

February 2020

Dear friends:

My wife Debbie and I were first-generation college students, meaning none of our parents had a college degree. The degrees we earned opened the world for us and fostered opportunities we still realize today.

That's why we are so passionate about ensuring those same opportunities for CU students. And the university delivers on that promise. It surprises some people, but CU's campuses combined are educating some 13,000 first-generation students this year (about one in five CU students).

Likewise, we serve more than 13,500 students who receive Pell Grants, a federal aid program in which low-income students get up to \$6,000 they don't have to repay. Students get full or partial awards, depending on need.

We work hard to enroll these students, and just as hard to ensure they graduate. At our campuses in Boulder, Colorado Springs and Denver, graduation rates for first-generation and Pell students trail those of all students, but the percentage difference is in single digits. We're working to narrow the gap. Those students graduate with a valuable degree from a quality institution.

Serving first-generation and Pell students is not only the right thing to do and in keeping with our mission of ensuring access, but it's also our present and future. Virtually all of CU's enrollment growth in the past decade has come from underrepresented minority students (many of whom are first-generation and/or Pell recipients). In fact, since 2010, their numbers have increased 100% (7,043 in 2010 to 14,085 last fall). They now account for 21% of all CU students. By contrast, the number of white students has increased 1% over the same period (41,055 to 41,463) reflecting the changing demographics of our state and nation.

The increased diversity on our campuses is a strength. It enhances the learning environment. It mirrors the society our students will graduate into. It brings different voices, viewpoints and perspectives, the hallmark of intellectual inquiry. We are exploring securing Hispanic-Serving Institution status for our Denver campus, the most diverse in our system. The designation comes with the opportunity to secure more federal grants and to improve access.

Serving a changing student demographic also comes with challenges. I know from personal experience that first-generation students benefit from financial aid and support services. I received grant aid as an undergraduate and took full advantage of advising and other services. That combination had a particular importance in my success. Universities can be complex and intimidating places to navigate for those unfamiliar with them. Similarly, underrepresented minority students benefit from campuses that are inclusive and welcoming. Providing a variety of support services leads directly to student success.

Financial aid is also critical. Pell awards make up 16% of CU's grants and scholarships. The number of Pell recipients at CU has increased by 34% over the past decade. We also generate more than \$200 million annually (the bulk from philanthropy) in financial aid to support our students. Our institutional aid has increased 102% in the past decade.

Still, academic services that support students can be expensive. We work to account for that in our internal budget deliberations, as well as in our funding conversations with state legislators. They quite rightly expect us to serve all students, and we work to convey to them just what it entails for us to ensure student success.

We are committed to advancing CU's role as Colorado's university of choice for all learners, including first-generation, Pell and less-represented minority students. Our track record of success in enrolling and graduating them is something we will build on in coming years as demographics continue to shift. I want every CU

student to have the same opportunities Debbie and I had, those that emerge after receiving a quality education at a great university.

All the best,



Mark Kennedy President

For feedback, contact president.newsletter@cu.edu



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IN THE NEWS



[Improving online education and boosting technology](#)

We partnered with Ernst & Young/Parthenon for an in-depth look at our online programs and how they align with current and future needs in the market. We also partnered with Deloitte to

examine our primary technology systems to ensure that we are being as efficient as possible and making optimal use of technology.



CU in Africa – and beyond

The Global Emergency Care Initiative at CU Anschutz gives students real-world experience. Students spend half of their time serving the communities and the other half on research or education projects that are longer standing, more ethical and a sustainable product for the Africans.



CU Anschutz researchers give parents with young children a supportive environment

Milk and Cookies is a CU Anschutz initiative that supports women scientists – and beyond – as they juggle their careers, education and parenthood. CU School of Medicine researchers and administrative support Michele Hoffman, Whitney Phinney and Pamela Alvarez Moran discuss the important steps they are taking to retain women in science.

NEWS FROM THE CAMPUSES

CU BOULDER

U.S. birth weights drop due to rise in cesarean births, inductions

Research has shown that, after decades of rising, birth weights began to fall in 1990.

CU COLORADO SPRINGS

College of Business launches new cybersecurity management programs

Three new AACSB-accredited cybersecurity management emphases will launch in the College of Business starting fall 2020.

CU DENVER

Police shootings linked to inaccurate dispatch information

The findings show a relationship between inaccurate dispatched information about the presence of a weapon and police shooting errors.

CU ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Colonels Row renovation a 'game-changer' for veteran care

The west side of the CU Anschutz Medical Campus will house patients of the Marcus Institute for Brain Health.