

# communique

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-COLORADO SPRINGS

## Orientation brings students, families together

Ahhh. It's that special time of year on campus. The irises are unfurling. Most classrooms are hushed. Parking spaces are easy picking. And flocks of visitors are alighting weekly — all of them disoriented, excited, bewildered.

And these are just the parents.

Welcome to Freshman Orientation season at CU-Colorado Springs.

In an increasing effort to reach out to the parents of incoming freshmen, the Student Success Center this year has added a "family and friends" program to its orientation lineup. It consists of extended panels and workshops where parents can visit with currently enrolled students and university staff and faculty.

It's easy to spot the parents — they're the ones holding the green bags stuffed with Housing Village packets, handy phone number magnets, and the booklet called *How to Help Your Child Successfully Transition from High School to College*.

"We tell them that the white bags are for the students, and if we see the parents with a white one, we know they're what we call the 'helicopter parents,'" says Vanessa Ea, academic advisor, Student Success Center. "They tend to hover."

While orientation — which began April 10 in weekly intervals — is technically geared for incoming freshmen and transfer students, Student Success Center staff are finding that

more often than not it's the parents who need the most coddling. Getting them to loosen their grip over their kids' lives — even long enough for students to take their math placement tests — can be a challenge, says Ea.

Part of the university's impetus to wean parents away from micromanaging their child's academic experience is a practical one. Federal law prohibits the university from releasing grades and other educational records to parents of children over age 18.

"They'll call and want to talk about the student as their 'child,' but, really, we have to think of them as students and adults," says Ea.

If helping parents to loosen their grip — or to resist "hovering" — is a key part of orientation, then Student Success staff want to help make the transition for parents as painless as possible. While new students are taking placement exams and socializing with other freshmen, family and friends get to assemble with a panel of seasoned students primed to answer their questions and to ease their minds. And parents seem to appreciate the opportunity for glimpses into what life is really like at CU-Colorado Springs.

"They'll ask tough questions like 'What kind of parties go on? Is alcohol involved? Is date rape a problem on campus,'" Ea said.

The panel of a dozen or so students, otherwise known as Orientation Work Leaders, answers truthfully. And more often than not, the answers are comfort-

ing. In addition, faculty from across the curriculum and campus — from Financial Aid to Athletics to Public Safety — also volunteer their time for similar panel discussions in this campus wide push to expand the parent component of orientation.

Orientation ends August 20.

### Sega considered for Defense post

President George W. Bush announced June 7 his intent to nominate Ron Sega, dean, College of Engineering and Applied Science, to the position of Director of Defense Research and Engineering for the Department of Defense.



Ron Sega

After announcing intent to nominate, the President will decide whether to proceed with the nomination. There are also U.S. Senate subcommittee and full committee confirmation hearings before a vote by the entire Senate.

"I am pleased for Dean Sega," Chancellor Linda Bunnell Shade said. "To be considered for nomination is a high honor. Dean Sega's qualifications for this position are exceptional."

Sega has served as dean since 1996. He joined the faculty in 1982 and is a former astronaut, participating in two Space Shuttle missions. Sega holds the rank of Brigadier General in the United States Air Force Reserve.

Overheard. . .

"El Pomar tower looks like a hockey player. It's missing a few teeth."

—Cleve McDaniel, vice chancellor, administration and finance

## Employee of the Month

# Doers profile

When Tamara Townsend, director, Office of Student Recruitment and Outreach, recently went to the Campus Services Building to pick up her office's mail, the department was behind and seemingly overwhelmed.

Did Townsend stand in line and lob complaints that her mail wasn't ready? That's not her style. She pitched in to help, spending an entire day sorting letters and packages for other offices and helping get the department back on its feet.

"It was no big deal," Townsend says. "When I first came to Colorado Springs, I had a job through a temp agency in a company's shipping and receiving department. It was like old times."



Townsend's team spirit and willingness to pitch in was one of the reasons her staff nominated her to be the May 2001 CU-Colorado Springs Employee of the Month.

"When she (Tamara) sees a need, she offers to help," Sue Mitchell, director, Student Success Center, wrote in Townsend's nominating letter. "You never hear her say she won't do something because it's not her job."

As director of student recruitment and outreach, Townsend is responsible for coordinating the university's efforts to recruit students. She visits area high schools, leads tours, writes letters, makes telephone calls and fields a seemingly endless stream of questions from potential students who range in age from 18 to 60.

Through it all, Townsend responds with a smile and with courtesy. She stopped for a moment recently to talk about her job and herself.

**Name:** Tamara J. Townsend

**Age:** 31

**Place of Birth:** San Rafael, California but my parents moved us to Wisconsin to raise us when I was pretty small. I usually just say that I'm from Wisconsin.

**Education:** Bachelor's in business, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. Currently pursuing master's studies at CU-Colorado Springs. I was the first person in my family to earn a college degree.



**How long have you lived in Colorado Springs?**

Eight years. My parents actually met here and I have quite a bit of family locally.

**How long have you been at CU-Colorado Springs?**

I began work at the university in the housing village in marketing and then moved to the Student Success Initiative. It's a total of three years.

**What do you like best about your job?**

The people I work with. They are hard working and enthusiastic. I also enjoy the enthusiasm of a potential student whether they're fresh out of high school or are an older student realizing a dream and returning to college. The gleam they have in their eyes is contagious.

**What's the worst job you've ever had?**

I prefer to call it the worst job I never had but it was a summer job in 1988 where they offered me \$12 an hour working in a computer clean room. My job would have been to pull bent pins – like straight pins — out of these huge bins for 10 hours a day. The more I thought about, the more I realized I simply couldn't do it. Money isn't everything.

**What thing about you would your co-workers least expect?**

For my 30th birthday, I got a motorcycle. I'd always wanted one and for years had done the sensible thing — the college student car, the first job car and the mom car. It's pretty funny when I take my son for a ride (seven-year-old Jordan) and he wears his red cape. We're quite a sight. I am an avid Star Trek fan. I also enjoy playing the flute and the guitar. I couldn't make a living playing them but music is something I really enjoy.

**Life motto:**

The world is moving so fast that there are days when the person who says 'it can't be done' is interrupted by the person doing it.

# Teacher education program earns CCHE grant

Students in the Teacher Education Program at CU-Colorado Springs soon may not be lugging paper-based portfolios for faculty and potential employers to review.



Sylvia Nolte

Thanks to a \$59,000 Eisenhower Grant from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the students will simply tap into a web site and demonstrate their teaching proficiency.

“We are excited about the possibility of students having work samples available on the Web,” Sylvia Nolte, director, TEP program, said. “They’ll be able to show us things like their lesson plans and both pre-test results and post-test results of their work with students. The faculty will be able to evaluate their work and offer assistance.”

The grant is particularly important to assist CU-Colorado Springs students who spend much of their time at seven local schools that are part of a Professional Development School program partnership with the university. Faculty will be able to track student work and demonstrations on a regular basis. Teacher

candidates must have a portfolio that demonstrates teaching proficiency in order to graduate. The material in the electronic portfolio and inventory will make the process much easier and efficient, Nolte said.

Another advantage of the program will be when students graduate, Nolte says. With the click of a few buttons, a potential employer will not only be able to see work samples but possibly a video of the student teaching a class and interacting with students.

“A principal, for example, will be able to see someone who is interviewing for a teacher position doing the most important thing of all — teaching,” Nolte says. “We think this will be a tremendous advantage for both the student and the employer.”

Nolte and Randall DePry, assistant professor of education, prepared the grant application to CCHE and will work together to evaluate software and other computer requirements to complete the project. They hope to have the on-line portfolio system available to students this fall.

## W A N T E D : a few good mentors

Going away to college is a difficult experience. Many students are neither prepared for the academic challenges nor the freedom that awaits them.

But imagine adding a different language, a new culture and being several thousand miles away from friends and family to that list of challenges.

International students at CU-Colorado Springs face these hurdles and some that American students cannot fathom, according to Irene Martinez, coordinator, International Student Services.

“It’s hard for any of us to imagine foreign governments defaulting on their commitment to fund a student’s education,” Martinez says, “or having the value of their country’s currency drop by half overnight.”

“We’ve had students in those situations.”

To assist international students in their transition to the university and Colorado Springs, Martinez is building a mentor program designed to link students with faculty, staff and community members. A committee is designing an International Friendship Campaign, a cornerstone of which is the mentor program to help students understand American culture and the mentor a chance to learn about places that might only exist in his or her mind.

The cost? Nothing. But the rewards are priceless.

To find out more about the mentoring program, contact Martinez at 262-3819 or visit the web site <http://web.uccs.edu/iss>.

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## New alumni director trades lights for mountains

Suppose that you've got your choice of two worlds.

One takes you to New York City where you're paid to arrange interviews for master perfumers who brew best-selling fragrances, to pitch the roller coaster merits of an upstart dot com to the *Wall Street Journal*, and — in what can only be described as drudgery for any young woman — to organize public appearances for *People* magazine's "100 Most Eligible Bachelors."

The other brings you home to the mountains.

For Ann Cesare, newly appointed director of Alumni and Community Relations for the CU-Colorado Springs, there's really no contest.

The Colorado Springs native and CU-Boulder graduate recently left the bright lights of Manhattan to pick up the reins of the campus alumni program and to work with the University of Colorado Friends and Alumni Association, a board of about a dozen CU-Colorado Springs supporters working to raise money and awareness for this campus.

After twelve months in the Big Apple being jostled during 90-minute subway commutes and being sucked into an East Coast frenzy that seemed to swallow all of the hours in her day, Cesare is back home where the pace suits her fine. And now that she's finally caught her breath, she says she is eager to spread the word among former students about how this campus has changed. She wants them to

see the transforming face of CU-Colorado Springs.



Ann Cesare

"I want alumni to know that this is a full-fledged university that has totally come into its own," Cesare says. "With its master's and Ph.D. programs, its dormitories, and its phenomenal growth, I think if you haven't been here in just two years you'd be shocked to see the change. I want to get people back here so they can see where this university has gone since they left."

Like any good alumni director, Cesare hopes that once former students and faculty witness the growth — and the growth yet to come — they'll be impressed enough to open up their pocketbooks. But she's also keenly aware that the cornerstone of her work is to build and cultivate relationships. Whether it's maintaining contact with returning faculty and staff, hooking up students who want to plan a reunion, or interacting with the deans and public relation staffs of various colleges to coordinate alumni news, Cesare's work is cut out for her. One of her goals is to see CU-Colorado Springs produce an alumni magazine not unlike Boulder's *The Coloradan* — a slick magazine that would encompass everything from athletics, to the latest technology developments, to news from all the campus' colleges.

As a former public relations executive whose job hinged on forging unions with editorial page editors, city politicians and reporters, Cesare knows the power of interaction. The

pace of Colorado Springs may be more palatable than New York City, but the principles of her job are the same. You have to build relationships. And for that, there's no short cuts.

It happens one skeptical reporter, or one former student, at a time.



Venkat Reddy, associate dean, College of Business was named by the *Colorado Springs Business Journal* to its "Forty Achievers under 40" list in the June 1 edition. Reddy, 39, directs the distance master's of business administration program in addition to other duties in the College of Business. Three CU-Colorado Springs alumni, Tom Wood-Young, Rodel Alejo, and Jordan Snedaker, were also cited by the newspaper.

### Brown bag a vice chancellor

Faculty and staff are encouraged to attend a brown-bag lunch tomorrow (June 14) with Chancellor Linda Bunnell Shade to discuss the Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs position. The discussion starts at noon in the University Center Theater, room 302. Drinks and cookies will be provided.

