

[Five questions for Cleopatra Estrada](#)[1]

Cleopatra Estrada has spent the past 40 years helping hundreds of students navigate the University of Colorado Boulder system and the college life. Many of those graduates still thank her when she sees them or they send her notes of gratitude.

Now she is ready to start a new phase of life. Last week she retired, cleaned out her office, said goodbye to colleagues and acquaintances, and remembered all of her years at – and contributions to – CU.

Over the years, she has had numerous job titles, but retires as program coordinator for Social Justice and Diversity Training at the Cultural Unity and Engagement Center. No matter what title she had, her goal always was to give students, especially minority students, what they needed to succeed in higher education. Her roles ranged from counselor to activist to negotiator.

On her retirement, the Cleo Estrada Student Support Fund was created to support on-campus activities for students and travel to conferences for student organizations. To donate, visit <http://www.cufund.org> and click “Give Now” then select the Cleo Estrada Student Support Fund or make a check out to the University of Colorado Foundation, and note the Cleo Estrada Student Support Fund in the memo line.

Boulder has been her “home” for more than 40 years: She earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in counseling at CU-Boulder and worked toward a Ph.D. in education leadership and development at CU Denver.

Even so, she still has fond memories of the place where she grew up, in the San Luis Valley “in the little town of Center.”

“I lived that kind of life where I could walk from house to house and all of my cousins and aunts and uncles took care of me,” she says. “To come to Boulder and be isolated from all of that was a real culture shock. I didn’t know anything about cities. I still don’t understand them. People always tell me, ‘You can take the gal out of the Valley, but you can’t take the Valley out of the gal.’”

1. How were you introduced to the University of Colorado?

My family was involved in field work and farm work in the San Luis Valley. One day, a woman from Boulder came down and she found my aunt, who is kind of a community activist, and asked if there were any students who might want to go to Boulder to the university. My aunt identified me right away. I was head girl and in the honor society, but I had no intention of going to Boulder, maybe Adams State. But even that was a long shot because I didn’t have any money.

We signed some papers, and the next thing I knew I was at Boulder. My mom and dad and aunt and uncle drove me up. I had never been to Boulder. I had never heard of Boulder. That was in 1969 and I was 17 years old. I lived in Farrand Hall and I loved it.

2. What was the beginning of your 40-year career with the university?

In my freshman year, I got involved with UMAS (United Mexican American Students) and their student support program, Education Opportunity Program (EOP). We were at the very beginning of the movement to give students of color access to higher education. I was hired to be a secretary for UMAS and that was in the middle of all the upheaval going on in the early ’70s, from protests of the Vietnam War to takeovers of buildings. A lot of Latinos – we called ourselves Chicanos then – took part in that.

At the end of my freshman year, I was ready to go back to work in the fields, because it was what I knew. The coordinator of our tutorial program of the EOP program asked if I would work there. I became a Spanish tutor and psychology tutor and I never left. Later I became a writing teacher and much later, I was the interim director of that program, which was one of our academic services programs for students of color.

There were five EOP programs – one for Asians, one for African-Americans, one for Latinos, one Native Americans and one for migrants. I worked with the Migrant Action Program for many years. Then all those programs were collapsed into one and became the CU Opportunity Program. By this time I had earned a counseling degree and ended up working in the university's counseling program. My cases were all of those minority students.

Later, I became associate director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs. The program had many names before. In 2006, the university set up the Office of Diversity and Equity with a new director who seemed like she wanted to get us out of our positions so that she could staff the office with her own people. All of my colleagues left. I was determined to stay during this "blip" even though it was demoralizing. But I loved working with the students.

I was working on a Ph.D. but because I had a full-time job and there was a lot of stress, it took me longer than I expected. My department at CU Denver told me that I had run out of time and I ended up with an education specialist degree instead of a Ph.D. But it was always a goal for me to show students of color that we could succeed in higher education.

3. What are some of your favorite memories from your time at CU?

I spent my whole life trying to get students of color to stay in college. I worked hard at helping students figure out how to navigate a university system and go beyond that into a master's program and other degrees.

One of my Latina students wanted to get into a teaching program but she did not have the grades to do it. This was in the '70s so we had more ability to massage this. I had good relationships with the deans and I approached the dean of education and made a case for her and got her admitted. She's been a teacher ever since and she thanks me every day for helping her get into that profession.

I had some students who failed all of their classes. I've been one of the most active agents for getting students retroactive withdrawals, which is hard to do. But I have been successful petitioning for those when students get all F's in one semester because of a serious emotional or physical issue. Sometimes the colleges will wipe those grades out as a reprieve. One student failed everything and we had a repeat policy in place. I set up a whole academic plan for him: the classes he would take, the tutoring he would have, etc. At the end of the semester, he had all A's. I love helping students. I love the challenge; it's wonderful.

A few months ago, the Women's Resource Center named a scholarship in my name that recognizes my activism on campus.

4. What will you do now that you are retired?

I have another job. Every once in a while I would do some work at Safe House in Boulder and they hired me about two months ago. I'll be counseling victims of domestic violence. I'll be a tri-city counselor and will be working with people in Boulder, Longmont and Lafayette. I'll use my skills and get back into counseling.

The other thing I want to do is write a murder mystery. That's one of my goals. And I want to teach an ethnic studies class that would be a research class where students would be trained to get out there and look for all of the old Chicano movement people and document their stories. I feel like I'm one of the last people who can get this done because I know all of the activists.

5. Cleopatra is such a wonderful name. Why were you given this name?

People are really surprised about that name, especially for a Mexican-American woman. I'm not a tall person and I've carried this weighty name around all of my life. I tell people that my mom and dad just loved me. I think it was probably because Elizabeth Taylor's movie was out. But my aunt tells me a different story. We didn't have a hospital in Center and we were born in our houses. My cousin was born and was named Mark Anthony. When I was born in the same week, my aunt thought it would be great to call me Cleopatra. Everyone had a godmother and godfather and they were the ones who would get to name the child, so she named me. I always ask her, "Couldn't you have named me Maria

like everyone else?”

[CU technology providing hope for patients with liver disease](#)[3]

About 15 million to 30 million people in the United States, and at least 500 million worldwide, suffer from chronic liver disease. At this point, methods of monitoring liver disease and treatment effectiveness can only be done in the later stages or can involve risky and invasive procedures prone to sampling error. These tests provide little comfort and reassurance to patients with early stage liver disease.

However, a promising new test developed at the [University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus](#)[4] and [HepQuant LLC](#)[5], one of [141 startup companies formed on the basis of CU technology](#)[6] since 1994, seeks to change that. HepQuant-SHUNT is a noninvasive, cost-effective test that measures the liver's portal circulation using natural compounds labeled with stable isotopes. The test may enable a physician to detect liver disease, measure the severity of the disease, and predict risk for future complications.

Now in the testing phase, the potential benefits of HepQuant are encouraging, said [Gregory Everson](#)[7], inventor of the test and professor and director of hepatology at the [CU School of Medicine](#)[8].

“Advantages of HepQuant are that it is noninvasive, quantifies function over the full range of disease – even at early stages – and can be used to monitor treatment effects or natural progression in a variety of liver diseases,” Everson said. Although treatment options connected with the information the HepQuant tests provide are not yet proven, researchers are optimistic.

“We think HQ tests are ideal for the new treatments for fibrosis of the liver and also fatty liver,” Everson said. “As the test is exposed to more investigators, we are seeing an interest to use the test for a whole host of liver-related research applications.”

Everson's potentially life-saving research is one of 141 startup companies formed at CU the past 20 years. Of those, 80 percent still are operating; among those, 96 companies have operations in Colorado.

And while HepQuant aims to fulfill an important medical need, CU ingenuity runs the gamut, with groundbreaking advances ranging from [OPXBIO](#)[9] – a CU-Boulder startup making sustainable, low-cost, high-return, renewable bio-based chemicals and fuels – to [LineRate Systems](#)[10], a computer networking approach that makes networks easier to configure, manage, troubleshoot and debug.

CU startups include companies that were founded based on CU technology – those numbers don't include, for instance, the many student-driven startups that emerge from business plan competitions, the CU New Venture Challenge and others.

In 2013-14, CU startups raised more than \$70 million in follow-on funding, including federal and state grants, venture financing and other funding. Total follow-on funding raised by these companies in that time amounts to more than \$6.2 billion, the CU Technology Transfer Office reports.

CU [startup companies have included](#)[6]:

89 biotech 19 software 18 physical sciences and engineering 16 energy/clean energy

Everson stressed that the HepQuant test is not FDA approved and is not currently used for any clinical decision making. “We are working with regulatory consultants to define the regulatory path,” Everson said. “We plan to conduct discussions with the FDA within the next six months.”

Trials have included prototype testing at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus and institutions such as the University of California Irvine and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. HepQuant research testing is underway at CU Anschutz and Baylor University in Dallas, with several other institutions starting the process of getting on board.

In the meantime, the HepQuant test has received two patents with others pending in the U.S., Europe and Australia. "We just paid the issuance fee on a third one in the U.S.," Everson said. "Hopefully others will fall in line this year and next year."

That's good news for people facing liver disease and for the people who care about them. And it is only one story among hundreds showcasing CU technology and its positive impact on the health, wellness and quality of life across the state, nation and world.

About the [HepQuant](#)[5] test:

The noninvasive test takes about two hours, inventor Gregory Everson said. Patients are given an IV and drink an oral solution. They receive an IV injection through a catheter. Six tubes of blood are removed over 90 minutes, he said. Anyone interesting in taking part in the trials may contact Jennifer DeSanto, R.N., coordinator for trials, at 303-724-1861.

[Two policies dropped, others await further review by stakeholders](#)[11]

Two Administrative Policy Statements (APs) were rescinded last month while several other APs previously under consideration for the January cycle have been postponed for more review.

The Office of Policy and Efficiency (OPE) this week announced the Jan. 6 rescission of two fiscal-related administrative policy statements (APs):

[4017](#)[12]-Direct Spending from a Foundation on Behalf of the University [4019](#)[13]-Reimbursement for Work Done on Behalf of a University of Colorado Supporting Foundation

The changes, approved by President Bruce Benson, were brought about by the transition of CU Foundation development staff onto the advancement team, now part of the university. For more detailed information, go to <http://www.cu.edu/oep/policy/aps-changes>[14].

Several other APs which have been under review – originally scheduled for the Jan. 1 policy cycle – have been delayed to an off-cycle approval to ensure adequate vetting with university stakeholders. The OPE expects these to go to the TEAM in either March or April for final approval:

Rescission:

[1010](#)[15]-Program Discontinuance When No Tenured or Tenure-track Faculty Face Dismissal

Revisions:

[1015](#)[16]-Implementing Program Discontinuance [2001](#)[17]-Commencement Exercise Responsibilities [3002](#)[18]-Capital Construction Planning and Projects [6001](#)[19]-Providing and Using Information Technology [8003](#)[20]-Campus Designation on Diplomas and Transcripts (formerly, Campus Designation on Diplomas, Permanent Record Cards and Transcripts) [8004](#)[21]-Admission Procedures for Assessing Student Applicant Criminal History (formerly, Admission Procedures for Students with Criminal Convictions)

New:

[2025](#)[22]-University Brand Identity and Trademarks

The July 1 policy cycle also has begun. A list of the tentative policies under review, as well as justifications and drafts, will begin to be posted to the OPE website (<https://www.cu.edu/oep/policy/aps-under-review>[23]) and will be updated as needed.

For general information on system policies, go to: <http://www.cu.edu/oep>[24]. To receive periodic policy updates from the Office of Policy and Efficiency, please send an email to ope@cu.edu[25] and request to be added to the OPE Distribution List.

[Beth-El students, faculty lead Valentine's Day Bear Drive](#)[26]

[CU Denver Business School marketing class helps KOTA Longboards refine demographics, brand](#)[27]

[CU Anschutz volunteers show healthy hospitality to Stock Show visitors](#)[28]

[New study details how cocaine really works in the brain, offers possibility of drug to treat addiction](#)[29]

[Brooks-Kayal elected president of American Epilepsy Society](#)[30]

Amy Brooks-Kayal, professor of pediatrics and neurology, School of Medicine, was elected president of the American Epilepsy Society (AES) at the group's annual meeting in December 2014.

Brooks-Kayal is the Ponzio Family Chair and chief of pediatric neurology at Children's Hospital Colorado. She also leads a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research program focused on the molecular mechanisms underlying epilepsy and the development of new targeted therapies for epilepsy prevention and disease modification.

AES is the largest U.S. medical and scientific society dedicated to the prevention, treatment and cure of epilepsy. AES members are professionals engaged in research and clinical care from private practice, academia and government. For more than 75 years, AES has been unlocking the potential of the clinical and research community by creating a global forum where professionals can share, learn and grow.

Brooks-Kayal has a long history of service to the neuroscience and epilepsy research communities. She is a member of the Advisory Council of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), and past chair of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Neuroplasticity and Neurotransmitters Study Section.

Brooks-Kayal organized and chaired sessions on epilepsy co-morbidities for the NIH-sponsored conference on curing epilepsy in 2007 and 2013, and she served as co-chair and steward for the NINDS epilepsy benchmark on epilepsy co-morbidities. She has served on the executive committee of the American Neurological Association, as a counselor for the Professors of Child Neurology, and she has served on multiple committees for the AES, Child Neurology Society and the Society for Neuroscience, and chaired the working group on co-morbidities for the ILAE/AES workshop on preclinical epilepsy therapy discovery.

She also has served on the scientific advisory boards for Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE) and for the National EpiFellows Foundation. She also is a past associate editor of the journal *Epilepsia* and currently reviews several other scientific journals.

[Finkelstein recognized for a best book of 2014](#)[31]

A biography by **Gabriel Finkelstein**, CU Denver associate professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, recently was selected as a Best Book of 2014 by Science Books and Films (SB&F).

The book, "Emil du Bois-Reymond: Neuroscience, Self, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Germany," was named a finalist for the inaugural Pickstone Prize (best book in the field) from the British Society for the History of Science. Also last year, the book received an Honorable Mention for History of Science at the PROSE Awards (The American Publishers Association Award for Professional and Scholarly Excellence).

Considered the founder of electrophysiology, du Bois-Reymond (1818-1896) reformed the teaching of medicine, popularized the conservation of energy, advocated Darwin's theories, and identified the scientific problem of consciousness. His writings also influenced the development of pragmatism, psychoanalysis, logical positivism and computer science.

Finkelstein's book, the first scholarly biography of du Bois-Reymond, is the result of two decades of archival research.

SB&F is a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society and the publisher of the journal Science.

[Swallow co-authors study on insect behavior, neurochemistry](#)[32]

John Swallow, professor and chair of biology at CU Denver's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and his lab groups are applying information about neurotransmitters to illustrate the power of using insect models to study aggression. Swallow and his team were invited to contribute to December's special-themed issue of the journal Current Zoology titled "Ecological and Evolutionary Connections Between Morphology, Behavior and Physiology."

Their contribution, "Neurochemistry as a bridge between morphology and behavior: Perspectives on aggression in insects," was co-authored by Swallow; Andrew Bubak, a Ph.D. student; Jaime Grace, a postdoc; and University of South Dakota colleagues professor Ken Renner and assistant professor Mick Watt.

"We are interested in the role of monoamines or neurotransmitters – such as serotonin, dopamine and noradrenaline – in the modulation of aggression because the outcome of contests over limited resources such as mates, territories, and food has significant fitness consequences," Swallow said. "Because monoamines share deep evolutionary origins in vertebrates and invertebrates they can have comparable effects in such diverse processes as aggression, learning and memory, mating behaviors and reproduction, stress responses and locomotion."

[Dropping names ...](#)[33]

Mary Coussons-Read, executive vice chancellor, Academic Affairs, and professor, Department of Psychology at UCCS, will discuss new research at Feb. 10's Café Scientifique at UCCS. The focus will be on how stress affects the outcome of human pregnancy by altering maternal inflammatory and endocrine activity, and how these changes may ultimately impact behavioral and immunological development and health in offspring. Despite advanced health care, the rate of preterm birth in the United States remains high, and often occurs in otherwise healthy women who have no clear risk factors. The presentation, "The Psychoneuroimmunology of Pregnancy: Implications for Birth and Human Development," will start at 6:30 p.m. at Clyde's in the University Center, and is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Tom Huber, professor, Geography and Environmental Studies, thuber@uccs.edu[34].

Jody Tanabe, professor and vice chair of research in the Department of Radiology, School of Medicine, has been honored with the 2014 Distinguished Investigator Award from the Academy of Radiology Research. Tanabe is one of 46 researchers selected to receive the award, which acknowledges the work of investigators who achieve scientific excellence while still being involved in clinical care. Her research focuses on using advanced neuroimaging methods to understand biological mechanisms of drug addiction.

Daniel (Danko) van der Laan, physics researcher at CU-Boulder (also of NIST) has received a patent for a high-temperature superconducting cable that provides flexible, high-current density power transmission. These cables have immediate applications in electrical grids and scientific and medical equipment; they may also enable better power transmission for military applications and in data centers. U.S. patent 8,938,278 (“Superconducting cables and methods of making the same”) was issued Jan. 20. This is the first U.S. patent to issue from a portfolio of related U.S. and international applications, and is the first patent awarded to van der Laan for his research at CU. This technology is being commercialized by a CU startup company, Advanced Conductor Technologies, founded by van der Laan. The company began filling its first commercial orders in 2014.

Casey Allen, assistant professor of Geography and Environmental Sciences and coordinator of Undergraduate Advising at CU Denver’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, co-edited a new book, “Geomorphological Fieldwork (Developments in Earth Surface Processes Vol. 18).” In addition, Allen authored a chapter and co-authored several others. Geomorphology is the study of landforms and the processes that shape them, and more broadly, the evolution of processes controlling the topography of any planet. The publisher notes this volume can be used as a student book for field-based university courses and postgraduate research requiring fieldwork or field schools.

[University Staff performance reviews to start this month](#)^[35]

The University Staff review cycle ended on Jan. 31 for most campuses. University Staff members in the CU system offices will receive their annual reviews several months earlier than in the past; for campuses, the schedule has not changed. Any merit raises will still take effect July 1.

Each campus’s procedures for review are slightly different. For specific questions, contact your campus HR office or department Business Partner.

[CU-Boulder](#)^[36][CU Denver and Anschutz](#)^[37][UCCS](#)^[38][CU System](#)^[39]

Questions or concerns: Visit <http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/performance-reviews>^[40]

[CU Anschutz Health and Wellness Center hosts open house Tuesday](#)^[41]

Experience how integrated programming at the CU Anschutz Health and Wellness Center can help make 2015 your best year yet by attending an open house.

During the event from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, visitors are invited to:

Enjoy fitness activities and specialty group exercise classes
Relax with a free 10-minute chair massage
Learn your body’s composition and how to benefit from our wellness programs
Discover beauty-enhancing techniques from CU
Plastics
Taste free healthy foods prepared in two evening cooking classes
Savor the flavor of Bistro Elaia’s healthy food samples
Sign-up for research studies
See our Human Performance Lab translate science to workout potential
For more information, go to <http://anschutzwellness.com/content/wellness-open-house>^[42]

[Exploring Digital Humanities Series continues next week](#)[43]

The CU Exploring Digital Humanities Series presents “It’s In the Air: Digital Histories of Medicine,” by E. Thomas Ewing from Virginia Tech, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 12 in the Center for British and Irish Studies, Norlin Library (5th floor), CU-Boulder.

The presentation will explore the past, present and future of digital history through a discussion of projects on the history of medicine that advance the mission of a research university to promote original scholarship, mentor students, and engage with the public. These projects include a Digging into Data challenge collaboration to explore newspaper reporting of the Spanish Influenza and a citizen-science effort to document the history of tuberculosis in the United States.

For more, see: <http://www.colorado.edu/history/dhss/>[44]

Links

[1] <https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-cleopatra-estrada>[2] <http://www.cufund.org/>[3] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-technology-providing-hope-patients-liver-disease>[4] <http://ucdenver.edu/>[5] <http://www.hepquant.com/>[6] <https://www.cu.edu/technology-transfer-office/startup-companies-cu>[7] <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/departments/medicine/Gastroenterology/Faculty/Pages/Faculty/GregoryTEverson.MD.FACP.aspx>[8] <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/Pages/somWelcome.aspx>[9] <http://www.opxbio.com/>[10] <http://www.lineratesystems.com/>[11] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/two-policies-dropped-others-await-further-review-stakeholders>[12] <http://www.cu.edu/sites/default/files/4017Justification.pdf>[13] <http://www.cu.edu/sites/default/files/4019Justification.pdf>[14] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/policy/aps-changes>[15] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1010>[16] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1015>[17] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/2001>[18] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/3002>[19] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/6001>[20] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/8003>[21] <http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/8004>[22] <http://www.cu.edu/sites/default/files/2025Draft.pdf>[23] <https://www.cu.edu/ope/policy/aps-under-review>[24] <http://www.cu.edu/ope>[25] <mailto:ope@cu.edu>[26] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/beth-el-students-faculty-lead-valentine-s-day-bear-drive>[27] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-denver-business-school-marketing-class-helps-kota-longboards-refine-demographics-brand>[28] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-anschutz-volunteers-show-healthy-hospitality-stock-show-visitors>[29] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-study-details-how-cocaine-really-works-brain-offers-possibility-drug-treat-addiction>[30] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/brooks-kayal-elected-president-american-epilepsy-society>[31] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/finkelstein-recognized-best-book-2014>[32] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/swallow-co-authors-study-insect-behavior-neurochemistry>[33] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/dropping-names-108>[34] <mailto:thuber@uccs.edu>[35] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/university-staff-performance-reviews-start-month>[36] <http://hr.colorado.edu/lr/pm/Pages/default.aspx>[37] <http://www.ucdenver.edu/about/departments/HR/Pages/default.aspx>[38] <http://www.uccs.edu/hr/performance-evaluation-due-dates.html>[39] <http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/performance-management-cu-system>[40] <http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/performance-reviews>[41] <https://connections.cu.edu/events/cu-anschutz-health-and-wellness-center-hosts-open-house-tuesday>[42] <http://anschutzwellness.com/content/wellness-open-house>[43] <https://connections.cu.edu/events/exploring-digital-humanities-series-continues-next-week>[44] <http://www.colorado.edu/history/dhss/>

