CU Denver is engineering diverse ways to serve communities[1]

Highfill named President's Employee of the Year[2]

Bethany Highfill of the Procurement Service Center is the 2021 President's Employee of the Year.

Highfill received the award Nov. 11 during a virtual event hosted by System Staff Council.

CU President Todd Saliman congratulated Highfill and nominees Larissa Armand and William Shelby Jr., and thanked the members of System Staff Council for their service and engagement.

"I just wanted to thank you all for your extraordinary work over the last year," Saliman said. "I'm an employee, too, and I'm so proud to be able to work with all of you."

Highfill's colleagues praised her for navigating supply scarcity during the pandemic, collaborating with the campuses to identify new sources of masks, gloves, sanitizer and other personal protective equipment needed across the system.

Among the comments about Highfill from colleagues who nominated her:
"Bethany has routinely exceeded her goals and has performed her job at an extraordinarily high level for several years." "She not only provides consistent and exceptional customer service, she has found new and creative ways to serve her customers. As part of her success, Bethany has demonstrated an extremely high level of teamwork and collaboration, taking initiative and ownership, and displaying strong leadership qualities." "Bethany's leadership in creating an unprecedented response during an unprecedented crisis was a phenomenal accomplishment. The impact on the university departments based on her leadership and efforts cannot be overstated."
"I'm very grateful to be part of such a big effort," Highfill said. "We all support the big picture here and we come together to support our campuses to do the best they can. … I want to thank everyone who was there for me and who helped us guide this effort."

System Staff Council also recognized two other nominees for the 2021 President's Employee of the Year Award:

Larissa Armand, University Information Systems: "Larissa has shown a very high level of commitment to the organization and her customers. She is a valuable asset to the organization, the system office and truly to the university as a whole."

William Shelby Jr., University Information Systems: "William, through his outstanding professional knowledge, enthusiasm and devotion to duty, contributed significantly to improved customer service at CU system on a consistent basis."

CU Innovation and Efficiency Award winners rose to year's challenges[3]

Despite a global pandemic, innovation remains alive and well at CU, as evidenced by the remarkable submissions to the 2021 CU Innovation and Efficiency Awards Program[4]. The university-wide program is designed to recognize employees who re-engineer operations, enhance communication, build employee engagement, improve customer service, or otherwise make CU work better.

The Office of University Controller (OUC), which administers the program, recently announced the winners of this

year's cash awards. They are two CU system-led, cross-campus collaborations and three campus-based team projects from CU Boulder, CU Denver and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

The grand prize – the University Controller's Award for Excellence – went to **Billing Automation**[5]**,** a University Information Services (UIS)-led effort that proved that cooperation is the key to overcoming challenges. This initiative revolutionized the previously highly manual, multistep process required to generate sponsored project invoices for the university. Headed by UIS grants application manager Ryan Day, the team included Linda Warren (also from UIS), Sonya Lee (CU Boulder), Melinda Hamilton (CU Colorado Springs) and Koffi Gnatsidji (CU Anschutz Medical Campus). They were recognized for their creativity, ingenuity, cost savings and efficiency. Read more from UIS.[6]

In addition to the $1,500 grand prize winner, four winners of $1,000 cash prizes were announced by the OUC. Not surprisingly, COVID played a role behind many of the submissions and award winners, with teams across CU responding to the challenges of remote learning and remote work in stellar fashion.

In **Electronic Consults: A Valuable Treatment Option for Patients and Providers**[7], Matthew Thompson and John Thomas (CU School of Medicine at CU Anschutz) were recognized for implementing a program that allows primary care providers to send non-urgent medical questions to a network of specialists. Their work has resulted in over 7,500 avoided in-person medical appointments, which saves patients co-pays, time off from work and unnecessary specialty visits. It has proved to be especially beneficial during the pandemic by preserving in-person care for those patients most in need.

In **Engineering Cloud Computing**[8]**,** John Franklin, David Long and Brandon Scovronski (CU Boulder) won a prize for their herculean efforts on behalf of students in the College of Engineering and Applied Science. The college – which relies heavily on complex, hands-on lab and computing resources – was dealt a severe blow during the pandemic when its labs were shut down and students went remote. Thanks to the efforts of this team, however, students are able to access, from anywhere in the world, the lab and specialized resources they need to pursue this critical component of their education.

In **LynxConnect Goes Digital**[9]**,** the CU Denver team of Jessica Godo, Sarah Trzeciak, Meghan Mitchell and Leah Fitzgerald developed a way to continue to provide services when the pandemic shut down their offices. Before COVID, much of their work with students had been conducted through informal, drop-in visits. Now they offer services – such as career counseling, study abroad guidance and undergraduate research opportunities – digitally. Their new virtual front desk and waiting room allow students to "drop in" and receive personalized, real-time support from LynxConnect's staff of peer advisers.

Finally, the **Personalized Post Award Work Centers**[10] project – another cross-campus initiative involving UIS – was recognized for its development of custom grants pages in PeopleSoft. Now, individuals who are tasked with managing data and tracking the progress of a grant award can complete their work more efficiently and accurately. The project team included Samantha Fildish, Linda Warren and Bryce Oakes (CU system), Stephanie Rosario (CU Boulder), Melinda Hamilton (CU Colorado Springs) and Ginger Acierno, Margaux Johnson and Julie Burger (CU Anschutz Medical Campus).

OUC congratulates all the 2021 winners, semi-finalists[11] and submitters for jobs well done during a year of unprecedented hardship. Thanks to your efforts, you kept the CU mission on track and kept students and employees motivated.

To learn more about current and past submissions, visit the CU Innovation and Efficiency Awards website[4]. OUC hopes you'll consider sharing your own innovations during the 2022 program.

Alumnus Tandean Rustandy makes surprise seven-figure gift announcement at ribbon-cutting[12]

UCCS' farm subscription program celebrated in 2021 Sustainable Campus Index [13]

Article examines why delivery complications can influence physician decision-making for the next patient [14]

Uncle Doc: A POW's story of survival, compassion and hope[15]

Bergeron to become acting vice provost and associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion at CU Boulder [16]

School of Medicine's Abdoo named National Magnet Nurse of the Year [17]

Barden retires after 28-year CU career[18]

Mike Barden, director of facilities projects, retired this week after a 28-year career managing design and construction for CU Anschutz, CU Denver and CU Boulder. His distinguished CU career included management oversight of new buildings, additions and renovations totaling over 7.2 million square feet and more than $2 billion.

Barden joined the design and construction team at CU Boulder in July 1993 as a project manager after an eight-year career with a Top 15 U.S. general contractor, Hensel Phelps. He had just completed the original DIA Concourse C project prior to joining CU. Notable CU Boulder projects include the University Memorial Center, Wardenburg Health Center, IMIG Music Building addition, Integrated Teaching and Learning Lab and the Environmental Health and Safety buildings.

After reaching the assistant director level at CU Boulder, Barden in 2000 became manager of major projects at CU Health Sciences Center, including developing the newly acquired Fitzsimons Army Base into a new medical campus. Barden and team have guided the design and construction of over 2,200 projects at CU Anschutz, including 21 new buildings/additions and renovations over 21 years.

In 2005, CU Health Sciences Center merged with the CU Denver campus, which brought initial smaller renovation projects in the Lawrence Street Center and CU Denver Building that evolved into larger needs. These continue today with the new Engineering Building. Barden's major projects include the Business School, Student Commons, North Classroom, Lola and Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center, Lynx Crossing and City Heights.

Barden became the director of facilities projects in 2010, continuing in that role until his retirement, serving CU Anschutz, CU Denver and CU South.

"It has been a pleasure to guide the growth of the CU-built community on three campuses," Barden said.

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/cu-denver-engineering-diverse-ways-serve-communities[2] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/highfill-named-president-s-employee-year[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-innovation-and-efficiency-award-winners-rose-year-s-challenges[4] https://www.cu.edu/controller/innovation-efficiency-awards[5] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-billing[6] https://www.cu.edu/blog/uis-news/uis-initiative-wins-cu-innovation-and-efficiency-grand-prize[7] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-0[8] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-engineering[9] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-Lynx[10] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-Personalized%20Post%20Award%20Work%20Centers[11] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-2021-semifinalists[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/alumnus-tandean-rustandy-makes-surprise-seven-figure-gift-announcement-ribbon-cutting[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-farm-subscription-program-celebrated-2021-sustainable-campus-index[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/article-examines-why-delivery-complications-can-influence-physician-decision-making-next[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uncle-doc-pow-s-story-survival-compassion-and-hope[16] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bergeron-become-acting-vice-provost-and-associate-vice-chancellor-diversity-equity-and[17] https://connections.cu.edu/people/school-medicine-s-abdoo-named-national-magnet-nurse-year[18] https://connections.cu.edu/people/barden-retires-after-28-year-cu-career