State senators advance PERA rescue plan[1]

The Colorado Senate on Monday passed a bill that sponsors say would shore up the Public Employees' Retirement Association over the next 30 years.

SB10-001, with a 25-10 vote, now moves to the House. The measure is scheduled to be heard by the House Appropriations Committee next week.

PERA open forum set for Friday

The Boulder Campus Staff Council will present an open forum on the proposed PERA legislation from 2 to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, in Old Main Chapel. Guest speaker will be Dennis Gatlin, director of PERA's field education services division. The Statewide Liaison Council is sponsoring the event. For information, contact Lynn Faudree at 303-492-8131.

The legislation would increase contributions by employers and employees, provide no cost-of-living adjustment for this year and place a cap on future adjustments for retirees, and change the age of retirement eligibility to 60 from 55 for most members.

One amendment was modified before passage. It says PERA will provide written notice to all members that an actuarial necessity, a legal term that means the future fund is in peril, could occur and the General Assembly could modify the benefits allowed by the plan.

In earlier debate, several witnesses had testified that changing cost-of-living adjustment benefits amounted to a breach of contract. Currently, retired members receive a 3.5 percent increase in benefits each year. SB1 would put a cap of 2 percent on the benefits, unless the plan is not fully funded; in that case, the amount of benefits would depend upon an inflation calculation.

During Senate debate last week, Sen. Keith King, R-Colorado Springs, said he was skeptical of the rescue plan, calling it "too rich," and offered several amendments that ultimately were defeated by the Senate Finance Committee.

Many of those amendments have now become part of House Bill 1207, which is co-sponsored by King.

As drafted, HB1207 would:
Modify highest average salary, which is a method used to calculate benefits, to a five-year base with a cap on the amount of salary increase from year to year at 5 percent. Require the state treasurer to submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the overall financial standing of PERA on an annual basis. Define actuarial necessity, a legal term that is not defined by current statutes. Require PERA to assume an annual rate of return on investments based on average of actual rate of return for the three previous calendar years. Eliminate amortization equalization disbursement (AED) and supplemental amortization equalization disbursement (SAED) beginning in 2011. Allow contribution rates to be set by the General Assembly, depending on plan funding percentage. Prohibit purchases of service credits after Jan. 1, 2011. Raise retirement age to 65. Cap cost of living adjustment for all members to the lesser of 2 percent or inflation. Eliminate existing defined contribution plan administered by PERA and specifies that member employees will become members of a newly established defined contribution plan. All employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 2011, would become members of the new DC plan and would not have the option to become a member of the current defined benefit plan. Current members of the defined benefit plan could opt in to the new DC plan.
Another measure, HB1153, would change the makeup of the 15-member board of trustees of PERA to create a majority of trustees who are non-PERA members with experience in certain fields. That bill has been assigned to the Houses State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

Flexibility for higher education on hold at Capitol[2]

Senate Bill 10-003, the legislation aimed at giving higher education institutions greater flexibility in several state-regulated areas, is in a holding pattern at the Capitol.

As a courtesy to Gov. Bill Ritter, the bill's sponsors — Senate Majority Leader John Morse, D-Colorado Springs, and Rep. Mark Ferrandino, D-Denver — have agreed to hold off on pursuit of advancing the bill until a study panel requested by the governor has had time to put forth preliminary recommendations. The package had been introduced in the Colorado Senate last week, and University of Colorado leadership had met with Morse and Senate Minority Leader Josh Penry, R-Grand Junction, to discuss the legislation. No action is expected before Feb. 23.
Supported by CU leadership, the bill is aimed at improving efficiency at institutions by loosening some state-mandated regulations. Among its goals:
Allow higher education institutions to develop their own fiscal rules and policies, apart from some state regulations. Cutting bureaucracy would improve efficiency and effectiveness. Remove current limits on the number of international students who may enroll in colleges. The University of Colorado at Boulder has the smallest international student population of any institution in the American Association of Universities. Without denying spots to in-state students, a greater influx of students from around the world would grow enrollment, diversify the campus experience and boost tuition revenue. Allow universities to determine how they allocate student financial aid money, rather than have it driven by state formulas. Establish that higher education institutions autonomously set their own information technology practices. Establish new standards for transferring college credits from two-year schools to four-year schools, and between four-year schools. Higher education faculty and administrators from two- and four-year institutions have been collaborating to determine transfer requirements for five degree programs by next year, with agreements on more degrees to follow in the future. Give colleges the ability to proceed with construction projects more efficiently by cutting down on the amount of financial data they must report to the state.

Threats to state funding continue to fester at Capitol[3]

A recent revision by Gov. Bill Ritter to the current budget is resulting in $5.5 million less for higher education in the state, including a $1.5 million cut to funding for the University of Colorado.

The cut will be backfilled by federal stimulus funding — money that won't be available in 2011. It's the latest addition to the "cliff effect" that threatens the budget of the university and other higher education institutions after the next fiscal year.

Another threat looming on the horizon: opposition to Gov. Ritter's proposal to repeal tax exemptions for such consumer goods as candy and soda pop. If the entire package of bills were to pass, it could result in $130 million in revenue for the state next year.

While proponents of education have generally praised the legislation, noting that it's time for business to share some of the burden of widespread economic woes, opponents of the plan have rallied. Grocery stores and beverage makers and distributors, among others, are fighting the action.

Should the bills be defeated and their intended revenue stream not materialize, K-12 and higher education remain vulnerable targets for further budget reductions.

The bills are being heard in committees today and Thursday, Feb. 4.

Faculty Council hears latest on early retirement incentives, dependent audit[4]

The Faculty Council last week heard updates on the dependent benefit eligibility audit that's under way and an early retirement incentive that's under consideration by administration.

The University of Colorado has launched an audit to verify the eligibility of dependents who are covered by employee benefit plans. As announced by Payroll and Benefit Services (PBS) during spring's open enrollment for the 2009-10 year, plan participants must review the university's eligibility requirements and determine whether their dependents meet requirements for coverage by health, dental and life insurance plans.

All benefits-eligible employees have received letters explaining the process. Later this month, all plan participants with enrolled dependents will receive a verification packet from Secova, an independent third party the university is partnering with for the confidential review. Participants will be asked for industry-standard documentation — such as birth certificates, marriage licenses and/or tax returns (without financial information) — verifying that dependents meet requirements.

Addressing questions brought up at Thursday, Jan. 28's council meeting, E. Jill Pollock, senior associate vice president and chief human resources officer, said the time table for the audit allows ample time for appeals by employees.

Pollock also updated the council on the progress of an early retirement incentive that's being proposed as a tool campuses could use during times of financial distress. Because such packages are highly regulated by the Internal Revenue Service, the process has been a slow one, Pollock said. She also said that the recommended sum of up to two years' salary to be paid over five years would remain the same, because the university couldn't afford to offer up to three years' salary — the amount suggested by the Faculty Council's budget committee.

In other action at the meeting of the Faculty Council and Faculty Senate:

— President Bruce D. Benson spoke to the group about the current budget challenges facing the university, and warned that the situation is likely to worsen. Regarding the ongoing university branding project, some council members told Benson there is a perception that the faculty has not been involved in the process and is not being informed of its progress. Benson said he would take note of the concerns.

— In a report from the Privilege and Tenure Committee, UC Denver Professor Weldon Lodwick said that anticipated program discontinuances would lead to an increase in grievances from faculty. He reminded faculty members that discontinuation of a specific program or school is not grounds for a grievance by an individual.

Physics professor set to testify before Congress on value of STEM[5]

Noah Finkelstein

Noah Finkelstein, an associate professor of physics education research at the University of Colorado at Boulder, will testify before Congress about STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Finkelstein, a co-principal investigator in the university's Integrating STEM Education (iSTEM) program, will speak on Thursday, Feb. 4, before the U.S. Congressional House Research and Science Education Subcommittee, House Committee on Science and Technology.

Finkelstein will discuss the roles universities can and need to play in the broader challenges of STEM education, including quality, access and inclusion, preparation of teachers at all levels, and numbers of STEM majors. He will

testify about leading research, reforms and models for improving STEM education.

Said Finkelstein, "Successful research-based programs at the University of Colorado at Boulder, such as the Colorado Learning Assistant model, demonstrate that we can increase student learning and engagement, include more students, engage faculty, recruit more and better STEM teachers, and do so in a sustainable, scalable and cost-effective manner."

In his testimony, aimed at encouraging federal funding, Finkelstein plans to make three main points:
Research has demonstrated that traditional models of classroom-based education are no longer appropriate. New models that engage students in learning experiences are critical. So far, higher education has been separated from national discussions on educational reform. It's time to focus on integrated approaches that reach across disciplines and across levels of the educational system to provide solutions that address our broad national challenge. We need the investment of the American citizenry and the university system. We need to engage STEM faculty and researchers in educational innovation and change.
Congress is preparing to reauthorize the America COMPETES Act, which focuses on increasing research investment; strengthening educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics from elementary through graduate school; and developing an innovation infrastructure.

"Math and science are the engine of the U.S. economy," Finkelstein said, but "we are under-educating the population at all levels."

The subcommittee hearing begins at 8:30 a.m. MDT and will be webcast live. To listen to testimony, visithttp://science.house.gov/publications/hearings_markups_details.aspx?newsid=2723[7] and click on "Webcast Info" on the right-hand side of the page. The testimony, both oral and written, will be available on the Web site within a day of the hearings.

CU-Boulder Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano visited the White House on Jan. 6 as one of four public research university leaders representing about 120 universities pledging to address the national shortage of science and mathematics teachers.

Five Questions for Shelby Wolf[8]

Shelby Wolf
Professor, School of Education
University of Colorado at Boulder
Shelby WolfProfessor, School of EducationUniversity of Colorado at Boulder

On any given day, you might find University of Colorado at Boulder School of Education Professor Shelby Wolf hidden behind a tome of children's or young adult literature. It's not simply the innovative illustrations or prose she finds of interest, but the way children interpret, engage in and respond to the words and pictures. She's written numerous books, including one that was a nine-year case study of her two daughters and their responses to literature she read to them.

As an educator, she hopes to train others to teach more than grammar, punctuation and sentence structure in the classroom. The No Child Left Behind policy has pushed literature into the back seat, she says, which is a devastating choice. "Teachers concentrate on getting children to decode, but it should be about getting children to want to read." Wolf has won numerous awards and accolades, including being named a member of the University of Colorado's President's Teaching Scholars.

- Cynthia Pasquale

1. What made you focus on youth and literature in your career path?

I never expected to be a teacher. I went to school in a period of time when I felt that women who went into teaching weren't serious. I got a degree in psychology and that garnered me nothing more than the ability to be a cocktail waitress. So I went into the Peace Corps where they told me I would be a teacher. I loved it. I went back to school and loved it and kept going and going. (She earned her Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1992.) It was a slowly growing passion that went all afire.

2. You have a book that will be published this year. What else are you currently working on?

The book is a very exciting project. It's a handbook of research on children's and young adult literature. Typically, these kinds of books are dusty tomes that no one reads. But we've asked our authors to write elegantly about subjects, including the genre of young adult novels, the art of the picture book and museums around the world. The scholars are well-known in the field, and so are the book authors and illustrators.

I'm also doing a study in London with two visual artists who are working in two inner-city schools. The students (now in fifth grade) are highly diverse but have been denied opportunities that others have been given. The children make art and talk about and analyze art and visit the Tate Modern. I began following them three years ago. I'd ask them, "What is the artist trying to say?" And they would say, "I don't know," expecting me to have the answer. Now these children go to the museum and find a piece of art that intrigues them and plop themselves down and sketch for 45 minutes. It's exciting to see them tackle complex symbolism. They are given space at the Tate for their own gallery and are gearing up for their final exhibition this summer.

3. What are your teaching duties at CU-Boulder?

I teach graduate and undergraduate children's literature and literary response. I love teaching. With pre-service teachers, if you can make a difference in their curriculum and ways of assessment, then maybe that will transfer to the way they work in class, and that will move literature from the backseat to the passenger seat. I show them how they can help children engage in literature, not by simply doing reports, but by inviting them into literature, using drama or visualization and really doing cognitive work. Children are eager to pick up that cognitive challenge if they are given the chance.

Teachers feel afraid to be independent thinkers. We tend to de-professionalize teachers, giving them books and telling them here's what to ask and here's how they should respond. That just closes down the mind. We don't prepare children to be creative, collaborative, flexible thinkers and that's what we'll need in the future.

4. What have been some of your experiences as a member of the University of Colorado President's Teaching Scholars program?

The central goal of the program is to promote teaching throughout the university. It's one of the most exciting things that has happened to me because I love teaching so much. The guild members are interested and intrigued by teaching. To be with them is always very enlightening. They come from fields very different than my own. They are a lovely blend of people and, at the heart of it, they are all dedicated to fine teaching.

I have a connection with the schools of business and journalism, helping to choose recipients for prestigious teaching awards. And through the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, I've begun helping other teachers by observing their classes and videotaping lectures (to help assess classroom learning and effectiveness).

5. What are some of your hobbies and what books are you reading now or do you recommend?

I love watching TV, especially HBO and programs like "The Wire." That's such astonishing TV. I love going to movies, too.

Some of my favorite books: "The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963," by Christopher Paul Curtis, an incredibly funny book that helps you to love a family before you go into tragedy with them; "The Book Thief," by Markus Zusak, which is

the most sophisticated and complex of novels that I teach; and "The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate," by Jacqueline Kelly, which is a book about a girl who (in 1899) is fascinated by Darwin.

Right now I'm reading books about the lives and internal thoughts and emotions of children on the autism spectrum. One is "Marcelo in the Real World," by Francisco X. Stork, about a young boy whose father refuses to accept his differences, and the other is "Anything But Typical," by Nora Raleigh Baskin, which discusses labels and perceptions.

Want to suggest a faculty or staff member for Five Questions? Please e-mail Jay.Dedrick@cu.edu[10]

Lawmakers say 'thank you' to CU lifesavers[11]

Sen. Rollie Heath thanks Norio Fukami, M.D.,
for saving his life.
Sen. Rollie Heath thanks Norio Fukami, M.D.,for saving his life.

The University of Colorado Cancer Center (UCCC), the University of Colorado School of Medicine and University of Colorado Hospital were honored by the Colorado Legislature on Friday, Jan. 29, with a joint resolution sponsored by three cancer survivors who credit UCCC doctors for saving their lives.

Senate Joint Resolution 10-009[13] was brought forward by esophagus cancer survivor Sen. Rollie Heath, D-Boulder, breast cancer survivor Rep. Dianne Primavera, D-Broomfield, and throat cancer survivor Rep. Mike Merrifield, D-Colorado Springs.

"All three of us are cancer survivors, all three have been treated at the cancer center and all three of us are here to tell the story," Heath said.

Heath was diagnosed with Stage I esophageal cancer in July 2009. He came to UCCC and University of Colorado Hospital, where he met Norio Fukami, M.D., a therapeutic endoscopist and assistant professor of gastroenterology at CU School of Medicine.

The current standard of treatment for early esophageal cancer involves an "open" operation during which the surgeon removes a big part of the esophagus, then stretches the stomach to attach to the remaining esophagus. Recovery from the procedure can take months.

But Fukami, who trained in Japan and at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, chose to do an advanced, minimally invasive endotherapy using an endoscope and a special knife to cut out just the tumor and surrounding tissue, leaving the esophagus in place. Fukami is conducting research to show the procedure, which is new to the U.S., can be safe and effective.

Heath credits Fukami and the advanced technique not only with saving his life, but also with saving him from lost work time and pain. He was back to work the day after his procedure.

"I had not gone to Houston, I had not gone to Rochester and Mayo, I had not gone to Cleveland, I had gone to the Aurora campus of the University of Colorado Hospital and the Cancer Center," Heath said. "It took me 20 minutes to get there."

Primavera offered emotional testimony about William Robinson, M.D., professor of medical oncology at the CU School of Medicine. She credits him with enabling her to outlive one doctor's suggestion that she would need to find someone to raise her then preschool-aged children.

"With his excellent care and skill, he gave me hope, he gave me health and he gave me my life back," she said.

"Twenty-one years later, I'm still here against all odds. I've taught my girls to drive and taken their prom pictures, and one day I will walk them down the aisle. Dr. Robinson, I owe you my life."

Merrifield recounted his experience receiving daily radiation therapy from David Raben, M.D., and chemotherapy from Madeleine Kane, M.D., for throat cancer.

"I expressed to (Raben) my fear mainly that I would never be able to sing again, and he was the first person who gave me a reason to feel positive," Merrifield said. "Today I am cancer free. My gratitude is not just as a representative who understands the value of this center for Colorado, but as a human being who understands on a heart-to-heart basis what these individuals have done for me."

Other legislators stepped up to offer their testimony about and support of UCCC, the School of Medicine and UCH. Several offered personal stories about their loved ones' care at the center.

Sen. Mike Kopp, R-Littleton, spoke about his wife's cancer treatment at UCCC. "Everybody said drive down the street and get to this campus," he said, referring to the University of Colorado Hospital on the Anschutz Medical Campus. "We heeded the advice of the pathologist and the oncologist. My wife is cancer free. These doctors are healing people."

Kopp has joined the University of Colorado Hospital's Cancer Expansion Committee to raise money for an addition to the Anschutz Cancer Pavilion, which, 10 years after opening, has outgrown its space.

Sen. Suzanne Williams, D-Aurora, who worked to move the CU medical enterprise to the Anschutz Medical Campus in the late 1990s, said, "The Anschutz Medical Campus is a huge economic boon to the city of Aurora and to the region, bringing approximately $2 billion to the region. What this campus will mean to the state of Colorado is the ultimate crown: It will become known as the cancer center, the medical center of the West."

Sen. Nancy Spence, R-Centennial, also noted that she and her husband, Pete, participate in the Prostate, Lung, Ovarian and Colorectal Cancer Screening Trial at UCCC, a long-term study funded by the National Cancer Institute.

Andrew Thorburn, Ph.D., UCCC interim director, was among a dozen center and university representatives on hand for the joint resolution's introduction and passage.

"We're the cancer center for the state of Colorado," he said. "It's really nice that we are getting this recognition and appreciation from our elected officials."

CU Women Succeeding Symposium offers information, career development[14]

The 2010 CU Women Succeeding Symposium[15] is set for Feb. 26 at the Anschutz Medical Campus. The day of recognition, information, career development, support and more is aimed at members of the University of Colorado community at all career levels.

Keynote speaker during the free event, which runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Research Center 2, will be Kathleen Bollard, associate vice president of academic affairs. Her topic: "Of Budgets and Branding: New Realities for Higher Ed in Colorado."

Joanne Belknap, professor of sociology at CU-Boulder, will be honored with the Elizabeth D. Gee Memorial Lectureship Award[16]. The annual award recognizes outstanding university faculty for their efforts to advance women

in academia.

Belknap will present her research on feminist criminology. She has devoted the past 25 years to understanding female offenders, and the victimization of women and girls. She authored the book "The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime, and Justice," a study on women and girls as offenders, victims and professionals in the criminal justice system.

Topics of long sessions at the symposium:
Being an effective mentor Creativity in uncertain times: teaching, learning, scholarship and leadership in academia CU women succeeding with social networks Self-defense in the classroom: strategies for preventing, confronting and prevailing against uncivil student behavior Workplace bullying among females
To register for the seventh annual event, click here[17].

Forum to present debate over constitutional reform[18]

"Ungovernable States: Prospects for Constitutional Reform in California and Colorado" is set for 7 p.m. Feb. 24 in the Turnhalle Opera House at the Tivoli Student Union on the Auraria Campus.

The two-hour public forum, sponsored by the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs, will feature:
Kelly Brough, president and CEO of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce Charlie Brown, director of the Center for Colorado's Economic Future at UC Denver State Rep. Lois Court, D-Denver Steven Hill, director of the political reform program of the New America Foundation in California
For details, call 303-315-2089 or click here[19].

Solar panels produce energy for campus, contribute to state goal[20]

Casey A. Cass/University of Colorado

Solar panels installed at the University of Colorado at Boulder on the roofs of the Coors Events/Conference Center, Housing System Maintenance Center and Wolf Law Building will produce 140,000 kilowatt-hours of energy per year -- enough to power 20 medium-sized houses.

The solar energy will go back into the buildings that hold the panels. It also will contribute to a cleaner energy grid and the fulfillment of Colorado Amendment 37, passed by voters in 2004 to mandate 20 percent use of renewable energy statewide by 2020.

The solar panels are initially free of charge to CU-Boulder because of a partnership with Centennial-based Rockwell Financial Group. The partnership allows CU-Boulder to reduce its carbon footprint through use of the newly acquired technology, while Rockwell receives monetary incentives, some of which CU-Boulder is not eligible for because of its tax-exempt status.

"This project had specific financing goals on top of our continued campus sustainability objectives," said Moe Tabrizi, CU-Boulder's energy conservation officer. "The university is not a tax entity and if we would have done this project on our own, we would have left a significant rebate, tax credits and a depreciation deal on the table."

Rockwell Financial Group receives a one-time, per kilowatt-hour installation rebate from Xcel Energy amounting to $200,000, as well as federal tax credits and depreciation charges. The company also has the opportunity to sell unused solar power back to Xcel Energy at a premium rate of 11.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. However, all solar power generated by the panels is slated to be used by the CU-Boulder campus at this time.

In seven years, CU-Boulder will have the option of buying the solar panels at a fraction of their original cost and also will be able to sell unused solar power back to Xcel Energy.

The Coors Events/Conference Center and the Housing System Maintenance Center each received 210 solar panels; the Wolf Law Building received 52. Tabrizi is working toward solar panel installations on every flat roof on campus, but Xcel Energy limits the amount of incentives accrued by one property. CU-Boulder is negotiating more installations on buildings off the main campus.

"CU-Boulder's solar panels are another step in reaching the carbon reduction goals we've set over the years," Tabrizi said. "From the University Presidents' Climate Commitment in 2007, the Colorado governor's 'Greening of State Government' executive order in 2007 and our own carbon neutrality plan set last fall, along with the ongoing support of Frank Bruno, vice chancellor for administration, we are moving forward on reducing our nonrenewable energy consumption 20 percent by 2012."

Suntech Power manufactured the solar panels and Bella Energy of Louisville carried out the project design and installation, which was completed over eight days in November and December of last year with the oversight of a CU-Boulder project management and engineering team.

For more information, click here[22].

University launches effort to boost ranks of science and education teachers[23]

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs will join other leading universities working to increase the number of math and science teachers in the United States by offering the nationally regarded UTeach program this year.

UCCS recently was selected as an expansion site for UTeach, a successful program developed in 1997 at the University of Texas. The program was replicated in 13 universities in 2008-2009 and is being expanded to 20 universities across the country this year as part of the National Math and Science Initiative. Last month at a special event at the White House, it was announced that UCCS will be added to the program in 2010-11 along with universities in Ohio, Tennessee and Texas.

At UCCS, the faculty and leadership of the College of Letters, Arts and Science and College of Education collaborated to recommend the UTeach Program as a way to develop more science and math teachers and to provide professional development for teachers already in Colorado classrooms. The University of Colorado at Boulder offers a similar program, CU Teach.

UCCS faculty members Catherine Kelly, an associate professor of education, and Rinaldo Schinazi, a math professor, will co-direct the program with collaboration from Barbara Frye, an assistant professor of education and director of the teacher education and licensure program. The program is designed to help students earn bachelor's degrees in math or science and to complete courses required to be licensed as a Colorado elementary or secondary school teacher at no extra time or cost. The UTeach program also will work closely with the UCCS Center for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education, which seeks to enhance the work force of scientists and engineers.

"A hallmark of the Teacher Education and Licensure Program at UCCS is culturally responsive teaching," Kelly said. "This partnership with the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences will infuse these tenets across content areas and

positively affect student outcomes."

Schinazi noted that U.S. students are behind those in other industrialized nations in math and science knowledge.

"I believe that, as a state university, one of our missions is to supply Colorado with high-quality K-12 educators," Schinazi said. "There has been a shortage of math teachers in Colorado and the nation for some time. UTeach is a great way to address the problem."
Funding for the new program, which will begin with the fall 2010 semester, was provided by a private anonymous donor.

The UTeach program allows students to graduate in four years with deep content knowledge as well as teaching certification. More than 90 percent of students who participate in the UTeach program become teachers, with more than 80 percent remaining in the classroom after five years, according to program administrators.

More than 2,100 math and science majors are currently enrolled in the program. Projections indicate that by 2018, UTeach programs around the country will have produced an estimated 7,000 new math and science teachers. Those teachers will have affected more than 20 million students in the course of the new teachers' careers.

Giving Back Campaign making fans of volunteerism[24]

[25]
UC Denver's inaugural Giving Back Campaign extended well into the new year, with faculty and staff connecting with the community, sharing time and talents where there are needs. Some 13 members of the University of Colorado Denver volunteered Jan. 13 at Food Bank of the Rockies.

"I felt I was making a difference for people who aren't as fortunate as I," said Amy Hume, consultant in the Office of Integrated University Communications. "I hadn't done much volunteering outside the political arena, and this gave me a completely different, wonderful, warm-hearted feeling."

Participants included Andy Jhanji, vice chancellor for advancement and chief of staff, and Carolyn Goble, executive assistant in the office of the vice chancellor for advancement and chief of staff. The Web Services and Integrated University Communications team included Hume, Jeremy Fulbright, Greg Aronoff, Jacque Montgomery, Steve Tapp, Jeff Exstrum, Micheline Heckler, Cecile Schoberle, Catherine Worster, Erica Lefeave and Catherine Beuten.

[26]
Food Bank of the Rockies provides food supplies to more than 1,000 hunger-relief programs across Northern Colorado and Wyoming. In its first 30 years, the bank has provided nearly 325 million pounds of food to member agencies, which translates to more than 250 million meals for people in need. Last year, the food bank distributed more than 56,000 meals each day to children, seniors and families in need.

The team volunteer opportunity is part of Chancellor M. Roy Wilson's[27] inaugural Giving Back Campaign[28], continued until this week.

UC Denver volunteers worked alongside Food Bank of the Rockies "regulars" to help unpack cartons, check food donations to see if they were acceptable, clean cans and bottles and pass them along on an assembly line.

"It was great to see the amount of food donated by the larger chain stores such as Target and Wal-Mart — items they can't put on the shelves but that people can still use," Lefeave said.
[29]
Many volunteers — sore feet and all — vowed to return. "In fact, I'd like to do this more often," Hume said. "I look forward

to introducing this type of volunteering to my daughter in the future."

Emergency medicine physicians take part in suicide research trial[30]

Emergency room physicians see the impact of patients who attempt suicide. Too often these patients don't receive the ongoing care they need. The physicians in emergency medicine and psychiatry at the University of Colorado School of Medicine are working to better develop a standardized approach to caring for such patients by participating in a recently approved study supported by a five-year National Institutes of Mental Health cooperative agreement.

University of Colorado Hospital physicians will work to identify ways to improve the detection and prevention of suicide among patients who arrive at the hospital's emergency departments. The University of Colorado, through collaboration between the departments of emergency medicine and psychiatry and the University Colorado Hospital emergency department, is one of eight sites across the country involved in this research trial.

"Despite the public health significance of suicidal behavior, there have been relatively few controlled trials which evaluate interventions to reduce suicidal behavior," said Emmy Betz, M.D., M.P.H., department of emergency medicine and principal investigator for the hospital site. The emergency department setting "is well-suited for this type of research."

The Emergency Department Safety Assessment and Follow-up Evaluation Trial, known as ED-SAFE, was awarded to the University of Massachusetts's Medical School and is expected to enroll nearly 1,420 participants over five years.
The objectives of this study:
Develop and test a standardized approach to screening emergency department patients for suicide risk Refine and test an emergency department-initiated intervention to reduce suicidal behavior and associated morbidity and mortality among people who self-identify or screen positive for suicidal ideation Conduct a cost analysis to compare costs and benefits associated with emergency department suicide screening and intervention.
Michael H. Allen, M.D., of the University of Colorado Depression Center is co-investigator at the national level overseeing the work at all eight sites. He is the former president of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry.

"In 2006, there were more than 500,000 (emergency department) visits related to intentional self-harm and the rate of patients with suicidal thoughts among (emergency department) patients at UCH is 5 percent," Allen said.

He said it has been difficult to engage potentially suicidal patients in treatment and that the treatment to be tested here is a carefully constructed series of telephone contacts including the patient's family. Results from this study should help doctors find ways to get more patients the treatment they need to improve their mental health.

Regent Merchant to keynote engineering conference at UC Denver[31]

Merchant

Regent Monisha Merchant[33], D-Lakewood, will be the keynote speaker at "Tu Futuro en Ingenieria," the third annual high school engineering conference sponsored by the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers at the University of Colorado Denver.

The event is slated for Feb. 5 on the UC Denver campus. The day of workshops is aimed at exposing high school students to careers in civil, mechanical, electrical and computer science engineering, all of which are taught at UC Denver.

Merchant's roots in engineering date back to her days as a student at Bear Creek High School, when she attended CU-Boulder's Engineering Days. She went on to earn electrical engineering and political science degrees at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and now works as an engineer and product manager at Broomfield-based Level 3 Communications.

For details on the event, contact Gabriel Ledezma, external president of the UC Denver chapter of the Society of Professional Engineers, 303-669-7566.

Veteran administrator takes post at UCCS[34]

Wesley

A college administrator with more than 30 years of experience will become vice chancellor for student success and enrollment management at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Homer "Bucky" Wesley, Ph.D., current vice president for student services at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Miss., was selected as vice chancellor following a national search.

"Dr. Wesley brings a depth and variety of experiences focused on improving the college student experience," said Pam Shockley-Zalabak, UCCS chancellor. "He is dedicated to improving access to the benefits of a university education and to serving the needs of students."

Since 2003, Wesley has served as vice president at Mississippi University for Women, a co-educational state university with 2,500 students. He provided direction for student activities, judicial affairs, career services and other functions. For more than 16 years, he held student affairs positions at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Miss. His professional career began at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala., in high school and junior college relations and pre-college counseling.

He earned a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Southern Mississippi and bachelor's and master's degrees from Auburn.

"I am impressed by the strength and standing of the academic programs at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, the quality of life that Colorado Springs offers and the warmth of the people I met on my visit to the campus," Wesley said. "This position is an excellent fit both personally and professionally."

As vice chancellor for student success, Wesley will have oversight for enrollment services, financial aid, student retention, academic advising, counseling, student health and student life. He will serve as a member of the chancellor's leadership team and as an officer of the university. Wesley will begin at UCCS on July 1.

Linhart returns to public safety at UCCS[36]

Steve Linhart, executive director of student support and judicial affairs, Office of the Dean of Students at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, has been reassigned to the Department of Public Safety.

UCCS Police Chief Jim Spice, also of the Department of Public Safety, announced Linhart would return to the department as director of emergency management and student judicial affairs. Linhart was a member of the department from 2000 to 2008, serving as police officer, police sergeant and deputy chief of police. He was assigned to the Office of the Dean of Students beginning with the fall 2008 semester.

"I am pleased that Steve has agreed to fill the important roles of directing our emergency management efforts as well as student judicial matters," Spice said. "Steve has proven himself over many years as someone who is able to balance multiple tasks and to work effectively across the campus."

Linhart will replace Brian Foltz, who previously served as emergency manager within the Department of Public Safety, and who recently left the university. Linhart will retain his current duties as student conduct officer. For that portion of his position, he will report to the vice chancellor for student success.

Linhart's previous supervisory duties of the directors of the Student Health Center, Counseling Center and Disability Services and University Testing Center will be transferred to Sue Mitchell, director of the Student Success Center.

Linhart's position in the Office of the Dean of Students will be eliminated.

Schedule for visits by four engineering dean candidates announced[37]

Four candidates identified as finalists by the University of Colorado Denver's engineering dean search committee will visit the downtown campus for interviews this month.

Anyone is welcome to attend any or all of the four "presentation" meetings scheduled for 10:30 a.m. to noon on the first day of each candidate's visit. The visit dates and links to vitas and schedules:
Feb. 3-4, Debra Larson[38], Ph.D., associate dean, College of Engineering, Forestry, and Natural Sciences, Northern Arizona University. **Click here for visit schedule.**[39]**Feb. 8-9, Neal Gallagher**[40], Ph.D., vice president for research, Savant-garde LLC; former dean, College of Engineering and Computer Science, University of Central Florida. **Click here for visit schedule**[41]. **Feb. 15-16, Marc Ingber**[42], Ph.D., program director, Chemical, Biological, Environmental, and Transport Systems Division, National Science Foundation and professor of mechanical engineering, University of New Mexico. **Click here for visit schedule**[43]. **Feb. 17-18, Karlene Hoo**[44], Ph.D., visiting professor, division of biomedical sciences, University of California, Riverside, and former associate vice president for research, Texas Tech University. **Click here for visit schedule**[45].

Environmental Health and Safety[46]

Are you an employee or affiliate of the University of Colorado Denver who is required to complete either "Bloodborne Pathogens" or "Chemical Waste Management" (previously known as "Hazardous Waste Management")?

As of Dec. 22, 2009, there are two new refreshers for these courses: "Bloodborne Pathogens Refresher" and "Chemical Waste Management Refresher."

If you have received communication from the Environmental Health and Safety office that you are due for your annual refresher training of either of these courses, be sure to complete the refresher course, not the initial version. Only employees who already have completed the initial training at CU should complete the refresher.

The refreshers are listed alphabetically in the CU Custom Curricula, University of Colorado: CUSTOM COURSES folder in SkillPort.

Questions? E-mail system.training@cu.edu[47]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/state-senators-advance-pera-rescue-plan[2] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/flexibility-higher-education-hold-capitol[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/threats-state-funding-continue-fester-capitol[4] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/faculty-council-hears-latest-early-retirement-incentives-dependent-audit[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/physics-professor-set-testify-congress-value-stem[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/stem_finkelstein-1.jpg[7] http://science.house.gov/publications/hearings_markups_details.aspx?newsid=2723[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/five-questions-shelby-wolf[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/5qs-front-2.jpg[10] mailto:Jay.Dedrick@cu.edu[11] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/lawmakers-say-thank-you-cu-lifesavers[12] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/med-day-1.jpg[13] http://www.leg.state.co.us/CL ICS/CLICS2010A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/E7DCD3D1657B811C872576B8005C9295?Open&file=SJR009_enr.pdf[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-women-succeeding-symposium-offers-information-career-development[15] https://www.cu.edu/FacultyCouncil/Women/symposium/[16] https://www.cu.edu/FacultyCouncil/Women/gee.html[17]

[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/forum-present-debate-over-constitutional-reform[19] http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/SPA/Pages/index.aspx[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/solar-panels-produce-energy-campus-contribute-state-goal[21] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ucb_solarpanels-1.jpg[22] http://www.colorado.edu/facilitiesmanagement/about/conservation/NewSolarPV.html[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/university-launches-effort-boost-ranks-science-and-education-teachers[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/giving-back-campaign-making-fans-volunteerism[25] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ucd1-1.jpg[26] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ucd2.jpg[27] http://www.ucdenver.edu/about/WhoWeAre/Chancellor/ChancellorWilson/Communique/Pages/ChancellorsCommunique.aspx[28] http://www.ucdenver.edu/faculty_staff/university/communityconnections/Pages/default.aspx[29] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ucd3-3.jpg[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/emergency-medicine-physicians-take-part-suicide-research-trial[31] https://connections.cu.edu/people/regent-merchant-keynote-engineering-conference-uc-denver[32] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/people_Merchant-1.jpg[33] https://www.cu.edu/regents/current/merchant.html[34] https://connections.cu.edu/people/veteran-administrator-takes-post-uccs[35] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/people_Wesley-1.jpg[36] https://connections.cu.edu/people/linhart-returns-public-safety-uccs[37] https://connections.cu.edu/people/schedule-visits-four-engineering-dean-candidates-announced[38] http://www.cudenver.edu/Who%20Am%20I/Network/Tell/Winter2010/Documents/Debra%20Larson.pdf[39]

http://www.cudenver.edu/Who%20Am%20I/Network/Tell/Winter2010/Documents/Larson%20Visit3.pdf[40]
http://www.cudenver.edu/Who%20Am%20I/Network/Tell/Winter2010/Documents/Neal%20Gallagher.pdf[41]
http://www.cudenver.edu/Who%20Am%20I/Network/Tell/Winter2010/Documents/Gallagher%20Visit3.pdf[42]
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