

# May 2020

**Dear friends of CU:**

Life these days can be an odd juxtaposition of slowing to a halt in some ways and moving at breakneck speed in others. It has been the same at CU.

Life didn't stop when we moved to remote teaching in mid-March in response to COVID-19, but our campuses became different places almost overnight, with the normal hustle and bustle replaced by a strange quiet.

Yet our faculty quickly pivoted to remote teaching and learning with all the creativity, quality, professionalism and dedication you would expect from them. And I appreciate the flexibility and adaptability of our students. Most everybody rose to the challenge under difficult circumstances.

The crisis also reinforced decisions we made last fall on two substantial, related projects: the Online Learning Project (which aims to leverage our current online presence) and Transformation and Innovation Program (which will boost our technology infrastructure). COVID-19 magnified the need for both projects and accelerated our work on them.

The Online Learning Project looks to leverage the considerable strengths in online programs across our four campuses, bringing a variety of them under one umbrella. A study we undertook last fall showed CU has strong programs that align with market demand and areas of concentrated online expertise. Yet it also found that overall, we lag national market leaders in offerings and capabilities.

We'll address this in two separate and distinct efforts. We will be promoting about a dozen current online programs (with each campus contributing) in fall 2020. Concurrently, we established a separate Online Accelerator Committee to frame

the foundation for a sustainable online effort that aligns with CU's mission. It will have a significant rollout in fall 2021.

We will look for opportunities to concentrate some services that support online programs for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness, such as enrollment marketing, recruiting and student support. Our campuses will continue to provide the high-quality online programs you would expect from CU's excellent faculty. We intend to be a leader in online education. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is the importance of getting online education right.

To do so, as well as to deliver on so many aspects of our mission, we need enhanced technical infrastructure. Our Transformation and Innovation Program focuses on several aspects of IT, including governance, finance, staffing and technology capabilities and services across the CU system. The program will help CU deliver reliable, secure and cost-effective technology services and data access. IT at CU will be a strategic partner for campus programs through innovation, automation, artificial intelligence and analytics.

A team of CU's best and brightest technology experts from across our system is collaborating to push the initiative forward. Technology not only increasingly drives our academic mission (particularly now), but also the operations of the university. We expect the outcome of the program to be greater effectiveness and efficiency.

While the pandemic drove the need to accelerate the Online Learning and Technology and Innovation programs, it caused us to slow down another key initiative. We are suspending work on our strategic planning process until next spring. We have made great progress to date, identifying our priorities, key areas of focus and metrics that will guide our actions. But looming budget uncertainty because of COVID-19 makes it prudent for us to pause until we have a better sense of funding and of whether we will be able to achieve our goal of safely open in the fall.

We will finish the last phases of the plan – defining action steps to achieve metrics and refining goals – next spring. We will have a much clearer picture of the landscape, which will allow us to complete the plan in July 2021.

The university is just like the rest of society, buffeted by the headwinds of COVID-19. But we are being deliberate about where we need to accelerate and where we need to brake. And in doing so, we are laser focused on meeting our mission today and for years to come.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Kennedy President

For feedback, contact [president.newsletter@cu.edu](mailto:president.newsletter@cu.edu)



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## Looking forward, looking up

There are many examples of the steps we are taking to educate and care for individuals surrounding COVID-19. Some outstanding initiatives are featured below, but please also listen to my university update on our [CU on the Air podcast](#). Additionally, I wanted to share this new weekly series called [Mind the Brain](#), articles from the Department of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine promoting mental health. You can also get a glimpse into the daily life of our outstanding health care workers at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus [in this video](#) and in this panel discussion on [Life on the Front Lines of COVID-19](#). Meanwhile, a new CU Boulder initiative, [COventure Forward](#), is helping small businesses weather the pandemic. Check out “How We’re Helping” at our [website](#) for dozens

more programs and initiatives that are at the forefront of care during the pandemic.

## IN THE NEWS



### [Make4COVID provides crucial PPE to Colorado's health care workers](#)

When CU closed its campuses because of the coronavirus crisis, instead of shutting its doors, members of Inworks opened up new opportunities to assist health care workers. Inworks at CU Denver | Anschutz launched [Make4Covid](#) to create and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE), using the tools and people-power available to them through CU and across the land.



## [True GRIT provides resilience training in coronavirus crisis](#)

CU on the Air talks with Chip Benight, a psychology professor at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. Benight researches the human adaptation from trauma. His work is focused on recovery from natural disasters such as the coronavirus pandemic as well as man-made disasters, accident trauma, violence, bereavement and more.

## NEWS FROM THE CAMPUSES

### CU BOULDER

### [Mobile food drive and COVID-19 testing](#)

CU Boulder helped deliver food to 216 people on April 29, distributing 9,583 pounds of pantry items, fresh produce and dairy products. Also, on April 30 and May 1, CU Boulder's East Campus became a COVID-19 drive-thru testing site through a partnership between King Soopers and the Colorado Emergency Operations Center.

### CU COLORADO SPRINGS

## **UCCS Aging Center receives NextFifty Initiative grant for COVID-19 services**

The center received a \$25,000 grant award for “Strengthening Services for Older Adults During and After COVID-19.” The award was provided by the NextFifty Initiative, a Denver-based nonprofit dedicated to funding initiatives that improve the lives of older adults and their caregivers.

**CU DENVER**

## **Avoiding quarantine conflict at home**

Quarantine conflict is natural, given that most people are under stay-at-home orders to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Even people who really like each other are not accustomed to perpetual cohabitation. You might need to develop some new skills for this new normal.

**CU ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

## **COVID-19 vaccine update: more than 80 under development**

Herd immunity to a germ occurs when enough people become immune to minimize the spread of the virus. Immunity occurs either through being infected naturally or through vaccination. Can we stake our hopes of conquering COVID-19 on herd immunity via widespread infection?



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