

# COLLEGE AVENUE

Volume 15 | Issue 1 | Fall 2019  
A Rocky Mountain Student Media Publication



## Tailgating Fashion

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The Rams could lose,  
but your tailgate style  
won't

## Rocky Mountain Showdown

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How CSU's 126-year  
rivalry with the Buffs  
came to be

## AlleyCat Art

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how the Alley Cat  
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# COLLEGE AVENUE

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# Letter from the Editor

Dear readers,

Welcome to our first issue of *College Avenue*! If this is your first time picking up our magazine: welcome aboard! If you've been a reader of ours before, you'll notice we've taken some stylistic liberties since our last issue. Fret not: We haven't been body-snatched by aliens.

We have, however, gone through some changes over the summer -- a reawakening in some aspects. You may notice that our content deviates slightly from the norm of a lifestyle magazine. While this may raise some alarm, I assure you we hold true to our roots as a lifestyle magazine. We are journalists: We have a commitment to our community as communicators and conversation leaders. And sometimes, that means includes addressing the issues which most affect our lifestyles.

This year, *College Avenue* is trying its hand at themed issues. This first issue deals with the theme of time, and to an extent, change. What does it mean to be



timeless? How does change factor in to the passage of history? By the time you're reading this, Colorado State University will have turned 150 years old: that's two-and-a-half centuries of lifestyles and traditions being created as we speak. At the same time, one can only imagine the lifestyles and cultures which have come to pass within the same span of time. In this issue, we see that some traditions persist as they were. Simultaneously, this issue also addresses some of the harsh realities members of the community experience today. If change affects society, then so it follows for a publication like *College Avenue*.

Our community, its makeup, values and beliefs reflect the unstoppable nature of change. As part of

our own transformation this year, College Avenue wants to play a stronger role in the exchange of ideas within our community. As we celebrate the 150 years at Colorado State, I urge readers to reflect on the past, present and future, and our role in shaping history.

With great excitement, I hope you enjoy our magazine and perhaps even see a place for yourself in our team. On a campus of 30,000 so faculty and students, stories are the ultimate denominator: you have one, I have one, and it's always worth sharing.

**Gabriel Go**  
Editor-in-Chief

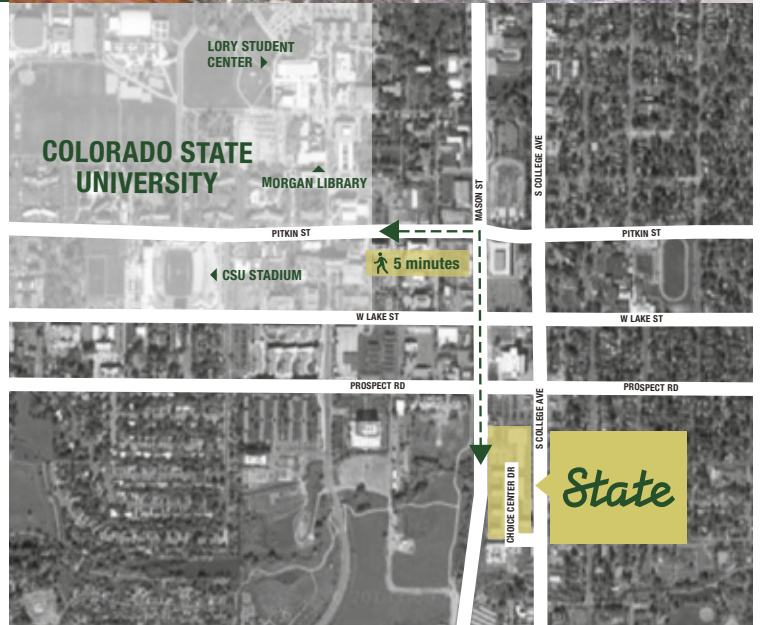
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# COLLEGE AVENUE CAN DO BETTER.

## And for that, we'd like to share your stories.

Dear readers,

Within the first weeks of the school year, we've already witnessed an incident involving four White students in blackface. A week later, a swastika was found next to a community coordinator's door in Aggie Village. These recent incidents have certainly shocked the campus community, but it is ultimately just the latest iteration of discriminatory behavior persistent within the past three years at Colorado State University. The fact that such incidents have been a mainstay on campus for the past four years is irrevocably heartbreaking.

An incident of racism has been a highlight of every semester since 2016. Since then, Since then, Rocky Mountain Student Media Corporation – College Avenue's parent company – has reported over 20 incidents related to bigotry; from a noose found hanging outside a Black resident assistant's dorm room in 2017 to clashes between White nationalists and anti-fascist protesters in 2018. Intentional or otherwise, these incidents perpetuate racist and racially-ignorant beliefs, none of which have any place on our campus.

As journalists, we acknowledge our roles as storytellers and conversation leaders and the responsibilities these roles carry within our community. We also recognize our deficiencies in reporting about campus diversity and fostering its discussion. As a first-generation immigrant and person of color, I'll be the first to say we haven't done enough as a publication to address these issues and share the voices of those most affected on campus.

At our core, College Avenue is a lifestyle magazine for the campus and Fort Collins community. Sometimes – perhaps more often than we're aware of – lifestyle includes experiencing discrimination and microaggressions: the everyday slights, behaviors and statements which marginalized groups experience.

Thus, we'd like to make the first steps in becoming a media outlet that engages with the full spectrum of the CSU community and the issues that define us.

So, this year, we're making a stronger commitment to sharing the stories of underrepresented groups on campus. To do that, we intend to schedule and attend meetings with the Student Diversity Programs and Services to have honest, thorough discussions about making College Avenue an inclusive platform for underrepresented voices. Based on these discussions, we will craft a diversity statement, which we will then send to the students and staff of the SDPS offices to receive feedback.

We want College Avenue to be a publication underrepresented communities on this campus can trust to tell their stories accurately. Our reason-for-being as a lifestyle magazine is, after all, tied directly to the rich collection of lived experiences within our community.

We honor those who share their pain and glories and respect that there are people among us who battle fatigue as a result of microaggressions. We endeavor to make this publication not only a safe space but a brave space, too.

We hope you as readers will aid us in our goal to be a better form of media – one that accurately tells the stories of everyone at CSU. This is only the first step, but we want to help make a difference on campus.

### *Get Involved.*

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**College Avenue meetings**

**Every Wednesday at 5 p.m.**

**Rocky Mountain Student Media Newsroom, LSC Room 118**

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Editor-in-Chief



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Your Alley

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# TAILGATE

— Fashion —





# What to wear to your next CSU tailgate

*By Maddie Steele*

Tailgates are best known for pre-gaming with friends, hamburgers and chicken wings, and getting pumped for the football game. But, an important part of tailgating is representing school pride. Tailgate fashion is the best way to not only show your school spirit but to creatively express your style and personality.

Tailgate fashion has always been evolving within collegiate sports culture. Long, puffy skirts in the '50s, athletic letter jackets in the '80s and jean jackets in the '90s. Although tailgate fashion has typically been one type of style, 2019 tailgate fashion takes it up a notch. Bright-striped overalls, oversized t-shirts, dresses, glitter, and more are trending at CSU's tailgates. Modern tailgate apparel is casual, comfy and grungy. Styles that were popular in the '90s are making a comeback in this year: bandanas, crop tops and denim.

Arranging a casual style outfit is insanely easy to achieve. For men, putting together a tailgate outfit can take up to 10 minutes, great if

your friends invited you to the home game last minute. All you need are these simple items to pair before a tailgate: a green, yellow or white bandana to get your hair out of your face and a matching shirt. These can be found at the CSU Bookstore, or may even be in your closet already. Sunglasses are great to protect your eyes and the spraying beer from trucks, but it fully packages the tailgate look if you're in a hurry. For men, jeans, tan pants or cargo shorts will not only be comfortable, but will pair with the rest of your grungy tailgate look. Complete the look with your favorite pair of beater shoes and your last-minute tailgate look is set.

For women, tailgate fashion doesn't always have to be super casual. If you want to spice up your look, consider making your own dress out of a t-shirt just like Julia Jannetto, a senior studying fashion and merchandising. This year was Jannetto's first time attending a CSU tailgate and because of her background in fashion, she wanted to stand out from everyone else. Because there were no CSU dresses available

**(Top left)** Jannetto wears a custom made dress, cut from an oversized men's shirt, spurred by the lack of women's tailgating apparel in stores.

**(Top right)** Overalls have been making the rounds at tailgates. Layer them over richly faded jeans and your fave kicks.

*Photos by Maddie Steele*



*Nothing is available on the market ... As a designer, I make it available.”*

**- Julia Jannetto  
senior in fashion &  
merchandising**

at the bookstore, Jannetto decided to create her own from a t-shirt laying around in her room.

To create a tube style dress, Jannetto started off by measuring the length of her dress and measurements to her body to make it a tight-fitting dress. To make her tailgate dress tight, Jannetto sewed the sides of the dress to make it more form-fitting. She then began to cut the sleeves of the over-sized shirt to make it a sleeveless. This was done with fabric scissors and sewing. In addition to her look, Jannetto includes a black fanny pack to hold all of her valuables.

“I love wearing dresses, they are my favorite thing to wear. My design is feminine and very figure-flattering,” Jannetto said. Inspired by the lack of women’s tailgating apparel in stores, Jannetto went to work. “Nothing is available on the market ... As a designer, I make it available.”

Jannetto considers her dress a fashion statement in sporting culture. “Everything they sell for tailgates is a male silhouette. Everything is a t-shirt, a jersey, big shorts. Nothing is actually in the female silhouette.”

If you’re not a fan of dresses, an oversized CSU shirt will work, too. Search through your closet or borrow a shirt from your roommate to begin this look. Applying makeup under your eyes as stripes or dots makes for a trendy, sporty aesthetic. Face paint, bright-green and yellow eye shadow or glitter can be used to complete the outfit. For socks, wear CSU-colored socks which can be sold anywhere from thrift stores to the CSU book store.

For men and women looking for a bold look for their next CSU tailgate, wearing the popular yellow and green striped overalls will help you achieve that goal. Any style of shirt can match with the overalls, such as a denim shirt, white tank top and a green hoodie. To round up the look, include a CSU baseball cap with the Ram logo. In case you have bed hair or want to protect your face from the sun, a baseball cap is a simple, casual way to express your tailgate style.

Whether you go with friends, family, a significant other or by yourself, tailgate fashion is its own culture. Wearing school colors to represent your team, painting your face, wearing bright overalls and creating your own tailgate style brings people together within their community.





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by 

Cannabidiol, more commonly known as CBD, has made waves across the country for its many forms, uses and benefits. CBD is a non-psychoactive cannabinoid that is found in cannabis plants. Since CBD is non-psychoactive, it will not produce the “high” that is associated with its more common cannabinoid cousin, THC.

So why use CBD if it doesn’t get you high? CBD has a number of medical benefits that go unmatched by THC. One beneficial property of CBD is its ability to reduce paranoia and anxiety. This is especially great for when your buddy next to you starts freaking out during the smoke session because his fingers are too long. With CBD he’ll be back to his calm self in next to no time.

CBD is also one of the best cannabinoids for pain relief and helps boost the pain relief effects of other cannabinoids like THC, to help reduce pain associated with things like multiple sclerosis and arthritis. With the help of the endocannabinoid “entourage effect,” CBD’s pain management is pretty unbelievable. CBD can be purchased legally by anyone 18 or older in a few different forms. One form is a crystal structure known as CBD isolate that you can put in bowls or take a straight dab of. You can also purchase hemp flower which can be smoked like you would normal cannabis flower. CBD can also be applied topically with salves and creams to absorb directly into the area of your body that is radiating pain.

Curious about trying CBD? Make a trip to Kind Creations (828 S College Ave in Fort Collins) where all your CBD needs can be met. You can even take a dab of some CBD isolate right there before purchasing some to take home!

students respond:

WHEN WILL ENOUGH  
BE ENOUGH AT?  
CSU?

By Leta McWilliams  
& Kenia Ortiz

*Editor's Note: Several students quoted in the following article requested anonymity or that only their first names be shared due to concerns about retaliation. In the interest of minimizing harm by protecting identities, we are respecting those requests.*

The past couple of weeks have been exhausting for many members of the Colorado State University community. It's been a place of ignorance, malice, education and protests for recognition.

Over the weekend of Sept. 7, a picture of students wearing mud masks was put on social media with the caption "Wakanda Forevaa." Since then, the photo has been labeled as blackface and has stood as a placeholder to represent every racist incident that has happened at CSU in recent years.

During President Joyce McConnell's Fall Address on Sept. 19, almost 400 students marched in the #NotProudToBe protest. The

protest was in response to what students consider the University Administration's lack of action towards the students in the Snapchat.

While this was a step in the right direction, many students still feel like their voices aren't being heard at CSU — and this is a big problem.

"Whenever the actual blackface event happened, it didn't only affect me emotionally," said Nealani Elliston, a CSU student. "It somewhat affected me physically because it was hard for me to look at myself in the mirror and not see their faces instead of my own."

Change will never be made if people aren't being heard by the institution and organizations that claim to be their ally.

"It is disappointing that I have to come to this to get to the University and our peers to genuinely see and hear us," said Haneen Badri, a CSU student. "We, the marginalized, and our allies are putting our foot down and

“CSU is scared to reprimand their white students because all of the biased incidents, from what I know, has been a white student.”

will not tolerate this complicity the University partakes in every time a hate and biased incident occurs.”

A university’s most basic, fundamental job is to provide a safe and effective learning environment for its students. While thousands get their degrees from CSU every year, the University seems to lack in its ability to educate students on racial matters.

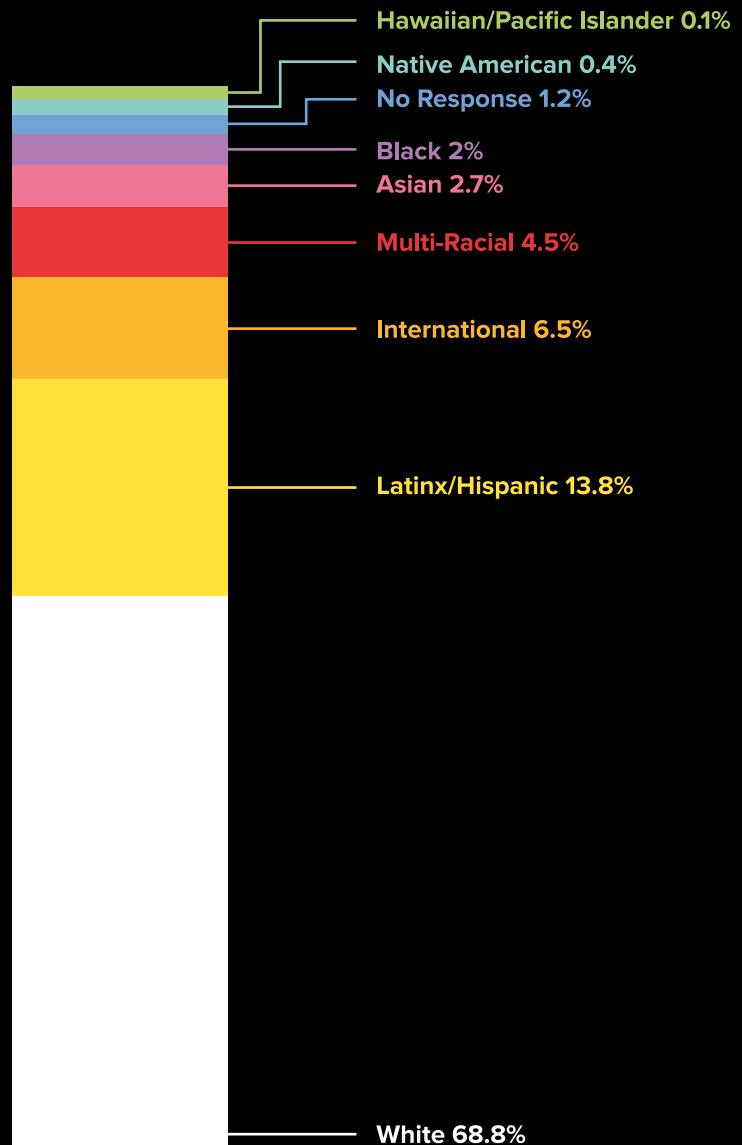
“If we get a collective of people to take classes, at least they now know they can’t run away from it,” said Andre Wilson, a first-year CSU student. “(The University) advertised respect and all of that from everybody, and everyone would be held to the same standards. But in this scenario, they didn’t hold everybody to the same standards. If we as people of color were to do the same thing, I naturally believe we’d be punished for it. We’d probably lose scholarships for it, and it would ruin our whole opportunity to stay on campus.”

Many want the University to start educating students, mainly those from privileged and white backgrounds — meaning those who have systematic advantages or those who are not subjected to racism — on how their actions impact others

“I think that there are two types of distinct ignorance that make up the white population,” said Huldah, a CSU student who asked that her first name only be shared. “It is ignorance towards not understanding students of color due to lack of exposure, lack of education, lack of community versus ignorance being racism, and prejudice because of personal bias towards people of color.”

Students also feel discriminated against

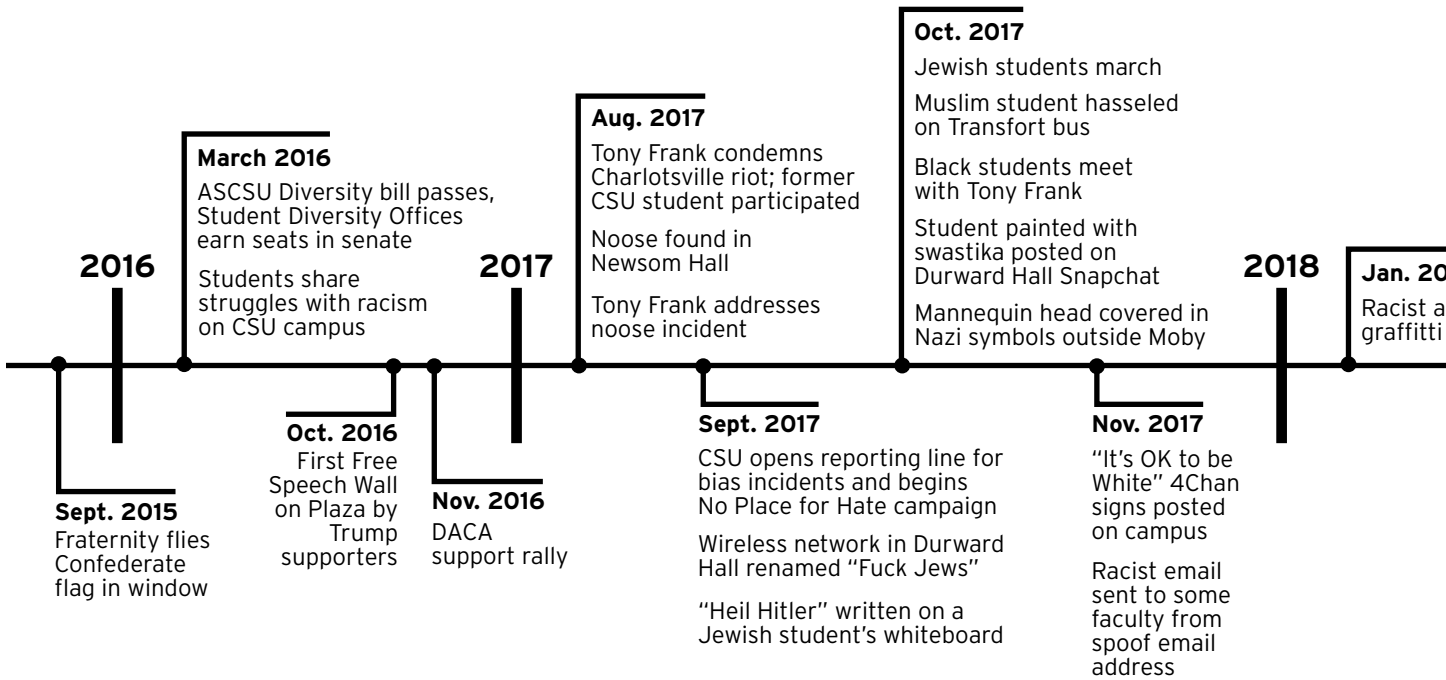
## Ethnic Breakdown of Students at CSU:



Data from Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness

# Timeline of Racial Events at CSU

2015 - Present



Timeline events compiled by Samantha Ye

because of the lack of diversity on campus. Minority groups make up a small portion of the students on campus, meaning they make up less of the money coming in for the University. According to CSU's Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness, almost 70% of the 24,600 undergraduates identified as white as of Fall 2019.

"CSU is scared to reprimand their white students because all of the biased incidents, from what I know, has been a white student," said Darlenne, a CSU student, who requested her first name only be published. "We go to a predominantly white institution. If all of their students who are white feel like as if they're finally going to be held accountable and they can't be themselves in a sense, I guess, then why have them come here? And I think that's

**"They're okay with white nationalists coming to our campus. They're okay with white nationalists posters on our campus. They're okay with Donald Trump Jr. and Charlie Kirk coming next month."**

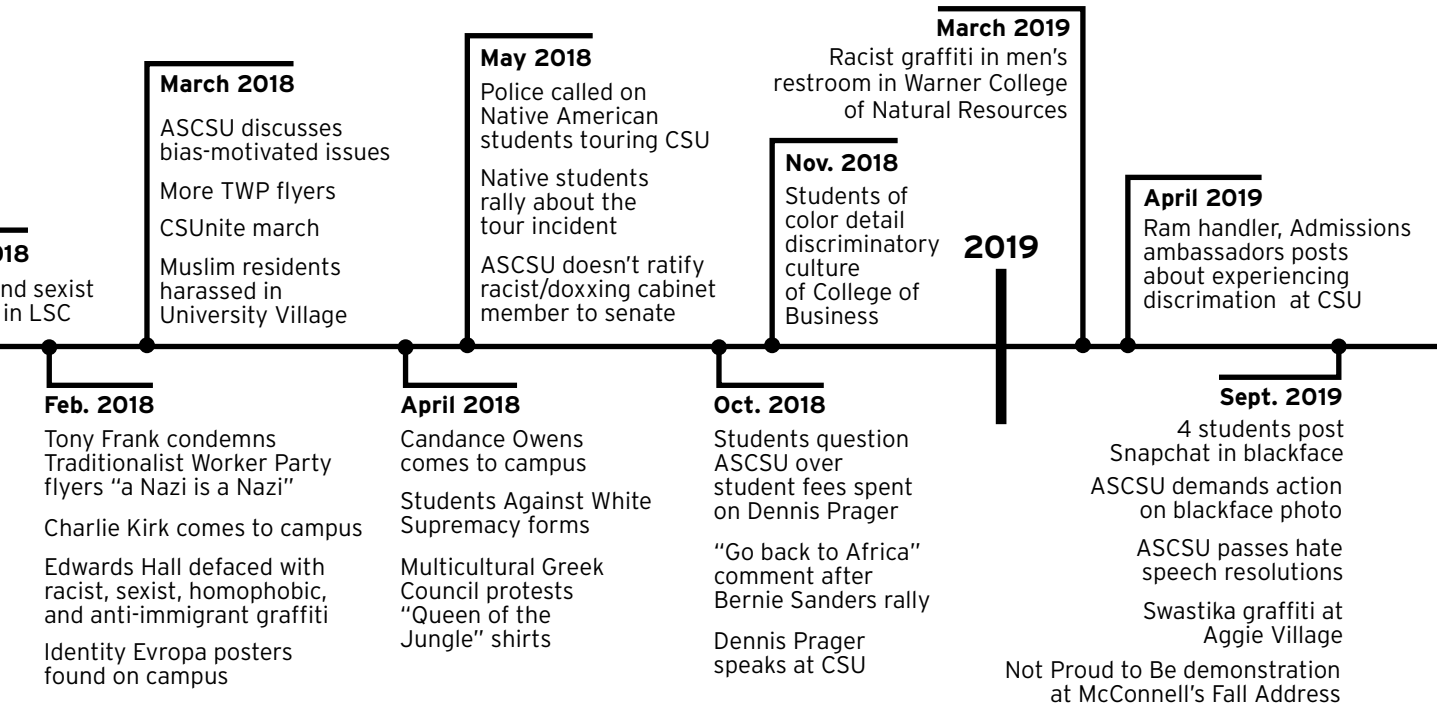
a really big thing. The largest minority group on campus makes up 15% ... they can do without our money. That's money they don't give a fuck about because it's not their largest target audience. And I think that's really what it is."

Along with anger toward the University, many are also upset with student media outlets, which have historically preached their desire to be inclusive and hear all sides of the story.

"I think it's really unfair for (Kaplan) to have gotten a 30-minute interview and this big platform to basically victimize herself," said Evelin, a CSU student.

The #NotProudToBe protest has been, for many students, the only time they've felt a sense of community during their time at CSU.

"I think it has been really cool that the stu-



dent body kind of united against this incident and recognized, 'Hey! We DON'T stand for this,'" said Caley, a CSU student who asked that their last name not be published. "I think that was a really cool thing to see, that the whole student body does not just seem passive. That was empowering."

The University claims to hear its students. It claims that it understands their fears and is working towards a solution.

"Blackface has a racist history that evokes fear, anger, and sorrow," McConnell wrote Sept. 13 in a campus-wide email. "It is a dehumanizing practice that continues today, and it is despicable. As your President, I will lead the work that we must do together to stand against racism on our campuses and in our community."

While CSU's administration works on events to make students feel safer, ASCSU approved and planned events hosted by Turning Point USA include bringing actively racist individuals to campus and endangering the students CSU claims to hear.

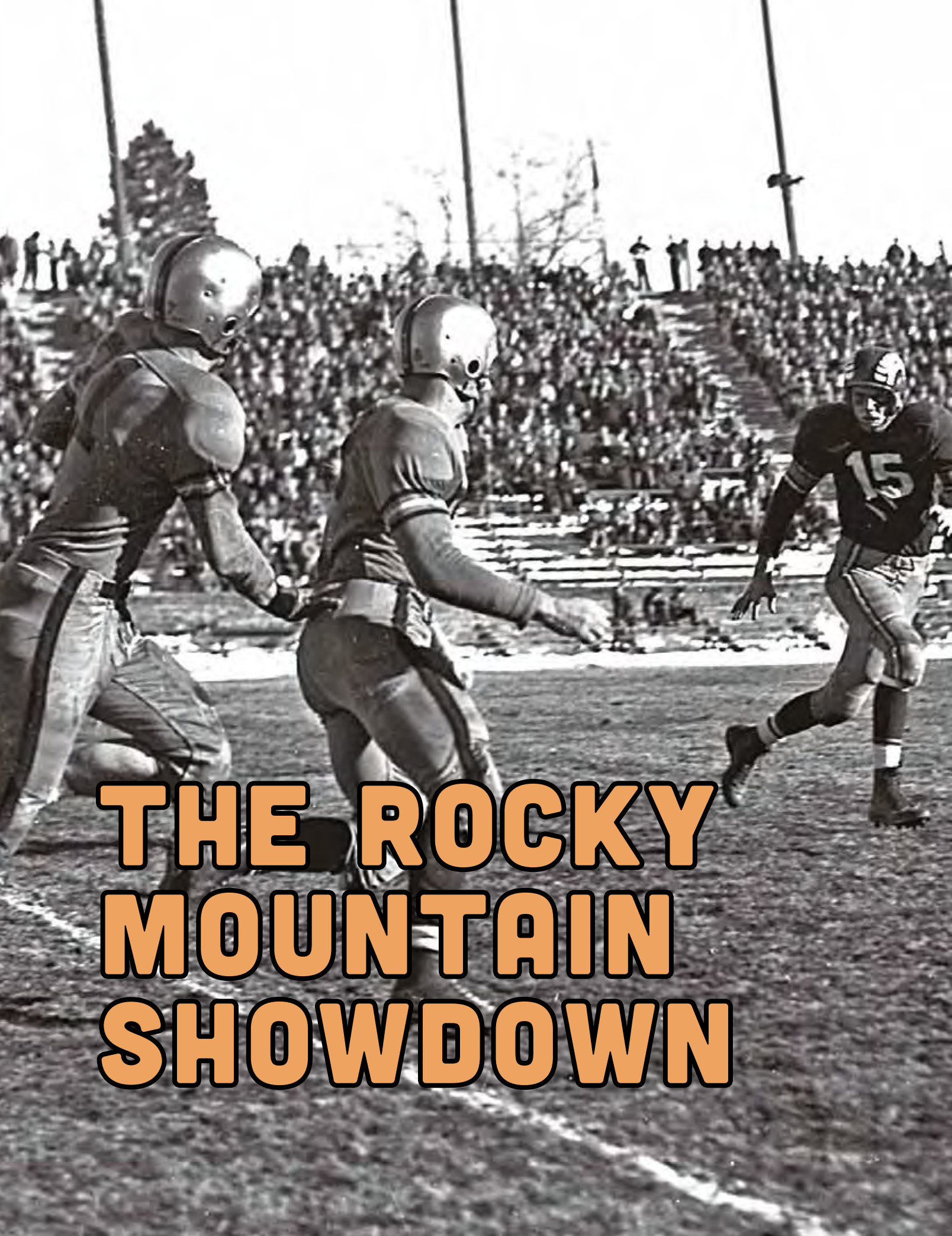
"(CSU's administration is) okay with white

nationalists coming to our campus," Huldah said. "They're okay with white nationalists posters on our campus. They're okay with Donald Trump Jr. and Charlie Kirk coming next month ... They're okay with fake cardboard walls being built on the LSC Plaza. They're okay with all of these things, yet it took till one in the morning to pass resolutions — not bills — resolutions in defense of students of color."

Students need to feel heard. They need to feel recognized by the University and its officials. They need to feel like they can speak up without fear of being the next target. They need to feel like they can be fully attributed in student media platforms without fear of retribution.

The bottom line is CSU needs to start listening.

"Our whole lives, we've been in the presence of racism," Badri said. "The presence of discrimination, in the presence of oppression, in the presence of violence, in the presence of hatred, and we are tired. When will enough be enough at Colorado State University?"



# THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHOWDOWN

# SEEDS OF AN EVERLASTING LEGACY

By Kailey Pickering

Flames licked the Colorado night sky, and strips of wood melted away like wax on a candle as the fire fed greedily on the wooden building.

The morning of Nov. 20, 1924, Colorado State University students would wake to find the work of arsonists: the on-campus Aggie Train Depot charred, a sign reading “Beat Aggies” hanging from the ruin. This could only be the work of the rivals, the University of Colorado at Boulder, reported *The Collegian* in their Nov. 21, 1924 issue.

The two universities were never supposed to be enemies. But how could they not be?

At the first game in 1893, the rivalry known as the Rocky Mountain Showdown was born, and it would grow in years to come. The Rocky Mountain Showdown has transformed as both an event as well as an aspect of CSU culture over time.

As the rivalry began to gain speed, pranks such as the Buffs burning down the CSU train depot started popping up in the 1920s. It wasn't until the 1940s and 1950s that fights began to pour out onto the fields after exhilarating games.

“In 1936, there was such a riot on the field at our old stadium field that they had to bring out tear gas,” said John Hirn, a CSU alumnus, athletic historian for CSU, and author of “The History of Football at Colorado State University”.

In 1958, the epic showdown was canceled and disappeared for 25 years.

Hirn said the programs were going in opposite directions: CU was striving to get into a higher league while CSU was content with our division's competitors. Hirn said that it wasn't until the 1980s when a senator “was threatening to put into legislation that the two schools had to play one another,” a Nov. 10, 1982 *Collegian* article ‘Headlines’ by Kevin Coleman confirmed



Rather than having a piece of paper forcing CSU and CU to play each other, the schools decided to continue competing against one another.

In the midst of this exciting rivalry, a huge factor was thrown in. The Rocky Mountain Showdown took place at the Mile High Stadium for the first time in 1998.

Stepping onto that field was an entirely new feeling that would shape the rivalry. Will Sharpe, the Associated Student's of CSU's directory of traditions describes the rivalry as “really kind of ... like a little civil war.”

This was an NFL field. Now, it was truly an American rivalry.

With the professional field and the crowds coming from all over Colorado, the rivalry was boosted onto a pedestal.

With Mile High Stadium, the culture of rivalry began to germinate. Seeds of

(Page left) Colorado State University and the University of Colorado Boulder compete against each other at CU Boulder's Folsom Field, in this photo from 1952.

(Middle) In 1924, members of the University of Colorado at Boulder football team set fire to Colorado State University's on-campus Aggie Train Depot, as part of a prank.

Photos courtesy of CSU Athletics



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# FAST FACTS ABOUT ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHOWDOWN



The first game between CU & CSU was played in 1895

67

out the the 91 games played have been won by CU



The last time CSU won a game was in 2014

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(Top) Colorado State plays against the University of Colorado for the first time, in this photo from 1893.

(Bottom left) Colorado State University and the University of Colorado Boulder compete against each other at the Rocky Mountain Showdown, in this photo from 1999.



school pride, dislike for CU Boulder and unity between CSU students began to fly across campus.

One seed that spread its roots and blossomed as one of the school's exciting traditions still happens to this day: Grill the Buffs.

The Grill the Buffs tradition started around fifteen years ago and consists of the smell of roasting Buffalo wafting across campus as members of ASCSU cook buffalo burg-

ers. The tradition usually includes the football team saying a few words and a pep rally.

But 2019 was different. Sharpe wanted to change it up. His goal was to prevent people from just grabbing a burger and leaving – he wanted people to hang out and build community.

“I put a bunch of picnic tables out there this time. There were speakers, and Spike ball and my hope was people would just hang out, you know?” Sharpe said.

Sharpe's hopes played out.

This year's Grill the Buffs saw students hanging out on the grass with music surrounding them. The event brought a sense of unity before the big game. Sharpe explains that, “Traditionally, Grill the Buffs really intensified that game, that ‘hey, we're CSU,’ that state pride.”

That feeling spread across campus as students savored a juicy buffalo burger.

As the rivalry has changed and grown in various ways since the two schools first played each other in 1893, one thing has always stayed the same: the event has always kept the campus connected.

“I think that's the one game that students can really, truly be like a Ram,” Sharpe said.

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# Making your **mark** as a **first** **generation** **student**



*By Arlee Walls*

Congratulations! It is our pleasure to announce that you have been accepted to Colorado State University!

We all waited in nervous excitement after the day we applied for college. When the day came with the opening of a letter, acceptance announcements were followed by an overwhelming euphoria: “I am actually going to college.”

The college experience is scary, exciting and stressful for young adults. The opportunity to learn about anything in the world is at students’ fingertips.

But homework, jobs and organizations on top of class can be overwhelming for many. And for some students, this is an experience they are learning all for themselves.

A first-generation student is a student whose parents or guardians did not acquire a four-year baccalaureate degree. From enrolling as a freshman to transferring after attending a different institution, college is a learning

experience they must handle on their own.

Fabiola Mora, director of the Academic Advancement Center, explains, “A first-generation student is not the same as a first-in-the-family student. A lot of times we meet with first-generation students at orientation who are unfamiliar with the definition of the first-generation student.”

According to the University’s Institutional Research department, the percentage of first-generation students has remained steady for the past five years but spiked to 33% for the Fall 2018 undergraduate student body.

But what sparks this passion to attend college as a first-generation student?

Angel Mendoza, a senior at CSU majoring in business with a concentration in computer information systems, is a first-generation and TRIO student. The TRIO program is a federally funded program intended to promote equal educational opportunities for first-generation students to pursue higher education



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— ANGEL MENDOZA

and help them overcome challenges while enrolled in school.

“College was expected from me because my parents immigrated from here, and I have a better opportunity so they really wanted a better future for me,” Mendoza said. “I felt like I agreed with society that it is a prerequisite to get a job.”

CSU is the first university in the country to establish a first-generation program through the First-Generation Scholarship. For decades, the CSU administration has built the programs and networks for first-generation student success.

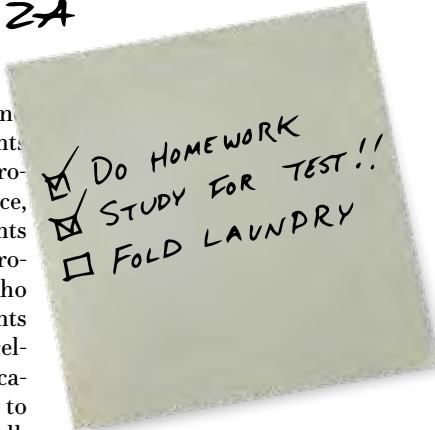
“In 1984, Paul Thayer lead the initiative to start the TRIO program and other programs to help first-generation students,” Mora said. “These programs have been at CSU for almost 40 years. CSU has a long history of providing for first-generation students.”

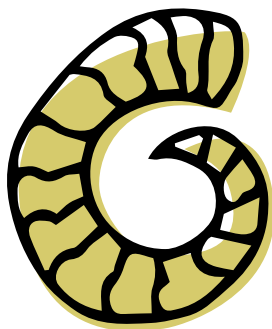
Challenges first-generation students face can take place in and outside of the class-

room, but programs during orientation and throughout the school year helps students connect with their faculty and peers. Programs such as Community for Excellence, which structures collaborative environments throughout the campus, and the TRiO program are designed to support students who are a first-generation, low-income or students with disabilities. The Community for Excellence and other programs through the Academic Advancement Center are continuing to grow as more first-generation students enroll.

CSU hosts events throughout the school year designed to support both first-generation students and their families. Sitting down with parents to talk about how they can support their child in college and what the new relationship dynamic may look like is a common conversation held.

For students, knowing the different aspects of a higher education system, from financial aid to tutoring sessions, are things that counselor’s mentor first-generation stu-





CSU

"GOING TO COLLEGE  
PUSHES ME TO  
DO BETTER."

- DAVID SAUCEDO

dents through.

"Talking to faculty members can seem intimidating, so we hold workshops about how they can be mentors, write emails and talk to them during office hours," Mora said. "We have found that personal connections on campus makes a bigger impact on students."

For Mendoza, the support network is outstanding.

"There really is a lot more support for first-generation students," Mendoza said. "Going to college, I can't ask my parents, 'How was it and what can I expect?' My first semester was rough, but all the programs here helped me get through it."

David Saucedo, a senior at CSU majoring in business with a concentration in computer information systems, attended Colorado Mountain College to complete his associate's degree in business. After visiting CSU, Saucedo fell in love with the school's community and loved how supportive everyone is.

For Saucedo, attending college was more than getting a bachelor's degree.

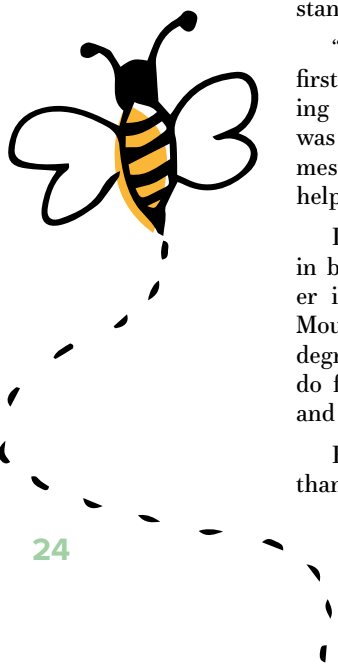
"Going to college pushes me to do better. My parents didn't go to college and I have two younger sisters," Saucedo said. "For me it has been setting that example that it is not just about going to work after high school, it is about doing more than what you thought you could do. One of my sisters is starting at Colorado Mountain College, too, and I'm really proud of her. It makes me proud knowing that I set that standard."

The future for first-generation students at CSU grows stronger each year. The Academic Advancement Center is building its network to keep up with the increasing number of students.

Saucedo encourages students to always be curious to know more.

"Always ask questions," Saucedo said. "Don't be scared to put yourself out there because people are there to support you especially on a campus like this."

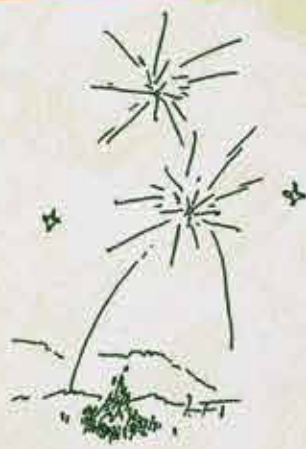
As a message for future first-generation students, Mora said, "There is a place for you here. You deserve to be here and you have earned your spot at CSU."



# #YOURPLACETO

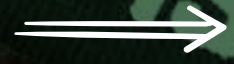
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# ART



## that's right up your alley

*By Kendall Martin*

Whether you're an early riser or a night owl, a coffee lover or a tea drinker, a socializer or a studier, a cafe near campus caters to you. But, take one step inside and you'll discover it's much more than just a cozy coffee shop.

AlleyCat Cafe, located on the top floor of 120 W. Laurel St., is also an immersive art gallery, a midnight hangout, a place to connect and a local business doing good in the Fort Collins community.

The AlleyCat has become known as an informal art gallery, presenting creations made by people from all walks of life. Artwork isn't contained to just the walls, though. The ceiling is a mosaic of painted tiles, each unique and designed by a different artist. Some tiles are realistic, some are abstract, some are 3D, some are poetic and some are meant to be viewed at a certain angle. The ceiling tiles have become a defining feature of the AlleyCat, and the artists who are lucky enough to

claim a spot on the ceiling contribute to this local legacy. There aren't enough ceiling tiles for everyone who wants one, however, so most are awarded to regulars who prove they truly want to become part of the cafe.

The majority of the art comes from ordinary people who want to express themselves and support the cafe, though some feature pieces are by prominent regional artists. For example, the cat mural on the building's outside wall was painted by Lindee Zimmer, director of the Fort Collins Mural Project and an artist who has created multiple murals in the city and across the world.

Although the ceiling tiles are mostly permanent, the cafe also hosts month-long art shows that bring new life to its interior. Most of the artwork displayed on the walls is for sale at reasonable prices, and cheaper prints are also available.

(Top left) Curated tiles line the ceiling of the AlleyCat, where spots are awarded to regulars and local artists.

*Photos by Kendall Martin*



**"At the AlleyCat,  
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*- Tyler Borkowski,  
Alley Cat Barista*





Because the cafe isn't an official art gallery, it's much more accepting of artwork that might be considered unorthodox, like art made from feathers, resin, and pressed flowers. Subjects have ranged from a cup-of-tea chessboard to a brain with teeth. The AlleyCat curates pieces from "artists a lot of places would turn away," said Abbey Harrison, who's worked at the cafe since 2014.

The AlleyCat supports the community not only by showcasing work from local artists but also by sourcing ingredients from locally owned businesses. The cafe works with Savory Spice Shop in Old Town and Jackie's Java, along with many other Fort Collins businesses.

"At the AlleyCat, everything is community-based, so that's why we find it important to draw from local business because we're supporting community members," said barista Tyler Borkowski.

By drawing their fare from small businesses in the area, the cafe promotes the same concept it hopes will bring customers through its doors: people supporting people.

"You know you always have a place to come to," Harrison said. "If you come in and

look utterly distraught, you can probably sit down at the bar and have a conversation with someone."

Many people who don't have a place to go for the night are welcomed in, whether they missed a flight, got locked out of their house, need someone to talk to or are simply looking for a roof over their head.

"That's just been a role that this place has not necessarily willingly and aggressively taken on, but it has happened to be here for those types of things," Harrison said.

The cafe's environment shifts with the time of day. The quiet early-morning evolves into a brighter, caffeine-buzzed afternoon, which transforms into a bustling and vibrant scene after dark, then slowly fading back into the peacefulness of the morning. But, a diverse crowd fills the seats around the clock, taking in the warm, art-filled atmosphere.

For 16 years, the AlleyCat Cafe has filled the lives of its guests with warmth, color, and culture – all while supporting the community.

"A lot of weird things have happened here, and will continue to happen here," Borkowski said, "but that's okay because we're all going through it together."

(Top left) Adorning the cafe's exterior, Lindee Zimmer's mural adds an extra dimension of life to the perennially open coffee house.

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