Nine faculty members join ranks of CU Distinguished Professors[1]

Nine University of Colorado faculty members today are being named Distinguished Professors, CU's highest honor for faculty across the system's four campuses.

Today, the CU Board of Regents votes to approve the cohort of faculty members, recommended by President Todd Saliman with the concurrence of the systemwide Committee of Distinguished Professors.

CU Distinguished Professors are tenured faculty members who demonstrate exemplary performance in research or creative work; a record of excellence in promoting learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and outstanding service to the profession, the university and its affiliates.

This year's honorees will be formally celebrated during a board meeting in spring 2025.

Including this year's honorees, 153 Distinguished Professors[2] have been named since the title's establishment in 1977.

Distinguished Professors for 2024 are:

Robert Erickson, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Electrical, Computer, and Energy Engineering, University of Colorado Boulder; CTO, BREK Electronics

Erickson is a pioneering figure in power electronics whose innovative research has transformed the field and set new standards for efficiency and performance in electric vehicles, as well as in inverters for solar power, wind power and battery energy storage systems. His development of composite power converter architectures has redefined the capabilities of power electronics, leading to the creation of BREK Electronics, a successful CU spinoff where Erickson serves as Chief Technology Officer. His work has not only driven technological advancements but has also shaped the trajectory of the industry through his collaborations with government and industry partners. His research has been recognized through awards including the Institution of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) William E Newell Award, Life Fellow of the IEEE, the CU Boulder Inventor of the Year and others.

Erickson's impact on education is equally significant. His textbook, Fundamentals of Power Electronics, has become a foundational resource for engineers and educators worldwide. His dedication to advancing digital education is evident in his leadership in founding and development of the Coursera-based MS-EE program, the first fully online MS-EE degree program, with highly innovative features such as performance-based admissions that are revolutionizing access to professional education and setting a benchmark for online learning in engineering. He led the development of a Massive Open Online Course and a Coursera Specialization in Power Electronics that reached over 100,000 learners worldwide.

In addition to his research and educational contributions, Erickson has provided exceptional service to CU Boulder, serving as ECEE Department Chair three times, and also guiding the university's online and professional graduate programs through critical periods of growth. His leadership has positioned CU Boulder as a leader in distance education, ensuring the success and continued expansion of its programs in Electrical Engineering and Power Electronics. Erickson's enduring contributions to research, education and leadership have had a lasting impact on the field and the university.

Pieter Johnson, Ph.D., Professor of Distinction, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado Boulder

Johnson is a world leader in disease ecology whose pioneering research has fundamentally transformed how we understand the impact of diseases on ecosystems. His work has bridged critical gaps between parasitology, community ecology and environmental policy, addressing urgent global challenges such as species extinction, climate change and emerging diseases. As a founding figure in the field of disease ecology, his innovative approaches have reshaped how scientists and policymakers tackle ecological and public health crises, making his contributions critical to

biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management.

Johnson's influence extends well beyond research. As an educator, he has inspired thousands of students, integrating cutting-edge research into the classroom to foster a deep understanding of ecology and environmental science. His dedication to teaching has earned him numerous accolades, including the prestigious Hazel Barnes Award, recognizing his ability to engage students from diverse backgrounds and ignite their passion for scientific inquiry. His mentorship has produced a generation of scientists who are now making significant contributions in their fields, many of whom credit Johnson's mentorship for their success.

In addition to his academic contributions, Johnson is a dedicated advocate for public education and community engagement. His development of citizen science platforms and educational programs has connected K-12 students and underserved communities with hands-on research experiences, fostering a broader understanding of the importance of ecosystem health and its connections to human well-being. Through his extensive media presence and public outreach, he continues to raise awareness of the critical need to protect natural ecosystems in the face of growing environmental challenges.

Johnson's visionary research, outstanding teaching and commitment to public service make him a transformative figure in the field of disease ecology and an invaluable asset to the University of Colorado and the scientific community at large.

Nancy F. Krebs, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics, Associate Vice Chair, Academic Affairs, Department of Pediatrics, CU School of Medicine, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Krebs is a globally recognized leader in pediatric nutrition whose visionary research and leadership have established the University of Colorado as a premier authority in this field. Her work has driven significant advancements in understanding pediatric nutrition, particularly in fetal and infant growth, zinc homeostasis and physiologic requirements. Spanning from laboratory-based studies to multi-country randomized controlled trials, reflected in nearly 400 publications, Krebs' research has influenced clinical practice and public health policies worldwide.

As a dedicated mentor, Krebs has nurtured the careers of many researchers who have become leaders in the field of nutrition. Her commitment to fostering talent is exemplified by her role of directing for more than two decades the NIH/NIDDK T32 Interdepartmental Training Program in Nutrition and her recognition with a prestigious NIH K24 award for mentoring in patient-oriented research. To promote the integration of nutrition into clinical medicine, she spearheaded its incorporation into the core curriculum of the School of Medicine.

Beyond her research and teaching, she has made substantial contributions to the academic community through her leadership roles in the university. As Head of the Section of Nutrition (1998-2023), she expanded its scope and impact as an academic unit that is unique in Departments of Pediatrics in the U.S. Other key university positions include Chair/Co-Chair of the Department of Pediatrics' Promotion and Tenure Committee and Associate Vice Chair for Academic Affairs.

Krebs' exceptional contributions to research, mentorship and leadership have not only elevated CU's national and international reputation but have also had a lasting impact on the field of pediatric nutrition. Her career is a testament to innovation, leadership and a deep commitment to improving the health of children around the world.

Donald Y.M. Leung, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics, CU School of Medicine, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus; Edelstein Family Chair of Pediatric Allergy-Immunology, National Jewish Health

Leung is a globally recognized pioneer in pediatrics whose groundbreaking research in atopic dermatitis and allergy has reshaped the understanding and treatment of these conditions. His seminal discovery that Staphylococcus aureus and its superantigens drive inflammation in atopic dermatitis has been a transformative contribution, influencing clinical practice and scientific approaches to managing the disease. Leung's work has also expanded knowledge of critical immune mechanisms, including the role of Th2 cytokines in skin barrier dysfunction, and has provided new insights into

food allergies and asthma. He was the recipient of the prestigious SPR E. Meade Johnson Award and the AAAAI Distinguished Scientist award. He is also one of the most highly cited authors in dermatology literature.

Leung's leadership extends beyond his research, as he has guided numerous NIH-funded programs, including the prestigious Atopic Dermatitis Research Network. He has been the recipient of an NHLBI MERIT award and currently serves on the NIAMS Skin Diseases Study section. His work has not only impacted clinical treatments but has also been instrumental in fostering the next generation of medical scholars and researchers.

A renowned educator and mentor, Leung has played a pivotal role in training clinicians and researchers who are now leaders in their fields. His dedication to education and mentorship has left a lasting legacy in academic and clinical settings, helping to bridge the gap between research and patient care. Leung's visionary contributions to pediatric immunology and his commitment to mentoring make him an outstanding leader in the academic and medical communities.

Lee Niswander, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, University of Colorado Boulder

Niswander is a renowned leader in developmental biology whose groundbreaking work has transformed our understanding of limb and neural development. Her pioneering research on the molecular mechanisms that drive limb formation reshaped the field and is now a foundational element in modern developmental biology. Her later focus on neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, and the role of folate in spinal development has provided critical insights with far-reaching implications for preventing birth defects in humans.

Niswander was recruited from Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center to the CU Anschutz Medical Campus in 2004 to serve as the founder of the Developmental Biology Program in Pediatrics, and then to be chair of MCDB at CU Boulder since 2017. She is past president of the Society for Developmental Biology and current chair of the Pew Biomedical Scholars Program and former HHMI Investigator.

Niswander has not only made significant scientific contributions but has also nurtured the next generation of scientists as a mentor and leader. She has trained over 65 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and mentored over 20 undergraduates since joining CU Boulder. She has championed diversity and inclusion in the biosciences, fostering opportunities for women and underrepresented students. Her tireless efforts to promote equity in science have helped build a more inclusive environment within her department and beyond.

Her leadership in research, combined with her dedication to mentoring and her advocacy for diversity, makes her a transformative figure in the field of developmental biology. Niswander's integration of scholarship, teaching and service exemplifies her profound impact on the scientific community and the broader academic landscape.

Jill M. Norris, Ph.D., M.P.H., Professor and Chair, Epidemiology, Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Norris is a highly influential leader in epidemiology whose career has placed the University of Colorado at the forefront of type 1 diabetes and autoimmune disease research. Her pioneering work in diabetes epidemiology has significantly advanced the understanding of how lifestyle, genetics and environmental factors contribute to the disease. Her research has reshaped public health strategies for diabetes prevention and management, earning her recognition as one of the most distinguished figures in the field.

As an educator and mentor, Norris has had a transformative impact on the next generation of epidemiologists. Her commitment to guiding graduate and postdoctoral students has nurtured a generation of scholars who have gone on to make significant contributions in public health. Her dedication to mentoring has been recognized with numerous awards, reflecting her role in shaping the careers of emerging leaders in epidemiology.

Norris has played a critical role in the development of the Colorado School of Public Health, serving as Department

Chair of Epidemiology and contributing to key strategic initiatives that have strengthened the school's impact in research and education. Her leadership extends beyond the university, influencing national and international public health policy through her work with organizations like the American Diabetes Association and the National Institutes of Health. Norris' scholarly contributions, commitment to education and leadership in public health make her a remarkable force in the field.

Hanspeter Schaub, Ph.D., Professor and Department Chair, Schaden Leadership Chair, Ann and H.J. Smead Aerospace Engineering, University of Colorado Boulder

Schaub is a visionary leader in the field of astrodynamics and spacecraft control whose innovative research has advanced the theoretical and practical understanding of spacecraft operations. His pioneering contributions to spacecraft formation flying, proximity operations, autonomous spacecraft scheduling and charged astrodynamics have transformed how we model and manage spacecraft motion, particularly through his work in electrostatic charging. These advancements are reshaping space mission proximity and rendezvous concepts, enabling new capabilities in spacecraft control without physical contact.

Schaub's research has been instrumental in high-profile space projects, including the development of key components for the UAE Hope mission to Mars and the creation of the widely used Basilisk simulation environment. His work also explores the integration of machine learning into spacecraft command and control, opening new avenues for the future of space operations. His leadership in these cutting-edge fields is reflected in his recognition as a Fellow of both the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) and the American Astronautical Society (AAS), alongside prestigious awards like the AAS Dirk Brouwer Award and the AIAA Mechanics and Control of Flight Award. He won the University of Colorado Hazel Barnes prize for integrating his research into multiple graduate courses.

As an educator, Schaub has had a profound impact on aerospace engineering. His co-authored textbook is a cornerstone in universities worldwide, and his groundbreaking aerospace MOOC has brought advanced learning to tens of thousands of students. His commitment to education has been recognized with numerous awards, and his mentorship has guided the careers of dozens of Ph.D. students, fostering the next generation of leaders in the field. In his role as Department Chair and through his editorial leadership at the AIAA Journal of Spacecraft and Rockets, Schaub continues to shape the future of aerospace engineering research and education, leaving a lasting legacy in academia and industry.

Kurt R. Stenmark, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine, Director of Cardiovascular Pulmonary Research and Developmental Lung Biology Laboratories, La Cache Critical Care Chair in Pediatrics, CU School of Medicine, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Stenmark is an internationally acclaimed expert in pulmonary vascular disease whose pioneering research has revolutionized the understanding and treatment of this complex condition. His innovative work, which has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health for over three decades, has led to groundbreaking strategies for managing pulmonary hypertension and uncovered novel insights into the disease's mechanisms. These advancements have significantly improved patient outcomes and made a lasting contribution to the field. His remarkable career achievements have also helped shape the reputation of CU Anschutz as a leader in cardiovascular pulmonary disease research, positioning him at the forefront of clinical practice and scientific inquiry.

As the long-standing Program Director of the NIH/NHLBI Translational Pulmonary Vascular Biology T32 Program, Stenmark has played a pivotal role in shaping the careers of numerous scientists and clinicians. Under his mentorship, many of his protégés have risen to prominent leadership positions within academia and research, exemplifying his unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders in the field. His influence extends globally, having recently served as President of the Pulmonary Vascular Research Institute, where he continues to spearhead advancements in basic and clinical research.

In addition to his research, Stenmark has made profound contributions to the CU School of Medicine and Children's Hospital Colorado, strengthening their reputations as leaders in pediatric critical care. In the mid-1980s, he established

one of the nation's first board-certified programs in pediatric critical care, which he led as Division Head until just recently. Under his leadership, the program grew to become one of the largest and most highly regarded in the country, providing life-saving care to thousands of critically ill children across the Rocky Mountain region.

Stenmark's dedication to mentorship, his leadership within professional societies, and his relentless pursuit of advancements in medical science and education have left an enduring legacy in the field.

Christopher M. Weible, Ph.D., Professor, School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado Denver; Co-Director and Co-Founder, Center for Policy and Democracy

Weible is an internationally recognized authority in public policy whose work has significantly advanced the scholar community and our understanding of policy process theories, most notably the Advocacy Coalition Framework, a theory that explains how policy change occurs through adversarial relations among groups of people and organizations. A trailblazer in the policy sciences, Weible's contributions have profoundly influenced academic research and real-world policymaking. His scholarly work, including Theories of the Policy Process, has been foundational in classrooms worldwide, fundamentally shaping how policy processes are studied and understood. In recognition of his scholarship and leadership in advancing the study of policy processes, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Luleå University of Technology, Sweden.

Weible's influence extends beyond research to his exceptional role as a mentor and educator. His commitment to cultivating the next generation of public policy scholars has led numerous students to secure academic positions, making him one of the most impactful mentors at CU Denver. His dedication to student development has earned him the university's top mentoring awards, highlighting his profound influence on shaping future leaders in the field.

In service to the broader academic community, Weible has co-edited leading journals for over a decade, establishing platforms for global discourse on policy research. His leadership in launching the Conference on Policy Process Research (COPPR) has created a new hub for international collaboration, drawing scholars from across the globe. Through initiatives such as CU Denver's Grand Challenge, "Building Democratic Communities," Weible continues to inspire progress in the academic study and practical application of public policy, making him a leader in scholarship and service.

Dear Colorado campaign wins education sector marketing award[3]

Dear Colorado, CU's systemwide marketing campaign, has won gold honors in the digital advertising category of the national Education Digital Marketing Awards.

The 12th Annual Education Digital Marketing Awards[4] celebrate outstanding achievements in digital marketing in the education sector. Colleges, universities and secondary schools from across the country submitted entries for evaluation by a panel of judges that included education marketers, advertising creative directors, and marketing and advertising professionals.

Entries were evaluated for creativity, marketing execution, message impact, technology application and innovative content.

Dear Colorado[5] launched this year on Colorado Day, Aug. 1, with a series of social media posts inviting Coloradans to participate in an open dialogue about the state's attributes they most appreciate and value.

The campaign website LoveColorado.com[5] asks visitors to "Tell us what you love about Colorado." In response, the campaign tells stories that demonstrate how members of the CU community across the four campuses are working on what Coloradans care about.

The social media launch served as prelude to a larger marketing effort employing advertising and other assets, including a CU-branded van that is motoring across the state.

From breakthrough research to mentoring Colorado businesses, the University of Colorado is on a mission to highlight CU's impact on Coloradans' everyday lives and show how it all comes from a shared love for our state.

The CU community is encouraged to participate in the campaign by using the hashtag #DearColorado and engaging with the CU system social accounts on LinkedIn, Meta and X platforms.

Click here[6] to find campaign-themed background images for virtual meetings and other material you can download and promote in your social media posts.

Colorado Shakespeare Festival 2025: Power plays, betrayal and forgiveness [7]

Retired Navy Commander John Herrington '83 to deliver fall 2024 Commencement address [8]

CU Denver's quantum programs featured in new report on preparing the workforce of tomorrow from CU Boulder [9]

Study finds pharmacy closures impact anticonvulsant medication refills[10]

Samper receives award for excellence in engaged scholarship [11]

Lowe cultivates culture of belonging through instructional design [12]

Cooley officially sworn in as UCCS police chief [13]

University of Colorado Denver kicks off Native American Heritage Month with celebration [14]

Blast off: Colorado Springs college students' experiment to launch to ISS[15]

Why the publishing industry is hot for romance[16]

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