

Focus on CU Faculty January 2021

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY 2021



University of Colorado **Boulder**

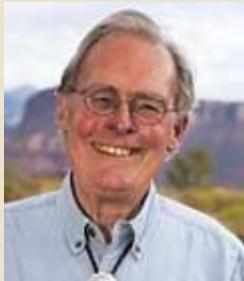


[Declutter the Mind: Brain Scans Reveal How to Best get Rid of Unwanted Thoughts](#)

Study Finds

(Dec. 19, 2020) -- Researchers from CU Boulder and the University of Texas say brain scans reveal how long your mind holds onto a thought, even after you try to get rid of it.

"We found that if you really want a new idea to come into your mind, you need to deliberately force yourself to stop thinking about the old one," says co-author [Marie Banich](#), professor and executive director of the Intermountain Neuroimaging Center at CU Boulder.



Biden Picks Rep. Deb Haaland (D-N.M.) to be First Native American Interior Secretary

The Washington Post

(Dec. 17, 2020) -- Three divisions of Interior have a tremendous impact on Indian Country, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration, which manages billions held in trust by the U.S. government.

"It's symbolic, but it just cuts to the core of Indian culture," CU Boulder law professor [Charles Wilkinson](#) said. "The Department of Interior has almost unlimited power over tribes. And, by the way, that is power to do good or bad. It's called plenary power."



Expert Looks into Whether Colorado Employers Can Ask Workers to Not Travel

CBS 4

(Dec. 14, 2020) -- "The ability of an employer to enforce a requirement like this ultimately comes down to an employer's prerogative to fire," said [Ahmed White](#), the Nicholas Rosenbaum Professor of Law Chair at CU Boulder. "This issue, as it's come up until now, has almost always involved individual employees, one employee in the entire workplace who has made some kind of complaint."



Tinkering with a Pollutant, Colorado Ranch Seeks to Improve Fish Habitat along Blue River

Summit Daily

(Jan. 2, 2021) -- A private ranch is seeking Colorado environmental regulators' permission to inject the Blue River with phosphorus — a chemical regulated as a pollutant — as part of an experiment that could help improve trout habitat at a High Country fishing destination.

"This is a success story," said [William Lewis](#), a professor at CU Boulder and director of its Center for Limnology. Lewis has studied the reservoir's chemistry for decades.



Colorado's Mountains are Starting to Recover from Acid Rains

Colorado Politics

Findings suggest that Colorado's mountains might be slowly recovering from the damage caused by vehicle emissions in Colorado's Front Range.

"It looks like we're doing the right thing," said co-author [Jason Neff](#), director and principal investigator at the Sustainability Innovation Lab at CU Boulder. "By controlling vehicle emissions, some of these really special places that make Colorado unique are going back to what they used to be."



University of Colorado **Colorado Springs**



Perceptions of Trump's Trustworthiness Became More Polarized from 2016 to 2019

PsyPost

(Dec. 19, 2020) -- Donald Trump was viewed as a low-trust individual as a presidential candidate and this perception did not improve overall after he entered the highest office in the United States, according to new research.

"As our clocks turned from one century to the next, 1999 to 2020, I worked with a number of notable communication scholars who had long been interested in the nature of 'trust.' We were fortunate to receive major funding to investigate the topic internationally," explained study author [Pamela S. Shockley-Zalabak](#), chancellor emerita at UCCS.



Colorado Springs Sales Tax Revenues Jump Nearly 14% despite Pandemic Woes

The Gazette

(Dec. 18, 2020) -- The Springs has continued to see newcomers who are moving to the area, said [Tatiana Bailey](#), director of the UCCS Economic Forum. Some economic sectors also have remained relatively healthy; the pace of home construction, for example, is at a 15-year high and the

city collects millions of sales tax dollars each year on the purchase of building materials.

"That's purchasing power," Bailey said of employees who remain on the job. "That's people being able to go out and make the purchases that they normally would."

Also: [Investments in Long-term Sustainable Economic Growth are also Investments in Americans | Tatiana Bailey](#), The Gazette, Jan. 3



[UCCS' Astronautical Engineering Program Expanding with Anschutz Foundation Donation](#)

The Gazette

(Dec. 16, 2020) -- Rocket science needs more engineers, and an expansion at UCCS will funnel more educated workers into the growing field of astronautical engineering. A \$3.5 million donation from the Anschutz Foundation will jumpstart construction of a 24,000-square-foot annex to the campus' College of Engineering and Applied Science.

"Thanks to the phenomenal support of the Anschutz Foundation, we can redouble our efforts to develop the bright minds of future engineering students, who will bring their skills and abilities to benefit the nation and make a difference on the ground and in space," Chancellor [Venkat Reddy](#) said.

Also: [Booming Demand for Colorado Springs Space Workers Creates Concern](#), The Gazette, Dec. 5



Four Colorado Springs Institutions Put Their Heads together for a First-of-its-Kind Collaboration

The Denver Post

(Dec. 2, 2020) -- The Quad Innovation Partnership rounds up students from Pikes Peak Community College, UCCS, Colorado College and the U.S. Air Force Academy to tackle project-based work for local industry. Beneficiaries of the program say it allows bright, young minds to share their fresh perspectives that organizations need to succeed in the future while creating a space for eager learners to put their unique skillsets to the test.



University of Colorado **Denver**



Brothers' Labor of Love Results in Safer, 'Smart' Power Wheelchair

The Denver Post

(Dec. 15, 2020) -- The originators of the wheelchair found partners and teachers in such fields as precision agriculture and autonomous vehicles as well as experts in technology and design for people with disabilities, including staff at the CU Denver Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering.

"We have all these smart technologies in our homes and in our cars, and we as a society use these technologies every

day without even thinking about it," said [Becky Breaux](#), an instructor at the center.



Unemployment Benefits are More Generous to Higher Earners, CU Denver research suggests

Denver Business Journal

(Dec. 12, 2020) -- Unemployment checks for the bottom one-fifth of earners who lost their jobs between 1996 and 2013 replaced 22% of previous earnings, according to the working paper. Workers who were in the middle three-fifths of earners had between 29% and 30% of their wages replaced.

"We know [unemployment insurance] is just a function of pre job-loss earnings, but the amount that's replaced by unemployment insurance is smaller for people who were earning less," said [Chloe East](#), an economics professor at CU Denver.

Also: [Pain, Despair and Poverty Reach Fever Pitch for Unemployed Workers](#), CNBC, Dec. 19



Colorado Looks to Logging to Help Re-balance Forests in an Era of Climate-Triggered Megafires

The Denver Post

(Dec. 7, 2020) -- CU Denver forest ecologist [Diana Tomback](#) said much depends on how much forest thinning is done and where. When westerners began snuffing wildfires a century ago, this obligated some form of logging to replace disturbed natural processes, Tomback said. But large clear-cuts cause erosion and even standing majority-dead forests can be preferable ecologically, she said.

“A storm of threats” — climate warming, megafires, insect outbreaks and drought — “is converging now to greatly diminish our nation’s once-magnificent forests,” Tomback said, suggesting Gov. Jared Polis should convene a forest science brain trust to develop a strategy.



[Federal Judge Considers Case against Cleanups of Homeless Encampments in Denver](#)

Denverite

(Dec. 15, 2020) -- [Marisa Westbrook](#), a public health researcher at CU Denver, testified about guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has cautioned that clearing encampments can increase the risk of spreading disease during the pandemic by dispersing people and disrupting their connections with service providers.

“There is a consensus that sweeps are not the solution” during the pandemic, Westbrook said.



How 2020 Has Affected the Way We Vote

5280

(Dec. 15, 2020) -- When all the votes were tallied, it turned out that Colorado did a good job.

"Colorado just simply didn't have the problems with absentee ballots and such that other states had," said [Michael Berry](#), an associate professor of political science at CU Denver. "That's largely because we had an expansive vote-by-mail apparatus that we all understood how to use."



University of Colorado **Anschutz Medical Campus**



Why America Can't Rely Solely on Individuals to Stop COVID-19

VOX

(Dec. 21, 2020) -- Most experts agree Thanksgiving dinners likely led to a surge on top of a surge, and similar Christmas and New Year's events likely did too. But that's why some experts believe there's a need for more focus on systemic action, not the individualistic approach.

"People, in general, are horrendous risk assessors," said [Daniel Goldberg](#), a medical historian and public health ethicist at CU Anschutz. "I hate to say people can't be trusted, but . . ."



Aurora Doctor is Leading the Push to Change Cornea Donation Restrictions

The Denver Post

(Dec. 9, 2020) -- Today, tests can identify the virus within eight days of infection, which is unlikely to pass through the cornea anyway, because it doesn't receive blood from outside the eye, said [Michael Puente](#), an eye surgeon affiliated the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

"I think it would be very reasonable to at least shorten the deferral from five years to three months," he said. "This policy is unnecessarily depriving thousands of patients around the world of the opportunity to see again."



Weight-Loss Surgery Lowers Long-Term Heart Risks for Diabetic Teens

HealthDay

(Dec. 21, 2020) – "The mitigation in risk does not seem to be completely activated or ascribed to weight loss, but largely to the remission of diabetes," said lead researcher [Petter Bjornstad](#), an assistant professor of pediatric endocrinology at CU Anschutz. "So even though we're seeing these great results, I think it's really important to acknowledge that this is a huge commitment, and it's not an easy fix."



Food Industry-Backed Research Gives Results Funders Want, New Analysis Shows

Scientific American

(Dec. 16, 2020) -- [Lisa Bero](#), a pharmacologist at CU Anschutz who studies research bias, cites four key approaches industry uses to manipulate research: by influencing what research questions are asked; how studies are designed; how conclusions interpret data; and whether unfavorable findings ever get published.

"Industry is more likely to fund research that is likely to show the benefits of their product or detract from [its] harms," she said. "The problem with that is that those might not be the most important health questions."



Colorado Hospitals are Rapidly Vaccinating Their Staff against Coronavirus

The Colorado Sun

(Dec. 18, 2020) -- A stream of thousands of nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists and other staff are moving daily through makeshift vaccination centers — beginning a steady march toward the hopeful end of the most miserable pandemic the world has seen in more than a century.

"It is rocking," said [Richard Zane](#), professor of emergency medicine at CU Anschutz and the chief innovation officer for UCHealth. "It is one of the most important events in the

history of science and medicine, and people are excited they are participating."

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