

CU South Denver classes underway ^[1]

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By **Marcia Neville** | *CU Denver*

As Matthew Goralczyk packed up from his job at ViaSat near Park Meadows Mall in south Denver at the end of a recent Tuesday, he had no idea that he was about to make history. All Goralczyk knew was that he was headed to the University of Colorado South Denver for a graduate class in Software Architecture and that it was located in a very convenient place—The Wildlife Experience natural history museum and art gallery in Douglas County.

Student No. 1

As he looked around at the just-completed renovations and took in that “new classroom” smell, Goralczyk was told that he was the first student to arrive at CU South Denver’s first-ever class. “That makes me ‘Student No. 1,’” he said proudly. “Having CU South Denver classes at The Wildlife Experience building is just about perfect for me. My job is only about a five-minute drive from here.”

Goralczyk graduated from CU Denver in May and decided to take advantage of his company’s tuition assistance program right away. Finding exactly what he was looking for— a graduate-level course in the CU Denver College of Engineering and Applied Science— right in the

neighborhood was a bonus. “I wish all my classes could be here,” he said.

Convenience

Of the dozen students on hand for the first night of lecturer Albert Hinrichs’ Software Architecture class, two work in the south Denver area and seven live nearby.

Reshmi Vijayakumara is the mother of a 5-year-old who lives in Parker, just a 10- minute drive away. She saw the banners announcing the arrival of CU South Denver while driving past The Wildlife Experience.

“I wanted to take another one of Albert’s classes,” she said, “but when I take a class downtown I’m often not home until 10 p.m. This was just the class that I was looking for and I’m lucky it was offered here. Otherwise, I might not have taken it.”

There’s a chance that no University of Colorado South Denver student will ever have it as good as Anusha Vidap. Vidap’s apartment is within walking distance of The Wildlife Experience. On the history-making first night of classes, after she’d already attended two classes downtown, ridden the light rail home and had dinner in her apartment, all she had to do was walk over to night class. “I’m so happy I didn’t have to stay downtown tonight,” she said. “It’ll be good to be home nice and early.”

More classes starting—enroll now!

Later in the week, the CU Denver Business School started its first CU South Denver Class—Leading Teams and Individuals. Nursing students are now at The Wildlife Experience location five days a week. And classes in education and counseling, politics and public policy, and public health are still enrolling and set to start later this fall.

The collaboration between the University of Colorado and The Wildlife Experience began in April 2014 with 11,000 square feet of the natural history museum and art gallery scheduled for renovation. Since then, an upstairs gallery space has been transformed into two classrooms, a computer lab and a student and faculty resource center. Expansive storage space in the lower level has been converted into a state-of-the-art nursing simulation lab.

“It’s hard to believe how much has been accomplished in just four short months,” said CU South Denver Executive Director Tony Smith. “Construction was completed on time, classes have already started and south Denver’s workforce and residents can now receive a quality CU education right in their own backyard.”

While the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus is taking the lead by offering the first classes at CU South Denver, both CU-Boulder and the University of Colorado Colorado Springs are expected to offer courses of their own in the near future.

New tradition

As for Goralscy, CU South Denver’s self-titled “Student No. 1,” he’s proud to begin a new University of Colorado tradition. “It’s pretty wicked to be in the first class,” he said. “It’s historic, a new chapter in the history of CU. I expect this new, convenient location will bring in many more professionals looking to advance their careers.”

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