Building Momentum in Denver

momentum – noun, plural -force or speed of movement; impetus, as of a physical object or course of events.

No other word better defines the University of Colorado Denver at this point in time than “momentum.”

Since consolidation, we’ve been re-defining ourselves in a new and exciting way—our name, our brand and how our two campuses can work together for our mutual benefit and for the benefit of our students and our community. Our progress has been significant, most recently with finalizing the university brand—including an updated version of the interlocking CU.

The University of Colorado Denver is a leading economic driver and job creator for the state of Colorado—a valued partner in our community and a place of academic excellence for the students who have turned to us to pursue their educational dreams. Our mission and vision remain consistent and more relevant than ever. Our institution is a diverse community that is committed to excellence in learning and teaching, discovery and innovation, community and culture, and health and wellness.

Even in the current challenging fiscal environment, the university continues to develop exciting new academic programs. The new bioengineering degree, for example, will utilize faculty, lab and classroom space on both

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Arts & Media: Rockin’ our ’hood with good

guitarist Andy Guerrero started his first band while still in high school, and he got his first taste of the rock-and-roll hustle by encouraging friends—including aspiring rappers Stephen Brackett and Jamie Laurie—to see his band's early gigs. These days, Guerrero, Brackett and Laurie are better known by their Flobots names, Andy Rok, Brer Rabbit and Jonny 5. Along with Mackenzie Gault, Jesse Walker and Kenny Ortiz, the group has turned its musical prowess into a wildly popular hip-hop band. When they’re not onstage, they’re building a Denver nonprofit designed to channel their fame and good fortune into grassroots organizing.

Flobots.org is garnering accolades in its own right as a force for social change and musical outreach, targeting political activism and music therapy for at-risk youth and earning the 2009 Mayor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts in the process. Guerrero, BS music business ’08, credits his time at UCD with giving him the tools and experience to pull it all together. “It changed my whole world,” he says. “It taught me how to write songs and communicate with other musicians, but the bigger thing for me was networking. I learned how to get information and make connections while I was still in school. I was able to leave college working and without debt.”

Guerrero was enrolled in band and choir classes throughout his years in Denver Public Schools and had started and promoted his own bands, but in UCD’s Department of Music Entertainment and Industry Studies, he learned firsthand how to take it to the next level. While leafleting a class with concert fliers, he caught the eye of a student who worked for local music promoters Nobody In Particular Presents. “She designed posters for them, and when they needed a new poster flier guy, she suggested me,” Guerrero says. He did the same for classmate

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Campuses. The BS in public health and the BA/BS-MD programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences allow students to start on the Denver Campus and continue their education at the Anschutz Medical Campus.

We’re also truly connecting education with business by creating an education corridor that bridges the gap between the Auraria Campus and Denver’s central business district. The new home of our Business School is ahead of schedule in its construction and will serve as a focal point for continuing efforts to forge critical partnerships with business, industry and government.

This summer, you will begin to see promotions for our new “momentum” campaign. Our students, faculty and staff have been moving forward in their education, research and community outreach. We’re ready to tell their stories and to share their enthusiasm.

Of course, our alumni are moving forward with momentum as well. In this issue, you’ll read about teachers making a difference in inner city districts; students building sustainable housing on a reservation in Utah; and much more.

I hope you’ll share your stories of your momentum. My e-mail address is jerry.wartgow@ucdenver.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jerry Wartgow
Chancellor

CU launches new Saudi alumni chapter

In January, University of Colorado Denver Chancellor Jerry Wartgow and University of Colorado Boulder Chancellor Phil DiStefano traveled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to celebrate the newly formed Saudi CU alumni chapter. Their visit was hosted by Zuhair Fayez, BArch ’70, MArch ’71, who has encouraged 17 members of his family to follow him to CU. Fayez was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters at commencement in Boulder in May in recognition of his accomplishments and service to the university.

The newly announced Friends of the University of Colorado and Dar Al-Hekma College, a $1 million endowment gift from Fayez, will facilitate a collaborative exchange between the College of Architecture and Planning and Dar Al-Hekma College, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in support of an annual studio project that includes student and faculty exchanges. The endowment allows the shared studio experience to continue in perpetuity.

University of Colorado Denver named ACI Outstanding University for 2010

The University of Colorado Denver, through the College of Engineering and Applied Science, has been named American Concrete Institute (ACI) Outstanding University for 2010. More than 40 students from the CU Denver College of Engineering and Applied Science are members of the American Concrete Institute and each semester students are certified by ACI to test concrete.

“We were one of 15 universities to receive this award, and I feel this is a true testament to the dedication and quality of our students,” says Stephan Durham, assistant professor of civil engineering at CU Denver. “This award represents all of their hard work.”

Can you be a resource for alumni, students?

This summer CU Denver will be introducing “Ask an Alum” a resource application within our new online community. We need alumni volunteers to be early adopters—volunteers willing to share their knowledge and professional expertise with other alumni. Out-of-state alumni might also share relocation advice via e-mail. At first, the community will just contain alumni, but in phase two, you could also get questions from CU Denver students. For more information or to volunteer, please contact us at UCDalumni@ucdenver.edu or 303-315-2333.

Other aspects of the new online community include: a Yellow Pages module, where you can post information about your company or find alumni owned or managed companies to patronize; a groups module where you can connect with other alumni who share your interests; and job and career information. The new community will also have the same features as you’re used to—class notes, an alumni directory and events. Watch for an announcement via e-mail and in the next CU on the Horizon when these applications are available. In the meantime, follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ucdenver), Twitter (www.twitter.com/cudenver) or YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/ucdenvervideo).
CU Denver honors mayor, legislator

In the role of interim Denver Mayor, Guillermo “Bill” Vidal, BSCE ’72, has said that as a child living in Pueblo’s Sacred Heart Orphanage, the idea of being mayor would have seemed like “an impossible miracle.”

Today Vidal is not only Denver’s mayor (he assumed the office after John Hickenlooper became Colorado’s governor) but he has also amassed an impressive record of accomplishments as a career civil servant advocating for sustainable regional growth and improved quality of life. For these and other achievements, Vidal will receive the 2011 University of Colorado Denver Alumni Appreciation Award.

In Vidal’s case, he came to Colorado as an immigrant from Cuba, one of thousands of children sent to the United States as part of Operation Peter Pan, a program that enabled anti-Castro Cuban parents to send their children to the United States.

Eventually reunited with his family, Vidal went on to earn a civil engineering degree from UCD. He began his career at the Colorado Department of Transportation, rising to the post of executive director in 1994 as an appointee of Gov. Roy Romer. During his years at CDOT, he spearheaded several landmark projects, including a major reengineering of design and construction processes along with the first multimodal transportation plan in the state’s history. It was also under Vidal that the T-Rex I-25 expansion project was launched.

In 1999 he was tapped to head the Denver Regional Council of Governments, where he was instrumental in the adoption of the 20-Year Transportation Plan and the Clean Water Plan. As executive director of DRCOG, Vidal led major regional projects that included the Central Platte Valley Light Rail Spur and Denver Union Station. To help manage growth sustainably among the disparate cities and counties in the metro area, Vidal worked with regional governments to form the Mile High Compact, a coalition of local governments committed to the environmental and quality-of-life goals outlined in the Metro Vision Plan. The compact, which now comprises 46 communities, is unique in the nation.

When Hickenlooper became mayor of the Mile High City, he asked Vidal to join his cabinet as deputy mayor and manager of public works. As Hickenlooper’s second in command, he spearheaded the city’s largest bridge and street construction program, instituted a sanitary and storm sewer plan—the city’s first—and oversaw the successful construction of a range of projects from the Colorado Convention Center expansion to the new wing of the Denver Art Museum.

Vidal also fought for the environment in his role, deploying a single-stream recycling program, which slashed the amount of waste going into landfills by 30 percent, and transitioning the city’s heavy equipment fleet to biodiesel.

Vidal assumed Denver’s mayorship in early 2011 and will hold the position until the term ends in July.

Unlike Vidal, who has spent a career in public service, Colorado Rep. Cheri Gerou, BA ’91, a CU Denver fine arts graduate and architect, is a relative newcomer. A Republican member of Colorado’s House of Representatives since 2009, Gerou represents District 25, which includes Evergreen, where she and her husband own an architecture and historic preservation business. They have two grown children, Greg and Sara, who both received their undergraduate degrees at CU Boulder. Greg earned his graduate degree from Colorado School of Mines and Sara received her master’s from Queens University of Charlotte, N.C.

Prior to running for office, Gerou spent years volunteering for children’s programs, her church and serving in leadership roles for professional organizations, among them the Colorado Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Denver Chapter of AIA and the Constructors and Designers Alliance. She became a gubernatorial appointee in 2006 when then-Governor Bill Owens named her to the State Licensing Board of Architects, Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors, where she currently serves as secretary of the board and vice chair of the Survey Quorum of Professional Land Surveyors.

In her short time in the legislature, she has proved to be a stalwart champion of higher education, working to minimize cuts to the state’s research universities, which because of their size, typically bear the brunt of funding reductions. Last year she sat on the fiscal stability review committee, which was responsible for SB 3, allowing state institutions the flexibility to increase tuition and freeing them from certain fiscal regulations—a move that has created enormous efficiencies and saved the state’s colleges millions. Gerou is also a major supporter of promoting biotechnology in the state and sees Colorado’s colleges as intrinsic to workforce development.

Gerou serves as chair of the Appropriations Committee and is vice-chair of the powerful Joint Budget Committee. She will receive the University of Colorado Denver 2011 Alumni Legislative Award.

Every year the Alumni Association recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to the university, higher education and the community. Vidal and Gerou will be honored May 14, 2011 at commencement ceremonies.
With more than 500 million users worldwide, Facebook has become a global phenomenon, a vast cyber neighborhood where friends meet to share photos, news and gossip. But when those relationships sour, another phenomenon often occurs—unfriending.

In what may be the first comprehensive study of its kind, a CU Denver Business School student has revealed the top reasons for Facebook unfriending, who is unfriended and how they react to being unfriended.

Researchers spend a lot of time examining how people form friendships online but little is known about how those relationships end,” says Christopher Sibona, a PhD student in the computer science and information systems program whose research was published in January by the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. “Perhaps this will help us develop a theory of the entire cycle of friending and unfriending.”

After surveying more than 1,500 Facebook users on Twitter, Sibona found the number-one reason for unfriending is frequent, unimportant posts. “The 100th post about your favorite band is no longer interesting,” he says.

The second reason was posting about polarizing topics like religion and politics. “They say not to talk about religion or politics at office parties and the same thing is true online,” he says.

Inappropriate posts, such as crude or racist comments, were the third reason for being unfriended.

The study showed 57 percent of those surveyed unfriended for online reasons, while 26.9 percent did so for offline behavior.

Sibona found a sort of online hierarchy of dominant and subordinate relationships. For example, those making friend requests stood a much higher chance of being abruptly unfriended. At the same time, those doing the unfriending seemed to hold the upper hand in the relationship.

It’s a delicate dance with its own rules or “netiquette,” far different from face-to-face interaction. “There is a lot more nuance in the offline friendship world. You don’t have to go up to someone and ask them to be your friend,” Sibona says. “That’s not the case online. It can be awkward.”

An AOL study showed 30 percent of teenagers wanted to unfriend their own parents. Sibona found two users who actually did this. One later unfriended his mom but put her on a limited profile so he could manage her online interactions.

While some respondents reported being deeply hurt by being unfriended, others were more amused than traumatized. “There are a wide variety of reactions depending on who did the unfriending and why,” he says.

Given the public nature of Facebook profiles, Sibona urged users to exercise caution in their posting behaviors citing a 2010 survey showing that 54.6 percent of recruiters used the site to find or investigate job candidates.

“The same kinds of posts that could get you unfriended might also be viewed negatively by recruiters,” he says.

Facebook, founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, is so ingrained in popular culture that in 2009 unfriend was named word of the year by the New Oxford American Dictionary.
ike many undergraduates, when Jamie Van Leeuwen, PhD ’07, matriculated at Creighton University, he did so intending to flout his parents’ middle-income careers as educators. He wanted to become a surgeon and “fabulously wealthy.”

Instead, he says, “I fell in love with working with the poor.”

The trajectory from financially ambitious pre-med student to entry-level social worker looked like this: As Van Leeuwen prepared to apply to medical school, his undergraduate mentor, Dr. Gilles Monif, suggested that before locking into medicine, he explore his interest in international issues. Monif advised him to get a master’s degree in public health and then decide.

As part of the international MPH he was pursuing at Tulane University, Van Leeuwen traveled to Ghana’s Lagon University to work on DNA testing for malaria, where he got his first taste of how poverty and complex social problems intersect. Back in Colorado, he took a job at Family Tree Gemini House as a weekend supervisor and adolescent caseworker and became enamored of working with troubled and homeless youth.

Still interested in research and policy, Van Leeuwen returned to Tulane for a second master’s in sociology, where he studied street kids and inner-city heroin addicts. But the Big Easy wore on him. Even pre-Katrina, he says, “New Orleans was a great place to learn what was wrong, but there were not a lot of innovating interventions” to make things right.

Instead of completing his PhD in New Orleans, he enrolled at the University of Colorado Boulder. Roxanne White, then president of Urban Peak (currently Gov. John Hickenlooper’s chief of staff), recruited Van Leeuwen to spearhead the street outreach program for Urban Peak, a nonprofit for homeless youth.

His years at Urban Peak gave Van Leeuwen an enormous range of experience, running and developing programs to combat homelessness, fundraising, working with the media and serving on governmental task forces. Both White and Van Leeuwen were interested in using data-driven methods to help the poor. As his work with Urban Peak deepened, he began conducting research on intravenous drug use and testing for sexually transmitted diseases in nonclinical outreach settings.

Their research piqued the interest of Dr. Franklin James, a University of Colorado Denver professor of public policy in the School of Public Affairs (SPA). As he and Van Leeuwen worked together and became friends, James convinced Van Leeuwen to transfer to UCD and work with him.

“He pestered and pestered me and in March 2003, I called Franklin and said, ‘You win. I’m interested in coming over, if I can study under you.’” Van Leeuwen finished the semester in Boulder and was slated to start at UCD in the fall, when he learned that James had died of a heart attack on July 4.

“I felt duty bound to finish,” Van Leeuwen says. “And to the credit of SPA, Peter deLeon took me under his wing. I dedicated my dissertation to Franklin James. He was a great steward of the poor, and I was honored that he would have me as a student.”

In 2006 Van Leeuwen was appointed executive director of Denver’s Road Home, Mayor Hickenlooper’s Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The job drew on his belief in the power of well-implemented public policy and his passion for combating poverty. Its stated mission, though, set the bar very, very high.

The “only way you accomplish something like this is to get the entire community involved,” Van Leeuwen says. “At the table we had the mayor’s office, nonprofits, United Way, business leaders and homeless individuals. We showed other cities it’s possible to tackle complex social issues with measurable goals and outcomes.”

Just over midway through the 10-year plan, Denver’s Road Home has made measurable strides: $50 million in new funds, 2,000 new units of affordable housing, 3,500 families saved from falling into homelessness and a reduction in chronic homelessness by 70 percent. The program was also recognized by HUD as one of the top six homeless programs in the country.

Last May, Hickenlooper tapped Van Leeuwen to become the policy czar for his gubernatorial campaign, a position that had Van Leeuwen drinking from a policy fire hose on unfamiliar issues such as agriculture and energy.

“It was one of the most extraordinary learning experiences of my career,” he says of the campaign. “SPA taught me how to write good public policy. My job was to assemble the smartest guys and gals in the room who understand these issues to synthesize, advise and guide. It was like being back in graduate school where you get up early in morning, get inundated with information, synthesize it and if you didn’t go to bed tired at night you hadn’t done your job.”

In January, Van Leeuwen became Hickenlooper’s new policy advisor and policy director for health, human services and education—another great opportunity.

One of the projects on the list is an exchange opportunity, called the Global Institute, through the grassroots nonprofit Come Let’s Dance (CLD) for students, business and policy leaders and medical professionals in Uganda. The idea is not to “fix Africa,” Van Leeuwan says, but to support CLD’s medical and business-empowerment initiatives while also inspiring research and ongoing interest in addressing poverty in Africa and the United States. “We’re excited about what public policy students can learn from Uganda,” he says, “and what Uganda can learn from them.”
**Education: Class inspires students of color to become educators**

Step into the teachers’ lounge at most public K-12 schools, and chances are you’ll be surrounded by teachers who look different than their students. Despite a steady rise in the percentage of students of color attending U.S. schools, statistics show roughly 90 percent of teachers are white and more than 70 percent are women—figures that have changed little in the past decade.

That troubles **Margarita Bianco**, PhD, an assistant professor in the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Education and & Human Development.

“As a person of color I never had any teachers throughout my public school education that looked like me,” she says, noting that throughout her undergraduate and graduate programs, and when she started teaching, she met few colleagues of color. “With each new experience, it became more apparent that I needed to do something about this.”

In 2010, Bianco teamed up with UCD alumna and Montbello High School teacher **Nina Conley**, MA ’10, to launch “Pathways2Teaching,” an ambitious pilot program aimed at addressing what the two see as an urgent need to boost the number of teachers of color in Colorado.

The program centers around a new elective course, Introduction to Urban Education, that offers juniors and seniors at ethnically diverse Montbello a chance to learn about the teaching profession and explore the tough subject of educational justice while gaining three college credits.

During the course’s inaugural semester, which began in August 2010, 33 students went through an eight-week teaching methods training program and were paired with fourth-grade elementary students to teach them vocabulary. They also had the opportunity to communicate with educational leaders of color—including Vanderbilt University scholar Donna Ford—via Skype. They also immersed themselves in research projects exploring such sticky questions as: Why is there an achievement gap between whites and non-whites? How do drugs, teenage pregnancy and growing up in the foster care system impact a youth’s education? And, most importantly, what can be done to improve things?

“It’s piquing their awareness,” says Conley, a Montbello graduate herself. “They are starting to question things and they are starting to ask, ‘What changes can I make?’"

“When I went here for high school, I never even thought about becoming a teacher. It just wasn’t discussed,” she says. “If I had taken this class back then, I would have been a teacher in 1986.”

In the Denver Public School district, only 19.8 percent of students are Caucasian but 78 percent of teachers are white (Colorado Department of Education). Statewide, 88 percent of teachers are Caucasian. According to a 2008 report by the Alliance for Quality Teaching, the percentage of students of color statewide rose from 32 percent to 38 percent between 2000 and 2005, while the number of minority teachers statewide rose just 1 percent and even declined in several districts.

The report pointed to research suggesting that “students, on average, learn more from teachers of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

**Luke Washington**, 18, an African American student in the Introduction to Urban Education class agrees: “I just feel like I can connect more and learn better when I have someone teaching me who can relate to my experiences.”

Conley, left a career in the airline industry in her mid-30s to earn her master’s in administrative leadership and policy studies. In February 2011, she was honored with an Our Heroes teaching award by Stand for Children Colorado. She says she is thrilled to see young, urban teens being turned on to the idea of a career in education.

As part of the course, the students have also been given a chance to visit college campuses and have received guidance on how to apply to universities, including a Saturday morning college essay writing boot camp taught by CU Denver professors and former Dean **Lynn Rhodes**.

Already, several students are planning their future careers as educators. Washington is one of them.

For his class research project, Washington—who has been in the foster care system for several years—explored some of the problems that surround foster care youth trying to succeed at school despite an often unstable home-life.

“Sometimes foster children have had to deal with the eviction of their biological parents, becoming homeless, moving from home to home, parental substance abuse and lack of clean clothes to wear. And schools just don’t have the resources to help them,” he says. “If I were a teacher, I would ask every foster student, what is it that you really need to succeed? I would show them more support.”

Since joining the class, Washington has made up his mind that he wants to pursue a PhD in education with the hope of ultimately “helping educate others with a better understanding of what it means to be a foster kid.” He has applied to several colleges, presented his research report at the Teachers of Color and Allies Summit in November in Boulder, and is now working to plan a conference for teachers, students and community members about foster care and the educational system.

“This class has given students like me opportunities they have never had before,” says Washington. “There should be a class like this in every school.”

For more information, log on to www.pathways2teaching.com.
n Dec. 11, in the chill, tart air of the desert in winter, 22 University of Colorado Denver students watched as the Navajo community blessed the house they had spent the last four months building.

Built for Maxine Begay and her son, Maurice, the Windcatcher House is the eighth home constructed by DesignBuildBLUFF, a nonprofit organization that gives graduate architecture students design build experience (“design build” refers to keeping the design and construction of a project in the same hands) while providing sustainable homes for Navajo families at no charge.

Founded in 2000 by architect Hank Lewis, DesignBuildBLUFF was modeled on Auburn University’s Rural Studio, a program started by professors Dennis K. Ruth and the late Samuel Mockbee to help improve living conditions in rural Alabama while giving architecture students real projects to design and build.

Initially DesignBuildBLUFF used the talents of students at the University of Utah College of Architecture and Planning, who over the course of two semesters designed and built one home in the bristly southeastern Utah desert. Hoping to increase the number of projects to as many as nine per year, Lewis called Rick Sommerfeld, associate chair of CU Denver’s College of Architecture and Planning, about bringing his students onboard.

“I was hoping for 15 students,” Sommerfeld says about the initial DesignBuildBLUFF offering, “but we had 22 with a wait list of three or four.” Michael Sullivan was supposed to graduate last December but postponed in order to work on DesignBuildBLUFF Raised in Wahoo, Neb., Sullivan, 27, has a degree in environmental design from CU Boulder. “I have a lot of love for construction, but know what it does to you,” he says. “With design build, you’re not outside doing construction 24/7; you get the comfort of being in an office in design mode.”

Hence his decision to pursue his master’s in architecture. A veteran of two previous UCD design build projects—the entryway to the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and facilities for the urban food project Feed Denver—Sullivan was happy to acquire the additional experience while delaying entry into a difficult job market.

Over the course of the summer, students met with three prospective families and investigated two possible community projects, selecting Begay as their client so she could provide a healthy home environment for her son. They did their surveying and site analysis, developed 11 preliminary designs that they narrowed down to three, of which Begay selected her favorite. In the fall they returned, some never having held a screw driver, to build the house.

“The group is pretty diverse,” Sullivan explains. “There are some who have done construction, but there’s a larger handful who have never touched a tool. We have art, art history, psychology majors. Using that diversity is pretty interesting.”

Equipped with a $45,000 budget, students sourced, recycled and scrounged materials wherever they could. Learning curves were steep, with construction methods researched one day and deployed soon thereafter.

“They designed all this and they built everything with no subcontractors,” Sommerfeld explains. “They dug foundation with shovels. All the concrete was mixed by hand, the walls rammed by hand. They installed every window and cabinet. It’s an intense immersive education for students.”

In a blog post midway through the project on the DesignBuildBLUFF site, student Joshua Paulsen muses about this kind of hands-dirty education. “Modern architectural education leans hard toward the theorization of the profession while eschewing construction and divorcing itself from the realities of budget, time and space. It teaches us to be a bit too wordy and perhaps not enough worldly...[DesignBuildBLUFF], and programs like it, fill a unique but necessary role in our education as architects: it straddles the line between theory and reality, design and construction, mind and hand. A glimpse of what a ‘master builder’ should be.”

The result is both striking and smart; the two-bedroom, one-bath house blends into the buff-colored landscape. A metal roof cantis away from the bluff. Insulating rammed-earth walls form the structure’s durable shell and a large chimney tower, cleverly serves as the home’s hearth and evaporative cooling system.

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Engineering and Business: Dual alumnus has double dose of enthusiasm

The University of Colorado Denver may not have sports, but it certainly has fans—and avid ones at that. For alumnus, Gary Meggison, PE, that enthusiasm comes from two UCD degrees, a successful career and countless hours of volunteering his skills for the university.

Meggison, BS civil engineering ’81, MBA ’94, is a senior vice president at The Weitz Company, where he started as a field engineer shortly after graduating from the College of Engineering and Applied Science. At Weitz, he’s worked on many different projects including the Sonnenalp Resort Hotel in Vail. Meggison was project manager and enjoyed working with the group of people who developed this resort. His largest project has been the Snowmass Village Base Facility near Aspen, where he was project executive on the 570,000 square-foot development. Currently, Meggison is working on estimates and construction planning for three privately developed office buildings scheduled to start mid- to late-2011.

Meggison’s gravitation toward structural engineering began when he was a kid. “For me it was never anything else. From trucks, tinker toys and building blocks to erector sets, I was always building something.” It also helped that inspiration was all around him—from his uncle, an engineer who leaned toward invention, wrote patents and was entrepreneurial about his ideas, to his two grandfathers, one in railroads and the other in mining.

He fondly recalls his fellow engineering students and those students he has since met, calling UCD the training ground for many of Colorado’s engineers. Students’ motivation impresses him—many need to work full-time while attending college, yet they are still successful in their studies because they are determined to thrive as an engineer. “That qualification is worth its weight in gold in the workplace,” he says.

Influences in the College of Engineering included Emeritus Dean Paul Bartlett from whom he learned “what you might expect of an engineer, in particular the rigor required to be an engineer.” He says that Professor Ernie Harris taught him that engineering can be fun. In a timber course, Harris shared his structural drawings for the artist Christo’s “Valley Curtain” project hung near Rifle, Colo., and Meggison was impressed with the creativity involved.

After moving into a management position, Meggison realized that, although he knew engineering, he also needed to know the real estate development business and how a construction firm fits into the equation. He returned to UCD, this time to the Business School, and studied business administration.

“My engineering training gave me the black-and-white framework of the discipline,” he says. “Business education taught me the shades of gray around the black-and-white. Taking the next step [by earning my MBA], I was able to become more valuable to Weitz and apply my engineering training in a different fashion.”

To this day, “I am all about CU Denver,” he says. “I believe that if you are given an opportunity, you owe something to repay the debt.”

Meggison lives that mantra. He is involved with the college through the Engineering Leadership Council and is also active with the Business School. He served on the board of directors of the UCD Alumni Association from 1998 through 2001 and earned the 2003 Alumni Mack Easton Award for outstanding voluntary contributions and service to the Denver Campus. Meggison attends the Rock Bottom Ruckus scholarship fundraiser every year.

UCD needs supporters and cheerleaders like Meggison.

“Get involved. Stay involved. Promote what this university is and help make it better.”

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Did you know... Some 200 CU alumni and friends gathered at the state capitol in Denver on Jan. 28 for CU Advocacy Day. The annual event is a chance to interact with lawmakers, convey the value of CU and press our case for funding. Pictured: Sen. Mike Kopp, MPA ’07, talks policy with senior director of state relations for the CU System, Kirsten Schuchman.
Isaac Slade, BS Music ’05, helping him get an internship at Denver’s Gothic Theater, and when Slade’s band, The Fray, was booked to play at Red Rocks Amphitheater, the Flobots were invited to open the show.

That kind of networking is just one of the skills that earned Guerrero the role of guitarist and logistical partner for the budding hip-hop band. Laurie and Brackett were writing the political protest songs for the group’s first album when Guerrero was called on to set up a Rock the Vote show in 2004. He stayed to guide the Flobots through a strategic campaign designed to leave fans excited and hungry for the next show. “We knew our friends would only come to our shows for so long,” says Laurie, the band’s agile rapper. “We had to get actual fans. My grandfather, who was in the theater, told me that the audience is like a greased pig. They’ll try to get away from you if they can. It’s your job to keep them from doing that.”

The group spaced shows six weeks apart and built a reputation as a local band with artistic and commercial punch. Soon they were outpacing “Hannah Montana,” the big time began to beckon. The Flobots were a bona fide underground sensation, and record labels took note.

“They were looking for a blip,” Laurie explained. In the Flobots, the industry found musicians with feet planted in the worlds of finance, classical music and political and social activism. Universal Republic signed them and re-released their CD “Fight With Tools” in 2008, launching the band on a national orbit. The band toured the United States and Europe and hit the late-night television circuit, including “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” and “Late Night with Conan O’Brien.” In August 2008, the band attained even more national exposure as the Democratic National Convention descended on Denver. Leading up to the election, Brackett and Laurie had been busy organizing street teams for social change and registering 2,000 youth voters. During the convention, the band teamed up with Rage Against the Machine for a free concert that attracted 10,000 people and ended with 7,000 anti-war protesters marching to the convention floor. To date, “Fight With Tools” has sold 350,000 copies, and fans have downloaded another 1.3 million copies of the hit single “Handlebars.”

In March 2010, the Flobots released their second CD, “Survival Stories,” but not before launching a few personal projects. Laurie and Guerrero had spent years thinking about the power of music as an agent of change. “People would leave our shows pumped up and energetic, and we wanted to put that energy somewhere,” Guerrero says. “We began to wonder if we could use our band as a platform to get people engaged.” A family friend asked if they would be interested in bringing music to the traumatized kids at the Denver Children’s Home and offered to fund the program with money from her foundation. “We built a little studio down there and it ended up being a cool thing,” he says. “The kids enjoy making music, we teach a few days a week, and we still have time to do music.”

Using that program as a model, the band went on to develop a similar after-school program in six Denver middle schools, using musical education as a tool to give at-risk students a voice and the confidence to use it. “The moment you give them that opportunity, their world view changes,” says Jami Duffy, co-executive director of the nonprofit organization formed to legally separate the band from its charities.

“Andy loves feeling like he is part of a city that is coming into its own musically,” says Laura Bond, who also co-directs Flobots.org. “and we talk a lot with Mayor [now Governor] Hickenlooper about why he loves the Flobots so much. He says it’s because they could have done anything with their fame but chose to stay in Denver and promote it with their music, invest in the schools and create opportunities for other musicians.” Because the Flobots continue to perform and travel, 12 other Denver musicians have been trained and are paid to run the school programs when they’re gone.

After graduating from college, Duffy served in the Peace Corps and directed the University of Denver’s social justice program, but she was attracted to Flobots.org in 2010 because it’s working to address the root causes of social problems, not just the symptoms, she says. “This is a Colorado based band that uses its music as a tool for social change, to inspire conscious living. We are so fortunate to be a rare community of young artists and activists who get to live our passion.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For information about how to make a difference in your community, visit www.flobots.org.

Flobots from left to right: Andy Guerrero, Stephen Brackett, Jesse Walker, Mackenzie Gault, Kenny Ortiz and Jamie Laurie.
Alumni...

Frederic Marienthal, MPA ’79, has been appointed to the Colorado Municipal Bond Supervision Advisory Board. As a senior public finance partner at Kutak Rock LLP, Marienthal also serves on the boards of Kitchen Sisters Productions, Public Media Company and the community board of Friends’ School in Boulder.

Alan Ford, MArch ’80, is principal of Alan Ford Architects in Denver. Ford was selected for the Innovative Practices award from the American Institute of Architects during the Colorado 2010 Practice and Design Conference in Keystone.

Richard Borchers, MA political science ’86, was named among the top five percent of lawyers in Super Lawyers Corporate Council Edition. He was nominated and evaluated by his peers as among the best alternative dispute resolution providers in the nation. Borchers is a former U.S. district court magistrate judge and was recognized at the state level in 2009.

Barbara Beall, MS technical communications ’90, recently published a book about the 1873 Jesse James Adair Iowa train robbery. Beall’s great grandfather was present at the robbery and the book contains actual photographs. More information is available at www.historical- footprints-2010.com. Beall resides in Denver and retired in May 2009 as an affiliate faculty member at Metropolitan State College and CCCOnline (Colorado Community Colleges Online) after more than 20 years teaching college composition.

Nancy Braun (Newey), MS health administration ’93, is a clinic manager for Silverton Hospital Network at Woodburn Family and Woodburn Internal Medicine.

Henry Sobanet, MA economics ’94, was appointed director of the Office of State Planning and Budgeting under Gov. John Hickenlooper. He had been deputy director from 1999-2004 and, during the last budget shortfall in 2005, was lead negotiator and researcher supporting the governor’s office and the legislature. The result of that crisis was the creation and adoption of Referendum C.

Amy Mueller, MPA ’95, is director of government relations for Kaiser Permanente in Colorado. In her role, Mueller develops strategy and policy for health care legislation and regulation. Previously, Mueller was deputy chief of staff to Mayor John Hickenlooper, deputy manager for the Department of Public Works in Denver, and policy advisor and intergovernmental relations coordinator for the city of Boulder.

Simmons Buntin, MURP ’97, published his second book of poems, Bloom. Buntin continues to edit Terrain.org, a journal of the built and natural environments, in addition to working as web program manager for the Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona.

Paul Harrison, MBA ’04, is treasurer for the Eastmoor Swim and Tennis Club. He is an accountant for AMS Estate Liquidation LLC and an adjunct professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Leigh Rich, BA anthropology ’94 and PhD health and behavioral science ’04, was appointed co-editor of the Journal of Bioethical Inquiry, a publication focusing on ethical, cultural and social issues arising in medicine and health care. Rich is an assistant professor of health science at Armstrong Atlantic State University and serves as co-executive director of the Center for Public Health Media and Research. She will spend the summer in Switzerland as a Brocher Foundation visiting professor.

Andy Pattison, MBA ’07, is the higher education representative on the governor’s Pollution Prevention Advisory Board, and will advise the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and other state officials on policies and programs.

Tyler Murphy, MBA and BARD certificate ’08, earned sales recognition from ColoradoBiz magazine for “Colorado’s 25 Most Powerful Sales People in 2011.”

Spiros Protopsaltis, PhD ’08, has been named the policy advisor for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions for the Majority Staff Office of the U.S. Senate.

Gloria Schoch, MPA ’08, was promoted to director of public affairs at First Data and was selected as a 2011 American Marshall Memorial Fellow.

Karen Sugar, MA political science ’08, was on campus in December 2010 to lead a talk on “Microfinance and Women’s Empowerment.” Sugar, the founder and executive director of the fund which supports this program, was joined by Bukenya Muusa and Grace Akello from northern Uganda.

Jennifer Chang, MArch ’09, and fellow alumni Eric Watson, MArch, MURP, MUD ’09, Owen Board, MArch ’95, and Dan Benjamin, MArch ’99, received the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award for planning during the Colorado 2010 Practice and Design Conference.

Terry Scanlon, MPA ’09, is a fiscal analyst for the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute.

Natasha Dadabhoi, MPA ’10, joined the Office of Policy and Fiscal Analysis as a legislative aide.

Emily Ferrell, MPA ’10, has assumed a position as an analyst for the Bureau of Land Management in the National Operations Center in Lakewood, Colo., as part of her selection as a Presidential Management Fellow.

Kristen Johnson, MPA ’10, joined the Colorado Legislative Council as a committee staffer.

Ryan Kloverdanz, MPA ’10, is a contract specialist and partnership coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service in Golden, Colo. Prior to this, Kloverdanz was an intern for the Federal Student Career Experience program.

Joanna Martell, BA English ’08 and MPA ’10, joined ACT as a senior consultant.

Matthew Urkoski, MPA ’10, is a utility billing supervisor for Clifton Gunderson LLP.
Did you know... Hats off to the 1,187 alumni and their families who attended CU Family Night at the National Western Stock Show on Friday, Jan. 21.

**In memoriam**

**70s**
- Fred Zook, BS civil engineering '71, died Aug. 4, 2010.
- William Eichelberger, BA geography '74, died Nov. 28, 2010.
- Veda Napper, BA fine arts '74, died Sept. 23, 2010.
- Francis O’Toole, BA distributed studies '76, died Jan. 2, 2010.
- Robert Thompson, MA urban affairs '76, died Aug. 10, 2010.
- Doris Rifkin (Strauss), MA education '77, died Sept. 20, 2010.
- Jo Ann Burgess, BA biology '78, died Nov. 5, 2010.

**80s**
- Jerome “Jerry” Davies, MPA '83 and PhD public administration '89, died Jan. 14, 2011.
- Bruce Sussman, BA psychology '85, died June 18, 2010.

**90s**
- Derek Strauss, BA political science '92, died Sept. 6, 2010.
- Douglas Clark, MS marketing '93, died Jan. 1, 2010.
- Judith Ferrill, MA counseling psychology/counselor education '98, died Jan. 2, 2011.

**00s**
- Lynne Napoliili (Enright), MA curriculum and instruction '00, died April 16, 2010.
- Anne Brittle, MS health administration '05, died Feb. 23, 2010.
- Nicholas McAdam, BFA and BA fine arts '07, died May 3, 2010.
- Colin Rose, BA political science '07, died Sept. 23, 2010.
- Andrew Lanphier, MURP '08, died Dec. 29, 2010.

**Friends**
- Shirley White Johnston, former associate and interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and associate professor emeritus of English, died Oct. 31, 2010.
- F. “Parker” Fowler, Jr., former professor in the College of Engineering and Applied Science, died Feb. 9, 2011.
- Jean Hemphill, former associate director of the Auraria Library, died Mar. 27, 2011.

**DID YOU KNOW...** The third annual STEMapalooza event, held last October at the Colorado Convention Center, drew more than 11,000 students, teachers and parents. The free event showcased the latest innovations in science, technology, engineering and math.

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**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BENEFITS**

**Alumni Online Community**
- [www.cudenveralumni.com](http://www.cudenveralumni.com)
  - Receive periodic e-newsletters and updates from the school or college you attended
  - Search for former classmates in the online directory
  - Upload pictures and class notes
  - Register for Alumni Association events

**CU Ambassadors Program**
- 303-831-6192
- [cuambassadors@cu.edu](mailto:cuambassadors@cu.edu)
- [www.cu.edu/cuambassadors](http://www.cu.edu/cuambassadors)
  - This voluntary group of Colorado residents advocates with the Colorado General Assembly for CU and higher education
  - All communication is via e-mail including legislative updates, notices of CU outreach events and timely messages from the CU president

**Career Center**
- 303-556-2250
- [www.ucdenver.edu/careercenter](http://www.ucdenver.edu/careercenter)
  - Services are free for the first year after graduation; reduced rates thereafter
  - Access to databases and job postings
  - Career counseling and job-search coaching
  - Career exploration and transitions
  - Resume assistance

**CU License Plates**
- 303-315-2333
- [www.ucdenver.edu/licenseplates](http://www.ucdenver.edu/licenseplates)
  - Cost includes a mandatory $50 county clerk fee and certificate from the Alumni Association
  - Donation to the Alumni Scholarship Fund
  - CU plates may be purchased upon completion of an application and receipt of an approval certificate from the Alumni Association
  - An additional $50 county clerk fee and your standard vehicle registration fees are applicable

**Financial Services**
- [www.ucdenver.edu/downtownalumni/benefits](http://www.ucdenver.edu/downtownalumni/benefits)

**Banking**
- Checking, money market accounts, CDs and IRAs
- Auto and mortgage loans and HELOC
- Home banking and bill pay
- Branches throughout the metro area

**Health/Dental**
- Short-term health insurance program for graduates that bridges the gap between student health insurance and employer coverage; also for alumni with short-term needs
- Comprehensive, renewable major medical coverage
- Supplemental major medical insurance for catastrophic medical expenses
- Long-term care insurance
- Group dental insurance

**Auto/Home**
- Group discount of 10 percent on auto, home and renter’s insurance
- Rates guaranteed for 12 months
- Additional savings based on age, driving experience and auto equipment (e.g. antilock brakes)
- Round-the-clock claims service

**CU Ambassadors Program**
- Enhance your level of fitness at the Campus Recreation Center for $100 per semester

**CU License Plates**
- Enhance your level of fitness at the Campus Recreation Center for $100 per semester

**CU Online Community**
- [www.ucdenver.edu/downtownalumni/benefits](http://www.ucdenver.edu/downtownalumni/benefits)

*These affinity partnerships benefit Alumni Association programs and scholarships, including CU on the Horizon.*
2nd Annual All Colorado Alumni Career Fair
Thursday, June 9, 2011 | 2-5 p.m. | Invesco Field at Mile High

Alumni and career offices for colleges and universities across the state are joining together to host the second annual career fair for their graduates. Employers from a variety of industries will be present to meet outstanding alumni to fill professional positions requiring three plus years of experience. Registration is required, but the event is free. Please register by Monday, June 6. Questions? Contact the Career Center at 303-556-2250 or visit www.ucdenver.edu/UCDalumnievents.

CU Denver Alumni Association Annual Meeting
Sunday, June 12, 2011 | 4 p.m. | Morton’s - The Steak House (I-25 and Bellview Ave.)

Meeting: Free and open to all alumni. Agenda: Election of officers and board members, committee reports, bylaws amendments and other business that may come before the members. Optional reception following: $10 per person. Reserve by Friday, June 3, 303-315-2333 or online at www.ucdenver.edu/UCDalumnievents.

Late Summer Film on the Rocks

Bring your family and friends to Red Rocks this summer for our Film on the Rocks event. Red Rocks Amphitheatre is the only naturally-occurring, acoustically perfect amphitheatre in the world. Enjoy an evening concert, then a feature film after dark.

Red Rocks won’t book the film dates until early summer (after finalizing their summer concert series). Let us know you’re interested by filling out the form at www.ucdenver.edu/UCDalumnievents and we’ll e-mail you the details the moment they’re confirmed. Cost $10 per person.