A taste for chemistry[1]

Agnessa Vartanova named associate vice president of Internal Audit for University of Colorado[2]

Note: An earlier version of this story included an incorrect title. The correct title is associate vice president of Internal Audit.

The University of Colorado Board of Regents on Wednesday named Agnessa Vartanova associate vice president of Internal Audit.

The board voted on the appointment during a special meeting, which was held remotely. A video recording of the meeting is posted here[3].

Vartanova comes to CU from DaVita Inc., a Fortune 500 company in Colorado, where she was director of enterprise risk services. Previously, she served in corporate leadership positions at TTEC Holdings Inc. and Ball Corporation, also a Colorado-based Fortune 500 company, where her roles included financial planning and analysis manager, and internal audit director for corporate and global packaging.

“Agnessa Vartanova brings considerable experience and expertise to this important position at CU,” said Board of Regents Chairman Glen Gallegos. “She has a track record of leadership at some of Colorado’s leading companies and she will be a wonderful addition to the CU team.”

The associate vice president of Internal Audit reports directly to the Board of Regents and the Regents Audit Committee.

Vartanova earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from the University of Wyoming, and a professional graduate certificate in corporate sustainability and innovation from the Harvard Extension School.

She takes over for Kevin Sisemore, who served in the role since 2013 and recently retired from CU.

“It is my honor and privilege to join the Internal Audit team at the University of Colorado,” Vartanova said. “I look forward to serving this distinguished institution and supporting the Board of Regents and system administration in the achievement of their strategic goals and mission.”

The Department of Internal Audit[4] provides independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the university’s operations. It helps the university accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to the evaluation and improvement of university processes related to university-wide risk management, control and governance.

Lawmakers won’t take up budget, higher ed legislation until February[5]
[6]

State lawmakers will convene at the Capitol for the 2021 legislative session on Wednesday, but only briefly. The business of the Legislature – including determining state funding for CU and higher education across the state – won’t get underway until Feb. 16, a delay brought on by the pandemic.

Specifics of the tentative schedule are noted in a joint release[7] from the Colorado General Assembly.

The pandemic and limits on large gatherings also caused delays in the 2020 legislative session. At that time, the Colorado Supreme Court agreed with the General Assembly's position that Joint Rule 44 allows the Legislature to pause its work during a declared public health emergency and return at a later date without those days during the recess counting toward the 120-day session limit. By law, the Legislature must conclude its business by June 30.

As the session approaches, CU's Office of Government Relations is anticipating some key pieces of higher education legislation. Details are available at the office's newsletter website[8].

ACT/SAT Test Optional. The General Assembly last year passed HB20-1407[9], temporarily allowing Colorado's public institutions of higher education to waive test scores as a metric to entry for the high school graduating class of 2021. This bill is a permanent extension of that legislation, giving higher education governing bodies more flexibility in the admissions metrics used to admit students, which may or may not include test scores.

In-state Tuition for American Indian Students. CU's Board of Regents in November passed a resolution[10] to work with the Legislature during the 2021 session to request permission for institutions of higher education to offer in-state tuition status to American Indian students whose tribal nations are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado.

A Peer Assistance Confidentiality Fix. During the process of selecting a vendor to provide peer assistance help for physicians, physician assistants, residents and medical students, the state Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) inserted a provision that mandated that participating vendors waive confidentiality to get help for stress, burnout, substance abuse issues, physical and mental health problems. DORA awarded the contract to a vendor that agreed to require the waiver. The medical community, including the CU School of Medicine faculty and student leadership, objected to this approach. It is anticipated that legislation to require confidential treatment and peer support will be introduced in January.

Phase I: Governor's Behavioral Health Task Force Report. The Behavioral Health Task Force[11], established by Gov. Jared Polis in April 2019, met from July 2019 through August 2020 to produce a comprehensive report addressing the governor's charge to create a Colorado Behavioral Health System that works for every Coloradan. The blueprint, "Behavioral Health in Colorado: Putting People First - A Blueprint for Reform[12]," released in September 2020, identified almost 150 recommendations to reform the state's system. The CU Anschutz Medical Campus Farley Health Policy Center[13] provided valuable support for the task force. C. Neil Epperson, M.D., chair of the Department of Psychiatry of the CU School of Medicine, was one of 25 members of the task force, which issued its recommendations in three phases. Legislation implementing Phase One is expected.

State budget. Gov. Polis submitted his FY 2021-22 budget request[14] on Nov. 2. It included a $494 million restoration of state funding to fill the gap left by the one-time 58% state funding cut for higher education. This would return higher education funding to FY 2019-20 levels beginning in FY 2021-22. The funding restoration is critical because CU still faces significant budgetary challenges as a result of COVID-19, even after federal CARES Act relief.

Regents announce slate of 2021 honorees[15]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents has announced its selection of this year's recipients of Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Service Awards and University Medals.

Upon the recommendation of the board's Awards Committee, the regents in November approved the 2021 nominees. Each recipient has been invited to attend a campus commencement ceremony to accept an award; the dates and locations are to be announced.

The 2021 recipients are:
Honorary Degrees

Ceal Barry (Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, CU Boulder)
Ceal Barry was a groundbreaking women's basketball coach and athletic department administrator at CU Boulder. She spent 37-plus years in the CU Boulder athletic department, the first 22 as head women's basketball coach and the final 15 as an administrator in several important capacities. Her teams brought positive national exposure to the University of Colorado. She geared her work in administration toward improving the experience for the student athlete. She is a member of three Halls of Fame: Colorado Sports, CU Athletics and Women's Basketball.
Lauren Casteel (Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, CU Denver)
Lauren Casteel's outstanding contributions in public service and philanthropy are well-known throughout the state. She has been credited with changing the face of Colorado's nonprofit community. She created the Nonprofit Inclusiveness Project, which earned the national Council of Foundations' Critical Impact Award (2009). Her asset-based, inclusive approach at the Women's Foundation respects all voices and drives outcomes that benefit all women and families. She has dedicated her life to excellence and inclusivity in philanthropy and is considered a national leader.
Lyda Ludeman (Doctor of Science, honoris causa, CU Anschutz)
Lyda Ludeman is a longtime supporter of the Center for Women's Health Research (CWHR). She became involved with CWHR after joining the Denver Chapter of the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS), an all-volunteer group of women who raise money for scientific scholarships at the University of Colorado, Colorado State University and the Colorado School of Mines. She started a seed grant endowment at the CWHR supporting junior researchers, a passion of hers. Her partnership promises to transform the health and well-being of women and their families.
Cleo Parker Robinson (Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, CU Boulder)
Cleo Parker Robinson is the world-renowned founder and artistic director of Cleo Parker Robinson Dance (CPRD), now in its 50th anniversary season. She is a cultural ambassador who brought her vision of "dance as a universal language" across the globe. Her work is crucial for remembering dance histories that, without artists and somatic archivists like her, could be forgotten. She has collaborated with numerous symphonies, theatrical and opera companies, and acclaimed artists. CPRD has performed at prestigious venues and festivals throughout the world. She has received many awards and recognitions including the CU Regents Distinguished Service Award in 1988.
Distinguished Service Awards
Amy Davis (posthumous, CU Anschutz)
Amy Davis was a well-known philanthropist who supported a number of causes in Colorado and Wyoming, including research and patient care at CU. She created the Courtenay C. and Lucy Patten Davis Foundation after her father's death in 1992. The Patten-Davis Foundation created five endowed chairs and provided multiple research funds to support faculty at the CU Cancer Center and the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes at CU Anschutz. Amy battled melanoma and was treated by Dr. William Robinson at the CU melanoma clinic, which has fueled support for melanoma research by the Patten-Davis Foundation.
Charles Sisk (CU Boulder)
Charles Sisk is a double Buff (undergraduate in 1967, graduate CU Law in 1969) and longtime public servant who dedicated his career to the state of Colorado. He has served as deputy district attorney in Boulder, Boulder County public administrator, Louisville City Council member and mayor, and RTD board member and chair. He has always had a passion for helping his community and is well-known across Colorado as a kind, generous and dedicated public servant. In 2019, he retired from public office. University Medals
Rick Gardner (CU Denver)
Rick Gardner has devoted much of his life to CU Denver through his teaching, expertise and philanthropy. He is a pioneer in the field of cognitive psychology with a celebrated 52-year career as a psychology professor. He has been giving philanthropically to CU Denver since 1992, primarily supporting liberal arts initiatives and financial aid, as well as investing in CU Denver programs in the psychology department. After his retirement in 2007, Rick and his wife of 50 years, Betty Ann, established the Gardner Doctoral Fellowship to support Ph.D. students in the Clinical Health Psychology program.
Michael Leeds (CU Boulder)
Michael Leeds provided philanthropic support to name the Leeds School of Business. He improved the academic profile of the Leeds student body through his transformational investment. He made social responsibility and ethics a core part of the business curriculum. He helped build the school's reputation as a thought and education leader in social responsibility and ethics, as well as sustainability and the environment.
Margaret Neville (CU Anschutz)
Margaret Neville dedicated her career to discovery at the cutting edge of science. She has 50 years of scientific

excellence and NIH funding, including a MERIT award. Upon her departure from the position, she endowed the Cobb Professorship in the Department of Ob/Gyn (2010) to be held by the chief of the Division of Reproductive Sciences. She inspired the careers of countless faculty members of the University of Colorado School of Medicine and provided an endowment to assure the future success of faculty.

Rebecca Roser (CU Boulder)

Rebecca Roser is a longtime, dedicated supporter of the University of Colorado Boulder. She distinguished herself through service and philanthropy as a tireless advocate and champion of CU and, in particular, the College of Music. She served CU in many ways including as a foundation trustee, campaign chair of the “music+” campaign, chair of the College of Music Advisory Board, co-chair of the ATLAS advisory board and as a member of the CU Health Sciences Cancer Center and Cancer Fund Board. Along with her late husband, Jim, she provided support for the Roser ATLAS Center and the Rebecca Roser Keyboard Department in the College of Music.

Lola and Rob Salazar (CU Denver)

The Salazar Family Foundation has awarded more than $20 million since it was established as a supporting organization in 1999. In 2017, the Salazar Family Foundation pledged its largest single donation to support CU Denver’s first named building, the Lola and Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center. The foundation has consistently supported the Denver Public Schools Foundation, Latin American Educational Foundation, Metropolitan State University of Denver and CU Denver. In 2019, Lola and Rob Salazar were honored with the Outstanding Philanthropist Award for National Philanthropy Day by the Association for Fundraising Professionals Colorado Chapter.

Policy changes to Tuition Assistance Benefit approved; spring applications now open[16]
[17]

Looking to go back to school? University of Colorado Tuition Assistance applications are now open; apply by Feb. 3 for the Spring 2021 semester.

(Note: The Office of Policy and Efficiency (OPE) recently announced changes to APS 5024-Tuition Assistance Benefit, which took effect Jan 1, 2021. The changes were reviewed by the campus chancellors and approved by President Mark Kennedy on Dec. 15, 2020. For more detailed information, go to https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/latest-changes[18]. For additional information on systemwide APSs, go to: http://www.cu.edu/ope[19].)

Employees who qualify for the Tuition Assistance Benefit[20] can receive up to nine credits waived for eligible courses each academic year (fall through summer). Eligible faculty and staff can use the benefit themselves or transfer it to a dependent for the academic.

Dependents, such as spouses or children, have several options[20] to use the benefit based on where they will attend classes.

This semester, employee course registration requirements have changed. Employee taking courses at UCCS may now register seven days prior to the first day of class. Employees taking courses at CU Boulder can register on the first day of the semester. Employees taking courses at CU Denver and CU Anschutz must enroll on the first day of each individual course.

Eligible faculty and staff can submit their applications through the employee portal[21] to start saving money on tuition. An employee must apply on behalf of any dependent(s) using the benefit.

Access the application:
Log into the employee portal[21]. Open the CU Resources dropdown menu and select **Forms.** Click the **Career Advancement** tile, then click the **Tuition Assistance Application** tile.
View deadlines by campus of registration:
CU Boulder[22]CU Colorado Springs[23]CU Denver and CU Anschutz[24]
See what people are saying about Tuition Assistance

Check out pages 11-14 of the Employee Services Impact Report[25], where fellow CU employees share their

experiences using the Tuition Assistance Benefit for themselves or their dependents.

‘Onward’: Impact report highlights giving to CU as a force of good[26]
[27]

The CU system Office of Advancement is proud to share its annual Impact Report to Donors[28]. Each year, the online report features financials information and stories of philanthropic impact across CU’s four campuses.

The theme of this year’s report is “Onward” because despite the challenges before us, CU continues to deliver on its mission to improve lives on our campuses, in our communities and around the world. Despite the pandemic, CU had one of its best years to date for donor support, raising $455.9 million.

The report also features inspiring stories about:
Medical professionals on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic who received emergency relief funding to help pay for rent, child care and groceries. Scholars working to improve equity and justice in our education, health care and legal systems. Students across our four campuses who found peace of mind, job skills or a sense of belonging, thanks to scholarships. Colorado communities that partner with CU to support the mental and physical well-being of residents.
See the 2020 report at essential.cu.edu/impact-reports/onward[28].

Every year, the Impact Report to Donors is a collaborative effort among partners across CU’s four campuses, the CU Foundation and the CU system. Thank you to all who contributed to this year’s publication.

We invite all CU employees to share links to the stories[29] in your communications channels and with your constituents, as well as add a link to the report to your email signature[30].

Boettcher Early Career Investigator Application 2021 deadline nears[31]
[32]

Applications for the 2021 Boettcher Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards[33] program will be due to the campus grants offices according to the following campus-specific instructions:
University of Colorado Boulder[34]University of Colorado Colorado Springs[35]University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus[36]
The Boettcher Foundation established the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards program, which will provide up to five grants of $235,000 each covering up to three years of research activity, to provide independent research opportunities to promising and talented early career investigators. Awardees will carry the title of Boettcher Investigator in acknowledgement of the prestigious award.

Boettcher Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards[37] from Boettcher Foundation[38] on Vimeo[39].

Since the first awards granted in July 2010, the Boettcher Foundation has awarded CU’s 49 current Boettcher Investigators[40] more than $11.3 million.

Eligible faculty researchers from all four CU campuses are encouraged to apply. For purposes of this program, an eligible early career investigator (ECI):
Is within four years of appointment to their career-track academic position (i.e., whose career-track appointments began no earlier than Jan. 1, 2016); Has not previously received a major independent research award; Has received a terminal degree or completed their medical residency within the 10 years preceding the application (i.e., on or after January 1, 2010); and Is either a U.S. Citizen or a Permanent Resident.
For more details, go to: http://www.cu.edu/bfww/eligibility[41]

Do not contact the Boettcher Foundation directly.

Chancellor DiStefano tests positive for COVID-19, has mild symptoms [42]

Whether it's 2020 or Baby Shark: Study offers clues on how to stop thinking about it [43]

7 Questions with Jay Coakley, author of 'Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies' [44]

Weed-chomping animals in lab coats? Weaver's goats assist in urban farm research[45]

COVID-19 and public health: Modeling, silver linings and 'Colorado's Dr. Fauci' [46]

Pediatrician develops tool to improve care for children with severe neurological impairments [47]

CU Boulder to advance resolutions to rename two buildings to honor Lucile Berkeley Buchanan, Albert and Vera Ramírez [48]

Bellin named interim vice chancellor for advancement at CU Boulder [49]

Baduashvili, who cares for COVID patients, participates in monoclonal antibody clinical trial [50]

Links

[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/taste-chemistry[2] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/agnessa-vartanova-named-associate-vice-president-internal-audit-university-colorado[3] https://cu.new.swagit.com/videos/111209[4] https://www.cu.edu/internalaudit%20[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/lawmakers-won-t-take-budget-higher-ed-legislation-until-february[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/leg-preview_top.jpg[7] https://www.cohousedems.com/joint-release-general-assembly-delays-2021-session-%ef%bb%bf/[8] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations[9] https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb20-1407[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-pursue-state-tuition-status-indigenous-peoples[11] https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/behavioral-health-reform[12] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lWVIG3IHPM8OUgVFgLuqWFn8waqgUseZ/view[13] https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/farleyhealthpolicycenter[14] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XWJacwoc0wvx6aqzDODe6kAsj98q6oqJ/view[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-announce-slate-2021-honorees[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/policy-changes-tuition-assistance-benefit-approved-spring-applications-now-open[17] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/tuitioin_benefit_top.jpg[18] https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/latest-changes[19] http://www.cu.edu/ope[20] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/dependent-options[21] https://my.cu.edu/[22] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/cu-boulder[23] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/uccs[24] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/cu-denveranschutz[25] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/impact-report[26] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/onward-impact-report-highlights-giving-cu-force-good[27] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/adv_onward_top.jpg[28] https://essential.cu.edu/impact-reports/onward[29] https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eov24zvkjfiqxuu/AAAN7heePTMh1Lqj5O0pg_Y-a?dl=0[30] https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ggpumkolsbxakk2/AADsxt1b5Mrps6NqYKyz9rH_a?dl=0[31] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/boettcher-early-career-investigator-application-2021-deadline-nears[32] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/bfww_page.jpg[33] http://www.cu.edu/bfww[34] https://www.cu.edu/doc/bfww-applicantinstructions-cu-boulder.pdf[35] https://www.cu.edu/doc/bfww-applicantinstructions-uccs.pdf[36] https://www.cu.edu/doc/bfww-applicantinstructions-cu-denver-amc.pdf[37] https://vimeo.com/189663981[38] https://vimeo.com/boettcherfoundation[39] https://vimeo.com[40] https://www.cu.edu/bfww/cu-investigators[41] http://www.cu.edu/bfww/eligibility[42] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/chancellor-distefano-tests-positive-covid-19-has-mild-symptoms[43] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/whether-it-s-2020-or-baby-shark-study-offers-clues-how-stop-thinking-about-it[44] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/7-questions-jay-coakley-author-sports-society-issues-and-controversies[45] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/weed-chomping-animals-lab-coats-weaver-s-goats-assist-urban-farm-research[46] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/covid-19-and-public-health-modeling-silver-linings-and-colorado-s-dr-fauci[47] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/pediatrician-develops-tool-improve-care-children-severe-neurological-impairments[48] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-boulder-advance-resolutions-rename-two-buildings-honor-lucile-berkeley-buchanan-albert-and[49] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bellin-named-interim-vice-chancellor-advancement-cu-boulder[50] https://connections.cu.edu/people/baduashvili-who-cares-covid-patients-participates-monoclonal-antibody-clinical-trial