



Students build bridges to K-12

Don't be surprised to find CU engineering students helping out in Boulder area elementary and secondary classrooms these days, thanks to a National Science Foundation grant.

The engineering students aim to boost math and science literacy in grades four through 12, as well as increase the number of high school students who decide on engineering or technology as a college path. The project is responding, in part, to statistics revealing there are fewer engineering graduates today than there were 16 years ago, according to the American Society of Engineering Education.

The CU students are helping develop hands-on lesson plans, as well as working on creating an online digital library of pre-engineering curricula to be used by teachers across the nation.

On campus, undergraduate students in four Arts and Sciences departments are being recruited and trained to become prospective K-12 science teachers in conjunction with the School of Education. Students majoring in applied math, astrophysics and planetary sciences, and physics, as well as molecular, cellular and developmental biology, become paid peer-learning assistants in specific courses for eight to 10 hours per week and assist during homework sessions.

Called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Colorado and supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the program aims to increase the number of students who graduate with both a bachelor's degree in a STEM discipline and a teaching certificate.

Visit <http://stem.colorado.edu>



Engineering professor Bernard Amadei, above in white shirt, is surrounded by youngsters in Zambougou, Mali. He helped create Engineers Without Borders to give students real-world experience. At right CU students work on a water system in San Pablo, Belize.



CU among best in nation for service learning programs

From working on a Navajo reservation to building water projects in Rwanda, CU-Boulder students and professors have helped the university land a citing in a new book, *Colleges with a Conscience: 81 Great Schools with Outstanding Community Involvement* (Random House).

The book lists CU as one of 81 exemplary universities that gives students a multitude of opportunities to demonstrate civic responsibility. The university was the only school selected in Colorado for the book, which includes a two-page spread on each campus selected. The publication is a joint venture of the Princeton Review, Random

House and Campus Compact, a national coalition of 950 college and university presidents committed to civic education.

There's more good news: University officials are developing a new campus institute that will integrate ethical and civic education throughout the curriculum and campus programs.

So far officials have raised \$600,000 for the Institute for Ethical and Civic Engagement. They are launching a model project at the journalism school beginning this fall, which will be a series of courses and symposia to help students become more aware of their civic and ethical responsibilities as communicators.

Good will through free samples

I have a modest proposal for improving CU's image — instead of hiring more flacks, turn the campus into a classroom.

Every year several hundred thousand visitors make their way across campus. Most have only a foggy idea of what goes on inside. And most leave without learning anything, which is kind of like visiting a brewery without getting to sample the beer.

That should change. CU should make it impossible to walk across the campus without learning something.

This doesn't mean dispatching roving bands of professors to leap out from behind bushes and instruct unsuspecting visitors in the finer points of molecular biology or moral philosophy.

What I have in mind are things like the model solar system that runs from the Fiske Planetarium past the Engineering Center — displays, statues and signs that teach you something as you wander by.

They need not be fancy. In the 1960s someone identified the main species of trees and shrubs on campus. The tree walk hosted by the Heritage Center and CU Museum each spring is very informative, as is the tree map created by the cartography group in the geography department. On the other hand, the displays could be very fancy and very exciting — think high definition TVs and multimedia.

Just making the cool stuff CU already has on hand more accessible would help. For example, the physics department's Foucault Pendulum in the Duane Tower is looking neglected. Geology has some terrific exhibits in and outside the Benson Building — without a word of explanation about what they are. A few plaques would transform them into learning experiences.

Every college, school and department is the steward of knowledge visitors would find absolutely fascinating. The CU Foundation might be able to shake some dollars out of alums who don't want to pay for another buffalo statue.

Colorado law mandates a certain percentage of public funding for new public buildings be spent on art. CU should use it for "info art." At the new law school, instead of the usual sculpture of some dead jurist, put up a replica of the Code of Hammurabi, the world's first codification of law, to provide insight on how law evolved.

It's no secret that CU has hit some nasty patches lately. When a company gets in trouble, a good way to recover is to focus on its core business. The core business of CU is teaching and learning.

A hint: A good way to cultivate good will is to give away free samples.

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