

“American Teacher” generates discussion at educational screening

The School of Education’s Dean Lorrie Shepard and the University of Colorado Foundation sponsored the educational screening of “[American Teacher](#)” to an enthusiastic audience Nov. 3. Panelists Ben DeGrow, Marjorie Larner, Nina Lopez, Zach Serrano and Val Wheeler fielded audience questions and commented on points made in the documentary following the screening.



Professor Dan Liston introduces panelists, from left, DeGrow, Wheeler, Larner, Serrano and Lopez.

“American Teacher,” officially sponsored by The Teacher Salary Project, is based on the 2005 *New York Times* bestselling book [Teachers Have It Easy: The Big Sacrifices and Small Salaries of America’s Teachers](#) by three authors: journalist and teacher Daniel Moulthrop, co-founder of the 826 National writing programs Nínive Calegari and writer Dave Eggers. The film, narrated by Matt Damon, is produced by Calegari and Eggers and produced and directed by Academy Award–winning filmmaker Vanessa Roth.

The documentary portrays the careers of four teachers and includes interviews with policymakers and various facts about the teaching profession. The film is intended to bring awareness to what The Teacher Salary Project considers “the core of our educational crisis.”

The panelists have a variety of backgrounds, which gave broad perspectives to the discussion following the screening. DeGrow is senior education policy analyst for the Colorado-based Independence Institute. Larner, a former teacher and administrator, is a Site Professor for the CU-Denver Urban Teacher Education Program. Lopez is Vice President of Strategy and Partnerships at the Colorado Legacy Foundation. Serrano is a high school language arts teacher at the Denver Center for International Studies at Montbello.

School of Education Professor Dan Liston emceed the evening and, in addition to Liston, the organizing committee included Sara McDonald, Marjorie Larner, Jennie Whitcomb and Barbara Darling.