Five questions for Bob Damrauer[1]
[2]

During the past 50 years, Bob Damrauer has been a shining element at the University of Colorado Denver. When he was hired in 1968, the fledgling educational institution was called the Denver Center and was housed mostly in the Tramway Building on 14th Street and was winkingly referred to as “UCLA” – the University of Colorado between Lawrence and Arapahoe.

The first years of his employment weren’t exactly fabulous – he came to a department that had no equipment – but Damrauer and his colleagues worked through the void and he has continued through the years to help build the department and the university.

He was recruited by two forward-looking Boulder chemistry faculty members, Stan Cristol and Chuck DePuy, to help build a chemistry department. The two distinguished organic chemists, both departmental leaders, saw that Denver deserved a major university as it was becoming a major city in the United States, Damrauer said.

“When I came, the department was very small with only one recent hire, Denis Williams, with whom I worked for years to help build the department,” Damrauer said.

A professor of chemistry, Damrauer also is an associate vice chancellor for research and special assistant to the provost. He served in other roles over the years and has been honored with many awards, including those for excellence in teaching and service.

During a recent gathering to celebrate his extraordinary feat, Chancellor Dorothy Horrell said, “Everyone in this room would have a Bob Damrauer story to share. … (He) has impacted each of us in extraordinary ways. Bob has never allowed this place to think that it could be anything but great.”

1. How did you choose this career path?

I had an uncle, who had been a chemistry professor at Purdue, but returned to Toledo to start his own chemical company. He managed to find me a job with a friend at a small analytical lab when I was 15 or so. It was close enough to my home so I could ride my bike to work after school. Subsequently, I worked for years for my uncle at his company in an assortment of jobs with an assortment of people. I now know there was a distinct plan in that part of my education, since even though I was the boss’s nephew, I worked with people of varied backgrounds and skills, all of whom had a lot to teach me about life and making my way in it.

A major influence on me after arriving in Denver was Paul Bartlett, the founding dean of the Engineering College. Somehow, I came under his wing: Every word I wrote, he carefully edited; every action I was considering, we discussed. He was a gentle mentor, but one whose standards and extraordinary work ethic spoke volumes to me.

2. You recently celebrated your 50th anniversary with the university. You’ve served as a professor, but also many other roles. Do you have a favorite?

I have loved more than anything being in the classroom and engaging students in learning. I have wanted students to love the things I love and to find ways to explore their worlds of interest. But, while I was asked to help build a chemistry department, I somehow also decided I wanted to be involved building something more, namely a quality university in this great city of Denver. So I have tried to do both and have enjoyed myself immensely.

My greatest passion outside the classroom has been in activities related to faculty development. In helping establish our Center for Faculty Development, chairing our highest-level Promotion and Tenure committee for many years, and heading our Office of Research Services, I have stayed close to the interests and needs of faculty, and, hopefully, had a positive effect on their career development.

3. What are your main research interests and how have they progressed over the years?

My research has concentrated on the study of silicon atoms inserted strategically into organic systems. Silicon is periodically related to carbon, but its behavior is different. My major research goals focused on preparing organic species that had silicon placed in stressful situations and studying the impact of its placement.

I began thinking about this as an MIT graduate student, but the actual work began in Denver. When I got to Denver, there was essentially no equipment or infrastructure in chemistry in Denver. That had to be acquired and built; lots of juggling was required to be scientifically productive. Largely undergraduate students initially wanted to work in my lab, after which a few graduate students from Boulder and local industry joined in the research efforts.

Every few years I have tried to make changes in my research focus, both to learn and keep challenged.

Some years after establishing a Denver laboratory presence, I began collaborating with Chuck DePuy and Ronnie Bierbaum in Boulder on some gas-phase ion chemistry that still probed the effects of silicon in organic systems, but did so in very different ways. That collaboration, along with running my Denver operation, lasted some 20 years. It was a remarkable one for us and our students, since the work being done by three independently funded and fundamentally different scientists provided special opportunities for students, postdocs and us.

The next research chapter arose when I decided I wanted to learn enough about computational chemistry to study some of the systems we had considered in the gas-phase. That work was greatly helped by my friend and colleague, Mark Gordon, a well-known theoretical and computational chemist at Iowa State. The wonders of email facilitated my education, since Mark would answer my questions quickly, no matter where he was in the world. His tutelage has led to several publications as well as some funding. More than that, it allowed me to begin to better appreciate an area of chemistry that has become of widespread importance.

There are several things I am proud of in this work: that it could be done at all under primitive initial conditions, that the conditions could be made so much better through the hard work and the support of many students, and the support of funding agencies and the university. I think I also can say that several research studies have had important impacts.

4. What are some of your favorite memories from your time at CU?

When I came to CU Denver, there were no silos. Departments were non-existent or tiny; we were all housed in a big building so your next-door office neighbor was more likely to be in English or history than chemistry. Friends made otherwise trying times not just tolerable, but very enjoyable and very stimulating.

I came when a number of faculty were hired as CU Denver was to “explode” into a great urban university. They came from fine institutions and had distinguished pedigrees. We concentrated our efforts on building CU Denver, many by devoting themselves largely to dedicated teaching, some by helping to manage the crises that we always seemed to face, and some by concentrating on their research efforts. There were many years of stress, none without challenge, and none that were not fun. My fondest memories are of the folks who have built this place.

I look out of my window today and see a real university that is both tribute and legacy to the efforts of so many. We have and continue to build an institution that takes seriously both teaching and scholarship, balancing them on a fine edge to showcase both.

5. What hobbies or leisure activities do you enjoy?

I am a reader primarily of nonfiction, mostly of history. I have spent a life trying to educate myself beyond the rigorous scientific education that was too science oriented. I have particular interests in science history, concentrating more than anything on the history surrounding the development of quantum mechanics, building of the atomic bomb, and the lives and times of scientific heroes like Einstein and Bohr.

Music occupies me a lot, mostly classical, more opera in the last few years.

I was an enthusiastic tennis and baseball participant for years, but now mostly walk for exercise, and dissemble about just how good I was at those sports.

CU Advocates program celebrates seventh anniversary with awards[3]
[4]

Friday's seventh anniversary celebration of the CU Advocates[5] program featured the announcement of a new CU Advocate of the Year, along with three other award presentations to outstanding members of the grass-roots group, which now numbers more than 4,300.

About 100 members of the group attended a reception at the Denver Country Club hosted by President Bruce and Marcy Benson.
[6]

Jane Dillon of Colorado Springs received the CU Advocate of the Year Award, given to an individual who demonstrates exceptional advocacy at multiple levels on behalf of CU. She is a significant contributor to the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, where she has funded 18 scholarships and recently established an endowment for the campus.

"She has single-handedly elevated the CU Colorado Springs campus through her service, outreach and advocacy for CU," said Michele McKinney, assistant vice president of advocacy and external relations at CU. "She's one-of-a-kind, especially not being a CU alum or parent. She believes in the influence, impact and economic activity a vibrant university can have on a city and its people."

Originally from Texas, Dillon moved to Colorado Springs in 1999 from New York City, where she was Assistant Commissioner for Business Services under New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

In Colorado Springs, Dillon has served on the PPRTA Advisory Council, the City Transportation Advisory Board (two years as chair), the El Paso County Planning Commission (currently vice chair), the County's Highway Advisory Commission and the County's Parks Advisory Board. Her activities at UCCS include the Theatreworks Advisory Board and the KPWE Advisory Board (mentor coordinator).

The event featured this video tribute to Dillon's advocacy:

Also honored at last week's event:
[7]

Karen Tuke, CU Staff Advocate of the Year

Tuke works in marketing and advertising at the CU Book Store. She lends her expertise to CU Advocates, having designed marketing material for the program, and frequently volunteers in support roles at CU Advocates events.
[8]

Kat Vierzba, CU Community Advocate of the Year

A CU Boulder alumna, Vierzba served as president of a Forever Buffs Alumni Chapter before returning to Colorado two years ago. Her community engagement has strengthened ties between the CU Advocates, Forever Buffs, CU Young Alumni and Buffs4Life. As a volunteer, she plays a key role in social media marketing for CU Advocates.
[9]

Michelle Sze, CU Student Advocate of the Year

A six-year graduate student studying physics at CU Boulder, she works at JILA, where she teaches a physics class and lab. She is a frequent attendee at educational events hosted by CU Advocates.

Friday's event featured remarks from President Benson; McKinney; Christina Beck, 2017 CU Advocate of the Year; and Colin Finch, chair of the CU Advocates Advisory Board and 2015 CU Advocate of the Year.

Also in attendance: Past CU Advocates of the Year Kimbirly Orr, 2016; George Gramer, 2014; and Alvin Rivera, 2013. CU leaders in attendance included Regent Chair Sue Sharkey, Regents Emereti Norwood Robb and Paul Schauer; CU Denver Chancellor Dorothy Horrell and UCCS Chancellor Venkat Reddy.

CU Advocates is the official grass-roots network of the University of Colorado. Its mission is to connect educated, engaged volunteers who care about the university and work to promote its educational, research and economic contributions to Colorado and beyond. Members also help raise awareness about issues broadly affecting higher education.

Since 2011, the CU Advocates program has presented more than 250 educational and advocacy-related programs and activities across the state, showcasing aspects of CU's academics and research across all four campuses.

Members of the CU Advocates program promote CU to prospective students and parents. They contact elected officials in response to legislative calls-to-action from the university. Advocates attend educational programs hosted by the university to gain a deeper of CU's work to address issues, including research discoveries, as well as understanding the policy challenges and opportunities facing CU. Many advocates have written letters to the editor and guest commentary pieces published in newspapers and other media. Advocates have hosted community events outside the Front Range to welcome new students from northeastern Colorado, the Western Slope and southern Colorado.

Regents announce presidential search firm[10]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents has selected Wheless Partners Consulting and Executive Search — one of the nation's leading executive search consultant and human capital advisory firms — to assist in searching for CU's next president.

Wheless Senior Partners Mike JR Wheless, Dr. Robert E. Witt and Scott Watson will lead the search process and candidate recruitment effort on behalf of CU and the board. The Board of Regents selected Wheless Partners after a competitive process that drew proposals from leading national firms.

The Wheless Partners team has client partners in Colorado and around the country, and an impressive track record of successfully conducting president, chancellor, CEO and executive searches in higher education and other industries. Wheless Partners has a strong record of placing candidates who have been successful in higher education, as well as success in attracting a strong pool of diverse candidates.

"Wheless Partners has an excellent track record of success in placing effective, dynamic leaders," said Sue Sharkey, chair of the CU Board of Regents. "With Wheless Partners' deep nationwide network and leading-edge business and search model, Wheless provides coverage across education, government and all industries in order to find a gifted CEO to lead the CU system. We look forward to working with them to find CU's next great leader."

Sharkey said the regents are particularly looking forward to working with Dr. Witt, who previously served as a campus chancellor and system president for the University of Alabama and is recognized as an established leader in the higher education community.

CU President Bruce D. Benson informed the board in July that he will retire from the university in July 2019. The board has issued a call for nominations for members of the search committee, which is expected to be empaneled this month.

The board named Regents Heidi Ganahl and Irene Griego as search committee co-chairs.

For more information about CU's presidential search, please visit https://www.cu.edu/presidential-search[11].

Call for proposals: Open Educational Resources grants[12]

The Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado OER (Open Educational Resources) Council are accepting proposals for the Open Educational Resources grant[13].

This grant program was created to:
Raise awareness of OER among faculty, staff and students in Colorado Provide funding to institutions, faculty and staff, and support and expand the creation, adoption, adaptation and promotion of the use of OER in Colorado Save students at Colorado's public institutions of higher education in textbook costs in the coming years
The OER grant program will aid CU and other institutions in the pursuit of the Colorado Statewide Master Plan Strategic Goals[14] by encouraging innovation, investing in affordability, improving student success and addressing the equity gaps in the state.

Application deadline is Oct. 31.

More information is available at: http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/oer-in-colorado/[13].

Members of the CU/Auraria OER Steering Team welcome expressions of interest in submitting a proposal and are available to answer questions about the grant program:
CU Boulder: Caroline Sinkinson, caroline.sinkinson@colorado.edu[15] UCCS: Dave Anderson, danderso@uccs.edu [16] CU Denver: Ellen Metter, ellen.metter@ucdenver.edu[17] CU Anschutz Medical Campus: Ben Harnke, ben.harnke@ucdenver.edu[18] CU system: Deborah Keyek-Franssen, deblkf@cu.edu[19]

Call for nominations: 2019 Regents awards[20]

The University of Colorado Board of Regents is soliciting nominations for its 2019 slate of Honorary Degrees, University Medals and Distinguished Service Awards.

An **Honorary Degree** (Doctor of Humane Letters or Doctor of Science) is the highest award CU can bestow. It is the policy of the Board of Regents to award Honorary Degrees in recognition of outstanding achievement in one or more of the following areas: intellectual contributions, university service, public service and/or philanthropy.

University Medals are awarded in recognition of those persons whose achievements and contributions are particularly associated with the university.

Distinguished Service Awards are awarded in recognition of achievements and contributions particularly associated with the state and/or nation.

Visit the newly updated website[21] for information on the nomination process and to nominate someone for an Honorary Degree, University Medal, or Distinguished Service Award.

Nominations are due Nov. 1.

Please direct questions about the process to the respective campus's canvassing committee:
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Retirement Ready events help faculty, staff develop plan[26]

There's a lot to plan for and consider before retirement. In an effort to help prepare University of Colorado faculty and staff members who are within five years of retirement, Employee Services will host Retirement Ready on CU campuses from Oct. 26 to Nov. 6.

Retirement Ready presents a comprehensive overview of the ins and outs of retiring with PERA or CU 401(a) retirement plans, Medicare, Social Security and income options after retirement.

Between talks, employees can fuel up with refreshments and stop by the Vendor Fair to speak with representatives from each presentation, get their questions answered, pick up informational material and set up appointments with TIAA.

"If you are thinking about retiring within the next five years, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources available at Retirement Ready," said Sharon Bishop, assistant vice president of benefits and payroll in Employee Services. "You have worked hard for your retirement. Let these knowledgeable professionals help you navigate through the details."

Running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., events will be held Oct. 26 at CU Anschutz, Oct. 29 at UCCS, Oct. 30 at CU system administration, Nov. 5 at CU Boulder and Nov. 6 at CU Denver. Participants can customize their talk schedules when they register. Spouses and partners are welcome to attend.

Presentations
CU's Process for Retiring: 401(a) Participants: This talk for CU 401(a) participants explains university retiree benefit options and the process behind becoming a university retiree. Topics include eligibility requirements, the process of

retiring with CU and available benefit options. **CU's Process for Retiring: PERA Participants:** This presentation will teach PERA participants about university retiree benefit options and the process behind becoming a university retiree. The talk covers topics such as eligibility requirements, the process of retiring with CU and available benefit options. **Paying Yourself: Income Options in Retirement:** It's almost time to turn retirement savings into a regular monthly income. Learn about basic rules that govern the most common retirement accounts, when to tap into different assets and flexible income choices offered by TIAA. **Preparing for Retirement from PERA:** This session provides valuable planning information to help PERA participants meet retirement goals. Topics include monthly and lump-sum benefit options, annual increases, tax implications and more. **PERACare:** Learn about the PERACare Health Benefits Program, including eligibility, pre-Medicare and Medicare plan choices, prescription benefits and other subjects. **Medicare 101:** This presentation covers the four basic parts of Medicare: hospital insurance, medical insurance, Medicare Advantage plans and prescription drug plans. Experts will detail how Medicare works with other insurances and provide helpful informational resources. **Social Security:** Social Security is a large part of retiring – one that often leaves people confused. This interactive lecture provides clarity on Social Security retirement benefits, pre-retirement planning and more.
Registration is open: Visit the Retirement Ready website[27] to view full event information and register.

CU's Optional Term Life Insurance maximum increased to $1 million[28]

University of Colorado employees now may enroll in up to $1 million of Optional Term Life Insurance, up from $500,000, as part of an Oct. 1 policy change. Coverage limits for eligible spouses and dependent children remain unchanged.

The optional term life insurance plan includes an accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefit in the same amount. The maximum amount of this policy is $1 million for employees, $500,000 for a spouse and a flat amount of $5,000 or $10,000 for eligible dependent children.

What this policy change means for you depends on when you became eligible for benefits:

New Employees

If you are a new hire who became benefits-eligible on Oct. 1, 2018, you may enroll in Optional Term Life Insurance in $1,000 increments up to three times your annual salary, not to exceed $1 million. For any amount above three times your salary, you must send a Medical History Statement Form[29] to the Standard Life Insurance Company for approval.

New hires must enroll in CU-offered benefits within 31 days of hire.

Learn more about CU's optional term life insurance for new employees here[30].

Current Employees

Current benefits-eligible employees may increase their Optional Term Life Insurance up to $1 million by submitting a Medical History Statement Form[29] to the Standard Life Insurance Company at any time for approval.

Learn more about CU's optional term life insurance for current employees here[31].

Research and Innovation Week offers something for everyone[32]

Colorado Springs economy expected to continue outpacing nation [33]

Underground drones could save lives [34]

University of Colorado Cancer Center Director Richard Schulick speaks at town hall [35]

Scot Chadwick is CU South Denver's new vice chancellor[36]

Trego named Distinguished Nurse Scholar-in-Residence [37]

Wood honored as 2018 Outstanding Fundraising Executive[38]

Anton selected as 2018 Bill Daniels Ethical Leader of the Year[39]

In memoriam: Vicki Erickson[40]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-bob-damrauer[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/damrauer_01.jpg[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-advocates-program-celebrates-seventh-anniversary-awards[4] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuadv_top.jpg[5] http://www.cu.edu/cu-advocates[6] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuadv_dillon.jpg[7] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuadv_tuke.jpg[8] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuadv_vierzba.jpg[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuadv_sze.jpg[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/regents-announce-presidential-search-firm[11] https://www.cu.edu/presidential-search[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/call-proposals-open-educational-resources-grants[13] http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/oer-in-colorado/[14] http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/the-colorado-goal-66-percent-statewide-attainment/[15]

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