

[Five questions for Sandy Hicks](#)[1]

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When Sandy Hicks wraps up her work day on Friday, it will be the first time in nearly four decades she hasn't had an official role at the University of Colorado.

Hicks, associate vice president and chief procurement officer, is retiring from CU, where she began as a CU Boulder freshman in 1979. It didn't take long for her to become part of the staff, too, as she joined the Athletic Department to sell football tickets.

"That was my first job," Hicks said. "I went to school full-time two years while working part-time. Then I flipped and went to school part-time while working full-time in the athletics business office. That's where I cut my teeth on learning business processes, learning purchases."

With her bachelor's degree in hand, she continued as a CU Boulder purchasing agent. Hicks has been part of procurement at the university ever since, going on to lead the Procurement Service Center. The center handles all purchasing, payables and travel for the four campuses, amounting to a \$1 billion-plus flow each year.

"We consolidated the campus operations into the Procurement Service Center in 1999. That was a major deal," Hicks said. "Our first stop was at Building 500 at what was then Fitzsimons. After five years there, we were at the Lawrence Street Center at CU Denver for five years, and we've been here at 1800 Grant St. for close to 10 years."

And she can still remember when CU Boulder connected its first fax machine. "You'd get a call letting you know you had a fax," she said with a laugh, "and you had to walk across campus to pick it up."

1. What are the significant changes in procurement – the industry at large and at CU – you've witnessed?

By becoming the Procurement Service Center, we went through really big changes. The best thing is that we can act as a conduit for the campuses. Because we know what housing is doing at CU Boulder and UCCS, we can give better service to both campuses. We achieve economies of scale by working together.

Also, we put purchasing and payables together, which was trendsetting at the time. We were early adopters of a consolidated service center model. Now, the University of Massachusetts is consolidating their procurement function for their campuses – and they're calling it the Colorado Model.

In the procurement industry and at CU, there have been big changes around technology. We implemented Concur travel and expense in 2010 and Marketplace in 2011. And now CU is looked at by these software companies and their customers as one of the best in class for technology. We have a lot of influence into how they enhance their software.

Basically, you want to implement as much technology as you can while still recognizing there's a strong people component and relationship component. We have somebody out on the campuses every single day. We have eight events a year that we do on the campuses. We need to have those relationships with them. Email and phone are fine for some things, but face-to-face interactions and meetings are very important.

2. What about CU has changed over those years? What hasn't?

What seems to be changing – and this is not unique to CU – is the frequency of people switching jobs. So it becomes hard to build and maintain relationships. Building relationships is key to our success and the success of the university as a whole. And when somebody new comes in, it takes time, because you have to start over. [We've used our videos](#) [3] to sustain relationships and humanize our department.

What hasn't changed is the loyalty and commitment that people who are involved in CU feel, whether you attended or worked here. There's a high level of pride in being part of the University of Colorado community.

3. As you reflect on your CU career at retirement, what memories are most vivid for you?

They revolve around people – people I've been able to support, and people who've supported me. I feel fortunate that I've been able to mentor my staff at the Procurement Service Center and other individuals from across CU and professional associations.

I've also been fortunate to have received support from President Bruce Benson, as well as Todd Saliman (vice president of budget and finance and chief financial officer), Geoff Barsch (senior associate vice president, business operations) and Kelly Fox (currently CU Boulder senior vice chancellor and chief financial officer). They have really moved things forward. When President Benson first came on board, he brought a business mentality and was looking for efficiencies. That's how we got CU Marketplace, which is our purchasing and payables system that enables online shopping.

Of course, knowing that CU now has one of the best procurement departments in higher education in the country means a lot, too!

4. What's in store for you next?

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Two days after I retire, my husband and I are heading to Barcelona. Then we have a Mediterranean cruise – it will be our 17th cruise. So definitely travel! We have two grandchildren in Colorado Springs, so we're looking forward to spending time with them. My mom recently moved one minute from us so we'll be spending time with her, too. It will be nice to have that time, which is the scarce resource in life.

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We like to go up to the mountains. The whole family skis and snowboards while I'm in the condo – I'm support staff! It's important to know your role.

People can't believe I'm not going to work anymore! And I'm not 100 percent sure I can believe it. But I do want to take a little break, to give myself that opportunity to see what that's like.

5. What do you think you'll miss most?

The people of the university and the supplier community. It means a lot to me to build relationships with people when you're working together for common goals.

It's been fun. I feel blessed that I've enjoyed my work and I have had fun doing it. My hope is that everybody, at their end of their work life would say, 'Wow, that was a great career.' And I can definitely say that.

[Mark R. Kennedy appointed 23rd president of the University of Colorado](#)[6]

The Board of Regents on Friday voted to appoint Mark R. Kennedy the 23rd president of the University of Colorado.

The vote at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus was 5-4.

Kennedy, 62, said he is "honored and humbled" by the appointment.

"CU is one of the world's great universities, built on a solid foundation, and it is poised to reach even greater heights. I am truly excited about the opportunity ahead," he said. "I am committed to furthering CU's standing as a leader in academic, medical and research excellence, and as a key contributor to the economy, health and culture of Colorado, the nation and world."

He will replace Bruce D. Benson, who is retiring from CU in June after more than 11 years as president. Board Chair Sue Sharkey said Kennedy's unique set of skills make him ideal for the job. He is president of the University of North Dakota and previously served as a U.S. congressman from Minnesota. Before that, he held leadership positions in some of the country's largest corporations, including what are now Macy's and General Foods.

"Not only has he led an institution of higher education, but he has also served in the United States Congress and has worked in complex business organizations," Sharkey said. "I was impressed with his forward-facing vision for the university and his recognition that higher education needs to adapt if it is going to meet the needs of our citizens. The state of Colorado needs the University of Colorado to be more accessible and more affordable so that students across the state can reach their highest potential."

Kennedy will assume the presidency in July. His complete statement and a video are at [CU.edu](#)[7].

A video recording of the full meeting is [posted here](#).[8]

Those regents voting to approve Kennedy as president were Chair Sue Sharkey, R-Castle Rock; John Carson, R-Highlands Ranch; Glen Gallegos, R-Grand Junction; Heidi Ganahl, R-Superior; and Chance Hill, R-Colorado Springs. Those regents voting against his appointment were Vice Chair Jack Kroll, D-Denver; Irene Griego, D-Lakewood; Linda Shoemaker, D-Boulder; and Lesley Smith, D-Boulder.

The vote was preceded by statements from each board member, as well as a period of public comment that included statements from several members of the CU community and from shared governance leaders: Nancy Moore, Staff Council chair; Joanne Addison, Faculty Council chair; and Sierra Brown, Intercampus Student Forum chair.

The regents acknowledged taking into account the many comments expressed by the university community via campus forums, an online comment form, letters, emails and phone calls. They said criticism from community members indicated that CU has work to do in making all members feel included.

"CU is about culture, it's about research and it's about inclusion," Gallegos said. "Things aren't going to change overnight. One person cannot move this university into the dark ages or into the future. It takes the people, the Faculty Council, the chancellors, the students, the professors ... it takes everybody to make that difference."

Said Hill, "This guy's gonna need our help, obviously. He can't do it alone."

Carson said the board was "not hiring Mark Kennedy to be a politician. He will not be a political president of the University of Colorado; he will be the president of CU, period."

The regents who voted against Kennedy's appointment had previously voted with the rest of the board in advancing him as the sole finalist. They said the period of comment and consideration since then led them to withdrawing their support.

Kroll said Kennedy "did not do enough to unite our community" during his campus visits. "He is not the best person to lead our university."

Said Smith, a former faculty member, "We can't have our largest contributors to the university's research dollars doubting our president's ability to be a strong leader."

Shoemaker said "the people that vote for this today will own it, for better or worse. I hope I regret my 'no' vote in the future."

The regents also voted on [Kennedy's contract](#)[9]; it passed 8-1, with Shoemaker voting against.

[Faculty Council recognizes award recipients, elects leadership](#)[10]

The Faculty Council recently honored faculty, administration and staff with the governance group's annual awards.

The council's April 25 meeting at 1800 Grant St. included the presentation of awards to Tamara Terzian, Ph.D., for Distinguished Service; to Michael Lightner, Ph.D., for Administrator of the Year; and to Jay Dedrick for Service Excellence. Awards were presented by Faculty Council Chair Joanne Addison.

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[Terzian](#)[12] is an assistant professor in the CU School of Medicine at the Anschutz Medical Campus. The Faculty Council Distinguished Service Award recognizes the service of faculty to CU. It is designed to recognize contributions through participation in faculty governance, particularly through activities in Faculty Council and its committee structures. Terzian chairs the council's Personnel and Benefits Committee and is the council's current secretary. She was praised as being a staunch advocate for faculty since first becoming a member of the School of Medicine Faculty Senate in 2014. She has contributed to improvements around such issues as anti-bullying, parental leave, tuition benefit, retirement, fertility, and gender equity.

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[Lightner](#)[14] is vice president and academic affairs officer for the CU system. He serves as the president's liaison between system administration and faculty across all four campuses. The Administrator of the Year Award recognizes significant contributions to the university, to Faculty Council and/or to shared and faculty governance. A professor of electrical, computer and energy engineering, he joined CU Boulder in 1981. He was lauded for his track record in scholarship, teaching and service, and for being a champion of shared governance. "Lightner is an innovative leader, a person of character and an agent of effective change, whose example is to be emulated," the award resolution reads.

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Dedrick is internal communications manager in the Office of the President at CU system administration. The Service Excellence Award recognizes service to the Faculty Council and CU faculty. The editor of CU Connections, Dedrick also is a non-voting member of the council's Communications Committee.

The winner of the council's Leadership in Public Education Award – which recognizes a public official or other individual in the state whose leadership on issues directly affecting public higher education results in significant, positive change – will be announced at a later date.

The April council meeting also featured the election of officers for the next academic year. All three are continuing in their roles from this year and were elected by acclamation: Joanne Addison, chair; Maja Krakowiak, vice chair; and Tamara Terzian, secretary.

In other business at the April 25 meeting:

The council voted to approve a [set of recommendations](#)[16] for the Equity and Inclusive Excellence Task Force. "We wanted a document with concrete examples of things we could and should be doing," Addison said. Among the items listed are a call to regularly administer social climate surveys and salary analyses. She said the recommendations are part of a "living document" that can be added to as needed. The task force was [approved by the Board of Regents in February](#)[17]. The council approved changing the name of its Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) to the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Equity. Committee co-chair Tina Moser said the committee felt the old name no longer reflected contemporary diversity terminology.

[Staff Council celebrates contributions of those who go above and beyond](#)[18]

Eight University of Colorado staff members – representing each campus and system administration – were honored with Service Excellence Awards during the University of Colorado Staff Council's (UCSC) Professional Development Day and Recognition Lunch, April 26 at CU South Denver.

The awards, presented annually by UCSC, recognize staff members who have “gone above and beyond their job duties and have surpassed expectations.”

Each honoree received a recognition plaque and a \$250 prize. Award winners are:

Missy Sernatinger, First Year Experience Program Coordinator
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

A year ago, Sernatinger switched positions at UCCS because she wanted to help instill the confidence in students needed to help them be successful in higher education. First-year students face many challenges, and during her time as program coordinator, many of those students have benefited from her commitment.

Last spring, a student’s mother contacted the program, fearing her son was ready to drop out of CU. Sernatinger worked with the student and his family, and helped the student improve his grade point average (from 1.0 to 3.1). Now, that young man, one of many students Sernatinger has helped, is thriving at the university.

Sernatinger has worked for CU for more than three years; her previous position was residence experience coordinator. Her nominator, Ellen Burkart, said her relationships with students, Housing Operations front desk staff, resident assistants, and residence hall managers have been a catalyst to making steps forward to improving the partnerships with Housing and Residence Life.

Sernatinger also has led numerous workshops, and has partnered with various programs and staff members. She serves on many university committees and is always exploring ways to develop herself professionally.

She has been cross-training to assist with the configuration and maintenance of Starfish Early Alert, a platform that includes appointment scheduling as a feature. In just one year, the platform has seen a 67 percent increase in use for scheduling. Because Sernatinger believes so much in the platform, she will be the Starfish liaison for Student Success. “This plan would not have been a possibility without Missy’s unique skill set, knowing student development and how student success units operate, coupled with her knowledge of technology,” Burkart said in the nomination letter.

Ellen Burkart, interim senior executive director of Student Support and Retention and director of First-Year Experience and Parent and Family programs
UCCS

Ellen Burkart’s nominator, Nick Lockwood, refers to her as “an exceptional professional who dedicates an extraordinary amount of time, energy, and commitment to providing support services to UCCS students, parents, faculty and staff.”

As director of the First-Year Experience and the Parent and Family programs, she has built and facilitated the campus’s early alert system in partnership with faculty, advising and multiple student support offices; hosts support workshops and student meetings; and is the university connection for parents, both before and during a student’s enrollment.

In December 2018, Burkart took over as the interim senior executive director of Student Support and Retention as well. She helped craft the Orientation and Parent and Family guide and calendar, a 36-page document that includes financial, academic and student involvement dates, campus resource descriptions and a guide for new students. For the past four years, she has volunteered her time to design the calendar in partnership with the orientation office.

In addition, she serves on the University Budget Advisory Committee; spearheaded the development and implementation of Starfish, the early alert program that supports students with academic, social and personal concerns; and is a member of Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals.

Burkart is a Colorado native and outdoor enthusiast, and often can be found hiking or camping.

Tanya Cohen, manager of Litigation Operations
CU system administration

Cohen is a master task juggler and works long hours, but she always greets coworkers with a smile. She's always "looking for ways to improve efficiency and make people's jobs easier," says her nominator, Tara Dressler. Add to that, says Dressler, a great sense of humor, a compassionate soul and a big heart.

Some of Cohen's work duties include vetting software options for the litigation team. In the past year, she was a direct supervisor to a paralegal, and has filled in when needed as the litigation team moves through a transition.

Not only has she done a wonderful job on on-boarding, but the training that she provides is invaluable, Dressler says. "She is very good at explaining things that need to be done in a way that people understand, and so it is not overwhelming. ... She goes the extra mile to make sure that things are being communicated properly and provides support both in subject matter and as a mentor."

In the past year, as the litigation team went through a transformation, Cohen filled in when needed and offered to take on tasks that were out of her normal responsibilities to keep the team afloat.

Cohen also is a member of the System Staff Council, serving as vice chair during the past year. Her special interests outside of work include volunteering for animal welfare and rescue organizations, and community outreach.

Andrea Holland, acting assistant director of Relationship Management
CU system administration

Over the past year, Holland has taken on new roles and responsibilities. She participated in the hiring of two staff members and has implemented development opportunities for her new coworkers; lightened the workload of colleagues by identifying tasks she can take on; and assisted with the budget planning process. "She is a huge part of the reason the team was able to maintain their positive, supportive, innovative dynamic during times of change and crisis," said her nominator, Sara Wuorinen.

She leads a walking club and book club in the office; participates on the Staff Appreciation Committee, bringing fun ideas to the office to keep up morale and office engagement; serves on the board of Apra Rocky Mountains; and has engaged in more than 160 hours of training for central and campus staff on topics such as contact reports, prospect management, and other business operations. She co-created a Beginner Advance Training, a monthly three-hour session for new employees, and is considered a subject matter expert when it comes to prospect management and other best practices.

"I've never seen anyone able to build and maintain relationships like Andrea," Wuorinen said. "She goes out of her way to engage with staff on an individual level and truly excels at creating partnerships among the office and campuses. She instills trust in others and her openness, honesty, and transparency serves the office well in our relationships with the campuses."

Erika Sandoval, Organizational and Employee Development Manager
University of Colorado Boulder

Sandoval joined Housing and Dining Services (HDS) four years ago to provide bilingual training to Spanish-speaking employees. In that time, she also has created opportunities specifically designed to empower and encourage those same employees. She coordinates foreign language initiatives, including interpretations and translations for Spanish, Nepali and Mandarin staff members to ensure they have access to important information in their primary language. She

also established a Spanish and a Nepali support group to help these language learners navigate an English-only environment. In addition, she works with employees affected by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) rules, helping them navigate complex legal and logistic issues.

“Erika is a vital part of our HDS community and works tirelessly to ensure those employees most likely to feel marginalized have an inclusive space to call their work home,” said her nominator, Brian Shimamoto. “Her establishment of the Café con Leche Spanish-language network and the Chiya Khala Nepali-language network are only two examples of successful initiatives she has created.”

One employee said this about Sandoval: “She is a girl that is very friendly is always smiling and helps everyone. In her trainings, she always encourages us to participate. Erika deserves recognition as the employee of the year. The little time she has worked for the university everyone knows her and loves her. Thank you!”

Before coming to CU, her work focused on refugee, development and human rights. She is a first-generation college graduate who speaks several languages, and is a volunteer Spanish yoga teacher in Boulder and Denver, and is a volunteer for North Denver Economic Development Opportunity.

Alan Slinkard, Window and Projects Specialist
CU Boulder

“Alan Slinkard’s motor does not idle,” said his nominator, Barry Sparks, who told this story as evidence: “He originally came to CU Boulder, years ago, as a window washer. He once asked his supervisor, Darren Gist, how many entry doors with glass panes he needed to wash in order to complete a task assigned to him. Darren had no idea. As an example of Alan’s resourcefulness, tenacity and ability to think outside the box, a few hours later he announced to Darren that there were 1,125 doorways on campus that needed washing, and he then delivered an accurate timetable for how long the entire project would take. Alan’s count and timetable were spot on.”

Slinkard has served as chair of the CU Boulder Staff Council and still serves as a member of the organization.

He has an eye for detail and was directly involved with developing a quality-control program for custodial building inspections, is constantly fine-tuning workflow systems to keep them in check, and takes the time to give new hires the attention they require to be properly trained and on-boarded.

He earned his Ph.D. in mythological studies in 2018, and teaches a religious studies class to master’s and Ph.D. candidates at the University of Denver in the evenings. He spends his free time skiing, rock climbing, parasailing, enjoying an occasional ride down the Snowmass zip line, relaxing with his family and sipping what he affectionately calls a “barley pop.”

Jay Campbell, executive director of Facilities Management
University of Colorado Denver

Campbell joined the university in 2015 and has made significant contributions to the campus since, said Ryan Untisz, who nominated Campbell on behalf of the CU Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus Staff Council. He joined staff council in 2016, and was elected chair in 2017.

During his tenure, writes Untisz in the nomination letter, Campbell “oversaw a dynamic shift in effectiveness and results of our campus staff council,” including:

Advocating for policy reviews that impacted staff, including a working group tasked with researching improvements to the tuition waiver benefit program; Launching the Staff Train and Retain Initiative, which aims to provide avenues for the professional development and retention of staff employees; Overseeing the expansion of Staff Council’s representation to include professional research assistants, who are not formally represented by faculty governance, and the creation of a new Staff Inclusive Excellence Committee (SIEC) to advance the causes of diversity and inclusion; and Initiating a discussion on parking and fees on CU Anschutz, resulting in greater transparency and

understanding about the complexities of university budgets and funding.

“Through his time as chair of the governance body representing staff, Jay Campbell has consistently provided guidance, encouragement, advocacy, and support to members of CU Denver | CU Anschutz Staff Council, far in excess of his significant responsibility as executive director of Facilities Management. There are few individuals who stand out as more deserving of recognition for such strong commitment to the university community and the communities we serve,” according to the nomination letter.

In addition, he served on the Long Range Facility Planning Committee for Cherry Creek School District from August 2015 to July 2018, is a current representative on the Aurora Water Citizens Advisory Board, and is a current board member for the Colorado Association of Physical Plant Administrators.

Ja’Net Hurt, assistant to the dean, School of Education and Human Development
CU Denver

Hurt has been a member of the CU Denver Staff Council since 2012, and has served on several council committees. She also is actively involved in service to the School of Education and Human Development, including leading the department’s wellness initiative.

“She is an important mentor to younger staff. I would describe her as the ‘heart’ of the school, someone who keeps everyone else in her line of sight and cares deeply about the school’s community,” said her nominator, Rebecca Kantor. She organizes many of the school’s events, including retirement celebrations, baby showers and the annual spring faculty and staff barbecue.

Hurt serves her community as well. She is a member of the board of directors for the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School and has served on the School Accountability Committee. For the past four years, she has been a Blue Bear Reading Buddy at the same school, and is active in her church.

[CU 401\(a\), 403\(b\) retirement plan fees lowered by 19%](#)[19]

Employee Services has negotiated lower fees in the University of Colorado 401(a) Mandatory Retirement Plan and the 403(b) Voluntary Retirement Plan.

As of Jan. 1, 2019, employees will pay an annual plan servicing fee of just 0.057% or 5.7 basis points. Prior to this change, the fee was 0.07% or 7 basis points. This means plan participants will pay a 57 cent fee per \$1,000 invested rather than 70 cents.

In 2018, CU reached a three-year milestone with TIAA as the Record Keeper for the CU retirement savings plans. Employee Services developed a Request for Information (RFI), in partnership with consultants at [Innovest](#)[20]. It sent the RFI to six vendors, including TIAA, for pricing. As a result, TIAA lowered its existing prices for CU plan holders by 19%.

“We monitor our plans closely to be sure our plan participants pay competitive rates and I am happy to report that CU’s retirement plan fees are, on average, approximately 65 percent lower than other Colorado higher education institutions using TIAA,” said Felicity O’Herron, Chief Human Resources Office at the University of Colorado Employee Services. According to Innovest’s 2017 report, TIAA’s average state universities’ retirement plan fees and record keeping costs are 0.16%. Other Colorado universities average 0.14 – 0.23% for these fees and costs.

The Plan Servicing Fee covers additional services such as recordkeeping, legal, accounting, investment advisory, and other plan and participant services.

When making decisions about a CU retirement plan account, it’s important to know the fees associated with many

plan services and investments. Some fees are paid by CU; others may be paid by plan holders based on services and investments chosen.

Learn more about fees associated with CU's retirement plans with an [interactive video](#)[21].

When making financial decisions, CU faculty and staff can receive guidance with no out-of-pocket cost as part of CU's administrative contract. Faculty and staff can schedule a one-on-one consultation with a TIAA retirement professional to discuss fees, investments, financial goals and more. An advisor can walk employees through TIAA's associated fees and help them chart their financial plans. [Schedule a meeting today](#)[22].

[New Anthem prescription manager set to debut](#)[23]

Managing your medications is an important part of health care. Beginning July 1, your prescriptions will be processed by [IngenioRx](#)[24], a change affecting faculty and staff enrolled in CU Health Plans – Exclusive, Extended and High Deductible.

With the change, CU Health Plan enrollees will have 24/7 access to pharmacy experts, online and mobile app prescription management and tools to find local doctors and pharmacies at anthem.com/cuhealthplan[25]

A letter from Anthem/IngenioRx detailing this transition will arrive on or near May 2.

Anthem has aimed to make the transition seamless:

The move does not change your prescription benefit and medication coverage. You may continue using the same pharmacy for prescriptions, medications and more. Be sure your pharmacy has the most recent Anthem ID card information on file for accuracy. If you currently utilize a UCHHealth pharmacy for your prescriptions, there will be no changes.

Current prescription benefits

Currently, the University of Colorado covers the majority of pharmaceutical costs for employees, spouses and dependents covered by a CU Health Plan. Anthem determines prescription drugs on a tier system.

CU Health Plan – Exclusive, Extended and High Deductible will continue covering prescription drugs through Anthem Retail, UCHHealth Retail and UCH Mail order. To compare prescription coverage, access [Employee Services' interactive plan comparison](#)[26].

Save on prescriptions with a Health Care Flexible Spending Account

Plan members can save on their prescription costs by enrolling in a Health Care Flexible Spending Account. This pre-tax savings account reserves a specified amount for eligible medical expenses including medications. Faculty and staff must re-enroll in a Health Care FSA each year. CU Health Plan – High Deductible members may enroll in a Health Savings Account to offset these costs. **Please note: CU employees may not be enrolled simultaneously in an HCFSA and an HSA.**

Chart your plan this Open Enrollment

Ensure you and your family are on the right track this plan year during Open Enrollment. This is your annual opportunity to enroll in a CU-offered health, dental and vision plans and flexible spending account. Select benefits to meet your needs until 5 p.m. Friday. Learn more at cu.edu/es[27].

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