



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

DEC. 9, 2024

## Message from the Provost & Executive Vice President



Dear Colleagues:

The end of the year is always a time of great personal and professional reflection for me, as I'm sure it is for you. As I look back upon 2024, my first thought is the profound amazement I have repeatedly experienced regarding your brilliance as research and teaching faculty. I also have stood in awe of our remarkable students who learn, discover, and create under your tutelage, and our dedicated academic leaders and staff who give their all in support of CSU's mission. What an honor it is to serve at this institution and work alongside you.

When I attended the APLU annual meeting a few weeks ago, I talked with leaders from other institutions who were reflecting on the state of higher education. It was clear to me we share the same concerns for our students and what they might be up against: health or mental health issues, financial struggles, relationship difficulties, the imposing unrest of the world, and more.

Like all of us in academia, our students have a lot going on in their lives while trying to achieve academic success.

When mental health and neurodivergence expert Dr. Katie Rose Guest Pryal was here in late October as our keynote speaker for the Provost's Ethics Colloquium on *Mental Health in Higher Education*, she came ready with a message for our faculty: In all you do, start from a point of trust that your students are doing the best they can. Dr. Pryal is a nationally recognized speaker and prolific author who often shares her own stories about struggling with bipolar disorder and autism as a student and faculty member.

- Please see the section below on the colloquium, which includes a link to the recording and information on how to access Dr. Pryal's latest book, *A Light in the Tower: A New Reckoning with Mental Health in Higher Education*, available free through CSU Libraries.

I have come to think that I would be more effective as a leader and person if I could trust that everyone I encounter is doing their best, whether they are delighting me, disappointing me, excluding me, rewarding me, or appreciating me. This is not a suggestion to dismiss poor behavior, but I like the idea of giving the benefit of the doubt as a way to apply generous thinking.

Trusting that our students and colleagues are doing their best with what they are up against moves us toward contemplating how we can help when we see someone who is not putting their best self forward. It encourages us to think how we could help them do better or approach things differently. But it also presents the opportunity for our own self-reflection and to consider that perhaps we have more room to grow, too.

Sincerely,  
Marion

Connect with the Provost & EVP: [LinkedIn – Marion Underwood](#) [X/Twitter – @MKUnderwood01](#)

## Mental Health at CSU

### Provost's Ethics Colloquium

The Fall 2024 Provost's Ethics Colloquium on *Mental Health in Higher Education* featured keynote speaker Dr. Katie Rose Guest Pryal, a nationally renowned expert on mental health and neurodivergence, followed by a panel of CSU faculty and staff leaders.

[Watch the Ethics Colloquium Recording](#)

[Read \*A Light in the Tower: A New Reckoning with Mental Health in Higher Education\* by Dr. Katie Pryal](#)

### Princeton Review Mental Health Services Honor Roll

CSU was one of only 16 schools named to The Princeton Review's 2025 Mental Health Services Honor Roll, and the only institution in Colorado. The list cited schools who have shown a strong commitment to student mental health and well-being.

[About the Mental Health Services Honor Roll](#)

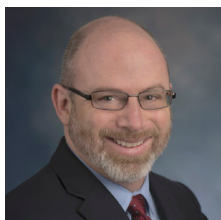
## Academic Leadership Updates

The fall semester brought [two outstanding leadership appointments in the Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President](#). On Nov. 1, Dr. Lisa Dysleski began her new role as Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Success and Advising, a position expanding upon and replacing the Executive Director of the University Academic and Advising Department. We are also greatly excited to announce Dr. Michael Galchinsky as our new Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Affairs effective May 1, 2025.

[Dr. Courtney Schultz has been appointed the new Director of the School of Global Environmental Sustainability](#). Effective Jan. 1, 2025, she will further the exceptional work of SoGES while leading the integration of the school with the CSU Climate Initiative.



**Dr. Lisa Dysleski**  
Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Success & Advising



**Dr. Michael Galchinsky**  
Vice Provost & Dean for Undergraduate Affairs



**Dr. Courtney Schultz**  
Director, School of Global Environmental Sustainability

## Faculty Success

### Program review survey open until 12/18

A [program review of CSU's Faculty Success unit](#) will inform the structure of the unit's staffing, resources, and services.

Faculty and academic leaders/staff are encouraged to [share their input via this survey](#), which concludes at the end of the day Dec. 18.

### New dates: Chairs & Heads Institute for Inclusive Excellence

This is a two-part CHIE workshop; lunch will be provided.

- **Part 1: Jan. 17, 2025, 12:30–4:30 p.m.**
- **Part 2: Jan. 24, 2025, 12:30–4:30 p.m.**

Location: OIE Training Room, Mary Ontiveros House

Registration open; [sign up here](#).

## Student Success

### Student Success Innovations

As the [student success ecosystem](#) at CSU matures and thrives, we are excited to showcase several programs:

- Ongoing innovation from Walter Scott, Jr. College of Engineering includes the creation of new intentionally designed first-year engineering curriculum to help students transition into university life, navigate the first-year engineering program, and prepare for successful progression into their respective engineering disciplines.
- Implementation of the [CSU System U.S. Department of Education \\$8 million SCALED Grant](#) is underway. The first outcome is now live: [CSU System Dashboard](#). Work on learning analytics and culturally responsive academic advising is ongoing.
- In November CSU expanded the national First Generation Day to include [an entire week of programming](#), showcased by the annual First Generation Award Celebration Dinner on Nov. 4. CSU continues to advance the [First-Generation University Initiative](#) in partnership with [First Gen Forward](#), where we are a Network Leader.

## Announcements

- **Apply for the Faculty Institute for Inclusive Excellence** – Applications are now being accepted for the Faculty Institute for Inclusive Excellence that will commence in Spring 2025. The application deadline is December 20, 2024. For more program information and to apply, [visit the FIIE website](#).
- **New Graduate Student Success Course** – Graduate School Associate Dean Sara Anne Tompkins developed [Onboarding & Beyond: Thriving in Graduate Education \(GRAD 580A3\)](#), a course to help graduate students succeed, build community, and manage challenges. This in-person course runs from Jan. 22 to March 12, 2025. Faculty are encouraged to recommend new graduate students participate.
- **TILT Spring Events** – The Institute for Learning and Teaching’s spring event lineup is now live on the [TILT Calendar!](#) The upcoming semester is packed with exciting professional development opportunities tailored for faculty, including *Best Practices in Teaching* (BPIT) courses, *Teaching Squares*, and workshops on impactful topics like *Leveraging the TEI in Annual Reviews*, *Active Learning Approaches*, and more.
- **TILT Represented CSU at POD Conference** – Four TILT staff members recently attended the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education’s annual conference in Chicago. While learning how other centers support faculty, TILT staff also [presented impactful sessions to scholars, educators, and university leaders](#) from around the globe, drawing significant interest from other institutions, particularly for programs like the [Election Year Teaching Toolkit](#), [TEF, TEI](#), and the [Teaching Squares](#) initiative.
- **Register for the CHHS Research Day** – Faculty, staff, and community members are invited to participate in the 6th annual College of Health and Human Sciences Research Day on March 11, 2025 at the Lory Student Center. The day will consist of a morning poster show, a keynote speaker, faculty lightning talks, and an awards ceremony. [Volunteer to judge posters, RSVP for the keynote and lunch, and learn more.](#)



## Higher Education News

Mental health is a growing concern at institutions of higher education across the nation for students, faculty, and staff, gaining more attention in recent years in great part due to the pandemic. We recommend a couple of readings on the subject:

- *The Chronicle for Higher Education* published a 42-page special report last month titled, [“The Neurodiverse Campus: Supporting students, faculty, and staff,”](#) available through its online store. The report explores how colleges can educate their campuses about neurodiversity and support neurodivergent students, faculty, and staff, including implementing a more inclusive hiring process and preparing neurodivergent students for the workforce.
- *The Chronicle* also published an article last week titled, [“Faculty and Staff Are Feeling Anxious, Depressed, and Burnt Out, Study Says.”](#) The article cites a national survey by the Healthy Minds Network assessing the prevalence of mental health issues among faculty and staff, and the impact of students’ mental health struggles. The article also discusses the results of a student survey that found more than one-third of student respondents had symptoms of anxiety, and almost four in 10 showed symptoms of moderate or severe depression.

In late October, the CSU Provost’s Ethics Colloquium focused on Mental Health in Higher Education and the need to foster mental health and well-being across the institution for all faculty, staff, and students. See: [Fall 2024: The Provost’s Ethics Colloquium on Mental Health in Higher Education](#).

## Points of Pride

- **Department of Soil and Crop Sciences** researchers [published a groundbreaking study in Nature](#) unveiling the microbiome of U.S. rivers and shedding light on the vital role microorganisms play in shaping water quality, ecosystem health, and nutrient flows.
- CSU’s **College of Business MBA programs** [ranked best in the world for sustainability](#) by *Corporate Knights*, an international media and research company.
- **Dr. Paul DeMott**, research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Science, was named a [Fellow of the American Association of Aerosol Research](#).
- The College of Health & Human Sciences hosted its first [Teaching Excellence Colloquium](#) Oct. 17 with a keynote by UDTS **Dan Beachy-Quick** from the Department of English, a panel discussion with students and faculty, presentations by CHHS Dean’s Faculty Teaching Fellows **Drs. Ashley Harvey** and **Leann Kaiser**, and 20 interactive Teaching Innovation Stations where educators from around CHHS shared practical tools and approaches to enhance teaching methods.
- Four history faculty members – **Drs. Jared Orsi, Mike Childers, Leisl Carr Childers, and Doug Sheflin** – will make up the editorial team of the *Western Historical Quarterly*, the leading scholarly journal in the field of U.S. West history, starting July 1, 2025.
- **Dr. George Wittemyer** (Fish, Wildlife & Conservation Biology) published two high-impact elephant studies: [African elephants address each other with name-like calls](#), and a site-level density model found [elephant populations decreased by 77% since 1964](#).
- **Drs. Garret Miyake** and **Robert Paton**, Department of Chemistry, have discovered a new approach to breaking down PFAS (forever chemicals). The details were [shared in a paper published in Nature](#) in November.
- The Veterinary Health System [added several dynamic leaders to the Clinical Services team](#), continuing to elevate veterinary services, research, and education: **Dr. Kelly Hall**, Medical Director for Small Animal Specialty Services; **Dr. Kathryn Wotman**, Medical Director for Large Animal Services; **Dr. Andrew Ciccolini**, Medical Director for Companion Animal Spectrum of Care Services; and **Dr. Sue Lana**, Director of the Flint Animal Cancer Center.
- Graduate School Associate Dean for Student Services **Dr. Sara Anne Tompkins** is collaborating with campus leaders – including **Justin Dove** and **Joe Tiner** (Student Disability Center), **Dr. Kyle Oldham** (Division of Student Affairs), and **Reese Klotz** (Graduate Student Neurodivergence Leadership Group) – to enhance the graduate education experience in academic spaces outside of the classroom. At the latest Symposium for

- Inclusive Excellence, they presented *Building an Accessible Graduate Experience: Addressing Neurodiversity and Mental Health in Graduate Programs* (recording to be available in January through the [Symposium Video Archives](#)), and a proposal has been submitted for the National AHEAD Conference in July 2025. TILT will also host a [PDI session on January 8](#).
- CVMBS’ Fall Forum was held Sept. 3 to a standing room-only crowd. Faculty awards were presented to assistant professors in advising (**Phillip Quirk, Ph.D.**), basic research (**Lynn Pezzanite, DVM, Ph.D.**), clinical research (**Brad Nelson, DVM, Ph.D.**), teaching (**Tanya Applegate, DVM, M.S.**), instruction (**Jodi Boyd, DVM**), and service (**Kristin Zersen, DVM, M.S.**). **Christie Mayo, DVM, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor in DMIP, was presented with the JEDI award.
- A [\\$2.5M grant from the National Institutes of Health](#) was awarded to **Dr. Ander Wilson**, Department of Statistics, to fund a new project to develop statistical and computational tools for the field of environmental health.
- Professor emeritus **Kurt Fausch, Ph.D.**, (Fish, Wildlife & Conservation Biology) authored a new book called [A Reverence for Rivers: Imagining an Ethic for Running Waters](#), which is being published by Oregon State University Press.
- Associate Professor of Communication Studies **Nick Marx, Ph.D.**, received extensive national attention for his research on political comedy and satire. His most recent media features were in *New York Magazine*, Wisconsin news radio 620 WTMJ, and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
- Several CHHS milestones occurred this semester, including the [Institute for the Built Environment](#) (30 years of creating healthy, thriving places through collaboration); the [Social Work Research Center](#) (20 years of improving the lives of Coloradans); the [School of Social Work](#) (50 years of accreditation and the accreditation of a new online Bachelor of Social Work); and the [Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising](#) (earned accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums).
- Electrical & Computer Engineering Assistant Professor **Haonan Chen, Ph.D.**, is one of only [24 recipients of this year’s Young Investigator Award](#) from the Office of Naval Research.
- After a rigorous nomination and review process, College of Business Associate Professor **Jonathan Z. Zhang, Ph.D.**, has been [named among the 2024 class of Marketing Science Institute Scholars](#).
- The Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station’s 10th research center – **the Metropolitan Agricultural Research Center** – [celebrated its grand opening](#) on Dec. 4 at the CSU Spur campus. The new center focuses on urban agriculture, organic growing methods, and harnessing the latest agricultural technology.