

[Obama recognizes CU for commitment to science, math education](#)[1]

President Barack Obama today recognized the University of Colorado at Boulder for its leadership in science, technology, engineering and math — or STEM — education, and welcomed the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs into the fold of American universities that have increased their commitment to shaping the next generation of American innovators.

CU-Boulder Chancellor Philip P. DiStefano and UCCS Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak attended the White House announcement of a major initiative that expands the president's Educate to Innovate campaign, aimed at fast-tracking the nation's focus on STEM education.

At the event, DiStefano accepted an honor for CU-Boulder's comprehensive commitment to STEM education, and was among the leaders of four public research universities who were asked to deliver a letter to President Obama, pledging to address the national shortage of science and mathematics teachers.

DiStefano and 78 other university leaders signed the letter, representing 120 members of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, or APLU. In the letter, the universities commit to the association's Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative (SMTI), which will strive to increase the number of new science and math teachers to more than 10,000 annually by 2015. CU-Boulder is among 39 institutions that also have pledged to at least double the number of science and math teachers graduated by 2015.

"President Obama's recognition of our efforts to educate more science and math teachers is another mark of excellence for the CU community and the state of Colorado," said CU President Bruce D. Benson. "I applaud our campuses for the recognition they have earned, and for challenging young people to go into fields that will advance our nation's position as a world leader in innovation."

Said DiStefano, "In recent years, a good number of public research universities have begun to address the issue of science and mathematics education and teacher preparation. Working through SMTI will enable our institutions to significantly impact science and mathematics education in our states and across the nation. It is a matter of economic security and global competitiveness."

At the White House event, Shockley-Zalabak represented UCCS as the Obama administration welcomed her campus and others into the latest cohort of universities to join UTeach, a renowned STEM program at the University of Texas. Both CU-Boulder and UCCS are now members of UTeach, and CU-Boulder has implemented its own program called CU Teach.

"I am honored to join with the president and leaders of education and industry in a unified goal to improve science and math education in our nation's classrooms," Shockley-Zalabak said. "This effort will create a pipeline of innovators to our universities and to positions in industry, government and defense."

The president announced public and private investments of more than \$250 million to help prepare 10,000 new math and science teachers and train more than 100,000 existing teachers. The plan is part of his administration's efforts to expand its Educate to Innovate campaign to improve science and math achievement among American students over the next decade.

Obama also announced several new and innovative partnerships involving major companies, universities, foundations, nonprofit organizations and government agencies designed to attract, develop, reward and retain outstanding STEM educators.

In Colorado, CU is leading the charge with multiple STEM education programs across its campuses: CU-Boulder was one of only 13 teacher education programs in the nation awarded a grant in 2007 by the National Math and Science Initiative to model its CU Teach program after UTeach. Also, the campus counts Nobel laureates and Distinguished Professors Carl Weiman and Thomas Cech among the faculty members dedicated to using innovative classroom instruction to encourage students to enter into science and math careers. UCCS is a burgeoning southern Colorado hub for STEM education, partnering with high-tech, military and government entities, and creating

the nation's first bachelor of innovation program. The University of Colorado Denver counts STEM programs among its hallmark academic offerings, and hosts the annual STEMpalooza, a hands-on science and math expo for elementary through high school students in Colorado.

[University asking employees to verify dependents' benefit eligibility](#)[2]

Like many employers challenged by rising health care costs, the University of Colorado is launching 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 will receive a letter this month explaining the process. In early February, 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.

"Although we believe the majority of enrolled dependents meet university eligibility requirements, there might be some instances when a plan participant mistakenly includes an ineligible dependent," said Mark Stanker, assistant vice president of PBS. "When this happens, each of us shares the cost of covering the ineligible dependent in our programs."

Plan participants who realize they have ineligible dependents are asked to voluntarily drop them from coverage in a timely manner. Penalties may be avoided by removing ineligible dependents from coverage by Feb. 28. After that date, if the university learns that a plan participant has knowingly enrolled an ineligible person as a dependent, the university may act to recover costs for the ineligible person's health care and/or benefit claims.

Dependent eligibility audits are increasingly common among employers as they seek to rein in health care costs. Other major universities including Stanford, Ohio State and Michigan recently completed similar dependent verifications. According to a recent Aon Consulting survey of large employers, 46 percent of organizations conducted such verification by 2009, and 20 percent plan to do so in the future.

"The data show that for large employers like CU, about 5 percent to 12 percent of dependents do not meet eligibility requirements, and each ineligible dependent costs an employer approximately \$2,000 to \$4,000 annually," Stanker said. "With nearly 18,000 dependents on our plans, assuring the university is paying only for eligible dependents is important, even more so in this economy."

[President's Teaching Scholars Program seeks conference proposals](#)[3]

The President's Teaching Scholars Program and the President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative invite proposals from university faculty for sessions at the spring conference on teaching.

The conference, themed "How Our Students Learn: Implications for Faculty," will run from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. March 5 at the Anschutz Medical Campus. All CU faculty members are invited to register for one of 100 seats.

Proposed sessions of one or two hours should address the conference theme, aspects of which could include: learning and brain science, how brain development influences student behavior, the development of learning and problem solving, individual differences in learning, and what faculty should know about how the brain works.

Proposals may include a nomination for a CU plenary speaker, though no honorarium is available from the conference organization. Workshop-style sessions that emphasize active participation by attendees, rather than passive listening, will be strongly favored by the organizing committee.

To propose a session, submit the following information by Jan. 29. Submissions will be selected by the organizers based on relationship to the theme, judged audience interest and balance with other sessions.

Session title:

One-paragraph description:

Name of (optional) CU plenary speaker:

One-paragraph description of plenary speaker:

Has the speaker been contacted and indicated a willingness to attend with no honorarium?

Your name and contact information (e-mail and phone):

Names of any other session leaders, with one-sentence descriptions:

Other information you wish to provide:

Proposals and other questions may be sent by e-mail to [ftep@colorado.edu](mailto:ftep@colorado.edu)[4].

[Five questions for Norman Pace](#)[5]

[6]

At an early age growing up in rural Indiana, Norman Pace, Ph.D., learned he had an affinity for microscopes and chemistry sets. He was so taken by the "unseen" world, he conjured up a variety of molds to stare at and, he says in his biographical sketch, couldn't resist the idea of making bombs. Lest you think he was a common delinquent, think again. His experiments were all in the name of science.

Pace is a professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He recently was appointed Distinguished Professor, an honor he received twice before in positions at Indiana University.

As a molecular biologist, Pace and his lab members have studied the structure of Ribonucleic acid (RNA), particularly the RNA enzyme ribonuclease P. He also is a microbial ecologist and has discovered new organisms and their interactions with humans. One recent study made people think twice before showering: Pace's research found that shower heads around the nation not only provide invigorating morning wake-ups, they also release mycobacterium avium, a pathogen linked to pulmonary disease, especially in people with compromised immune systems.

**1. Your recent study on shower heads was eye-opening and even a bit frightening. Because you deal with microbes, have you changed your lifestyle to compensate for what you discover?**

Not particularly. I got a new shower head — mine was crusty — and I've started scrutinizing hotel shower heads that I encounter. Sometimes I take a bath instead. I also try to stay out of indoor crowds of people. That's hard to do. For instance, at DIA (Denver International Airport) waiting for a train, I stay away from the crowd. When I'm in a crowd, I see a sludge of microbiology. Of course you have to get in the train with them.

**2. What research studies are you currently working on?**

The shower-head study was a small part of a much larger project, studying aerosol microbiology of the indoor environment: schools, office buildings, the New York City subway system, hospital operation rooms and waiting areas, homeless shelters and public swimming facilities. You don't swim in public pools, do you?

The thing that's impressed me about the study of indoor environments is that we collect 2 cubic meters of air — about what you breathe every day — and it contains 1 million bacteria. No matter where you are, you see human microbiology. Think about it; it makes a lot of sense. There's a convective plume of warm air rising off of you, carrying whatever you are giving off. You have to live with (microbiology), and a little is good. It keeps your immune system humming.

Another thing we found in the New York subway was aerosol iron, presumably from the tracks. If you worked there eight to 10 hours a day, there must be some syndrome you'd have. You couldn't get through a metal detector.

We see microorganisms that humans have had little touch with. Out of about 100 phyla (or groups of organisms), most of our knowledge stems from seven. Only 20 have been cultured. We have little knowledge of what else is out in our world.

### **3. What research have you conducted that you feel has had the most impact on humankind?**

The development of technology (and philosophy) for culture-independent identification and study of naturally occurring microorganisms. This development has changed the face of microbial ecology, which drives the biosphere. Basically we rip out the DNA of an organism and find out what's there. Some prefer to culture it, but we find out more by looking at the DNA than we would culturing.

### **4. You also are an accomplished cave explorer. What is your favorite cave?**

I used to be a lot more active than I currently am, exploring and mapping caves. I've walked in a lot of places where no else has been, on dried sediments that were laid down hundreds of years ago. There are no footprints there, so you know you are the first.

Mammoth Cave in central Kentucky is probably my favorite. (The largest cave system in the world, Mammoth may be as long as 1,000 miles. More than 300 miles have been explored.)

### **5. Away from the lab, you are a voracious reader. What are you reading now?**

I'm right now reading "Earth Abides," by George Stewart, a futuristic novel about the collapse of civilization. I just finished reading "Stoner," by John Williams. It's a biographical novel about a university professor, not about drugs. Before that I read "A Dog in a Hat," by Joe Parkin, a bio about racing bikes in Belgium. I'm into bikes. I follow bike racing (but don't participate); that's a hard way to have fun. I use my bike almost exclusive of cars. I live about 3 miles away (from work). I ride even in the snow; I just use studded tires.

### [Cancer Center has new interim director](#)[7]

**Andrew Thorburn**, Ph.D., will become interim director of the University of Colorado Cancer Center for the next six months. On July 1, **Dan Theodorescu**, M.D., Ph.D., will assume the post. Theodorescu currently is director of the Mellon Urologic Cancer Institute at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Thorburn, who has served as deputy director of the center, also is an associate director for cancer prevention and control at the center, and is associate dean for public health practice at the Colorado School of Public Health.

For the past year, **Tim Byers**, M.D., M.P.H., served as interim director of the Cancer Center. He will return to his duties as deputy director of the center and as an associate director for cancer prevention and control.

[Associate professor earns award for epilepsy research](#)[8]

Patel

**Manisha Patel**, a researcher at the University of Colorado School of Pharmacy, was one of three recipients of a 2010 Innovator Award worth \$50,000 from Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE).

"The vast majority of epilepsy research is focused on channels and synapses and only a minority focuses on metabolic processes," said Patel, an associate professor at the school. "Although anticonvulsant drugs remain frontline therapies for controlling epilepsies, the search for novel disease-modifying drugs is highly desirable to halt the development, progression and cognitive changes associated with chronic seizures. This CURE award will enable us to conduct a proof-of-principle study to test the benefits of a unique antioxidant compound that targets metabolic dysfunction."

Launched this year, the CURE Innovator Award supports principal investigators in pursuing innovative research studies. The award supports high-risk studies that have the potential to reveal new avenues for investigation. Since its inception in 1998, [CURE](#)[10] has raised more than \$10 million to fund 93 cutting-edge research projects.

[Boulder, Denver researchers elected as fellows](#)[11]

Cumalat, Johnson, McKnight

Agarwal, Carpenter

Three University of Colorado at Boulder faculty members and two University of Colorado School of Pharmacy researchers have been named fellows of the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for 2009.

The three Boulder faculty members are **John Cumalat** of the physics department, **Thomas Johnson** of the integrative physiology department and **Diane McKnight** of the civil, environmental and architectural engineering department.

**Raj Agarwal** and **John Carpenter** are two of only eight Pharmaceutical Sciences AAAS fellows elected in 2009.

The five were among 531 AAAS fellows elected by their peers for efforts to advance science or foster scientifically or socially distinguished applications. They will be honored at the Fellows Forum during the AAAS annual meeting, Feb. 20 in San Diego.

[Leader in sustainable development new director of real estate program](#)[14]

**Susan Watts**, a nationally recognized leader in sustainable development, has been named executive director of the University of Colorado Real Estate Center, an academic real estate program for graduate and undergraduate students attending the Leeds School of Business.

Watts spent 25 years in senior management for development industry leaders in California, Arizona and Florida. She also taught at the University of Arizona's School of Renewable Natural Resources.

"Susan's background in academia, her thorough knowledge of the real estate industry and commitment to sustainability make her the ideal candidate to lead the CU Real Estate Center into its exciting next chapter," said Byron Koste, founding director of the 12-year-old center.

In her new position, Watts will continue to enhance the graduate and undergraduate real estate curriculum; maintain and expand relationships with local, state, and national professional associations to foster best practices in real estate development and management; and provide opportunities to apply best practices and research related to public and private land use and environmental groups.

"I look forward to working with the dedicated members of the CU Real Estate Council, led by incoming Chairman Sherman Miller, the CU Real Estate Foundation and the top-notch faculty to provide the skill sets necessary for the next generation of students entering an industry that is focused on sustainable development," Watts said.

She also will develop student internships and recruit and provide guidance to the center's director of the Initiative for Sustainable Development. The search process for the new director for sustainable development is under way; Watts is participating on the search committee and is currently interviewing candidates.

[Philosophy professor to lead international organization](#)[15]

Hildebrand

**David Hildebrand**, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado Denver, was recently elected president of the Southwestern Philosophical Society, an association of scholars and philosophers founded in 1936.

The group provides a forum for philosophical and scholarly research. Originally serving philosophers in the American Southwest, it has been for many years been a national and international society, with its own journal, Southwest Philosophy Review.

[Symposium focuses on service learning](#)[17]

The [Center for Faculty Development](#)[18] at the University of Colorado Denver will present "Enhancing Scholarly Engagement Through Service Learning," a symposium set for 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Jan. 29 in the North Classroom Atrium.

Service learning serves as a bridge between classroom learning and community volunteerism for students, where service is anchored in the curriculum, classroom discussion and the community. This half-day symposium is designed to bring together faculty, community partner organizations and students who are interested in the benefits of service learning via:

developing faculty research on the scholarship of teaching and learning developing university and community partnerships to improve social problems and meet the goals of the University of Colorado Denver's strategic plan, and enhancing student learning, career networks and professional development

The event is aimed at tenure-track or tenured professors who are looking for ways to overlap research, teaching and service interests.

Keynote speaker is Stephen Hartnett, chair of the department of communication. A panel discussion among faculty, community partners and students will address what makes service-learning work. The event also offers a chance for networking with community partners to identify potential service-learning projects, and student posters on their service-learning projects.

To register for the symposium, which is co-sponsored by the Experiential Learning Center, the College of Liberal Arts Sciences and the Center for Faculty Development, [click here](#)[19].

[Study: New approach to emissions improves accuracy of climate models](#)[20]

It's no secret that emissions leaving a car tailpipe or factory smokestack affect climate and air quality. Even trees release chemicals that influence the atmosphere. But until now, scientists have struggled to know where these organic molecules go and what happens to them once they leave their source. That has led to incomplete or less than accurate models for predicting climate and air quality.

A major collaborative effort of more than 60 scientists led by Jose-Luis Jimenez, an associate professor of chemistry at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has discovered common ground in the jumble of organic material floating through the skies. The finding presents a workable solution that will improve the speed and accuracy of prediction models used to understand how these aerosols affect climate and human health, said Jimenez, also a fellow of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES).

"We're providing a key piece of machinery that is needed to make accurate predictions of air quality and climate and that is also relatively simple and practical to use," said Jimenez, lead author of the study that appears in the Dec. 11 issue of *Science*. CIRES is a joint institute of CU and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Organic compounds coat airborne particles like a lacquer of spray paint and make up as much as 90 percent of all fine particle mass aloft in the atmosphere. These particles influence cloud formation and subsequent rainfall. They also affect human health and can lead to illnesses like asthma, heart disease and lung cancer.

But so far only about 10 to 30 percent of the thousands of individual compounds have been identified, and past research has focused on following specific molecules with the idea that these compounds remain relatively static in nature once they enter the atmosphere. Recent discoveries show the life cycle of these compounds is much more complex, with organic molecules reacting many times over in many different ways. Attempts by atmospheric scientists to track this life cycle often leave researchers with a vast array of divergent paths to follow.

To find some order in this chaos, Jimenez and his colleagues began looking at organic particles with a more holistic mindset. Through a series of field observations and lab experiments conducted all over the world, they found that organic matter ultimately tends to evolve toward a similar end, regardless of the source or where the matter occurs in the atmosphere.

"What surprised us is how similar the organic matter looked as we went from the heart of Mexico City to an island in Japan to a forest in Finland or a mountain in the Swiss Alps," Jimenez said.

"The atmosphere acts like Dan Aykroyd's Bass-O-Matic, making similar-looking goop almost no matter what you start with," said Neil Donahue, a study co-author with Carnegie Mellon University.

The study found that this particle soup can be boiled down into a few measurable characteristics, such as the oxygen-to-carbon ratio, which are key variables for predicting climate and air quality.

"These results allow us to do a better job in predicting future climate and air quality," Jimenez said. "And we need good predictions in order to be able to do the right thing."

The research study was funded with grants from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It included scientists from more than 30 institutes, including Carnegie Mellon University, Aerodyne Research Inc., and international collaborators from England, Switzerland, China, Japan, Mexico, Germany, Sweden and Finland.

#### [Rural medicine, Down syndrome programs receive federal support](#)[21]

Several programs of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, including efforts to bolster rural health care and to research Down syndrome, got a recent boost from the omnibus federal spending bill.

"Down syndrome research and rural health care are areas of real need in Colorado, the nation and around the world," said M. Roy Wilson, M.D., M.S., University of Colorado Denver chancellor. "We are grateful to our federal lawmakers for helping us make the case for the importance of continued funding in these areas, which are crucial to the health and wellness of citizens in our own backyard and around the globe."

The School of Medicine's rural track is in line for \$575,000. The program is designed to address the shortage of physicians for Colorado's rural population by increasing the number of doctors and improving health care in rural areas.

"The rural track, in its fifth year, now costs about a quarter of a million dollars a year," said Mark Deutchman, M.D., the program's director. "This is a substantial step for a growing program."

The money will be used for students in the rural track — now about 10 percent of the medical school — and to provide rural-medicine experience for all medical school students.

The rural health-care problem is serious in Colorado. In 2007, no active licensed physicians lived in Bent or Washington counties, according to the Colorado Health Institute. Three other counties — San Juan, Mineral and Costilla — had one active licensed physician each. Fewer than five active licensed physicians lived in each of 10 other rural counties.

The Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome (LCI) at the University of Colorado School of Medicine will receive \$1.5 million, thanks to the recently signed federal omnibus bill. Sens. Michael Bennet and Mark Udall and Reps. Ed Perlmutter and Jared Polis led the effort with the support of the Colorado delegation.

The work of the LCI aims to eradicate the ill effects on cognitive function in people with Down syndrome. LCI researchers will break new ground and use a new model to bring researchers in a variety of disciplines together with clinical providers. Day-to-day challenges in patient care will be communicated to researchers and, conversely, emerging research opportunities in the laboratory will be conveyed to clinicians and clinician-researchers.



The \$1.5 million, restricted to the sole support of LCI, will include buying medical laboratory equipment needed to conduct research on Down syndrome with the goals of understanding the biological basis for cognitive deficits and discovering effective new treatments.

The faculty will focus on the full spectrum of activities needed for success: basic research, clinical research and clinical care and treatment of children, adolescents and adults with Down syndrome.

The economic impact of the Institute could extend to the discovery of new treatments, pharmaceuticals and procedures for restoration of neural function in individuals affected by a host of developmental brain disorders, most notable Down syndrome.

[Rural medicine. Down syndrome programs receive federal support](#)[22]

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#### [Basketball fans to get first look at new arena](#)[23]

A new era for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Athletics will begin Friday when the Mountain Lions play the first games in the new 1,250-seat UCCS Event Center. The center's opening eliminates the dubious distinction of UCCS athletics having the smallest venue in NCAA Division II.

The basketball teams will face Fort Lewis on Friday and Adams State on Saturday. Women's games both nights will begin at 6 p.m., followed by men's games at about 8 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door; advance tickets are available by calling 719-255-3602.

The 27,000-square-foot event center, adjacent to the old Lions' Den, features high-tech sound, lighting and high-speed data capability. The multi-purpose facility will host intercollegiate athletics, conferences and large all-campus events such as convocation. It will be available for rent by non-university entities.

Fans will notice new LED scoreboards, scrolling message score tables and improved seating, restrooms and concession areas. Also included are a large visitors' locker room, an officials' locker room and a VIP area.

"I don't think I can overstate how important the new UCCS Events Center will be for the development of our athletics programs," said UCCS athletic director and women's basketball coach Stephen Kirkham. "It will positively impact us in many areas, particularly in local recruiting and alumni relations."

Because some finish work still has to be done, this weekend's games are considered a soft opening for the facility. The official grand opening ceremony will be at 4 p.m. Jan. 22 before games against Regis. Faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members are invited to attend the event, which will feature comments by CU Regent Steve Bosley, President Bruce Benson, Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak and Student Government President Daniel Garcia. The UCCS pep band and cheerleaders will perform. A barbecue will feature buffalo burgers and hamburgers seared with the image of the UCCS Mountain Lion mascot. For more information, call 719-255-3210.

The \$9 million project got underway in fall 2007 with a \$2 million allocation from the Office of the President of the University of Colorado. Multiple revenue sources were used to fund the balance of the project.

Following other recent construction at UCCS, the Event Center will seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification for its energy efficiency and use of sustainable building practices.

#### [SkillPort](#)[24]

In order to access training through SkillPort, your browser must be Java enabled and allow for pop-ups. So, what does this mean to you?

If you need information on the browser you are using, or instructions on how to update your browser, Java or pop-ups,

check the following links:

Do you know if your browser is fully compatible? Perform a browser check at:

<http://browser.skillport.com/bh/default.asp>[25] To enable Java and pop-ups, go to:

[https://www.cu.edu/articles/upload/PC\\_JAVA\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.cu.edu/articles/upload/PC_JAVA_Guide.pdf)[26] Do you want to learn more about the technical requirements associated with SkillPort? Go to: <https://www.cu.edu/articles/upload/SkillPortFAQs.pdf>[27]

If you have specific technical questions that cannot be answered by the above documents, please:

Call your campus IT Help Desk: CU-Boulder — 303-735-HELP UCCS — 719-262-3536 UC Denver — 303-315-HELP Anschutz Medical Campus — 303-724-HELP System — 303-492-9457 Contact SkillSoft Tech Support at [support@skillsoft.com](mailto:support@skillsoft.com)[28] or 1-866-754-5435.

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## Links

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