The 10 most-read CU Connections features of 2023[1]
[2]
Six faculty members named CU Distinguished Professors[3]
Nov. 9 – The University of Colorado this week welcomed six new members to its roster of Distinguished Professors, a title signifying the highest honor awarded to faculty across the CU system's four campuses. CU Distinguished Professors are tenured faculty members who demonstrate exemplary performance in research or creative work; a record of excellence in promoting learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and outstanding service to the profession, the university and its affiliates.

Regents announce slate of honorees for 2023[4]
April 6 – The University of Colorado Board of Regents has announced the list of individuals receiving Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Service Awards and University Medals for 2023. Honorary Degrees recognize outstanding achievement in one or more of the following areas: intellectual contributions, university service, philanthropy and/or public service. Distinguished Service Awards recognize those persons whose achievements and contributions are particularly associated with the state and/or nation. University Medals recognize those persons whose achievements and contributions are particularly associated with the university.

President's DEI Awards celebrate contributions, commitment across system[5]
March 30 – CU President Todd Saliman announced the President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards, annual recognition for individuals and units demonstrating outstanding commitment and making significant contributions to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across CU. "It's so important to support and reward the people in our CU community who are taking action to advance diversity, equity and inclusion across the campuses," President Saliman said.

CU Denver program helps incarcerated learners reach milestone[6]
Jan. 26 – A CU Denver partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections recently celebrated a milestone, holding "graduation" ceremonies for incarcerated learners who completed a seven-class sequence leading toward a Certificate in Strategic Communication.Led by Stephen Hartnett, professor from CU Denver's communication department, CU's Prison Education program[7] offers college communication classes aimed at giving students the skills and confidence to return to their communities. "Everybody knows education reduces recidivism," Hartnett said. "It's the elevator to justice. It reduces burdens on the taxpayer. There's a lot of good."

University Counsel advises CU community on impact of Supreme Court decision[8]
Sept. 7 – A U.S. Supreme Court decision earlier this summer prohibits universities from considering race as a factor in college admissions, but it does not affect the University of Colorado's pursuit of a diverse student body, university leadership says. The Office of University Counsel in CU system administration is providing guidance to the CU community following the Court's announcement of the opinion [9]in June. The University of Colorado and its four campuses are proud to support and celebrate key programs that create a diverse campus environment.

Board of Regents officially welcomes four newest members[10]
Jan. 12 – Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Brian Boatright last week swore in four members of the University of Colorado Board of Regents who were elected in November. Four is an unusual number to join the nine-member board. Typically, the most seats that will turn over in any election cycle is three. In the most recent cycle, however, board Vice Chair Ken Montera had to run for the 5th Congressional District seat Gov. Jared Polis appointed him to in late 2021. Montera, R-Colorado Springs, was joined by three new board members: District 1's Wanda James, D-Denver; District 4's Frank McNulty, R-Highlands Ranch; and Mark VanDriel, R-Greeley, from the newly created District 8.

Boettcher Foundation names six CU researchers to 2023 class of Boettcher Investigators[11]
June 8 – Six outstanding biomedical researchers at the University of Colorado are members of the Boettcher

Foundation's 2023 class of Boettcher Investigators, recipients of grant funding through the Boettcher Foundation's Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program. The 13-year-old program invests in leading Colorado researchers during the early stages of their careers, providing support to fund their independent scientific research. Each researcher receives $235,000 in grant funding to support up to three years of biomedical research, supporting Boettcher Foundation's goal to retain top scientific talent in Colorado.

Five questions for Beth Rudden: COLTT speaker to delve into AI's role in higher education[12]
May 18 – Global IT and cognitive science leader Beth Rudden will be the keynote speaker for the 2023 Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology (COLTT[13]) conference. Rudden has over 20 years of experience in IT and data science. In 2022, she founded Bast.ai, a groundbreaking corporation pioneering the future of conversational AI technology. Its aim is to empower everyone, from students and educators to doctors and marketing professionals, to interact with information in a new way so people can learn and acquire knowledge better and faster.

9. Staff Council honors exceptional CU employees[14]

Oct. 19 – The University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC) recently honored 10 exceptional employees across the CU system with the 2023 Staff Excellence Awards. CU staff members – two from each campus and from system administration – received the honors, which annually recognize those who go above and beyond their job duties and consistently surpass expectations. Each received a $250 award presented at the ceremony at the Hilton Inverness Denver in Englewood.

10. Dressler honored as President's Employee of the Year[15]

Jan. 5 – Tara Dressler, director for trademarks in the Office of University Counsel, recently was honored as the 2022 President's Employee of the Year. Dressler and four other nominees for the award, which is presented by System Staff Council, were recognized during a ceremony at 1800 Grant St. The event also celebrated system administration employees who reached milestone years of service.

CU EthicsLine video launches[16]

A newly released video[17] serves as an animated reminder of the CU EthicsLine[17], a simple, anonymous way for members of the university community to report concerns or suspected misconduct.

The video was presented during the Dec. 13 meeting of the Regents Audit Committee[18] as part of the quarterly EthicsLine report from Kathleen Sutherland, senior advisory manager.

Via CU EthicsLine, university community members may report such instances as:
Suspected fraud or fiscal misconduct by university employees or contractors Violations of federal or state law Serious or recurring violations of university policy in the performance of university duties Gross waste of university funds and property Serious or recurring abuse of university authority (improper conduct)
CU EthicsLine should not be used to fulfill mandatory reporting requirements established by law or university policy. Depending on the nature of the issue, mandatory reporters should report directly to the office or agency designated by university policy or applicable law.

Once a reporter contacts CU EthicsLine using the web portal or by phone, a file is created and assigned a unique number, enabling the reporting employee to revisit it and post or respond to additional questions from those investigating. It is important to follow up to allow for a full review of the concerns raised. The reporter may choose to remain anonymous or to provide contact information.

All information from those reporting is kept offsite on a secured server managed by NAVEX[19], the vendor for CU's EthicsLine. CU's Internal Audit[20] maintains the infrastructure so that questions and concerns are routed to the

appropriate university contact person or responsible office for follow-up.

CU EthicsLine isn't intended as the only, or even best, way to resolve concerns. Employees are encouraged to speak with a supervisor or manager when issues arise. Personnel issues, such as complaints of discrimination or harassment, also should be addressed with a supervisor, Human Resources, or the campus institutional equity offices [21]. When an issue arises, CU EthicsLine can be a resource to provide support as needed.

Learn more about CU EthicsLine here.[17]

Other presentations[22] at last week's Regents Audit Committee meeting included results of the 2022-23 fiscal year audit by FORVIS; the quarterly financial statement review; the quarterly Internal Audit report from Agnessa Vartanova, associate vice president and chief audit executive; and a report on the process for handling fiscal misconduct allegations.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2024.

Tuition Assistance Benefit helps to grow and develop careers[23]
[24]

In today's rapidly changing workplace, it is vital to pursue further learning and skill development. The University of Colorado's Tuition Assistance Benefit (TAB)[25] enables CU's workforce to meet this demand and pursue higher education at any of CU's four campuses. TAB expands access to higher education, whether that be embarking on a new career path or broadening knowledge with a few courses.

Many CU employees have used the TAB to its fullest potential, achieving new or advanced degrees.

Leah Lleras, director of finance and research for the Department of Surgery at the School of Medicine on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, used the Tuition Assistance Benefit to earn her master of science in management and organization.

Opening doors with the Tuition Assistance Benefit

While working in a Human Resources role in the Department of Neurology, Lleras first became aware of the tuition benefit through the applications she processed for department members. After looking through the CU Careers website, Lleras decided to pursue the master's degree program to earn a more applicable degree for her career and to expand upon her own interests.

"I realized my bachelor's in Italian wasn't really an applicable degree here," Lleras said. "I also wanted to learn more about organizational design, running a unit, etc."

With her knowledge of the benefit, Lleras applied and began taking courses while working in various positions at the School of Medicine.

"The Tuition Assistance Benefit paid for my whole degree, which was awesome," she said.

Career advancement with TAB

Unlocking advanced career opportunities is made possible through the dedication to development that TAB users exemplify. Working in the neurology department when beginning her degree plan, Lleras became the division administrator for Hospital Medicine by the time she completed the program.

During these career changes and while being a student, Lleras paused her studies to have a baby and resumed almost

immediately after.

“I took two semesters off and went back with a newborn, which was a little bit crazy with working full time, but I wanted to get it done,” Lleras said.

In her position in Hospital Medicine, Lleras was able to leverage the skills taught in her courses. Change management courses were especially helpful when working in a newly created division.

Even now, as director of finance and research, Lleras says her course work has helped in facilitating the program’s growth.

“Looking at case studies of how different organizations are structured helped a lot in this current position,” she said. “Because when I started here, we had three employees, and now I have four teams of employees.”

Lleras spoke to the importance of having a well-structured unit and said the knowledge she gained from her organizational design courses applied directly to her work.

TAB’s lifelong impact

The decision to go back to school and seek higher education is an impactful choice — one that may be hindered by financial considerations. CU’s Tuition Assistance Benefit seeks to incentivize faculty, staff and their dependents to follow their educational aspirations.

When asked about TAB’s impact on her choice, Lleras said, “I don’t know that I would have gone back for my master’s (degree) … I was pretty new in my career, and I was trying to start my family. I would have had to take out student loans or just not gone back to school at all.”

The benefit was consequential in helping Lleras achieve her educational goals.

“It definitely made a huge difference for me because it paid for all of my master’s (degree),” she said.

Using TAB in spring 2024

Benefits-eligible staff and faculty can apply now for the Tuition Assistance Benefit for the 2024 spring semester. Review campus-specific policies, deadlines and FAQs on the Tuition Assistance Benefit webpage[26] before applying.

Submit your application prior to the campus deadlines below.
CU Denver l Anschutz — 5 p.m. Jan. 31 CU Colorado Springs — Jan. 31 CU Boulder — Feb. 15

Reap the benefits: Use this annual checkup to get the most out of your CU benefits [27]

From sun to garden to sea: 10 stories of discovery and exploration from 2023 [28]

Event Recap: 15th Annual Mountain Lion Research Day [29]

University Technical Assistance Program brings rural community projects to life [30]

CU Anschutz top stories of 2023 [31]

Jones Jolivet to give keynote talk for MLK Day event Jan. 22 [32]

Woodall receives MESA Undergraduate Education Award [33]

Tilliss embraces retirement with continued contributions [34]

Advocate in CU Boulder Police Department supports crime victims[35]

New Orleans unveils vision for a new park and gathering space in Central City[36]

Richard Fierro speaks at UCCS Fall Commencement[37]

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