Engineering: Build a Better Bridge

Students at the downtown campus are reminded daily of the impact of the College of Engineering and Applied Science. A favored cross-over point from downtown to the Auraria campus—the Lawrence Street bridge—is closed for reconstruction. The story begins in 1997, when civil engineering Associate Professor Kevin Rens proposed a bridge management system for the City and County of Denver. That project evolved to become an overall maintenance program that includes not only bridges but also streets, alleys and curbs. Built in 1958, the Lawrence Street bridge is a concrete girder structure that spans Cherry Creek and an adjacent bike path. In spring 2003, a team of students began an in-depth inspection of the bridge substructure to analyze conditions for rehabilitative design options, with a main focus on existing pier caps and columns. The prognosis was serious. Jennifer Wood (BS civil engineering 1996), a student at the time, notes: “Each span of the two-span superstructure is simply supported with an expansion joint over the pier. Over the years, water has leaked through this expansion joint and directly onto the supporting pier and foundation system. Water penetration and cyclical climatic changes of freezing and thawing resulted in the deterioration of the supporting substructure system below. The cap suffers from spalling, cracking and exposed steel reinforcement that is corroding. The supporting columns exhibit cracking, from the top downward.” As a result of the assessment, the bridge was closed for structural rehabilitation. A five-ton 3’x3’x 6’ section of a pier cap has been removed and delivered to the group’s lab in the North Classroom building, where slices will be compared with computer-generated models of the interior of the bridge. Sam Brown (BS, civil engineering and a master’s student in education) oversees the students and says the chance for physical inspection is a “neat thing—like the answers in the back of the book.” Civil engineering students at the downtown Denver campus, including four graduates and six undergraduates, actively review structures for maintenance. Their main task is inspection: physically walking around and looking at a structure and recording its health by rating current conditions. For bridges, in addition to visual checks, the students use nondestructive tests—hammer sounding, checking surface hardness, ultrasonic testing, acoustic tomography and ground-penetrating radar scanning. They also conduct destructive testing—coring (concrete, rebar) or removal of part of the structure to test in the lab.
The University of Colorado has again won the first-place trophy in the international Solar Decathlon competition in Washington, D.C. CU was one of 18 universities competing in the Department of Energy-sponsored event, which began Oct. 7 on the National Mall, the pedestrian way connecting the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol.

Cornell University placed second and California Polytechnic State University finished third.

The international contest challenged students to design, build and operate the most attractive, efficient and comfortable solar home, while educating the public about alternative energy technologies. An estimated 100,000 people toured the homes in the “Solar Village” during the 10-day event.

“By winning two back-to-back solar decathlon competitions in 2002 and 2005, the College of Architecture and Planning has established itself as the academic leader in environmental architecture and renewable energy design,” said Julee Herdt, architect and associate professor of architecture. “We are continuing to build on this reputation through the work underway in our college in the areas of building materials research, green construction and modular environmental housing development.”

This year’s contest differed markedly from the 2002 event because it rained or was cloudy for the entire week. As a result, the solar panels were able to collect only a small fraction of the energy that would be collected on a good day in Colorado, according to project manager Jeff Lyng, graduate student in civil engineering.

“It’s kind of surreal,” Lyng said just after the results were announced. “We have a great team, and we picked a strategy on Monday that worked. We had a suspicion as early as yesterday that we would have enough points to win, but there was no real guarantee that we would be able to keep our lead.”

The project was a two-year effort involving students from the College of Architecture and Planning and the College of Engineering and Applied Science, with Professors Herdt of architecture and Michael Brandemuehl of engineering serving as faculty advisors.

Teams scored points in 10 different categories, ranging from architectural design to the home’s ability to maintain a comfortable temperature. The CU team took first place in documentation, communication and “getting around” in an electric car powered by the home’s solar collectors. The team decided to forego earning points in the energy balance category as part of its strategy to accumulate the most points overall in light of the week’s poor weather conditions.

Judges in the communication contest praised the CU team for explaining its vision and using building materials from such natural products as soy, wheat and corn. The team’s slogan: “A house you can sink your teeth into” made perfect sense.

For more information on the Solar Decathlon and the CU solar home, visit http://solardecathlon.org and http://solar.colorado.edu/.

From left to right: winning CU students
Nathan Abbott, Blake Belanger, Blake Church,
Chip Radebaugh and Tom Magloczki

PHOTO BY CASEY A. CASS
he latest victory in Professor David Liban’s resume is an award for a documentary on a quirky subject: “Carhenge: Genius or Junk?” He recently received the Grand Festival Recognition Award at the Berkeley Film and Video Festival, northern California’s largest independent video and film event. He picked up the honors at an Oct. 29 ceremony in Berkeley’s Oaks Theatre, along with an official Reel Award and Gorilla Pro film production software.

A professor of post-production in the Department of Theatre, Film, and Video, a producer and director of a wide range of independent productions, and the recipient of the 2002 Fulbright Distinguished Chair Award, Liban’s latest triumph began as an attempt to escape boredom.

The project started as a way to pass the time while visiting his in-laws in Alliance, Neb., where there is a made-to-scale replica of Stonehenge, England’s ancient stone circle—the American version consisting of 38 junked cars. At first, Liban mused, he would focus on asking what constitutes art. After filming began, he realized the creator of Carhenge, Jim Reinders, was just as interesting as the roadside attraction itself.

This isn’t Liban’s first award. His film “Smithee’s Lecture” was screened at the New York Metropolitan Museum in 2003. It received the Grand Festival award at the Berkeley Film and Video Festival, the Silver Award at the Telly Awards, the Best of Festival at the Rochester International Film Festival, and the Award of Distinction in creativity/editing at the Videographer Awards. Liban then took material from the film to create an educational resource for teachers of video editing.

For more information on Liban’s video wizardry, visit his Web site at www.davidliban.com.

**Theatre “Arts in Action”**

One thing you consistently hear alums talk about when discussing their educational experiences on the downtown Denver campus is the dedication of the instructors. If there is one instructor on campus who best illustrates this level of dedication, it is Carol Bloom.

Bloom, who has been teaching theatre arts in the College of Arts & Media since the early 1990s, expresses that dedication by doing whatever is necessary to provide her students with quality learning experiences.

“One day, early in my teaching career, I got a call from President Judith Albino’s office on the Boulder campus, relaying a request for university resources to help the town theatre in Silverton, Colo. start a summer youth program.”

Bloom understood youth theatre programs, from previous experience as the resident youth director at Denver’s Shwayder Theatre. So when Bloom spoke with the founder of the Silverton community theatre group, she knew exactly what to do. “I called and we talked for three hours,” recounts Bloom. “We shared a common philosophy and theatre background.”

Soon Bloom’s undergraduates were enrolling for her “Arts in Action” class and developing curricula, leading youth camp sessions and participating in adult productions of Silverton’s community theatre.

**Rural Network**

From there, what began as a small venture to hold a 10-week summer camp in theatre arts for Silverton youths expanded to include similar programs in four other rural communities—in Cortez, Westcliffe, Montrose and Berthoud. “It was crazy because I was traveling from one rural theatre to another, overseeing my students and their work with the youngsters, and trying to raise money for the programs all at the same time,” she says.

Today, Bloom still teaches on the downtown Denver campus, but her “Arts in Action” course is no longer offered, and the urban outreach program ended when the school became a magnet program for gifted and talented students nearly two years ago. But some rural communities have managed to maintain their local theatre camps.

The Silverton community theatre, in particular, has had help from Mollie Mook, a former undergraduate student of Bloom’s who is now an acting instructor on the downtown campus. “Although Mollie is now the program director in Silverton,” notes Bloom, “I try to stay involved as much as possible.”

Obviously, Bloom’s dedication to the theatre, her students and the university will keep her involved. Hoping to revive her “Arts in Action” class in the next year or two, Bloom is presently identifying new inner-city schools where her students can launch their urban outreach programs.

**Urban Component**

As if Bloom didn’t have enough on her plate, she added an urban arts outreach program for children of the homeless to her repertoire. Working in conjunction with a Denver public school, the after-school sessions provided a safe environment for children until they were able to return to the shelters with their parents in the evening. Notes Bloom, “Everything we taught promoted self-confidence, literacy and other educational skills that helped the children articulate and explore themselves through the arts.”
The world’s largest chapter of Financial Management Association International (FMAI)—at 200 strong—can be found at the Business School. With a goal to foster and promote career and life management skills, the chapter received a national bronze award from FMAI for its superior growth in membership and activities in 2004 to 2005.

According to John Turner, faculty sponsor and senior instructor of finance, the chapter is highly inclusive. "We’ve opened it up to non-students," he explains. "We’ve expanded it into the business community: anyone who is interested in our activities can join."

The chapter typically meets twice a week for activities and lectures that cover everything from writing resumes to running a chocolate factory. This fall, FMAI is touring the Federal Reserve Bank and the Denver Mint. Members are learning everything they want to know about home mortgage financing, how to put together a top-notch presentation, and how to avoid cute, colorful voice mail greetings—a bad idea when waiting for a potential employer to call, Turner says.

In addition to lectures and activities, FMAI gives members an “in” with companies that offer corporate internships and career opportunities. Employers such as EnCana Oil and Gas (USA) Inc., Lipper Inc., Mutual of Omaha and many others take an active role in chapter activities not only to assist members but as a recruiting tool to access the metro area’s best-educated students. "The employers are getting to know us," Turner explains. "This year, it has been the employers who have called and asked to come and speak.

"We’re geared more and more toward getting jobs for chapter members and making important connections," Turner stresses. "We’re getting out there and the message is getting out."

Check out the group’s Web site at http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/business/fma/ or e-mail for information at fmai@ cudenver.edu.

EnCana Sponsors Course

The leading natural gas producer in North America, EnCana of Canada, is developing significant relationships with the Business School. At their request—and with their support—the school will develop an undergraduate class that focuses on accounting for the oil and gas industry.

“We were asked to develop a course to round out the undergraduate business degree," said Ken Bettenhausen, associate dean for academic programs. “Normally, you would gain knowledge on the job for this specialized industry. This course will help our students get a leg up on the competition by preparing them in advance.”

EnCana will underwrite course development and provide internship and employment opportunities. The class will be elective in the accounting curriculum and begins in spring 2006.

Financial Management Association International

Business School: Ethics Prof Helps Olympics

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has been plagued by scandal and allegations of misconduct in recent years, triggering resignations, firings, congressional investigations and calls for reform. A professor of law and ethics at the Business School, John Ruhnka, is stepping into the fray as an ethics consultant to the USOC. He will help the USOC board and ethics committee as they review and revise the USOC ethics code, standards of business conduct, ethics enforcement and training practices.

The USOC is a federally chartered not-for-profit organization that handles all of the United States’ participation in the Olympic Games and other international athletic competitive activities. Headquartered in Colorado Springs, it has 440 employees located in five offices and training facilities in the United States, with an annual budget of $140 million.

Ruhnka is academic director of the Bard Center for Entrepreneurship and teaches entrepreneurship, international business, and legal and ethical aspects of business. He was instrumental in launching the Bard Center Business Plan competition, now in its fifth year, which awards top entrepreneurs with assistance—tangible support and sometimes space—entering the business community.

Ruhnka is also one of 10 professors designated as "term professors" at the Business School. The award, paid out over three years, provides a $30,000 stipend to fund research and instructional activities. The term professorships help to recognize outstanding faculty who have made important contributions to their field as well as to the school itself.

Another term professor, Herman Aguinis, the Mehalchin Term Professor of Management, has been elected a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA). Fellow status is an honor given to APA members who show evidence of unusual and outstanding contributions or performance in psychology. Aguinis also edits the journal Organizational Research Methods.

Term Professorships in the Business School

Bard Family Term Professor in Entrepreneurship
John Ruhnka, law/ethics

Mehalchin Term Professor of Management
Herman Aguinis
Joseph and Martha Davis Term Professor
Larry Cunningham, marketing

John B. Rogers Term Professor
Cliff Young
Rutt Bridges Term Professor
Gary Kochenberger

Wells Fargo Term Professor
Sue Keaveney
PricewaterhouseCoopers Term Professor
Bruce Neuman

Accenture Term Professor
Jahan Karimi
Basey Innovation and Leadership Award
Ajeyo Banerjee

US Bank Term Professor
Wayne Cascio

John Ruhnka, Bard Family Term Professor in Entrepreneurship

Herman Aguinis, Mehalchin Term Professor of Management

EnCana will underwrite course development and provide internship and employment opportunities. The class will be elective in the accounting curriculum and begins in spring 2006.
Public Affairs: Can We Do Better at Disaster Response?

The study of emergency management, policy and planning is gathering momentum as the pace of accidental, natural and intentional disasters washes over the world like a conceptual tsunami. That’s why three CU units have developed a certificate program in the subject, a collaboration of the Graduate School of Public Affairs, the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) and the planning program of the College of Architecture and Planning.

Complex Subject

“This is an exceedingly complex subject technically and socially,” Assistant Professor George Busenberg observes. And it’s inevitable that public affairs professionals will need to learn about it. “If you work in public affairs, there is the possibility you will become responsible for an emergency in your jurisdiction,” says the professor, who received an award for teaching excellence from the Graduate School of Public Affairs.

The subject is inherently interdisciplinary. A natural hazard, for example, requires the understanding of natural science. Once an event occurs, the response becomes a social matter.

For example, in the recent devastating earthquake in Pakistan, the disaster involved a need to understand:
- plate tectonics
- hazard mapping
- infrastructure damage
- death and injury
- shelter for the survivors
- international relations—the need for aid

Hazard Types

There are three types of hazards, Busenberg explains: technological (oil tanker spills), intentional (terrorist acts) and natural (earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, etc.). Busenberg teaches one of the two core classes in the program—disaster and emergency management policies. The other course concerns hazard mitigation and vulnerability assessment.

The core courses and nine hours of electives focus on research and training in low probability, high-consequence events. “We need to manage extremes,” Busenberg says. “It’s never routine, but most disasters can be managed.”

“In the end,” he muses, “it’s a question of what measures we want to take to protect human civilization and the natural world from the hazards that face them. We have to ask: Is this the kind of world we want to live in, or can we do better?”

Student SoARs to Help

Coloradoans are well served by numerous volunteer search and rescue (SAR) teams, and they are well served by sophomore Jarret Winkelman, who has been doing SAR work since high school.

“I got my initial experience with Arapahoe Rescue Patrol,” notes Winkelman. “It’s the only search and rescue team in the world comprised completely of high school students.”

Winkelman’s enthusiasm for the group is obvious, as he recounts the unit’s history and how he served as the team’s captain while a senior in high school. “I was in charge of their day-to-day operations and all of their emergency responses.”

Although Winkelman had to “graduate” from the patrol when he finished high school, he remains involved as a reserve member by responding to calls, doing training, and taking back knowledge and experiences he gains in his work with other agencies.

Winkelman’s work with other agencies is extensive. Currently, he is an emergency responder for four agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security. “I branched out when I graduated from Arapahoe Rescue Patrol,” he says.

Leadership Forums

The school hosted its fifth Legislative Leadership Forum in November at El Pomar Foundation’s conference center in Colorado Springs. Legislators came to a weekend retreat to reflect on how the legislature is doing, a rare opportunity to work together without discussing partisan issues.

Katrina Team

Winkelman was deployed with the Colorado-2 Disaster Medical Assistance Team following Hurricane Katrina. “We spent most of our time at Houston’s Astrodome in an evacuee shelter. We were also the initial medical check point for all evacuees entering, leaving or just passing through Texas. At times we were seeing 400 to 500 patients per hour for rapid triage assessment.” The team was in Texas for two weeks before returning to Colorado.

The team also deployed as the National Medical Response Team to Houston. As members of a specialized HAZMAT and WMD response team, their job was to stand by for any hazardous materials events that might have developed in the affected Gulf Coast region. “We were ready to go in with decontamination equipment if necessary; luckily we were only placed on alert a few times for events that proved to be nontoxic.”

In addition to being a SAR volunteer, Winkelman works part time as a communications dispatcher and takes classes. “I’m studying business management but mainly for use on the side. My priority remains emergency services.”

Ambitious Goals

To suit his schedule, Winkelman takes many courses for his major online and he acknowledges that receiving an Alumni Association General Scholarship has helped him financially; since he earns nothing as a volunteer: “Colorado Search and Rescue is voluntary, and we don’t charge for any services to the community or missing persons,” Winkelman notes. “Ultimately, I’d like to pursue the fire service and paramedicine as a full-time career and have my own business on the side.”

Already, Winkelman is working toward that goal. Besides his volunteer work, he has partnered with another former Arapahoe Rescue Patrol team captain to start up Incident Response Technologies, LLC and develop specialized computer software for emergency service agencies. “Our leadership roles with the patrol helped us identify a need to minimize the amount of paperwork associated with each SAR mission,” notes Winkelman. The software, called Sarnet, will manage both administrative and incident management functions. It is currently undergoing beta testing by Alpine Rescue in Evergreen, Colo., and should be released sometime in early 2006.
Greene Publishes in *Nature*

The prestigious and widely read journal *Nature* featured an article in September by Michael Greene, UCDHSC assistant professor of biology, and Stanford University colleagues Deborah Gordon, professor, and Megan Frederickson, doctoral student.

The article describes an unusual relationship between a species of ant and a specific tree in the Amazon rain forest. Locals will say there’s a “devil’s garden” in the forest—a particular tree that has no other plants growing around it. In a tropical rain forest, it is highly unusual to see a single species of tree, Greene says. It turns out the tree enjoys its own garden plot because it is host to a species of ant that kills off any other vegetation. It’s the natural equivalent of a homeowner spraying herbicide to kill off all but lush Kentucky bluegrass on the lawn.

The ants that live in this tree know when offending plants are present. They pinch off a leaf of the pesky intruder with their mandibles and then turn around to inject formic acid (a natural herbicide) through stingers into the plant. Slowly the unwanted vegetation dies, leaving only the host tree.

Frederickson has spent several years in the field doing the research. Greene helped to determine the ants were the ones controlling the environment. His field of chemical ecology involves understanding how animals and plants interact with each other using chemicals.

For a look at “Devil’s garden’s” bedeviled by ants” go online to [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com) click on archive and look for volume 437/Sept. 22, 2005.

This is the second article Greene has seen published in *Nature*. His first focused on the opposite kind of environment—the Arizona desert. That piece looked at harvester ants. “We are trying to understand how ant societies are regulated,” he says. “A harvester ant colony has a single queen and 10,000–20,000 workers doing jobs that keep the colony alive. All workers are the daughters of the queen, and they don’t operate like armies with a leader. Each worker has to make up her mind to perform a job. We are trying to understand what pieces of information these worker ants use to make up their minds.”

Greene brings undergraduate as well as graduate students into his lab for hands-on experience in research. Two students are working on a project to look at water loss physiology in snakes. Greene’s second area of expertise. When the students finish the experiments and collect the data, they will collaborate with Greene in writing a paper and, it is hoped, presenting the paper at a professional conference.

One graduate student has looked at garter snakes in the region. Of the three common garter snakes, one is declining in Colorado, particularly during years of drought. The red-sided garter snake prefers wetland environments, which have been disappearing in the face of increased development.

**CLAS: Era Reflects Growth**

After eight years, W. James Smith is stepping down as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He’s leaving a program that has grown enrollment despite the national trend to disparage the liberal arts and sciences.

“Some consider the traditional liberal arts and sciences passé,” Smith says, “but they are really dynamic and interesting.” Student enrollment has increased dramatically—especially in philosophy and writing/English—while the traditional stalwarts of biology and health careers have also kept pace. With a 4- to 6-percent increase over the last seven years, the evidence supports the premise.

The diverse cultures and perspectives in CLAS departments add up to students who are “well-trained and thinking.”

There are, Smith says, outstanding faculty in every department, and many students in an introductory class are taught by international scholars. He names some of them:

- An economist who edits a major journal
- A psychology professor who is an expert on drug usage
- Several internationally known poets, one who turned down an offer from writer Harper Lee to stay at UCDHSC
- A medical anthropologist who initiated new, important literature in her field with insight on evolution and adaptation to high altitudes
- A statistician who is one of the top researchers in analyzing extremely large datasets in genomics and weather observations
- A mathematician who has math concepts in the literature named after him

When you get professors of that caliber, Smith observes, you benefit from their network of contacts. “Faculty reputations speak,” Smith says. A professor can make a phone call and open doors. That’s an advantage of the CLAS faculty at UCDHSC.

Smith also has a ready recital of students who have helped to build the university’s reputation.

- Two of the top economists in Colorado are CLAS alumni: Mike Mauer, legislative consultant, and Henry Sobanet, director of planning and budgeting for the state.
- One student went to Stanford for a PhD in business. Her professor wrote to Smith: “Send more of these students!”
- Another student did graduate study at Carnegie Mellon and is teaching at Georgia State. He attributes his career to an intro math class at UCDHSC.
- New York magazine featured one of the country’s best-known psychologists, who found his passion in an intro psych class when a writing course was full.

What’s ahead for the school? “We’re in good shape,” Smith says. “Our economics program is ranked the top terminal master’s program in the United States. Math is cracking international rankings and graduating seven doctoral students a year. Scholars are in the classrooms teaching and talking to students. Our reputation is catching up with us.”
The Education Leadership and Innovation program (EDLI) has enriched research opportunities for doctoral students at the university. Each student completes at least 12 credit hours of research in doctoral research labs on problems of contemporary practice. Two to five faculty members support each lab, and students meet weekly to discuss issues, review literature, set up projects, collect data, and write and present findings.

The research labs give students an opportunity to get involved in cutting-edge knowledge. The labs cover a broad range of areas, including:

- Urban schools
- Literacy
- Math-science education
- Educational leadership
- Sociocultural approach to learning
- Technology and instructional design
- Research, evaluation and methods
- Early childhood education
- Teacher education
- Higher education

Students benefit from peer-to-peer mentoring in the pursuit of their research through these labs, creating a community of learners focused on a particular topic. They learn the culture of the research environment as it applies to real-world experiences. “This is a conduit to take our students to national and international conferences, to produce papers and presentations,” says Deanna Sands, coordinator of the doctoral program. And it is a way for academics to develop relevant programs. “So much of what we do is in local communities, schools, organizations and businesses,” Sands says. “Getting outside of ourselves is the key to this program.”

**Urban Lab**

The lab in Urban Schools considers the universal issues of equity, access and social justice. It attracts significant national and international grants. One recently received grant comes from UNESCO and supports a network of international researchers committed to facilitating the implementation of inclusive education in local communities throughout the world. Partners from Russia, England, South Africa, New Zealand, Argentina and such U.S. universities as Howard University will collaborate in the effort. Another national grant looks at the disproportional number of students of color in special education programs. A third grant connected to this lab involves support for public schools in Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, Los Angeles and El Paso to implement inclusive school practices.

**Learning Activity**

The Lab of Learning Activity (LoLA) studies the processes of change in activity. Researchers look at how activity systems affect those who participate in them. Research sites include K-12 schools, universities, youth organizations and mental health centers, both nationally and internationally.

Here’s one example of how LoLA works: Fairmont Elementary is a dual-language (Spanish-English) school in Denver. Honorie Nocon, a new faculty member fresh from the University of California-San Diego, is site professor at the school, the point person making sure that School of Education and Human Development students are working effectively in conjunction with the goals and needs of the Fairmont principal and teachers. She arrived at a “tender political time,” according to Mark Clarke, who along with Nocon, Alan Davis, Maria Thomas-Ruzic and Phillip White, coordinates the LoLA lab. Demands for higher test scores and the needs of a rapidly growing immigrant population had created a highly stressful environment for the school.

Nocon had hoped to establish a Fifth Dimension after-school club based on clubs originally developed at UCSD and now operating internationally through a far-flung network. But before she could establish the club, she needed to address the school’s immediate concern—literacy. The program gained momentum.

More kids showed up before and after school, as they connected with the program. Teachers began to integrate what was happening in the club into their classroom work. In the process, Nocon was able to include computer literacy, a part of the club’s standard curriculum. Now, Clarke says, the Club de Aguiia (Eagle’s Club) is a “real humming endeavor” that combines the efforts of veteran teachers and administrators, teacher candidates and doctoral students.

“It’s a good example of our work,” Clarke says. “We have to be involved in the sites where our teacher candidates will work. And we have to collaborate with schools and other institutions to make the sort of changes that will support education innovation, improve test scores and create good experiences for our teachers and learners.”

**Did you know...** The School of Education and Human Development wins an average of $7.5 million annually in grants and sponsored research.
"Top Docs" make UCDHSC a winner

In the 13 years that 5280 magazine has been publishing its "Denver Top Docs" issue, many professionals affiliated with the University of Colorado have been named as leaders in their respective medical disciplines. Some, like Dr. Phillip Mehler (see feature this page), have even received their undergraduate degree from the downtown Denver campus.

If you’re familiar with 5280, you know that each year the magazine surveys 4,000 metro-area doctors by asking them to respond to the question, "With whom would you trust your health or the health of a loved one?" Results determine Denver’s "Top Docs."

But how credible are the results, since the survey is not scientific? "There is no way to be sure first-place results aren’t skewed by individuals with terrific name recognition," says Lindsey Kohler, spokeswoman for 5280. To offset this possibility, the magazine now prints the names of second-, third- and even sixth-place results. Notes Kohler, "Doctors taking second-place and lower may be the better doctors because they have received enough votes from their peers to make survey results statistically relevant."

Whether the survey is scientific or not, many readers refer to it to find a physician. It’s probably a more reliable resource than the phone book, and the steps the magazine has taken to improve the survey over the years make everyone listed a winner.

Thirty-eight top docs were affiliated with the University of Colorado Hospital in 2005. Dr. Mehler, named to the list in 2002, was listed second in his medical discipline, internal medicine.

Campus Grad is “Top Doc”

I began my studies at CU-Denver in the 1970s, as an accounting major,” reflects Philip Mehler, MD, “but I didn’t really like the classes.”

When Mehler realized he was doing well in the sciences, it was his father who urged him to “shoot for the top" and pursue his newfound penchant as a career. “Pre-med wasn’t really a major back then,” he recalls, “but the transition from accounting to biology was easy. I had a good advisor, and I had taken mostly prerequisites during my freshman year—all the stuff I needed regardless of my major.”

With his mission identified, Mehler started to push himself. During the summer, when he wasn’t taking classes, he cut back his 40-hour work week as a packing house butcher and sought opportunities to familiarize himself with medical issues. “One summer,” Mehler recalls, “I worked in a research lab, and another summer I traveled around the state teaching migrant workers about diabetes.”

After graduating "with distinction" from CU-Denver in 1979, Mehler took the Medical College Admission Test, applying only to one or two schools for consideration, including the University of Colorado School of Medicine. “I started school at the Health Sciences Center in ’79, and I did well.” That he did. Not only did Mehler graduate with honors, but he acquired numerous awards for academic achievement and research along the way, including the Glaser Award for Outstanding Research During Medical School and the prestigious Gold-Headed Cane Award for Highest Achievement in Internal Medicine.

On to Denver Health

After medical school, Mehler spent the next two years as a University of Colorado resident, rotating through Denver Health, University Hospital and the veterans’ hospital. Then Mehler was one of four in a class of 40 students chosen to become a chief resident. As he says, “I’ve really been at Denver Health ever since.”

After completing his residencies, Mehler worked part time, at first as an internal medicine physician at Denver Health while simultaneously pursuing part-time work in the numerous psychiatric hospitals that dotted the metro area. “Often these hospitals needed to incorporate psychological care with medical care, so I provided the internal medicine consults for them.” Along the way, one of psychiatric hospitals asked Mehler if he’d be interested in participating in a new unit for eating disorders.

At the time, the mid 1980s, anorexia nervosa and bulimia were commonly identified as psychiatric disorders, but very little was known about their associated medical conditions. "It was a new area, but one in which it was easy to forge research," says Mehler.

Acute Excellence

Recognized as a national expert on the medical complications and treatments of eating disorders, Mehler takes great pride in his continued relationship with Denver Health—especially the Acute Comprehensive Urgent Treatment for Eating Disorders (ACUTE) program. “This program is just one of the many centers of excellence at Denver Health today,” he says, “and it's nationally recognized for its intensive treatment of some of the most severe eating disorders in the country.” Denver Health relies on its centers of excellence, like ACUTE, to attract insured patients and to perpetuate its mission of helping the uninsured.

Although repeatedly recruited for private practice, Mehler has declined. His goal is to do something bigger in a public hospital system. “Whether at Denver Health or someplace else, I think my expertise lies in exhorting institutions and their physicians to provide safe and high-quality patient care.” Also, he really loves taking care of the underserved and vulnerable. “If you have a mission and you believe in the goal,” says Mehler, “you’ve got to keep pushing.”
Alumni Association Board Gets Involved

The mission of the UCDHSC downtown Denver campus Alumni Association is to sponsor programs and services that stimulate interest in, increase support for, and build lifelong commitment to the downtown Denver campus among its alumni, students and the community.

The association, which represents more than 53,000 UCDHSC downtown Denver campus alumni worldwide, is guided by a volunteer board of directors. Each of the schools and colleges on the downtown Denver campus appoints one member to the board. All others are appointed through a nomination process to fill at-large positions. Members serve three-year terms.

This working board oversees the activities and the volunteers of 10 committees, with several managing programs directly benefiting undergraduate students. For example, the recruitment committee assists the Office of Admissions in welcoming new students to the downtown Denver campus through spring and fall phone-a-thons. The awards committee oversees the Academic Athlete Program, which recognizes students who enrolled for 12 or more credit hours and who maintained a 4.0 grade point average for two consecutive semesters, excluding summer.

The general scholarship committee, which plans and implements the annual “Rock Bottom Ruckus” dinner and silent auction, serves to perpetuate the association’s general scholarship program for undergraduates. The scholarship committee also prepares and distributes scholarship application materials, evaluates scholarship applications and conducts scholarship candidate interviews.

“The general scholarship committee is recognized by UCDHSC as playing an essential role in helping students on the downtown Denver campus achieve their dreams of an advanced education,” says committee chair Vicky Henry. “Committee members are volunteers who have experienced the rigors of financing their own educations, and all feel it is an excellent way to give back to the campus and support the future of its students.” Because of the close involvement of the Alumni Association in administering the program, students view this award as one of the most prestigious scholarships on the downtown Denver campus.

The committee has distributed over $468,900 since the program’s inception in 1990.

Also benefiting the general scholarship program is the commencement committee, which sells commemorative t-shirts and videos, bottled water and flowers at the spring and fall commencement exercises.

Other Alumni Association committees, such as communications, awards and legislative, reach out to alumni and the broader community. The finance and planning committee provides sound fiscal planning and management to the alumni association, and it also helps establish many alumni benefits, such as the alumni insurance and credit card programs.

Administratively, members of the bylaws committee oversee the association’s governing documents and nominating committee members solicit for the at-large and officer positions of the UCDHSC downtown Denver campus Alumni Association Board of Directors.

All alumni volunteers, not just those serving on a committee or the board, are the driving force behind the success of the Alumni Association and its programs. Get involved and volunteer your time and talent to the UCDHSC downtown Denver campus Alumni Association. Contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 303-556-2549, visit our Web site at www.cudenver.edu/alumni, or return the reply card on page 11.

Did you know... All full-time physicians at Denver Health are members of the University of Colorado School of Medicine faculty. They teach medical interns and residents in 28 different specialties and conduct research that improves patient outcomes at Denver Health and around the world.

Call for Nominations

The Alumni Association annually honors those who are distinguished in their profession, community and society at large. This is your opportunity to suggest names for the Alumni Appreciation Award, the Alumni Leadership Award, the Alumni Legislative Award, the Alumni Mack Easton Award and the Alumni Recognition Award, to be presented at spring commencement May 13, 2006.

The Alumni Appreciation Award recognizes contributions that bring outstanding benefits to the downtown campus. Nominees may be from the community at large and not necessarily alumni.

The Alumni Leadership Award recognizes the remarkable ability to effect positive change in an individual or organization within the university community. Nominees may be from the community at large and not necessarily alumni.

The Alumni Legislative Award is presented to a legislator who has assisted the advancement of the downtown campus and higher education in general.

The Alumni Mack Easton Award recognizes outstanding voluntary contributions and service to the downtown campus. The award is named for the late D. Mack Easton, dean of the Denver Extension Center in the early 1960s. His vision enabled the extension to become a separate campus of the University of Colorado. Nominees may be from the community at large and not necessarily alumni.

The Alumni Recognition Award goes to an alumnus/alumna who has excelled in his/her career field, as well as in community service. Former students who did not receive an official degree from UCDHSC will be considered.

Please submit your nominations by Friday, Jan. 27, 2006. For a copy of the form, call the alumni office at 303-556-2549.
Alumni Association Benefits

The Alumni Association offers many free and low-cost programs to alumni. Contact the number listed for additional information or visit the Alumni Association Web site: www.cudenver.edu/alumni.

**Ambassador's Program**
cuambassadors@cu.edu or
www.cusys.edu/cuambassadors
- This voluntary group of Colorado residents advocates on behalf of CU and higher education with the Colorado General Assembly.
- All communication is via e-mail including legislative updates, notices of CU outreach events and timely messages from the CU president.

**Campus Recreation**
303-556-2549 (Alumni Office: call to begin the membership process)
303-556-3210 (Campus Recreation: call for hours, location, etc.)
www.mscd.edu/~cr
- A one-year membership fee of $90 includes full use of the Recreation Center (an additional one-time ID fee of $10 and a student bond fee of $28 per semester do apply).

**Career Center**
303-556-2250
http://careers.cudenver.edu
- Career counseling and job-search coaching
- Career exploration and transitions
- Resume assistance
- Mock interviews
- Online resume referrals and job postings
- Career library resources

**CU Alumni License Plates**
303-556-2549
www.cudenver.edu/alumni
- Cost includes a mandatory, minimum donation of $50 to the Alumni Scholarship Fund.
- Upon completion of an application and receipt of an approval certificate from the Alumni Association, CU plates may be purchased.
- An additional $25 county clerk fee and your standard vehicle registration fees are applicable.

**Loan Consolidation Program**
(in negotiation)
1-800-COLLEGE or
1-800-448-2424 (outside Colorado)
www.collegeinvest.org
- Available to alumni with multiple student loans totaling more than $7,500
- Consolidate eligible federal student loans
- Upon consolidation, Collegeinvest will forgive 1 percent of the loan balance

**MBNA Credit Card**
1-800-932-2775 or TTY users call
1-800-833-6262 (mention priority code QL79)
- No annual fee
- Every time you use University of Colorado at Denver Platinum Plus® Credit Card to make a purchase, you support the downtown Denver campus Alumni Scholarship Fund and other alumni programs
- World Points Reward Program allows you to redeem points for travel, gift certificates, cash rewards or merchandise.

**U of C Federal Credit Union**
4672-4672-4672 Ext. 1435
www.uofcfcu.com
- A $20 donation to the CU-Denver Alumni Association is required to begin the process of opening an account.
- No monthly fee or minimum balance is required on checking accounts.
- Low-cost loans for new and used vehicles, mortgages, home equity loans and lines of credit are available.
- No-fee investment and credit counseling services are offered.
- Easy account access is available at branches, online, or at one of 1,300 Credit Union Service Centers located throughout the country.
- RealityCheck, a consumer-education Web site, helps you make wise decisions by giving you unbiased information rather than hype.

**Insurance Program**
1-800-922-1245
http://alumninsuranceprogram.com/cudenever
- 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 term life insurance

**Academic Athletes Star**

The Alumni Association held its annual recognition of outstanding undergraduate students in October. Dubbed “academic athletes” for their intellectual prowess, awards are given to students who earn a 4.0 for the previous two semesters. They are eligible to compete for the scholarship recognition during their term of enrollment. Subsequent scholarship awards increase each year.

Forty students were on hand at the Palm Restaurant to receive tuition-credit scholarships and handsome athletic-style jackets, joining the 40 past recipients present to create a unique community of achievers.

Provost Mark Heckler and alumnus Scott Beckley were tag-team emcees who teased out information—from a focus on poetry to a passion for math—from each honoree. The full-time students represented the colleges and schools of the downtown Denver campus.

**Fall Fest Celebrates Student Community**

Hip-hop moves by Rift Raw Krew generated admiration at the annual Fall Festival, co-sponsored by the Office of Student Life. The September event celebrated diverse interests, vendors, artisans, and student and departmental organizations. Dancing, jousting, live music, nonprofits, ethnic food, homemade clothing and grass-roots movements entwined over two days in a lively setting at the flagpole area of Auraria Campus.

“The fall festival is an opportunity for building community and a chance for our students to mix and mingle and meet with student organization leaders and departmental representatives,” says Khushnur Dadabhoy, associate director of the Office of Student Life. “Students participating in this event have reported a heightened sense of belonging and campus pride.”

The event was also co-sponsored by Metro Student Activities and Wells Fargo.
Alumni Notes

Melissa Babich, MA Curriculum & Instruction 2002, works at the Minnesota Zoo as a bird trainer, presenting bird shows to the public daily.

E. Joseph Barani, BA Fine Arts 2000, was accepted by jury into the 35th annual Great 8 Exhibition of the Kansas Water Color Society. This exhibit showcased original watercolor paintings from artists from an eight-state region and was sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.


Christine A. Berkowitz, BA History 2002, was awarded a research fellowship by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Her project title is “Railroad Crossings: Railway Workers and the Transitional World of North America, 1875-1910.” Berkowitz is a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada.

Nancy Chrisbaum, BFA Theatre, Film & Television 2004, produced a documentary, “Tapping Hidden Talents,” which aired on KBDI PBS Channel 12 in early July. The documentary was based on a UCDHSC program that targeted high school students who have the ability to go to college but who, due to a variety of personal, cultural and socioeconomic reasons, are “hidden talent” relative to the typical college pipeline.

Nancy Glauner Conklin, MPA 1994, was promoted to coordinator of educational access services at Mesa State College. This department provides services for students with disabilities.

Michael Darling, MA Economics and MS Finance 1999, is a residential mortgage loan officer for Royal Bank of Canada. Darling is married to Brita Darling (Joanne Brita Seeborg), BA Economics 1991, who is a self-employed lawyer focusing on family law. They have two boys.

Anastasia D. Gavanias, MS Information Systems 1995, currently lives in Athens, Greece, and is the new product and content development manager for ECDL Hellas, a company that provides computer IT skills training and certification. Together with her colleagues, Gavanias has written several ECDL computer books for novice and experienced computer users, available in the Greek market.

Ann Kern, BS Marketing 1987, was promoted to director of external relations for the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards. This nonprofit organization awards the CFP® certification to individuals who meet its initial and ongoing requirements.

D. Marie Kube, BA Chemistry 1990, has joined Fish & Richardson P.C. as a technology specialist. Kube previously worked as a research associate and fellow at the Mayo Clinic and as a laboratory head and project leader for E. Hoffmann-LaRoche in Switzerland. Kube received her PhD in microbiology from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1997 and is the holder of two patents.

Mary Katherine Makkai, BA English Writing 2000, recently graduated from the Denver Health Paramedic School and has been certified by the State of Colorado as an Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic.

James A. Masias, MPA 1998, completed his MBA at Regis University and is the president and CEO of Blackpointe Tech Inc., a management consulting firm. Masias is also the vice president of education for the National Society of Hispanic MBAs-Denver Chapter.

Matthew S. Mingus, PhD Public Administration 1999, has been awarded the 2003-06 Fulbright Research Chair in Public Policy, Governance, and Public Administration at the University of Ottawa’s Centre on Governance. He will study an attempt by Canada’s prime minister to change the Canadian system of government so the nation’s parliament is more democratic. Mingus is an associate professor and doctoral director in Western Michigan University’s School of Public Affairs and Administration.

Sue Moore, BS Biology 1983, completed her MEd in school counseling at Northern Arizona University and is currently employed as a high school counselor. Moore is married to Wayne Moore, BS Electrical Engineering 1984, who is a principal engineer in Tucson, Ariz.

Sheila Seery, MPA 1997, was promoted to vice president for research and state and local relations at the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in Albany, N.Y. Seery’s role includes conducting research, analyzing public policy and advocating for higher education.

Kimberly Straith, BS Finance and Accounting 2000, is a mortgage specialist for Greystone Mortgage.

IN MEMORIAM


Keep in Touch

Take a moment to tell us your news—both professional and personal. You might find your name in the next issue of CU on the Horizon!

NAME______________________________________________________________
ADDRESS____________________________________________________________
CITY _________________________________________________________________
STATE/ZIP_______________________________
TELEPHONE (DAY)___________________________
TELEPHONE (EVENING)________________________
EMAIL______________________________________________________________
MAJOR ______________________________________________________________ 
GRADUATION YEAR _________________________________
NEWS ______________________________________________________________ 

Stay Involved!

I’d like to join other alumni:
- Selecting alumni award recipients
- Assisting with commencement
- Working on legislative issues as a CU Ambassador
- Planning and implementing CU Back on Campus and special events
- Assisting with CU on the Horizon and other alumni publications
- Providing information about my career field to students and alumni
- Selecting scholarship recipients
- Raising funds for scholarships
- Calling and welcoming new students

Submit to:
UCDHSC Alumni Relations
Downtown Denver Campus
Campus Box 189
P.O. Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364
Perennial Favorites

Make sure these alumni events—always sure to please—are on your calendar this winter season.

CU Family Night at the National Western Stock Show
Friday, January 13 | 7 p.m. | Denver Coliseum

Join us for an evening of barrel racing and steer roping, as alumni from all CU campuses get together for CU Family Night at the National Western Stock Show. Your $10 ticket provides access to the stock show grounds and entrance to the rodeo at 7 p.m. Wander the stockyards for a close-up look at longhorns and buffalo, then take a seat to watch the cowboys earn their prize money. We’ll share a hearty laugh over everybody’s favorite—watching the little ones hang on for dear life in the Mutton Bustin’ Contest.

If you would like to enter your relation into the lottery for the Mutton Bustin’ Contest, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 303-556-2549. Children must be 5-7 years old and weigh less than 55 pounds.

Rock Bottom Ruckus Dinner and Auction
Sunday, February 26 | 5:30 p.m.
Rock Bottom Brewery | Corner of 16th and Curtis Streets

Dust off your boots, polish up your spurs, and join us for what has become Denver’s finest auction. The attire may be Western, but the dinner is gourmet, with our friends from the Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery donating their time, their fixins, and every seat in the house so all proceeds benefit downtown Denver campus scholarships.

Contact the Office of Alumni Relations for reservations at 303-556-2549.

All of your donation, except $28 per dinner, is tax deductible. The University of Colorado is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Federal tax ID# 84-6000555

Stock Show
RSVP BY JANUARY 5

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NUMBER ATTENDING ___ x $10/per person = ___

Ruckus Dinner and Auction
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| CATTLE BARONS: ___ x $200/per person = ___ |
| CHANCELLOR'S POSSE: ___ x $150/per person = ___ |
| BUFFALO RIDERS: ___ x $100/per person = ___ |
| RANCH HANDS: ___ x $65/per person = ___ |

Submit to:
UCDHS Alumni Relations
Downtown Denver Campus
Campus Box 189
P.O. Box 173364
Denver, CO 80217-3364
Fax: 303-556-6545
E-mail: alumni@ucdenver.edu
Make checks payable to:
UCDHS Alumni Association