

[Five questions for Carol Cleland](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

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If researchers were to find “life” that is unlike anything we currently recognize as a living organism, would the discovery be understood? It’s a question that has been debated for years and one that has intrigued Carol Cleland, a professor of philosophy at the University of Colorado Boulder.

She has written on the nature and origins of life in several manuscripts and a book, “The Quest for a Universal Theory of Life: Searching for life as we don’t know it.” She also is affiliated with the NASA Astrobiology Institute and is a member of CU’s Center for Astrobiology. Most recently, she was named director of the new Center for the Study of Origins.

Her areas of interest include the philosophy of science, the philosophy of logic and metaphysics. She loves to travel, and whenever she’s invited to speak at workshops or conferences, she’ll extend her trip a day or two to explore the area.

“I particularly like historical monuments, especially medieval history. I was in Scandinavia a couple of years ago and spent a lot of time visiting old Viking ruins and churches and homes,” said Cleland, who also loves natural history, especially paleontology, and is “always trying to talk my way onto an expedition.”

**1. Your CV notes that you graduated with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics. How did your career path wind from math to philosophy?**

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I view myself as an accidental math major. Originally, I was a physics major, but I didn’t like labs. I was a klutz in the lab and my experiments never turned out right, and I was more interested in theoretical science. I tried a number of other fields, including geology. I liked geology because I liked getting out in the field and basically scrounging around looking for stuff and collecting stuff. But it turned out there were no women in geology, and being in the field was isolating and very awkward.

I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do, and I ended up taking a lot of science courses. I took chemistry and biology classes. In my junior year, I discovered philosophy and I felt that was what I wanted to do. It turned out I couldn’t get a degree in philosophy without taking undergraduate classes. I had taken all of the upper-division classes, but I didn’t have the first-year courses on the history of philosophy. I’d been basically taking courses for five years on overload: 180 units were required and I had something like 260 units. I only needed one course to get a degree in mathematics because I had taken all those courses for physics and several others on foundations of mathematics and mathematical logic.

After graduation, I worked as a software engineer in a small company. I did that for about a year, and when my then-husband got his Ph.D. and received a position in Massachusetts, I ended up at Brown University pursuing philosophy, with an emphasis on metaphysics, because I was interested in space, time and causations.

I earned my Ph.D. in philosophy; my dissertation was on causation. I thought I would spend a year writing my dissertation and having a baby, but a teaching position opened up at Wheaton College, and I went there. Between having a new baby and dealing with teaching college for the first time, the completion of my dissertation was delayed by two years. When I found out the position was non-tenured, I applied for, received and accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in both philosophy and computer science at Stanford at the Center for Study of Language and Information. In 1986, I applied for a job at CU and got the job.

**2. How did you become affiliated with the NASA Astrobiology Institute (NAI)?**

I was doing metaphysics, philosophical logic and computability theory in the mid-’90s at CU. There was a breaking news story about the alleged discovery of fossilized Martian life in an ancient Martian meteorite that had been discovered in the Antarctic. What was found inside this meteorite was puzzling both chemically and structurally. It became very controversial. Bruce Jakosky (Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics) put together a panel

discussion and invited me to be part of it. I was teaching the philosophy of science at the time.

I read the articles about the discovery and realized there was a fundamental confusion in the debate. People were saying the researchers hadn't proved that it was what they had suggested. Science can't prove a hypothesis, which, no matter how well-established, is always tentative and subject to revision. You can falsify a generalization, but you can't falsify a claim about the origins of particular structures in a single rock, and these structures were very old, dating back to about 3.8 billion years ago. The search into Earth's past and the origins and development of our planetary system, as well as other planetary systems and the universe as a whole, is about particular events – events that typically happened a very long time ago

I was intrigued. The philosophical literature hadn't paid much attention to the practices of historical scientists. It had been assumed that all of science fits a one-size-fits-all model based on experimental science. I gave my talk and a couple of scientists told me they had learned something. A year later, Bruce Jakosky told me he was writing a proposal to the new NASA Astrobiology Institute (NAI), which was created based on the controversy over the meteorite (dubbed ALH 84001). NAI had put out a call for diverse teams of researchers and Bruce asked me to join his team. Over the next 10 years, I was a co-Investigator on two Boulder teams funded by the institute.

I'm currently a co-Investigator on a team, led by Robert Hazen of the Carnegie Institution of Washington's Geophysical Laboratory, that is looking at the use of biogenic minerals as biosignatures for searching for extraterrestrial life. We recently received funding from the John Templeton Foundation. I am also a core collaborator on a CU-based NAI team, "Rock Powered Life," led by Alexis Templeton.

### **3. What does your current research entail?**

Since the mid-'90s, I have focused on two separate prongs of research. One is the nature of life and the fact that we don't have a universal theory of life. We have universal theories of physics: general relativity and quantum mechanics. These theories are tentative, but we don't have the same type of theories for life.

Our current understanding of life is very Earth-centric. We know there are ways in which life on Earth could be different at the molecular level. We know, for instance, that proteins could be modestly different in composition — known Earth life constructs proteins from only 20 out of more than 100 amino acids found in nature — but we don't know how different life could be from familiar life. In a sense, we have a single example of life, but we don't know if it is representative or unrepresentative, and if it is unrepresentative, we don't know in what ways it is unrepresentative. So we're in a real pickle trying to generalize from life as we know it to all of life.

My book is about that problem. What I argue is that we shouldn't define life based on a single sample. Because definitions supply necessary and sufficient conditions for the categories that they define, we would completely set the boundaries of what counts as a living thing. But we are in no position to do that. If we use a definition of life, we would automatically exclude life that differs from ours, especially if we are searching for extraterrestrial life.

We want to remain open to being able to discover a system we're uncertain about. I call this the search for anomalies. I suggest using tentative criteria in order to search for extraterrestrial life rather than using defining criteria. I point out in the book that scientific theories don't give you definitions for core concepts; they function very differently than commonly supposed.

### **4. You coined the phrase "shadow biosphere." Please explain what you mean by this.**

I coined the term "shadow biosphere" when I spent five months at the Centro de Astrobiología in Spain while on sabbatical in 2002-2003. I went there because they were affiliated with the European Space Agency and had a team of scientists working on the problem of how to search for extraterrestrial life on planets and moons in our solar system.

I was interested in learning about biochemical and molecular methods for doing this. I asked them how they would detect microorganisms in a sample of Earth soil because most astrobiologists believe that microbial life is probably fairly common in the universe, but big organisms – animals and plants – are very rare. The scientists at the center listed things like microscopy with staining techniques, cultivation and metagenomic methods.

I was stunned because it occurred to me that they would never be able to recognize alien forms of microbial life if they encountered it. How would you explore for life, not as we know it, but as we don't know it? I argued that you would need a collection of diverse tentative criteria, which would raise the suspicion that a system exhibiting provocatively lifelike characteristics but nonetheless differing in ways that one wouldn't expect in terrestrial life, might be a truly novel form of life. It also occurred to me that we might have microorganisms on Earth that are undetected for the very same reasons. I called these hypothetical microbes a "shadow biosphere" because, like all organisms, they would leave traces (shadows) in their environments, extracting energy and material for metabolic purposes and releasing waste products back into their environments.

Another theme in my forthcoming book is that the microbial world doesn't fit well into concepts and principles that have been traditionally used to explore complex multicellular organisms like plants and animals. I recommend that we consider rethinking biology from a more microbial perspective instead of trying to fit them into categories and principles applying to large, complex organisms. That's the central thesis of the book.

### **5. What is the Center for the Study of Origins and how will it operate? How did it come about?**

The other prong of my current research is focused on natural history. What methodologies are used by historical natural scientists who are studying paleoclimate or Darwinian evolution or the beginning of life on Earth? Can these methods be rationally justified, despite the fact that, as mentioned earlier, they differ in important ways from those of experimental scientists? Are the methods of experimental science really the paragon for all of science? I have written extensively on this topic. That's where the Center for the Studies of Origins (CSO) comes in.

CSO grew out of my sudden realization, while a member of CU Boulder's Grand Challenge Steering Committee, that almost every discipline, from the natural sciences to the social sciences to the humanities, studies origins, but nobody has talked much about how different disciplines explore the past and the similarities and differences among different approaches. The center is devoted to exploring the study of the past through the lenses of different academic disciplines.

When you study the past, you don't study generalizations as much as you study particular cases. Take the collapse of the Chaco Canyon Anasazi culture. What caused this particular culture to collapse? The collapse of every culture is a unique event. There may be similarities, but there will also be important differences, and these similarities and differences will vary from culture to culture. It is unlikely that the culture of ancient Egypt collapsed for the same reasons as the Chaco Canyon Anasazi culture.

Our theme for next year is climate and human history. We'll bring together social scientists, natural scientists and humanists and hold several workshops. One of the issues that will be discussed is the Little Ice Age. What caused it? How did it affect climate around the world, and how did it affect civilizations and cultures around the world, including the Anasazi? Another question is whether we see influences in the intellectual development of Europe, changes in the development of philosophy and influences from the Little Ice Age on political and cultural institutions. Bringing social scientists, humanists and natural scientists together may help us trace historical connections that might not have been noticed before.

Oxford University Press has invited us to submit a proposal for a handbook on origins. Oxford also expressed an interest in funding volumes for our yearly themes. We anticipate that papers jointly authored by scientists and scholars will come out of these workshops and meetings. A freshman seminar is also planned, and will start this fall. It will be team-taught by CSO faculty as a survey of research on origins across the disciplines. We're hoping that other courses come out of this, but because the center is so focused on interdisciplinary work, a course would be hard to fit into any particular department, which is required by the new core curriculum.

Our plans for the center are exciting because we truly are trying to cross three broad areas of intellectual inquiry and that's something we don't do enough, especially as we emphasize STEM more and the humanities less.

[Service to university, communities celebrated by Staff Council](#)<sup>[4]</sup>

[5]

Four University of Colorado staff members were honored for their contributions to the university and their communities during a luncheon April 14 at CU South Denver, hosted by the University of Colorado Staff Council, which sponsors and selects the winners of the Service Excellence Awards.

The honorees, from the campuses and system administration, received a plaque and a \$1,000 award. Those recognized during the luncheon were:

**Connie Amen**, CU Denver I Anschutz Medical Campus **Sharon Vieyra**, CU Boulder **Elizabeth Volkert**, system administration **Gregory Williams**, UCCS

[Connie Amen](#), assistant dean of Finance and Human Resources, Business School at CU Denver, came to CU in 2007 as a manager and was promoted to the director of human resources in 2012. She became assistant dean of Finance and Human Resources in 2016, with duties that include managing the human resources and budget department.

She is the go-to person when expertise is needed concerning human capital or budget matters, according to her nomination letter. She served on a special task force to assist in the resolution of issues in a nonfunctioning payroll system. She also is the lead coordinator of an annual Halloween party and has organized a school community fund used to send flowers on behalf of the college as colleagues celebrate milestones or struggle through mishaps. Her nominators call her the “glue” of the Business School, and she is credited with streamlining her own and her team’s processes and procedures.

Because of her input and insight, many policies and procedures in the school and the university have been improved or developed, said her nominators. She has served on various committees that advance both the school and the university.

She has continually upgraded her own skills through certifications from SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) and PHR (Professional in Human Resources). She also contributes to these professional organizations with her own time, expertise and finances. In addition, she is a regular blood donor. Her son serves in the military, and when she found out that several of his colleagues were homesick, she put together care packages to be distributed among the soldiers in her son’s group.

“Working at CU Denver has been a wonderful, wonderful experience,” she said. “I work with amazing people and I always tell them that they are the ones that make me look good. Thank you for all the support.”

[Sharon Vieyra](#), executive assistant in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) at CU Boulder, was described by her nominators as “the all-knowing seer around diversity and inclusion; she is grace in the face of adversity; she is the vigilant sentry.” Before working in ODECE, Vieyra held a position in the College of Business Development Office and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

[Vieyra](#) has been a constant in the 18-year history of ODECE (formerly the Office of Diversity and Equity), and throughout that time has provided not only stability, but also context and instruction concerning a variety of critical diversity and inclusion issues, according to her nomination letter. She has used her influence to help shape policy and events, an example of which is the Equity and Excellence (E&E) Celebration, held every spring semester to honor graduating underrepresented and first-generation students. She lobbied successfully to reshape the event from a catch-all ceremony to one that specifically focuses on celebrating graduating seniors.

For 10 years, Vieyra has volunteered with the Hispanic Alumni Association, helping to host fundraisers for scholarship dollars that were matched by CU. She persuaded Ofelia Miramontes, the first associate vice chancellor for the Office of Diversity and Equity, and her spouse, to donate toward the scholarship fund. When Ofelia Miramontes passed away, the Ofelia Miramontes Friend Scholarship was created, and as a result of Vieyra’s volunteer work, she was the first to receive the award.

She has volunteered on the Boulder Staff Council, serving on the Outreach and Years of Service committees. She

"remains one of the most committed, passionate, dedicated members of the Boulder Staff Council, and her contributions have significantly improved the way Staff Council operates and will continue to operate," according to her nominators. She has served on the Alumni Selection committee; the President's Diversity Award committee, identifying individuals whose service has contributed to diversity and inclusion systemwide; and the CU Boulder Chancellor's Employee of the Year selection committee.

Outside the CU community, she has worked for the past six years with the Boulder County Latino Women's League (BCLWL), assisting young Latino women who dreamed of attending college, including in the mentorship program. She continued to work with these young women throughout their time at CU, helping them overcome hurdles, including providing money, food or clothing appropriate for student job interviews. She also convinced one donor to contribute to help students with tuition and books when a lack of funds threatened their ability to continue toward graduation. The women that Vieyra helped, all first-generation college students, went on to take positions such as a grade-school teacher, a CPA working for Ernst and Young, an intern working with a veterinarian, a doctor now starting her residency, and a graduate with an engineering degree.

Vieyra thanked her nominators, co-workers and supervisors. "I would also like to thank all staff from all four campuses because I do believe that we all work hard together and we do make this a great university."

[Elizabeth Volkert](#), internal audit manager in system administration, oversees internal operating controls, processes and practices for the university to ensure compliance with regulations and policies. She oversees audit and consulting projects and ensures all review steps are completed and reviewed internally, while providing support and education to other team members.

She has served on the President's Task Force on Efficiency, working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of system administration and its interactions with the university community, and on a hiring search committee. Her focus has been on streamlining and simplification of policies, administrative review units, the Grant Street efficiency group, shared practices, customer service training and system administration operating efficiencies.

She also helped organize System Staff Council charitable events, including coat drives, a holiday toy drive and a military supply drive.

Outside of her work at CU, she serves as a finance coach, teaching people how to save money and get out of debt. She also facilitates Financial Peace University classes at her church, and also works with seniors to ensure they have the information and forms needed to save on property taxes. She is a member of the Association of College and University Auditors (ACUA) and has contributed to fundraising that benefits sporting activities in which her sons participated.

"This is an honor and I am humbled by it," she said. "I encourage you all to do your best and participate in community service because it is important that we help each other."

[Gregory Williams](#), director of Networks and Infrastructure at UCCS, is responsible for the overall planning, organizing and execution of all network and infrastructure functions within the Information Technology Department. That means ensuring peak performance for network and telephone operations and recommending upgrades or changes for future needs. He also served on the assistant vice chancellor/CIO search committee.

"Greg contributes to ... the mission of UCCS beyond the expectations of his role as the director of infrastructure," said his nominator, Gregory Krems. "Most of the network and information security that we enjoy on this campus is a result of his sharing of his personal time and energy. He is an outstanding mentor that continually motivates, inspires and leads those around him."

Williams has served as the director for the Sparks program, a subset of the Awanas Club, since August 2016. The Sparks program engages children who are in kindergarten through second grade to share their faith. The children can earn "Awana bucks" to buy prizes in a store or they can turn in their bucks to vote for a leader to get a pie in the face. Last year, his group saved all their money to guarantee that he would get the pie.

Williams' 8-year-old daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes two years ago, and since that time, he has been an integral part of the American Diabetes Association. His daughter is a youth ambassador for the association, therefore making Williams an ambassador as well.

Using his knowledge of technology, Williams has helped several organizations maintain the security and integrity of their websites, as well as redesigning and moving the sites to better platforms. He allows organizations to use his personal storage servers free of charge, and also has designed websites, databases, and interfaces without pay for groups or companies that are just starting out.

"I couldn't do it without all" of my colleagues, he said.

Also during last week's daylong Staff Council meeting:

Kathy Nesbitt, vice president of employee and information services, provided an overview of some university goings-on, including the status of Elevate, the systemwide human resources and financial system.

She also offered advice to members of the campus staff councils about how to reach their goals. "Sit down and strategize, which is probably the most effective way to have your voice heard," she recommended. Only "champion one or two issues over the course of the year." She also advised attendees to keep an open mind as they work with administration to advance those priorities, keeping in mind the campus goals as well.

"It's not always a give situation; you don't always want to be in the situation of asking for something. You also want to be a good partner and help resolve the issues on your campus," she added.

Nesbitt also presented "Lessons Learned in Leadership," offering tips on how to be a good leader for both the university and for supervised team members.

The council recognized former and outgoing members of the University of Colorado Staff Council for their work and commitment to the organization. Those honored were:

Dana Drummond, CU Boulder, 2012-16

Ida Dilwood, UCCS, 2012-15

Jim Dages, system, 2013-16

Philip Bradley, CU Boulder, 2012-15

Tricia Strating, system, 2012-15

Joanna Iturbe, CU Boulder, 2014-16

Carla Ho-a, CU Boulder, 2012-14

Rhea Taylor, UCCS, 2012-14

Nancy Sicalides-Tucker, system, 2013-16

Denise Thomas, CU Boulder, 2014-17

Ja 'Net Hurt, CU Denver, 2012-15

John McKee, CU Boulder, 2012-14

Anja Wynne, UCCS, 2014-17

Malaika White, CU Denver, 2012-14

Staff council members also paid tribute to former council member Jim Dages, who was killed in a motorcycle accident on July 14, 2016. Nancy Sicalides-Tucker wrote about Dages:

"I was lucky to have him as both co-worker and friend. What a gentle, patient soul, except when his passion and drive took over. ... As our partnership grew, I learned about Jim's passion for music. My husband and I went many times to see Jim go to town on that trumpet. What a joy! In addition to seeing him play, we were able to meet his wonderful wife, Roberta. A match made in heaven, you could say about Jim and Roberta. ... There are only a few people in your life that you can call a friend that are pure and golden through and through. My friend will be missed."

Dages' wife, Roberta, who attended the luncheon, said, "Staff Council was the highlight for Jim working at CU. He put on that shirt and his shoulders went back and his pride went up and he knew he was going somewhere where people cared, where people listened and where people tried to make change." She said she still has Jim's Staff Council shirt hanging in her closet.

#### [CU Health Plan rate changes minimal for most 2017-18 plans](#)<sup>[6]</sup>

<sup>[7]</sup>

During this year's Open Enrollment, which will begin Monday and continues through May 12, medical plan monthly premiums will increase by varying degrees. Dental rates will decrease, while vision, insurance and disability rates will remain unchanged.

The overall cost of CU's 2017-18 benefits plans will increase with some plans experiencing a larger percentage increase than others.

"Even with increased plan costs, the university continues to absorb a good amount of these increases, which you will see reflected in your rates," said Michelle Martinez, director of Benefits Administration at CU Employee Services.

### **Medical Plans**

Medical plan cost increases are primarily driven by high utilization and high-cost claims. For the upcoming plan year, CU Health Plan - Kaiser and CU Health Plan – Extended will have larger cost increases due to a higher-than-expected utilization of services and significant number of high-cost claims. The Exclusive and High Deductible plans did not have the higher-than-expected increases in either utilization or large claims; as a result, those monthly premiums did not increase significantly.

CU Health Plan – Exclusive members can expect minimal changes with a 72-cent increase for employee-only coverage, a \$5.22 increase for employee-and-spouse coverage, a 4-cent increase for employee-and-children coverage and a \$3.90 increase for family coverage

Monthly premium costs for CU Health Plan – High Deductible (HSA compatible) will not change, with costs remaining as low as free for an employee-only plan and \$19 a month for a family plan.

As a reminder, the CU Health Plan – High Deductible plan is HSA compatible and members may opt into CU's Health Savings Account (HSA) anytime during the plan year to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses. Faculty and staff are not required to enroll in an HSA during Open Enrollment. [Learn more about HSAs and how to enroll](#)<sup>[8]</sup>.

CU Health Plan – Kaiser will see the largest price change with the employee-only plan rate increasing by \$35.60 and the family plan by \$66.56.

For CU Health Plan – Extended, rates will rise by \$19.16 for employee-and-child coverage and \$40.76 for family coverage.

### **Dental Plans**



Dental plans are changing names and prices. However, this is a bonus for members' wallets. CU Health Plan – Essential Dental, which replaces CU Health Plan – EPO Dental in the new plan year, will continue to offer a zero premium cost for employee-only plan and a slight decrease for other coverage levels. The decrease varies, but monthly premium cost decreases range from 24 cents less for family plans to \$3.36 less for employee-and-spouse plans.

CU Health Plan – Choice Dental, which replaces CU Health Plan – PPO Dental, will see monthly premium decreases among all plans with employee-only plans declining by \$1.60 and family plans dropping 54 cents.

In addition, covered services will expand for both plans. [Find out more about the changes in dental coverage.](#)[9]

## **Vision**

Rates for CU Health Plan – Vision will remain the same at \$6.18 a month.

## **Life insurance and disability**

Rates for short-term and long-term disability have not changed, nor have rates for optional term life insurance, children's optional term life insurance, or voluntary accidental death and dismemberment coverage.

Full rate details for the 2017-18 plan year can be found on [the Open Enrollment website](#)[10]. Full plan details will be available when Open Enrollment begins at 8 a.m. Monday.

Employee Services' benefits professionals are available to answer additional questions at 303-860-4200, option 3.

## [State improves college affordability for Olympic athletes](#)[11]

[12]

Olympic athletes training in Colorado will have greater access to more affordable college tuition now that [House Bill 17-1081](#)[13] has been signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper.

The first-of-its-kind legislation, backed by the Colorado Springs-based United States Olympic Committee and the University of Colorado, allows state-supported institutions to offer in-state tuition to Team USA athletes who train in Colorado, regardless of permanent residency. The law is permissive, so participation is not required.

To be eligible, athletes must participate in a Colorado-based elite-level training program that is approved by the USOC and a national governing body of an Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American or Parapan American sport.

A bipartisan effort sponsored by Sen. Stephen Fenberg, D-Boulder, and Rep. Dan Nordberg, R-Colorado Springs, the bill could benefit an estimated 350 Olympic athletes who live and train in Colorado, an increase from the nearly 40 athletes who took advantage of in-state tuition in 2016. Under the former law, in-state tuition only was offered to Team USA athletes who trained at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, with nearly 200 athletes benefiting from the program since 2013.

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Hickenlooper signed the bill into law on April 13 in a ceremony at the Capitol that included several CU representatives, including Regent Sue Sharkey and UCCS Vice Chancellor for Student Success Sentwali Bakari. UCCS student Olympic athletes Dale Royer and Mirai Nagasu also appeared, as did CU Boulder alumna Jenny Simpson. The Olympic track athlete won the bronze medal in the 1,500 meters event at last year's Rio games, making her the first American woman to medal in the race.



"We are thrilled to offer more American athletes the opportunity to pursue higher education through this legislation," USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said in a news release. "Access to affordable education while training and competing will help athletes be better prepared to enter the workforce and successfully transition into a career after retiring from elite competition."

Earlier this month, the governor also signed into law [Senate Bill 17-062](#)[15], which prohibits public institutions of higher education from limiting or restricting student expression or forums. The legislation was sponsored by Sen. Tim Neville, R-Littleton; Rep. Jeff Bridges, D-Greenwood Village; and Rep. Stephen Humphrey, R-Eaton.

CU and other institutions still may enforce parameters regarding time, place and manner so that protests and demonstrations do not interfere with the teaching and research mission.

[Kip Thorne, pioneer in gravitational waves, to give 51st Gamow lecture](#)[16]

[UCCS professor finds automation of applications for jobless benefits linked to overpayments](#)[17]

[50 years of CAP in the community](#)[18]

[FAMILY open house to showcase new additions for improved treatment](#)[19]

[20]

FAMILY Program Open House **When:** 5-7 p.m. April 27

**Where:** Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center, 13199 E. Montview Blvd., Suite 330, Aurora

For more information [visit them online](#)[21].

The FAMILY (Fostering Anxiety and Mood Improvement in Lives of Youth) program at the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center wants to show the University of Colorado community how it can successfully improve the lives of children and teens.

The FAMILY Program will host an open house 5-7 p.m. April 27 to debut its updated therapy rooms and offices. Those interested may drop by, tour the facilities and talk with program clinicians about services provided and available treatment options.

With one in five children and adolescents suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, the center is looking for ways to better serve a greater population and destigmatize mental health treatment.

Led by a dedicated, five-person team of board-certified psychiatrists and psychologists, the FAMILY program offers expert individualized treatment and support for patients and their families suffering from anxiety, mood disorders and general mental health issues that inhibit everyday life.

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"Mental health is no different from physical health in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. If you have diabetes, you would go to the doctor. It's the same thing with depression or anxiety: You should get it treated," said Melissa Batt, a child and adolescent psychiatrist. "That's where the breakdown happens. There's a perception that you are weak or just need to pull yourself up by your bootstraps. We don't believe that's true. Just like anything, treatment can be tailored for what the person wants to do to treat their condition, with options like medicine or therapy."

Recently, the program expanded to include additional offices and two new rooms for enhanced group and family therapy. These rooms provide a welcoming environment for families and large groups to meet together and work through various mental health obstacles with a FAMILY member. They also host various workshops such as Anxiety Bootcamp, where parents together with their children or teens can gain information and skills related to anxiety in a rapid format.

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"It feels like a real success when you can shift people's perception of a child from being a 'bad kid' to one with a lot of symptoms that need help. If parents or teachers are stuck in this viewpoint, you're not in a position to provide support," said psychologist Aimee Sullivan, Ph.D. "If you can adjust that perspective to one where we realize the child is also unhappy with the way things are, then we can address the symptoms."

Each team member has examples of patients reclaiming their lives, from the depressed teen who dropped out of school but was able to pull his life back together with therapy and medication, to the family who couldn't go to a restaurant because of their child's anxiety, to countless others.

"One of the highest compliments we can receive is when parents say, 'Thank you for giving my child back,'" said Scott Cypers, Ph.D.

Those who don't live near the CU Anschutz Medical Campus may receive face-to-face treatment through TeleHealth, a secure phone line with FaceTime capabilities, to talk with a member of the team from the comfort of home while avoiding high travel costs for quality care.

The Depression Center takes multiple types of insurance including Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield. CU faculty and staff with a CU Health Plan, held under Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, are covered for services given at the Depression Center. Both the FAMILY program and the Depression Center hold a strict privacy policy for all patients.

[Visit the Depression Center website.](#)[24]

[Jaggar, Luger join American Academy of Arts and Sciences](#)[25]

[Scholarship program names Swaby an 'Unstoppable Woman'](#)[26]

[Nesbitt nominated for prestigious ATHENA Leadership Award](#)[27]

[28]

Kathy Nesbitt, vice president of employee and information services, recently was nominated for an ATHENA Award and honored at the ATHENA Leadership Award luncheon.

The ATHENA Leadership Award honors Colorado women who exemplify exceptional professional achievement,

devotion to community service and generosity in actively assisting other women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills.

The 20th annual ATHENA Leadership Award Luncheon and Conference, presented by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, was April 12 at the Ritz Carlton in Denver.

This year's recipient of the award, Jean Galloway, accepted it from Kristen Blessman, CEO of the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce and Women's Leadership Foundation, and Dorothy Horrell, CU Denver chancellor, who received the award last year. Since the program's inception in 1982, more than 7,000 exemplary leaders in over 500 communities have received the prestigious ATHENA Leadership Award.

Before coming to CU in 2014, Nesbitt served in a variety of public and private sector positions. She served as Gov. John Hickenlooper's chief personnel director, human resources director for Kaiser Permanente, staff attorney for the Mountain States Employers Council, and an attorney for Qwest Communications. She is an alumna of CU Boulder and also completed the Executive Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

[Kenny, Tuffield nominated for nursing awards](#)<sup>[29]</sup>

[CU South Denver seeking community input via survey, open forum](#)<sup>[30]</sup>

<sup>[31]</sup>

The University of Colorado South Denver is seeking input from the community and its stakeholders – including CU faculty and staff across the system – with a survey that will inform a new strategic planning process.

The ambitious process will help leadership to set goals and define a vision to bring innovative education models to the South Denver community.

[The survey](#)<sup>[31]</sup> is available now and will be open through Monday.

"As valued stakeholders of our local community, your contribution to the future of CU South Denver is greatly needed and appreciated," said Luella Chavez D'Angelo, vice chancellor for enterprise development for CU South Denver.

"The University of Colorado plays a profound role in the lives of individuals and communities throughout Colorado, across the country and around the world. CU South Denver, the newest addition to the CU enterprise, is a place for lifelong learners of all ages that brings together the knowledge from all four campuses – CU Anschutz Medical Campus, CU Boulder, CU Colorado Springs, CU Denver."

The survey seeks to gather information from local community members to inform future programming and offerings from CU South Denver and ensure community needs are being met.

CU South Denver also will host an [open forum](#)<sup>[32]</sup> where members of the community may provide input and feedback in person. The event is set for 6:30 p.m. May 1 at CU South Denver in the Great Hall.

"This is an opportunity to share thoughts and opinions in person crucial to the success of our strategic plan," D'Angelo said. "We truly want to know what CU can do for you."

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## Links

[1] <https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-carol-cleland>[2]  
[https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cleland\\_01.jpg](https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/cleland_01.jpg)[3]  
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<https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-health-plan-rate-changes-minimal-most-2017-18-plans>[7]  
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<http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb17-1081>[14] [https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/leg-update\\_top.jpg](https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/leg-update_top.jpg)[15]  
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