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University of Colorado

Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

# **A Message from the President**

## **June 2018**

**Dear alumni and friends:**

Over the past decade we have worked hard to promote a culture of innovation and efficiency at the university, and we've made great progress. The results show in a variety of ways that are often dramatic. For example, in the past three years, our efficiency efforts have resulted in about \$112 million in cost savings and cost avoidance. In prior years, we saved millions more.

Efficiencies help our students, our campuses and our employees. Our goal is to keep our costs in check so the cost of a CU education remains reasonable for our students. It also means not spending money we don't have to. We're a complex, \$4.5 billion annual operation, and there is plenty of room for finding savings in such a large enterprise. The key is having a mindset of efficiency that permeates the organization.

And while we tend to focus on the big-ticket items that save millions or tens of millions of dollars, the mindset is as important as the result. A couple of weeks ago, I had a great example of that. Each year, our Office of University Controller sponsors the CU Innovation and Efficiency Awards. We ask our employees to come up with ideas that can save us money or improve our operations. We offer cash prizes of \$1,000 to \$1,500 as

incentive. I am continually amazed by the creative thinking and innovative solutions that emerge.

For instance, this year's winner, from our Boulder campus, emerged from a significant calamity. The floods that struck parts of campus in 2013 caused a steam vault to overflow, killing surrounding vegetation. Darren Willett, turf manager for Housing and Dining Services, noticed this and a light bulb went off. He wondered if steam could be harnessed for weed control. He and facilities manager David Lawson explored the concept and found an Australian company with proven technology. Its use led to fewer weeds, less herbicide and our grounds crew covering a 63 percent greater area per hour. They shared the idea with the other three CU campuses, as well as other colleges in Colorado and the City of Boulder.

One of my favorites came a few years back, when Jori Leszczynski at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus led a team that looked to the restaurant industry and devised a system allowing for more efficient mopping of the floors at the campus animal-care facility. It ended up saving about 3,900 labor hours (at a savings of \$108,000), 620 fewer gallons of chemicals and 40,000 fewer gallons of water, saving an additional \$8,300. And it substantially reduced bacteria in the facility.

Many other great ideas – ranging from more efficient student advising to reducing the number of plastic water bottles – have emerged from the contest. Its goal is to save time and money, streamline procedures, create efficiencies and perhaps most important, share ideas with other departments and campuses.

Along with that, we certainly focus on big-ticket items. We conducted an audit of our employee insurance plans in 2012 that resulted in nearly \$3 million in annual savings. Related, we instituted self-insurance in 2011, which saves \$3 million to \$4 million annually.

We have worked closely with legislators over the past decade to secure legislation that allows us to operate more efficiently. They passed nearly 20 bills that help us increase efficiencies – everything from streamlining the construction approval process to instituting better procurement processes – that save tens of millions annually.

The efficiency mindset resonates beyond the university as well. Moody's credit rating arm recently upgraded CU's bond rating to Aa1, which allows us to save millions in bond transactions. We refinanced some \$450 million in bonds, saving about \$50 million. We also issued our first commercial paper sale (accompanied by Moody's and Fitch's highest ratings), which will eventually save millions.

Efficiencies save us, and our students, money. But the mindset that accompanies it also makes us a better place to work and it places a premium on employee creativity and innovation. It has become second nature now at CU, and I expect it will lead to many more efficiencies to come.

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

Sincerely,



Bruce Benson  
President



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## IN THE NEWS



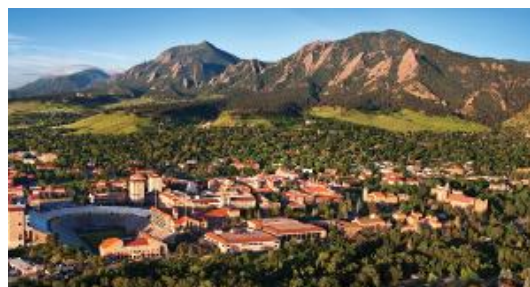
### **University of Colorado MOOC enrollments top 2 million**

A leader in massive open online courses – or MOOCs – the University of Colorado recently exceeded 2 million enrollments since it began offering the classes in 2013. CU now offers 95 free, online courses reaching 194 countries.



### **Thomas Jefferson Award honorees exemplify CU's best in service, leadership**

Representing faculty, staff and students, three CU community members received the 2018 Thomas Jefferson Award. It is among the highest honors given at CU. Congratulations to this year's recipients: John Harner, UCCS, and Julia Willis and Lúgia Batista Silverman from CU Boulder.



### **CU Boulder ranked one of world's top universities**

CU Boulder last week was [named No. 50 out of 18,000 universities worldwide](#) by the Center for World University Rankings, which publishes university rankings that measure the quality of education and training of students, the prestige of faculty members and quality of faculty research without relying on surveys and university data submissions.



## Rockin' litigation in the entertainment industry

From Beatlemania to the #MeToo movement, the causes and outcomes of rock 'n' roll litigation are varied and complex. Stan Soocher, CU Denver professor of Music & Entertainment Industry Studies, talks with [CU on the Air](#) about court cases ranging from the Beatles to Elvis, Michael Jackson to Taylor Swift, and how they have shaped the industry.



## Alumni, tell us how you're doing

If you are an alumnus of the University of Colorado, you should have this week received a survey from us asking for your input. It's important that we get meaningful feedback on the job we are doing, and there's no better place to obtain it than from our alumni. The first survey was two years ago, and it is important that we continue to glean insight about how CU alumni fare after graduation. Your feedback helps us understand not only the work of the university, but also its impact on individuals and communities.

## SPOTLIGHT ON **ALUMNI**



### [CU Denver grad heads to the CU School of Medicine](#)

William Mundo earned a bachelor's degree from CU Denver and a master's degree from CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Now, he's enrolled at the CU School of Medicine. The son of Mexican immigrants, Mundo remembers as a child watching visitors arrive at his house to be healed by his father.

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## ALL FOUR: **COLORADO**



### [Meet the engaged arts and humanities scholars](#)

CU Boulder graduate students are part of a new program where they learn to use the tools of their academic disciplines to connect with Colorado communities. This summer, the group will learn more about facilitating dialogue across different perspectives, design thinking and community engagement, in addition to writing a proposal to launch community engagement projects.

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## BECOME A **CU ADVOCATE**

Colorado needs healthy research universities that produce a highly educated workforce, grow our economy, attract business and industry, and engage in research that generates jobs, creates companies and improves lives. With your help we can keep CU - and Colorado - strong.

[Become an advocate for CU](#)

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## NEWS FROM OUR **CAMPUSES**

### CU BOULDER

[Better water for all:](#) Each year, nearly 41,000 children in Pakistan die from diarrhea caused by contaminated water supplies. Mustafa Naseem, who grew up drinking from those water supplies, wants to change that.

### CU COLORADO SPRINGS

[Collaboration expands access for veterans:](#) Veterans who experience the “hidden wounds of war” have a new option for treatment in a new partnership between the UCCS Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic and the Headstrong Project.

### CU DENVER

[Enhancing cities one parking space and trail at a time:](#) CU Denver students gain hands-on experience through Hometown Colorado partnership.

### CU ANSCHUTZ

[Anxiety disorders take center stage in early virtual reality testing:](#) Experts predict gaming technology can help break mental health barriers using exposure therapies.



**Make a difference. Support CU today!**

**[GIVE TO CU](#)**

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Message sent by:

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