Honing Elizabeth Cushman and her gift to UCCS

Liz Cushman came to UCCS after completing a successful career with the Social Security Administration. After graduating in 1983 (B.A., Economics) at the age of 65, she maintained a keen interest in involving students in public policy research. Her initial contributions defrayed the expenses of students interning at the state legislature with then-Rep. Daphne Greenwood and provided the foundation for the Center for Colorado Policy Studies. Upon her death, she left a generous bequest to support ongoing public policy research — a portion of which funds a permanent student internship named in her honor.

The center held a reception in April of 2005 to celebrate her life and her gift. It included the unveiling of a commemorative plaque now mounted in the atrium of Columbine Hall. Along with Liz Cushman’s sister, Elsie Steg of San Antonio, Texas, and many close friends (including Jennifer Forbes, Ann Brown, Zell Rector, and Andrea Corley), the reception was attended by UCCS Chancellor Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Prof. Paul Ballantyne, and Colorado state representative the Honorable Larry Liston. Pictures from the event may be downloaded from web.uccs.edu/ccps.

“Liz’s graciousness and intellect will be missed by her many friends,” said Greenwood. “Involving students in public policy research is what Liz wanted, and her gift makes it possible for us to do more of that.”
Can Affordable Health Care Be Quality Care?

Amid growing concerns about costs and coverage of health care, the fourth annual Colorado’s Future conference held on September 30, 2005, focused on “win-win” solutions.

“We pay for national health insurance already — we just don’t get it!” said keynote speaker Dr. David Himmelstein, chief of the Division of Social and Community Medicine at Cambridge Hospital in Cambridge, MA, and co-founder of the group Physicians for a National Health Program (www.pnhp.org). Himmelstein supports universal coverage because he believes it would help to restore the physician-patient relationship, offer patients more choice of physicians and hospitals, and free physicians from what he terms the “bonds of managed care.”

Dr. Pamela Hanes, president of the Colorado Health Institute, gave an overview of the insurance situation in Colorado and shared frustrations with the piecemeal remedies provided by the legislature. Dean Carole Schoffstall of Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences spoke on a new delivery model centered on nurse practitioners who coordinate with physicians. John Steiner, Professor at CU’s School of Medicine, addressed the real difficulties in measuring quality in ways that affect outcomes.

Dr. Himmelstein also spoke at a forum — free and open to the public — on September 29 at Temple Shalom in Colorado Springs. A diverse group of citizens, including Dr. John Burrington, Rep. Michael Merrifield, and Manitou City Council member Kathy Verlo, participated in a wide-ranging, stimulating discussion following his presentation on “Health Care Reform: A Medical Emergency.”

For a summary of the speakers’ remarks, see the conference brochure at web.uccs.edu/ccps. We also have additional print copies for distribution to groups and individuals.

CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Special thanks to Memorial Hospital, Penrose-St. Francis Hospital, the Marcy Morrison Humanitarian Fund, the Gay and Lesbian Fund of Colorado, the Bain Family Foundation, the Bighorn Center, Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and Kaiser Permanente. We had great feedback from the community and the participants about how much they learned, and it wouldn’t have been possible without your financial support!

Referenda C & D debated

On October 18, the Center cosponsored a debate on Referenda C & D, held at UCCS. John Hazlehurst, a journalist and past member of the Colorado Springs City Council, and Douglas Bruce, El Paso County Commissioner, debated the pros and cons (respectively) of the five-year “time-out” from the TABOR Amendment that would allow the state to keep and spend an estimated $3.7 billion in state revenues.

The debate was well-attended by students and members of the community and received local TV coverage.

A panel led by health policy expert Marcy Morrison, Mayor of Manitou Springs (center), included (L-R): Gary VanderArk, University of Colorado Medical School; Lorez Meinhold, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative; Rep. Betty Boyd, Chair, Health Committee, Colorado House of Representatives; Marcy Morrison; Dayna Matthew, University of Colorado School of Law; Cherie Gorby, Memorial Hospital-Colorado Springs; and Jeffrey Oram-Smith, Penrose-St. Francis Hospital-Colorado Springs.
New board members

Larry Barrett has served as an independent consultant in energy management services planning, implementation, and evaluation since 1989. He has over 35 years of experience as a government economic analyst, a utility official, and a management consultant.

Lynn Peterson has been active in local community affairs for many years. She chaired Colorado Springs’ Comprehensive Plan Task Force from 1998-2001 and earlier served three terms (one as president) on the Colorado Springs District 11 school board.

Continuing board members

We thank departing member Jeff Bain for his years of service on the board and support of the Colorado’s Future conferences through the Bain Family Foundation. Continuing board members include Prof. A. Paul Ballantyne of the Department of Economics; Dean Thomas Christensen of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences; Dr. Jack Dillon, Penrose-St. Francis Hospital; the Honorable Marcy Morrison, Mayor of Manitou Springs; and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Rogers Redding.

Growing income inequality

Most of us know that the gap between top income earners in the U.S. and those in the middle and at the bottom has widened during the past twenty-five years. Can states take steps to ensure that economic prosperity reaches more segments of the population? We’re analyzing the contribution of state policies to growing income inequality.

Will Moeller, senior economics major and recipient of the 2006 Cushman Internship in Public Policy, is assisting in data collection for this project.

Donate to the Center for Colorado Policy Studies

We appreciate the support of donors large and small to keep the work of the Center ongoing. Your tax-deductible contribution will help defray printing and mailing costs of this newsletter and other Center reports. Please write your check to the CU Foundation and include a notation that your donation is to be used exclusively for the Center for Colorado Policy Studies. Thank you!

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Running on empty? Study examines water issues

Most of us get our water from Colorado Springs Utilities and have dealt with some water rationing and concerns about future availability. For those in unincorporated areas of the county using well water, how secure is the supply?

Jacob Stiedemann researched this question as an intern with the Center last year. Running on Empty? El Paso County Growth and the Denver Basin is available at web.uccs.edu/ccps. His paper compares the financial resources available to water districts with construction costs of new transportation or storage facilities for water needed to meet future demands.

Jacob talked to many people in county and city government and at water districts as he estimated the future supply and demand for water in the northern water districts. This area has been experiencing rapid growth and expects more.

Mill levies in these small districts might have to increase dramatically to cover projected infrastructure costs. Two possible solutions to these problems are suggested in Jacob’s paper: consolidation of small districts to take advantage of economies of scale or cooperation between districts to reach area-wide solutions to water problems.

Subsidized utility rates?

Colorado Springs Utilities is currently reviewing its role in growth and economic development and how it can best fulfill its charge to serve the community. Should rates be kept as low as possible for everyone? Or should discounts be offered to bring new employers to the city?

Before making its recommendations, the Colorado Springs Utilities Policy Advisory Board (UPAC) is holding extensive hearings. Center Director and Economics Professor Daphne Greenwood is among those invited by the board to present pertinent information. The meeting is on April 5 at 8 am in the Blue River Boardroom on the 5th floor of the Plaza of the Rockies and is open to the public. For more information, call Gail Connors at 668-8012.