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2022 Staff Excellence Award Recipients [1]

Ellen Burkart



Ellen Burkart is the Director for First Year Experience and Family Connections at the

University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS). Driven by helping students to find their place and reach their goals, she takes pride in developing, coordinating, and implementing initiatives to help students and their families navigate the college journey. In her 15 years at UCCS, Ellen founded the Parent and Family Programs (now Family Connections) sub-unit; implemented and maintains the Starfish system; established a peer coaching program; and designs and coordinates a variety of enrollment and persistence outreach campaigns for the Division of Student Affairs among many other initiatives. She currently serves on numerous committees including, but not limited to, Retention and Graduation, CRM Governance, Enrollment Marketing, Salesforce Student Support Network, and Learning Communities committees. Outside of work, you can find Ellen spending time with her family, spending time outdoors, co-leading a Girl Scouts troop, or crafting. Ellen holds both a Master of Science degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education and a Bachelor of Science in Forestry with a Business Concentration from Colorado State University.

Liz Evans



Liz Evans is the Undergraduate Research Advisor and Program Coordinator for the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities at the University of Colorado Denver. She assists students in their research journeys from finding a mentor or research opportunity, to developing and succeeding in independent inquiry. Liz holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from Colorado State University and received her Master of Social Sciences from the University of Colorado Denver in May 2022. Her research focuses on the communication dynamics of multicultural populations. As an interdisciplinary researcher, Liz is passionate about expanding access to undergraduate research across disciplines and draws from her background in intercultural communication training to provide individualized student advising.

Syndee Garland



Syndee Garland is a Senior Academic Advisor and Co-Chair of the Winter Giving Project at UCCS. She has enjoyed advising and supporting students in higher education for the past 16 years, with the past 7 years spent at UCCS. Syndee enjoys supporting students through the challenges and successes of their educational journeys, as well as watching them grow into emerging professionals during their time on campus.
When she is not on campus, Syndee can be found adventuring around Colorado or traveling with her children and granddaughters.

Jennifer Hope



Jennifer was raised in Brigham City, Utah and graduated from Brigham Young University with a Bachelor of Arts in Family History. I started at the University of Colorado in February 2005 and joined the School of Pharmacy Distance Degrees and Programs in June 2013. I am in my all-time favorite job as an Academic Student Advisor because I love helping students. Above all, I am so grateful for the incredible mentorship I received from Sarah King, Academic Services Coordinator, as she imparted of her knowledge on how to be the best advisor. I live in Brigham City, Utah with my supportive husband and two children.

Nikki Hutchinson



Nikki Hutchinson (She/Her) is a Residence Hall Director in Bear Creek. One of Nikki's favorite aspects of the HD role, in addition to the eclectic job responsibilities, is supporting her students (residents & staff) and being a part of their journey. Nikki was born and raised in Connecticut and moved to Colorado in August 2016. To help with the transition from family and friends, Nikki adopted a fluff named Luna, an Australian Shepherd Mix, with ton of energy. Nikki is a self-proclaimed extroverted introvert who is always seeking the "silver lining" in any situation. Nikki enjoys listening to music, reading books, journal writing, midnight drives and going to the movies! Her top love languages are quality time and words of affirmation and her top 5 strengths are adaptability, harmony, empathy, positivity, and restorative. Nikki values vulnerability, consistency, creativity, humor and spontaneity.

Mike Jones



Mike Jones (he/him) serves as the Assistant Director of First-Generation Programs and Enrichment within the Center for Inclusion and Social Change (CISC) where he manages the First-Generation Scholars Program and leads the Men of Excellence initiative, a cross-campus collaborative that enhances the men of color experience at CU Boulder through programming geared towards academic support, community building, and career readiness. Mike prides himself on carrying out his work and building relationships with an intentional mindset and spirit.

Originally from North Carolina, Mike earned his B.A. in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and M.A. in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University. As a first-generation college student himself, Mike understands the value of helping students find their sense of belonging on campus and is committed to creating equitable opportunities for success and growth. In his spare time, you can find Mike working out, playing basketball, or watching RuPaul's Drag Race.

Samantha Kelly



Samantha Kelly has been with the University of Colorado Denver since 2014. She I began her career at CU Denver working in the Lynx Center and New Student Orientation. In 2018, she joined the Registrar's Office as an Associate Registrar. I enjoy being able to work face to face with students to assist them in their academic journey and being able to work on the back end of things to make students' journeys as seamless as possible I am a native Coloradoan. I'm a first-generation college student and grew up in Southwest Denver. I received my Bachelor of Arts from the Colorado State University, and my Master of Arts in Leadership for Educational Organizations in Higher Education from the University of Colorado Denver. I get to share my life with my husband, my two beautiful little girls, and my dog.

Kelsi Miles



Kelsi Miles (she/her/hers) serves as the Peer Advocate Leaders Program Coordinator and will begin her new role as Assistant Director of Student Engagement at CU Denver on November 1, 2022. Kelsi is an alumna of CU Denver and the University of Nothern Colorado. Her career focus is developing student leaders and supporting students through transitions. She is currently back in the classroom pursuing a Master of Social Sciences focusing on educational geography in urban environments.

Tammy Orten



Tammy is currently serving as the Health Care Manager for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at CU 5280 OB-GYN. With over 18 years of experience, I am passionate about women’s health. I am proud to be part of an organization that allows the opportunity to provide diverse, purposeful, compassionate care to the patients in our community.

As a leader, I am grateful to be surrounded by such a resilient, authentic, supportive team who are committed to mentoring new generations in delivering exceptional patient care.

Having lived in Colorado my entire life, I enjoy hiking, camping and fishing with my family.

Emily Osan



Emily Osan (she/her) joined the University of Colorado System Administration in the fall of 2020. In her role as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Specialist, Emily works collaboratively with administrative and campus partners to develop and implement initiatives designed to enhance the success, personal development, and retention of CU's community and to further CU's commitment to developing a just, inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment.

Throughout her career, Emily has worked in a variety of settings focused on social justice, DEI, empowerment, education, community building, and prevention. Emily previously led crisis response and advocacy services at a nonprofit focused on interpersonal violence. Her previous experience also includes teaching youth and adults as well as working in the post-secondary educational access space. Emily holds a BSW from the University of Texas at Austin, a Master of Social Work in Management, Policy, and Evaluation with a professional certificate of DEI from the University of Michigan, and a certificate in Human Resources Management from Cornell University.

RyAnne Scott



RyAnne serves as a director of communications and outreach for Employee Services and University Information Services at CU System Administration. Since joining CU in 2013, she's worked to develop strategies, tools and events to ensure CU's faculty and staff take full advantage of the excellent benefits and resources available to them. In fact, she and her team are working to roll out new easy-to-use resource soon, and we're very excited to share it with the CU community. In her free time, she enjoys traveling with her husband, attending concerts and standup comedy shows, weightlifting and cycling – and a long list of podcasts that make those last two items infinitely more enjoyable.

Groups audience:
University of Colorado Staff Council

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