Five questions for Heidi Ganahl[1]
[2]

Heidi Ganahl's days were plenty busy before she won election to the CU Board of Regents. Not surprisingly, that new role has added to her activity level. About nine months into her six-year term, the Republican from Superior brings a smiling, enthusiastic presence to the entity that oversees her alma mater – CU Boulder – and the rest of the system. [3]

"Every day is an adventure," Ganahl said. "I have four children ranging in age from 5 to 22, so they are priority one – and the dog!"

Her well-known love of dogs helped her build a $100 million brand, Camp Bow Wow, which grew into the largest pet-care franchise in the country.

"My husband is an entrepreneur as well and has a barbecue brand that is growing like crazy. I'm also looking at launching a new franchise concept," she said. "My time as a regent is spent attending CU events, committee meetings for our board, reaching out to business and community leaders to discuss partnerships, and spending time with constituents."

That leaves little free time, but when she finds it, Ganahl spends it with her younger kids, visits her oldest daughter in Oregon, mentors young entrepreneurs and takes in college football games. There's also yoga, running – and hiking with Henry the Labrador.

1. When you recall your days attending CU Boulder and earning your undergraduate degree, what's most memorable?

I started my college experience at SMU in Dallas, but then transferred to CU and felt immediately at home. Those years were filled with meeting great people – I made lifetime friends that I'm still close to through my sorority, Delta Gamma; my job at the CU Business Research Division; and my involvement in various groups at the B School – now Leeds.

My first home at CU Boulder was in Williams Village, where I had a floor filled with incredible people whom I remain friends with today. I worked hard, usually a couple of jobs at once, to pay my way through school. So my schedule was intense, but I managed to fit in a lot of fun, too.

I still remember the first football game I went to: We beat Nebraska 20-10! I've been a die-hard Buffs football fan ever since. I remember the places to go out were Tulagi's, Pearl's and Potter's, and we still had the mall crawl back then on Halloween.

2. Your Camp Bow Wow experience is a widely known business success story. How are the lessons you learned applicable to others looking to become entrepreneurial?

The key lesson is to build a business around something you love. Passion for what you are doing gets you through the toughest of times. Also, build a team of people around you who are the best of the best, and follow the golden rule – treat others as you would have them treat you.

Being an entrepreneur is not easy, but it's something everyone should try once. It teaches you about grit, passion, leadership and tenacity. Creating jobs is one of the most important things we can do to keep opportunity alive for generations – and entrepreneurs make that happen.

3. How did you come to establish the Fight Back Foundation[4], and what is the focus of your work with this effort?

Our family dealt with a horrible experience a few years ago when one of my children was sexually assaulted here in Boulder County. The justice process was a disaster and so I started Fight Back to hold district attorneys accountable to

prosecute these cases and protect our children.

Fight Back has evolved now into an incubator to support social entrepreneurs who want to tackle the most pressing issues confronting kids in Colorado today. We work with founders who believe they will do well by doing good. Our team works to give our start-ups access to mentors, funders, and partners to tackle the problem from all sides and set them up for a sustainable, successful future.

4. You were sworn in as a regent in January, but you already have gained quite a bit of experience. What are some of the highlights so far?
[5]

This year I've meet with business leaders all over Colorado discussing their needs, what CU is up to and how we can partner. The opportunities are limitless. Whether it's discussing a research project between an engineering firm and our School of Engineering, or a speaker event at CU with industry leaders, or an investment in educating our future workforce, the partnership between our business leaders and CU is vital.

CU's fundraising efforts are breaking records as well, and that's because donors recognize the tremendous value of investing in educating our future business leaders, doing research that helps build the next Boeing, Apple or Amazon, or finding the cure for cancer.

Higher education is changing at a rapid pace and we have to do all we can to stay ahead of those changes. For me, one key takeaway from this summer's Board of Regents retreat was that we need to focus on creating value for our students and alumni. Value means different things to different people, but I believe we need to focus on offering degree programs that correlate with the jobs of the future, and make sure our students graduate knowing how to think, not what to think.

Over the summer, I attended celebration events for new CU students in Grand Junction and Pueblo. The students I met were fantastic – they inspired me! It was so exciting to hear about their hopes and fears about entering college, and the dreams they have to make a difference in the world. It was also great to meet the parents of our new students and hear their concerns and feedback. CU serves all of Colorado, not just our metro areas, so it's vital we spend time in our rural communities listening and supporting our CU families there.

5. What have you learned about the University of Colorado that you didn't know before you were elected to the Board of Regents?

I am so proud and honored to be in this role. With every student, faculty and staff member that I meet, I grow more impressed with the CU community and our commitment to Colorado. Last month, we learned that CU has a $12 billion impact on the Colorado economy[6]. I've learned that CU reaches into every community in Colorado through our medical school, our research, our community partnerships and our students. CU is truly one of the pillars of our state and I could not be more excited about our involvement in shaping the future of Colorado.

I truly believe education is the key to keeping the American dream alive. We all need to get involved to make sure our children have the same opportunities we have when it comes to getting educated, and be the change we want to see in the world!

Four top CU Advocates honored at sixth anniversary celebration[7]

A special group of CU supporters came together Friday at the Denver Country Club for the sixth anniversary of the CU Advocates[8] program, which now counts more than 3,500 members in Colorado and around the world.

President Bruce and Marcy Benson hosted the reception, where a slate of annual awards celebrated four top CU Advocates.

[9]

Christina Beck, executive assistant to the athletics director at CU Boulder, is the CU Advocate of the Year. She brings intense dedication and passion to her work in athletics, transcending activity on the fields of play. Beck also volunteers her time at functions serving the campus and beyond, serving as a conduit between community members and the sports they're passionate about. Her advocacy for CU athletics begins at the many games she attends and extends to the greater university, where she enthusiastically connects with a wide variety of people on a first-name basis.

Destin Mehess, interim principal at Central High School in Pueblo, is the CU Community Advocate of the Year. She is credited with building a bridge between students at her school and CU campuses. A CU Advocate since 2013, she has played a pivotal role in establishing CU Celebration events in Pueblo, where hundreds of new CU students and family members are welcomed to the university family. A former science teacher, Mehess also has helped students from her school visit CU Boulder, where they gain pre-collegiate exposure to CU's expertise in the STEM fields.

Darren Chavez, program coordinator for Academic Affairs operations at the CU system, is the CU Staff Advocate of the Year. He has worked to raise awareness of CU Advocates efforts among CU faculty members, and has integrated CU Advocates programs and activities into those of CU's Academic Affairs Office. A can-do team member who's always eager to step up and help in a volunteer capacity, Chavez recruited more than 50 soon-to-graduate CU Boulder students as CU Advocates at a single event.

Johnnie Nguyen, a political science student at CU Denver, is the CU Student Advocate of the Year. Slated to graduate in December, he is a former intern for the CU Advocates program. He is a consummate volunteer for the university, having served on student government and advocating for inclusion on campus. A first-generation college student, Nguyen has a natural gift for connecting with members of under-represented communities. He is active in state and local politics with plans to attend law school at CU Boulder.

The event featured remarks from President Benson, as well as Michele McKinney, assistant vice president for external affairs and advocacy, and Kimbirly Orr, the 2016 CU Advocate of the Year. Also attending were past CU Advocates of the Year Colin Finch (2015), George Gramer (2014) and Alvin Rivera (2013). CU leaders in attendance included Regent Sue Sharkey and CU Denver Chancellor Dorothy Horrell.

CU Advocates is a grassroots network of 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 200 educational and advocacy-related programs and activities across the state, showcasing aspects of CU's academics and research across all four campuses.

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

Experts provide direction, how-to advice at Retirement Ready events[10]

Three in 10 people in the workforce claim that preparing for retirement causes them to feel stressed mentally and emotionally, according to the 2017 Retirement Confidence Survey conducted by the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

The University of Colorado wants its workforce to feel confident and prepared on the road to retirement, which is why Employee Services developed Retirement Ready: A CU Financial Event[11].

The event will be on each CU campus Nov. 6-15, and is designed to give employees within five years of retirement a comprehensive overview of retiring with PERA or 401(a) plans, Medicare, Social Security and income options after retirement.

“This year I am excited to have a representative from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services present on Medicare, a first at these sessions,” said Michelle Martinez, director of benefits administration in Employee Services. “It is important employees understand their Medicare and Social Security options prior to, and as they prepare for, retirement.”

Attend Retirement Ready on the campus of your choosing. Presentation availability varies by campus and Vendor Fairs will be held 10 a.m.-3 p.m. during each event. Be sure to stop by and speak one-on-one with representatives from each talk, get your personal questions answered, pick up informational material and set up appointments with TIAA.

Presentations include:

CU's Process for Retiring: 401(a) Participants: Are you a CU 401(a) participant? Learn more about your university retiree benefit options and the process behind becoming a university retiree.

Paying Yourself: Income options in retirement: You’ve finally saved enough and you’re ready to retire…what are your income options now? Learn about basic rules that govern the most common retirement accounts, when to tap into different assets and flexible income choices offered by TIAA.

Market Volatility: What’s the best way to handle market ups and downs? This seminar offers best practices and actionable steps to help investors steer through stormy markets to help stay on the path to financial security. (Only at CU Boulder and CU Anschutz.)

Medicare 101: This presentation covers the four basic parts of Medicare: Hospital Insurance, Medical Insurance, Medicare Advantage Plans and Prescription drug plans. Experts will teach you how Medicare works with other insurances and provide helpful informational resources. (Will not be held at the CU system event, due to a scheduling conflict.)

Social Security: Social Security is a large part of retiring and often leaves people confused. If there are areas you would like to learn more about, or if you just have general questions, this interactive lecture will give you the clarity you seek. (Not part of the UCCS event, due to a scheduling conflict.)

CU’s Process for Retiring: PERA Participants: Are you a PERA participant? Learn about your university retiree benefit options and the process behind becoming a university retiree.

Preparing for Retirement from PERA: Get the most out of your PERA account. This session provides valuable information needed to help meet your retirement goals.

View full event information and register on the Retirement Ready website[12].

Buffs helping Buffs: The gift of life[13]

NIST adds nearly $2 billion in economic contributions to Maryland and Colorado [14]

‘Back to the Future’ to come to campus[15]

Volunteer for CU at the Table[16]

New donor walls showcase generosity and vision of CU Anschutz philanthropic community[17]

Strain receives $4.7 million in autism-related grants[18]

Townsend named new director of INSTAAR[19]

Faculty achievement celebrated at CU Boulder event [20]

Eight picked as ethics fellows[21]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-heidi-ganahl[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/5q-ganahl_feat.jpg[3] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/5q-ganahl_02.jpg[4] http://fightback.foundation/[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/5q-ganahl_03.jpg[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-s-economic-impact-1235-billion-annually[7] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/four-top-cu-advocates-honored-sixth-anniversary-celebration[8] http://www.cu.edu/cu-advocates[9] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cuaoty_slide_beck.jpg [10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/experts-provide-direction-how-advice-retirement-ready-events[11] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/coming-soon/retirement-ready[12] https://www.cu.edu/retirement-ready[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/buffs-helping-buffs-gift-life[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/nist-adds-nearly-2-billion-economic-contributions-maryland-and-colorado[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/back-future-come-campus[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/volunteer-cu-table[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-donor-walls-showcase-generosity-and-vision-cu-anschutz-philanthropic-community[18] https://connections.cu.edu/people/strain-receives-47-million-autism-related-grants[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/townsend-named-new-director-instaar[20] https://connections.cu.edu/people/faculty-achievement-celebrated-cu-boulder-event[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/eight-picked-ethics-fellows