# For Christensen, leadership is a lifestyle[1]
[2]

Chat with Professor Thomas Christensen for few minutes, and you quickly recognize the passion and dedication of this UCCS educator.

Maybe that's because he has held so many titles throughout his career: University of Colorado Colorado Springs physics professor; department chair; College of Letters, Arts and Sciences dean; and currently co-director of UCCS Teach.

For his dedication and contributions to UCCS, Christensen can add 2015 Excellence in Leadership Award Winner[3] to that list, too.

Christensen participated in the first Excellence in Leadership Program[4], known then as the Emerging Leaders Program. The systemwide leadership development program, run through Employee Services' Employee Learning and Development division, cultivates collaborative leaders.

"I certainly see leadership as a form of service," Christensen said. "It's a matter of trying to find ways to move us all forward collectively."

Indeed, service is the clear theme running through Christensen's career. After receiving a Ph.D. in Physics at Cornell University, the Minnesota native earned a coveted spot researching at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque. It was a great gig, he said, but he felt a stronger pull to teach. He took a job as an assistant professor in the Department of Physics and Energy on a growing UCCS campus in 1989.

"The fact that it was a smaller campus and one that seemed to have good growth potential attracted me," he said. "Certainly, Colorado attracted me. Colorado Springs is a lovely community to be working in."

With the support of fellow professors and deans, Christensen started taking on more responsibility, chairing the Physics Department between 1994 and 2001. In September 2002, he was asked to serve as interim dean on the heels of his ELP nomination.

"It made for a very busy year for me," he laughed, "but one where the experiences I was gaining in the ELP very much complemented what I was learning as an interim dean."

He remembers a specific ELP session when a guest speaker talked about the importance of integrity in decision-making and individual leadership. That's when things clicked, he said.

"If you don't have integrity, you cannot lead," Christensen reflected. "You lose your credibility – no one is going to follow someone who they don't feel has integrity."

So when UCCS needed a dean for the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences – and when the university saw its funding slashed during the recession – Christensen decided to step up.

"I was a little concerned about bringing in somebody from the outside who didn't really know the college when we might be in a difficult time," he said. "I felt that maybe I had something to offer them."

Christensen did have something to offer. In his first year as dean, Christensen led the college through two rounds of budget cuts, inviting department chairs and the faculty budget committee to offer suggestions in a collaborative, open process. As UCCS climbed out of the economic downturn, he helped steward major gifts to Theatreworks and the Gallery of Contemporary Art. He championed development of the Heller Center for the Arts and Humanities, and developed three new undergraduate majors and a new Ph.D. program in applied sciences.

His steadfast leadership has earned him the admiration of people not only at UCCS, but across the CU system.

“Tom is compassionate,” wrote Barbara Gaddis, executive director of the Office of First Year Experience and Student Retention at UCCS. “He listens fully to an issue and proposes a solution that captures the real intention of both sides of the argument.”

Christensen stepped down as dean in June 2012 to co-direct UCCS Teach, a program that trains the next generation of science, technology, engineering and math educators. The UCCS program is one of 44 nationwide, including one at CU-Boulder. Christensen oversees the science curriculum content, and team-teaches one of the classes.

For someone who has dedicated his career to teaching, Christensen says guiding young educators is one of the best ways to give back.

“I really see the value and importance of good teaching, and I also see the importance of middle and high school science and math teachers,” he said. “If they can help excite students at that age and can help give them a good solid background in science and math, then those students … have the potential to be excellent students here.” His own high school physics teacher inspired him to pursue the subject in college, he noted.

Looking back on his career so far, Christensen is quick to attribute his success to a systemwide culture of personal growth and shared success. He encourages everyone, regardless of their role, to see themselves as leaders.

“We need people in the faculty, in the staff and in the student body who exercise leadership in their own individual roles,” he said. “You need all levels of leadership for the university to move forward.”

Staff Council moving ahead with survey on working climate[5]

The University of Colorado Staff Council has begun to develop categories of questions for a survey on working climate. The goal is to gauge priorities of staff members concerning benefits so that the council may better represent staff interests to university administrators.

Council members discussed the survey during their Dec. 17, 2015, teleconference.

The governance group wants to ensure that the survey will be manageable – not too long or too vague – for employees and that responses will provide useful data for potential future action by the council and the administration.

“We want to know what the preferred method of professional development is, and we want to get a good idea of different people’s experiences and how supported they are in development,” said Joanna Iturbe of CU-Boulder. For instance, she said, do employees have to pay for development out of pocket, or is it required for their jobs or is it optional, and do they have to take personal time off to participate.

“We know that it is inconsistent, so I want to get a really good idea of how inconsistent it is,” Iturbe said. She also said the survey should assess priorities of staff to help determine what is feasible financially.

Phil Petty of CU Denver l Anschutz Medical Campus reiterated the importance of asking the right questions. He said that instead of university officials trying to keep the university on par with “peer” institutions, they should try to keep CU at the forefront. “It’s (council’s) to push that. If (administrators) don’t hear from us, they won’t make changes.”

Faculty Council also is working on a proposal that would revamp the tuition benefit, which currently is different for all campuses, but Thomas reminded council that faculty members likely use the benefit differently than staff members.

Also during the meeting:
Council approved the appointment of Gaylynne von der Nuell of CU-Boulder to the office of secretary. Kay Miller

stepped down from the post in December. Tara Dressler of CU system inquired about the status of notifying system administration employees who work on the other campuses about events. Some campuses have incorporated specific system administration employee email addresses into their distribution lists to ensure that the employees whose work is not located on their home campus are notified of employee events. Dressler said she has heard from some employees that they are not being updated about events or included in invitation lists. Council members representing each campus will make inquiries about the status of measures being used to include these employees in campus activities. Denise Thomas, council chair, asked campus representatives to determine the number of people who will participate in "legislative day" later this year. Each year, campus representatives visit the Colorado Legislature where they can watch the proceedings, speak with representatives, and learn about new or potential legislation and how it will affect the university specifically or higher education in general.

## One new policy, two policy changes in place for 2016[6]

The Office of Policy and Efficiency (OPE) has announced changes to administrative policy statements (APSs) from the academic affairs and administrative/general functional areas:
Revisions 1016[7] - Procedures for Allocating Sponsored Project Funding on More than One Campus 2025[8] - University Brand Identity and Logo Usage (Previously, University Brand Identity and Trademarks) New 2026[9] - University Trademarks, Trade Names and Service Marks
These changes, presented at the Dec. 10 TEAM meeting and approved by President Bruce Benson, took effect on Jan. 1, 2016.

For more detailed information, go to https://www.cu.edu/ope/policy/aps-changes[10].

For additional information on system policies, go to: http://www.cu.edu/ope[11].

## Payroll issue affects 350[12]

CU's December payroll run left more than 350 CU employees without complete paychecks, but the issue was largely attributed to a combination of system functionality and unfamiliarity on the part of some staff who submit time into the recently upgraded payroll system, according to CU human resources officials.

About 19,000 employees are paid in a typical payroll run. While the number of those affected was small – about 200 employees did not receive any pay, while the remainder did not receive overtime, shift differentials or other additional pay – and the majority of checks each were less than $1,000 (mostly to working retirees and temporary employees), Vice President for Employee Services and Information Kathy Nesbitt said it is a significant issue for payroll staff, who are fully engaged.

"We know that getting people paid is the most important thing we do. We have apologized to those affected and gotten everyone paid," Nesbitt said. "We are working with employees to address any follow-up issues such as automatic payments or late charges."

The majority of those affected were on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, although employees on each campus and at system administration also were involved.

The upgrade to the payroll system that is part of the Elevate project was extensively tested before the actual payroll runs and worked as designed. Still, Nesbitt said the issue provides an opportunity to more fully examine not only how the payroll system – and its technical and human components – operates, but also how payroll staff respond to concerned employees. Staff received a high volume of concerned calls on the day before the New Year's break.

"We are going to use this to improve our services, our response time and our system," Nesbitt said. "It doesn't matter

that it affected only a small number of people. One is too many."

UCCS recognizes lifetime donors at dinner[13]

Philanthropy at work: Valerie Brown[14]

Takács Quartet lands fifth Grammy nomination[15]

A thematically diverse and technically challenging collection of Dmitri Shostakovich pieces has garnered the College of Music's resident chamber ensemble its fifth Grammy nomination. The Takács Quartet's album "Shostakovich: Piano Quintet and String Quartet No. 2," recorded with longtime collaborator, pianist Marc-André Hamelin, was nominated for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance.

Gazette editor joins UCCS as communication professional[16]

A veteran, award-winning journalist will join the staff of University Communications and Media Relations Jan. 19. Joanna Bean, editor of the Colorado Springs Gazette, was named assistant director Jan. 4 following a national search. Bean will manage UCCS social media and support internal communication and media relations efforts in coordination with Tom Hutton, executive director, University Communications and Media Relations.

In memoriam: Robert L. Linn[17]

Robert L. Linn was a true giant in the field of educational measurement. "In the 90-year history of the field there has been no comparable eminence save E. F. Lindquist and R. W. Tyler." They started innovative measurement activities, "but their scholarly, academic production was skimpy compared with Linn's." This assessment was written in 1995 by Lee J. Cronbach, himself the only other contender to be named in such esteemed company.

Flaig named to new clinical research post[18]

**Tom Flaig,** M.D., associate professor in the Department of Medicine's Division of Medical Oncology, has been named the inaugural UCHealth and University of Colorado chief clinical research officer and associate dean for clinical research, effective January 2016. In this role, Flaig will lead efforts to provide an efficient and attractive environment for conducting research while ensuring compliance with federal and state regulatory requirements. The ultimate goal is to create the infrastructure, processes, informatics and analytics that enable the CU and UCHealth to be leaders among

academic health systems from the perspective of investigators as well as sponsors.

Brodsky honored for research assistance[19]

**Kelley Brodsky**, a member of the Department of Anesthesiology, has received the Steven Fadul Award, which honors contributions of outstanding professional research assistants and staff in comparable positions in the School of Medicine. Brodsky joined the department in 2008 after working for many years in the Department of Medicine's endocrinology and gastroenterology divisions. One of her nominators noted that Brodsky had volunteered to take on a lab project that many colleagues felt "would fall by the wayside." The nominator said perseverance serves "as a teaching example for my trainees."

Four from Department of Pediatrics receive career awards[20]

Career Teaching Scholars awards recently were handed out to several recipients who have made outstanding contributions to pediatric education throughout their careers. Those who received the awards, given each year by the Department of Pediatrics, were **Jerry Buckley, M.D.**, associate clinical professor emeritus of pediatrics; **Susan Pharo, M.D.**, clinical instructor of pediatrics; **Adam Rosenberg, M.D.**, professor of pediatrics; and **Ron Sokol, M.D.**, professor of pediatrics and director of the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute.

Havlick publishes book on landscape restoration[21]

David Havlick, associate professor, Geography and Environmental Studies Department, recently edited "Restoring Layered Landscapes: History, Ecology and Culture."

Meyer to lead grain education course[22]

Nanna Meyer, associate professor, Department of Health Sciences, Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, will join with leading experts to present Grain School Jan. 15-17 on campus.

CU in Focus: Price of Higher Education - cost contributors and financial assistance[23]

Todd Saliman, vice president and chief financial officer, CU System will provide insight to student financial assistance at the CU campuses, how tuition can be reduced relatively significantly based on income, need and merit. He will also take a close look at some of the factors contributing to rising costs at CU, such as the STEM disciplines. More details and registration coming soon.

**CU Advocates**[24]

Colorado schools are heeding the call for rapid ROI[25]

Judge dismisses prof's claims against CU-Boulder, campus settles for $25K[26]

Denver doctors visit Nepal[27]

Family Fun Day | Snow & Ice[28]
Jan. 16 and 17, 2016
**It's cold out!**

Join us for our Family Fun Day and explore the icy worlds of the North and South pole, and compare these ecosystems to our winters in Colorado.

**Activities include:**
Test how blubber keeps animals warm Check out animal artifacts And more!
**Special attraction:** On **Saturday, Jan. 16,** journey to the stars without leaving the museum, through an inflatable, portable planetarium! **Fiske Planetarium will be onsite with shows at 11 a.m., noon and 1 p.m.**

LEARN MORE**[29]**

New international employees must complete CU tax appointment[30]

U.S taxes can be complicated — especially for international employees who come to work for CU. That's where CU's international tax specialists come in.

If you're new to the university — and a non-U.S. resident — one of your first stops should be your required appointment with CU's international tax specialists. They're here to help you learn and document your U.S. tax status, which you'll need for determining how much money CU should deduct from your CU pay for tax purposes.

Unlike employees who are U.S. citizens, you can't fill out Form W-4 — the form used to tell the U.S. Internal Revenue Service your tax-deduction preferences — until you've had this important meeting. Similarly, if you manage international employees, please direct them to CU's international tax specialists for this purpose.

**Here's what you need to do:**
Schedule your international tax appointment online. Bring your passport, I-94 and immigration document (I-20, DS-2019, H1B approval; etc.) Come prepared to discuss your entire history of presence in the United States, including previous visits in different immigration statuses.
You **do not** need a Social Security number/card for these appointments.

For more information, check out Employee Services' international employee Web page[31].

Opening today, new garage to add 555 campus parking spots[32]

Service Excellence Awards: Staff Council seeking nominations[33]

The University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC) is seeking nominations of classified and university staff members for its annual Service Excellence Awards[34], which honor outstanding volunteer service to the university and to community, civic and professional organizations.

The awards will be presented to one individual from each campus and system administration during the All Staff Council Conference on April 8 in Colorado Springs. Each of the recipients receives the award, a plaque commemorating the event and a $1,000 prize.

Any active classified staff or university staff employee is eligible to receive the award, and nominations will be accepted from any staff, faculty, student or administrator within the university. Active employees of the university at the time of the nomination, excluding the current members of UCSC, are eligible to receive the award.

Nominees will be judged in two, equally weighted areas: service to home campus or the university, including participation in campus programs or committees; and service to community, including participation in a community group or working to address a social issue. Activities that are part of an employee's job description or assigned duties should not be included in the nomination.

The nomination process has been streamlined this year and must be completed electronically. All nominations will be reviewed by UCSC members. Award recipients will be selected based on stated criteria. Any nominations that do not meet eligibility criteria will not be considered.

For complete nomination procedures and other information, and the electronic nomination form, visit the UCSC website at http://www.cu.edu/ucsc/ucsc-service-excellence-award[34].

All nominations must be received electronically by 11:59 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29.

CU-Boulder conference to explore gender, media and religion[35]

More than 70 speakers and presenters from around the world will be part of Media, Gender and Religion, a University of Colorado Boulder conference to be held Jan. 7-10. Read more>>[36]

**Links**
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/christensen-leadership-lifestyle[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/christensen.jpg[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-christensen-wins-excellence-leadership-award[4] http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/career-advancement-learning/leadership/elp[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/staff-council-moving-ahead-survey-working-climate[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/one-new-policy-two-policy-changes-place-2016[7] http://www.cu.edu/ope/policy/aps-1016-procedures-allocating-sponsored-project-funding-more-one-campus[8]

http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/2025[9] http://www.cu.edu/sites/default/files/2026Draft.pdf[10] https://www.cu.edu/ope/policy/aps-changes[11] http://www.cu.edu/ope[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/payroll-issue-affects-350[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-recognizes-lifetime-donors-dinner[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/philanthropy-work-valerie-brown[15] https://connections.cu.edu/people/tak-cs-quartet-lands-fifth-grammy-nomination[16] https://connections.cu.edu/people/gazette-editor-joins-uccs-communication-professional[17] https://connections.cu.edu/people/memoriam-robert-l-linn[18] https://connections.cu.edu/people/flaig-named-new-clinical-research-post[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/brodsky-honored-research-assistance[20] https://connections.cu.edu/people/four-department-pediatrics-receive-career-awards[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/havlick-publishes-book-landscape-restoration[22] https://connections.cu.edu/people/meyer-lead-grain-education-course[23] https://connections.cu.edu/events/cu-scoop-todd-saliman-vp-and-chief-financial-officer-cu-system-1[24] http://www.cu.edu/cuadvocates[25] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/colorado-schools-are-heeding-call-rapid-roi[26] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/judge-dismisses-profs-claims-against-cu-boulder-campus-settles-25k[27] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/denver-doctors-visit-nepal[28] https://connections.cu.edu/events/family-fun-day-snow-ice-0[29] http://southdenver.cu.edu/events/event/family-fun-day-snow-ice-january/[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-international-employees-must-complete-cu-tax-appointment[31] https://www.cu.edu/node/2185/[32] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/opening-today-new-garage-add-555-campus-parking-spots[33] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/service-excellence-awards-staff-council-seeking-nominations[34] http://www.cu.edu/ucsc/ucsc-service-excellence-award[35] https://connections.cu.edu/events/cu-boulder-conference-explore-gender-media-and-religion[36] http://www.colorado.edu/news/features/cu-boulder-conference-explore-gender-media-and-religion-jan-7-10