Unboxing technology's role in diversity, equity and inclusion[1]
[2]

For more than 20 years, the University of Colorado has offered the COLTT conference[3], focused on teaching and learning with technology to participants across the state and beyond. COLTT (Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology) has a history of outstanding content and speakers, and this year is no different.

This year's Aug. 5-6 conference will be virtual with focus on the intersection of technology with diversity, equity and inclusion. Click here to register to attend[4].

"The Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology conference is an excellent way for educators to not only learn valuable information about teaching with technology, but also challenges the way they think about doing so," said CU President Mark Kennedy. "Today's pandemic world magnifies the need for the effective use of technology in teaching and learning, so COLTT will be particularly valuable this year."

Here is a preview of what you can expect at COLTT 2020.
[5]

Praveen Shanbhag, Founder and CEO of NameCoach, is participating in the Aug. 5 panel discussion, You Matter. You Belong: A conversation with diversity and inclusion experts. Systemic racism and the events that have unfolded across America over the past few months serve as an urgent reminder of the continued change needed in our society and its institutions. As members of the ed-tech community, it is crucial that we are attuned to the racial injustices in a larger sense and are aware that this issue is present in every aspect of our work in higher education. The panel will be a conversation about creating a culture of diversity and inclusion and taking actionable steps toward equality for all.

NameCoach[6] is a tech company that aims to solve the common problem of name mispronunciation and gender pronoun communication in as many critical settings as possible. It provides audio name pronunciations embedded online to easily learn and remember how to say them.

Here's a Q&A with Praveen Shanbhag.

1. The NameCoach tool provides curated audio name pronunciations in the tools you use, to promote respect, inclusion and belonging in every interaction. Can you share its origin story?

NameCoach started as a passion project because my sister had her name butchered at her undergrad commencement ceremony. It was a very alienating experience for her and our family and I knew that she/us were not the only ones that experienced this feeling. This is something that happens on a daily basis and impacts a majority of us. We started in the commencement space, but quickly expanded our offerings to focus on belonging and community for all students/faculty/staff through integrations in enrollment services, advisory services, LMS, SIS, all the way to alumni/advancement. Today we have hundreds of university partners all over the world.

2. What demographics benefit most from the use of accurate name pronunciation software?

We've noticed that NameCoach supports all demographics. It helps create a sense of belonging from Day One at the university which ultimately helps all students. A recent survey from Salesforce shows that 75% of students would choose their university based on a sense of belonging. If a student feels like they belong, they are more likely to stay in school and have lower stress and anxiety levels. It's sometimes thought that lots of names are 'easy' enough for anyone to know how to say. But we're always surprised at how many people get their names mispronounced and tell us their stories – and more importantly, we can't assume that everyone will have familiarity with how you say your name in an increasingly diverse world. Everyone in a school community benefits from helping others say their name, and learning how to say others' names.

3. You will be on the panel for the COLTT session, You Matter. You Belong: A conversation with diversity and inclusion experts. Can you give us a sneak peek at what you hope to be able to share?

I hope to be able to share our company view on how a sense of belonging can truly impact someone's life.

There is a great quote from an article someone at Michigan Tech wrote that I think shows just how impactful belonging is in Higher Ed: "Learning and correctly pronouncing names is challenging, but it's one of the best things an instructor can do (and encourage students to do) to promote community in a class. There's evidence that learning names can reduce cheating, increase academic performance, and aid in classroom management."

We need to stop spending so much time focusing on the mistakes students might make, and instead make them feel supported and part of a community, to keep them more engaged and ultimately perform better. We need students to know they belong to keep them in school and promote the importance of education and the positive impact they can have on this world. We need to model values to them that they can take into the world and exemplify so that societal change is sustained into the next generation. What we do is just a small part of that, but I'd like to share our views on the larger picture.

4. How has the recent surge in support and activity regarding the Black Live Matter movement impacted your business and services provided?

I recently wrote a blog post [7]that I shared with my team that talks about my view on social injustice and systemic racism in this country. I want to highlight that, as an organization, our core purpose has always been to enable respect, inclusion and belonging, in just one way among many. I believe that we must each manifest these values and model them for others, because they are critical to sustain a dignified, diverse and free society. We don't want to use this time to highlight what we are doing as a company, rather use this platform to stand up for what we believe in and do what is right for the people in this world. We have hosted webinars, engaged in discussions and provided thought leadership around the subject that I hope helps make a difference in creating lasting change.

5. What are your goals for NameCoach and what do you hope is its impact on society?

I've always said, from Day One, that I hope NameCoach becomes a ubiquitous tool that you will see everywhere. There shouldn't be time that someone feels isolated or alienated because you can't pronounce their name or properly identify their gender. Everyone should feel that they belong on this earth, at our schools, at their jobs, because they do.

We are working on new integrations and partnerships that allow for this to one day come true. We now have the world's largest and most accurate name pronunciation database and recommendation algorithm that can be plugged into any system to ensure all names are pronounced properly.

We will soon be releasing a state-of-the-art, text-to-phonetic engine for names to help with pronunciations for the hearing-impaired, and to give voices to those who may not want to or cannot use their own voice, for any number of reasons. With tools like these integrated into as many institutions as possible, from K-12 to higher ed to the workplace, we are working toward our goal of a universal belonging tool for all!

Engaging students by 'unboxing and unpacking pedagogy'
[8]

Clinical Assistant Professor **Dennis Debay** and Senior Instructor **Andrea Laser**, both with the School of Education and Human Development at CU Denver, are facilitating a session on the second day of the conference, Aug. 6. Unboxing and Unpacking Pedagogy: (Re)humanizing online learning by mail, will unbox and unpack a fun and innovative way to engage students and build community in online spaces. In this session, attendees will hear how sending packages in the mail has the potential to build connections across geographical distance.
[9]

Here is a Q&A with Dennis Debay and Andrea Laser.

1. How can educational technology be used by higher education faculty, staff and leadership to improve equity and justice for urban and underrepresented students at their institutions?

Educational technology alone does not increase equity and justice for its users – in fact, it has the potential to do the opposite by creating divides and inequitable access to underrepresented students. The content and format of online course design is critical to the work of equity and justice as we strive to build meaningful learning communities. Meaningful teaching in the online world requires unique practices that include working to increase connectedness and belonging for our students.

2. Over the last two semesters, you and your colleagues have been experimenting with sending packages in the mail to students who are engaged in online courses. How has this helped with community building and student success?
[10]

Part of the thinking behind "Unboxing Pedagogy" is actually thinking beyond high-tech; moving to the idea of taking something very "analog" and traditional in some senses, and weaving it into an online course as a way to build community and bridges between the online and in person world. We wanted to focus on different ways of interaction to make connections and build community. The idea was that we would send boxes of materials to students in the mail and in return, students would co-create assignments, activities, even pieces as a group that required some sort of engagement.

To play with this idea, last year, the two of us, supported through ThinqStudio[11], co-facilitated a group of colleagues who were interested in playing in this space. We each focused on different ways of how we might design these experiences – with the common thread of something sent in the mail that required some sort of engagement. Some faculty handmade items at InWorks[12] relevant to their course content, others thought about ideas of chain letters, others considered a puzzle piece that aligned with a group – and students had to figure out which group they were in, while others invited students to send back a page that would eventually create a class book.

Ready to send our packages, COVID-19 shut the project down – as we were unsure at that time about the risk of sending packages in the mail. Equipped with what we now know about the relatively low risk of mail, we intend to reboot in the fall, and attempt to pick up where we left off.

While we have much playing and investigating still to do, what we did learn is that faculty seemed re-energized and invigorated in their teaching – as they had the opportunity to think really creatively about their projects.

3. What is the biggest challenge facing underrepresented students from being able to pursue an advanced degree both nationally and in Colorado?

There are several barriers that could be cited: time, money, unfamiliar processes, retention after they enroll – as faculty, it's important to continue to advocate for increased equity on all levels. We also realize that the place that we likely have the most influence is how we engage students in course design that is meaningful, relevant, and works to build a community of learners that they can trust and receive support from.

If we are successful in designing these spaces, it reinforces to students that they are supported, are not alone through the process of higher education, that they are, in fact, a vital part of a community. A sense of community is so important to the success and well-being of our college students. The students that feel a sense of community in the classroom are more likely to attend class, and more likely to participate in the learning environments in class. Each of these realities is especially evident among students in underserved populations.

4. What are the most critical changes that we must make to face the future effectively?

The landscape of higher education is changing and our institution needs to change with it. Often, we as instructors may have temporary experiences with groups of students each semester. However, these brief moments have the power to change lives.

As facilitators in a classroom (either in-person or online), we are the ones who decide the impact of our semester-long relationships. We decide to what degree we will work toward student engagement, community building and

transformation within our courses. This takes more than regurgitating the most compelling content, and it goes beyond collaborative pedagogical practices. As we move further into pedagogies that involve some high-tech solutions, we need to stay grounded in the fact that it is not the technology that needs to be a focus, however, the conversations, the dialogue between faculty and students.

Register now for COLTT 2020[4]

Please refer to the full schedule[13] for more details on COLTT 2020. COLTT's $25 registration fee goes directly toward covering this year's expenses. Registration scholarships are available by application for those unable to pay the fee. Registrants also may choose the Pony Up rate of $135, funds from which will help cover costs in 2020 and sustain COLTT into the future.

Staff Council discusses fall return to campus with President Kennedy[14]

With fall's return to campus approaching, CU President Mark Kennedy joined the July 16 meeting of the University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC) to provide an update and take questions from council members.
[15]

"I appreciate the good work you do," Kennedy said during the meeting, which was held remotely via Zoom. CU staff has remained efficient and productive during the pandemic, he said, "and we thank you for your extra effort."

As faculty and students ready to return to the four campuses next month, Kennedy acknowledged that "there's clearly going to need to be some degree of coming back to work" for many staff. Others, though, who in March moved to remote working for most or all of their responsibilities should expect to continue in that mode.

"To the extent you can deliver and be productive while working remotely, great," Kennedy said. "That's still the modus operandi."

When asked if remote working would remain in widespread use even after the pandemic has ended, Kennedy said such decisions will be made at the campus level.

"At 1800 Grant, I fully expect some of our employees post-pandemic will be working exclusively from home, while some will be splitting their time between home and office," Kennedy said. "There's not a resistance from the system toward the campuses exploring those options."

Kennedy said he expects work units will undergo facility usage studies, such as one taking place at 1800 Grant St. Office sharing and hoteling are likely to grow more common. Current budget pressures don't allow for efficiency-improving remodeling projects, which may eventually be feasible.

Kennedy provided an overview of back-to-fall preparations being made at the campuses, highlighting what the four chancellors presented to the Board of Regents[16] last week. Testing and tracing will be ongoing, and campuses are making arrangements to allow for isolation of students who must be quarantined.

"There have been and there will be positive (COVID-19) cases on the campuses," Kennedy said. "The only question is, if whatever happens grows beyond our ability to test, trace and isolate, would we need to move back to closing down campuses? We're hoping that isn't the case.

"We're in a far better position than we were at the start of the pandemic, but we recognize that only foolish people would make plans set in stone during this very turbulent time. We're prepared to adjust."

As for furloughs now under way across the system, Kennedy said uncertainty over enrollment and other coronavirus-related factors make it difficult to say whether furlough durations might be reduced or extended.

“Some of the full-time furloughs will likely be lifted in the weeks and months ahead,” he said.

Kenney also reviewed recent activity at the system and campus levels pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion. He said university leadership will more frequently report on the topic at meetings of the Board of Regents; in August, he’ll issue a compendium of activities, decisions and actions already taken as well as future goals. Diversity, equity and inclusion is one of four pillars of the president’s strategic planning process, which was paused at the onset of the pandemic but which is resuming presently.

Early details of CU Online initiative presented to university leadership[17]
[18]

The co-chairs of the University of Colorado’s online education initiative last week presented to the president and campus chancellors some of the early recommendations from the Online Accelerator Committee that are related to supporting growth in fully online academic programs in the systemwide CU Online effort.

Committee co-chairs Sheana Bull, interim senior faculty fellow for online learning, and Scot Chadwick, interim associate vice president for online learning, asked the president and four chancellors for feedback and decision-making guidance on the proposed operating model. The presentation outlined the projected distribution of services that would fall to the system Office of Digital Education (ODE) vs. the campus level.

“This represents collaboration, with the campuses and with the programs, and so it does reflect shared responsibility, shared cooperation and where the ownership lives,” Chadwick said. “It’s always a collaboration with the campuses and the programs on every single item that’s there.”

Chancellors Michelle Marks, CU Denver, and Venkat Reddy, UCCS, asked for more detail about the proposal – which covered functions including student success, enrollment, instructional design and delivery, technology, support and enablement, and marketing.

“What does it really mean? What part are you taking on? What is the campus?” Reddy asked.

“I have to see what the deal that you're offering is,” Marks said. “All of this seems absolutely terrific. And I’m sure that you have the bigger picture and I just don't have it yet.”

Chadwick agreed the current model does not provide necessary details, which are still being determined, but said the outline is an overview of information and input the working committees have gleaned from campus constituents.

CU President Mark Kennedy said the proposal was built around faculty input, and stressed the importance of faculty playing a leading role in driving the academic structures and standards, and the overall implementation and advancement of CU Online.

“When we say yes to this, we say ‘Yes, there’s the straw proposal that will hit the campuses when the faculty comes back,’ and we’ll have a chance to get dialogue and input from them,” Kennedy said. “This is affirming that our working groups have looked at this, the Online Accelerator Committee has looked at this, we’ve looked at this, and the collective of that pool believes that this is a strong proposal that we’re advancing for the campuses for further input.”

CU established an Online Accelerator Committee (OAC) in the 2019-20 academic year that comprises faculty, staff and administrators from all campuses and system. Its structure – which includes working groups in academics, finance, online services, IT and marketing/communications – was recommended by vendor EY-Parthenon. The firm began working with CU last fall to assess the university’s offerings and compare them against market demand and opportunity. It found that while CU has pockets of excellence in its online offerings, it also lags market leaders and would benefit from sharing services such as IT, student service and marketing.

The resulting systemwide initiative, dubbed All Four: CU Online, will maintain and support campus autonomy and innovation while optimizing efficiencies and building on CU capabilities. The university's goal is to more than double the number of online students served annually within five years.

The OAC is working toward recommending a structure to the president and chancellors for the systemwide effort. The recommendation is expected in October after engagement with faculty and other stakeholders.

Chadwick said the committee is scheduling time with the chancellors and their teams to dig into the specific questions and to conduct individual conversations.

"Give us the time to meet together, go into the details on this with you all individually, and then ensure that we're making the kind of progress and answering the questions that you all have," Chadwick said.

The initiative is not to be confused with systemwide online offerings that will be in market in fall 2020. Those 12 programs, recommended by campus chancellors and supported with marketing funding from the president, are meant to help gauge market demand, test enrollment strategies and expand ODE's role to serve all four campuses, rather than its previous work with just the Denver and Anschutz campuses.

July 16 CU Online presentation[19]
Coming up Here is the timeline for team reviews by each working group in the OAC.

Program portfolio
The process by which programs will be identified for the CU Online portfolio for fall 2021 and determining a process for assessing and evolving potential program duplication, Aug. 6

Processes for programs to be identified for the CU Online portfolio beyond fall 2021, Sept. 3

Operating model
Determining services that might be available for programs outside the portfolio, Aug. 6

Marketing Communications
Academic Working Group supported to enable channels for authentic faculty engagement and feedback; and recognizing and incorporating that faculty input, Sept. 6

Mapping a comprehensive and cohesive brand and marketing to support and grow online learning at CU, Oct. 1

Financial model
Potential pricing adjustment opportunities to be considered and whether fully online programs will be housed within main campus or auxiliary, Aug. 6

The flow of funds between ODE and campuses for programs within the portfolio and the financial viability metrics for assessing program sustainability, Sept. 6

Technology roadmap
Technology solutions, platforms and capabilities required to support high-quality online program design and delivery; and data tracking and integrations are required to effectively track and support students throughout their CU experience, Oct. 1

CU Transformation and Innovation Program sets systemwide IT goals[20]
[21]

CU's Transformation and Innovation Program (TIP), launched last year as a key component of President Mark Kennedy's strategic planning process[22], this week debuts a website[23] that will highlight systemwide efforts to better leverage technology's role in advancing the mission of the university.
[24]

The four campuses and system administration are collaborating on the program, which aims to better position the CU system to efficiently, effectively deliver technology services to students, faculty, researchers and staff.

"It's imperative that CU be more effective and efficient with our technology," said CU President Mark Kennedy. "It drives everything from student success to business operations to engagement with alumni and donors, and more. I am confident that the Transformation and Innovation Program will lead to improvement in this critical area."

Following an RFP last year, the resulting assessment by Deloitte[25] reviewed and evaluated the university's current information technology (IT) environment, while also providing recommendations and a roadmap for improving and aligning IT capabilities across CU.

The assessment helped form three main areas of program visions and goals:
Clarify roles and responsibilities by establishing clear mandates of responsibility for the system and the campuses though effective IT governance that fosters collaboration and consistency. **Strengthen the core** through the delivery of reliable, secure and cost-effective core technology services and data access. **Foster innovation and effectiveness** through a focus on strategic partnerships, fostering innovations such as automation, artificial intelligence, and analytics to advance the mission.
Proposal recommendations were agreed to by President Kennedy and the campus chancellors. A new Transformation and Innovation Program (TIP) office was established at the system to lead the implementation of the recommendations; Harper Johnson, associate vice president of transformation and innovation, is at the helm of what's planned as a three-year program.

That program will consist of six focus areas:
IT Governance: A more comprehensive governance model with defined roles and responsibilities to support effective oversight, collaboration and coordinated IT initiatives across CU. **IT Finance:** More collaborative financial processes for IT to drive visibility and coordination on IT initiatives and improve management and reporting. **IT Talent:** A fresh, collaborative approach to IT talent management will help prepare and retain the right talent pipeline to realize the goals of CU. **Technology Capabilities:** Opportunities allow CU to modernize its technology services through key operational improvements and strategic enhancements. **Service Management:** Central IT groups across CU must collaborate to support their customers' needs using consistent, transparent processes and tools. **Cross Functional:** CU's IT resources can be strategically improved to enable mission-driven innovations across CU.
Some 19 projects falling within those six categories have been identified; 11 have been approved by leadership to advance with the remaining eight being inactive at this time.

Currently, the program is focused on chartering and planning activities for the active projects including understanding resource needs. All projects involve campus participation and input.

Details on the projects, who serves on the program steering committee, and the members of the program management office are posted on the TIP website[23], which also invites stakeholders to share their input.

The program is committed to sharing regular updates and information as the work progresses.

When good sleep goes bad – and what to do about it[26]

[27]

[28]

It's the middle of the night and you're awake.

You toss and turn, hoping to fall asleep and wake up rested. Still, no luck. Slumber slips from your grasp and you stare at the ceiling frustrated.

The more you think about falling asleep, the harder it gets, and before you know it, it's morning and your alarm rings. You roll out of bed, bleary-eyed and exhausted, to start your day.

At work, you struggle to focus. You're groggy and anxious and you can tell you're not at your best. As the day slogs on, you dread the idea of not being able to sleep tonight. You wonder if you'll ever get a good night's sleep again.

The science of sleep

What are you to do when you've tried counting sheep and drinking chamomile tea, not to mention all the over-the-counter pills and prescription medications, and nothing is working?

If you're suffering from consistently poor sleep, you need to get to the root of these stubborn sleep problems and that's where cognitive and behavioral techniques can help. These science-backed techniques help you by identifying negative thoughts and behaviors that get in the way of quality sleep, and replacing them with positive habits that help you sleep better.

The secret to better sleep

Sleepio is an online sleep improvement program that uses cognitive and behavioral techniques to help you fall asleep faster, stay asleep during the night, and wake feeling refreshed and ready to tackle the day.

As of July 1[29], CU Health Plan members, spouses and dependents can participate in Sleepio at no additional cost.

Designed by a sleep expert, professor Colin Espie of Oxford University, Sleepio is an effective long-term solution to your sleep troubles.

Sleepio takes a practical approach to sleep improvement. It's personalized to you and is backed by decades of scientific evidence. No drugs, prescriptions, or doctor visits necessary — Sleepio has been validated in 17 research studies, including 10 randomized control trials and over 13,000 participants.

Your next step to sleeping better tonight

Get started by discovering your Sleep Score: www.sleepio.com/cuhealthplan[30]. You'll get a personalized sleep report, plus a technique you can try as soon as tonight to help you sleep better.

After taking the test, you can continue with Sleepio's science-backed program, to finally get to the root of your stubborn poor sleep and say goodbye to those restless nights.

New COVID-19 test returns results in 45 minutes, without painful nasal swab[31]

Registration for Mini Law School Online: The 2020 Election now open [32]

‘5 Things You Need to Know,’ with professor Stephany Rose Spaulding [33]

Is COVID-19 giving cyberattackers an opportunity to hack universities? [34]

Facing tough road of cancer treatment, Scott Ryberg just kept running up mountains [35]

Program connects students with COVID-19’s most vulnerable [36]

Keasley, a true university citizen, to retire[37]

Loresto, Harpin on innovation during the pandemic [38]

George one of four ADs to present on leveraging climate action[39]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/unboxing-technology-s-role-diversity-equity-and-inclusion[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_top_0.jpg[3] https://www.cu.edu/coltt[4] https://web.cvent.com/event/24cac17d-617c-4440-8cf4-30b426e309a7/websitePage:f8da4d0d-4ed9-4c67-a06f-493deb38ce5d?rp=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_praveen.jpg[6] https://cloud.name-coach.com/commencement[7] https://name-coach.com/blog/the-values-we-must-affirm-now-more-than-ever/[8] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_debay.jpg[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_laser.jpg[10] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/coltt_unboxing.jpg[11] https://thingstudio.us/[12] https://inworks.ucdenver.edu/w/[13] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/coltt-2020-schedule[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/staff-council-discusses-fall-return-campus-president-kennedy[15] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/fac_cncl_kennedy.jpg[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/plans-fall-return-campus-show-commitment-health-safety[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/early-details-cu-online-initiative-presented-university-leadership[18] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cu-online_top.jpg[19] https://www.cu.edu/doc/200716cu716-team-updatev2sentpdf[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-transformation-

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