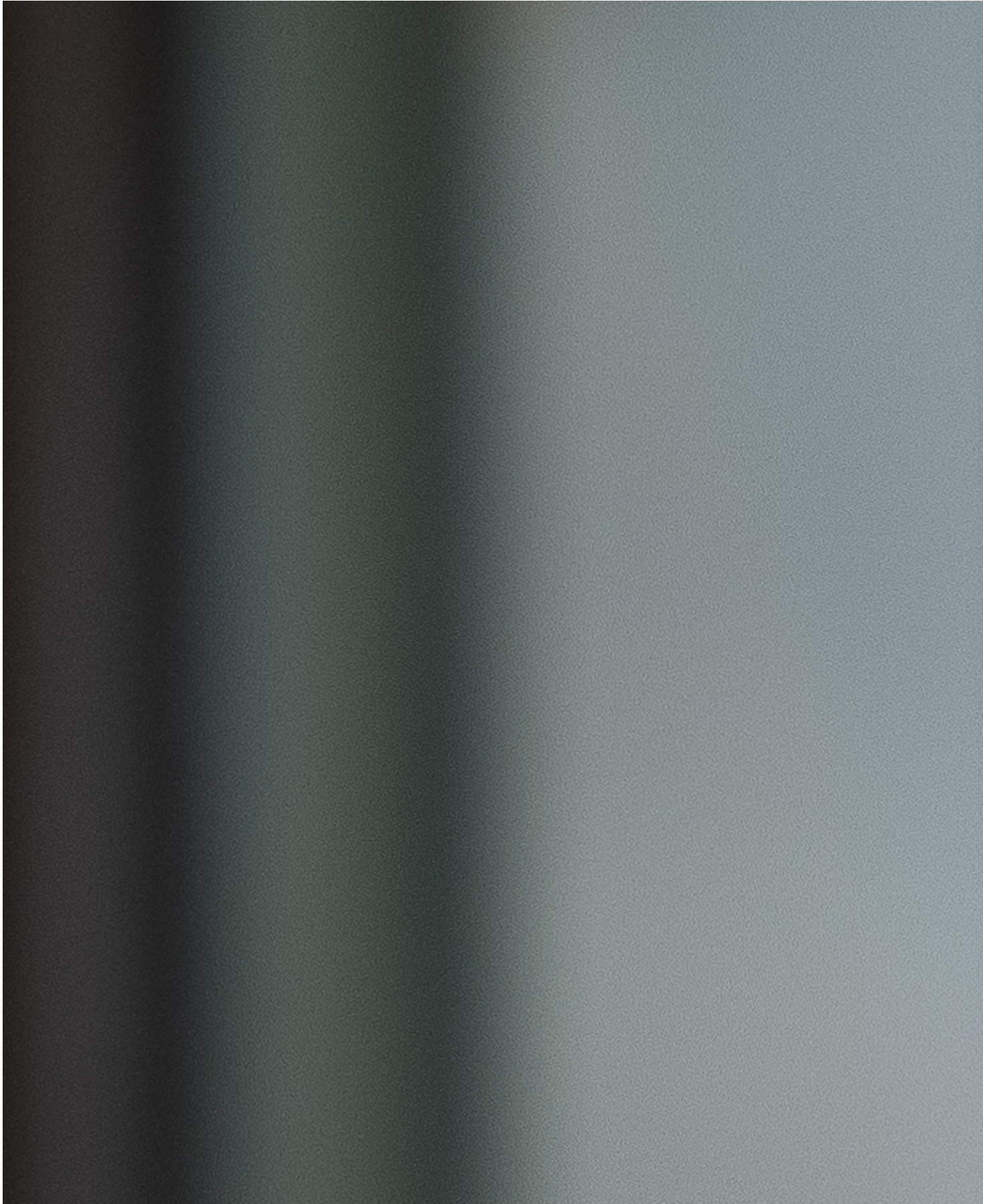


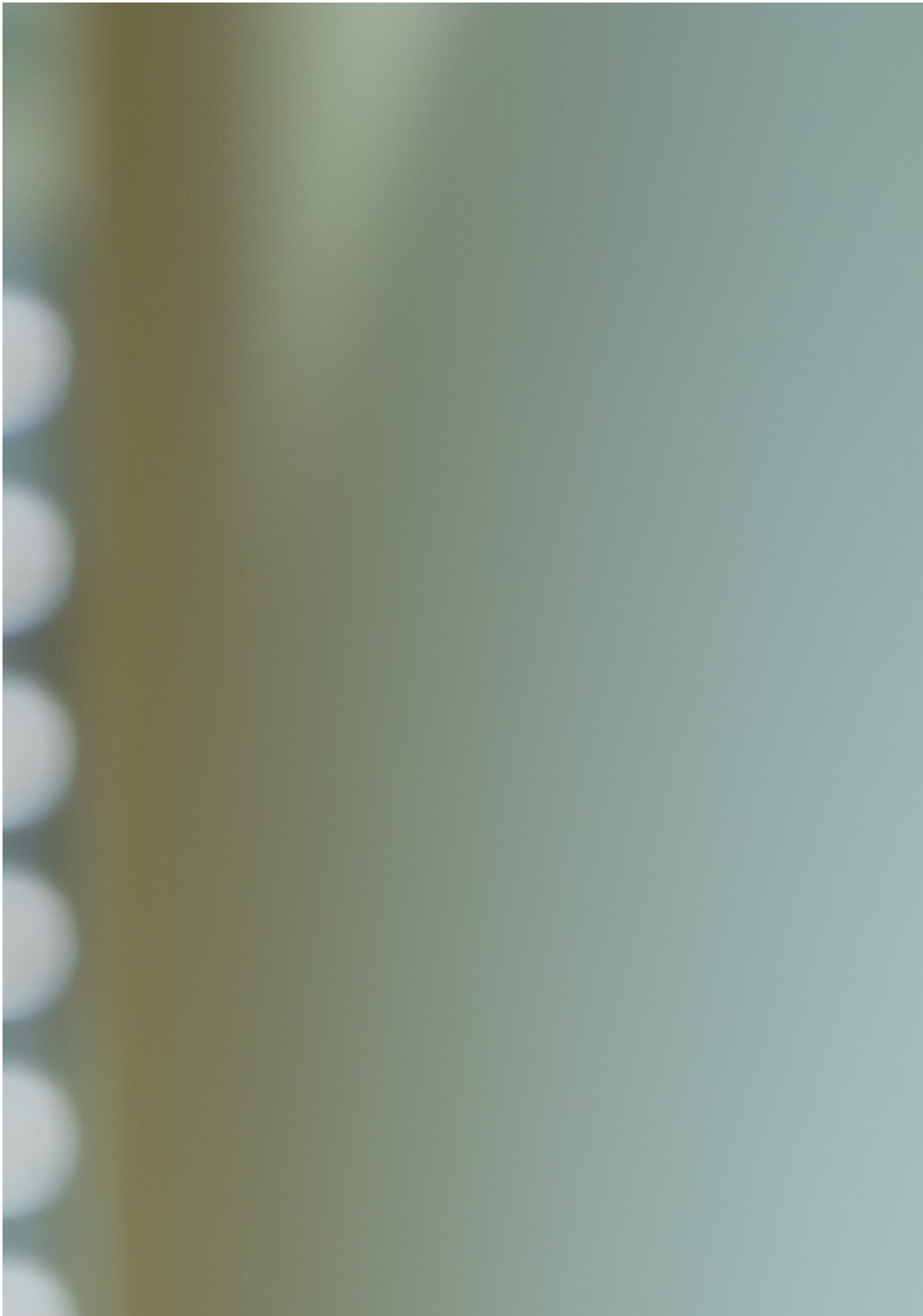
## **2025 Staff Excellence Award Recipients** <sup>[1]</sup>

---



Lauren is a Senior Internship Advisor with the Experiential Learning Center at CU Denver. She brings her 10+ years of experience in education to help students navigate the internship process! She works with the College of Architecture & Planning, College of Arts & Media, School of Public Affairs, and the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' undergraduate Psychology programs. Lauren also chairs the ELC's Unpaid Internship Support Scholarship and is acting Treasurer for CU Denver's LGBTQ+ Affinity Group for Faculty & Staff. She earned her bachelor's degree in English & Secondary Education from Appalachian State University in her home state of North Carolina, and before joining CU Denver, spent 8 years teaching high school English in central North Carolina. Lauren lives with her partner and their dog in East Denver and spends her free time reading, hiking, and dreaming of being a hobbit.

---



## **Mario Rubio**

I am a Project and Transition of Care Coordinator at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus with nearly three years of service, following 13 years as a Care Coordinator at the University of Colorado Hospital. My work focuses on patient discharge planning, cross-departmental collaboration, and securing financial resources for uninsured patients. I have worked extensively with cancer care teams and actively support patients across state lines, ensuring they receive timely and affordable treatment. Outside of work, I love cooking and baking, ask me about my homemade salsa! I also enjoy spending time with family and friends cheering on my favorite hockey team - go Avs!

---





Lanie is a Philanthropic Assistant in the CU Anschutz Office of Advancement, where she has supported the university's mission for nearly three years. Before joining the Advancement team, she served as a Team Lead at UHealth and was honored with the Above & Beyond award for her dedication to excellence. Lanie is pursuing her Master of Healthcare Administration at MSU Denver and is passionate about continuing her career growth within the CU Anschutz community. Committed to professional development, Lanie recently completed the CU System Emerging Leaders Program and Crucial Accountability training. She has contributed to several team-focused initiatives, including collaborative efforts to restructure and enhance a widely used Team Toolkit—streamlining resources and improving usability for colleagues across Advancement. A Colorado native, Lanie was born in Aurora, raised in Parker, and now resides in Denver. She is known for fostering connection and positivity in her workplace—she created the “Friday Feature,” a weekly spotlight that encourages colleagues to share about their lives and interests, and she plays an active role in the Sunshine Committee to help bring joy and support to the team. Outside work, she enjoys reading, writing, spending time in nature, and relaxing with her loving partner and their pets.

---



**Kai Amey**

Kai Amey is the Director of Engineering Education and Operations and Associate Director of the Integrated Teaching and Learning Program at the University of Colorado Boulder's College of Engineering and Applied Science. He brings over a decade of experience leading teams and developing hands-on engineering education initiatives. In his current role, he provides strategic and operational leadership for a multidisciplinary team of 10 professional staff and ~40 student employees who support hands-on learning experiences for thousands of students across the college. Kai holds a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering Sciences from CU Boulder and an MBA specializing in Business Strategy from CU Denver. He is pursuing a doctorate in Leadership for Educational Equity, focusing on Higher Education

Leadership, at CU Denver's School of Education & Human Development. His research examines how engagement with hands-on learning shapes outcomes such as retention, identity development, and sense of belonging among first-year engineering students, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds.

---





Dr. Beth A. Myers is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at the University of Colorado Denver. Her role includes leadership and oversight of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the Office of Assessment, academic planning, accreditation, and policy. She is the co-executive sponsor of the CU system-wide Data Governance and Management project, which makes data more accessible and allows data-informed decision-making. She also serves as the campus Data Governance Executive. Beth volunteers in her community, supporting STEM events, particularly those for people from underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds. She also volunteers as a Program Evaluator for ABET and was on the National Academy of Engineering Committee on Sharing Admissions Practices that Promote Diversity in Engineering from 2019-2022. She earned a bachelor's in biochemistry, a Master of Engineering in engineering management, a Master Black Belt in Six Sigma, and a PhD in civil engineering from the University of Colorado Boulder. She has worked for the University of Colorado for over 26 years.

---





Will Angel joined CU System Advancement in May 2022 as the Internal Communications Senior Program Manager. In his role, Will leads efforts to keep Advancement staff informed, connected, and occasionally amused through thoughtful internal communications. Will manages key channels like the CU Ascend updates, the Advancement-wide newsletter, and twice-weekly updates for System Advancement — all known for their creativity, clarity, and emoji flair. Will played a pivotal communications role in the launch of CU Ascend, building out gamified trainings and collaborating across teams to make complex topics engaging and accessible. His efforts have helped staff feel informed, valued, and seen. Outside work, Will is an avid skier who braves I-70 nearly every weekend in search of fresh powder. When the snow melts, you'll find him hiking, backpacking, and chasing down any pun-worthy moment life throws his way.

---





Michaela Steen received her BA in film and electronic arts from Cal State Long Beach, then moved to Colorado Springs from Venice/Santa Monica, California, to finish her graduate degree in history with a focus on art history. She has worked at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs since January 2011. Michaela is the coordinator of the Visual Resource Center in the UCCS Department of Visual and Performing Arts, where she rents equipment to students, manages the department website and social media, creates graphic design for program events, helps students with printing services for class projects and events such as the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum and Mountain Lion Research Day, and acts as the VAPA Department IT Liaison. Michaela is also a lecturer at UCCS. Her art history courses cover a range of periods from the Bronze Age Aegean to contemporary. As a science fiction aficionado, her humanities courses often focus on visual expressions of futurist dystopias and transhuman technologies in modern visual culture. In her spare time, Michaela is a perpetual servant to two foster fail felines and a senior mill dog rescue who contribute not to the household income and lie around sleeping all day.

---



**Noelle San Souci**

Noelle San Souci is the Director of Student Engagement at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS), where she oversees many student engagement and leadership programs designed to enrich the co-curricular experience. A dedicated advocate for student involvement, she works to create meaningful opportunities that foster leadership, community, and personal growth. Noelle has played a key role in enhancing campus traditions, supporting student-led initiatives, and building collaborative partnerships. She helped establish the Engagement Leader Program, which connects current and new students to increase campus engagement. Her leadership in significant projects, including the successful Student Activities Fee referendum, has significantly enriched the student experience by expanding funding for clubs and events. Her leadership and dedication were recognized when she was named UCCS Employee of the Quarter in Fall 2024. Noelle earned her graduate degree in Student Affairs and Higher Education from UCCS. Originally from California, she lives with her wife and daughter in Colorado Springs.

---





Estrella Lastre was born and raised in Florida, where she previously worked for the University of South Florida and served as President of a non-profit before moving to Colorado. She has worked as a Lab Coordinator II for the Department of Chemistry at the University of Colorado Boulder since 2021 while also pursuing a Master's degree in Supply Chain Analytics from the Leeds School of Business. In her current role, she trains and mentors graduate Teaching Assistants and undergraduate Lab Assistants for the General Chemistry Teaching Labs. She has developed several impactful initiatives, including a comprehensive 3-day TA training program and a Summer Undergraduate TA training curriculum. Estrella is deeply committed to creating a welcoming environment where all students feel heard, accepted, and valued—a philosophy that led her to the decision of manually scheduling hundreds of lab shifts each semester to accommodate both department needs and graduate student requests. Her innovative contributions have been recognized with the Dean's Innovation Award and the Staff Advisory Committee Innovation Award in 2024. Beyond her professional responsibilities, Estrella actively serves on multiple committees at CU, including the Department of Chemistry TA Training & Orientation Committee, the ACE Faculty & Staff Mentoring Program, and the A&S Staff Summit Planning Committee. When she's not in a laboratory or attending classes, she enjoys gardening, traveling, and spending time with her five guinea pigs.

---





Justin Arico is currently an Internal Audit Manager who joined the Internal Audit Department at the University of Colorado System Administration in October 2021. He has spent the past 3 ½ years offering insight with impact to the Board of Regents and university management across the university system. Before joining the team at CU, Justin excelled in various audit roles spanning from public accounting at RSM US LLP and in the media industry at Showtime Networks, Inc. Using the tools and skills developed during his career in both public and internal audit, Justin was able to assimilate into higher education quickly. Justin is a licensed CPA in Colorado and New York and earned his master's degree in professional accounting at Syracuse University. Since joining the CU family, Justin has completed multiple audits across the five CU entities. He was voted into the System Staff Council at Administration with a goal to help communicate the ideas and concerns of classified and university employees to the system administration. Additionally, he has also dedicated some of his time to mentoring a student within the Accounting Graduate Program as MSU. Outside work, Justin goes on a family walk with his wife, Jessica, and dog, Lanie, or attends a concert at Red Rocks. He's an avid fan of the New York Yankees, enjoys hiking in National Parks, and loves to talk about his current house project. You may see him running in the surrounding Denver neighborhoods. Fun fact: he completed the Boston Marathon this past Monday, April 21st (making it his 5th marathon!).

---

**Groups audience:**

University of Colorado Staff Council

---

**Source URL:**<https://www.cu.edu/ucsc/staff-excellence-award/2025-staff-excellence-award-recipients>

**Links**

[1] <https://www.cu.edu/ucsc/staff-excellence-award/2025-staff-excellence-award-recipients>