



University of Colorado **Denver**



MEETING THE MOMENT

2022 Achievements & Stories



University of Colorado **Denver**

AT A GLANCE

Nearly \$800M

economic impact
in Colorado each year

Nationally ranked programs across
7 schools & colleges

110+

bachelor, master,
and doctoral degrees

15,000 students

110,000+ alumni

2,000 faculty and staff

No. 1

in social mobility in Colorado

1/2 of undergraduates

- Are students of color
- Are first-generation college students

2/3 of CU Denver Alumni

Stay in Colorado and contribute
to the local economy

Minority-serving Institution

Military-friendly designations

- Military-friendly schools: Gold Award
- Military spouse friendly school

Age-Friendly University



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

Letter from the Chancellor

4

Fueling a Diverse Talent Pipeline

Student in Focus: Val Gonzalez

8

Building a University for Life—and the Workforce of the Future

Alumna in Focus: Sarah Bennett

12

Activating Change Through Research and Creative Work

Student in Focus: Paola Larios

16

Connecting Art & Alumni to Highlight Our Sense of Place, Impact

Alumnus in Focus: Frank Dávila

18

Leading Innovation in Downtown Denver—and Beyond

Student in Focus: Jackie Chacon Duarte

22

Becoming a Best Place to Work

Employee in Focus: Genia Herndon

26

Timeline of Impact

LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR



New City Heights Residence Hall and Learning Commons Opening (Aug. 12, 2021)
From left: Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Enrollment and Student Success Monique Snowden; Regent Nolbert Chavez; Regent Callie Rennison; Provost Constanancio Nakuma; former Regent Jack Kroll; Chancellor Michelle Marks; Regent Ilana Spiegel; Executive Vice Chancellor of Administration and Strategy Jennifer Sobanet; and former Student Government Association President Chris Hilton.

Connection. This word says so much about where we are as a society—what drives us and what we value. We live in a period of significant change in our country, in our workplaces, and in higher education, but I like to think about the great possibility that change brings. To me, connection is not only part of our ethos at the University of Colorado Denver, but it is a critical component to addressing some of the greatest needs in our city, state, and nation as we embrace our role as a university that meets the moment.

At CU Denver, we are actively strengthening our connections to meet the moment thanks to our 2030 Strategic Plan: Make Education Work for All, which was released in June 2021. These connections link our university to our communities, to our city and state, to other schools and universities, and to industries outside higher education. In fact, connection was a major force behind the development of our strategic plan: In the six months leading up to the plan's launch in June 2021, 3,000 community members from across our campus and beyond came together to deliver 7,000 ideas to create a vision and set of goals to guide our strategy and way forward.

Ultimately, our plan centers on the idea that education should work for all—for learners of all ages, life stages, and backgrounds—and that education is a continuous journey because of the changing nature of work and the need to continually reskill. As Colorado's only public urban research university, CU Denver has an obligation and the unique assets to provide a high-quality, accessible, real-world education to the talented many. Together, our community arrived at five primary aspirations:

- **Fueling a diverse talent pipeline** that not only enables economic growth but also helps create a more equitable and thriving society.

- **Building a “university for life”** that serves the people of Denver and Colorado throughout their career, and at different stages in their lives.
- **Activating positive change through research and creative work** with an eye toward catalyzing positive societal change.
- **Taking on the mantle of leading innovation in Denver**, which is our home and an emerging global city uniquely positioned to address tomorrow's challenges.
- **Becoming a best place to work**, adding to Denver's talent pipeline, and expanding the University of Colorado System's impact as the third-largest employer in the state.

And we are well on our way, together.

Since June 2021, we received the No. 1 ranking in social mobility in Colorado by *U.S. News and World Report* for both 2021 and 2022; we have partnered with numerous organizations to set a course for making Denver a true smart city; we have built a sustainable and durable habitat for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) researchers in Antarctica; we have begun to envision our forthcoming innovation district; and we have opened this university's inaugural—and award-winning—first-year residence hall on campus to deepen our students' connection to our campus, the city, and its employers.

This report is a synthesis of the many steps we have taken toward our mission to make education work for all. Our internal and external communities mobilized incredibly quickly in support of our goals while also accelerating other efforts to energize and move us forward. And this report aims to contextualize their initiative with those connections and that impact while also setting a vision for what's to come.

As you read this report, I hope you will see a university that is not only achieving the results needed to meet the moment but also relishing its work. Our mission isn't just why we exist, it is the work we love to do. And I hope you'll appreciate the same thing about CU Denver that I have since arriving here: We're an upstart. As far as institutions go, we're relatively young. Our history, while important, isn't a storybook legacy. I view this not as a shortcoming but as a competitive advantage. We're hungry. We're nimble. We're not beholden to the ways of the past because we are looking to the future. In 2023, CU Denver will celebrate our 50th anniversary—a marker of how far we have come in such a short time, and a testament to the fact that we're just getting started.

The work we're doing can't, and shouldn't, be done alone. Our best work can only be done together, and I invite you to engage with us at any level. We look forward to working with you.



Michelle Marks
Michelle Marks, PhD
Chancellor

FUELING A DIVERSE TALENT PIPELINE



We know that opening the doors to students from more backgrounds and giving them the resources to succeed not only enhances our educational environment, it also translates to a highly diverse and talent-ready workforce. As the job landscape in Colorado shifts and grows, CU Denver strives to create a talent pool that is prepared to enter the work economy today—and lead tomorrow.

Since launching our 2030 Strategic Plan, we are proud to report that we have made significant strides towards achieving our goal of building the diverse talent pipeline of the future:

- **Ranked #1 in Social Mobility** by *U.S. News & World Report* two years in a row, highlighting CU Denver as the No. 1 university in Colorado for enhancing students' socioeconomic mobility.
- **Continued to recruit and enroll a highly diverse student body**, with over 50% of CU Denver undergraduates identifying as persons of color and half being the first in their family to go to college.
- **Partnered with the business community to launch the First-Generation and Multicultural Business Program**, helping students build social capital and career networks, and gain exposure to careers of interest and access to resources.
- Created an Endowed Professorship in **Jain Studies** in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, providing our students yet another new opportunity to become better educated global citizens.
- **Expanded the Displaced Aurarian Scholarship**, providing tuition-free education for individuals displaced from the Auraria neighborhood when the Auraria Campus was built in the 1970s, as well as provide tuition-free education for their descendants in perpetuity.
- **Launched a project to revitalize the Ninth Street Historic Park**, an anchor of the former Aurarian neighborhood, beginning with the historic preservation of the Centennial House as a geographic and emotional heart of CU Denver's campus.



Across the city, state, and country, our graduates are in demand from top companies and growing industries—and we provide scholarships, real-world learning, and other academic and career opportunities to help our students flourish. This includes expanding the Displaced Aurarian Scholarship program, which enabled student Val Gonzalez to start a new career. Read Val's story on the next page. >>



Val Gonzalez

Master of Sciences Candidate '24, Applied Mathematics

An Aurarian descendant and career changer returns to campus to become a professor

When Val Gonzalez walks near Ninth Street Historic Park on his way to a calculus or linear algebra class, he can't help but think of the past—and of his family. This one-block stretch of preserved homes is part of Auraria, a historic and largely Hispanic neighborhood from which residents and businesses were displaced in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Auraria Campus was created. And for Val, his connection to this place is deep.

He can point to St. Cajetan's in the distance, where his pregnant mom walked and walked around the church's annual bazaar on a Saturday to help induce labor, and it worked; he was born the very next day. At the time, his parents lived in an apartment above a garage business (the building is no longer there) that was close to the family restaurant: the Casa Mayan, which was run by Val's great uncle. His parents bought a house shortly after he was born, but he remembers coming back to the neighborhood to visit and driving through the alleys to reach the restaurant, where family would settle in for conversation, coffee, and menudo (a traditional Mexican soup).

Five decades later, Val's back in the area—as a student. He's a recipient of the Displaced Aurarian Scholarship. The scholarship was expanded in 2021 to cover all descendants in perpetuity, meaning that Val's children, grandchildren, and any future generations will be able to attend CU Denver for free. He heard about the scholarship from old Auraria neighbors who wanted to make sure he and his kids knew about the opportunity.

“It has turned into a magnificent, beautiful urban campus, but it is definitely on the backs of some people,” Val said, adding that it was good to see that there is reciprocity for the neighborhood's displacement. “I think it speaks well of the city of Denver and the people.”

Val, who recently retired from a 26-year career as a civil rights investigator for federal agencies and in higher education, felt drawn back to the classroom and knew that the scholarship would help make his long-held dream of becoming an international math professor a reality. He started classes, and quickly found out that he was a little rusty. “I think you get comfortable in the professional workplace and then you think, ‘Oh, I can do anything,’” Val said. “At my age, returning is definitely interesting.”

He quickly reached out to the math department and sat down with an advisor to make an individual learning plan to fit his needs. Like an athlete preparing for the start of the season, his advisor suggested he warm up with a few specific courses in linear algebra, calculus, and statistics. Once integrals and derivatives feel comfortable to him again, he'll ramp into a master's program to reach his goal of sharing his passion for mathematics with students—thanks, in part, to the scholarship. “I have cousins who call me and say, ‘I'm proud of you for doing this thing,’” Val said. “I think, really, the part that strikes me is how cool my dad would think it was. My dad was very attached to this place and the people.”



My dad was very attached to this place and the people.



BUILDING A UNIVERSITY FOR LIFE— AND THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE



Change is inevitable, but the rate at which our economy and workforce are evolving is accelerating. By collaborating with employers, we can help learners anticipate these shifts and adapt for the modern workplace. We also know that learning does not always follow a predictable path—nor does it have an endpoint. At CU Denver, we’re meeting the evolving needs of learners and our workforce with new academic programs and real-world opportunities that help learners achieve their goals, no matter where they are in their lives and careers.

As part of our flexible model that meets learners where they are, we have implemented the following steps:

- Developed a holistic digital strategy that ensures the creation and delivery of flexible, hybrid, and stackable programs that fit the practical realities of students’ lives. More than **10,600 CU Denver students chose to take classes in more than one modality** (hybrid, in-person, or online), meaning that they selected programming that works for them, wherever they are.
- Invested in strategic hybrid programming for in-demand fields, including accounting, information systems, and early childhood education, which helps fill employment gaps in our local and global economy.
- Created and offered a growing number of stackable degrees, credentials, and certificates, enabling our diverse learners to grow their careers and contribute to a more inclusive workforce.
- Continued growth in experiential learning opportunities, including the launch of federally registered apprenticeship programs providing work-based learning opportunities for students.
- Launched the Change Makers program to help older adults explore new career possibilities. This effort

builds off of CU Denver’s larger initiative as part of the Age-Friendly University Global Network—an innovative global education movement that supports intergenerational opportunities for an aging learning population.

- Established a micro-credential in electric vehicle technology in partnership with the Colorado Smart Cities Alliance.



We prepare students for the world—the real world—which means teaching hands-on skills in addition to high-quality academics. And we provide learning whenever and wherever learners want it—including online. That’s true for alumna Sarah Bennett, whose online and in-person coursework in political science has led to a burgeoning career in public policy. Read Sarah’s story on the next page.





“ Students get the support that they need, and they can go out into [the] world and make an impact....That’s what I love about our university. ”



Sarah Bennett

Bachelor of Arts '22, Political Science

How hybrid learning and an internship program enabled a single mother to pursue a career in public policy—and provide a better life for her two young sons

Sarah Bennett’s school days had a rhythm to them. As a single mom, she’d get her two sons ready, drop them off at daycare, attend a few classes, and head to work. At 6:30 p.m., she’d take her kids home, get them ready for bed and go online to finish classwork. In between, she’d manage care for her grandmother.

But if the kids’ daycare was closed or someone got sick, she needed flexibility, especially with her academics. That was a big draw of enrolling at CU Denver, where she was impressed with the hybrid options that could work with her, on her schedule. “It’s important to prioritize your dreams,” Bennett said, adding that the university showed her a different higher education model where “college is not something that is a one-size-fits-all.”

She enrolled in a political science degree program with a public policy track in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. She quickly found that the university was just as committed to her education as she was. Her professors challenged her, offered guidance, and understood how to help her define her own success. “There were times when I brought my two little boys to class and asked if they could stay,” Sarah said. “Every single professor was super flexible.”

And she was pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to form a community on campus, even though she was a hybrid student. “I can be a mom, and I can be a friend,

and I can be a daughter, and I can be a sister, and I can be all of these things and still have this experience be my own,” she said. She joined Peer Advocate Leaders (PALs), a program that pairs returning students with new ones, to share her experiences and help others navigate their own educational journey.

She also tapped into CU Denver’s internship networks to build her resume and test out what might be a good fit for her next step. She interned with the Denver Police Department and with a legislator at the Colorado State Capitol. “I got to see behind the curtain, but I also built my resume,” she said, pointing out that the CU Denver’s internship office also offers grants so that students can more easily participate in these opportunities.

After graduation, Sarah became a legislative aide and now plans to attend law school. “My degree represents years of hard work,” she said. “Now, I get to say, ‘I earned it, that’s mine.’ It gives me goosebumps.” And she’s given her sons a model for perseverance and hard work. “My children are so proud,” she said. “They can’t wait for commencement. It just taught them that even through adversity you can accomplish your dreams.”



ACTIVATING CHANGE THROUGH RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORK



Diverse researchers, artists, scholars, and designers come together from around the world at CU Denver to transcend disciplinary boundaries and strengthen our university's impact on the city, state, nation, and world. Working with a collaborative ethos, they are the leaders of our expanding research enterprise, solving some of society's grand challenges with the curiosity, compassion, and grit that defines our community.

Our faculty and students create work that is transforming research areas, including cybersecurity, data science, smart and sustainable urban infrastructure, and health. We continue to enhance our level of research activity, both as a leading public university with the highest research classification and also benefiting from our affiliation with the nationally renowned CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

Upon launching our strategic plan, we have built a foundation for becoming an internationally known and society-impacting research enterprise, including these achievements:

- Received \$19.5M in federal research funding during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- Earned a \$1.3M grant from the **National Science Foundation** to study how vegetation in western Alaska responds to climate change. By investigating impacts in the Arctic, scientists may be able to make predictions about other high-altitude environments, including Denver.
- Launched an enterprise-wide **Research and Creative Work Grand Challenges** initiative with significant investments in collaborative projects. The first wave of investments heavily focused on our role as an urban university, addressing grand challenges such as the effect of climate change on community health, the use of informatics to strengthen urban infrastructure, and the role of democracy in society.
- Designed and built a sustainable laboratory for **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists in Antarctica** in partnership with NOAA Fisheries, **Bespoke Project Solutions**, and **OZ Architecture**. Guided by our expert faculty on CU Denver's campus, 22 graduate students from CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning Colorado Design Build Project completed the first design and construction phase of Antarctica's new Cape Shirreff field camp to improve the living conditions of the NOAA scientists conducting marine ecosystem research. Following the design-build in Denver, the architecturally and environmentally sophisticated structures were shipped to their destination 10,000 miles away.



Our faculty produce meaningful research at home—and abroad—in a range of topics from urbanism to climate change. This year, our architecture and planning students, including Paola Larios, created a custom design-build for another group of researchers—NOAA scientists—who are studying marine ecosystems in Antarctica. Read Paola's story on the next page. >>



Paola Larios

Master of Architecture Candidate '23

Only a vibrant city and the opportunity of a lifetime could draw this Texan away from her family. CU Denver delivered both and enabled her to impact climate change from across the globe

When Paola Larios was looking at master's in architecture degree programs, she did her homework. She wanted something that was competitive and in an interesting city that would help make moving away from her family network in El Paso, Texas, a little easier. And she wanted to have a unique experience, which is why CU Denver's Design Build Graduate Certificate Program stood out. She'd have a chance to work on a real-world project. What she didn't know was that it would make a difference nearly 10,000 miles away—in Antarctica.

She and 21 other CU Denver students helped build field camps for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service. The structures, which include a galley and a berthing space, would become the home for eight scientists conducting marine research to enable ecosystem-based fishery management in the Southern Ocean. Paola soon realized that the Cape Shirreff field camp was a project unlike any other. "Our professors said, 'This isn't going to be in the mountains, where people might see it,'" she said. "The government is our client, and the work will have to travel across continents."

The College of Architecture and Planning students worked with faculty, Bespoke Project Solutions, and OZ Architecture on the Cape Shirreff field camp. Logistic concerns forced Paola and her teammates to constantly challenge themselves. "With shipping [the materials] down in containers and moving them onto the boat, and then onto the Zodiac and across slippery rocks, we had to find ways to make good ideas even better," she said. The project, which completed its first phase in June 2022, delivered on its promise. "It pushed the boundaries of what an architect or a designer can be and what kind of impact we can have," Paola said. "This was the project of our lives."

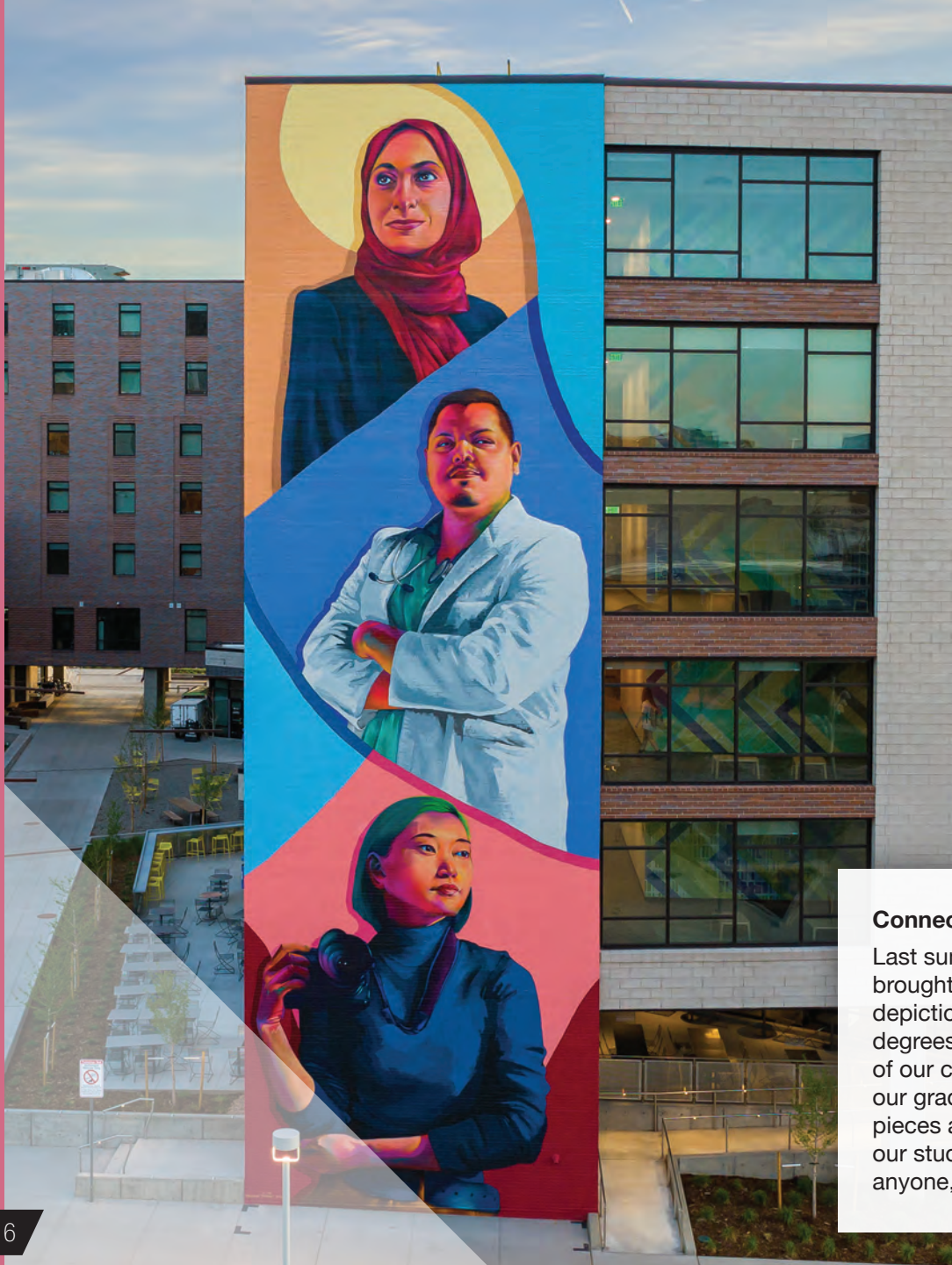
The build, which also had to address sustainability and a harsh maritime environment, came together quickly, and moved from the design phase to construction in just six months. Now, Paola is focusing on earning a historic preservation certificate. She's excited to have worked on such an interesting project as a graduate student, even if it was challenging. "You forgot how tired you were," she said. "You forgot how much stress you have. All of that just goes away because you see how happy [the client] is. That's not something that a lot of people in school get to see."

“

It pushed the boundaries of what an architect or a designer can be and what kind of impact we can have.

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Connecting Art & Alumni to Highlight Our Sense of Place, Impact

Last summer, world-renowned artist Thomas Evans, known as Detour, brought his iconic mural style to our urban campus with colorful depictions of seven CU Denver alums. An alum with two CU Denver degrees himself (BS '08, MBA '12), Thomas captured the bold spirit of our campus community and the incredibly diverse career paths of our graduates, from health care to public policy and finance. These pieces are displayed on campus and serve as a point of inspiration for our students, literally showing them that CU Denver is a place where anyone, from any background, can find a home and succeed.



Frank Dávila

PhD '98

A journey from Texas' migrant labor camps to become an educational leader

For Frank Dávila—who was born in Marlin, Texas and grew up as a migrant worker—being a kid meant never staying in one place for very long. “My dad worked for the railroad,” Frank said. “Every year, his job took us back and forth between our home and a migrant camp 300 miles away.” The family would travel in a two-and-a-half-ton truck as part of a caravan that moved from location to location. When he was 10, his mother passed away, which put an incredible strain on Frank, his dad, and his six siblings.

Despite having a fractured education experience—he had just two complete years of school: first grade and 12th grade—Frank graduated from high school and college to become a classroom teacher. But then, a year later, as the U.S. escalated its efforts in the Vietnam War, he got his draft notice. “There were six Latino students in my high school graduating class, and all six of us were drafted into the military,” Frank said. “That gives you a picture of how minority populations were first to go to the front lines.”

After a three-year stint in the military, Frank went back to school to earn a master's degree in secondary education and Spanish, with a minor in linguistics, to shift from being a classroom teacher to a school principal. Then, he enrolled in CU Denver's School of

Education & Human Development, where he earned his PhD. As a first-generation Latino student, Frank at first felt that he didn't quite fit in. But soon, he began to appreciate what made him stand out. “I was neither here nor there,” Frank said. “I was in between. Those of us who speak Spanish or another language, who are bilingual, bicultural, we always have our foot and our thoughts in both places, and so we're able to move back and forth. That's beautiful to me.”

To him, CU Denver is an institution that values both cultural heritage and social mobility—and he's committed to doing his part: He worked with the university to launch the Doctor of Education in Leadership for Educational Equity, Latin@ Learners and Communities program. Frank, who in addition to his professional achievements is a two-time cancer survivor, wants to inspire future students.

He also wants to challenge them to ask questions and reach out to other students to foster a greater sense of belonging. In his hopes for CU Denver's future graduates, Frank sees shades of his father, who sacrificed so much so that Frank could receive an education. “I carry him and his dreams through me. I want to carry them on to create a multi-generational growth process,” he said. “It's still unfolding, and I hope it will be for years to come.”



LEADING INNOVATION IN DOWNTOWN DENVER—AND BEYOND

Situated in the heart of downtown Denver, CU Denver embraces our location in the center of one of America's fastest-growing cities by creating new forms of social entrepreneurship, economic development, and transformative education. With nearly 70% of the world's population expected to live in cities by 2050, solving challenges in our metropolitan areas is a social imperative and an opportunity for connection. We're working to fuel inclusive innovation, collaboration, sustainability, and economic growth for Denver and Colorado. We're also forming partnerships with business and community leaders to build sustainable physical spaces that foster open innovation.

Our commitment to, and progress in, building an innovation community following the launch of our strategic plan has accelerated with these actions:

- **Continued to advance our partnership with the Colorado Smart Cities Alliance**—a statewide organization that brings together government, businesses, and allied organizations to advance smart city investments and enhance Denver's growth as a global city.
- **Became a founding member of the Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities (HSRU)**, a network of universities that aim to increase the number of Hispanic doctoral students across our institutions and the diversity of the faculty pipeline across America.
- **Opened City Heights, an award-winning residence hall** that provides an affordable housing option to first-year students, with integrated student services and proximity to jobs, internships, research opportunities, and more.
- **Partnered with Apple to strengthen local K-12 schools' tech education through our Pathways2Teaching and P-TEACH programs.** The partnership included an expansive Apple technology hardware package and support of student scholarships, curriculum development, and teacher training in K-12 schools throughout the front range.



Whether it's planning the state's first open innovation district or constructing an award-winning City Heights dorm that provides affordable housing for our students, CU Denver is on the frontlines of innovation, tech, and workforce development. Student Jackie Chacon Duarté knows all about building—it's not only part of her major in engineering but it is also part of her family's history. Read Jackie's story on the next page. >>



“ At CU Denver, there is a place for everybody. ”



Jackie Chacon Duarté

Bachelor of Science Candidate '23, Construction Engineering and Management

A family trade is inspiring this first-generation student to pursue an in-demand career in construction; she found community and on-the-job experience in the process

During Jackie Chacon Duarté's first week at CU Denver, the campus felt huge. As a first-generation student, she didn't have a family member who'd gone to college to guide her through registering for classes, finding her way, and taking advantage of resources such as the Writing Center and Career Center. She wondered if she'd make friends and what the next four years would be like. And while all those things would still take time to figure out, almost immediately there were people on campus to help support her. Those connections, Jackie said, helped with the transition.

She found her career path when CU Denver's College of Engineering, Design and Computing (CEDC) launched an undergraduate program in construction management. "My family has a background in construction," Jackie said. "I just fell in love with the program." The coursework gave her an opportunity to expand on a familiar topic and the small size of the emerging program—less than 60 students—gave her a chance to get to know her fellow students and faculty. "Everyone is so focused on making sure you are succeeding," she said.

Through a work-study program, she formed relationships. She also joined a society of women engineers and one for Hispanic engineers. She not only met people like herself, but she also received advice about how to navigate more challenging courses. Jackie, who has interned

at engineering firm JLL and GH Phipps Construction Companies, was asked to serve on the student steering committee and participate in various visioning exercises for the open innovation district. "We help the university identify what matters to us," Jackie said.

When she comes to campus now, it's a familiar place. She goes to classes, helps as a teacher assistant, works as a student assistant for the CEDC, and meets friends downtown to explore the city. One of her favorite things about the university is its diversity and seeing people who look like her, who are also first-generation students. "At CU Denver, there's a place for everybody," she said.

All of which makes her want to support other students and be a role model for women in the construction field. "As a first-generation student, my degree means that all of my parents' efforts were not in vain and I was able to overcome every single barrier that I may have thought I had," Jackie said. "I'm encouraging all of my siblings to do the same and go to college. And I can be the one to support them through those experiences. I can support them and help guide that path. So, yeah, my degree means a lot to my family."



BECOMING A BEST PLACE TO WORK



Our interest in shaping and investing in the workforce of the future extends to our own people. CU Denver aspires to be an employer of choice in the region, building upon the University of Colorado's strong position as the third largest employer in Colorado. Our talented faculty and staff undergird our entire strategy. They help to create an equitable and diverse community, educate learners of all ages and life stages, conduct society-impacting research, innovate in disciplines ranging from cyber to urban planning, and nurture a vibrant campus community in downtown Denver.

Our people also contribute to CU Denver's statewide economic impact, which was nearly \$800M in the last year and included work not only in the Denver metro area but also throughout Colorado's rural communities via our K-12 teacher degree and licensure programs.

With our 2030 strategy providing the framework to become a best place to work, we achieved these results:

- **Continued to demonstrate leadership in our COVID-19 response**, both internally and externally, to ensure that nearly 98% of our employees and 96% of our students are vaccinated and adhering to public health guidelines.
- **Partnered with the city and state to offer several vaccine clinics** in the Denver community and increase vaccine adoption while reducing hesitancy in diverse communities. In spring 2022, we hosted U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra to share best practices.
- **Continued to work with our employees to fully return to campus by fall 2021** to restore the human connection of our learning, revive our collaborative scholarship and campus environment, and contribute to the revitalization of downtown Denver.
- **Supported our community members affected by the tragic Marshall Fire** in December 2021 by raising \$8,000 from our campus community to offer relief and additional support.
- **Brought together numerous teams and volunteers to support several iconic citywide events**, including Denver Startup Week and the Denver Colfax Marathon, further advancing our role as an anchor institution in the downtown.



Being a best place to work means investing in the people we employ and the city we call home. For us, this also means encouraging our employees to embrace our University for Life model and engage in lifelong learning. That's true for Genia Herndon, who is a double-degree recipient at CU Denver and plays a major role in fostering the success of our future graduates. Read Genia's story on the next page. >>



Genia Herndon

Master of Arts '15, Political Science; PhD '22, Education

This lifelong learner contributes to CU Denver's workforce—and supports the success of our students

Genia Herndon is a familiar face around campus. As the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student and Community Engagement, she spends a lot of time logging steps across campus for her day job. And as a CU Denver alum, she's added to that distance while taking courses. "I'm a lifelong learner," Genia said with a laugh. "We're all evolving, and we need to adapt our skills, and our understanding, and our perspectives in order to be able to lean into our purposes."

Her master's degree focused on education policy and her doctorate looked at executive leadership with a lens on equity and organizational change. "I had a real curiosity and I wanted to dive into how do people improve our process around change management," she said. Her studies also gave her insight into the student experience, whether that was registering for classes or defending her dissertation during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I had to change my data," Genia said. "I had to go back and repropose and rework." It was hard to balance that, a full-time job, and family life. Some mornings, she'd wake up at 4 a.m. to read or write (something she still does on occasion, out of habit).

Genia grew up around educators and innovators, but education wasn't her first career. She initially worked in the hospitality business with a focus on contract management. A job with Aramark Corporation brought her back to Colorado—her home state—at Coors Field. After becoming a mom, she shifted her career and eventually joined CU Denver in 2009. And while she said that trajectory may not

seem linear, in retrospect, she sees a clear through line. "It all connects back to: How are we creating experiences and how are we engaging people?" she said. "That has always been a theme within my career and within my education."

At CU Denver, she joked that she's worked in nearly every area of Student Affairs, which helps her have an even deeper understanding of the work and care that goes into each student's experience. "I have overseen everything from financial aid scholarships to admissions, recruitment, enrollment, community partnerships, and K-12 work." Her current focus is on wellness, advocacy, and student life. "I have a real appreciation for how all of this works together," she said. "And also, how we bring in and engage community members."

She said that one of the biggest opportunities right now is to help students grapple with the impact of the pandemic on their lives—from mental wellness to changed goals—and to plan for the future. She hopes that her experiences and her team can help give students a compass to navigate their educational path. It still echoes her early career, but with an important re-direction. "I'm so excited by the priorities that CU Denver has," Genia said. "I think that provides a framework for us to map out [the future]. And it's not just the incoming first-year classes. It is veterans who are coming off the battlefields. It's adult learners who had to step out for whatever reason. We mean so many different things to so many different people."

“

Our students are learning how to navigate, how to network, how to identify leadership, and how they can make a difference.

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TIMELINE OF IMPACT



STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCHED

After engaging more than 3,000 community members and generating more than 7,000 ideas in six months, we released our *2030 Strategic Plan: Make Education Work for All* to reimagine the potential of higher education and strengthen society.

JUNE 17



AWARD-WINNING CITY HEIGHTS RESIDENCE HALL AND LEARNING COMMONS WELCOMED STUDENTS

We opened our first residence hall to provide an affordable downtown housing option to first-year students—with proximity to jobs, internships, research opportunities, and more.

AUGUST 12



DISPLACED AURARIAN SCHOLARSHIP EXPANDED

Tuition-free education for people displaced from the Auraria neighborhood (1955 to 1973) was expanded to include all direct descendants, in perpetuity, and bring more education and opportunity to our community.

NOVEMBER 4



EARNED MILITARY-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS GOLD AWARD DESIGNATION

We received national recognition for providing outstanding support to military students and ensuring veterans' ongoing educational and professional success.

MARCH 7



LED COVID-19 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH U.S. SEC. XAVIER BECERRA AND GOV. JARED POLIS

Chancellor Michelle Marks hosted government representatives and leaders in higher education, public health, and the local community at a roundtable discussion on "Whole Health/A Community Response to COVID."

MARCH 25



INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED MURALIST PAINTED CAMPUS

Thomas Evans, the alumnus and acclaimed artist known as Detour, debuted large-scale works depicting seven successful CU Denver graduates and the promise of higher education.

JUNE 1

2021

AUGUST 3

PARTNERSHIP WITH COLORADO SMART CITIES DEEPENED

This innovative partnership with the nation's largest smart cities alliance will enhance Denver's growth as a global city.

SEPTEMBER 13

RANKED #1 IN SOCIAL MOBILITY

U.S. News & World Report ranked CU Denver the No. 1 university in Colorado for enhancing students' socioeconomic standings. CU Denver achieved this milestone again in September 2022.

2022

FEBRUARY 24

NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS FUEL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The College of Engineering, Design and Computing launched two federally registered apprenticeship programs in construction project management and user experience design to provide work-based learning opportunities for students and industry.

MARCH 16

CU DENVER ANNOUNCES COMMITMENT TO REVITALIZE NINTH STREET HISTORIC PARK

Led by CU Regent Nolbert Chavez and in partnership with AHEC and our community, CU Denver embarked on an initiative to preserve and renovate historic homes along Ninth Street—as well as define their usage—as one important way to honor and celebrate our history as we build our collective future.

MAY 21

DANA CRAWFORD PRESERVATION PROGRAM NAMED

Our historic preservation program was named after award-winning Denver preservationist and industry icon Dana Crawford, which will help create the next generation of city planners and placemakers.

JUNE 7

CU DENVER STUDENTS SUPPORT NOAA CLIMATE RESEARCHERS IN ANTARCTICA

Twenty-two graduate students from CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning completed the first design and construction phase of safe and sustainable laboratories to house scientists at the Cape Shirreff field camp in Antarctica.





JOINED ALLIANCE OF HISPANIC SERVING RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

We became a founding member of a collective of 20 leading Hispanic-serving research universities that aims to increase access to doctoral programs for Hispanic students.

JUNE 14

BECAME UNIVERSITY INNOVATION ALLIANCE MEMBER

As the only Colorado university in the University Innovation Alliance, we are ensuring that public research universities here in the Rocky Mountain region enroll, support, and graduate more diverse students.

SEPTEMBER 27



CENTENNIAL HOUSE BLESSING

As part of our Ninth Street initiative, CU Denver hosted a blessing for the Centennial House in the Ninth Street Historic Park on our Auraria Campus as we work to honor our past and affirm our commitment to a more inclusive future.

OCTOBER 27

SEPTEMBER 15

ANNOUNCED PARTNERSHIP WITH APPLE

In a partnership with Apple, CU Denver strengthened local K-12 tech education and our Pathways2Teaching and P-TEACH programs by providing an expansive Apple technology hardware package, supporting student scholarships, curriculum development and teacher training in K-12 schools throughout the front range.



OCTOBER 13

INITIAL RESEARCH GRAND CHALLENGES COHORT ANNOUNCED AT CU DENVER'S FUTURE FEST

The first wave of collaborative research projects aimed to solve some of society's grandest challenges were announced and presented, including climate change, community health, and urban infrastructure.



2023

USHERED IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS OF CU DENVER

CU Denver will start a new chapter in 2023, turning 50 on January 11! As we celebrate our 50th anniversary by revisiting our accomplishments in the last 50 years, we will also work together with our internal and external communities to continue building a strong framework for our future.



“ CU Denver is the essential institution to meet this moment. We’re young and innovative, embodying the curiosity, kindness, and ambition of the Rocky Mountain spirit. And we believe that redefining the public urban research university is the most important thing we can do for higher education and for the future of America. ”

—Michelle Marks, Chancellor



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