

[Skillsoft to upgrade, expand to students in June](#)[1]

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The University of Colorado launches its new Skillsoft user interface on June 15.

As part of the upgrade, Skillsoft will be made available to students on all CU campuses, so faculty will have the ability to share resources with them and assign items to their classes.

“By upgrading Skillsoft, CU will be meeting many important milestones,” said Janet Lowe, Employee Services’ director of Employee Learning and Development. “This includes a product with a progressive accessibility roadmap, an updated look and feel, and the ability for students to take CU compliance training.”

### **Refreshing changes coming**

Skillsoft’s updated features include new ways to search for items, improved accessibility and a new version of Book24x7. The upgraded version will include more than 28,000 educational resources, including CU’s custom courses.

Staff, faculty and students still will have the ability to prepare for certification tests and tackle personal and professional goals right from their computer. They can take required courses or instructor-led trainings (ILTs) and watch quick videos to build their knowledge in a variety of different subjects.

The new version of Books24x7 is called Skillsoft books. It includes BusinessPro, Digital Skills and ITPro titles, giving employees all the resources needed to enhance their business skills. New titles are added weekly. Instead of being housed in a separate area, these books intermingle with other Skillsoft resources, making them easier to find in searches.

### **Preview the new Skillsoft interface**

Faculty, staff and students can get a sneak peek of changes coming to Skillsoft by visiting the [upgrade webpage](#)[3]. It includes highlights of the new system, with interactive features to walk you through coming changes.

[Five questions for Kim Hunter Reed](#)[4]

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The new executive director of the [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#)[6], Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D., wore the purple-and-gold garb of Louisiana State University for last month’s College Friday. Naturally, a piece of her heart remains in her native state, where she earned three degrees (two from LSU) and worked as a higher education official.

Her mind, though, is clearly focused on her new home state.

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“I’m certainly enjoying the opportunity to serve in this role,” said Reed, who most recently served in President Obama’s administration as deputy undersecretary at the U.S. Department of Education. Since arriving in Colorado in February, she has visited about a dozen campuses, including CU Boulder, with plans to visit more.

“Colorado is a fascinating place to be. I love the entrepreneurial spirit. People really believe they can make a difference and they try.”

A voracious reader, Reed quickly discovered Denver’s famed Tattered Cover bookstore. Her 15-year-old daughter’s volleyball tournaments keep Reed and her husband traveling on many weekends so they can cheer from the stands.

“On weekends when I’m here, I try to meet someone new and learn something new.”

**1.You most recently worked on federal education policy in Washington, D.C. How do the two jobs compare?**  
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The scale is different – national compared to state. But the scope of the work is very much the same. I do think both jobs have given me an opportunity to focus on the things I’m passionate about. In both positions I’ve worked on equity and excellence and how to expand opportunity for students.

I’m from a family of educators and I like to stay in the family business. My experience at LSU was a great one, and I want every student to have an outstanding college experience as well. I know that I was fortunate in two ways: one, college was an expectation in my home and two, I had the means to get there. Not every student has that. That’s why every day I’m passionately advocating for access and affordability for students. Our students and our institutions need more champions. We need to remind people that education is a common good.

People ask why I chose Colorado. It’s because you are working on things I’m passionate about that are challenging and rewarding. I’m honored to have this opportunity and I’m looking forward every day to advancing the ball and making a difference for our state and our citizens. I’m very excited about this work.

**2.Though you’re still new on the job, you already have a strong presence on [social media](#)[9]. What do you see as potential benefits for using these platforms for higher education in Colorado?**

In a previous job, I was one of two employees who was not on Twitter. I got a call-out – “I really wish you would please use.”

I think social media has the power to amplify good policy information. I try to do something every day to make sure people are aware of the work we’re doing and to elevate the great institutions here in Colorado. It’s a way to promote their value.

As I travel around the state, I have had campus leaders and students say they’ve seen us at other campuses on social media. We’re getting a little bit of attention and I hope we get more. I certainly see it as an asset in our work.

**3.How do you define the role of the University of Colorado in the state?**  
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It’s a critical leader, obviously, and a leading innovator as well. Research there is extremely important, from space missions to medical research. But there’s also applied research for undergraduate students, which gives them hands-on experience.

My visit to CU Boulder was an amazing one. Chancellor DiStefano has a real vision and real commitment to the work. I’m looking forward to visiting the other CU campuses.

**4.CU leadership has worked to keep tuition increases as low as possible, but state funding that ranks among the lowest in the country means college affordability continues to grow more challenging for many families. How can the trend be slowed or reversed?**

I think we have to have a full-court-press approach of the state’s investment, community support, accelerated time to earning a degree, and early start for students. That full process will continue to help us.

But we have some real challenges. This is a state that has disinvested: We have seen a cost shift from the state investment covering two-thirds of the cost of tuition to the student’s share being two-thirds. We will not realize our real potential if we don’t have a sustained investment in higher education by the state. I’m looking forward to being part of that effort. We have to continue to talk about the public good that is higher education.

We’re happy to see in the state budget for 2017-18 that we have a \$20.5 million increase for higher education, and we

appreciate the governor's and the Legislature's support, which is very important.

From an agency perspective, there are a number of things we're doing in terms of affordability. We have [Collegelvest, the 529 plan](#)[11], and we need to get more people thinking about investing early. We're raising scholarship dollars with COSI (Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative); I already have met some folks who talked about how much COSI has made a difference.

Having students who are informed of choices is important as well. Concurrent enrollment, Supplemental Academic Instruction and other policies and practices can make the time to a degree faster and the cost of a degree cheaper. I'm proud to see that 30 percent of Colorado 11th and 12th graders, about 38,000 students, have earned college credit through dual enrollment.

Another number I saw two months ago is that only 57 percent of high school graduates are moving directly into college enrollment. We'd like to see more students participating. So we're also thinking about stronger pathways, such as youth apprenticeship programs.

**5. Our state ranks high in the number of adults with post-secondary degrees, but lower in terms of the percentage of high school students who go on to graduate from college. How can the "Colorado paradox" be addressed?**

It's a term I learned about when I arrived in the state. The idea of different geographic locations being brain magnets is not new to me. It is a positive that highly skilled, educated individuals would like to be part of the Colorado economy.

I'm more concerned that we have Colorado pride in our young talent. How do we invest in them? We have to double down on how to support our own talent. As you know, the knowledge economy has really reset the educational requirements for students in order to meet their full potential.

One of my goals is to make sure I honor every community by visiting. It's impossible to sit in Denver and understand the challenges and opportunities happening across the state unless you walk the campuses with leaders, faculty, staff and students.

I also know it's very important that we update our state master plan, which is well underway. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is on track to vote in June. We need to reaffirm our commitment to having 66 percent of adults in the state with certificates and degrees.

A longer-term goal will be to make sure we have more champions of education – a broader coalition that's supporting our work and informed of it. And we need to make sure we match our aspiration with the investment needed to reach our goals.

I'm honored to have the opportunity to work every day on those issues on behalf of the state and the students we're serving.

[Regents Ganahl, Kroll discuss priorities with Staff Council](#)[12]

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University of Colorado regents Jack Kroll and Heidi Ganahl were guests of the University of Colorado Staff Council during its regular meeting May 18 in Boulder.

After hearing about the council's projects, including research on paid parental leave and a staff survey measuring satisfaction with work and university benefits, the regents discussed their own priorities.

Kroll said he is concerned about wage compression at the university, which he calls "significant" for the lowest-paid

staff members. He hopes to address the disparity in the upcoming year and wants to set aside money in the budget to address the issue.

Another significant issue, Kroll said, is affordable housing for faculty and staff in Boulder.

“At the end of the day, I believe we are community first and university second,” he said, adding that one way to potentially provide some relief would be to include affordable housing at the CU Boulder South development site.

In addition, he said that society has effectively elected to “disincentivize women to stay in the workforce when they become mothers” and that it is up to his generation to fix the problem.

“As the third-largest employer in Colorado, I think we can make a significant impact if we move” on these and other issues to create an advantage, especially when it comes to employee retention and providing a roadmap for other businesses and institutions.

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Ganahl encouraged staff council members to see the Board of Regents as a resource.

“It is extremely important that you feel comfortable talking to us,” she said. “(We) can’t fix things that (we) don’t know are broken. The more information you can bring to us with solutions, the better able we are to figure it out. Let us know if there are issues you aren’t getting much traction on. We’re here to help and to represent everyone.”

One of her passions is to ensure diversity among faculty and staff, Ganahl said. She’s also working with student government leaders on campus on the issues of sexual assault and binge drinking.

Also during the meeting:

New university staff council officers for the 2017-18 academic year were announced. As of July 1, Nancy Moore will chair the council. Also moving into council positions on that date are Anne Melzer, vice chair; Nick Lockwood, treasurer; and Gaylynn von der Nuell, secretary. The parental leave committee reported that members continue to gather information and data about leave use at the university, state and national levels in order to provide a robust picture of how many people use leaves. Council members heard updates on the tuition benefit pilot program, including ways to better communicate the benefit to all employees and make the benefit easier to use. Members received an update on the working survey. Summaries, including respondent comments, will be drafted by early June. The report will then be released to university administration and the public. Council discussed an August retreat where members will set next year’s agenda and priorities.

#### [Board of Regents continues review of Tumpkin matter](#)[15]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents on Monday continued its review of the university’s response to allegations of domestic violence by former CU assistant football coach Joe Tumpkin.

After an executive session of several hours at 1800 Grant St., the board issued the following statement:

“The Board of Regents today engaged in a collaborative discussion on issues surrounding the inquiry into the response to domestic violence allegations against former CU assistant football coach Joe Tumpkin. The board directed President Bruce Benson, in consultation with the board, to outline any necessary changes to university policies and procedures, specify how training and education will be enhanced, and recommend appropriate action for CU employees involved. A public report will be issued when complete. At the next regularly scheduled meeting June 15-16, the board will take up the contract extension for head football Coach Mike MacIntyre.”

#### [Talking trash, robots and facilities at CU Innovation and Efficiency Awards](#)[16]

The 2017 CU Innovation and Efficiency Awards Expo showcased an impressive group of finalist submissions that covered everything from robotics to trash, with the top prize going to a staff member who used his procurement expertise to save the university almost \$5 million in construction materials over the past two years.

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During the May 15 event at 1800 Grant St., the grand prize of \$1,500 was awarded to Jeff Darling, a procurement and supply chain specialist with Facilities Management at CU Boulder. His "Total Supply Chain Integration Model" compares contractor supply chains against the state's supply chain to ensure that the university is getting the best discount structure possible for goods used during the construction process.

By working directly with contractors and learning about the discounts available to them through their suppliers, Facilities Management has been able to solicit competitive bids from these suppliers that have resulted in significant savings on quality construction materials.

Submissions from CU Boulder's Facilities Management set the competitive pace this year, taking not only the grand prize, but two of the four \$1,000 runner-up cash prizes. One of those went to Tim Golden, Ron Ried, Jack Brubaker and Jon Sherman, whose vision of reducing traffic on the Boulder campus led them to an arrangement with Staples.

With the new practice, all campus office supply orders from Staples are delivered via the Facilities Management Distribution Center, using Facilities Management staff. By incorporating the Staples deliveries with the deliveries routinely done by their own staff, the team successfully reduced the number of delivery vehicles on campus streets, improving safety and reducing congestion and emissions. Also, with the assistance of Duane Tucker from the Procurement Services Center, the team negotiated a rebate from Staples to cover the costs of these deliveries. Negotiations now are underway with UPS to see if a similar deal can be struck.

But it's not all about supplies and materials with Facilities Management. In another prize-winning turn from the group, Kelsey Draper, a training coordinator, implemented the Inclusiveness Excellence Initiative, which aims to take down the language and technology barriers that exist for many custodial employees. Starting simply as an introduction to computers and mobile devices, the program has expanded to include classes on resume writing, job skills and more. They also have developed a website and mobile app that delivers critical information and alerts in English, Spanish and Laotian.

The outreach and enhanced communications have promoted an increased awareness of safety issues, reduced response time in emergencies, and heightened level of engagement for employees.

Eric Hoffmeyer, a professional research assistant with the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, won a cash prize and impressed all in attendance by redesigning the programming for his lab's liquid-handling robot. The redesign significantly reduced the amount of time needed for the robot to perform its regular tasks, allowing Hoffmeyer to program new tasks and increase the robot's overall functionality.

Thanks to Hoffmeyer's robotics skills, the resulting improvements in efficiency and functionality have negated the need to purchase an additional robot to handle an increasing number of patient samples.

Personnel in the Environmental Health and Safety Department at CU Anschutz earned a prize for one of two "Let's Talk Trash" submissions. Biomedical Waste officers and specialists teamed up not only to educate campus personnel about the differences between regulated and nonregulated medical waste, but also to analyze disposal patterns in a successful effort to trim costs associated with waste pickup.

Team members Denise Donnelly, Mark Garcia and Robert L. Williams earned a cash prize for their money-saving time/motion analysis of waste pickup, with kudos going to J.C. Lexow for her work with the team on its related submission involving data analysis and financial reconciliation of waste disposal activities on campus.

Other individuals receiving finalist recognition this year included Chris Yankee and Allison Miller for their work developing the RIO (Research and Innovation Office) Bulletin, a biweekly communication targeting research personnel

at CU Boulder.

Travis Chillemi and Normandy Roden were recognized for their submission on content-rich and engaging learning resources, in which existing learning resources were revamped and updated to consolidate related subject matter into individual modules that included a variety of training delivery modalities. Chillemi also became the expo's first interactive virtual participant by beaming in from Oregon to showcase his and Roden's work.

Alex Holmgren – associate director at CU Boulder's Center for Western Civilization, Thought and Policy – earned her place among the finalists by developing an event-tracking tool that combined Google and Zap Technology to comprehensively track and report on critical event information.

Jonathan Moore and Charles Whitecotton, another finalist team from CU Boulder Facilities Management, drew praise for their Mobile Device Management Model, which streamlines the configuration, deployment and management of its almost 500 smart devices by employing a centralized university-registered ID.

The CU Innovation and Efficiency program extended its thanks and congratulations to all the 2017 program year participants.

View short videos (filmed by Mike Cusic of the Office of University Controller) on the finalists and their submissions at <http://www.cu.edu/controller/cu-innovation-efficiency-awards-submissions-2017-semi-finalist-videos>[18].

[Legislature 2017: Funding increase for higher ed; hospital provider fee eases budget pressure](#)[19]

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Colorado's 2017 legislative session concluded May 10, bringing resolution to several pieces of CU-sponsored legislation and clarity for the state's 2017-18 budget.

"Many of the bills introduced had major state-wide policy implications which generated complex, passionate and at times politically charged discussions," wrote Tanya Kelly-Bowry, vice president for Government Relations, in a post-session communication. "Several bills were introduced on behalf of CU in our continued efforts to bring more operating efficiency and cost savings to the university. We also worked hard to stave off or kill pieces of legislation that would have negatively impacted our operations or created unfunded mandates."

Results of the final budget as passed by lawmakers:

\$16.7 million statewide increase for higher education operations, including \$7.8 million in additional funding for CU through the higher education allocation model. \$3.9 million statewide increase for financial aid, including \$2.5 million in anticipated additional funding for eligible CU students based on the CCHE allocation. \$4.1 million for controlled maintenance projects on the CU and AHEC campuses.

"Of particular importance this session were several bills aimed at alleviating the significant budget challenges in our state, including transportation, roads and funding for rural hospitals. In coordination with Vice President Todd Saliman, we worked strategically throughout the session with leadership in both chambers on a critical bill, SB 17-267," Kelly-Bowry wrote.

With its passage, a long-sought change to the hospital provider fee was achieved. By reclassifying the fee as an enterprise, pressure on the state budget will drop significantly when Colorado's economy is robust.

"This is great news for CU and all of higher education," Kelly-Bowry wrote. "While state budget writers will continue to face difficult choices every year, they will not need to implement budget cuts to pay for TABOR rebates for several years due to the changes in this bill. If the bill had not passed, hospitals throughout Colorado would have been cut by \$256 million next year."

The bill was named "Sustainability of Rural Colorado," a reference to the positive impacts on rural hospitals and

schools, which stood to otherwise face severe funding challenges.

Below are highlights from the 2017 legislative session, including the names of sponsoring legislators; please visit this [page](#)[21] for a full list of bills and links to bill text.

**SB 17-40 Public Access to Government Files** (Kefalas/Pabon): This bill modernizes the Colorado Open Records Act by requiring governmental bodies to provide requested records electronically when feasible. This bill was sent to Gov. John Hickenlooper for signature.

**SB 17-41 Higher Education Employment Contract Terms** (Priola/Willet, Hooton): This CU-initiated bill addressed higher education employment contract terms. Prior law had limited higher education institutions to awarding only six term-employment contracts per campus and system. Contract length also was limited. SB 17-41 enables more flexibility by exempting contracts for positions funded by revenue from auxiliary activities, such as athletics. In CU's case, all contracts still must be approved after review by the Board of Regents in a public meeting. The board retains the ability to decline to offer contracts to any auxiliary employee and to decline individual contracts on a case-by-case basis. The bill was signed by the governor.

**SB 17-62 Student Free Speech Public Higher Education Campuses** (Neville, T./Bridges, Humphrey): This bill eliminates the use of "free speech zones" on college campuses. This bill has been signed by the governor.

**SB 17-74 Create Medication-assisted Treatment (MAT) Pilot Program** (Garcia/Esgar): This bill, initiated by the Colorado Attorney General's Office and stakeholders from CU Anschutz, creates the MAT expansion pilot program, administered by the University of Colorado College of Nursing, to expand access to MAT to opioid-dependent patients in Pueblo and Routt counties. The bill appropriates \$500,000 from the Marijuana Cash Fund over two years. This bill was sent to the governor for signature.

**SB 17-193 Research Center Prevention Substance Abuse Addiction** (Jahn, Lundberg/Rankin, Pettersen): This CU-initiated bill appropriates \$1 million to CU Anschutz to establish a national center for substance abuse education, research and treatment. The bill will provide critical seed funding that will help leverage additional federal and private support. This bill was signed by the governor at CU Anschutz; [read more](#)[22] in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences blog.

**SB 17-296 Faculty Oath Section in School Finance** (Hill/Pettersen): Currently, upon hire, all higher education faculty and K-12 teachers in the state must take a notarized sworn oath to both the United States and Colorado Constitutions. The CU initiated section of this bill will make the process more efficient by allowing the oath to be taken electronically. This will save costs and time in hiring. This bill was sent to the governor for signature.

**SB 17-297 Revising Higher Education Performance Requirements** (Lambert/Hamner): The bill repeals a performance-based funding plan for institutions of higher education that was included in the master plan for Colorado postsecondary education. It also realigns performance contracts more efficiently with the current funding formula. The CU budget office was instrumental in the negotiations on this bill which helped lead to its passage without opposition. The bill was signed by Gov. Hickenlooper at CU Boulder; [read more](#)[23] in CU Boulder Today.

**HB 17-1004 College Credit for Military Education and Training** (Michaelson Jenet, Danielson/Garcia, Hill): This bill requires all campuses to have a policy for awarding credit for military learning. It also directs the GE Council to establish common standards for GT pathways designation of military prior learning. This bill was sent to the governor for signature.

**HB 17-1081 Olympic Athletes Colorado In-state Tuition** (Nordberg/Fenberg): This bill makes it permissible, but not mandatory, for institutions of higher education to offer in-state tuition for Olympic athletes training outside of Colorado Springs. CU supported the United States Olympic Committee in introducing this bill and it has been signed into law by the governor.

**HB 17-1094 Telehealth Coverage under Health Benefit Plans** (Buck, Valdez/Crowder, Donovan): The bill removes impediments to the enactment of telehealth in Colorado and makes telehealth work for all medical purposes. This bill

has been signed by the governor.

Related: [CU Boulder Today's Q&A](#)[24] with the federal relations team on President Trump's 2018 budget.

[Proposed Ramaley addition would give boost to Integrative Physiology](#) [25]

[Olson named interim dean; search committee to form](#)[26]

[Spring 2017 Commencement included CU Denver staff](#)[27]

[Students help residents of Denver Meadows](#) [28]

[Lee receives lifetime achievement award](#)[29]

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Terry Lee, associate vice president and chief risk officer for the University of Colorado, recently received the 2017 President's Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by Professionals in Workers' Compensation. The Colorado nonprofit organization represents all aspects of the workers' compensation industry.

Lee was honored for making extraordinary contributions in various realms of the insurance and risk management industry and for demonstrating selfless service and ongoing dedication in the industry and the community.

Terry is the first recipient to receive this honor, which historically has been awarded to Judges, Attorneys, and Physicians.

[Yang Selected as Research Chair at the J.P. Morgan Center for Commodities](#)[31]

[Roede selected as Scientist to Watch](#)[32]



## Links

[1] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/skillsoft-upgrade-expand-students-june>[2]  
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