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Tuition Assistance Benefit helps to grow and develop careers [1]

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In today's rapidly changing workplace, it is vital to pursue further learning and skill development. The University of Colorado's Tuition Assistance Benefit (TAB) [3] enables CU's workforce to meet this demand and pursue higher education at any of CU's four campuses. TAB expands access to higher education, whether that be embarking on a new career path or expanding knowledge with a few courses.

Many CU employees have used the TAB to its fullest potential, achieving new or advanced degrees.

Leah Lleras, director of Finance and Research for the Department of Surgery at Anschutz Medical School, used the Tuition Assistance Benefit to earn her master's of science in Management and Organization.



Opening doors with the Tuition Assistance Benefit

While working in a Human Resources role in the Department of Neurology, Lleras first became aware of the tuition benefit through the applications she processed for department members. After looking through the CU Careers website, Lleras decided to pursue the master's degree program to earn a more applicable degree for her career and to expand upon her own interests.

"I realized my bachelor's in Italian wasn't really an applicable degree here and I also wanted to learn more about organizational design, running a unit, etc." she said.

With her knowledge of the benefit, Lleras applied and began taking courses while working in various positions at Anschutz Medical School. "The Tuition Assistance Benefit paid for my whole degree, which was awesome."

Career advancement with TAB

Unlocking advanced career opportunities is made possible through the dedication to development that TAB users exemplify. Working in the Neurology department when beginning her degree plan, Lleras became the division administrator for Hospital Medicine by the time she completed the program.

During these career changes and while being a student, Lleras paused her studies to have a baby and resumed almost immediately after.

“I took two semesters off and went back with a newborn, which was a little bit crazy with working full time, but I wanted to get it done,” Lleras said.

In her position in Hospital Medicine, Lleras was able to leverage the skills taught in her courses. Change management courses were especially helpful when working in a newly created division.

Even now, as director of Finance and Research, Lleras says her course work has helped in facilitating the program’s growth.

“Looking at case studies of how different organizations are structured helped a lot in this current position, because when I started here, we had three employees, and now I have four teams of employees,” she said.

Lleras spoke to the importance of having a well-structured unit and said the knowledge she gained from her organizational design courses applied directly to her work.

TAB’s lifelong impact

The decision to go back to school and seek higher education is an impactful choice — one that may be hindered by financial considerations. CU’s Tuition Assistance Benefit seeks to incentivize faculty, staff and their dependents to follow their educational aspirations.

When asked about TAB’s impact on her choice, Lleras said “I don’t know that I would have gone back for my master’s (degree) … I was pretty new in my career, and I was trying to start my family. I would have had to take out student loans or just not gone back to school at all.”

The benefit was consequential in helping Llera achieve her educational goals, “It definitely made a huge difference for me because it paid for all of my master’s (degree).”

Using TAB in spring 2024

Benefits eligible staff and faculty can apply now for the Tuition Assistance Benefit for the 2024 spring semester. Review campus-specific policies, deadlines and FAQs on the Tuition Assistance Benefit webpage [3] before applying.

Submit your application prior to the campus deadlines below.

Denver/Anschutz — 5 p.m. Jan. 31
Colorado Springs — Jan. 31
Boulder — Feb. 15

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