

[Five questions for Mary Ann Cutter](#)[1]

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In the 1970s, Mary Ann Cutter was a Georgetown University undergraduate. The pre-med student and philosophy major was introduced to the philosophy of medicine through the work and teaching of physician-philosopher H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr. and bioethicist Tom L. Beauchamp, both influential thinkers in the biomedical ethics movement in the U.S.

Later, as a graduate student in biology and then philosophy at Georgetown in the 1980s, she began work on the ways in which classifications and descriptions of diseases frame how they are treated, and how they set up ethical challenges that must be addressed.

"In the 1990s, I applied this approach in my work on AIDS, health care reform, ovarian and uterine cancers, and concepts of death," Cutter said.

Today, Cutter is a professor in the Philosophy Department at UCCS, where she has established a lengthy, award-winning CU career that began at CU Denver in 1988. Her most recent high honor is the 2019-20 [Elizabeth D. Gee Memorial Lectureship Award](#)[3], presented by the CU Faculty Council Women's Committee, in recognition of her efforts to advance women in academia, interdisciplinary scholarly contributions and distinguished teaching.

Her global work on death and dying has culminated in a popular class at UCCS as well as a [major book publication in 2019](#)[4]. In 2012, she began work on ethical issues raised by how physicians understand and treat breast cancer, and this year is looking at how decisions are made regarding diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of COVID-19.

"In short, my interest is on how philosophical claims and assumptions frame our biomedical ethical standpoints, and guide how we think about resolving ethical dilemmas in clinical medicine," Cutter said.

1. Regarding your Gee Award, fellow UCCS Professor Raphael Sassower said that you have "consistently and generously supported women faculty from the ranks of full professors to lecturers." In your experience, what are the most valuable ways women in academia can help one another?

Here are few initial thoughts:

Know the reward system. Stay focused on your work and your goals. (Set aside time each day or week for your work, writing and research.) Balance your work and home life. Ask questions and inquire into possibilities because the worst someone can say is "no." Be confident in who you are; you can't be someone else. Avoid gossip and treat others equitably. Find one or two (yes, just a few) trusted mentors and ask them to be your sounding board on matters. Personally, I find that some women faculty feel obligated to do certain tasks (in part, because they are asked to do them) and I tell them, "Don't; just say no." More positively, serve in ways that you can make a difference and in which you can grow and flourish.

Good service is good leadership. Knowing what and how to serve requires a stake in the activity or event. Women bring to leadership roles and their service, perspectives on life and work that come about through their unique life experiences. These perspectives are important to all of us in academia in creating a more inclusive and diverse environment.

2. How is COVID-19 influencing your teaching and research? How have you managed remote teaching during the pandemic?

Ask teachers, and they will tell you that COVID-19 has been a challenge in many ways: (1) how to deliver educational content during a pandemic, (2) how to transition from live to remote learning, (3) how to be present to students in ways that are helpful and open to what is needed, (4) how to find assistance when questions arise, (5) how to set up the home office in ways that work, (6) how to continue the research and writing that is expected, (7) how to be the teacher, parent, grandparent, care provider, home cook, and all-around get-it-done person one is expected to be during this time, and (8) we could go on.

Personally, I transitioned well to remote learning because, years ago and as chair of my department, I saw the emergence of interest in online studies and thought I should get involved. And so, I attended online learning classes and submitted three of my courses for Quality Matters certification. I currently teach those three courses on a regular basis, both live and online, and so I was able to transition as best I could from live to remote class delivery.

I must say that I find online teaching inevitable, challenging and rewarding for those who can teach and learn this way. As an educator, I find that online teaching requires me to be organized in all that I do, succinct in my words, intentional with regard to my learning objectives, humble in my attempts to try out new things, available to learners who contact me all through the week, and open to more engaged dialogue from students who seem to be more willing to post discussion board comments than share thoughts in a live class.

My advice to those teaching remotely follows:

Find others who teach online in your discipline or a related discipline and seek their advice. After COVID-19 hit, I found myself along with a few others in my department becoming an informal trainer to others. We put together tip sheets and made ourselves available. The first two weeks that we moved to remote learning were pretty crazy because the call-centers that we typically use were swamped and we had to figure out for ourselves how to make something work. Be organized in each aspect of the course (e.g., the announcements, syllabus, modules, synchronous or asynchronous lectures, discussion boards, peer-review, assignments, surveys, etc.). Have a clear sense of the goals one seeks to achieve in each aspect of the course. Think about delivering content in a “pluralistic” way: Use text, visuals, auditory means, and multiple measures of assessment (e.g., formal and informal writing, multiple choice, discussion boards, peer-group exercises, etc.). Do not expect that online teaching and learning is for everyone and every discipline, because it is not. Have fun and try new things out and encourage feedback from students about what works and what does not work.

3. The coronavirus pandemic has brought on some politically charged public conversation surrounding the value of life and trade-offs in terms of economic impact. What are your impressions of this discussion?

There are so many trade-offs or risk assessments that we have confronted during this pandemic, including the value of life vs. economic impact, individual vs. societal rights, individual vs. societal obligations, and those raised by just allocation of resources. We have encountered such trade-offs in our work life (e.g., live vs. remote classes), our personal and family lives (e.g., physical visits with family vs. Zoom visits), and our social networks (e.g., opened vs. closed businesses).

Regarding the value of life vs. economic impact, we have all been asked in some way to restrict life choices in order to save lives (e.g., by following state and local laws regarding social distancing, wearing masks, and running our businesses, etc.). This has resulted in economic impact to varying degrees. Alternatively, some have been able to redesign their economic lives in order to minimize negative impact on others (e.g., by delivering work products remotely), and some have been able to maintain their incomes.

Such scenarios – involving how we work, shop for essentials, visit with each other, and take care of ourselves – highlight the trade-offs we all have in our day-to-day lives, but, during this pandemic, they have been focal points because of the emergence of a novel and evolving viral infection that leads to sudden death among certain segments of the population (e.g., the elderly, the minority, and those in work environments in which there is close human contact). And we have confronted the limits of medical resources and worried about things like dying alone and not being able to mourn our loved one’s passing in our expected ways. Some of these trade-offs (e.g., restricting my choices when I venture out into public) are unavoidable and some (e.g., allowing patients to die alone in hospitals) need to be addressed more critically.

In addition to thinking about how we as humans deal with trade-offs, the epidemic has been an opportunity to think about how we manage uncertainty in decision-making. The pandemic has confronted us with the challenge of making decisions quickly and in a fluid way about something that we do not fully understand in order to prevent against otherwise preventable deaths. How we manage uncertainty in clinical decision-making as patients and health care providers is the focus of my upcoming book.

4. What can you tell us about that and other book projects you have in the works? What inspires you to take on a topic in book form?

My current projects include two sole-authored books, *Managing Uncertainty in Clinical Decision-Making: The Case of COVID-19* and *Practical Ethics: Readings and Reflections*.

I work on book-length projects because I am interested in providing a perspective on a subject matter that provides its background, its current terrain, and suggestions about how to think about it. This work requires more pages than what an article typically allows.

I'll share a bit about the first book because it relates to COVID-19. *Managing Uncertainty in Clinical Decision-Making: The Case of COVID-19* focuses on how we manage uncertainty in the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of COVID-19, and addresses the ethical duty we have to recognize such uncertainty.

Uncertainty pervades clinical decision-making in a number of ways. It affects how we understand and treat clinical problems such as COVID-19. Clinical problems, such as COVID-19, are uncertain because knowledge and treatment of them are always limited. They are limited by their nature as changing and evolving natural phenomena and the empirical methods that are used to know them. Clinical problems are uncertain because they are expressed differently in patients and therefore respond differently to treatment.

As a consequence, it is important for clinicians and patients to recognize clinical uncertainty, think through how to manage it, and acknowledge the ethical implications of addressing uncertainty in clinical decision-making in order to respect those in the health care setting, maximize patient welfare, and allocate health care resources equitably.

More specifically, and when possible:

Reduce the timeline when making decisions (in part because evidence is more relevant in the short run); Take one risk or a set of risks at a time and avoid unnecessary or irrelevant risks; Think through how to manage clinical uncertainty through "multiple means" of evidence and "multiple ways" of framing it; Invest in keeping options open and be flexible or fluid in decision-making (in light of the evolving nature of clinical evidence and how we come to know); Keep one's personal and collective goals and values at the forefront and tend to them (and do not compromise central moral principles); Do the best one can, accept the decisions one has made, and minimize speculative guessing about decisions made in the past (thereby, engaging in compassion for the self and others); and Practice making decisions under uncertainty (through, for instance, finding a mentor to run through options, paying attention to how one cognitively and emotionally processes it).

5. Among your many awards is the title of President's Teaching Scholar, a systemwide designation you received in 2018. What has it meant to have that title?

The short response to this question is that being recognized as a President's Teaching Scholar in the University of Colorado system has been the honor of my career.

The [President's Teaching Scholar Program](#)^[5] (PTSP) recognizes faculty "who exemplify a zeal for teaching and learning, a passion for their discipline, high regard for their students, an altruistic attitude toward students and colleagues, full respect for diversity in teaching styles and learning communities, an interest in assessing the effects of classroom teaching, and a desire to promote civil discourse both inside and outside the classroom."

Teaching has been the central focus of my life as a philosopher-ethicist. In every aspect of my courses in biomedical ethics, death and dying, and practical ethics, I take my role as moderator of discussion and mediator of dispute seriously and sensitively as students navigate controversial — and sometimes quite personal — topics in ethics in the context of health care, science, law, public policy, and the workplace.

My overriding responsibility to my students is to create an environment that students deem educational, engaging, practical, inclusive, fair, respectful, and open to revision. I take the opportunity to work with others in an educational role in the areas of biomedical ethics, and death and dying, seriously, enthusiastically, and with great care.

[Regents hear progress report on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts](#)^[6]

Current and future efforts to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion within the University of Colorado community are broad and deep, CU leadership reported Tuesday to members of the Board of Regents.

But while President Mark Kennedy, Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook and the four campus chancellors cited lengthy lists of accomplishments and initiatives, they acknowledged that much work remains.

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“This is the first step of an important journey to elevate diversity, equity and inclusion across the CU system,” said Board of Regents Vice Chair Lesley Smith. “We want to see progress. We’re going to hold administration accountable. And we want to see the needle move.”

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Smith chairs the board’s Governance Committee, which teamed with the University Affairs Committee, chaired by Regent Sue Sharkey, for the first joint meeting of the two committees. Between the two, they account for eight of the board’s nine members. While Regent John Carson did not take part in Tuesday’s meeting, held remotely and livestreamed, they were joined by Chair Glen Gallegos. A recording of the meeting is [posted here](#)^[9].

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Tuesday’s meeting was organized after Regent Jack Kroll introduced a resolution at the board’s June 18 meeting. The resolution listed eight immediate action steps for the university to take “to ensure a system that is fair, equitable, and accountable for all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.” The board referred the resolution to its University Affairs and Governance committees for further review and opportunities to hear input from the university community.

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In his [report to the board](#)^[12], President Kennedy demonstrated how the steps listed in the resolution already have been completed or are being addressed, along with further action.

“We have made progress, but we still have much more work to do and much more listening and learning to do,” Kennedy said. “We’re in this for the long haul and we are committed to success. Achieving success means everyone has to be engaged. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion isn’t just our new Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook’s job or a campus CDO’s job, it must be a focus for every one of us and we must work together to get where we need to go.”

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Cook discussed the role of a CDO and described work that’s underway. In the works are the spring 2021 launch of a systemwide diversity campaign and an improved climate survey.

The four chancellors reviewed ways in which they and other leaders have engaged with an energized university community in the months since the death of George Floyd led to calls for change.

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At UCCS, Chancellor Venkat Reddy said, “We’re very fortunate we have a campus community invested in the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.” Expanded curriculum and training for senior leadership have been called for. At CU Denver, the most diverse campus in the system, Chancellor Michelle Marks pointed to [action steps](#)^[15] that resulted from input she received during her first weeks on the job. CU Boulder Chancellor Phil DiStefano gave an update on [eight actions for change](#)^[16], designed as immediate steps before the fall semester. CU Anschutz Chancellor Don Elliman noted the June establishment of a dedicated Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on the campus.

“We (chancellors) all recognize this is a moment in time, a situation that has prompted interest in and a focus on the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion,” Elliman said. “It gives us an opportunity that we would be, frankly, remiss if we didn’t take advantage of to make significant progress. ... Shame on us if we don’t take advantage of (this

moment).”

Kroll commended President Kennedy and the administration for pursuing the calls to action in his resolution, which he said he doesn't plan to bring back to the board for a vote. He said institutions like CU in the past have talked more about diversity, equity and inclusion than taken action.

“We simply must do better,” Kroll said.

Regent Chance Hill said he remains concerned with diversity of thought, notably among faculty. “We have to continue to focus on all aspects of diversity.”

Other board members, including Irene Griego, Linda Shoemaker and Chair Gallegos emphasized the board's responsibility in holding leadership accountable for the actions being taken at the campuses and across the system. Smith said the board must prioritize measurable goals, the development of a timeline and expects timely reporting from leadership to regents.

Smith said she and Sharkey will ask staff to prepare committee recommendations to submit to the full board at its September meeting.

[Transformation and Innovation Program: Who's who](#)[17]

With CU's Transformation and Innovation Program (TIP), the four campuses and system administration are collaborating to better position the CU system to efficiently, effectively deliver technology services to students, faculty, researchers and staff. TIP launched last year as a key component of President Mark Kennedy's [strategic planning process](#)[18].

“The Transformation and Innovation Program has the potential to have an impact on virtually every part of CU's far-flung operations, so it's critical that we take a deliberate approach to finding efficiencies and enhancing effectiveness,” Kennedy said.

The effort at the system level is led by the recently formed [Program Management Office](#)[19], which is based in the Office of the President. The Program Management Office follows the systemwide IT strategy as determined by the president and chancellors, and works closely with the TIP Steering Committee, consisting of members from across the four campuses and system administration.

Who's who in the TIP Program Management Office?

Harper Johnson, Associate Vice President of Transformation and Innovation

Johnson, who joined CU in 2017, is responsible for TIP. He is focused on aligning and improving IT capabilities at CU through the delivery of reliable, secure and cost-effective technology services and data access, and fostering innovation and effectiveness through a focus on strategic partnerships.

Johnson has over 20 years of experience working on innovative education technology solutions. He has served the University of Colorado Colorado Springs in the position of AVC of IT and CIO since 2017. Before joining CU, he led the Information Security and Enterprise Information Solutions teams in support of all Academic and Administrative technology efforts at Northern Arizona University.

He worked in the private sector in the education software industry and managing an on-demand printing business; and served as an officer and pilot in the U.S. Air Force. Johnson earned a bachelor's degree in international affairs at the U.S. Air Force Academy and a master's degree in computer information systems from the University of Phoenix.

PhuLan Olson, Senior Project Manager

Olson joined CU in 2019. She brings to CU over 20 years of experience in planning, project management, process improvement, information technology, and sales and marketing.

At CU, she will focus on project management of various TIP projects including CU-wide constituent relationship management (CRM). Before joining CU, Olson served in Strategic Accounts at Kaiser Permanente and was instrumental in lifting the organization to the next level by achieving growth, retention and client relations objectives.

Olson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of California, Riverside, a master's degree in health administration from the University of Southern California, PMP certification from PMI, and MHP designation from AHIP.

Olson enjoys family, running, skiing and a wide variety of cuisine.

Kristen Quintana, Senior Project Manager

Quintana joined CU two months ago to help stand up the TIP PMO and serve as a project manager focused on TIP projects.

Previously in her 12-year career, she worked in education at McGraw Hill, standing up and running a project management office that supported enterprise product implementations. She also served in project management roles at Pearson.

Quintana earned her master's in project management from Regis University and also has a PMP (Project Management Professional) certification.

She coaches softball, and enjoys live music, camping, and rooting for the Broncos. Quintana aims to travel internationally at least once a year.

Lara Ackerman, Senior Organizational Change Manager

Ackerman joined CU in 2017 and has spent the past three years working as an organizational change manager primarily on projects that affect all four campuses. She's passionate about translating strategic vision to tangible outcomes that move CU forward.

Ackerman has 13 years of dedicated organizational change management (OCM) experience in management consulting and internal roles across many industries including higher education, manufacturing, telecom, financial services, aerospace, and oil and gas. Her projects included merger integrations, business process improvement efforts, enterprise resource planning systems, CRM systems, launching a project management office, organizational design, culture change, and digital transformation.

Before focusing on OCM, Ackerman worked on large-scale technology projects in roles such as business analysis, reporting/data system analysis and development, testing coordination, project management, training, and communications.

An avid traveler and Boulder native, she earned her bachelor's in Business Administration, magna cum laude, from Babson College, and an MBA from CU Boulder's Leeds School of Business.

The TIP Program Management Office takes guidance and strategic direction from the TIP Steering Committee. Members of the committee are:

CU Boulder: **Carla Ho-a**, Chief Financial Officer (CFO); **Larry Levine**, Associate Vice Chancellor for IT and Chief

Information Officer (CIO); **Dan Jones**, Vice Chancellor for Integrity, Safety and Compliance.

CU Denver | Anschutz: Terri Carrothers, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Chief Financial Officer, CU Anschutz; **Jennifer Sobanet**, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Chief Financial Officer, CU Denver; **Russ Poole**, Associate Vice Chancellor for IT and Chief Information Officer (CIO).

CU Colorado Springs: Chuck Litchfield, Vice Chancellor Administration and Finance; **Harper Johnson**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for IT and Chief Information Officer (CIO), Committee Chairperson.

CU system: Todd Saliman, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (CFO); **Kathy Nesbitt**, Vice President of Employee and Information Services; **Scott Munson**, Chief Information Officer (CIO); **Ed Mills**, Chief Purchasing Officer; **Jason Hunter**, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Advancement.

For more information on CU's Transformation and Innovation Program, please see the [TIP website](#)[20], which also invites stakeholders to share their input.

TIP is committed to sharing regular updates and information as the work progresses.

[Tuition Assistance Benefit applications now open](#)[21]
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As the University of Colorado's 2020-21 academic year approaches, it's time to apply for the Tuition Assistance Benefit (TAB) for undergraduate and graduate courses.

Fall 2020 applications for the Tuition Assistance Benefit are now open, and campus-specific enrollment deadlines are fast approaching.

Each academic year (fall through summer), eligible [employees](#)[23] can save on up to nine credits on eligible courses on any CU campus. Their [dependents](#)[24] also have several options to save on tuition costs.

Employees can grant certain dependents their Tuition Assistance Benefit, but whoever uses the benefit first in the current academic year is allotted the benefit for the entire academic year. If an employee uses the benefit in the fall, their dependent cannot use it in the spring and vice versa.

The [Tuition Assistance Benefit page](#)[24] highlights the rules, deadlines and application instructions. The [Tuition Assistance Benefit guide](#)[25] provides a high-level, step-by-step overview of the process. Keep in mind that each campus has its own TAB application and course registration deadlines.

Here are the deadlines for the Fall 2020 semester:

[CU Boulder](#)[26]

Course registration: Employees: First day of class for each specific course after Aug. 24, 2020 Dependents: On their designated registration day TAB application: By Sept. 11, 2020

[CU Denver | CU Anschutz](#)[27]

Course registration: Employees: First day of class for each specific course after Aug. 17, 2020 Dependents: On their designated registration day TAB application: By Sept. 2, 2020

[CU Colorado Springs](#)[28]

Course registration: Employees: Starting Aug. 24, 2020 Dependents: On their designated registration day TAB application: By Sept. 10, 2020

Tuition Assistance Benefit dependents can take courses on the employee's "home" CU campus (their campus of employment) or take courses at other CU campuses. Dependents attending other CU campuses can be granted a \$270 per-credit stipend, for up to nine credits per academic year (fall through summer), to apply toward eligible

courses.

Some exclusions apply for employees and dependents, so please review the [program page](#)^[29] and each campus's requirements closely.

Finally, all users should be aware that they are responsible for paying student fees and that this benefit may be subject to taxation. You can find out more on the dedicated [Tuition Assistance Benefit taxation webpage](#)^[30] for this benefit.

[CU Boulder launches Protect Our Herd public health awareness campaign](#) ^[31]

[CU records second-best fundraising year](#)^[32]

The generosity of University of Colorado donors resulted in the second-best fundraising year in university history. CU raised some \$455 million across its four campuses in fiscal year 2019-20, which is only eclipsed by last year, when a nine-figure gift late in the fiscal year pushed the total past \$500 million.

"We are incredibly grateful to our donors, who add substantial value to CU students, faculty and programs through their generous contributions," said CU President Mark Kennedy. "Through scholarships, research initiatives and program advancements, our donors enhance quality at CU and make us a much stronger institution."

Kennedy lauded the university's advancement staff for its "tireless work" in engaging with donors. He said the effort was particularly impressive, given that the pandemic struck in the final quarter of the fiscal year, a time that usually sees considerable activity in terms of gifts received. Kennedy also noted that donors earmark their contributions for specific scholarships, programs, faculty positions or research projects, and that the funds cannot be diverted to general operations of the university.

"This year's total is not just testament to the confidence that donors have in CU, its people and its activities, as well as their incredible generosity," said Annie Baccary, associate vice president and interim advancement administration officer. "We also have a great advancement team on each of our campuses that does a great job pairing our donors' passion with CU's people and programs.

"We're extremely grateful to have people who make a significant impact on Colorado and beyond by investing through CU to make our communities, state and nation better places," she said.

[Faculty Assembly to prioritize safety, equitable teaching evaluations for 2020-21 academic year](#)^[33]

[What will class look like this fall?](#) ^[34]

[Liquid chalk proven in CU labs to kill coronavirus, potentially helping gyms to safely reopen](#) ^[35]

[Virtual panel highlights how CU Cancer Center is redefining cancer care in Colorado and beyond](#) [36]

[Limerick named to state Geographic Naming Advisory Board](#) [37]

[Provencio-Vasquez appointed to NIH National Advisory Council on Nursing Research](#) [38]

[Ahmad-Post accepts position at University of Denver](#) [39]

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