Regents approve sale of Ninth and Colorado property to Continuum Partners[1]

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9th and Colorado Phased Development Plan

The University of Colorado Board of Regents this morning approved the sale of CU's former Health Sciences Center at Ninth Avenue and Colorado Boulevard in Denver to Continuum Partners, a Denver-based developer, for $30 million.

Continuum's proposal for the 25.918-acre campus encompasses a broad range of residential, office and retail spaces with an emphasis on small and local businesses. Continuum's plans envision a vibrant, walkable mixed-use neighborhood that creates a memorable place, including a true "town center" with amenities including parks, plazas, and underground parking.

The closing on the sale of the property is scheduled to occur by December 2014. Continuum anticipates beginning work on the project immediately following closing and estimates that the overall project will take approximately five years to complete.

CU moved its health sciences education programs to the Ninth and Colorado location in 1924. The university has been marketing that property since 2006 as it relocated the health sciences campus to the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Aurora, now the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

"This property has had a wonderful past and now is headed toward a wonderful future," said Lilly Marks, vice president for health affairs for the University of Colorado and executive vice chancellor of the Anschutz campus. "It served Denver and Colorado well as a health sciences center. Now it can start anew as a vibrant part of Denver."

CU sold 6.74 acres of the old campus to Lionstone Group in June 2013. The buildings on that lot are being demolished to make way for residential development.

The announcement today follows months of collaboration between the university, Denver officials and City Council members to find the best use for the prime acreage on Denver's east side.

A review committee of representatives from CU, the city and county of Denver and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) was formed to recommend a developer to the Board of Regents that could close on the sale and embrace the needs of the university, the surrounding neighborhoods and the city of Denver. Continuum has redeveloped several complex mixed-use sites including Denver Union Station and Belmar in Lakewood.

The regents' vote today was 9-0. The final sale is contingent upon city approval of tax-increment financing.

Denver City Council President Mary Beth Susman, whose council district incorporates part of the Ninth and Colorado site, said, "It is exciting to see this project moving forward again, and we look forward to working with the developer in sharing the plan with the community and hearing their feedback." Councilwomen Jeanne Robb, whose district also includes the site, added, "We are pleased with our preliminary understanding of the Continuum plan because it addresses many of the aspirations of the neighbors and city plans."

Said Continuum CEO and Founder Mark Falcone, "From the start, we wanted a project that the neighbors, the city and Continuum would be proud of. Our company is dedicated to creating sustainable urban spaces that have character and enduring value, and we feel that this project embodies those ideals."

Mayor Michael Hancock said, "The city is grateful for the public input that has been garnered around this development. We look forward to further collaboration to ensure this is a project we can all be proud of and will serve the neighborhoods well, now and into the future."

Five questions for Tom Lemieux[4]

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While working for an agriculture biotech company in the San Francisco Bay area, Tom Lemieux had a couple of benches where he would keep his “weird” plants. But his job entailed growing corn, tomatoes and petunias for research, so there wasn’t much room for the plants he enjoyed.

He was drawn to the University of Colorado Boulder because it was an opportunity to build a teaching collection of plants that was a lot more exciting. Lemieux, CU-Boulder’s greenhouse manager, has been at the university for 22 years. The collection he has amassed over the years is used to teach students about plant biology.

The Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department (EBIO) has three greenhouse facilities: one near Macky Auditorium, one on the roof of Ramaley Hall, and one on the East Campus on 30th Street. Here Lemieux can grow nearly all the strange and wonderful plants he likes for use in a variety of plant science courses and as research material for faculty and students. Other institutions in Boulder also have made use of the space, including the National Center for Atmosphere Research; Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology and the chemistry department at the university; and the city of Boulder.

Tropaeolum 'Alaska' (Photos by Richard Ellis)

“Many people think growing a plant is as easy as running a load of laundry,” Lemieux says. “It might be, but then again unforeseen variables can detract from solid conclusions in experiments and certainly some plants are more difficult to cultivate than others.” He and Janice Harvey, the assistant greenhouse manager, oversee everything that has to do with the care and cultivation of the plants and maintain the greenhouse facilities – “all the stuff that has to do with keeping the plants warm in winter and cool in summer.” Then there’s the pest control and transplanting and fertilizing. At times, they may have to substitute plants with specific characteristics for use in course labs.

And there’s lots of sharing of plants, especially among greenhouse managers at universities. He also has sent plants to other institutions. “In the 20-plus years I’ve been here, I’ve easily given away thousands of dollars in plants to Denver Botanic Gardens because the plants have grown too big for us. A few years ago, they came here regularly with a flatbed truck and a hydraulic lift, and we would load it up.” The Smithsonian Institute, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami, and the New York Botanic Garden, among other entities, also have some of CU’s plants.

Lemieux doesn’t have his own backyard greenhouse – “I don’t have any need for one; I have one when I come to work” – therefore he spends some of his leisure time biking and playing Venezuelan folk music on the cuatro, the national instrument of Venezuela, so named because it has four strings.

1. How did you become interested in horticulture?

Morus alba 'Issai' (Photo by Richard Ellis)

My dad always had a garden when we lived in Maine. There was a local Italian market there and when my dad’s bell peppers came into season, they were the only bell peppers the Italian market wanted. He loved growing roses and other plants, too. I got an early exposure to plants and gardens, and I wish I had taken more advantage of it. It wasn’t until I was a sophomore in college that I realized that I was definitely going to do something with plants. I’m lucky to have picked the right career. When I taught horticulture in California, I had a lot of people in the program who had advanced degrees – a nuclear physicist, a practicing psychiatrist, a graduate of Harvard Law School – people who were either forced or encouraged to go one way or another in life but who decided they didn’t want to do that anymore; they wanted to grow plants. I’m lucky I picked a career I’ve never gotten tired of or bored with.

2. Does each of the greenhouses hold different collections?

Microgramma squamulosa (Photo by Richard Ellis)

The rooftop greenhouse is mainly for research purposes. There are a number of faculty members and grad students who need to sample or monitor their plants frequently, so the proximity of Ramaley to lab and office space is a great advantage. But the space is limited. The two greenhouses near Macky mainly house plants for teaching purposes, while the greenhouse at 30th street has more space and is where we have plants used for both teaching and research.

We have about 1,000 different kinds of plants, but in some cases we have duplicates or grow the same plant in large quantities depending on the needs of a course. We probably grow about 6,000 plants total. We're lucky to have facilities like this. The facility on 30th Street used to exist in Richmond, Calif., and was owned by Chevron Oil. They had 23 greenhouses that needed to be removed because they were selling the land and relocating their research facilities to Southern California. It's a credit to our chair of the department at the time, Bill Lewis, who was able to make this happen. We disassembled the largest and best of the greenhouses and loaded it onto three semi-trucks. We cannibalized another 2,000-square-foot structure in order to reconfigure it into the present structure at 30th Street. Local architect Peter Heinz was responsible for the ingenious design.

We have a really fantastic collection and impressive facilities, especially since some universities with plant science departments have considerably less. We operate on a shoestring of a budget and have a lot of unusual plants, some of which have been wild collected. Those have the greatest appeal. We're more interested in naturally occurring plants than hybridized things that have bigger flowers or brighter colors. That's one of the things I love about this job: I don't have to be dependent on consumers or marketing whims – like blue roses -- or anything like that.

Helminthostachys zeylanica (Photo by Richard Ellis)

One of the plants we have is Helminthostachys zeylanica. Once a systemicist from Harvard wanted to see our collection and I showed him this plant. He said he had just published a paper on the plant and had to use herbarium material – dried plants that have been mounted on a sheet of paper – because he didn't know that anyone had a living specimen. The plant was collected in Sarawak (Malaysia) in 1987 by Dr. Dennis Walker, now retired from Humboldt State University.

3. You have traveled overseas on plant expeditions. Do you have a favorite place to see or collect specimens?

I've been fortunate to be included on collecting trips mainly in Latin America and New Caledonia. When you're working with plants, you can have many, many favorite plants and countries, but one of the places I've been a number of times is Venezuela. I really like going there. Here in our collections, I have plants from Venezuela that I've been growing for 30 years. One of the things that's not so great about Venezuela is that you can never put your hands in shrubbery because of a poisonous snake called Mapanare, a pit viper with lethal and fast-acting venom. In New Caledonia, you can put your hands in any plant or shrubbery because there's only one snake there and it's blind and not poisonous. You develop favorites and not-so-favorites based on things like that. When I walked through the forest in Peru, I always carried a stick so that I could poke the ground in front of me because of another snake called the Fer-de-Lance (a related pit viper). They, too, have a very powerful bite and are very poisonous. I guess I'm a "vegephile" and an ophidiophobe!

Pseudobombax elliipticum flower (Photo by Richard Ellis)

I would love to get to the top of the Tepuis, these massive flat-topped mountains in southeast Venezuela. The mountaintops have their own flora that doesn't exist anywhere else in world. But there are weather problems. It usually requires a helicopter trip up and I've read that you can plan to leave in a few days but the helicopter can't come back to get you because the weather is too bad.

4. What are some of the research projects the plants have been used in?

The permanent collection is for teaching purposes. Researchers usually acquire their own plants by collecting or obtaining them from other researchers or even nurseries. Occasionally a researcher will request our help in obtaining seeds or plants. We've obtained plants in every conceivable way – except illegally.

Some of the research done here has looked at physiological and molecular mechanisms of plant survival in extreme environments, plant defense chemistry and its relationship to herbivores, spatial aspects of vernal pool ecology and its wider implications in ecosystems, and evolution and genetics of floral diversification. Our faculty has diverse interests and our facilities accommodate them in a variety of ways.

Recently we grew a bunch of weird succulents in the black pepper family from seed that we got from a collector in the Netherlands. All of them show interesting aspects of morphology for conservation of water and light penetration through thick-windowed leaves. We've also received plant starts from France and other countries. Sometimes a visitor comes by with a plant or somebody calls us because they want to get rid of a plant. Of course we don't take everything that's offered to us.

5. Do you have any special techniques for growing plants that you can share with gardeners?

I often inform researchers: "There's nobody that these plants are more important to than you." If they assign care of the plants to an inexperienced student, they may be taking chances. Believe it or not, at the greenhouses, there are four of us who can water – Janice Harvey, the assistant greenhouse manager, two work-study students, and me. One of us who can water is in our greenhouses every day of the year -- every Christmas, every Hanukkah, every birthday, every single day. I tell you this because if you want to do a good job of growing plants, the best thing you can do is pay attention to them. They need water and regular food. You can eat peanut butter for months and you wouldn't die but that's not the best thing for you. But somehow people think that if they fertilize their plants once a month, they're doing a good job. Plants need regular, small amounts of fertilizer just like people need regular, small amounts of food.

A lot of plants that do well in houses really just tolerate the conditions. Some plants have names like "Cast Iron Plant" because you almost can't kill them; they are extremely tolerant. But if you want to grow more unusual things, you have to pay attention to their needs, and in many cases, that means daily or at least every other day.

Pitcairnia corallina (Photo by Richard Ellis)

All plant photography provided by Richard Ellis.

CU, Colorado Springs community celebrate Lane Center opening[13]

[14]

CU dignitaries, partners and guests on Wednesday celebrated the launch of the Lane Center for Academic Health Sciences at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

[15]
The center is the result of a $4 million gift from the John E. and Margaret L. Lane Foundation to UCCS and Peak Vista Community Health. It is the first UCCS building in the North Nevada urban renewal zone and the lead for a long-term project that involves performing arts, athletics and additional health-related facilities on the west side of its campus.

Many CU leaders -- including all members of the CU Board of Regents, CU President Bruce Benson, UCCS Chancellor

Pam Shockley-Zalabak -- took part, as well as Peak Vista Community Health Centers President and CEO Pam McManus, and Lane Center benefactor Margot Lane, who lauded how the center will "enhance and enrich our community." The program celebrated the innovative partnership and the completion of the integrated health care facility.

“This is the culmination of an incredible collaboration,” Shockley-Zalabak said. “It signifies the beginning of a new way to view and provide health care to the greater Colorado Springs community.”

Said McManus, “This partnership will have a tremendous impact on the Pikes Peak region. The sharing of expertise among health care providers will allow improved access to wellness services for the growing population of seniors.”

Housed in the new Lane Center will be five clinics operating under the banner of UCCS HealthCircle. Services will include a primary care clinic as well as specialized services in nutrition, aging, physical activity and behavioral health.

Peak Vista’s Lane Family Senior Health Center also will be located on the second floor in the state-of-the-art facility. Peak Vista will provide primary care focused on wellness and prevention for people 55 and up.

A branch of the CU School of Medicine will also occupy space on the fourth floor of the facility.

“This represents the health care model of the future,” said Sara Qualls, UCCS Kramer Family Professor of Aging. “By having a diverse group of health care professionals in one location such as nutritionists, mental health specialists, gerontologists and primary care physicians working cooperatively together and sharing information, we can maximize care for the ‘whole’ person.”

The public is invited to tour the facility at its community open house scheduled from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. The clinics will officially be open and operating on March 3.

All photos courtesy Tom Kimmell

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Fundraising strong as CU-Boulder moves forward with athletics facilities[16]

[17]

The University of Colorado Boulder is making progress on its $143 million facilities project, having raised more than half of the $50 million required to begin construction, which is planned for April.

CU-Boulder Athletic Director Rick George updated the Board of Regents’ Intercollegiate Athletic Committee on the effort as part of his reports during the board’s meeting Wednesday at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. (The board meeting continues today; CU Connections will post updates.)

The plan received unanimous support from the Board of Regents[18] at its December meeting. It will be funded by private fundraising, bonding, corporate partners and new revenue streams.

The plan includes a multipurpose, indoor practice facility for football, track and other sports, as well as improvements to Folsom Field including a new club level and rooftop terrace that would generate revenue via non-game-day events.

George’s presentation to the board included artists’ renderings of the proposed facilities, including football locker room, offices at Folsom Field with a view of the Flatirons, and a multi-sport indoor practice field.

David Clough, Faculty Athletics Representative at CU-Boulder, told the board that less flashy details also will contribute to a better overall campus experience for student-athletes.

“The primary thing I see is that it improves their overall quality of life on campus. Some of this is not so spectacular,” Clough said. “We have a lot of our athletes that work out and practice and go to class. They do not have convenient access to shower out. … You might say, so what? If you think about it, that’s a mindset that will adversely affect their academic performance. This is really going to assist and bring the facilities closer to where their classes are and it’s going to have a marvelous effect.”

The project is set for completion in August 2015, George said.

Some of the proposed improvements at Folsom Field have the potential to boost the needed revenue George spoke of at the December meeting; the $62.8 million athletics budget for 2014-15 he referenced in his Wednesday presentation to the board indicated revenue of $1.2 million less than that. He said he expects that shortfall to be made up before budgets are made final this summer.

“We have got to find ways at CU to generate more revenue,” George told the board on Wednesday. “We have to think of nontraditional ways of generating revenue.” He said unsold seats at football games last year – 13,000 to 14,000 – contributed a significant hit to potential revenue.

On the student-athlete side, George pointed to a student-athlete GPA of 2.898 during the fall semester, representing the best fall semester GPA on record, and the second-highest semester GPA on record. The APR (Academic Progress Rate) for 2012-13 will be announced this June.

“Credit where credit’s due – we have made remarkable progress in men’s basketball and football,” Clough said, in terms of APR. “We are light years away from (NCAA) penalty status in those sports. The news (in the upcoming report) is good.”

Said George, “I think we’re recruiting the right student-athlete.”

George on Wednesday also presented a strategic plan for CU-Boulder athletics[19], a complex, 15-year outline that specifies several goals, many of which he called “aspirational, but attainable,” and aimed at encouraging accountability in the department while pursuing sports championships.

“We want to compete in at least one Pac-12 football championship by 2016,” George said. “It’s aspirational, but we believe it’s attainable.” He also noted a goal of an 80 percent graduation rate for student-athletes by 2017.

Development of the plan’s 104 metrics was led by Jeff Luftig, associate vice chancellor for process innovation, who helms CU-Boulder’s Office for Performance Improvement.

The committee also heard from the UCCS’ Brian Burnett , senior executive vice chancellor for administration and finance, and Steve Kirkham, athletic director, about programs and facilities at the campus[20]. Burnett pointed to the evolution of facilities for basketball, soccer and softball, and noted the need for a new multi-purpose facility for soccer and cross-country, with a projected first phase cost of $20 million to $35 million. UCCS is working on details of plan and will update the committee at a future meeting.

In other business on Wednesday, the first of the Board of Regents’ two-day meeting at UCCS:

During her report to the board, Melinda Piket-May, chair of Faculty Council, stressed the popular desire for an expansion of the university’s dependent tuition benefit.

“Ideally what they would like is to be able to use their tuition benefit on any CU campus, regardless of where they work,” said Piket-May, calling the benefit a crucial tool for recruitment and retention. “I know that’s a long ways off, but it’s something we’d like to see the administration strive for.”

Members of the board and administrators said they are happy to work with faculty and staff on studying details and feasibility for such changes to the benefit.

[President Benson part of national task force taking on regulations][21]

CU President Bruce Benson was among the national higher education leaders and lawmakers who took part in the first meeting of a new bipartisan task force, one charged with working to streamline federal regulations affecting U.S. colleges and universities.

The Higher Education Regulatory Task Force met Feb. 12 at the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C.

The task force was convened by Senate education committee ranking member Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and committee members Barbara Mikulski, D-Md.; Richard Burr, R-N.C.; and Michael Bennet, D-Colo. The group consists of college presidents and chancellors representing a variety of institutions; Sen. Bennet urged Benson to participate.

Alexander has said the pending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act presents an opportunity for congressional leaders to reconsider the regulatory burden of costly, sometimes confusing requirements. [The task force aims to make recommendations][22] for reducing and streamlining regulations.

President Benson met with Sen. Bennet and senior staff from Sen. Alexander's office before last week's meeting to discusses their priorities for the task force. They hope the recommendations would consist of a detailed list of top reforms that Congress and the Department of Education could pursue.

"I hope we can cut a lot of the bureaucracy and red tape, much like what we have done over the past six years at CU," Benson said.

The task force meeting featured 12 of the 14 task force members and representatives from a number of higher education associations with expertise in the education regulatory landscape. The group is being staffed by the American Council on Education (ACE).

At the meeting, representatives from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA), and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) provided summaries of regulatory issues they hear most about from their members. Some of the top challenges repeated by many of these groups included complying with the Clery Act, Return of Title IV funds, statute of limitations for Ed audits, accreditation, "mission creep" and IRS concerns related to the Forms 990 and 1098-T.

The task force is scheduled to meet again June 6 in Washington. Initial recommendations are scheduled to be presented to senators in the summer, followed by a third meeting of the task force in the fall. Final recommendations would be made late this year or in early 2015.

[Phishing attack could have been worse][23]

[24]

A series of phishing schemes In November and December of 2013 targeted the University of Colorado Denver campus' direct deposit function, resulting in some employee pay fraudulently being redirected to other accounts.

Brad Judy, director of University Information Systems (UIS) security, told members of the University of Colorado Staff Council at their meeting at the CU Denver Business School on Feb. 13 that about 2,700 emails were sent to campus addresses in an effort to obtain user name and password information.

"Out of those emails, only 18 employees had their direct deposit accounts changed fraudulently, and not all of those changes resulted in loss of pay," Judy said. In an effort to combat future criminal actions, the university is looking at ways to add another layer of security to self-service and direct deposit functions.

Judy said he doesn't know why criminals only targeted the Denver campus but said that other institutions of higher education across the country also have been affected. Campus police and the FBI are involved in the investigation of the event, but Judy says because the case is international and complex, it is unlikely that charges will be filed against the perpetrators.

The process of the crime is fairly straightforward, Judy said. An employee receives an email that takes him or her to a website that looks similar to a Denver campus login site. Once the user name and password are entered, the criminal uses the information to log into the CU Portal and change the direct deposit information. Criminals alter the information shortly before a pay cycle, leaving an employee and the university little time to catch the problem before a payment is redirected.

Judy said the university emails employees who change direct deposit information, but unfortunately, some of the affected people did not realize that something in their account was amiss. "We didn't hear about this when it happened," Judy said. "We heard about it when pay didn't land in their bank accounts."

By that time, the money already had been redirected into yet another account. Judy said the money often goes to a bank account held by an unknowing accomplice or another victim in a scheme that is called "money muling." The criminals lead unsuspecting people into laundering money for them. Those people likely were tricked into believing they had a work-from-home job or were involved in a romance crime, where victims are led to believe that an online love interest is in need of money.

Because only 18 out of 2,700 people were affected, Judy said, "This is a story of imperfect success, which is the general story of information security to a certain degree. This is a low response rate for employees, and that shows us that we have good awareness or maybe people are just ignoring their emails."

Judy said the university has efforts in place to combat security crimes. "We block about 78 percent of all inbound emails at the University of Colorado, so bad emails never get to your inboxes. Most of the stuff that does get through is legitimate, so in effect, we're blocking about 97 percent of the bad stuff. And that's the imperfect success."

When UIS learned of the breach, it blocked access to websites, deleted copies of the phishing email and sent follow-up communications to employees who had received the email, telling them not to act on the fake request for information. While all of this helped, Judy said, UIS cannot block all access, especially to employees' home or mobile accounts. "We can narrow down when the crime will occur but we can't get to zero."

The problem is compounded because many staff and students regularly travel or bank overseas. "We have people in other countries all of the time so that type of traffic from all over the world isn't unusual," he said. He added that the university gets about 1,000 true requests to change bank accounts every month. He said about 700 banks are represented in the university direct deposit process.

The university is discussing ways to add even more layers of authentication for employees who seek account changes, including adding an extra validation step.

Staff Council members also heard from several other guests:
Tony DeCrosta, associate vice president and chief plan administrator for the University of Colorado Health and Welfare

Trust, said the trust is in the process of setting rates for the upcoming year for health benefit plans. He said the national trend is a 10 percent increase, but he believes trust plan participants will see a lower rate change. Board of Regents Chair Michael Carrigan reiterated the need for better communication concerning board decisions. He also said that the program prioritization process currently in progress on all campuses will help the individual campuses, the university and the regents understand how finances are used and help identify which programs may or may not be vital to university goals. He said the process will help enable the institution to continue to provide a quality education to its students. See story here: http://connections.cu.edu/news/program-prioritization-is-underway-at-campuses/[25] Dan Montez, director of the Office of Policy and Efficiency (OPE) and Leonard Dinegar, senior vice president and chief of staff, gave a progress report[26] on the efforts to pare down and clarify system policies and improve system administration efficiency. See story here: http://connections.cu.edu/news/administrative-efficiency-getting-better-with-room-for-improvement/[27]

$5 million gift bolsters CU melanoma research project[28]

William Robinson, M.D., Ph.D.

A research project at the University of Colorado School of Medicine that aims for more targeted therapies for melanoma—made possible by a $5 million anonymous gift—will be led by William Robinson, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine in the Division of Medical Oncology.

During this five-year research project, which begins this winter, investigators will undertake next-generation DNA sequencing of up to 3,000 tissue and blood cell samples housed at a melanoma biorepository on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Previous work in this area has centered on a small number of genes involved in the development and treatment of melanoma. This technique will allow these investigators to examine all 20,000 genes in each cancer.

This DNA sequencing will illuminate the gene profiles of each cancer case and help researchers discern individual patterns in molecular makeup, which will allow them to develop specific “targeted” treatments. Aided by bioinformatics expertise on the Anschutz Medical Campus and School of Medicine dermatologists, surgeons and molecular biologists, researchers can use the molecular information to select new therapies tailored toward an individual’s genetic makeup. The results of this study will be made freely available to other scientists around the world.

Melanoma is a potentially lethal cancer that until recently had no effective therapy once it spread beyond the skin.

The Anschutz Medical Campus houses one of the world’s largest melanoma biorepositories, with extensive clinical information underlying each of these biosamples. CU’s state-of-the-art health sciences facilities, most of which were built during the past decade, and breadth of basic and clinical research expertise add to the project’s outstanding potential for success.

The donor’s $5 million gift is expected to have a multiplier effect as follow-up projects are likely to attract further grants, additional private support and perhaps ultimately will lead to patents or spinoff businesses that could garner revenue.

The gift highlights the prowess and potential of cancer research on the Anschutz Medical Campus. The University of Colorado Cancer Center is one of 41 comprehensive cancer centers in the United States designated by the National Cancer Institute, and one of 23 members of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, which recommends the guidelines followed by cancer-care providers.

“Melanoma has become the poster child for the development of new molecularly targeted therapies, due to the rapid advances that have been made recently in melanoma research,” said Dr. Robinson, a CU School of Medicine alumnus. “The information gained here will be made available to other research scientists around the world and will impact not only our understanding and treatment of melanoma, but other cancers as well.”

The impact of this research is particularly relevant for residents of Colorado, where ultraviolet light exposure is more intense due to high elevation. Colorado ranks among the top 10 U.S. states in melanoma mortality rate. But unlike other high-incidence locales such as Australia, where Dr. Robinson earned his Ph.D. and where public education campaigns have led to reduced melanoma incidence, Colorado's rate has continued to increase.

Dr. Robinson said public education in the U.S. about melanoma risk factors must continue. "A majority of the sun exposure that leads to development of melanoma occurs during childhood and teenage years," he said. "It's not the sun you got last week. It's the sun you got when you were young, when your skin is expanding or growing. Putting the suntan lotion on when you're 60 is not likely to prevent you from getting melanoma."

While melanoma is often equated with "skin cancer," it is different from other skin cancers such as squamous and basal cell carcinomas that are rarely fatal. The significant threat from melanoma results from its spread into the bloodstream and then other parts of the body, which occurs if the cancer is not caught early. It is this more advanced stage of melanoma, which is often fatal, that Dr. Robinson's research aims to tackle.

CU Advocacy Day is March 17[30]

[31]

CU Advocacy Day at the Capitol is set for March 17.

The annual gathering during the legislative session features leaders from the state and the University of Colorado, and offers the public an opportunity to learn more about funding trends and legislative priorities that affect CU and higher education across the state.

The schedule, set for 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., promises to inform attendees about the university's educational, research and economic contributions to the state. Featured will be Huntington Potter, Ph.D., professor and director of Alzheimer's Disease Research in the School of Medicine, Department of Neurology and the Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome. He'll discuss Alzheimer's research, treatment and discoveries.

Registration is required for the event, which is hosted by the Office of Government Relations and CU Advocates Program in the Office of the President. Click here to register.[32]
Schedule for March 17
7:30 – 8:15 a.m. - Registration and Informal Breakfast Reception with Elected Officials and CU Leadership

8:20 a.m. - Welcome, Introductions and CU's Legislative Priorities

8:25 – 8:35 a.m. - Budget Outlook for the State and Consequences to CU

8:35 – 8:45 a.m. - How You Can Help CU as an Advocate

8:45 – 9:15 a.m. - Alzheimer's Disease Research, Treatment and Discoveries, Dr. Huntington Potter, CU School of Medicine

9:15 – 9:35 a.m. - How to Advocate with Elected Officials, Legislator TBD

9:35 – 9:55 a.m. - Why Higher Education is a Priority, Legislator TBD

10 a.m. - Closing Comments

10:15 a.m. - Visit and Observe Legislative Process in House and Senate Galleries

Middle school students get hands-on medical training[33]

[34]
A group of middle school students recently got a hands-on opportunity to use real equipment to perform dental procedures and see how some of the latest medical equipment works.

The 46 students from Denver's Skinner Middle School actually worked on dental models -- not real patients -- to learn about dental hygiene and other symptoms and treatments. That was just one session in the daylong program last month as part of Pre-Collegiate 4 Y.O.U. Hosted by the CU Anschutz Office of Inclusion and Outreach, the participants started the day with a discussion of college life before heading over to the School of Dental Medicine.

Each student had his or her own lab station, where they learned about dental hygiene and corrective procedures. They all had an opportunity to clean, drill and add sealants to a model tooth.

The young students also learned about simulations and the importance of role-playing in preparing future health care providers to be culturally and medically competent. Using "simulated patients," the participants were able to use the knowledge they had just learned and put it into action.

[35]
"These young participants soon understood the stress of making life-saving decisions in a chaotic work environment," said Dominic Martinez, MA, senior director, Office of Inclusion and Outreach. "These students were energized, focused and had tons of fun. Many also expressed interest in medical careers and followed up with our staff here at the university."

Martinez extended special thanks to colleagues who offered their time and helped to facilitate access to amazing technologies in the School of Dental Medicine including Samantha Moreno, Ph.D.; Elizabeth Shick, DDS; and Kristy Klare, K-12 coordinator; as well as Joey Failma from the Center for Advancing Professional Excellence (CAPE).

New academic building progressing; Qdoba chosen as food vendor[36]
[37]
Since breaking ground in January 2013, the new CU Denver academic building on the Auraria Campus has been evolving along Speer Boulevard at Larimer Street.
Perhaps most noticeable in the past month, the shiny insulation on the exterior has been covered with stone and red brick, a look that meshes with the style of surrounding buildings such as the North Classroom and the Science Building.

A recent walk through the interior revealed many elements designed to engage and excite students, faculty, staff and visitors. Workers representing nearly 40 companies are busy adding the finishes of what promise to be inviting and comfortable spaces.

Features of the new five-story building include classrooms, offices, study nooks, a common area with food service on the first floor. The first two floors are designated for student services including the Admissions Office and the Lynx Center. The idea is to serve current students but to appeal to prospective students on their first look at the environment.

Food vendor selected
When the building opens in August, Qdoba will be there, too. Results of a student survey informed the decision made by a committee to award a food vendor contract to Qdoba Mexican Grill.

The menu is expected to include the chain's typical fare as well as breakfast options available only at this location. This will be the first "university" Qdoba space operating in Colorado.

Building offers dramatic view

Large windows will offer broad views of the Tivoli, Lodo and the Denver Performing Arts Center. Even the ceiling has been upgraded with skylights and terrace lounges on the roof.

The second floor will house the Learning Resource Center, TRiO, Disability Resources and the Educational Opportunity Office. Co-location of these offices is designed to promote a cohesive and cooperative environment so that office personnel and visitors may interact to the extent they desire, but also enjoy their unique needs, all while respecting their unique service needs. Departments to be housed on the third and fourth floors include history, communication, political science, math, and master of humanities and social science.

Five floors above Speer, windows have been installed as the exterior walls. From this floor, you'll get a 360 -degree view of Denver and Colorado's Front Range. The Financial Aid Office, the Registrar's Office and the Bursars Office are expected to settle there, so be prepared for the bonus view from the top floor.

CU-Boulder launches national search for new Title IX programs director[38]

Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano on Monday launched a national hiring search for the newly created position of Title IX director at the University of Colorado Boulder.

The director for Title IX and protected class programs will report directly to DiStefano. Creating a new Title IX director position with ultimate campuswide oversight for all complaints was the most important recommendation from a recently released external Title IX policy review by law firm Pepper Hamilton, DiStefano said.

CU-Boulder currently meets Title IX obligations through two offices. Employee complaints are investigated by the Office of Discrimination and Harassment; student complaints are investigated by the Office of Student Conduct.

In accordance with federal law, the new director will ensure timely investigations of complaints regarding sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and other forms of protected class harassment and discrimination. The successful candidate also will develop and implement a long-term vision for campus training and educational programs on topics such as sexual harassment and sexual violence, dating and intimate partner violence and stalking.

"Ensuring that we foster a culture that does not condone sexual harassment and sexual violence is one of the highest priorities on this campus," DiStefano said. "While the Pepper Hamilton report found that our campus is in compliance with the law, I want our new Title IX director to take us to the next level and make us a national model. The new director will be in a highly visible role and will be expected to develop, deliver and oversee Title IX programs, as well as the protected class discrimination and harassment programs for students, faculty and staff."

On July 24, 2013, DiStefano announced that CU-Boulder was the subject of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights into a complaint concerning the university's handling of a sexual assault involving a student. On the same day, DiStefano called for an external review of the campus's Title IX policies and procedures.

Last month, the university received the Pepper Hamilton report and released it to the public.

“Hiring a new Title IX director is the first of many steps we will take to expand upon our strong Title IX practices,” DiStefano said. “I expect our new director to carry out other recommendations made by Pepper Hamilton, including the development of additional training, education and prevention programming.”

CU-Boulder will give full consideration to job applications received by March 10, 2014. A job posting may be viewed at www.jobsatcu.com/postings/78824[39].

Strong retention rates lead to record spring enrollment[40]

[41]

Student enrollment for the spring 2014 semester increased by more than 7 percent from a year ago, thanks in part to improved student retention.

Homer Wesley

Homer Wesley, vice chancellor of Student Success and Enrollment Management, on Feb. 11 announced that 10,129 students enrolled for the spring semester, a 695 student or 7.4 percent increase from the 9,434 students who enrolled last year. Student credit hours – the number of students multiplied by the number of courses in which they enrolled – also increased. For spring 2014, UCCS students generated 116,497 credit hours, a 6,773 hour increase or 6.2 percent from 109,724 credit hours in spring 2013.

Wesley thanked faculty and staff for making the increase possible and noted that 90 percent of full-time freshmen students who started in the fall semester continued to spring.

“I am pleased that a record enrollment of students in the fall is continuing to the spring semester,” Wesley said. “We can all celebrate in the progress of students toward the goal of earning a degree.”

All UCCS colleges reported enrollment increases in undergraduate students with most seeing increases in graduate students as well.

This fall, UCCS set records for headcount, credit hours and freshman class with each campus college posting increases in undergraduate enrollment.

Total enrollment increased by 821 students or 8.4 percent from 9,777 students in fall 2012 to 10,598 in fall 2013. Student credit hours – the number of students multiplied by the number of courses they take – increased by 9,234 hours or 8.1 percent from 113,481 in fall 2012 to 122,715 in fall 2013.

Spring enrollment is traditionally lower than fall because of graduation and freshman student retention.

Garcia named executive director of development[43]

[44]

Jaime McMullen Garcia will become executive director of development, University Advancement at UCCS, effective March 1. Garcia has served as interim director since October.

An 18-year veteran of UCCS, Garcia previously held fundraising positions with the CU Foundation and as a staff member in the Office of Student Recruitment. She began her UCCS career as a student assistant in the Office of the Chancellor and also coached the UCCS Dance Team and served as director of Spirit Teams.

She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from UCCS and serves on the board of directors for KCME 88.7 radio and is past president of the Colorado Springs Regionally Accredited Colleges and Universities. McMullen Garcia replaces Megan Fisher who resigned from UCCS to accept a fundraising position for a Denver museum.

Laird recognized as part of National Mentoring Month[45]

[46]
Pamela Laird, professor and chair of history at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at CU Denver, was interviewed by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) as a part of their celebration of January as National Mentoring Month, and the resulting feature is currently showcased on their blog.

In the interview, Laird describes the implications of mentoring in a networking setting. Creating a community and network of personal relationships, Laird said, is more valuable than the immediate results of professional networking.

"The nice thing about (networking) and volunteering, is that even if it doesn't have a professional benefit, it's (mentoring) doing the right thing," she said. "It's doing work that matters and helps people and builds community. So it's valuable in itself."

Laird received the University of Colorado Denver Mentor of the Year Award for 2013.

Clinical problem-solving series of articles includes work by Allen[47]

[48]
Larry Allen, assistant professor in the School of Medicine, is the lead author of an article in the "Clinical Problem-Solving" series in the current issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The article details a case in which high levels of cobalt and chromium were discovered in a 59-year-old woman diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. She previously had metal-on-metal hip implants and her symptoms support cobalt cardiomyopathy as the likely diagnosis. One of Allen's conclusions is especially worth noting: Specialists and patients may benefit from "improved awareness and multidisciplinary communication" regarding the potential risks associated with these devices.

According to Allen, "... for many patients we do not find an obvious cause (of worsening heart function), and they are given the diagnosis of 'idiopathic dilated cardiomyopathy.' Ultimately, that is what we thought the patient had, until routine testing for her recalled hip prostheses asked her to get a blood test for cobalt, and it was very high. From there it was pretty easy to think that her hips might be the source of the problem."

His work in this area also was discussed recently in The New York Times.

Former dean Sega honored at reception[49]

Ron Sega (right) receives award from Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak (left)

Ron Sega, former dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Science at UCCS, recently was feted as part of a retirement celebration. Sega, who was dean from 1996 to 2001 and a member of the faculty since 1982, was recognized by current and former members of the faculty as well as several industry leaders.

During a reception at the Kraemer Family Library, Sega was credited for creating the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and for new degrees in computer science. As a NASA astronaut, while on leave from UCCS in the 1990s, Sega flew two missions aboard the Space Shuttle and carried the UCCS flag with him on those missions.

On leave from UCCS since 2001, Sega went on to serve as undersecretary of the U.S. Air Force and in various positions at Colorado State University and Ohio State University.

Burns elected VP of American Astronomical Society[51]

[52]

Jack O. Burns, a CU-Boulder professor of astrophysical and planetary sciences, has been elected vice president of the American Astronomical Society.

Burns, who aims to probe the origins of the universe from the far side of the moon, is one of three vice presidents of the AAS. The AAS is described as the premiere organization of professional astronomers in North America and perhaps the world. The organization's scientific and educational programs are among the "most important presented anywhere," Burns said.

As vice president, Burns will be responsible for assembling scientific programs that are broad, diverse, touch on the forefront of science and include educational innovations, he said. Burns is an expert in public policy and science policy as they relate to space.

At CU-Boulder, he teaches classes on space policy, an area he has a particular passion for. "We live and die by the funding available," he said.

Rozek-Brodrick named to virtual nursing academy[53]

Nicole Rozek-Brodrick, a lecturer at Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, recently was named to the American Psychiatric Nurses Association's Virtual Nursing Academy for Smoking Cessation.

Rozek-Brodrick is one of 14 psychiatric-mental health nurses selected by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association

for implementation of smoking cessation initiatives.

The Virtual Nursing Academy of APNA Champions for Smoking Cessation is a new initiative formed in partnership with the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center. Each member is awarded an honorarium and the recipients will collaborate and receive support throughout this year-long initiative in an online community.

Vale to be honored at retirement reception[54]

Vale

The CU community is invited to join Kelly Fox, senior vice chancellor and CFO, in congratulating Louise Vale for over 20 years of service to the University of Colorado.

A retirement reception will be from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, in the Koenig Alumni Center, 1202 University Ave., Boulder.

Vale has served as vice chancellor for administration at CU-Boulder since September 2012. Previously, she served as the director of internal audit for the CU system and as the associate vice chancellor for budget and operations at CU Denver. In addition, she participated in the capital budgeting and planning of new buildings at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus and served for two years on the Boulder campus beginning in 1998 as an assistant to the dean of budget and planning in the College of Arts and Sciences. She retires on March 14.

Questions: Contact Robin Bryant, 303-492-1972, robin.bryant@colorado.edu[56].

Save the date: Marijuana and Public Health Symposium[57]

The Marijuana and Public Health Symposium[58] will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 7 at Mile High Station, 2027 W. Lower Colfax Ave., Denver.

“The Colorado School of Public Health has a mission to improve collective understanding of important health issues that could benefit from broader public dialogue. Clearly, the topic of marijuana and public health is both important and timely,” said Tim Byers, M.D., MPH, director of the Center for Public Health Practice.

Organizers from Colorado School of Public Health’s Center for Public Health Practice invite public health leaders as well as the general public to hear from public health experts regarding the evidence for health effects of marijuana and the public health-related policies relevant to Colorado’s marijuana laws.

“The purpose of this symposium is to collectively review the existing evidence for marijuana’s effects on health and to

discuss how public health organizations in Washington State and Colorado are now defining, prioritizing and addressing the public health issues," Byers said.

Attendees will have the chance to network and learn about topics from leaders from organizations such as the Colorado School of Public Health, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, and Denver Health, to name a few.

"Attendees will benefit from an up-to-date review of the scientific evidence relating marijuana to health, from hearing how public health agencies view marijuana as a risk to public health, and from joining in the dialogue about how best to frame marijuana issues and health as we move forward," Byers said.

Topics included in the agenda are marijuana and heart and lung disease, marijuana and mental health, marijuana and traffic safety, and marijuana issues in Colorado, and many more.

"The outcome we expect is a broader shared understanding of potential public health problems that might emerge as a result of our new approaches to marijuana legalization," Byers said.

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-approve-sale-ninth-and-colorado-property-continuum-partners[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/9th-colorado-campus.png[3] https://connections.cu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/9th-Colophased-dev-plan.pdf[4] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/five-questions-tom-lemieux[5] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux_top/[6] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux/[7] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux01/[8] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux02/[9] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux03/[10] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux05/[11] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux04/[12] http://connections.cu.edu/news/five-questions-for-tom-lemieux/5q-limieux_bottom/[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-colorado-springs-community-celebrate-lane-center-opening[14] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/lane_top1.png[15] https://connections.cu.edu/news/cu-colorado-springs-community-celebrate-lane-center-opening/lane_bldg-side[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/fundraising-strong-cu-boulder-moves-forward-athletics-facilities[17] https://connections.cu.edu/news/fundraising-strong-as-cu-boulder-moves-forward-with-athletics-facilities/ucb_athletics-facility[18] https://connections.cu.edu/news/athletics-upgrades-at-cu-boulder-get-ok-from-regents[19] http://www.cubuffs.com/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=209411063&DB_OEM_ID=600[20] http://communique.uccs.edu/?p=14094[21] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/president-benson-part-national-task-force-taking-regulations[22] http://www.help.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/?id=a57a588e-a96d-47f8-a2a6-8fcd41734b6f&groups=Ranking[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/phishing-attack-could-have-been-worse[24] https://connections.cu.edu/file/staff-phishingtoppng[25] https://connections.cu.edu/news/program-prioritization-is-underway-at-campuses[26] https://connections.cu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/PTFE-rpt-2014m02.pdf[27] https://connections.cu.edu/news/administrative-efficiency-getting-better-with-room-for-improvement[28] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/5-million-gift-bolsters-cu-melanoma-research-project[29] https://connections.cu.edu/file/melanomarobinsonpng[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-advocacy-day-march-17[31] https://connections.cu.edu/file/cuadvtoppng-0[32] https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/UCO/event/showEventForm.jsp?form_id=169141[33] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/middle-school-students-get-hands-medical-training[34] https://connections.cu.edu/file/amcmiddle-sch-medpng[35] https://connections.cu.edu/file/amcmiddle-sch-med02png[36] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-academic-building-progressing-qdoba-chosen-food-vendor[37] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ucd_newbldg.png[38] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-boulder-launches-national-search-new-title-ix-programs-director[39] http://ucolorado.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d%3e2%3a2%3e%26JDG%3c95%3a473%3b%26SDG%3c90%3a.&a

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