

communiqué

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-COLORADO SPRINGS

Main Hall shows naked truth

If you are one of those people who laments “they don’t build them like they used to,” Rob Smith would like to show you a few things in 1914-era Main Hall.

“See that joist there?” Smith, construction coordinator, asked visitors recently. “When they’re notched like that, there’s not a whole of lot structural integrity left. That 20-foot span without a single support? No wonder the floors were so bouncy in the place. We’d never do that today.”

“Frankly, I think we were lucky to have started this project when we did,” Smith said. “There was not a lot of life left in the building.”

On a recent tour, Smith pointed out turn-of-the last century wiring insulated only with a thin layer of cloth, stairways to nowhere, and a hodge-podge of additions that show the building’s transition from hospital to classrooms. And building insulation? There was none, save for a few handfuls of horsehair around pipes.

Crews have discovered windows hidden inside walls, crawl spaces, and many examples of construction shortcuts.

“Look at that — those are horse stalls that were used as part of the ceiling,” Smith pointed out. “You can still see the numbers clearly printed on them.”

Smith theorizes that the stalls were scrap from a horse barn on the property. A thrifty contractor, even before the days of state low-bid, likely saw the wood and put it to use.



Rob Smith, construction coordinator, points out a detail of Main Hall's 1914 construction during a recent tour.

That or a local farmer returned from his fields one day to find half his barn missing, courtesy of the contractor.

Since the stalls aren’t weight bearing, they’ll remain above where Vice Chancellor John Pierce’s office will be on Main’s fourth floor. And Smith says today’s contractor, GH Phipps Construction, will borrow a chapter from the unknown original contractor by re-using some of the timbers now being removed for wood blocking.

Other elements will also remain. The exterior walls will be unchanged. So will a fireplace and mantle. An ancient elevator cab will be saved. So will a few other trinkets — porcelain wire insulators, a few feet of single-strand wire, a handful of insulation, and a pressure gauge from the coal-fed steam heating system. And a photograph of the horse stalls in Pierce’s office.

“I emphatically deny that the presence of horse stalls has anything to do with what will take place in the office,” Pierce said.

The patchwork timber framing of Main Hall, now exposed by sledgehammer-swinging construction crews, is a lot like an X-Ray of a human skeleton. Every break, every mistake, is obvious.

Touch of Irish hits campus

St. Patrick’s Day will be celebrated from noon to 2 p.m. Thursday on campus.

A traditional Irish meal of corned beef, cabbage and cake will be served free beginning at noon to the first 100 people at the University Center atrium. The Pikes Peak Highlanders will provide bagpipe music.

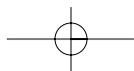
At 1 p.m. in University Center 116, Tom Huber, professor of geography and environmental studies, will present a lecture on “Ireland — The Land of Enchantment.”



Overheard . . .

“All the CU campuses are competing for a shrinking share of the total state appropriations ‘pie.’ It is clear that we must look to other sources to take care of our true campus needs.”

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Cleve McDaniel



Chemistry earns kudos from accrediting body

Mention the word “research” to Radha Pyati, assistant professor of chemistry, and her speech quickens.

Soon, she’s talking in staccato-like fashion about her field of electrochemistry. Blank tablet pages are filled with diagrams illustrating what happens when voltage is applied to an electron or the effect of various solutions on the electrochemical reaction.

“Research is about discovery,” Pyati says. “It’s the process of asking questions and seeking answers to those questions by applying what you’ve learned and what you hope to learn.”

Pyati teaches undergraduate and graduate chemistry courses. She enjoys teaching. But what quickens her speech and makes her eyes sparkle is her research and her quest to create a new, better kind of light emitting display – the thing that makes computer monitors and hundreds of other devices work.

Pyati, like her Department of Chemistry colleagues, combines her research interest and teaching. The result? Research assistants, while still undergraduates, who have the oppor-

tunity to apply what they’ve learned in class in a laboratory environment, side by side with faculty. At many universities, students must be graduate students before being allowed to work with faculty.

The Department of Chemistry’s successful integration of research with the undergraduate student experience recently earned kudos from the American Chemical Society which issued the department its highest honor — continued accreditation.

“The committee reviewed your department’s five-year reevaluation report and complimented your vigorous chemistry program with its flourishing undergraduate research activities,” the chemical society secretary wrote to Allen Schoffstall, chair, chemistry department, when conveying news of the accreditation.

Schoffstall says the accreditation is appreciated and serves to underscore what he already knew — the CU-Colorado Springs Department of Chemistry has excellent faculty who are committed both to teaching and research and who understand the important relationship between the two.



Radha Pyati

Teacher prep programs earn praise

Teacher education programs at CU-Colorado Springs are “outstanding” and “innovative,” according to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

CCHE staff recently conducted an in-depth look at the university’s teacher education program and recommended the College of Education’s programs in elementary education, special education, and secondary education. At its Feb. 28 meeting, the CCHE board approved all three program areas.

In December, CCHE staff and education faculty from the University of Northern Colorado and Colorado State University visited the campus and evaluated the teacher education program. Their conclusion? The College of Education’s teacher education programs are exceptional.

The report cited many positives including:

- ◆ An innovative on-line system to monitor student progress in the Special Education curriculum.
- ◆ Successful collaboration between the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and the College of Education.
- ◆ A professional development school model which was called “outstanding in its scope and intensity, providing excellent interaction between the university and the schools.”

The professional development model designates six Colorado Springs schools where teacher candidates receive hands-on experience and are assisted by university faculty and current public school teachers.

The special education program was cited as having outstanding instructional skills needed to work with diverse learners, including students who are learning English.

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Employee of the Month

Doers profile

Sue Allison grew up in Ottumwa, Iowa — the town Walter “Radar” O’Reilly was always talking about on the 80s hit series “M*A*S*H.” Like army medic O’Reilly, Allison ended up traveling far afield — first to Durango, then to Colorado Springs, where she’s worked in CU-Colorado Springs’ personnel office since 1994. Allison helps oversee classified hiring at the university, tests job applicants who live in the Colorado Springs area, and enters the data that generates payroll. Prior to joining the personnel office, Allison worked as a Program Assistant I for three CU-Colorado Springs chancellors — Dwayne Nuzum, Merrill Lessley, and Linda Bunnell Shade.



Two people, Larry Hiatt, physical plant, and Kathy Griffith, director, university events and outreach, nominated Allison as February’s Employee of the Month. Griffith lauded Allison for her work ethic. Hiatt praised Allison for her dedication and compassion when handling the financial affairs of Leonard Gilchrist, a custodian who died suddenly last month. Allison took time from her hectic schedule to personally deliver the necessary payroll and benefits paperwork to Gilchrist’s family, who were struggling to make funeral arrangements. And there was more, noted Hiatt: “I am so impressed, but not surprised by the compassion shown by this department, despite their workloads. I travel past the university often and it is my habit to inspect the campus as I go by. It is too often that I see a car belonging to one of the employees in personnel and the lights on in their offices. I find it so impressive that with so much to do, this department and Sue Allison can find the time to care.”

Name: Sue Allison

Age: “I’ll never be older than 55.”

Birthplace: Ottumwa, Iowa

Job Title: General Professional II, Personnel Office

What was your reaction to being named Employee of the Month?

I was really surprised. I couldn’t be outstanding without Robynne Kiplinger and Vickie Hilty (director of personnel).

How’s the job going?

It’s very challenging and very complex. Looming over us all the time are these deadlines. It’s very stressful. In the personnel office, we’ve been working 10-hour days.

How does Colorado Springs compare with Durango, where you lived from 1981 to 1985?

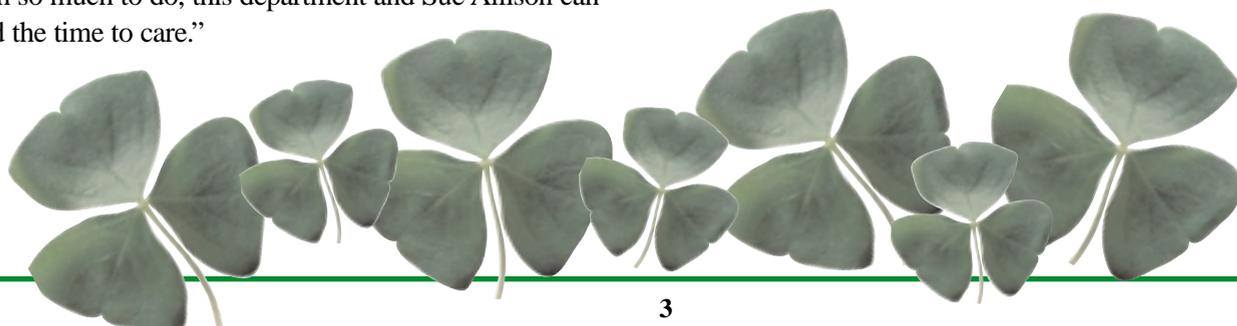
I didn’t like Durango. I worked as an office manager for the state probation department. It seemed like everybody I knew was on probation for either drugs or alcohol. It was like a mini-Aspen. The Wild West attitude was real prevalent there.

Was working for the probation department a real eye-opener?

I got pretty tough. You get real thick-skinned.

Let’s see. You went from working as an office manager for the state probation department to assisting three university chancellors. That’s quite a career stretch. What have you learned about people along the way? Do people have the ability to redeem themselves?

Some can, depending on their circumstances. We treated people on probation just like everybody else. I don’t care if you’re at the top or on the bottom. Everybody comes into this world the same way — and goes out the same way.



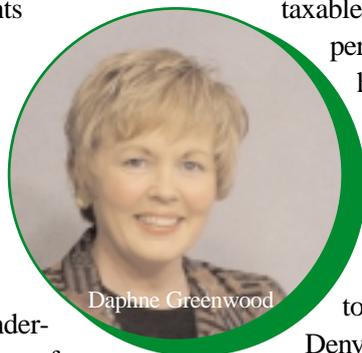
Colorado Constitution makes cutting taxes complicated

A popular idea to eliminate personal property tax on business equipment will cost school districts and local governments almost twice what it would save Colorado businesses, according to a recent analysis by the Center for Colorado Policy Studies at CU-Colorado Springs.

“This is more complicated than many advocates have understood, because so many aspects of Colorado tax law are imbedded in the state constitution,” according to Daphne Greenwood, center director and professor of economics.

The 1982 “Gallagher amendment” requires that homeowners pay no more than 45 percent of total property taxes annually. Commercial properties pay the other 55 percent. Eliminating \$532 million in taxes on business machinery and equipment would require a reduction in residential taxes of \$519 million to restore the 45:55 ratio of taxes paid. This would raise the total cost to \$1.05 billion, or more than 30 percent of current property tax revenues, according to Greenwood.

Greenwood and Tom Brown, senior research associate, also analyzed the property tax records of most state taxing districts and calculated the percentage of locally assessed business personal property for more than 1,300 districts. Since Colorado’s revenue system is locally based, eliminating the tax will affect some areas more than others unless a revenue sharing system is put in place.



Daphne Greenwood

The study found wide differences with El Paso County, at just above the state average of 15.2 percent of total taxable property in business personal property. In highly residential areas such as Pitkin and Ouray counties, business personal property represents only 3 percent of the total property tax base. Denver and Pueblo counties were above average at 18 percent and 25 percent. Rural areas such as Moffat and Morgan counties, home to large power plants, had more than 40 percent of their locally assessed property in business personal property.

Greenwood and Brown found that within counties there are substantial variances by taxing districts as well. For example, eliminating the business personal property tax would have a dramatic effect on Harrison School District Two in El Paso County, but little effect on the Manitou Springs School District. The highest effect on

any taxing district in the state would be in Louviers Fire Protection District in Douglas County, where almost 39 percent of the base is locally assessed business personal property.

“This analysis demonstrates the complexity of tax reform in Colorado,” said Greenwood.

She explained that the Colorado Constitution can only be amended by popular vote. Without a change in the 45:55 ratio, business personal property taxes cannot be eliminated without an almost corresponding increase in homeowner property taxes.

“In addition,” said Greenwood, “without provisions for sharing of state revenues with highly impacted taxing districts, some areas would feel the impact of elimination much more than others.”

Greenwood and Brown’s report, with detailed county and district information, is available at web.uccs.edu/ccps. The center will continue to study interactions of Colorado’s various tax provisions during the coming year.



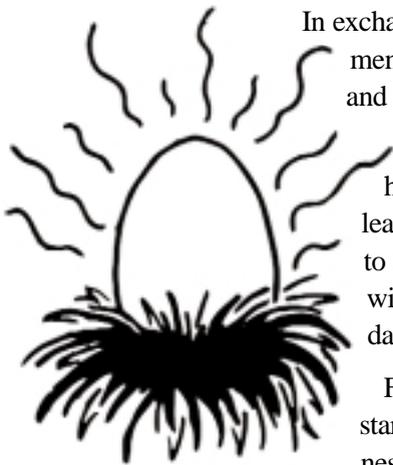
David R. Nelson, assistant professor, communication, won a silver Omni Intermedia Award for directing “The Current Aspects of Business (C.A.B.) Series” for the distance-learning program in the College of Business.

The Omni awards recognize excellence in the converging fields of television, video, radio, film, Internet and multimedia. The University of Colorado’s award is listed among other winners including the *Chicago Tribune*, Hewlett Packard, Salomon Smith Barney, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Hatching fledgling companies at CU-Colorado Springs

A former CU-Colorado Springs master of business administration student will head a comprehensive business assistance center for technology start-ups.

Gary Markle is the new CEO for the Colorado Springs Technology Incubator. CSTI, an entrepreneurial partnership between the university, the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado Economic Development Corporation, Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development Corporation and the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, will provide high-tech companies with the tools and support services needed to help them grow and thrive.



In exchange for a modest equity position in its client companies, CSTI will offer hands-on management, mentoring and coaching, assistance with business plan preparation, financing connections and orchestrated exposure to critical business and technical support services.

Now that \$500,000 is raised, CSTI will provide assistance for up to eight companies in a hosted office space. After an additional \$1 million is raised, the incubator will move into a leased facility for at least half a dozen more incubator clients. Ultimately, CSTI hopes to raise up to \$6.4 million to construct a 50,000-foot building on campus. The center will be closely aligned with the College of Business. Eventually, the facility will house up to 20 clients, and accommodate classroom space and other tenant needs.

Fledgling businesses need help. According to national statistics, only 53 percent of businesses started today will be viable in three years. That rate, however, jumps to 87 percent for those businesses that have been “incubated.”

Forum probes campus financial picture

To accomplish its financial goals, CU-Colorado Springs faculty and staff must look beyond state appropriations and tuition increases.

Cleve McDaniel, vice chancellor for administration and finance, told a group of 40 faculty and staff attending a March 9 University Forum that while CU-Colorado Springs has improved its budget in recent years, substantial funding improvements likely won't come from the Colorado Legislature.

“All three general CU campuses are being funded below their peers,” McDaniel said. “While our campus has made progress in recent years, all CU campuses are competing for a shrinking share of the total state appropriations pie. It is clear that we must look to other sources of revenue generation to take care of our true campus needs.”

McDaniel provided an overview of state and national higher education funding. About 47 percent of the CU-Colorado Springs budget comes from tuition and state general funds, he said, compared to 36 percent for the Denver campus and 23 percent for Boulder.

The campus' dependence on state funds is a problem, McDaniel said, because of downward trends in higher education funding. In 1979, Colorado had a higher-than-average state per student appropriation. Now, Colorado ranks 47th of all states in appropriations per student.

The change occurred because of the TABOR Amendment, federally mandated state expenditures, mandatory funding levels for elementary and secondary education and competition for state dollars from highways and prisons.

John Pierce, vice chancellor for academic affairs, and Pam Shockley, vice chancellor for student success, said enrollment increases have brought additional state and tuition funds to the campus. Increasing summer school enrollment, as well as graduate and undergraduate enrollment, will also generate revenue. However, the campus faces stiff competition for top students.

McDaniel challenged faculty and staff to think of ways the campus could cut expenses or increase revenues.

Ideas at the forum ranged from increasing sponsored research on the campus to partnerships with private businesses and energy conservation efforts.

McDaniel and Chancellor Linda Bunnell Shade promised continued discussion of revenue issues on the campus and to bring forward the most promising ideas.

