Five questions for Bryan Less[1]
[2]

For over 12 years, Emmy-winner Bryan Less' quiet approach, technical skills and critical eye for the art of video have culminated in masterful and compelling teaching, training and promotional materials for CU Denver and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

A 25-year veteran in all aspects of film, Less manages CU Productions[3], which offers full-service media production for videos, online classes, podcasts and more. He works with clients from the campus schools and departments, as well as health partners such as the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Behavioral Health.
[4]

Less departed early on from his original major in business at the University of Iowa. During his freshman year, he worked for the football department, video recording practices and games. Here he found his calling, changed his major and has been working in the profession ever since.

Less is married and has "two great teenage boys who put me to the test every day." Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family, exercising and working in his yard.

1. You've previously produced online learning videos. With the pandemic, some educators were sent scrambling to learn the basic skills of remote education. What tips do you have for those entering this space for the first time?
[5]

Having produced 11 classes and more than 300 lessons for the University of Colorado and its partner Coursera, we have a lot of experience in this area. Producing online lesson content is much different than lecture-based teaching.

When recording a class for online education, the first and most important tip is not to underestimate the time commitment. Second, be prepared for the recordings by having your scripts ready, whether you're working with a studio team or by yourself with your own equipment. This will keep you on message and reduce the number of retakes. Third, keep the length of your lessons short. And finally, be creative and open to visual diversity by using photos, graphics, video vignettes and animations.

2. Tell us about your staff at CU Productions: How many folks work for/with you and in what areas of specialty?
[6]

CU Productions is a team of two, Steve Hall and me. Steve has been with CU Productions for a little over a year and brings more than 20 years of editing experience from the entertainment industry. He's also a videographer and photographer.

My primary responsibilities are to meet with clients to clearly understand their video needs and serve as executive producer of our projects. You'll also find me scripting, operating a camera and editing. Steve and I wear a lot of different hats.

3. CU Productions covers CU Denver and CU Anschutz, with studios on each campus. What are some differences between the campus cultures and requests?
[7]

The majority of our projects for the two campuses are promotional in nature. For example, we worked with the School of Education and Human Development on the CU Denver campus on a video to promote their Culturally Diverse Education program[8]. Similarly, we created a video for the Department of Family Medicine[9] on the CU Anschutz campus promoting diversity in their department.

One difference between the two campuses is that we tend to produce more training videos on the CU Anschutz

campus. Most recently, we produced a training video for nurses on how to provide care to infants in the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) at Children's Hospital Colorado.

4. What are some examples of the top online courses and projects you've produced? What made them so successful?

CU Productions worked with the CU system office to produce 11 courses and more than 300 online lessons in partnership with Coursera. One of the most successful online classes is Data Warehousing[10], which we produced with CU Denver Business School professors Mike Mannino and Jahangir Karimi. Because these professors used alternative approaches to deliver their lectures and content, the online class has been a huge hit with students.

One of my favorite projects was a set of training videos for the Department of Health Care Policy[11] on the CU Anschutz campus. These videos train state surveyors on how to properly interview residents of care facilities. I really enjoyed this project for two reasons. One, it allowed me to take on all aspects of the producing and directing process. And, two, there's such fulfillment in knowing the work you do has the potential to improve the quality of life for others.

5. Which of your projects won an Emmy Award?

While working at the University of Iowa in the mid-'90s, I was a videographer and editor for a series of educational videos on health and wellness. One video in particular was on spiritualty. We traveled the country gathering many different perspectives on religion and spirituality from prominent individuals such as Robert Schuller, a prominent Christian televangelist, and Leo Buscaglia, also known as "Dr. Love" and a popular figure in the 1970s and 1980s. Iowa Public Television broadcasted the series. We entered the spirituality video in the regional Emmy Awards, and we won!

Strength in numbers: President Kennedy establishes National Security Advisory Group[12]
[13]

Even amid the havoc COVID-19 continues to wreak here on Earth, the sky's the limit for CU. Or more precisely, that limit extends to outer space.

Despite pandemic-related chaos and uncertainty, CU's commitment to learning, discovery, innovation and research remains steadfast. As a testament – and building on CU Boulder's National Security Initiative[14] – President Mark Kennedy on Tuesday convened faculty experts from all four campuses for an initial meeting of CU's new National Security Advisory Group.

The group is tasked with identifying existing strengths and collaborative opportunities to enhance U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) funding for current and future national-security-related projects and initiatives, especially in space, medical care and cybersecurity.

"If we lean in together, I think there is an opportunity to leverage our assets and capabilities to expand CU's role in federal national security efforts," said Kennedy, noting that CU garnered just $49 million in DoD research funding in FY19 despite its broad capacity in research and workforce development, and close proximity to numerous DoD installations in Colorado. "The more we're coordinated, the better off we'll be."

Members of CU's Government Relations team briefed the group on the current federal landscape, providing updates on the effects of COVID-19 on legislative activity, FY21 appropriations and the status of the National Defense Authorization Act. The discussion then turned to CU's role in helping to position Colorado as the permanent home of U.S. Space Command – now temporarily housed at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs – as well as the pending creation of a space University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) supporting Space Command.

"I'm a firm believer that we should lead rather than follow," said advisory group member Dan Baker, director of the

Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics at CU Boulder. “I believe that we have, across the campuses and in this region, the strengths that would make Colorado a natural to lead in this domain.”

In addition to its research, technology, cybersecurity and aerospace capabilities – as well as its industry partnerships – CU is well-positioned to work on Space Command’s medical priorities, which advisory group member Vik Bebarta, director of the Center for Combat Medicine and Battlefield Research at CU Anschutz, outlined following a recent meeting with Space Command’s medical leaders. These include evacuating injured individuals out of terrestrial orbit; caring and transporting patients from one planet to another; and medically and surgically resuscitating patients on the surface of other planets, such as Mars.

As the advisory group works to solidify its priorities, next steps include mapping CU’s strengths and gaps for leading a UARC consortium; identifying universities with which to potentially partner in a consortium; and preparing to work on the RFP for inclusion in the UARC consortium, which is expected to be released this summer.

CU’s National Security Advisory Group members were selected by each of the four chancellors as the leading experts on their respective campuses in areas such as combat medicine, cybersecurity, engineering and space awareness and defense. Members include:
CU Anschutz: Vik Bebarta, director of the Center for Combat Medicine and Battlefield Research **CU Boulder:** Dan Baker, director of the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics; Iain Boyd, national security faculty director; Terri Fiez, vice chancellor for research and innovation; James Olson, executive director of national security research **CU Denver:** Martin Dunn, dean of the College of Engineering, Design and Computing; Douglas Sicker, senior associate dean of computing **UCCS:** Don Rabern, dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences

CU suspends strategic planning activity[15]
[16]

University of Colorado President Mark Kennedy on Wednesday informed faculty and staff in a systemwide communication[17] that he is suspending activity on CU’s strategic planning effort, Leaning Into the Future, until spring.

Kennedy cited the considerable uncertainty surrounding COVID-19’s impact on the university’s budget, along with the great lengths faculty and staff are going to in responding to immediate impacts of the virus and in preparing to reopen campuses in the fall, if possible. Still, Kennedy lauded the work done to date and noted it will serve the university well in addressing budget challenges ahead.

“I’m proud of the thoughtful, creative and energetic work that has been done on the plan and I very much appreciate all the dedicated efforts of so many members of the CU community who have gotten us to this point,” Kennedy said. “At the same time, I recognize that we need all hands on deck in responding to the current crisis and in determining the many details and issues that need addressed before we can safely open our campuses in the fall.”

The effort, which began last summer with listening sessions inside and outside the university, had engaged a wide swath of the CU community and had reached broad consensus on the plan’s scope, four broad priorities (with additional focus areas under each) and metrics. Under the new timeline, work will resume in spring 2021, with the aim to present the completed plan to the Board of Regents for its consideration in July 2021. Working groups addressing each area of focus still have to articulate action steps for achieving the metrics, as well as to complete any refinements to goals.

“We knew the importance of focusing on our priorities when we started this process and if anything, the crisis magnifies that need,” Kennedy said. “We will get through it, and completing the plan next year will catapult us toward transforming the university to thrive in the new normal ahead of us.”

Open Enrollment ends at 5 p.m. Friday, May 8[18]
[19]

Employees have until 5 p.m. Friday, May 8, to ensure their coverage will meet their needs for the July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021 plan year.

Here are the key steps to take when reviewing your benefits:
Get a quick dose of what's new[20] for the next plan year. Changes include a new pharmacy provider for Anthem plans, small rate changes and new wellness programs. Visit the Open Enrollment website[21] for details about medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, as well as pre-tax savings plan options for dependent care and health care.
Ready to enroll? Watch a short video[22] to navigate the new enrollment tool, then get started in the portal's CU Resources area[23].
REMINDER: If you like the plans you currently have, you don't need to take action. The exception: If you would like to enroll in or keep your flexible spending account, you will need to designate how much you will contribute.

After taking time for your benefits, enroll in digital delivery

Each year when you enroll in CU's health plans, we are legally required to mail you a large packet of benefits notices. Now, you can opt to receive these notices electronically via email. We'll deliver them to your inbox and store them conveniently in the portal where you can access them any time – saving paper, time and mailing costs.

Sign up[24]

CU statement on U.S. Department of Education's Title IX regulations[25]

Tuition Assistance applications now open[26]
[27]

CU faculty and staff can now apply for the Tuition Assistance Benefit for the summer 2020 semester through the employee portal[23].

Qualified employees can save on up to nine credits per academic year (fall through summer), and their children, spouses and other dependents have several options to save on tuition costs. Dependent options vary based on whether classes are taken on the employee's home campus or not.

Employees must submit a Tuition Assistance Benefit application on behalf of their dependent. See the links below for full details on campus application deadlines and processes:
CU Boulder: June 1, 2020[28]CU Denver and CU Anschutz: June 16, 2020[29]CU Colorado Springs: June 22, 2020
[30]
Apply now
Log into the employee portal[23] Open the CU Resources dropdown menu and select **Forms** Click the **Career Advancement** tile, then click the **Tuition Assistance Application** tile
See full policies, deadlines and instructions on the Tuition Assistance Benefit web page[31].

By IRS regulation, some uses of the Tuition Assistance Benefit are taxed. Taxable tuition assistance will be subject to federal, state and FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes. Taxable employees can expect these taxes to be deducted from their paychecks one to two months after their CU campus of registration's census deadline.

Employee Services will notify taxable employees via email each semester. Learn more about the general taxation process by viewing the webinar on the Tuition Assistance Benefit Taxes website[32].

Faculty Council LGBTQ+ Committee presents virtual film screening Friday[33]
[34]

The CU Faculty Council's LGBTQ+ Committee is presenting Queer Night at the Movies, a virtual film screening.

Join us at 7 p.m. Friday, May 8, to watch "Becoming More Visible,"[35] a documentary film about four fearless transgender young adults defying societal norms to be their true selves and to become more visible.

The film starts at 7 p.m. followed by a Q&A session at 8:15 p.m. with Katherine and producer Pamela French.

The event is free and registration not required.

Save the time and date to your calendar with this Zoom link https://cusystem.zoom.us/j/93516059638[36]

All are welcome. Questions? Email facultycouncil@cu.edu[37]

This information can also be found on our website[38].

CU Boulder summer camps move online[39]

UCCS BioFrontiers Center teams up with El Paso County to 3D print protective gear [40]

Looking ahead with CU Denver's incoming chancellor [41]

Watch town hall on COVID-19 financial impact to campus [42]

COVID-19 prompts CCTSI to launch new pilot award program, support four innovative projects [43]

Lieu named associate director of clinical research at CU Cancer Center [44]

Larson, Vaida join ranks of National Academy of Sciences[45]

Five college stars named employees of the year [46]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-bryan-less[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/b-less_mug.jpg[3] https://www.cuproductions.tv/[4] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/b-less_fam.jpg[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/b-less_studio.jpg[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/b-less_steve.jpg[7] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/b-less_onlocation.jpg[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBGWHaX-Jkg[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9NB_ctRZoE&list=PLNUqy8OMn4lcwmKRV58BtEiF8L1DMqzhS&index=2&t=1s[10] https://www.coursera.org/specializations/data-warehousing[11] https://vimeo.com/298026565[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/strength-numbers-president-kennedy-establishes-national-security-advisory-group[13] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/ussspaceforce_uccs_top_0.jpg[14] https://www.colorado.edu/researchinnovation/about-us/national-security-initiative[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-suspends-strategic-planning-activity[16] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/stratplng_top.jpg[17] https://www.cu.edu/news/presidents-communication-faculty-and-staff-may-6[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/open-enrollment-ends-5-pm-friday-may-8[19] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/oe_top_0.jpg[20] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/open-enrollment/whats-new[21] https://www.cu.edu/oe[22] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/open-enrollment/how-enroll[23] https://my.cu.edu/[24] http://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/digital-delivery[25] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-statement-us-department-education-s-title-ix-regulations[26] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/tuition-assistance-applications-now-open-0[27] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/tuition-assistance_top_0.jpg[28] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/cu-boulder[29] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/cu-denveranschutz[30] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/uccs[31] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance[32] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/benefits-wellness/current-employee/tuition-assistance/taxes[33] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/faculty-council-lgbtq-committee-presents-virtual-film-screening-friday[34] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/fac-cncl_visible_poster.jpg[35] http://secure-web.cisco.com/15NQFx2C4UrRSA8juACbWW54nZ8Gktl4DkVMgfPAtg5c7SRzSfGbffitsdwp-dVhn1zMT90xHnZq2xNyw6nZmXLYi3TIREAOrkWUMMQj_Y-QE5KXZx42x1zeeGC3vPwwwY3zY7xPZDpM6LWvIYYLQTaGudBFY3WBBEbsyMISam5yp5XNNDUSHMIy5--q1peILm01Ygx96BU5pUtrOXVLSEyqDXv5Mnk1GSPFjyOinC9lP9xW1C_NZEl_a4H_WCjGPfXw0dOzDLof1E25bVXuo4s5FZT7_J_ZIkjNRuuxJsOiT5IvWg0gJxb7PV0BotDSfUPZMhMSIvGyRXez4Eki_CD1W4V17Pt4LOwAdbIPB21vwI-zhpDOTZ0VZAi-roYyypujA_cZ-AqckigYo2cPMIrl0RPf8kqjRiwG7ced4o-U6zfe5k1J1HqYc2sOVEe0hki8QA8s8Cj0h3Wjg35hI-Q/http%3A%2F%2Fbecomingmorevisible.com%2F[36] https://cusystem.zoom.us/j/93516059638[37] mailto:facultycouncil@cu.edu[38] https://www.cu.edu/faculty-council/committees/lgbtq/2020-lgbtq-virtual-film-screening[39] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-boulder-summer-camps-move-online[40] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/uccs-biofrontiers-center-teams-el-paso-county-3d-print-protective-gear[41] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/looking-ahead-cu-denver-s-incoming-chancellor[42] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/watch-town-hall-covid-19-financial-impact-campus[43] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/covid-19-prompts-cctsi-launch-new-pilot-award-program-support-four-innovative-projects[44] https://connections.cu.edu/people/lieu-named-associate-director-clinical-research-cu-cancer-center[45] https://connections.cu.edu/people/larson-vaida-join-ranks-national-academy-sciences[46]

https://connections.cu.edu/people/five-college-stars-named-employees-year