Programs at CU Boulder, CU Denver light pathways to innovation for high school students[1]
[2]

In the bustling state of Colorado, where the Rockies paint a stunning backdrop to the cities of Boulder and Denver, a story of entrepreneurial passion unfolds. It involves two exceptional initiatives, the High School New Venture Challenge [3] (HSNVC) at CU Boulder and Business Bound[4] at CU Denver.

While distinct in their strategies, both programs have the same goal. They are connecting high school students with their communities and cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets that span beyond basic business finance to creative problem-solving. Each initiative plays a pivotal role in fostering young innovators across Colorado.

Stan Hickory, director of the CU Boulder Innovation & Entrepreneurship Initiative and the High School New Venture Challenge, called the initiative an entrepreneurial “flight simulator.” It’s propelling future CU Boulder students into the world of startups through events, mentorship and a pitch competition with over $100,000 on the line.

“The objective is to enhance the connection between students and their rural communities by fostering local mentorship during their engagement with the HSNVC,” Hickory said. "We want to establish a route to higher education, allowing them to acquire additional knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and leadership. Ultimately, these students can come back to their communities as influential leaders within the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.”

The New Venture Challenge will expand beyond campus next year with a high school competition reaching schools in Lafayette, Longmont, Westminster, Colorado Springs and Aurora. Hickory looks to rural school districts and areas with higher numbers of underrepresented students, with plans to offer scholarships to make CU Boulder a beacon for budding entrepreneurs.

Across the city in Denver, Madhavan Parthasarathy, Ph.D., leads Business Bound[4] at the Jake Jabs Center for Entrepreneurship in the CU Denver Business School. Emphasizing the CU Denver campus’s urban focus, Business Bound targets students who are curious about pathways to entrepreneurial and academic success.
[5]

“We partnered with Junior Achievement to offer this program because experiential learning experiences like this are critical for young students to discover their passions, build transferable skills and explore their academic and professional options before they have to decide on their path to college,” said Clair Seville (Sims), assistant director of operations at the Jake Jabs Center.

This energetic program, in partnership with Junior Achievement, is tailored to urban students, hosting 55 high school students for a week of experiences. Led by successful business leaders and entrepreneurs, including Jake Jabs himself, students dove into the complex workings of the world of business. They were immersed in a simulated CEO experience in the phone industry, learning decision-making, strategic analysis and the art of competition. Notably, students also earned one college credit hour at CU Denver, setting them on a path of entrepreneurial and academic excellence.

This year, the collaborative efforts between the High School New Venture Challenge and Business Bound aim to support high school students across Colorado. The overarching objective of these programs is to prepare and equip the upcoming generation with the skills, knowledge and adaptability needed for a quickly changing job landscape.

According to the World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs survey, half of today’s work activities could be automated by 2055, necessitating new skills and perspectives. Entrepreneurship-focused programs, like the NVC and Business Bound, offer a way for students to navigate this uncertain future. They teach crucial life skills – problem-solving, teamwork, empathy, and resilience in the face of failure. Both programs emphasize that the next generation of entrepreneurs will have to emerge through collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication skills.

The leaders and staff behind these two initiatives recognize the importance of investing in high school students. They are not only shaping the entrepreneurs of the future; they are equipping young minds with the tools to take on new challenges and carve out a path in an ever-changing world.

To learn more, go to jacolorado.org/businessbound/ [4] and https://www.colorado.edu/nvc/[3]

CU President Todd Saliman selects Jennifer Sobanet as next chancellor of UCCS[6]

Excellence in Leadership event emphasizes inclusion, recognizes CU Boulder professor with award[7]

The 2023 Excellence in Leadership Lecture and Luncheon celebrated inclusion and belonging, as Excellence in Leadership (ELP) program[8] alumni and current program participants recently gathered at Denver's Brown Palace Hotel.

Sponsored by TIAA[9] and hosted by the CU System Administration office, the Nov. 17 event fostered continued collaboration, networking and leadership development and recognized an impactful CU leader.

ELP provides opportunities for CU faculty and staff across all campuses to become more effective leaders, equipping them to address the challenges of a dynamic university. Since 2000, more than 740 fellows have completed the program.

Felicity O'Herron, vice president and chief human resource officer, spoke at the event, emphasizing the need for inclusive leaders at CU, as diversity, inclusion, equity and access are the third pillar of CU's Strategic Plan[10].

"Inclusivity isn't just a buzzword. It's a fundamental element of our strategy," O'Herron said.
[11]

CU Boulder provost Russell Moore introduced the keynote speaker, Stefanie Johnson, Ph.D., director of CU Boulder's Center for Leadership, an associate professor at the Leeds School of Business, and author of "Inclusify: The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging to Build Innovative Teams."

Johnson's lecture, "We see you at CU: How leaders can bolster belonging," focused on the importance of leaders, both formally and informally, to help employees feel like they belong at work by empowering others and accepting them for who they are.

"Belonging comes from how we treat people, our peers, our colleagues, our students, that can help them feel like they belong," Johnson said. "I'm hoping to challenge the idea that belonging is not just, 'We accept you.' But it's actually seeing the unique differences that people bring and accepting them and celebrating them because of those differences … and have them be celebrated for who they are."
[12]

Ruth Ellen Kocher, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor at CU Boulder's College of Arts and Sciences, received the 2023 Excellence in Leadership Award.

In presenting the award, Moore emphasized the guiding impact Kocher has made in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion practices across CU Boulder in her official roles and as a mentor to female faculty and faculty of color.

Kocher served as the first black female dean in the College of Arts and Sciences as dean of Arts and Humanities, hiring and retaining diverse faculty and facilitating DEI curriculum. As chair of the English department, she played a pivotal role in the creation of the inaugural Dean of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion position at the college.

“Her efforts in preserving the liberal arts and celebrating the importance of arts and humanities have been accompanied by a deep commitment to anti-racist practices,” Moore said. “As a leader who has broken barriers and serves as the first in various roles, she has made equity and racial justice a guiding principle.”

Kocher accepted her award in a pre-recorded video[13], thanking not only her nominators and fellow ELP alumni, but her own mentors who provided the framework of her own mentoring and leadership style.

“I don’t think any of us come to service or come to leadership without mentors who’ve inspired us to do so,” Kocher said. “I am the product of the hard service that academic professionals do that’s all not necessarily all on the books. I appreciate the opportunity I had to see them move through those very difficult paths with grace.”

Excellence in Leadership Award nominees for 2023 included:
Nichole Carlson, director of the Center for Innovative Design and Analysis and professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Informatics at CU Anschutz Jan Gascoigne, associate vice chancellor of Student Affairs, and associate clinical professor of Community and Behavioral Health in the Colorado School of Public Health at CU Anschutz Stephanie Hanenberg, assistant vice chancellor for Health and Wellness at the Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center at UCCS Alana Jones, associate vice chancellor of International Affairs at CU Denver and Anschutz Medical Campus Shelly Miller, professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at CU Boulder’s College of Engineering and Applied Science Scott Skinner-Thompson, associate professor of Law and affiliate faculty at the LGBTQ Studies Program at CU Boulder
Learn more about the Excellence in Leadership Program[8].

Call for submissions: President’s DEI Awards and Grants[14]

The CU Office of the President has announced the opening of nominations for the annual President’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards[15], and the start of the application period for the President’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Grants[16].

President’s DEI Awards

The President’s DEI Awards[15] honor three individuals and one unit that have demonstrated outstanding commitment and made significant contributions to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the University of Colorado community.

Recipients of the honor receive $2,000 and a commemorative award.

Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Feb. 2, 2024.

A reception to honor awardees is set for 2:30-4:30 p.m. April 24, 2024, at 1800 Grant St.

DEI Award categories:
Faculty (full-time CU faculty members with rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior instructor or instructor) Staff Student (undergraduate or graduate) Academic or administrative unit
President's DEI Grants

Applications for the President’s DEI Grants[16] are now being accepted.

Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Feb. 2, 2024.

Grant winners will be acknowledged during a reception set for 2:30-4:30 p.m. April 24, 2024, at 1800 Grant St.

The President’s DEI Grants are designed to fund innovative and creative projects that promote diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the University of Colorado. Proposal funding is for one year with a maximum request of $8,000 per

year. However, a proposal may be considered for a second year of funding pending demonstration of positive impact, potential for replication across the system, and institutionalization at home campus. Second-year funding is not guaranteed and requires the submittal of an annual report that aligns with the timeline for the following year funding.

Grant proposals must be submitted by CU faculty (full-time CU faculty members with the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior instructor or instructor) or staff. Students or student groups interested in submitting a proposal must have a faculty or staff sponsor submit the proposal and include a letter of support.

Questions? Please contact CU system DEI.[17]

Gear up for spring 2024: Tuition Assistance applications are now open [18]

CU introduces Roth contribution options for PERA voluntary retirement plans [19]

Human rights climate commitments released in Dubai[20]

December Town Hall: Campus finances, strategic enrollment and more [21]

CU Denver professor finds solution to car theft[22]

Cardiologist offers Top 10 ways to keep high blood pressure at bay[23]

Publication note: No CU Connections on Dec. 28 and Jan. 4 [24]

Li named J. Daniel Couger Endowed Chair of Information Systems[25]

Beaudry named a fellow of the American Mathematical Society[26]

Beer wins prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship[27]

CU Boulder research helps advance the search for habitable planets[28]

New Drugs Can Fix Teenage Obesity, but Young People Don’t Get Them[29]

Battling teacher shortages, Colorado enlists the help of a promising pool of educators: Military vets[30]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/programs-cu-boulder-cu-denver-light-pathways-innovation-high-school-students[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/innovation_high-school-students_feat.jpg[3] https://www.colorado.edu/nvc/[4] http://jacolorado.org/businessbound/[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/picture2_high_school_entrepreneurship_parthasarathy_crop_12-14-2023.jpg[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-president-todd-saliman-selects-jennifer-sobanet-next-chancellor-uccs[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/excellence-leadership-event-emphasizes-inclusion-recognizes-cu-boulder-professor-award[8] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/professional-growth-training/leadership/elp[9] https://www.tiaa.org/public/[10] https://www.cu.edu/strategic-plan[11] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/stefanie_johnson_1_elp_crop_12-14-2023.jpg[12] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/ruth_kocher_elp_lead_12-14-2023.png[13] https://vimeo.com/885337325[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/call-submissions-president-s-dei-awards-and-grants[15] https://www.cu.edu/dei/presidents-dei-awards-and-grants/presidents-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei-award[16] https://www.cu.edu/dei/presidents-dei-awards-and-grants/presidents-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-grants[17] mailto:systemdei@cu.edu?subject=[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/gear-spring-2024-tuition-assistance-applications-are-now-open[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-introduces-roth-contribution-options-pera-voluntary-retirement-plans[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/human-rights-climate-commitments-released-dubai[21] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/december-town-hall-campus-finances-strategic-enrollment-and-more[22] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-denver-professor-finds-solution-car-theft[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cardiologist-offers-top-10-ways-keep-high-blood-pressure-bay[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/publication-note-no-cu-connections-dec-28-and-jan-4[25] https://connections.cu.edu/people/li-named-j-daniel-couger-endowed-chair-information-systems[26] https://connections.cu.edu/people/beaudry-named-fellow-american-mathematical-society[27] https://connections.cu.edu/people/beer-wins-prestigious-guggenheim-fellowship[28] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cu-boulder-research-helps-advance-search-habitable-planets[29] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/new-drugs-can-fix-teenage-obesity-young-people-don-t-get-them[30] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/battling-teacher-shortages-colorado-enlists-help-promising-pool-educators-military-vets