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The University of Colorado Boulder is nationally recognized for its unique and stellar academic programs, outstanding faculty, high-achieving students, award-winning staff, and its beautiful geographic setting. In my role as Director of Career Services, I am often asked how this academic excellence translates into the world of work in terms of degree marketability. In that spirit, I am presenting this open letter to our CU community to share my personal perspective based on my experience working with college intern and employment recruiters and also to give you an overview of the current recruiting picture at CU-Boulder.

Career Services at CU-Boulder is responsible for helping students with various aspects of their professional development and for facilitating interactions between students and potential employers in terms of career fairs, job and internship listings, and on-campus interviewing. While the job market for new college graduates is related to the national job market, it has some differences that make it bounce back faster and weather difficulties more easily than the market in general. For example, employers who are moving from a stalled hiring period into a more active one may target new graduates as a cost-effective strategy and a way of finding enthusiastic professionals with the latest skills and training. When our employer relations team talks with potential employers about the value of hiring new college graduates in general and CU-Boulder graduates in particular, they focus specifically on the benefits of hiring the best and the brightest this country has to offer.

Marketing the value of a degree from CU-Boulder is an easy job. In fact, we enjoy talking about the academic and leadership credentials of our students, the caliber of our nationally celebrated faculty, the uniqueness of our academic offerings, and the variety of extracurricular education available to our students. Among the highlights we emphasize are:

- Five Nobel Prize winners
- 19 Rhodes scholars
- 25 National Security Education Program recipients
- The 2004 and 2013 National Professor of the Year
- Four professors awarded the National Medal of Science, the nation's highest scientific honor
- More than 100 faculty Fulbright fellows since 1982
- 160 student Fulbright fellows since 1977
- 33 faculty members in the National Academy of Sciences
- 29 faculty members in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- 20 faculty members in the National Academy of Engineering
- Seven faculty members in the National Academy of Education
- Eight faculty recipients of MacArthur Fellowships, otherwise known as “Genius Grants”
- 14 Packard fellows (recognizing the most promising science and engineering researchers in the U.S.)
- 18 professors awarded Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowships since 1998.
- Two National Science Foundation Director’s Award winners for Distinguished Teaching Scholars
- 63 fellows in the American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Five faculty members named investigators by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute
- 10 professors honored with fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities
Also:

- CU-Boulder ranks No. 6 in the nation for graduates serving as Peace Corps volunteers with 62 alumni currently serving around the world. More than 2,400 CU-Boulder alumni have served as Peace Corps volunteers, making our university the No. 5 volunteer-producing school of all time.
- 18 NASA astronauts are CU-Boulder affiliates (graduates, postdocs, faculty) and have flown in space on a total of 40 missions, beginning with Scott Carpenter and the Mercury missions in the 1960s. CU-Boulder ranks among the top five U.S. universities, excluding military academies, in the number of astronaut alumni. We are the only research institution in the world to have designed and built space instruments for NASA that have been launched to every planet in the solar system plus Pluto.

As the following highlights additionally indicate, CU-Boulder has been nationally recognized as one of the finest universities in the country:

- CU-Boulder is one of only 34 U.S. public research universities invited to join the prestigious Association of American Universities.
- U.S. News & World Report ranked CU-Boulder 38th among the top public universities the United States in its 2015 America’s Best Colleges issue. The rankings are based on factors such as academic reputation, student retention, faculty resources, alumni giving, graduation rates and admissions selectivity.
- Seven CU-Boulder graduate school specialty programs are ranked in the top 10 in the nation, and 12 are in the top 20 in U.S. News & World Report's 2015 America’s Best Graduate Schools issue.
- No. 19 most entrepreneurial university in the nation (Forbes, 2014)
- No. 1 public university recipient of NASA research awards
- No. 1 NIH-funded non-medical school institution
- More than 1,200 undergraduates are involved in research
- Highest graduation rate among all Colorado public universities—70%
- 14,500 students participate in community service or service learning annually
- CU-Boulder produces more than one-third of all PhDs awarded in Colorado
- No. 1 ranked program in the nation in atomic, molecular and optical physics since 2006 (U.S. News & World Report).
- Our geosciences researchers are global leaders in monitoring greenhouse gas and Arctic ice melt, and our geosciences program is ranked No. 2 in the world.*
- No. 9 in aerospace engineering (public)*
- No. 10 in environmental engineering (public)*
- No. 12 in chemical engineering (public)*
- No. 20 in engineering (public)*

* U.S. News & World Report, September 2014

As you can see, CU-Boulder is one of the highest caliber universities, public or private, in the country. Although our awards and rankings are impressive, the strength of our employer relations depends primarily upon our graduates. What keeps employers returning to CU-Boulder to recruit semester after semester and year after year is the success of its previous recruits within their organization. CU-Boulder graduates make good employees. Hiring managers and campus recruiters know that investing in CU-Boulder graduates is a good decision for their company and the come here for all of their recruiting and hiring needs.

Despite the recession, our graduates continue to interview and are finding success within a dynamic and unpredictable new graduate job market. The Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI) recently reported that employers anticipate a 16% increase in bachelor’s level new graduate hiring this year, growth not
seen since the dot-com boom of 1999-2000, and we believe that outlook is reflective of CU-Boulder as well. Here is an overview of recruiting at CU-Boulder:

- Last year, over 3,000 organizations posted approximately 8,675 opportunities in diverse industries across Colorado, the US, and the world representing 49 states, plus the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and international opportunities.
- These job postings included almost 5,000 full-time positions and more than 2,500 internships, many with multiple openings.
- The most frequent major request by organizations was “All Majors.” In other words, companies are looking for talented, educated, motivated leaders from any academic discipline or background to be problem-solvers within their organization.
- Career Services facilitated opportunities for almost 3,500 organizations to engage CU-Boulder students and alumni through internship/job postings, career fairs, on-campus interviews, and networking opportunities.
- According to the Wall Street Journal, corporate recruiters are increasingly hiring from large, state schools, in part because they can interview more candidates more quickly at a big state campus than at a smaller, private school. In addition, the quality gap between private and state schools has narrowed. Recruiters call graduates of the top state schools among the best-prepared students and say they fit well with their corporate cultures.
- We recently surveyed our alumni who graduated in May of 2014 to ask how they were doing six months after graduation. For those who graduated from CU-Boulder with a bachelor’s degree, 93% were employed in a variety of settings, in military service, in a formal volunteer program like Peace Corps, or in graduate, law, or medical school, and another 1% were taking time out to travel. The median salary for the Bachelor’s degree level group six months after graduation was $40,000.

To help our graduates maximize their potential and stand out among candidates, we offer professional career counseling and coaching. Counselors can help students identify strengths, make career decisions, strategize a plan, write a resume, practice interviewing, and build a network. We also work closely with the Alumni Association to help students connect with alumni as well as to help alumni in career transition. CU-Boulder is committed to helping graduates be successful professionally throughout their lifetimes.

The good news from our employer partners is that CU-Boulder continues to be their top choice in recruiting despite challenging economic times. The quality of the degrees earned here at CU-Boulder, as evidenced by the list of accolades above, helps to keep us at the forefront of college recruiting. Those of us on the front lines of marketing CU-Boulder degrees will continue to represent the University of Colorado with great pride. We continually meet with new employers as well as our long-time partners to bring the best opportunities to campus. As always, we seek feedback from students, faculty, staff, and CU-Boulder parents to shape and guide our programs. As our students and the world of work constantly change, we continue to strive to meet and exceed the needs of the best and brightest students and new graduates in the country.

Sincerely,

Lisa Severy, PhD
Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs &
Director of Career Services