Dean’s Letter

Diversity efforts are key to our students’ future
As both President Benson and Chancellor DiStefano have noted, diversity efforts are critical to our mission as a research and educational institution. In particular, President Benson has said that, “Diversity is one of our university’s core values and stated guiding principles.”
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/deans/

Features

You run for your health, but they flee zombies
Sure, there are endorphin junkies who love to enter the ‘pain cave,’ but for those who’d rather play, fleeing from ‘zombies’ does the trick, CU-Boulder researchers find.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/they-run-but-not-for-the-health-of-it/

Are you happy now? Enjoy your (likely) long life
Some peer-reviewed studies have found that happy people tend to live longer than their less-happy counterparts. But now, for the first time, researchers have found that happiness all by itself—regardless of marital status, income, physical health and other indicators—is a key factor in longevity.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/are-you-happy-now-enjoy-your-likely-long-life/

Profs find few benefits, some harm in ‘voluntourism’
Generally, ‘voluntourism’ is a poor substitute for traditional development work. Most projects are short-term, organizations that promote voluntouring don’t always ‘understand the place where it happens,’ and travelers typically don’t have skills needed for particular projects, researchers find.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/profs-find-few-benefits-some-harm-in-voluntourism/

CU research IDs new strategy to fight species extinction
The go-to-strategy for rescuing threatened species has long been to set aside tracts of healthy land to spread out in, and migration corridors that allow them to mix with other populations, gaining resilience via a broadened gene pool. Because habitat preservation isn’t always viable, introducing genetic diversity might keep threatened species viable, scientists find.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/cu-research-ids-new-strategy-to-fight-species-extinction/
Citizen ‘sparkplugs’ can reduce red-zone fire danger
Researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder recently examined the aftermath of two catastrophic conflagrations and found an unexpected ally in wildfire-education efforts, the “citizen entrepreneur.”
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/citizen-sparkplugs-can-reduce-red-zone-fire-danger/

‘Circular migration’ improves drinking water in rural China
Regardless of rainfall or government-built infrastructure, the availability of drinking water in rural Chinese villages varies based on villagers’ ingenuity, “circular migration” patterns, and maintenance of water infrastructure, a University of Colorado graduate student has found.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/circular-migration-improves-drinking-water-in-rural-china/

Pre-natal stress, terbutaline linked to autism, epilepsy in rats
Researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder have discovered that a combination of pre-natal stress and an unapproved pre-term labor medication called terbutaline may create a higher risk for the co-development of autism and epilepsy based on test results involving laboratory rats.

Long before kitten videos, animals inspired art
In a partnership between the University of Colorado Boulder Art Museum and the CU Museum of Natural History, the exhibition Animals in Antiquity will explore the relationships between humans and animals through the ages. The exhibition is on view at the Museum of Natural History through Sept. 2016.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/10/long-before-kitten-videos-animals-inspired-art/

Literary Buffs help high-schoolers write better
Some area high school students are better prepared for college-level writing thanks to help from CU-Boulder English students, who have, in turn, gained experience and confidence in making public presentations. The fortuitous arrangement began when Northglenn High School English teacher Maria Clinton asked the university to find someone to coach her students.
http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/literary-buffs-help-high-schoolers-write-better/
Donors

Sue Baer loves to write, loves children and wants to help others. So it’s no surprise that her newest children’s book tackles a grown-up issue: children with autism. It’s one of many ways she and her husband, Barry, use their time and resources in the service of others.

http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/alums-give-back-to-cu-city-in-multiple-ways/

‘Quietly poor’ poet’s life anything but prosaic

Poet Kim Swendson is a collector of sorts, a gatherer of experiences with people she interacts with during the day. Asking the gas station attendant about his children, chatting with the barista about her weekend plans... these daily interactions serve as inspiration for the stories and poetry Swendson writes.

http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/quietly-poor-poets-life-anything-but-prosaic/

Alumni

Lisa Solberg’s performance installation art, which clearly is not boring, is a natural evolution. “Art is actually life, and I think most people are yearning for a change in perspective, a jolt of inspiration, a fresh breath of air. I strive to make art that would evoke a similar shock to jumping in an ice-cold body of water.”

http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/classically-trained-artist-is-uber-cool-icon/

The potential effects of climate change are just as bad as human trampling for biological soil crust communities, two CU-Boulder alumni have found.

http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/warming-trends-increasing-precipitation-signal-biocrust-decline/

The mastermind behind a formerly anonymously run website that serves as a crowd-sourced watchdog of peer-reviewed scientific journal articles turns out to be Brandon Stell, a 1997 graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder.

http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/alum-is-mastermind-behind-science-watchdog-site/

Dan Peterson’s career has taken many paths, starting from his humble beginnings as a young CU student walking the Ho Chi Minh Trail to class, to becoming a skilled neurosurgeon, the CEO of a revolutionary medical equipment company and the co-owner of a classic-car business.

Pioneering prof wins prestigious Grawemeyer Award
University of Colorado Boulder scientist Steven Maier, who discovered a brain mechanism that not only produces resilience to trauma but aids in coping with future adversity, has won the 2016 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Psychology. The award is among the most prestigious in the field of psychology and comes with a no-strings-attached $100,000 prize. http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/cu-boulder-prof-wins-prestigious-grawemeyer-award/

Sociologist applies lessons of gangs to terrorism
David Pyrooz, a University of Colorado Boulder sociologist who is advancing the study of terrorism by applying research on criminal gangs, has won an Early Career Award from the American Society of Criminology. http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/sociologist-applies-lessons-of-gangs-to-terrorism/

Nobel Prize highlights importance of Russian studies
For Svetlana Alexievich, this year's winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Soviet Union is a kind of 'historical Chernobyl that still produces contamination and radiation—psychological, historical, political and cultural,' CU-Boulder expert Mark Leiderman observes. He says now is a good time for students and the world to learn more about Russia, and the university has already moved to meet that need. http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/nobel-prize-highlights-importance-of-russian-studies/

Lower textbook costs and better learning
Students who take an introductory chemistry courses at Michigan State University not only get the benefit of a curriculum proven to help them better understand many important chemistry concepts, but they also save money by not having to pay for items such as textbooks and study guides. http://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/magazine/2015/12/cu-boulder-prof-colleague-aim-to-cut-textbook-costs/