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CU'S 61ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON WORLD AFFAIRS
OFFERS MILLION-DOLLAR CONFERENCE
TO PUBLIC ON A SHOESTRING, APRIL 6-10

If you had to put on nearly 200 free events for tens of thousands of people for a fraction of the approximately \$2 million cost, you might come up with the University of Colorado at Boulder's Conference on World Affairs.

From April 6 through 10, for the 61st time, participants from throughout the United States and abroad will pay their own way to attend the unique event film critic Roger Ebert once termed the "Conference on Everything Conceivable."

Other participants this year will include former Sen. Chuck Hagel, United Nations Foundation President Tim Wirth, National Public Radio correspondent Margot Adler, women's health pioneer Susan Love, New York Times reporter James Glanz and the director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, James Hansen.

All 190 events are free and open to the public.

"There really is nothing like the Conference on World Affairs," said conference Director Jim Palmer. "The Conference on World Affairs is a million-dollar conference that is basically run on a shoestring."

All participants get free housing during the conference provided by local residents. These hosts and hundreds of other volunteers enable the conference to offer so much for so little each year.

Many of the conference's 97 participants also would command large speaking fees for a single appearance and yet "most come for the entire week to share their time and energy and expertise," Palmer said. "These wonderful participants get no honorariums and pay their own way here."

The total 2009 CWA budget is about \$165,000, mostly for staff and office expenses. But if the university were to pay the actual cost of the conference, the event easily would approach \$2 million, conference officials said.

The global economic crisis will be the focus of at least 10 events this year, including panel discussions and plenary addresses on "Are We Stimulated Yet?" "What the Economic Crisis Has Taught Us" and "The Economy: Nightmare for the Next Generation."

Participating in two of the panels will be Grammy Award-winning recording artist Don Grusin, who holds a master's degree in economics from CU-Boulder. Grusin will appear at "Financial Cents for Dummies: The Plastic Generation" on April 9 and at "How the Economists Missed It" on April 10. Don and his Academy Award and Grammy Award-winning brother, Dave, will both participate in the conference's famous free Jazz Concert in Macky Auditorium on Tuesday, April 7.

Other far-ranging conference panel topics include "Reading Fiction Helps Me Live in the Real World," "Civil Liberties: What, Me Worry?" "Pakistan: Pandora's Box," "Brave New World of Journalism," "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia" and "Help! My Mom Friendened Me on Facebook!"

The 2009 conference theme is "Perspective 360," which "refers to looking at things from every possible angle," Palmer said. "360 degrees is also a circle, which can symbolize a cycle of return, something participants experience when they return to campus for the conference every year."

CU-Boulder students get priority entry to selected conference events and are invited to meet with conference participants on April 6 at 10 a.m. on the Norlin Quadrangle.

All students will receive free breakfast burritos with a student ID and will be able to chat with attendees from the United Nations Foundation, NASA, Brookings Institution, Cato Institute, Heritage Foundation and U.S. Foreign Service.

For Will O'Donnell, a 2008 magna cum laude CU-Boulder graduate, last year's Conference on World Affairs led to the unforgettable experience of making a film in Kenya over the past four months. One of the 2008 conference participants was Karambu Ringera, the founder and head of International Peace Initiatives, a small nonprofit providing support for education in Kenya.

"I was a senior, graduating in political science with the idea of pursuing a career in sustainable development, yet I was without a clear idea of where to begin," O'Donnell recalled. "Dr. K was the start. Uniquely situated as a student volunteer for the Conference on World Affairs, I approached her during a social gathering after being inspired by her performance at a panel. I wanted experience in developing countries and I told her so. I asked simply, 'Is there anything I can do for your organization?'"

"I was stunned and elated when she made time for us to meet later that afternoon to discuss what I might do to help, and ended up inviting me to stay in her own home in Kenya," O'Donnell said. "So it was with informal small talk, surrounded by over a hundred oddly humble experts from around the world, that Dr. K and I began a partnership that has blossomed into a film tracing the impact of education on the Kenyan poor."

O'Donnell has been blogging from Kenya about his experience at <http://educationishopekenya.blogspot.com/>.

The eight primary sponsors of this year's conference are the Camera, Albion Interactive, Boulder Weekly, Alem International Management, Circle Graphics, Gold Lake Resort, Hotel Boulderado and OneRiot Social Search Engine.

Members of the public attending the Conference on World Affairs are encouraged to use public transportation as there is no event parking on campus. Those driving are

encouraged to park for free on the second level of the Macy's parking structure at the 29th Street mall in Boulder, located on the southwest corner of 30th Street and Walnut Street, and take the free HOP bus to campus.

The HOP bus will run on its normal route arriving every 7 to 10 minutes between the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. The two stops nearest the Macy's parking structure are at 29th Street and Walnut Street and 30th Street and Walnut Street.

For a complete schedule and more information visit the Conference on World Affairs' Web site at <http://www.colorado.edu/cwa/>. Live Web streaming of selected conference events also will be available on the site.