

[Five questions for Tanya Heikkila](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

[2]

Conflict is an age-old issue, but so is concord. Tanya Heikkila's teaching and research focuses on policy processes, especially "the two sides of a coin" in the debate in order to understand how people can move from disagreements to collaboration in the highly politicized world of energy governance.

While earning a master's degree in public administration at the University of Arizona, she researched the coordination of ground and surface water management.

"I got really into it, and my adviser said I should look into getting a Ph.D., since the data I had been collecting could be used for a dissertation. I naively said, 'That's a good idea.' But it turned out to be a great career choice. I love being able to integrate what I learn from my research into my classes and teaching," said Heikkila, a professor in CU Denver's School of Public Affairs and associate dean for faculty affairs.

[3]

Her early career work focused on water governance. For the past six years, Heikkila has been studying politics around oil and gas issues, and, more recently, other types of energy infrastructure, including wind and solar.

As someone who loves studying the environment, she also loves playing in the outdoors – hiking, skiing and rafting. Another love is international travel. She recently was in Peru for a conference, and at its conclusion, was joined by her husband and children for a visit to Machu Picchu.

**1. You are in the middle of a two-year grant to research conflict in energy infrastructure sitings. What are you learning and what do you hope to accomplish with your findings?**

That grant, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, is a collaborative project with my colleague Chris Weible and several of our Ph.D. students here at the School of Public Affairs. We are trying to understand how conflict and concord emerge around the siting decisions for four types of energy infrastructure – wind and solar energy, and natural gas pipelines and transmission lines – partly to get a better sense of the differences across these infrastructure types.

We got into this largely because a lot of attention gets focused on the high-conflict cases when we do research or even in the news media, and our speculation is that there is more of a distribution of conflict. We don't just have high conflict then no conflict, we have different types of conflict. There are a lot of cases of low conflict or some areas of agreement that don't often get studied or highlighted in the news media.

We are trying to get a better sense of what is that distribution of conflict and concord around these projects and what is associated with it. What are the characteristics, the location and the people involved and the types of strategies that emerge in these projects? We are doing some news media and media analysis and are collecting demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the areas where these projects are located to help explore the characteristics of conflict and concord and how they compare across different types of energy infrastructure.

Ideally, we are contributing to the academic dialogue, but hopefully we can provide practical insights as well around how we can better understand what might trigger the types of severe conflicts that often arise, or when people are more likely to be in agreement on these siting decisions.

**2. Have you worked with groups or entities to help them understand conflicts and move toward collaboration?**

Most of my research has been funded by the National Science Foundation or agencies like Sloan's that want to see some academic output, but I think more and more, academics and funding agencies want to see more engaged scholarship and more practical output.

I've been working on that kind of engaged scholarship process in different ways. Under another Sloan Foundation

grant that focused on the politics of oil and gas development, we brought together stakeholders from nonprofits, industry, government and other interest groups so they could inform us of what types of questions they might be concerned about in terms of the politics and the debates around oil and gas development. We also shared our findings and offered some suggestions of what the findings might imply for decision-makers. We've had a couple of these small dialogue processes that were meant to provide a safe space to have conversations around difficult issues because, as you know, the oil and gas debate has been politicized here and across the country for the past 10 years or so. We've tried to have these conversations in more neutral ways to provide a venue for people – who may disagree and may be actively contesting each other – to sit down and talk. And we can see how politics are playing out in the state and what would be helpful for policy makers to know.

I also spent a couple of years with the Aspen Institute in a dialog series with a similar group of people from the environmental community, industry, state government and academia. We got together every few months to talk about the governance challenges around shale oil and gas development that uses hydraulic fracturing. We discussed what recommendations we could provide to broader industry and government groups to improve how stakeholder engagement is happening and to improve information flows about the impacts of oil and gas development, which, in turn, could improve some of the interactions between the industry, government, environmental groups, and communities where oil and gas development is occurring.

That was a wonderful process and opportunity for me to provide input on some of these broader questions and to sit down and talk with people in deep and meaningful ways around these challenges. There's always the assumption that we can find technical solutions to most environmental dilemmas, but at the end of the day, people recognize that it is truly the politics and the institutional challenges that prevent us from making good progress on how we manage difficult environmental challenges.

**3. If humans are the problem, does that mean conflict and collaboration are similar across all sectors or is environmental governance different? Is it more emotional, for instance?**

I teach environmental policy to master's students and the beginning of the class is focused on why we see so much conflict around environmental issues. Why do we see people challenging climate change and the science around climate change? I think certainly there are other highly contested political issues out there – gun control, immigration, abortion – that spark intense conflict. I think across those issues, it is about the fundamental challenges of competing human values, but it also goes beyond that.

People can have competing values and still come to agreement on issues, and so there are other things that trip us up. One of them is this idea of perceived threat. If your action in making policy or proposing policy are perceived as threatening to me, that you are going to take away something I have, that is going to fuel my emotions in that policy debate and make me less liable to compromise on an issue. When we see variation in intensity of conflict, a lot of it comes down to my perception of my opponent's position, so to speak, and how much of that is a threat to me. It also intensifies the political behaviors we see where people engage in a range of activities from lobbying to influencing the media to court cases.

**4. Your research also focuses on concord, or agreements. What is an example of a positive outcome?**

I see this as kind of two-sided coin. I'm interested in understanding conflict but also what motivates and incentivizes people to solve collective-action problems and work together when they have different interests and goals and values.

One of the cool things about the environmental field is that, while we see a lot of conflict, we also see a lot of collaboration. We see amazing examples of how people have worked through decades of disputes, for example managing transboundary water issues, and come to an agreement to say this is how we are going to solve this problem. I look at how we devise institutional arrangements and government processes to support that type of collaboration, but I've also looked at how we can engage in learning in those processes.

One of the biggest challenges right now in our politics is how we learn and whether we can learn from each other. It goes back to the basic psychological challenges we have. When we are in intense emotional conflict, we tend to shut down to information we disagree with, and we are seeing this in our politics today.

The question is, how do we get over that? What types of mechanisms in a governance process can help us overcome that tendency to dismiss information we disagree with and only accept information from sources that reinforces what we already know?

There are examples of collaboration out there, and I think there is a lot of hope. I spent a number of years looking at the Everglades in south Florida. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was authorized in 2000, and was sparked by an awareness that the ecosystem had been severely impaired by infrastructure for flood control for increased development and by farming that was releasing phosphorus into the Everglades and the national park, which historically had no phosphorus in the system. The water quality and endangered species issues sparked a lot of concern and brought people together from federal, local, state and tribal governments to devise a federal/state plan and to create a task force to guide the restoration effort. It is not a perfect model, but they've built an arrangement that has allowed an ongoing communication process across the different stakeholders. So there is a mechanism for ongoing learning and a mechanism for vetting some of those conflicts in a professionalized forum rather than leaving it up to the courts and adversarial processes, which, unfortunately, is what we often see.

To build the types of institutional arrangements that can bring together diverse and often competing interests, I think it is more about trust-building and about having the time and experience to get to know your opponent, to get to know some of the people that you see as "the other."

**5. You've written several books, including "Making Policy in a Complex World," which was released this year. What are the lessons of this book?**

The goal was to embrace the messiness that exists in policy processes and decision-making but to do it in a way that would be simple and straightforward. Some of the governance processes that I study are not traditional, top-down approaches to decision-making. I study processes that may look messy on the surface but do have structure and design that we can learn from.

One of the goals of our book was to emphasize that we can learn to navigate governance processes that are complex, and in doing so, we can become better advocates and better policy makers. I think one of the lessons we've seen across literature, and some of my work, is that people who build more robust and diverse networks, and people who are engaged in policy making and in governance and decision-making, are more successful at reaching agreement. We need to spend more time building our social capital and that's how we build trust.

[Faculty Council discusses online education, strategic planning with President Kennedy](#)[4]

Faculty members are eager to provide input to university leadership as CU continues to pursue answers to questions about the future of online education across the system.

That was the message communicated to President Mark Kennedy by members of the Faculty Council during the governance group's Sept. 26 meeting at 1800 Grant St.

Faculty Council Chair Joanne Addison said faculty are "frustrated we weren't included from the start" when the university in August requested proposals from external firms to assess CU's current online education capabilities and opportunities.

"I feel like we need to turn this ship together if we're going to turn it," she said.

"I think we all have a lot of questions," Kennedy told the council. "We're going to be asking a consultant, what should we expect in terms of digital consolidation in online education?"

The August request for proposals (RFP) seeks a consultant capable of gauging CU's current online education

capabilities, reviewing national and regional markets, assessing the competitive environment, and articulating successful operating structures.

As leadership nears a decision on a successful RFP, Faculty Council was invited to provide input; chairs of campus-based Faculty Assemblies are expected to provide names to leadership next week.

Kennedy also updated the council on progress on the university's strategic plan, which receives an official kickoff today at CU South Denver. Faculty members are included on the working groups that will focus on key areas of the plan; invitations to take part in those groups were being extended to individuals last week. Along with strategic planning co-chairs Sharon Matusik, dean of the Leeds School of Business at CU Boulder, and Todd Saliman, system vice president for finance and chief financial officer, Kennedy said he plans to provide updates at each Faculty Council meeting in the coming year.

Also at last week's Faculty Council meeting, Regent Lesley Smith attended to discuss her interest in emphasizing sustainability across the system. Because next year is the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day, she requested a panel discussion on sustainability. It's set for the next University Affairs Committee meeting, 10 a.m. to noon Oct. 18 at 1800 Grant St.

#### [Goodbye Lynda.com, hello LinkedIn Learning](#)[5]

CU faculty and staff now have access to LinkedIn Learning, a free, on-demand learning solution. LinkedIn Learning offers a large number of resources to help employees succeed in their careers, expand their knowledge, build a professional network, and receive professional certifications.

LinkedIn Learning provides the following:

Unlimited access to more than 13,000 video tutorials covering business, creative and technology topics. Personalized recommendations based on employees' experience. Information from expert instructors and industry leaders. Convenient learning that can be accessed from any desktop or mobile device. Innovative resources such as quizzes, exercise files and coding practice windows that reinforce learning.

#### **Activate your account**

During the activation process, you will be prompted to connect your personal LinkedIn profile to your LinkedIn Learning account. Make sure you have your LinkedIn username and password ready to connect your account. While it is not required to connect to LinkedIn, it is highly recommended for a more personalized learning experience.

Start exploring courses today. For an overview, watch [How to Use LinkedIn Learning](#)[6].

#### **Access LinkedIn Learning:**

Log into my.cu.edu Select **Training** from the drop-down menu Select the **LinkedIn Learning** tile Begin learning Questions? Email [system.training@cu.edu](mailto:system.training@cu.edu)[7] or visit the Professional Growth and Development [website](#)[8].

#### [CU attracts record-breaking amount of funding for sponsored research](#)[9]

Setting a new systemwide record, faculty at the University of Colorado attracted more than \$1.2 billion in sponsored research funding and gifts during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

This marks the third consecutive year the four-campus university system has exceeded \$1 billion in annual sponsored research funding and reflects a 15.5% increase over the previous year. Each CU campus individually saw growth in research funding over last year as well.

Most sponsored research funding is awarded by federal agencies. In 2018-19, CU received \$771 million in federal awards and \$388.4 million in non-federal awards.

“CU’s record-setting research funding demonstrates the high quality of our faculty, whose work in discovery and innovation improves lives, saves lives and addresses some of the most pressing issues facing society,” said CU President Mark Kennedy. “Their work not only enhances the educational experience for our students, but also makes our world a better place.”

Following are the year’s totals in sponsored research funding at CU campuses, along with examples of the leading-edge endeavors that are elevating life across Colorado and beyond:

**University of Colorado Boulder: \$630.9 million.** The U.S. Geological Survey selected CU Boulder to host the North Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (NCCASC) for the next five years. NCCASC Director Jennifer Balch, an assistant professor of Geography and director of CIRES’ Earth Lab, said the new, \$4.5-million award recognizes the huge potential for synergy with existing campus programs and expertise. The center is one of eight regional climate centers created to help meet the changing needs of land and resource managers across the country; the North Central center serves Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas and Nebraska.

**University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus: \$553.5 million.** Kathleen Barnes, director of the Colorado Center for Personalized Medicine, received continued funding in FY2019 totaling over \$2.5 million related to two National Institutes of Health R01 five-year awards (total over five years is \$13.3 million), both focused on identifying genetic determinants associated with asthma in people of African ancestry, who suffer disproportionately compared to white patients with asthma. One of these awards was a competitive renewal from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, supporting the Consortium on Asthma among African-Ancestry Populations in the Americas (CAAPA), which is the largest genetics study of its kind focused exclusively on more than 18,000 individuals representing the African Diaspora, from North, Central, South America, the Caribbean and continental Africa.

**University of Colorado Denver: \$23.4 million.** The National Science Foundation awarded researchers a \$440,000 grant to study the recovery of manufactured homes after natural disasters. Esther Sullivan, assistant professor of sociology, and Andrew Rumbach and Carrie Makarewicz, assistant professors of urban and regional planning, are examining the impact of Hurricane Harvey on mobile home parks in greater Houston, a nine-county region with a population of more than 7 million. This is the first longitudinal study to focus on the recovery of manufactured homes, which make up one in every five homes bought in the U.S.

**University of Colorado Colorado Springs: \$8 million.** A three-year, \$432,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health is supporting research to develop, improve and utilize super-resolution microscopy with a focus on imaging live cells at the UCCS BioFrontiers Center. Undergraduate and graduate students are working with Guy Hagen, senior research associate, and Kathrin Spendier, assistant professor of physics, to use the improved imaging methods to study the molecular basis of allergic responses, which affect more than 50 million Americans each year.

Sponsored research funding from federal, state, international and foundation entities targets specific projects to advance research in laboratories and in the field. Research funding also helps pay for research-related capital improvements, scientific equipment, travel and salaries for research and support staff and student assistantships. CU cannot divert this funding to non-research-related expenses.

A great deal of sponsored research funding is directed to departments and researchers with unique expertise, such as biotechnology and aerospace, which stimulates industry.

[Election 2019: University guidelines affect campaign activity. expression](#)[10]

[11]

As Colorado's Nov. 5 Election Day approaches, the University of Colorado reminds employees of guidelines regarding political campaign-related activity and expression.

A variety of state and federal laws and regulations govern political expression and conduct in the university workplace. Application of the law depends on the particular facts of the situation, and legal counsel should be consulted when questions arise. However, the following guidelines may be used when trying to determine whether particular conduct is appropriate in the University setting.

**General principles:**

Employees have the right as private citizens to freedom of expression and participation in the political process. When expressing their political views, university employees should endeavor to prevent the appearance of university partiality in political campaigns. Private political activities must be conducted on personal time and without using university resources.

**Employees should refrain from the following activities while at work:**

Sending emails from university-hosted email accounts in support of or in opposition to candidates or ballot initiatives. Using university office supplies (including computers, copiers, and fax machines) to create campaign materials. Making calls on university phones in support of or opposition to a political candidate or ballot initiatives. Using university computers to make monetary contributions to political campaigns. Placing campaign materials in locations not designated for general signage.

**In general, employees may engage in the following activities while at work:**

Discussing political issues and political campaigns with one another while on break. Wearing buttons or clothing promoting a particular candidate or issue, provided that the employee does not regularly interact with the public as part of her job duties. Placing a bumper sticker on a personal vehicle. Participating in campaign-related activities on personal time.

Because university email addresses are generally public and published on various websites, employees may receive electronic mail messages on their university-hosted email accounts from candidates and campaigns. Such emails are not illegal. The university cannot know or block every campaign- or candidate-related email account. Installing restrictive "spam" filters would have limited success with such messages, which originate from many different sources. It is important to remember, however, that the transmission of such emails to you does not constitute University of Colorado endorsement of any candidate or campaign. Employees should refrain from using university email accounts to forward candidate or campaign-related messages for the purpose of expressing opposition to or support for the relevant candidate or campaign issue.

University employees should always be aware that, as public employees, their activities may be subject to heightened scrutiny by the media and members of the public. Accordingly, they should take care to ensure that their private activities do not compromise their ability to carry out their official duties.

[More discipline can lead kids to prison, new study finds](#)<sup>[12]</sup>

[Scott Kelly: 'The sky is not the limit'](#)<sup>[13]</sup>

[Teen vaping study reveals how schools influence e-cigarette use, outlines prevention strategies](#)<sup>[14]</sup>

[Public health ethics toolkit offers unique resource](#)[15]

[Braun voyage: Engineering dean bound for NASA in 2020](#)[16]

[Berning one of 31 national awardees for leadership in wellness promotion](#)[17]

[New Investigator Award helps Robin bring new clinical trials to Colorado](#)[18]

---

## Links

[1] <https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-tanya-heikkila>[2]  
[https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/heikkila\\_01.jpg](https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/heikkila_01.jpg)[3]  
[https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/heikkila\\_02.jpg](https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/heikkila_02.jpg)[4] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/faculty-council-discusses-online-education-strategic-planning-president-kennedy>[5] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/goodbye-lyndacom-hello-linkedin-learning>[6] <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/how-to-use-linkedin-learning>[7]  
<mailto:system.training@cu.edu>[8] <http://www.cu.edu/linkedin>[9] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-attracts-record-breaking-amount-funding-sponsored-research>[10] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/election-2019-university-guidelines-affect-campaign-activity-expression>[11] [https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/election\\_rules\\_feat.jpg](https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/election_rules_feat.jpg)[12] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/more-discipline-can-lead-kids-prison-new-study-finds>[13]  
<https://connections.cu.edu/stories/scott-kelly-sky-not-limit>[14] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/teen-vaping-study-reveals-how-schools-influence-e-cigarette-use-outlines-prevention>[15] <https://connections.cu.edu/stories/public-health-ethics-toolkit-offers-unique-resource>[16] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/braun-voyage-engineering-dean-bound-nasa-2020>[17] <https://connections.cu.edu/people/berning-one-31-national-awardees-leadership-wellness-promotion>[18]  
<https://connections.cu.edu/people/new-investigator-award-helps-robin-bring-new-clinical-trials-colorado>