Going above and beyond: CU staff members honored for excellence[1]
[2]

The University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC) recently honored 10 exceptional employees across the CU system with the 2025 Staff Excellence Awards.

CU staff members – two from each campus and system administration – received the honors presented annually to recognize those who go above and beyond their job duties and consistently surpass expectations. Each received a $250 award.

The April 25 ceremony at the Lone Tree Golf Club and Hotel also featured appearances from several members of CU leadership, including President Tood Saliman and Regents Elliott Hood, Frank McNulty and Callie Rennison.

The award criteria are based on CU's Guiding Principles: Integrity and Respect, Responsibility, Discovery and Excellence, and Community.

This year's recipients are:

University of Colorado Boulder
Kai Amey, Director of Engineering Education and Operations, College of Engineering and Applied Science
Estrella Lastre, Lab Coordinator II, Department of Chemistry
University of Colorado Colorado Springs
Michaela L. Steen, Coordinator, Visual Resource Center and Lecturer, Art History and Humanities, Department of Visual and Performing Arts
Noelle San Souci, Director of Student Engagement, Student Life
University of Colorado Denver
Beth A. Myers, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
Lauren Stewart, Senior Internship Advisor, Experiential Learning Center
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
Mario Rubio, Project and Transition of Care Coordinator, Division of Hospital Medicine
Lanie Mog, Philanthropic Assistant, Office of Advancement
University of Colorado System Administration
Will A. Angel, Internal Communications Senior Program Manager, Advancement
Justin Arico, Audit Manager, Internal Audit
Click here to read more on each of the honorees.[3]

This year's call for nominations resulted in over 220 nominees being eligible for the award.

For more information about the Staff Excellence Awards or the University of Colorado Staff Council, please visit https://www.cu.edu/ucsc/ucsc-staff-excellence-award[4].

Open Enrollment: Choose your MVP (Most Valuable Plan) with insights from the Benefits Toolkit [5]

Finalists announced: 2025 CU Innovation & Efficiency Awards[6]

The Office of University Controller has announced the finalists[7] for this year's CU Innovation & Efficiency (CU I&E) Awards program, spotlighting innovative projects that are transforming CU's systems and saving time, money and effort.

The top five teams, which will be announced in early June, are eligible for cash prizes up to $1,500.

Here are the projects and teams making an impact with solutions that may have use elsewhere across the university.

Change of Major/Minor Automated Robot Process[8]

This collaboration between CU Boulder's College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of the Registrar introduced an automated process to streamline major and minor declarations, improving accessibility and efficiency while enhancing student communication. By eliminating paper forms and manual data entry, it has significantly increased staff productivity and garnered interest from other colleges for broader adoption.

Decreasing Clinical Research Startup Time[9]

The CTRC Study Startup Dashboard at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus is a custom-built solution that optimizes collaboration and document control, reducing nursing order finalization time by over 50% and improving regulatory compliance and patient safety. This tool has transformed clinical research startup efficiency and strengthened interdisciplinary teamwork.

Departmental Indirect Cost Recovery Split % Report Automation[10]

This automation at CU Boulder modernized a labor-intensive manual process, creating a real-time, on-demand reporting tool that improves efficiency, accuracy and user access, empowering stakeholders with actionable insights for data-driven decision-making. It has significantly enhanced customer service across departments, eliminating delays and inefficiencies.

Hiring Request Portal - Enrollment Management and Finance & Business Strategy[11]

CU Boulder's Hiring Request Portal, built with PowerApps, automates the hiring and promotion request process, streamlining communication and improving workflow efficiency. With over 100 submissions processed, it has saved hundreds of staff hours and earned praise for its user-friendly interface and effectiveness.

On Time, On Budget: The Key to Award Management Success[12]

This award management system at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus centralizes and automates the full research funding life cycle, from proposal submission to closeout, ensuring compliance, accuracy and timely reporting. By reducing manual processes, it has eliminated missed deadlines and improved overall support for researchers.

Research Cores, Rewired: The Case for Automation With Tools You Already Own[13]

Leveraging tools like Qualtrics and Microsoft Dataverse, this project at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus created an automated management system for a research core facility, streamlining operations and reducing administrative workload. Automation of quotes, invoicing and data tracking has improved transparency and empowered staff to focus on high-impact scientific work.

Safety Permit Approval and Generation Using Power Automated[14]

Using Power Automate, this project at UCCS streamlined the approval and generation of safety permits for campus activities, improving communication and efficiency across multiple departments. The automation provides real-time status updates and reduces manual work, simplifying the permit approval process.

Sponsor Setup Automation[15]

Sponsor Setup Automation reduces the manual effort required to add over 500 sponsors to the PeopleSoft Finance System each year by automating data entry and validation, saving over three weeks of work annually and enhancing data accuracy. This CU system administration solution allows staff to focus on more impactful tasks and ensures timely

financial transactions.

Sustainability in Simulation Operations[16]

This CU Anschutz Medical Campus project promotes sustainability by recycling, repackaging and repurposing plastic materials used in health care simulation training, significantly reducing waste and the need for new materials. By reusing items like foley catheter bags and educating staff and students on sustainable practices, the initiative supports the university's environmental goals.

View all CU I&E Finalists here[7]

- Office of University Controller

President Saliman discusses state budget, federal impacts with Faculty Senate[17]

When speaking last fall before the Faculty Senate, President Todd Saliman said he anticipated a challenging year for state funding. During his April 24 appearance at the same governance group's meeting, he was able to report good news for CU in the wake of the legislature's budgeting process.

Speaking in his role as president of the Faculty Senate during its meeting held via Zoom, Saliman said CU lobbied legislators to provide funding for the university's core costs and did so in coordination with nearly every other higher education institution in the state (Colorado Mesa University did not take part). CU also successfully fought against proposed cuts that targeted specific areas, such as a $20 million drop at CU Anschutz that did not advance.

"They funded our request and we're incredibly grateful to them for doing that," said Saliman, who extended kudos to CU's Office of Government Relations. "And if you see a Joint Budget Committee member, thank them. They made it happen for CU and higher ed in Colorado."

The state's investment is expected to bring CU an operating increase of 2.5%, or $8.7 million in state funding, which in turn enables CU to keep tuition in check and allows for the consideration of compensation increases at the campuses.

Action related to this year's rapid changes at the federal level, including numerous directives affecting higher education nationally, is now taking most of his time, Saliman said.

"I know it's creating tremendous anxiety on our campuses with faculty, staff and students," Saliman said. "It's so important to recognize what is happening right now – the degree it's impacting us, the degree it's not and the degree it may impact us more in the future."

Saliman said he receives weekly updates on grant stop orders and terminations, which had meant a $24 million systemwide impact as of mid-April; he said he expects the figure to increase.

"One of the things I'm most concerned about is not just the stop work and termination orders now, but even more, what is coming," he said. "I don't know the answer to that, just like you don't, and it's creating a ton of anxiety for all of us. As we learn more about that, we'll share it with you."

The president took questions from Faculty Senate members during his appearance, including queries about the budget outlook beyond the coming fiscal year. The tight state budget this year was not an exception but will be the rule for the next few years, he said.

"The federal funding piece of it is huge. I don't know what's headed our way and how dramatic of an impact the federal actions might have," Saliman said. "What I do know is our capacity to intervene is quite limited. … If federal reductions are deep, that will absolutely have an impact on our mission – our ability to do research and some of our

education mission – and it will absolutely impact jobs."

Saliman also was asked about CU potentially joining some other higher education institutions in the state in signing a recent statement[18] by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). He said there are no plans for CU to do so, because the university is engaging directly with Colorado's elected officials at the national level.

"We've had meaningful support from our federal delegation on both sides of the aisle," Saliman said. "I think having those direct conversations on specific things that impact us is much more persuasive than broad, general statements. As a former legislator, I know what's most compelling."

Though not signing the statement, CU stands in solidarity with higher education colleagues, he said. "But my first priority is defending the University of Colorado and the things being identified here that could result in dramatic funding cuts or changes at CU. That's where I'm focusing my attention and resources."

In the face of current challenges, rising above and being present for the university's mission is vital, and Saliman expressed gratitude to faculty for doing so.

"Thank you for all the wonderful work that you're doing, with the shifting landscape all around us," he said. "Thank you for focusing on what matters most."

Also at last week's meeting, Faculty Senate voted to approve amendments to the group's bylaws.

At a meeting of the Faculty Council that immediately followed the Faculty Senate meeting, the council elected a slate of officers[19] for the 2025-26 academic year.

The council also announced the winners of its annual awards. The awards for Distinguished Service for council members Cindy O'Bryant and Vicky Grove, and the award for Administrator of the Year for Anne Fleming, will be presented at the council's last meeting of the year, scheduled for May 15 at 1800 Grant St.

Federal transition update: Student visas, new education executive orders, Department of Education lawsuits, NSF director resignation, NIH requirements for fund recipients, Department of State restructuring[20]

From April 25, this federal government update from CU Federal Relations and Counsel includes an update on student visas, new education executive orders, Department of Education lawsuits, NSF director resignation, NIH requirements for fund recipients and Department of State restructuring.

Click here to read the post.[21]

For the latest communications and federal memos, please visit the CU System Federal Transitions Update[22] page.

New Horizons collects first map of galaxy in important type of ultraviolet light [23]

UCCS earns top two spot, tenth straight Military Friendly Gold ranking[24]

10 startups from Colorado and across the U.S. join CU Denver's Smart Futures Lab [25]

Dean Sampson appoints new leadership team for the CU School of Medicine [26]

Federal transition resources from CU Federal Relations and Counsel [27]

Chavez, White, Yoo elected Faculty Council officers[19]

Faculty Council[28] last week elected three new officers for the 2025-26 academic year. The council voted in the new leadership during an April 24 meeting, held virtually:

Chair: **Jorge Chavez**[29]

Chair-elect: **Diana White**[30]

Secretary: **Monica Yoo**[31]

This was the governance group's first election of officers since enacting changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution, which added the post of chair-elect. Going forward, the chair-elect will succeed the chair in the following term, meaning future councils will vote on chair-elect but not chair.

The council's fourth leadership post is past chair, which current Chair Alastair Norcross will take on. He was first elected chair in 2023.

"I can't imagine a better, more competent, more inspiring slate of candidates for these positions," Cross said of the newly elected officers. "We're in really good hands."

The next Faculty Council meeting, which will include the presentation of its annual awards, is scheduled for May 15 at 1800 Grant St.

Ehlmann named new director of LASP [32]

Moore reflects on 32 years at CU Boulder [33]

Controlled burns reduce wildfire risk, but they require trained staff and funding[34]

Poison control calls are rising as more people use psilocybin, study finds[35]

The Lack Of Science In Road Design Is Deadly[36]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/going-above-and-beyond-cu-staff-members-honored-excellence[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/ucsc-awards_feat.jpg[3] https://www.cu.edu/ucsc/staff-excellence-award/2025-staff-excellence-award-recipients[4] https://www.cu.edu/ucsc/ucsc-staff-excellence-award[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/open-enrollment-choose-your-mvp-most-valuable-plan-insights-benefits-toolkit[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/finalists-announced-2025-cu-innovation-efficiency-awards[7] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-2025-finalists[8] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-change-majorminor-automated-robot-process[9] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-decreasing-clinical-research-startup-time[10] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-departmental-indirect-cost-recovery-split[11] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-hiring-request-portal-enrollment[12] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-time-budget-key-award-management-success[13] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-research-cores-rewired-case-automation[14] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-safety-permit-approval-generation-using[15] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-sponsor-setup-automation[16] https://www.cu.edu/controller/i-e-awards/current-submissions/cu-ie-submission-sustainability-simulation-operations[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/president-saliman-discusses-state-budget-federal-impacts-faculty-senate[18] https://www.aacu.org/newsroom/a-call-for-constructive-engagement[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/chavez-white-yoo-elected-faculty-council-officers[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/federal-transition-update-student-visas-new-education-executive-orders-department-education[21] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/federal-government-transition-update-42525[22] https://www.cu.edu/federal-transition-updates[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-horizons-collects-first-map-galaxy-important-type-ultraviolet-light[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-earns-top-two-spot-tenth-straight-military-friendly-gold-ranking[25] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/10-startups-colorado-and-across-us-join-cu-denver-s-smart-futures-lab[26] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/dean-sampson-appoints-new-leadership-team-cu-school-medicine[27] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/federal-transition-resources-cu-federal-relations-and-counsel[28] https://www.cu.edu/faculty-senate-faculty-council[29] https://education.ucdenver.edu/about-us/faculty-directory/Chavez-Jorge-UCD6000756948[30] https://clas.ucdenver.edu/mathematical-and-statistical-sciences/diana-white[31] https://coe.uccs.edu/people/teaching-and-learning/monica-yoo[32] https://connections.cu.edu/people/ehlmann-named-new-director-lasp[33] https://connections.cu.edu/people/moore-reflects-32-years-cu-boulder[34] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/controlled-burns-reduce-wildfire-risk-they-require-trained-staff-and-funding[35] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/poison-control-calls-are-rising-more-people-use-psilocybin-study-finds[36] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/lack-science-road-design-deadly