Longtime CU champion Tanya Kelly-Bowry honored by Board of Regents[1]

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Photos by Glenn Asakawa/University of Colorado

University of Colorado leadership last week celebrated the career and contributions of Tanya Kelly-Bowry, CU's longtime advocate at the state Capitol and in Washington, D.C.

Kelly-Bowry retired from her role as vice president of government relations in August 2020, during COVID. The Sept. 12 meeting of the Board of Regents at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus included the first formal public recognition of Kelly-Bowry since then.

The board unanimously passed a resolution[2] expressing deep gratitude for Kelly-Bowry's dedicated service, leadership and contributions to the CU system. Regents also granted her the title of Vice President Emerita in recognition of her significant and distinctive service.

Regent Glen Gallegos read the resolution and presented Kelly-Bowry with a plaque from the university.

"I'm proud to have served for seven (CU) presidents and I've loved every single one of them," Kelly-Bowry said.

Leaders including current and past members of the board, campus chancellors and vice presidents expressed gratitude for Kelly-Bowry's loyal advocacy for CU over decades. They praised her fearless leadership and efficacy for landing both her and the University of Colorado on the map as leaders on higher education policy for the state and nation.

Kelly-Bowry grew up in the San Luis Valley and was the youngest and first Hispanic woman to become a vice president in CU history. Among her many honors was being selected as a rising star of women in higher education leadership to participate in the HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) executive program.

Her advocacy for CU took root when she was a student at CU Boulder. After graduating, she began her career as a staffer in the Colorado Senate, where she served as a policy analyst and press secretary. She developed strong relationships at the Capitol with elected officials and staff from across the political spectrum while also learning the complexities of the state budget and legislative process.

Kelly-Bowry's strong bipartisan relationships and deep knowledge of the inner-workings of state government proved invaluable when she was hired by CU to advocate on behalf of the university at both the state and then the federal level. Under Kelly-Bowry's leadership, the university attracted nearly $3 billion in state and federal funding.

Among her many contributions, Kelly-Bowry opened the university's first Washington, D.C., office. She worked with all levels of the institution, providing critical guidance, strategy advice and advocacy for the administration, faculty, staff and students.

Since her retirement, Kelly-Bowry had continued to serve as a senior advisor and contract lobbyist for the Office of Government Relations at the state Capitol.

“At the Capitol, you are the University of Colorado. You have been and always will be,” President Todd Saliman said to Kelly-Bowry at Thursday’s meeting. “That doesn’t diminish the incredible work that others do down there, but that’s who you are. That’s how people think of you.”

President Saliman also emphasized the key role Kelly-Bowry played in the transformation of the past CU Health and Sciences Center in Denver into the current CU Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, pointing to her billion-dollar impact on the campus’s growth.

“It wouldn’t have happened without you,” said Saliman, who called Kelly-Bowry “an incredible friend, an incredible leader and a trailblazer.”

At the time of Kelly-Bowry’s retirement, Saliman served as CU’s vice president for budget and finance and CFO. He took on Kelly-Bowry’s work with legislators and his title changed to senior vice president of strategy, government relations and chief financial officer. He credited Kelly-Bowry’s support for contributing to his being named president in 2021.

“I’m sure I wouldn’t be sitting here today if it weren’t for you,” Saliman said. “Thank you for all that you’ve done.”

Tributes continued at a Thursday night reception attended by several high-profile leaders in Colorado politics, attesting to Kelly-Bowry’s ability to work effectively in a bipartisan manner. They included Rep. Joe Neguse (via video), former Sen. Cory Gardner, former Gov. Bill Ritter, former Lt. Gov. Donna Lynne, former Rep. Bob Beauprez, former Rep. Ed Perlmutter, state Sen. Janet Buckner, state Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer, former state Sen. Bob Rankin and Roxane White, former chief of staff for Gov. John Hickenlooper. Former CU President and first lady Bruce and Marcy Benson also joined the celebration.

Leaders share tributes to Tanya Kelly-Bowry

Rep. Joe Neguse, former CU Regent

For over 20 years, she has been a mentor, friend and an advisor. Having known her for many years, I can confidently say that there is no one who deserves the George Norlin Lifetime Achievement Award more than Tanya. She has been able to bring people of different perspectives and viewpoints and philosophies together and captivate them with the bigger picture. She builds big coalitions to get things done for the university and for the citizens of our state.

Thank you for being such a warm, thoughtful, caring friend to me, to countless other politicians, members of Congress, state senators and state representatives, governors, university presidents and everyday citizens of our state.

Former Sen. Cory Gardner

Tanya, congratulations. This is such an incredible moment. And you look around at the people in this room, and they are movers and shakers. They are people who have helped others become leaders in the state. They have created university presidents, they’ve created senators. They have created members of Congress, city council members, regents. And you were all a part of it.

I just want to thank her for the work that she has done over these many years. There is no one more deserving of this award. No more impact. You can’t find anybody who’s had a bigger impact on the University of Colorado working through generations of leaders, young and old, in this room, some who started 20, 30 years ago, some who started their career just this past election. It’s amazing to see the work that you have done that you will continue to do.

Former Gov. Bill Ritter

In my mind, you're just a hero, given the chaotic political situation we find ourselves in. You're one of those people who understands that chaos is not good for developing the right public policy. And you just kept doing it and doing it and doing it. And I was really happy and privileged that you invited me to speak. So, thank you.

Former Lt. Gov. Donna Lynne

I'm looking forward to a friendship that transcends the work that we've done together. And really, you deserve this award. Thank you.

Former Rep. Bob Beauprez

This lady was so persistent, so persuasive, so organized, so detail-oriented, so relationship-oriented. It's thanks to people like her who are smart, who have developed relationships, who develop a plan … and get the job done. At the end of the day, we're really going to miss you. She's just genuine as they come.

Former Rep. Ed Perlmutter

You all have heard what a fierce advocate she is for the university or any of her clients. She does it with a smile that is so disarming that you don't have a chance. And she always has a plan and is a mission-focused individual. I'm so proud of her and her success.

State Sen. Janet Buckner

I was writing down notes about what I think about this amazing lady, and I met her under odd circumstances. My husband passed away, as you all know, and I was appointed. Get this: My husband died May 28, and I was appointed in July to fill his vacancy. Talk about a tough time. When I got there, I thought, "Who can follow John Buckner?" She said, "You can." And she helped me through that tough time. When I think of Tanya, I think of a confidant, friend, mentor. She's reasonable, she's a bulldog – but in such a nice way, and she was always there.

State Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer

She has been a great lobbyist. She's great for the University of Colorado. Everything she does is phenomenal. She knows what she's talking about. We have done a lot of amazing things together just in two years. But more importantly, she has become my friend. And I just really love you.

Former State Sen. Bob Rankin

I am beyond honored to be part of celebrating Tanya's retirement. A new chapter in life. I can only echo all the wonderful things that have been said. Best of luck in the next chapter.

Roxane White, former chief of staff for Gov. John Hickenlooper

Tanya, I want to thank you for being the best friend, the best lobbyist for all of us, and for making us all feel so special. But, you know, my heart is with people who have behavioral health issues and have no place to sleep at night – and you moved systems for the poorest of the poor. My foster son got to go to CU because of the work you had also done for young people like that. So, thank you for being a friend, for all the people of Colorado.

Regent Glen Gallegos

She's one of a kind. She always has been. She's been our support, and we just love her because she's so creative and she is for the people. And I can call her my friend.

Board of Regents meeting roundup

In other business at the Sept. 12-13 Board of Regents meeting, administration presented preliminary estimates of fall

enrollment at the four CU campuses. The figures indicate good news for CU's annual budget, with student numbers exceeding the estimates made earlier this year.

In determining tuition revenue for the 2024-25 budget approved by the Board of Regents in June, administrators had estimated systemwide enrollment of 66,046 students this fall. The preliminary total reported at Thursday's Board of Regents meeting is 67,414, roughly 2% higher than the June forecast.

The fall 2024 estimate also is up nearly 2% over the final census figure of fall 2023, which was 66,293.

This fall's campus censuses will conclude next week. Final totals are due to the Colorado Department of Higher Education in October.

As part of its consent agenda, the board approved the renaming of two entities at CU Boulder. Read more[3] in CU Boulder Today.

The board meeting concluded with a learning session in which regents considered the fast-moving ramifications of AI and its place in higher education and the world. Colorado-based consultant and futurist Bill Quinn delivered a keynote, which was followed by a panel of CU faculty members who spoke on ways they currently use AI in their teaching and research. The panel members were Casey Green, Ph.D., of the CU Anschutz Medical Campus; Joseph Kuzma, Ph.D., UCCS; Diane Sieber, Ph.D., CU Boulder; and Ronica Rooks, Ph.D., CU Denver.

The next regular meeting of the CU Board of Regents is scheduled for Nov. 7-8 at UCCS.

Office of Academic Affairs calls for submissions for fall awards and grants[4]

The CU Office of Academic Affairs invites submissions for fall awards and grants.

President's Fund for the Humanities Grant[5]

The President's Fund for the Humanities (PFH) Grant promotes the research and scholarly activities of faculty in the arts and humanities at CU. Successful proposals for the PFH program describe a well-developed scholarly or creative project rooted in the arts and humanities with clear and feasible outcomes. Proposals selected for funding will receive up to $15,000.

Eligibility: Full-time CU tenured faculty, tenure track faculty, or full-time CU instructional and clinical teaching faculty with 20% or greater differential workload for scholarly work. There are no disciplinary restrictions on applicants so long as the work fits solidly within an artistic/humanistic framework. Proposals will not be considered if submitted by faculty who have not completed their final report from a previous PFH grant.

Click here[5] for more details on the grant.

Deadline to apply: Nov. 11, 2024

Chase Faculty Community Service Award[6]

Sponsored by the Chase Corporation, the Chase Faculty Community Service Award provides $10,000 to a full-time CU faculty member who, in addition to his or her university responsibilities, has, pro bono, provided exceptional educational, humanitarian, civic or other service in the community.

Eligibility: Full-time CU tenured, tenure-track faculty, instructional, research and clinical faculty. Self-nominations are not allowed, and previous winners are not eligible to be nominated.

Click here[6] for more details on the award.

Deadline to nominate: Dec. 2, 2024

Thomas Jefferson Award[7]

The Thomas Jefferson Award, which is sponsored by an endowment provided by the McConnell Foundation and from a bequest by Harrison Blair, honors students, staff and faculty members whose achievements demonstrate superior performance in their normal work or scholarship and notable participation in humanitarian activities.

Ideal candidates demonstrate:

- broad interests in literature, arts and sciences, and public affairs;
- a strong concern for the advancement of higher education;
- a deeply seated sense of individual civic responsibility; and,
- a profound commitment to the welfare and rights of the individual.

Eligibility: Full-time CU tenured, tenure-track faculty, instructional, research and clinical faculty; full-time CU students; and full-time CU staff. Self-nominations are not allowed, and previous winners are not eligible to be nominated.

Click here[7] for more details on the award.

Deadline to nominate: Dec. 2, 2024

Questions? Please contact academicaffairs@cu.edu[8]

Explore new features in Skillsoft Percipio training platform, now live [9]

CU financial aid officers, IT partners adapt to FAFSA rollout by putting student support first [10]

$15M gift to transform real estate education and student wellness at CU Boulder[11]

College of Education hosts Leadership Development and Coaching Symposium[12]

CU Denver faculty develop new app to help people with intellectual disabilities navigate indoor spaces [13]

Machine learning could help reduce hospitalizations by nearly 30% during a pandemic, study finds [14]

Moore stepping down as CU Boulder provost after nearly 14 years [15]

Freitas named director for Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education [16]

Grammy Award-winning Takács Quartet celebrates 50 years [17]

Boulder among three finalists to host Sundance film fest[18]

Colorado's flu season likely to be normal, but COVID is a "wild card"[19]

Amendment 80: Colorado voters to decide on putting school choice in the state constitution[20]

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[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/longtime-cu-champion-tanya-kelly-bowry-honored-board-regents[2] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/D8JN445E0CC8/$file/Resolution%20of%20Appreciation_Tanya%20Kelly-Bowry.pdf[3] https://www.colorado.edu/today/2024/09/13/regents-approve-renaming-institute-behavioral-science-leeds-real-estate-center-more[4] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/office-academic-affairs-calls-submissions-fall-awards-and-grants[5] https://www.cu.edu/oaa/grants/presidents-fund-humanities[6] https://www.cu.edu/oaa/recognitions/chase-faculty-community-service-award[7] https://www.cu.edu/oaa/recognitions/thomas-jefferson-award[8] mailto:academicaffairs@cu.edu?subject=CU%20System%20Office%20of%20Academic%20Affairs%20Email[9] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/explore-new-features-skillsoft-percipio-training-platform-now-live[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-financial-aid-officers-it-partners-adapt-fafsa-rollout-putting-student-support-first[11] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/15m-gift-transform-real-estate-education-and-student-wellness-cu-boulder[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/college-education-hosts-leadership-development-and-coaching-symposium[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-denver-faculty-develop-new-app-help-people-intellectual-disabilities-navigate-indoor[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/machine-learning-could-help-reduce-hospitalizations-nearly-30-during-pandemic-study-finds[15] https://connections.cu.edu/people/moore-stepping-down-cu-boulder-provost-after-nearly-14-years[16] https://connections.cu.edu/people/freitas-named-director-center-interprofessional-practice-and-education[17]

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