel the heat on race day – not that anyone complained. More than 400 health plan members showed up to move their feet.

“CU Health Plan is more than just health insurance. We value wellness, and we want to show that with the events we hold,” said Mallory Bergen, health coordinator at CU Health Plan. “We wanted to encourage people who have never done a 5K to try one out.”

Gathered about 30 feet from the starting line, Kristen Rollins chatted with members of her staff from the University of Colorado Boulder’s Center for Student Involvement. Some were experienced 5K runners; others were trying it for the first time. “We thought it would be a fun chance for our staff to get out together and do something healthy on the weekend,” Rollins said. “We’re excited to support (the first-timers).”

At 8:30 a.m. at the starting line, Anne Lindberg of CorePower Yoga led a 10-minute yoga warmup, calling out and demonstrating stretches and lunges that racers replicated, readying themselves for the race.

Children lined up at 8:45 a.m. for the Kid's Dash. Crossing the finish line a few minutes later, the little racers received a balloon, a ribbon, a pair of colorful sunglasses as well as high-fives from the Delta Dental of Colorado Tooth Fairy.

As the 5K race neared, the announcer reminded all participants to turn on their Be Colorado Move. apps. The program pays participants $25 for completing 30 minutes of activity 12 days a month. "This is going to count as a workout for sure," the announcer quipped.

Once the announcer counted down to zero, racers – some going solo, some paired with the family dog, others pushing strollers – flooded across the starting line. The 3.1-mile race snaked around Washington Park's scenic lake and gardens. At the finish line, racers could grab waters and visit booths with information about Be Colorado, UCHealth, the CU Anschutz Health and Wellness Center, Anthem, Kaiser, Delta Dental of Colorado and Blue Moose of Boulder.

A scant 18 minutes later, the first racer crossed the finish line. Sam Cosgrove, program coordinator for International Student Involvement at CU-Boulder's Cultural Unity and Engagement Center, was the top male finisher with a time of 18:11 – an average 5:52 mile. Ioanna Antonopoulos, a post-doctoral fellow at the CU Anschutz Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, took the top female prize with a time of 19:48 – an average 6:23 mile.

"When I saw the email for this event, it seemed like a good way to get involved in the community and tie in my love of running," said Antonopoulos, who ran cross country for the University of Delaware as an undergraduate and now uses her Move. app to spur on her exercise routine. "I think it's important that the health plans tie in wellness. It shows employees we're not just seen as workers or employees, but we're family members, athletes and more."

Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor to speak at CU Boulder[7]

Program to ease transfer extends to Pueblo[8]

How international scholars get a U.S. visa[9]

Collaboration brings new lodging facility to Guatemala clinic[10]

Long to direct CU Denver Student Wellness Center[11]

Keaveney recognized for sustainability issues in business curriculum[12]

Baas lectures in Austria[13]
[14]

Roy Franc Baas, senior instructor in Leeds Finance Division, CU Boulder, recently delivered a lecture to the Wirtshaftskammer Tirol's (aka WKO, Chamber of Commerce) banking and finance executives, including several Austrian bank presidents and senior officers. His topic, Negative Interest Rates: New Tool of Central Banks and Its Effects on Money and Capital Markets, was well-received at the July 28 event and generated extended Q&A, followed by a reception hosted by the WKO. Baas also is a longtime adjunct professor of economics and finance with the University of New Orleans-Innsbruck (Austria) International Summer School.

Among the 35 attendees were Dr. Ann Edward, UNO Anthropology professor; and Dr. Barbara Cooper, University of Georgia Foreign Languages professor; and Mag. Stefan Garbislander, Senior Manager of WKO programs.

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/pok-mon-moocs-coltt-races-between-tech-topics[2]
https://connections.cu.edu/stories/president-benson-receive-courage-education-award[3]
http://www.steamboatinstitute.org/[4] http://steamboatinstitute.org/freedom-conference/[5]
https://connections.cu.edu/stories/hundreds-move-their-feet-be-colorado-cu-health-plan-5k-run[6]
http://becolorado.org/programs/be-colorado-move[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/supreme-court-justice-sotomayor-speak-cu-boulder[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/program-ease-transfer-extends-pueblo[9]
https://connections.cu.edu/stories/how-international-scholars-get-us-visa[10]
https://connections.cu.edu/stories/collaboration-brings-new-lodging-facility-guatemala-clinic[11]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/long-direct-cu-denver-student-wellness-center[12]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/keaveney-recognized-sustainability-issues-business-curriculum[13]
https://connections.cu.edu/people/baas-lectures-austria[14]
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