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Excellence in Leadership event examines teamwork, recognizes CU Anschutz dean with award [1]

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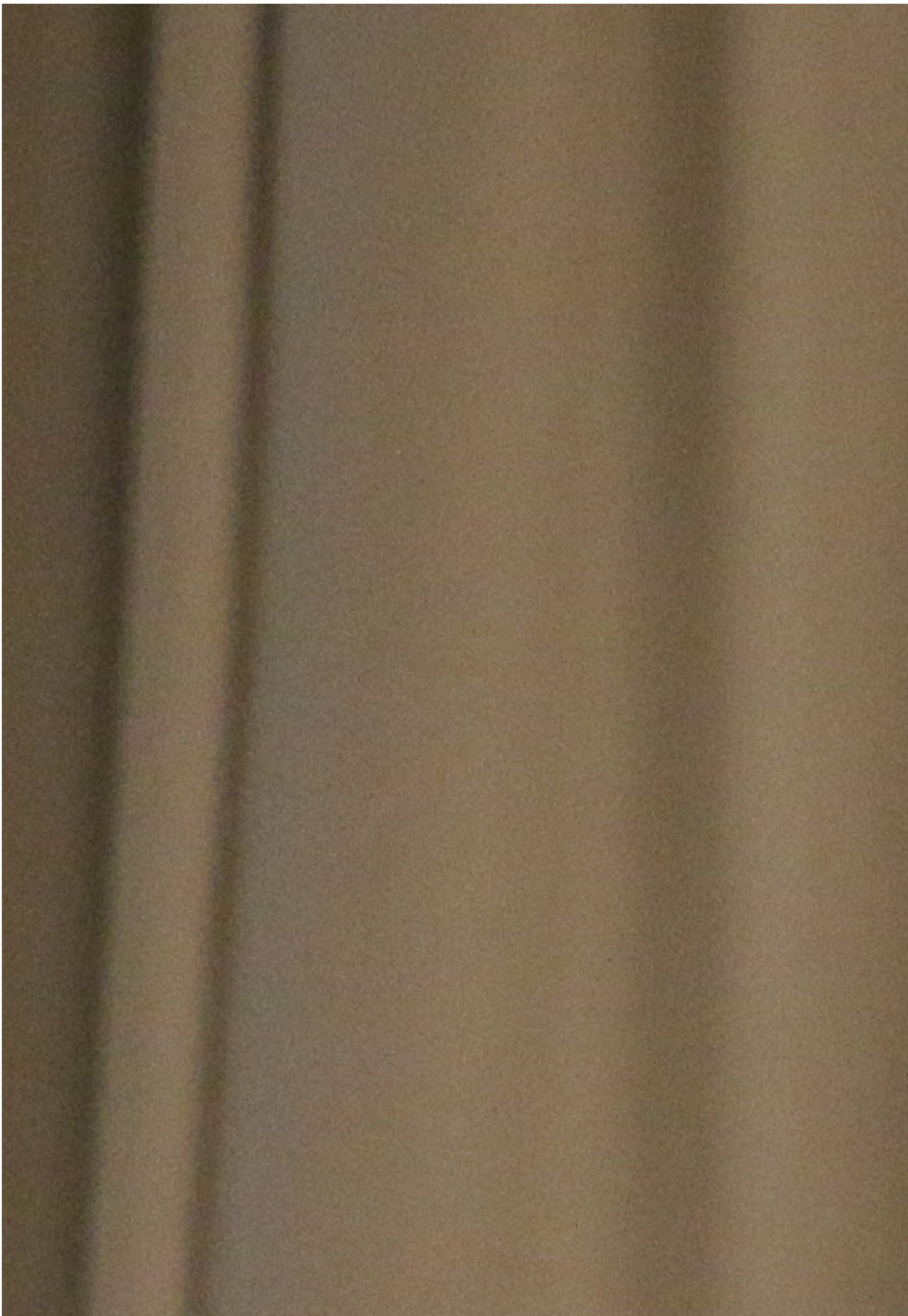
The 2025 Excellence in Leadership Lecture and Luncheon examined leadership and teamwork, as Excellence in Leadership program (ELP) [3] alumni and current program participants gathered on April 4 at the Benson Hotel on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

Sponsored by TIAA and hosted by the CU System Administration office, the annual event creates opportunities for continued collaboration, networking and leadership development, and recognizes an impactful ELP Alumni leader.

ELP provides opportunities for CU faculty and staff across all campuses to become more effective leaders, providing participants with a greater understanding of all aspects of CU's organizational function, cultivating community among university leaders and strengthening leadership capabilities.

Since 2000, nearly 580 fellows have completed the program.

Leading through productive discord



Dr. Ann Schmiesing delivers the 2025 ELP Luncheon keynote address.

Dr. Ann Schmiesing, interim vice chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and professor of German at CU Boulder, gave the keynote speech at this year's luncheon.

Dr. Schmiesing, a 2012 ELP program alumna, spoke to the power of recurring patterns that can enhance or diminish leadership teams.

"Our team members need to all pull toward the same goal. That doesn't mean they all have the same role or that they all think the same thing. On the contrary, productive discord is indispensable to their work," she said.

Describing situations leaders can find their teams in, Schmiesing used the diamond model of participatory decision making to explain that many efforts begin with divergent thinking and diverse perspectives, move into the "groan zone," before finally achieving convergent thinking and an ultimate decision.

When Dr. Schmiesing first encountered the diamond model, she thought that it resembled more of a story than a shape. Using folk tales like The Wizard of Oz and Little Red Riding Hood, she said "To get from disequilibrium to equilibrium – to arrive at the happy ending – our characters have to go through the forest. The forest in fairy tales is the equivalent of the groan zone."

"Characters are tested in the forest in terrifying ways, but the forest is also a space of self-realization, where you can break free of norms."

Dr. Schmiesing's address Leadership – A Tale of Teams highlighted the role team leaders play in setting team dynamics and interaction. The speech centered around teams of leaders themselves, detailing the importance of collaboration, even when there are multiple competing perspectives.

"To address the complicated problems they are presented with, the members of a leadership team have to spar actively. They must challenge one another's ideas, question assumptions and push back in debates," Schmiesing said, quoting researchers Thomas Keil and Marianna Zangrillo. "Even as they move collaboratively toward a goal, they are propelled by the forces of conflict, competition and ambition."

"A place I'm really proud to be"

Cathy Bradley, dean of the Colorado School of Public Health at CU Anschutz, received the 2025 Excellence in Leadership Award [4].

Bradley was presented with the award by Dr. Rod Nairn, executive vice chancellor for academic and students affairs at CU Anschutz, and Chancellor Don Elliman.

Elliman presented the award to Bradley, saying, “To have someone like Cathy, whose strength, whose commitment and whose, frankly, willingness to go to battle in the role that she’s in now, will serve us well at the Colorado School of Public Health and at the University of Colorado.”

Bradley is an internationally recognized expert [5] in health services research and health economics, focusing on the labor market outcomes of cancer survivors, health policy and health disparities. She has served [5] on multiple national advisory committees, is a member of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Methods Committee and is involved in multiple esteemed scientific journals, as mentioned in her online bio [5].

“I’ve been at three institutions in my career. The last 10 years here, and I would say most of my mentors and leadership all come from this university. It’s a place I’m really proud to be,” Bradley said.



Dr. Cathy Bradley receiving the 2025 Excellence in Leadership Award on April 4, 2025.

Excellence in Leadership Award nominees for 2025 included:

- Andrea Cordova, retired chief of staff at UCCS
- Yonca Ertimur, Tandean Rustandy esteemed professor at CU Boulder
- Carrie Makarewicz, associate professor and department chair of Urban and Regional Planning at CU Denver
- Scott Munson, associate vice president of UIS and chief information officer at CU System Administration
- Kristi Ryujin, associate dean for Graduate Programs at CU Boulder
- Ann Schmiesing, interim vice chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and professor of German at CU Boulder
- Bernadette Stewart, assistant dean of People, Engagement and Culture at CU Boulder
- Adam Stark, director of Tax and Payroll-Benefit Accounting at CU System Administration
- Greg Tucker, professor at CU Boulder
- Nelia Viveiros, associate vice chancellor for Academic Operations at CU Denver | Anschutz
- Dan Zhang, associate dean for Research and Academics, professor, and dean's faculty fellow for Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Operations at CU Boulder

Learn more about the Excellence in Leadership Program [3].

ELP [6], ELP [6]

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