

[Five questions for Lisa Landis](#)[1]

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Sometimes it takes a lot of effort and a little “magic” to make things happen, whether it’s tackling the complex issues of a university or a world far away. That’s why Lisa Landis keeps a bent and twisted fork – a work of art with a message – on her desk.

“I was at a magic show and the magician asked me to write my initials on the fork. As I was doing it, he was able to twist the neck and spread the tines using no force,” she says. “I’m a fairly skeptical person. So I keep it on my desk to remind myself that anything is possible. It happened right before my eyes.”

It’s a good reminder, both in her professional and personal life. Landis has worked at the University of Colorado for 14 years, most recently as director of Human Resources, System Administration. On Feb. 1, she gained more responsibilities and a new title – assistant vice president, Employee Services. Although Landis works directly with system administration, she has been the point person for many universitywide projects. Once a year, she works on a different type of project, one that changes the lives of children forever.

She earned a degree in biology from CU-Boulder, but after graduation she was offered a temporary job on the campus and then became an accounting technician in the public safety department. While working, she earned her MBA from CU Denver. “I didn’t really choose this career,” she says, “but I’m always open to opportunities.”

1. While your title has changed, you will continue your job as director of human resources. What are your responsibilities?

Human resources in system administration covers 350 employees. I also have been the coordinator for a lot of systemwide initiatives, including policy work. The HR directors and I have developed close collaboration for such initiatives. As I move into my assistant vice president role, I’m taking on payroll and benefits responsibilities for all of CU as well as the international tax and accounting needs for the university.

2. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your job? What are some of your biggest accomplishments?

At CU, one of the biggest challenges is gaining consensus between the campuses as we strike a balance between valuing the uniqueness of each campus and their processes and still finding the efficiency we always strive for. We try to focus on the similarities first, especially since much of what we do is governed by federal or state regulations. Then we turn our attention to the differences and work through each one individually.

For instance, Payroll & Benefit Services and the campus HR offices just rolled out our People Admin Position Description module, which will get everyone to use the same system while honoring uniqueness. With the module, you can create all of the job descriptions electronically – right now it’s all paper and e-mail. This way, we can easily communicate with departments and track each position and its changes.

We’re also right in the middle of our compensation project, which is very large and will span several years. We did an overhaul of the officer and exempt professional title system because of legislation changes that made it necessary to have a better titling structure. We have developed career families and new titles for every exempt professional position. Having done that, we can link to national compensation surveys to help determine the market ranges for each position. We’re just beginning to determine competencies for each position and how those might differ for a director versus a manager.

The tuition benefit program is an ongoing, evolving project, and we continue to look at how we can enhance it. Recently faculty and staff councils provided us feedback about the benefit.

3. How has the role of human resources changed over the years?

I think there are two main pieces that have changed. First, HR has become more reliant on data. Data analysis plays out when we look at national trends for compensation and benefits to determine the market salary and how the university fits there. The other area is in person-specific technology. Eventually there will be a way that we can provide service to employees on an individual basis because we will be able to identify who they are and what groups and attributes belong to them. That capability will allow us to communicate with them more effectively.

4. How did you become involved with doing charity work overseas?

My husband is a pediatric nurse involved in cardiac surgeries. The surgeon he works with is connected to the Friends of Barnabas Foundation (FOBF) and Project Little Hearts, which performs heart surgeries on underserved children in Honduras. He recruited my husband to go to Honduras once a year. I went along for the first time two years ago. Obviously I'm not involved medically, but I organize the effort, helping with patient files, scheduling, pharmacy and expense tracking and anywhere else I'm needed. A team of 45 volunteers – both medical and nonmedical – from the U.S. goes to Honduras for 10 days to perform surgeries. Last year we completed 36 catheterization lab heart repairs (often to close congenital heart defects), 26 open heart surgeries and 52 echocardiograms to diagnose heart issues. These diagnoses will help FOBF create a surgery schedule for the following year.

We work closely with the Honduran cardiologists who identify heart murmurs or other heart issues and perform follow-up care after we depart. The FOBF also makes screening visits year-round at no cost to the children's families.

5. What about the volunteer work made an impression on you?

I think it's always eye-opening to go into different cultures, especially because Honduras is very poor. But one thing that stands out is "the moment." That's what we call it when a child is rolled out of the operating room and is wheeled to a place where family and volunteers converge. The parents talk to the children and kiss them. What is amazing is that the biggest thing the parents notice and say is that their child is pink. That's because these children have always been blue due to a lack of appropriate amounts of oxygen in their bodies.

In the states, we would find most of these heart issues in utero and these babies would go into surgery right after birth or in the first few months of their lives. But these children are 5 and 6 years old and their bodies have had to compensate for defects. Even in the first hours after surgery, they begin to get that healthy, pink color. We try to make a very big deal about it with the families, taking pictures.

It's also amazing to see how sturdy these kids are. In the states, we would keep them sedated long after surgery. The children there don't have that luxury of extended recovery room time or the appropriate drugs. The children go from surgery to ICU to a step-down unit then to a recovery house or home if they live close enough, all within three days. You'll see kids with open-heart surgery scars playing soccer and talking with other kids. The families all take care of each other because they don't have the reserves to do it any other way.

[CU-Boulder announces finalists for Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy](#)^[3]

The University of Colorado Boulder on Monday announced three finalists for the inaugural Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy. This month, the finalists will make one-day campus visits, during which they will hold public forums.

Since last summer, an advisory committee has been working to identify finalists. The committee has sought a "highly visible" scholar who is "deeply engaged in either the analytical scholarship or practice of conservative thinking and policymaking or both."

The three finalists are Linda Chavez, chair of the Center for Equal Opportunity; Steven Hayward, Thomas W. Smith, Distinguished Fellow at the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University; and Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings

Institution.

"The College of Arts and Sciences is pleased that the committee has chosen an outstanding set of candidates," said Steven Leigh, dean of the college. "Their scholarly accomplishments and capabilities add significant strengths to our campus, and fit well with the high quality of the CU-Boulder faculty."

Each finalist will visit campus for a day, during which the finalist will meet privately with the search committee, the chancellor, provost and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Each will also teach a class -- but that activity will not be open to the media.

Finally, each will hold a public forum, which will consist of a 15-minute presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session. The finalists' visiting days are as follows:

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Steven Hayward, Friday. Public forum from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Old Main Chapel. His presentation is titled, "Is 'Conservative Environmentalist' an Oxymoron?" [\[5\]](#)

Linda Chavez, Monday. Public forum from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Old Main Chapel. Her presentation is titled, "A Conservative Approach to Immigration Reform." [\[6\]](#)

Ron Haskins, Tuesday. Public forum, "Why Worry About the Federal Deficit?: Our Kids Can Pay" from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Old Main Chapel.

Chavez is a 1970 graduate of CU-Boulder, where she studied English literature, and she earned a master of fine arts in creative writing from George Mason University in 2012. In the Reagan administration, she was director of public liaison at the White House and staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Chavez has been a syndicated columnist since 1987 and has written three public-policy books, including "Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation."

Chavez is a Fox News Channel contributor, a regular panelist on the PBS show "To the Contrary" and a frequent guest and commentator on NPR. In 2000, the Library of Congress named her a "Living Legend" for her contributions to America's cultural and historical legacy.

Hayward holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from Claremont Graduate School. He has been the F.K. Weyerhaeuser Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he was principal author and project director of the AEI's "Energy and Environment Outlook."

Hayward has been a visiting lecturer in the Government Department of Georgetown University and is a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy. He has also served as a Bradley Fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

Hayward's essays have been published in The Washington Post, National Review, Weekly Standard and other publications. His most recent book, published in 2010, is "Mere Environmentalism: A Biblical Perspective on Humans and the Natural World."

Haskins holds a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has been a senior fellow and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution since 2001. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a sergeant from 1963 to 1966.

Since 2004, Haskins has served as senior editor of "The Future of Children," a collaboration between the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution. He has been a senior consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation since 2001 and has served in advisory and staff leadership positions in the White House and Congress.

Haskins has edited or co-edited several books. He is the author of "Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law." He has appeared frequently on television and radio and has written essays published in The Washington Post, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, National Review and others.

The advisory committee that selected these finalists includes five faculty members and five community members. Keith

Maskus, associate dean of social sciences and professor of economics, chairs the committee but does not vote.

Maskus said the committee has excelled: "The committee members have worked together extremely well and are committed to the goal of bringing an exceptional scholar to campus."

Non-university committee members include: David Pyle, founder and CEO of American Career College; Mike Rosen, longtime radio host on AM 850 KOA and Denver Post columnist and political commentator; Bob Greenlee, former Boulder City Council member and mayor and current president of Centennial Investment and Management Company Inc.; CU President Emeritus Hank Brown; and Earl Wright, CEO of AMG National Trust Bank.

CU faculty members on the committee include: Vanessa Baird, associate professor of political science; David S. Brown, professor and chair of political science; Bradley Monton, associate professor of philosophy; Murat Iyigun, professor of economics; and Susan K. Kent, professor and chair of history.

"This is a novel idea to further enrich discourse on our campus," said CU-Boulder Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano. "Any one of the finalists, if selected, will contribute to the diversity of thought on campus by encouraging debate and discussion, by sharing their scholarship and career experience, and by hosting public events in the campus community and perhaps around the state."

The Visiting Scholar in Conservative Thought and Policy is a three-year pilot program supported by private funds. More than 20 donors have raised \$1 million to support the program.

[Guest opinion: Grade inflation? Or hard-earned results?\[7\]](#)

Belknap

For the last couple of decades, with increasing frequency, grade inflation has been identified as a problem in high schools, colleges, and most recently in my department, in graduate classes.

I'm one of those professors who tend to give higher grades. My undergraduate teaching at CU is almost all 3000-level undergraduate electives, which are cross-listed in Sociology and Women and Gender Studies. The office staff tell me these classes fill up the fastest of all of the classes in our department, even though they're electives and even though I typically have the cap at 100 students. When I was up for post-tenure review last spring, one of my colleagues came to conduct a peer review of my teaching and he said he had a hard time finding a seat. This is an indication of the terrific attendance I have in this class even though it's an elective and attendance is not part of the grade. And now my department has implemented a grading scheme to give more of our doctoral students grades in the B range (B-, B, B+). I argued this because we accept incredible students into our graduate program and I expect them to make A's. (And if they don't make A's, I don't give them A's.)

I don't think my classes are the hardest in the department, but they are also demanding. I have a paper due every semester, and I put together very recent readings (to limit the ability of buying a paper) so that everyone has the same paper and they're easy to run through the Turnitin plagiarism detector. I have four exams and an optional cumulative final. If students miss an exam for any reason or they want to drop their lowest test grade, they can take the final. I have weekly quizzes, mostly on the required readings and mostly short essays. There is an extensive website for the class with detailed guidelines for the papers, exams from previous semesters (not with the keys), the PowerPoint slides, study guides and so on. Some people tell me this is pandering to the students, but I feel like I give the student who is willing to work hard the chance to do well. The students still have a significant amount of work because I cover a huge amount of material over the semester and for each exam. Having the old exams helps them understand my testing style.

Most of the students make A's or B's in this class. But then with excellent attendance, typically good work on the quizzes and papers, I expect them to, especially since they are mostly juniors and seniors. The tests are not easy, they have three short essays worth 10 points each and 70 multiple-choice/true-false items. The quizzes are not easy, although they get to drop their five lowest out of 15. I do not offer make-ups for quizzes or tests. And I do flunk some people. Usually it is because they missed and/or flunked a lot of quizzes and thought C's on exams would pull them through, or because they cheated (an automatic F in the class and report to the Honor Code Office).

Obviously, before venturing into the "can we stop it with the grade inflation chatter?," I felt compelled to document my teaching demands as rigorous. I hope I have succeeded.

Now to the grade inflation. Not counting being a teaching assistant, I've been teaching at the college level since 1983. My first class in graduate school had 100 students. Most of my courses have been undergraduate, with 70 to 120 students. I'm quite confident in my ability to know what an A, A-, B+,F paper/quiz/essay/exam is. And given that my classes are upper-level, I expect the students to be better prepared and do well. Finally, when I have incredibly satisfying attendance and class participation, and usually a line for office hours, I'm not surprised that most of the students do very well in my classes.

Anyone who reads about a college education knows how tuition has increased enormously, and in many cases a college education probably isn't worth what it used to be. And, in most cases, the debt involved in acquiring a college education definitely isn't the investment it used to be. Following the news on college applications, we also know how much harder it is to get into college than it used to be. And there is a continuing debate about the interest rate on paying back student loans and wondering what Congress will decide about keeping the lower rates. An article by Ron Lieber in The New York Times (Feb. 10, 2013) begins: "If Steve Boedefeld graduates from Appalachian State University without any student loan debt, it will be because of the money he earned fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and the money he now saves by eating what he grows and kills."

I have an only child who just started college in fall 2012. He is fortunate that he can go to the college of his choice and we can pay out-of-state tuition. He would also be fortunate to go to CU and pay in-state tuition. As much as employees talk about our "entitled, wealthy student body," it's vital to remember that not all of them are wealthy and not all of them have wealthy parents. I have so many stories of students working their way through CU, one being the sole guardian of her younger brother who was 14 and they lived in Denver. Another had two part-time jobs and was the first person in her family to go to college. Another was an only child whose mother was in prison for killing her father in self-defense. And we all have a multitude of students who have racked up significant debt getting their degree (or even not completing their degree) at CU.

So why – if most of the students who attend a junior/senior level course have close to perfect or perfect attendance, do well on exams, quizzes and a paper – would we not give them A's and B's? They earned it.

[Joanne Belknap](#)[9] is a professor of sociology at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has won many teaching and research awards, and is president-elect of the American Society of Criminology.

Submissions from current and retired CU faculty and staff are welcome. To contribute or suggest a guest opinion column, contact Jay Dedrick, CU Connections editor, 303-860-5707, jay.dedrick@cu.edu[10].

[East 17th Place bridge opens at Anschutz Medical Campus](#)[11]

Rep. Ed Perlmutter talks about the partnerships that led to the completion of the interchange at East 17th Place and Interstate 225 on the east side of the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Officials cut the ribbon on the 17th Place-Interstate 225 interchange Monday morning, ushering in an important and

long-anticipated access point to the Anschutz Medical Campus.

The bridge is expected to open for public use by March 1.

About 40 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the interchange, which will offer full access of I-225 via East 17th Place, just north of Colfax Avenue.

Vice President for Health Affairs at the University of Colorado and Executive Vice Chancellor of the Anschutz Medical Campus Lilly Marks called the interchange a significant transportation upgrade.

“We look forward to enhanced access to our campus, which is critical to all of the occupants of this campus and to all of the patients and community who come here,” Marks said.

Government and transportation leaders praised the collaborations that resulted in the \$43 million interchange. Speakers at the ceremony were Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan, Rep. Mike Coffman, Rep. Ed Perlmutter, Colorado Department of Transportation Executive Director Don Hunt and Shaun Cutting, program delivery team leader for the Federal Highway Administration.

Hogan said the Anschutz Medical Campus sees 58,000 in-and-out vehicle trips each day, and the old 17th Place interchange was designed to serve only 4,000 vehicles per day.

“This project was critically needed and will be an important link to help serve and make this entire area a success,” Hogan said.

Project partners included the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, the University of Colorado Hospital, Children’s Hospital Colorado, the city of Aurora, CDOT, Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, Denver Regional Council of Governments and the Federal Highway Administration.

Perlmutter said the bipartisan, public-private effort was carried off because “as Coloradans we work together well.” He added, “It would have never happened but for the fact that Children’s Hospital and CU and the Aurora Economic Development Council, the chamber of commerce, and the city of Aurora were all very focused on getting this project finished to build out what is the best medical center in the entire country. It is the envy of the entire nation.”

Hogan noted that the Anschutz Medical Campus is a major economic engine in the city and region, and it will only strengthen with the opening of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 2015. Hunt received spontaneous applause when he said, “This really does help tie together jobs, living areas and, in this case, a premier health care facility for the entire state. And it’s not going to be very long before light rail transit also makes it to the campus.”

Cutting said the project is a perfect example of what Congress intended with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“This is the project that is helping America get back to work,” he said. “ ... This project was delivered ahead of schedule and was accelerated because of the partnership between the state, federal and local agencies.”

[Health and Welfare Trust chooses new medical benefits administrator](#)^[13]

The University of Colorado Health and Welfare Trust employers on Monday chose not to extend the current administrative services contract with Cigna beyond June 30.

The employers of the health trust are the University of Colorado, University of Colorado Hospital and University

Physicians Inc.

“After considerable analysis and discussion, the employers concluded that Cigna is not the best match for the Trust, given the complexities of the CU Health Plan,” said E. Jill Pollock, vice president, Employee and Information Services, and chair of the University of Colorado Health and Welfare Trust.

The employers are re-engaging Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield to handle administrative services for the CU Health Plan effective July 1. Anthem will be responsible for claims processing, benefit appeal hearings, certain provider networks and other administrative functions.

Cigna will continue to serve the current benefit plans through June 30. During this period, employees will not see changes to their health coverage. Employees participating in the Kaiser Permanente plan are not affected by this change.

More details will be available during Open Enrollment for CU employees this spring.

[Colorado Department of Education awards \\$290,000 to support English language learners](#)^[14]

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The Colorado Department of Higher Education recently awarded \$290,000 in federal funding to UCCS to support work with Harrison School District 2 and Colorado Springs School District 11 in training educators of young English language learners.

The Improving Teacher Quality grants are designed to support partnerships between institutions of higher education and school districts. The grants are part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and are distributed to states for disbursement.

A total of six institutions applied for the latest round of funding, which was focused on addressing the specific literacy needs of English language learners in grades pre-kindergarten through 3. UCCS was the sole award recipient and was notified Feb. 1.

The DHE has awarded more than \$800,000 in the federal grants in recent months, with the goal of improving K-12 achievement by boosting teacher quality.

Colorado has seen rapid growth in the number of English language learners in its K-12 schools, with the state Department of Education reporting a more than 250 percent increase since 1994. Most of that growth has been in the elementary grades.

In its grant application, the UCCS College of Education said work with its two district partners will include “a sustained program of workshops, discussions, online resources, an intensive summer institute and structured observation sessions” for teachers. The project also calls for “the valuing of students’ identities” as emerging bilingual learners.

The grant was submitted by three College of Education faculty from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Barbara Frye, associate professor, Angela Bell, assistant professor, and Leslie Grant, associate professor. They will serve as the grant’s principal investigators.

[Professor views project as way to open doors to housekeepers](#)^[16]

Assistant professor Andres Lema-Hincapie, center, with custodians Aurelio Barranca-Osorio and Angelica Reaves.

Andres Lema-Hincapie's work in the Department of Modern Languages is about opening doors -- to language, to culture, to art.

So it's not surprising that he turned his attention to the custodial staff in the Plaza Building where he teaches. He noticed that the janitors are part of the university, yet are also far apart from it, mainly because of language barriers.

Lema-Hincapie, Ph.D., a Colombia native, wants to expose them to what the university is about. He wants to open the door. Welcome them in.

He applied for a CU System Diversity and Excellence Grant for a project titled, "Including Our Housekeepers: Basic Computers, Written Spanish/English, Great World Cinema."

"I'd like to see them acclimate to be part of this cultural and knowledge adventure, which is the university," Lema-Hincapie said. "Because I think by cleaning restrooms and mopping floors, this is not the only way to be part of this community. This is a community of learning and doing research."

His proposal was one of eight selected for funding at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus for 2012-13. "Including Our Housekeepers" won a \$2,995 grant and, using volunteer teachers, will instruct a group of 10 housekeepers on computers, written English and Spanish and classic cinema over a 16-week period.

"Imagine the housekeepers going to a place they usually clean up -- the Auraria Library -- but this time they are not going to clean it, they are going to learn," he said. "They are going to be part of this learning entity."

Lema-Hincapie's evening classes in the Plaza coincide with the custodians' work shifts. They often include the assistant professor in their meal break time. "I like the company of these marvelous people, but I don't like their spicy food," he said with a laugh.

A visit with one custodian in particular sparked an idea in Lema-Hincapie. The man said he'd bought a laptop for his daughter and wanted to be able to use the computer. Lema-Hincapie put the man in touch with a Modern Languages student, Harold Kleeman, who is handy with computers. It ended up being a symbiotic relationship -- the custodian expanded the student's knowledge of Spanish, while for a short period of time the student taught the man computer 101.

Similarly, the project will pair volunteer teachers one-on-one with housekeepers. During weekly 90-minute sessions at Auraria Library, the custodians will receive 30 minutes of instruction each in computers (brought by the teachers), written English and written Spanish. They won't be the only ones learning, Lema-Hincapie said. "The volunteers are teaching someone, but at the same time they are learning how to teach. They are going to face some unusual situations."

They will be responsible for completing regular online exercises with an exercise tutor outside Denver. Once a month, they will be encouraged to invite friends and family to a screening of a classic film at the library.

Olga Gavara, a Modern Languages graduate student, will coordinate the project. Monica Fullmer Bautista, who earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology from CU Denver, is now working on a master's in public health at the Colorado School of Public Health at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. If Bautista is successful in getting the "Including Our Housekeepers" project accepted as the practicum for her master's studies, it would enable the project to expand in the future, Lema-Hincapie said.

"If we do the scientific document side (performed by Bautista), we could apply for a huge grant," he said. "The idea would be to include more housekeepers."

Regardless of whether the scientific document is approved, Lema-Hincapie will include a videotaped record of the project.

Lema-Hincapie is hopeful the project could spin off into a policy that ensures that as housekeepers are hired, they receive basic English and computer instruction. Ultimately, the project could improve housekeepers' self-confidence; reduce cultural/technological gaps between custodians and their younger family members; should cut down on the percentage of housekeepers' children and grandchildren who drop out of high school; and expose university undergraduate and graduate students of Spanish to teaching situations in a controlled environment.

"What for us is very simple, is not so very simple for them," Lema-Hincapie said. "Metaphorically, we breathe and they cannot breathe."

For more on the 2012-13 Diversity and Excellence Grant projects, [click here](#)[18].

[Southwest regional warming likely cause of pinyon pine cone decline, says CU study](#)[19]

A decline in the reproduction of pinyon pine trees in the Southwest in recent decades could affect a number of different bird and mammal species, including the crossbill seen here feeding on a pinyon pine nut. (Photo courtesy Jeffrey Mitton/University of Colorado)

Creeping climate change in the Southwest appears to be having a negative effect on pinyon pine reproduction, a finding with implications for wildlife species sharing the same woodland ecosystems, says a University of Colorado Boulder-led study.

The new study showed that pinyon pine seed cone production declined by an average of about 40 percent at nine study sites in New Mexico and northwestern Oklahoma over the past four decades, said CU-Boulder doctoral student Miranda Redmond, who led the study. The biggest declines in pinyon pine seed cone reproduction were at the higher elevation research sites experiencing more dramatic warming relative to lower elevations, said Redmond of CU's ecology and evolutionary biology department.

"We are finding significant declines in pinyon pine cone production at many of our study sites," Redmond said. "The biggest declines in cone production we measured were in areas with greater increases in temperatures over the past several decades during the March to October growing season."

Temperature and precipitation were recorded at official long-term weather stations located near each of the nine sites. Overall, average temperatures in the study areas have increased by about 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit in the past four decades, she said.

A paper on the subject by Redmond, assistant professor Nichole Barger of CU-Boulder and Frank Forcella of the United States Department of Agriculture in Morris, Minn., appeared in a recent issue of the journal *Ecosphere*, published by the Ecological Society of America. The new study was funded primarily by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to Redmond.

The cones in which the pinyon seeds are produced are initiated two years prior to seed maturity, and research suggests the environmental stimulus for cone initiation is unseasonably low temperatures during the late summer, Redmond said. Between 1969 and 2009, unseasonably low temperatures in late summer decreased in the study areas, likely inhibiting cone initiation and development.

The study is one of the first to examine the impact of climate change on tree species like pinyon pines that, instead of reproducing annually, shed vast quantities of cones every few years during synchronous, episodic occurrences known as "masting" events. Redmond said such masting in the pinyon pine appears to occur every three to seven years, resulting in massive "bumper crops" of cones covering the ground.

In the new Ecosphere study, the researchers compared two 10-year sequences of time. In addition to showing that total pinyon pine cone production during the 2003-2012 decade had declined from the 1969-1978 decade in the study areas, the team found the production of cones during masting events also declined during that period.

Some scientists believe masting events evolved to produce a big surplus of nut-carrying cones -- far too many for wildlife species to consume in a season -- making it more likely the nuts eventually will sprout into pinyon pine seedlings, she said. Others have suggested masting events occur during favorable climate conditions and/or to increase pollination efficiency. "Right now we really don't know what drives them," Redmond said.

"Across a range of forested ecosystems we are observing widespread mortality events due to stressors such as changing climate, drought, insects and fire," said CU's Barger. "This study provides evidence that increasing air temperatures may be influencing the ability of a common and iconic western U.S. tree, pinyon pine, to reproduce. We would predict that declines in pinyon pine cone production may impact the long-term viability of these tree populations."

Wildlife biologists say pinyon-juniper woodlands are popular with scores of bird and mammal species ranging from black-chinned hummingbirds to black bears. A 2007 study by researchers at the University of Northern Arizona estimated that 150 Clark's Nutcrackers cached roughly 5 million pinyon pine nuts in a single season, benefiting not only the birds themselves but also the pines whose nuts were distributed more widely for possible germination.

For the new study, Redmond revisited nine pinyon pine study sites scattered throughout New Mexico and Oklahoma that had been studied previously in 1978 by Forcella. Both Forcella and Redmond were able to document pinyon pine masting years by counting small, concave blemishes known as "abscission scars" on individual tree branches that appeared after the cones have been dropped, she said.

Since each year in the life of a pinyon pine tree is marked by a "whorl" -- a single circle of branches extending around a tree trunk -- the researchers were able to bracket pinyon pine reproductive activity in the nine study areas for the 1969-1978 decade and 2003-2012 decade, which were then compared.

Pinyon pines take three growing seasons, or about 26 months, to produce mature cones from the time of cone initiation. Low elevation conifers including pinyon pines grow in water-limited environments and have been shown to have higher cone output during cool and/or wet summers, said Redmond. In addition to the climate-warming trend under way in the Southwest, the 2002-03 drought caused significant mortality in pinyon pine forests, Redmond said.

"Miranda's ideas and accompanying results will be of value to ecologists and land managers in the deserts of the Southwest and beyond," said Forcella, now a research agronomist in the USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "The work is evidence that the University of Colorado continues to cultivate a cadre of high-caliber graduate students for which it rightfully can take tremendous pride."

Pinyon nuts, the Southwest's only commercial source of edible pine seeds today, were dietary staples of indigenous Americans going back millennia.

For more information on CU-Boulder's ecology and evolutionary biology department visit <http://ebio.colorado.edu>[21].

[Donors thanked for their transformative contributions](#)[22]

Special honoree Donald Bennallack is welcomed to the stage by CU Foundation Chair Carl "Spike" Eklund.

Stories of life-changing university research, and the people who make it possible, were celebrated at the Sixth Annual Donor Recognition Dinner.

The event drew a full house to the Seawell Ballroom in the Denver Performing Arts Complex on Feb. 7. Leaders of the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus and the [University of Colorado Foundation](#)[24] honored the many contributors to the foundation's [Creating Futures](#)[25] campaign.

University of Colorado President Bruce Benson and his wife, Marcy, chairs of Creating Futures, announced that the campaign, in its third year, has to date raised \$1.3 billion and is closing in on its goal of \$1.5 billion. "We probably should close this (campaign) out in a year or so," Benson said. "I want to thank everyone for supporting this."

The evening began with a set of music by Mix A Cappella, a CU Denver student singing group, and a chance for the more than 520 attendees to mingle and learn more about research being conducted at CU Denver and the Anschutz Medical Campus. Displays included a presentation showing how polymer technology is being used to treat aneurysms and other medical conditions and a student-designed car that runs on hydrogen fuel.

"For me, it really is an honor to be associated with the great work at both our Denver campus and our Anschutz campus that has inspired such loyal support from all of you in this room," said Don Elliman, chancellor. "Every year our work attracts new donors to new opportunities. Tonight's gathering really acknowledges support provided in the past, and while that's true, this dinner is really about the future. I can tell you in no uncertain terms that the University of Colorado Denver and the Anschutz Medical Campus is the future of Denver, Aurora and Colorado."

Elliman highlighted recent accomplishments on the Denver campus, including the academic building ground-breaking, new undergraduate programs (architecture and bioengineering) and graduate programs (construction engineering management and hospital management). He noted how the university's donors are "truly the engine that drives CU's success. Your generosity makes possibilities real, and all of CU is grateful."

Elliman introduced Lilly Marks, vice president for Health Affairs at the University of Colorado and executive vice chancellor of the Anschutz Medical Campus, praising her leadership of CU Anschutz, "truly a crown jewel .. built literally from the ground up through the contributions of many people in this room."

Marks thanked the audience, noting how "with your help, we have built a nationally recognized health care campus on a shuttered Army base."

The campus is now the primary source of training Colorado's professional health care workforce. "Many of you have enabled our students to pursue their professional education and dreams through your generous support of student scholarships," Marks said.

Six special honorees were acknowledged, with Marks and Elliman introducing the philanthropists making transformative contributions on the respective campuses.

Special honorees included:

Mary Rossick Kern and Jerry Kern: The list of Denver-area organizations benefitting from the Kerns' generosity is considerable. At CU, we highlight their commitment to the Mary Rossick Kern and Jerome Kern Endowed Chair in Thyroid Tumor Research, and their decade of giving to advance progress in studying the neurobiology of mental disorders in children. Delta Dental of Colorado and the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation: Delta Dental is proud to support the work that CU has done to help further its mission. Through the Frontier Center, the CU School of Dental Medicine is working to ensure that medical students now graduate with training in oral health. This creates collaborations between dentistry and medicine to enhance preventive care and improve oral health outcomes. Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation has supported Colorado with more than \$12 million in grants and services. CoBank: The largest financial institution headquartered in Colorado, CoBank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in 50 states. Thanks to CoBank's generous support, the CU Denver Business School is able to provide relevant education and training for business leaders of tomorrow. The Piton Foundation: The foundation's mission is to provide opportunities for children and their families to move from poverty and dependence to self-reliance. It has invested in numerous CU programs toward this end, beginning with a grant of \$500,000 in 1981 to support the centers at the School of Public Affairs. Today, The Piton Foundation continues to work with the university to help a generation of children thrive and succeed. Donald A. Bennalack, M.D.: A member of the CU School of Medicine class of 1950, Bennalack worked his way

through school with many jobs. He thought himself fortunate compared to a classmate who had to drop out of school for lack of money. Now he is giving back through a bequest that will provide scholarships for CU's medical students. Carl "Spike" Eklund, chair of the CU Foundation Board of Directors, introduced Bennalack, noting that in his 36 years of Ob/Gyn practice the doctor delivered thousands of Colorado babies, "including all three of ours! (he and his wife, Nan)." The audience gave Bennalack, 88, a standing ovation as he walked to the podium.

Bennalack said he's been a lucky man. "In practice I was lucky to have wonderful patients. Since I've been retired I've been lucky -- I have wonderful friends. Some are here this evening," he said. "I wish all of you some good luck, good health and happiness in your futures."

Other dignitaries included current regents Michael Carrigan (chair), Sue Sharkey (vice chair), Steve Bosley and Irene Griego, former CU President Judith Albino and current CU Foundation President Rick Lawrence.

[McConnell named a 'Rising Star'](#)[26]

[27]

Daisy McConnell, director, Galleries of Contemporary Art, at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, was named a 2013 Rising Star by the Colorado Springs Business Journal.

In the Feb. 7 edition of the local business newspaper, McConnell was one of 30 Colorado Springs young professionals recognized as "those in the local community 40 and younger who have made significant strides in their careers and who have given back to the community through their dedication to volunteerism and charity."

A panel of judges rated the nominees in five areas that gauged their work ethic and community involvement. The group will be honored at a reception March 21 at Cheyenne Mountain Resort.

[Krizek, Boykoff named Leopold Leadership Fellows](#)[28]

Boykoff

Two University of Colorado Boulder environmental researchers have been named Leopold Leadership Fellows for 2013 in recognition of their outstanding leadership abilities and desire to communicate scientific issues beyond academic audiences.

Environmental design professor **Kevin J. Krizek** and environmental studies assistant professor **Maxwell Boykoff** are among 20 Leopold fellows selected this year from around the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Krizek researches sustainable transport infrastructure, bicycle planning, transportation policies and land use. He also serves as outreach and education coordinator for sustainability and as senior transportation fellow for the CU Environmental Center. One of his recent papers examined the role of bike facilities in influencing people's preferences for traveling around town. He found that people prefer bike facilities, such as designated lanes, more than the absence of street-side parking on roads, and that people will go up to 2 miles out of their way to get to a bike path.

Boykoff researches cultural politics of climate change and analyses of the transformations of carbon-based economies and societies. He also is a fellow of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) and an adjunct faculty member in the geography department.

One of Boykoff's areas of focus is the mass media -- a key vehicle by which climate change contrarianism has

traveled, he says. Among his various and ongoing research projects, Boykoff has tracked climate change coverage in 50 newspapers in 20 countries on six continents since 2004.

The Leopold fellowships provide scientists with intensive communications and leadership training to help them communicate scientific information effectively to nonscientific audiences, especially policymakers, the media, business leaders and the public. Leopold fellows are selected through a competitive application process and represent a broad range of environmental science disciplines, including environmental engineering, wildlife veterinary medicine, tropical forestry, marine ecology and environmental economics.

The two previous Leopold fellows from CU-Boulder were **Sharon Collinge** in 2004 and **Alan Townsend** in 2001. Collinge is the CU-Boulder director and a professor of environmental studies. She also is a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology and chairs CU-Boulder's Environment and Sustainability Visioning Committee. Townsend is a CU-Boulder professor of ecology and evolutionary biology as well as environmental studies, currently on leave to serve as director of the Division of Environmental Biology at the National Science Foundation.

[Crane appointed associate dean for Academic Affairs](#)^[30]

^[31]

Lori A. Crane, professor and currently chair of the Department of Community and Behavioral Health at the Colorado School of Public Health, will become the new associate dean for Academic Affairs effective March 1.

Crane will fill the role previously held by Jack Barnette, professor of biostatistics.

"Lori has a long and distinguished career of service to the school and public health education and research," said Dean David C. Goff. "I am extremely confident in her ability to apply that experience to advance the academic mission and programs of our growing school."

Crane will assume the associate dean position during a period of rapid growth within the school. Since opening in 2008, the school has increased enrollment to more than 500 students and added new programs and areas of study. The school is currently making plans for added enrollment and curriculum expansion, areas that will be overseen by Crane.

"I believe that the Colorado School of Public Health has the potential to become one of the best schools of public health in the world," Crane said. "And I'm excited for the chance to be part of the team that leads us there."

Crane will step down from her role as department chair in order to become associate dean.

As a professor of community and behavioral health, Crane's research interests include cancer prevention and early detection, with particular emphasis on behavioral interventions to reduce skin cancer risk, and vaccine policy.

[Simpson to visit Anschutz Medical Campus as part of lectureship](#)^[32]

^[33]

Lisa Simpson has been named the recipient of the prestigious Chancellor's John J. Conger Lectureship and Visiting Professorship. She will be at Children's Hospital Colorado and the Anschutz Medical campus March 7-8.

Simpson is the president and chief executive officer for AcademyHealth, the leading national organization serving the fields of health services and policy research and the professionals who produce and use this important work. She was invited by **Allison Kempe**, professor of pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Colorado and director of the Center for

Research in Implementation Science and Prevention (CRISP), and **Steve Berman**, professor of pediatrics, Children's Hospital Colorado Chair in General Pediatrics and director, Center for Global Health, Colorado School of Public Health.

She will present "Child Health Services in a Post Affordable Care Act World: What Do We Need to Know?" from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. March 8 at Children's Hospital Colorado.

Representing AcademyHealth's nearly 4,600 members, Simpson is a leading advocate for the translation of research into policy and practice, and for the support and training necessary to continue improving the relevance and rigor of the health services research enterprise. Since joining AcademyHealth in 2011, Simpson has worked to raise the visibility of the field of health services research and its contributions to improving the quality, value and accessibility of care, reducing disparities, and improving health.

A nationally recognized health policy researcher and pediatrician, Simpson's research focuses on improving the performance of the health care system and includes studies of the quality and safety of care, health and health care disparities and the health policy and system response to childhood obesity. Before joining AcademyHealth, Simpson served as the director of the Child Policy Research Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and professor of pediatrics in the Division of Health Policy and Clinical Effectiveness, Department of Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati. She also served as the deputy director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality from 1996 to 2002.

[Dropping names...](#)[34]

Struessel

Tami Struessel, senior instructor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine physical therapy program, was honored by the Education Section American Physical Therapy Association with the 2012 Feitelberg Journal Founders' Award, which recognizes excellence in preparing a manuscript by a first-time author in the Journal of Physical Therapy Education. ... **Mark Stanker**, assistant vice president for Payroll & Benefit Services, has been named plan administrator for the University of Colorado Health and Welfare Trust. The growth in size and complexity of the trust since its founding in 2010 necessitated a separate office to handle its affairs. Stanker has led Payroll & Benefit Services for the past 11 years. He was a key member of the original Administrative Streamlining Project, which consolidated the payroll functions and inaugurated the present human resources management system (HRMS). Replacing Stanker is **Lisa Landis**, whose present responsibilities for System Administration human resources will be combined with those in PBS. Her new title is assistant vice president, Employee Services. Landis has been a key contributor to universitywide human resources functions, particularly as lead for the comprehensive university staff compensation project, the RFP process regarding the next generation of HRMS and the dependent tuition benefit. ... Seven faculty or staff members joined UCCS in January. They are: **Cheryl Hill**, senior instructor, UCCS Teach Program, College of Education; **Julie Anderson**, manager, Peak Nutrition Clinic, Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences; **Donald Tharp**, educational technologist, School of Public Affairs; **Teresa Wagner**, accounting technician, Student Financial Services; **April Martin**, communication technician, Department of Public Safety; **Frederick Warren**, senior research associate, Trauma Health and Hazards Center; and **Carolyn Yeager**, senior application software engineer, Trauma Health and Hazards Center.

[How does inclusion work? Conference will seek answers](#)[36]

[37]

How does inclusion work? What fosters an inclusive dynamic? What are dynamic approaches to broadening inclusive practices in your community, school, culture or nation?

The Fourth Annual Undergraduate Conference on Diversity, presented by the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder, is set for Feb. 21. The event begins at 8 a.m. with international breakfast, followed at 8:15 a.m. by an interactive opening icebreaker with Nii Armah Sowah and the 1,000 Voices Project. From 8:45-9:45 a.m., the CU Dialogue Project with immigrant employees will be facilitated by Pilar Prostko. Featured student presenters appear from 10-11:30 a.m.

The One Action performance of Motus Playback Theater Performance is 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. It promises a conversation on oppression, privilege and opportunity.

The conference will be in the British Studies Room, M549, of Norlin Library. Click [here](#)^[37] to download the flyer.

[Risk Management offers informative overview](#)^[38]

^[39]

Have you ever wondered what [University Risk Management](#)^[40] (URM) does? Do you only call if you have a claim or an injury?

URM does more than just insurance. URM also supports departments through risk identification and assessments, best practices and guidelines, event management and more.

At the upcoming University Risk Management Overview, CU-Boulder faculty and staff are invited to come meet the Boulder URM staff and learn about the many ways URM can partner with your department.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday in the Administrative Research Center (ARC) Conference Room 620, East Campus, Marine Street. Light refreshments will be served.

To register, contact Stephanie.Ball@cu.edu^[41] or 303-860-5682.

[Expert on workplace bullying set for Boulder workshops, lecture](#)^[42]

Keashly

Professor Loreleigh Keashly will visit the CU-Boulder campus to present two bystander training workshops on workplace bullying, as well as a session at the CU Women Succeeding professional development symposium.

Keashly, of Wayne State University in Detroit, is an internationally recognized scholar on workplace bullying. The workshops will be 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 21 in the UMC Art Gallery (room 225) and 9 a.m.-noon Feb. 22 in UMC 415-417.

People who witness workplace bullying report feeling reluctant to act for fear they will be next. They also report that they do not know what options they have for responding. Keashly believes co-workers can learn to respond to uncivil and bullying behaviors and often have a positive impact. The focus of the session is to help participants recognize strategies they can use when bullying occurs in their workplace. In the workshops there will be opportunities to try out some of these responses through role play and debriefing of these experiences.

Space is limited to 40 participants in each session. Click a link below to register:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/February-21>[44]

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/February-22>[45]

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As part of the CU Women Succeeding professional development symposium, Keashly will present, “Workplace bullying: What’s going on and what can I do?”

In this session, participants will learn to recognize when a relationship becomes bullying and when it is not. Keashly will pay particular attention to women’s experiences. She will draw on current research and participants’ own experiences, and examine how bullying manifests itself in university environments. The group will then generate strategies that can be utilized by those who feel bullied, bystanders and those perceived to be “bullies” to improve bullying relationships.

This talk will be 2:45 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Feb. 22 in the UMC Aspen Rooms (285-289).

The CU Women Succeeding symposium is free and available to faculty and staff from all campuses of the University of Colorado. Sign up to attend at: <https://www.cu.edu/FacultyCouncil/womens-symposium/index.html>[46].

[Magic, motorcycles and more get mashed up in series of talks](#)[47]

[48]

It’s magic and motorcycles – and topics in between – as the Galleries of Contemporary Art (GOCA) at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs host ChitChat, an annual series of mash-up talks on contemporary culture and DIY topics. The event, every Wednesday night from Feb. 20 through March 20, features two speakers, hands-on learning and lively conversation.

Topics and presenters are:

Feb. 20: Motorcycle Culture, D. Alex Ilyasova, UCCS/English; Brazilian Dance, Luciana da Silva, Brazilian dancer.

Feb. 27: Hitchcock, George Butte, Colorado College/Film; Literary Cocktails, Frank Frey, Nosh/Blue Star Bartender.

March 6: Physics of Color, Tom Christensen, UCCS/Physics; Crepes! Crepes! Crepes!, Turu Marx Eurich, Coquette’s Bistro.

March 13: Magical Geography, Mike Larkin, UCCS/Geography; Magic Tricks, Mark Modeer, Zeezo’s Magic Castle.

March 20: Salem Witch Trials, Cathy Giuffre, Colorado College/Sociology; Bicycles for All, All Brody, cycling activist.

Events begin at 7 p.m. at GOCA21, 121 S. Tejon St., Colorado Springs. Suggested donations are \$5 for GOCA members and \$10 for the general public. Students are admitted free. For more information, call 719-255-3504 or visit www.galleryuccs.org[49]. The series is made possible by the CU President’s Fund for the Humanities.

[Call for research proposals: President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative](#)^[50]

Faculty from all disciplines are invited to become investigators in the CU President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative (PTLC), now beginning its eighth year and establishing its 2013-14 cohort of Faculty Researchers.

Central to the work of the collaborative is creating and publishing scholarship in teaching and learning that contributes both to theory and effective teaching practice in and across disciplines. To this end, each faculty researcher designs and undertakes an investigation aimed at deepening understanding of disciplinary pedagogy and related to an important issue in learning.

Faculty Researchers design, carry out and publish research on a particular aspect of learning in a specific course. Each investigator is supported by a coach and short seminars in how to do education research. Faculty researchers will receive funding totaling \$1,550 for their research that may include a student research assistant and presenting one's research.

All application materials must be submitted electronically in attached **Word documents only** to Suzanne.Eyerman@Colorado.EDU^[51] by May 22.

Complete details are posted at: http://www.colorado.edu/ptsp/ptlc/PTLC_Call.html^[52]

[Leadership program offered for early childhood educators](#)^[53]

[CU Denver's School of Education and Human Development](#)^[54] has joined the [Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation](#)^[55] and the [Institute at Clayton Early Learning](#)^[56] to offer an exciting leadership program for early childhood educators.

The 18-credit graduate certificate program is taught within a cohort structure with convenient classes (weekends/online). Generous support from the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation provides each admitted student with a full tuition scholarship. [Details/Apply](#)^[57]

Links

[\[1\] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/five-questions-lisa-landis](#)^[2] [https://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-lisa-landis/5q-landis-f](#)^[3] [https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-boulder-announces-finalists-visiting-scholar-conservative-thought-and-policy](#)^[4] [https://connections.cu.edu/news/cu-boulder-announces-finalists-for-visiting-scholar-in-conservative-thought-and-policy/conserv_hayward](#)^[5] [https://connections.cu.edu/news/cu-boulder-announces-finalists-for-visiting-scholar-in-conservative-thought-and-policy/conserv_chavez](#)^[6] [https://connections.cu.edu/news/cu-boulder-announces-finalists-for-visiting-scholar-in-conservative-thought-and-policy/conserv_haskins](#)^[7] [https://connections.cu.edu/stories/guest-opinion-grade-inflation-or-hard-earned-results](#)^[8] [https://connections.cu.edu/news/guest-opinion-grade-inflation-or-hard-earned-results/belknap](#)^[9] <http://www.colorado.edu/ibs/pb/belknap/>^[10] <mailto:jay.dedrick@cu.edu>^[11] [https://connections.cu.edu/stories/east-17th-place-bridge-opens-anschutz-medical-campus](#)^[12] [https://connections.cu.edu/across-cu/east-17th-place-bridge-opens-at-anschutz-medical-campus/amc_perlmutter](#)^[13] [https://connections.cu.edu/stories/health-and-welfare-trust-chooses-new-medical-benefits-administrator](#)^[14] [https://connections.cu.edu/stories/colorado-department-education-](#)

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