



Psychology News

Department Welcomes New Chair

Professor Theresa D. Hernández has been appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as the new chair of the department as of July 1st. After a year-long process shepherded by the Executive Committee and culminating in a final faculty vote, Professor Hernández is now our 26th and first female chair.

The feeling in the department about our new chair is upbeat and welcoming, appreciative of the strengths that she brings to her new role. Professor Lew Harvey, our outgoing chair, describes her as having “a broad, encompassing view of what psychology and neuroscience can achieve as a science and as a service to contribute to making the world a better place. She has fantastic organizational skills and a clear vision that is rooted in the present and focused on the future.”

Professor Hernández has been a faculty member in our department since 1990. During that time, she has served two terms as Associate Chair and Director of Graduate Education, providing her with considerable experience helpful in her new role.

Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, Professor Hernández routinely heard her father, Louis Hernández, say “there is nothing you can’t do.” This belief coupled with her observations of his career as a kindergarten through ninth grade principal provided the foundation for her strong commitment to education, service and improving the lives of others. Indeed, these principles have been the driving force behind her professional choices, including the undertaking of chair.



She also enjoys the creative challenge of managing complexity and helping a large department achieve its goals. “I like to create things and work with a lot of moving parts at the same time,” she says. “And I like the process of finding ways to make those parts work differently or better. The department itself, because it’s so large, is very dynamic, which makes it an engaging place to work.”

Professor Hernández has focused on behavioral neuroscience throughout her career, with a particular interest in traumatic brain injury (TBI) and how to aid the recovery process so that the injury has less of an adverse impact on the individual. Her research has investigated conventional treatments for TBI, including the use of medication and its consequences, as well as complementary and alternative medicine treatment options. Her current research explores the effects of acupressure on Veterans with TBI and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), using a placebo-controlled, randomized, blinded design. This unique partnership between CU and the VA Medical Center in Denver is supported
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Message from the Chair

This, my inaugural “Message from the Chair,” is written with a great deal of excitement about being Chair of the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Colorado Boulder. Having been here since 1990, I feel extremely fortunate to be able to spend my time doing good work in the department, surrounded by strong faculty, staff and students, both at the undergraduate and the graduate level.

Serving students, many of whom are on a path that leads to their life’s work, is an exceptional job to have.

As faculty, we get to be a part of the student’s journey on that path. Sometimes we help by providing direction, sometimes reassurance if the road has been rough, and sometimes we simply bear witness to the fundamental transformation that takes place as the student matures and gains mastery in a subject through coursework and/or research. It is an honor to be a part of this process.

At the same time, there is the opportunity to engage in our own research, which involves working with students, research/administrative staff and faculty colleagues. This highly collaborative process is the cornerstone of a productive and satisfying research experience. To begin, we formulate hypotheses, then identify the means by which to test them and finally conduct scientifically rigorous studies. In most cases, conducting research can only be done after funding has been secured, which is often a lengthy process. That said, it can also be a very rewarding process.

In addition to serving students and our field of science, we have an opportunity and perhaps even an obligation



to serve the greater community as well. Examples of activities can be seen in outreach and accessibility projects directed by some of our clinical faculty, such as CREST (Center for Research, Evidence-Based Services, and Training), ADAPT (Adolescent Development and Preventive Treatment Program), and the Raimy Psychology Clinic. Boulder’s Daily Camera newspaper also recently spotlighted one of our outreach projects in their article, “Boulder Kindergarten Students Participate in Brain Day.” For links to these projects,

please see the Alumni Resources page of our department’s website (<http://psych.colorado.edu/alumni>). You can also find other projects of interest in the Research and News sections of our website.

It is this triad of commitments (teaching, research, and service) that we faculty are tasked with. I, for one, feel quite fortunate to be able to come to work every day and feel engaged by the time spent in each of these.

On another note... I am delighted to announce the following personnel actions: Ryan Bachtell was reappointed as Assistant Professor, Al Kim was promoted to Associate Professor with continuous tenure, and Erik Willcutt was promoted to Full Professor, as was I.

Please stay tuned... The Regents will vote on the department’s proposed undergraduate degree in neuroscience. Many, many thanks to Dr. Jerry Rudy for all of the time and effort he devoted to this.

Wishing you success, engagement and satisfaction in your work.

—Theresa D. Hernández

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Department Welcomes New Chair (continued from page 1)

by a grant from the Department of Defense. Information about this and her other research can be found on her lab's website at <http://psych.colorado.edu/~tdhlab>. She notes that thus far, "acupressure appears to be a promising intervention following TBI, because it is portable, of little or no cost, is easily learned and independently accessible. This type of treatment option can be especially important for those with chronic health issues, as it may lead to a greater sense of independence and self-efficacy, both being important for the recovery process."

As chair, Professor Hernández will continue to teach undergraduate and graduate students, both in and outside of the classroom. As she takes on new departmental duties, the importance of maintaining integrity in all of her responsibilities (teaching, research, and service) is clearly on her mind. She notes that "the chair position is a very demanding role and will take a lot of organization, clarity and consistency in order to do a good job at it and still be able to maintain my teaching contributions and program of research."

Professor Hernández says she's benefitted from the department's year-long transition process, allowing the incoming chair to have a full semester and part of the summer to overlap with and shadow the current chair, which she's taken full advantage of. She's been able to sit in on meetings, observing, listening, and gradually being included in the business of the chair. As she fully steps up now, she says she feels a growing excitement and energy for the creative process that this new role requires.

Colleagues in the department also express a genuine enthusiasm when asked about her, especially our current associate chairs, who have worked closely with her and know her quite well.

Professor Bob Spencer, Associate Chair and Director of Undergraduate Education, thinks that Professor Hernández brings a unique blend of perspective, leadership and managerial skills to her new role. "Teri is an excellent scientist, teacher and community servant," he says. He goes on to describe her leadership skills, noting that she's "highly respected by the faculty for her ability to calmly facilitate good group decisions, to make sure that all stakeholders have a voice in the process and to know when to be impartial and when to lead."

Professor Bernadette Park, Associate Chair and Director of Graduate Education, talks about her observations over the years: "Throughout Teri's career she has spent

a great deal of energy not only on her research and teaching, but on effecting policy change that makes a difference in people's lives. She brings that same energy and experience to the chair role. Her approach is one of hard work, fairness, and transparency, skills that make for a strong and effective leader. The department is very fortunate that Teri is willing to take on this role, and I believe it will thrive under her guidance."



Professor Harvey relinquishes the chair to Professor Hernández

And Professor Jerry Rudy, Associate Chair for Faculty Affairs, sums up the accolades by saying, "Teri will be an outstanding chair. She is a proven leader who has demonstrated an ability to work with diverse groups both within the university community and the state. Teri is well known to the campus administration and will do a great job in representing the interests of the department."



As we welcome Professor Hernández as our new chair, we are also letting go of Professor Lew Harvey in that role, a significant loss. Thankfully, he'll continue

as an inspiring teacher, picking up a third class in addition to the two classes he taught during his tenure as chair. He'll continue to teach *Psychology of Perception*, the popular undergraduate course that he's enthusiastically "taught forever," as he says.

Most of our faculty, staff and students associate Lew Harvey with several significant accomplishments as chair. He facilitated the process of obtaining the fMRI on the CU-Boulder campus, a major feat that will affect the direction of our department for generations to come. Accordingly, he facilitated procedures for the department's name change, reflecting our deepening interest in neuroscience. He was also instrumental in recruiting and retaining an outstanding group of faculty. Internally, he reorganized the department's business office and restructured staff leadership. And especially appreciated by our readers, he launched the alumni newsletter.

But Lew leaves a legacy not only defined by concrete accomplishments. It was his personal style that some say affected the department most of all. He brought us his warmth, sense of humor and generosity of spirit. Not only was his door literally always open, but his personal openness and positive demeanor strengthened those qualities in the culture of the department. At the beginning of each graduation ceremony, he offered students a resounding directive to "Be curious, be critical, be kind." He will be remembered for bringing the gift of those abilities to his role. We are all truly the better for it.

—Alivia Segal

Research News

Using Psychology, Genetics and Neuroscience to Improve Health

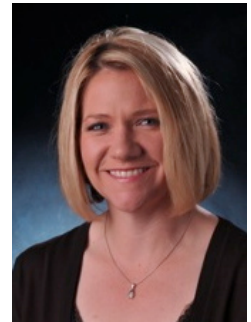
by Professor Angela Bryan

My research is focused on a transdisciplinary approach to the study of health and risk behavior, and the development of interventions to improve health behavior. I combine research findings from social psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology, exercise physiology, neuroscience, and genetics to try to understand why people engage in behavior that harms their health, and how to help them change that behavior.

One content area that accounts for much of my work is the reduction of sexual risk behavior and substance abuse among adolescents. My lab designs, implements and evaluates interventions to increase safer sex and figure out which interventions work best for which kids. This work has been funded by multiple NIH institutes including NIAAA, NIDA, and NINR, and one of my interventions was selected by the federal Office of Adolescent Health as a “Program that Works” for the prevention of teen pregnancy (for information, see <http://www.socio.com/passt28.php>). We have shown that programs that increase young people’s confidence in their ability to buy condoms without embarrassment, to use them properly, and to talk about them with their partners significantly increases safer sexual behavior.

The second content area of my work concerns the reduction of diseases associated with sedentary lifestyle (heart disease, Type II diabetes, a number of cancers, age-related illnesses) through increasing physical exercise. This work has been funded by the National Cancer Institute, and we’ve shown that there are genetic factors that are associated with people’s affective response to exercise (e.g., how good or bad it makes them feel). This kind of response is associated with how much people exercise.

My lab has some exciting projects in development, one of which combines my two areas of interest. Recently, we showed that among people who were all heavy alcohol drinkers, those who did not exercise had significantly more damage to the white matter in their brains than those who did exercise. This suggests that exercise might help prevent or undo some of the damage alcohol does to the brain.



Using Computer Simulations to Understand the Brain

by Professor Randy O’Reilly



Everyone knows that the weather is complex and hard to predict, and that computer models are essential for taming this complexity to produce (relatively) accurate weather predictions. All the same logic applies to trying to understand the complexity of the brain, and our lab (the Computational Cognitive Neuroscience or CCN Lab) is among the leaders in this relatively small field. We have published a free online textbook used for the *Computational Cognitive Neuroscience* class. This textbook is available at <http://ccnbook.colorado.edu> and provides a thorough introduction to this fascinating area of research. Roughly thirty motivated undergrads (along with a number of grad students) tackle this course every year, and routinely report it to be one of their most challenging and rewarding learning experiences at CU.

The key idea behind our research is to encode many of the specific biological properties of different brain areas into a computer simulation, and then challenge that simulation with many of the same cognitive tasks that we think those brain areas handle. As we build up many such models of different brain areas, we can begin to understand the commonalities and differences across the brain, and how biological form leads to cognitive function. We have made central contributions to understanding how the peculiar features of the hippocampus enable it to be the memory center of the brain, and how the prefrontal cortex got to be so smart that it is referred to as the “CEO” of the brain. As in a company, it turns out that the CEO depends on a large roster of support staff, one of which is the basal ganglia – our computer simulations can explain many aspects of Parkinson’s disease (which affects the basal ganglia), including even the reason why some Parkinson’s patients become reckless gamblers as a result of medication treatments.

Our latest project is a large-scale multi-institution effort to understand how many different brain areas all work together in the process of understanding complex patterns of intelligence data, and how the biology of these brain areas leads to systematic cognitive biases that can distort interpretations of these data. With this understanding, we can potentially provide targeted interventions and corrective measures to enhance the effectiveness of this process.

Undergraduate Research: How Kismet Smith Cordova Found Her Calling

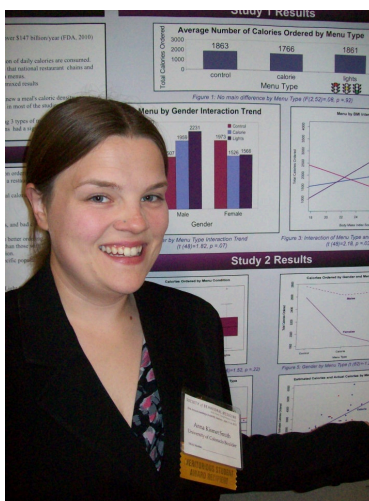
Kismet Smith Cordova, class of 2011, is a self-described research nerd. “I get truly excited about the scientific method, being an actual part of the process,” she says. “It’s like the first time you vote, going from watching it all on TV to being a part of the action. I’m not just a bystander reading the textbook but I’m actually helping to write it.”

Kismet knew at age eleven that she was interested in psychology. She was always curious about how people think and understand their world. But it was only as an undergraduate in our department, while taking several statistics and research method classes, that her interest in research came alive. In one of those classes, she was able to do a project from start to finish, from developing a hypothesis to analyzing the results. This was her first taste of research and after moving through the sequence of those steps, she was hooked.

“We spend a lot of time in the psychology major learning theories about what people do and how they become who they are,” she reflects, “but research is able to answer some of those questions more concretely with actual reliable data and that’s what I love about it.”

Kismet went on to take every research opportunity offered to undergraduates by the department: volunteering as a research assistant and becoming a member of a research lab, doing an independent study and then an honors thesis, and participating in the department’s annual Undergraduate Research Day, where she displayed the results of her honors thesis as a poster presentation. While these experiences strengthened her graduate school application, it also gave her the opportunity to explore different aspects of research and learn about her own inclinations in the process. “I realized that I was more interested in finding the answers to the questions than in generating research ideas and theory,” she says. “I love using research design and the statistical side of data analysis to ensure the greatest integrity of results.”

Her honors thesis was particularly meaningful to her. Looking back on the experience, she says it gave her the big picture. “I got to touch every aspect of research. It was a fantastic way to get to know every element of the research experience.” It was also a treat to explore an area that she had a personal interest in: the topic of healthy lifestyle choices. Focusing on behavioral health and the obesity epidemic, her thesis project looked at whether nutritional information on restaurant menus affected ordering behavior. Her outcomes were



significant and surprising. She found that women tended to use nutritional information to order fewer calories while men tended to use the same information to order more calories. She also found that thinner individuals, as indicated by a lower Body Mass Index (BMI), tended to use the provided health information to order fewer calories while those with a higher BMI tended to order more calories when using the same information.

Kismet lights up when she talks about arriving at these outcomes. “The main ‘aha moment’ was analyzing the data,” she says. “You put in all the work and when you actually get to see the results

of it there’s nothing like it, to have that work pay off and see it amount to something substantial. That’s when you stop feeling like a student and start feeling like a peer with other researchers looking at the same issue.” She became even more aware of this collegiality when her honors thesis abstract was accepted by the Society of Behavioral Medicine for their annual meeting in 2012. She was thrilled to learn that it would be featured at the meeting and awarded as a Meritorious Student Submission, which made her first conference presentation a very memorable event.

When she traces the auspicious path she’s been on, Kismet feels strongly that her connection with mentors has been essential to her professional growth. Two mentors have been particularly helpful and vital to her development: her thesis faculty advisor, Professor Gary McClelland, who gave her much guidance, and Professor Angela Bryan, who does research in behavioral health and was an important mentor in that field.

After graduating Summa Cum Laude, Kismet was hired by Professor Bryan and Professor Tiffany Ito as a professional research assistant in the department. This fall, she’ll begin working towards a master of public health degree (MPH) in applied biostatistics and bioinformatics at the Colorado School of Public Health. After completing her MPH she hopes to work in a research setting to find the best interventions and policies to combat the obesity epidemic.

While excited about pursuing the field of public health, she speaks most passionately about the process of research itself. “It’s a field that addresses that age-old search for truth and getting as close to truth as possible. You’re never going to be able to answer every question in the universe but research is the process of trying to answer as many of those questions as well as we possibly can.” —Alicia Segal

New Faculty



August 2013—**Naomi Friedman**, Assistant Professor, Institute for Behavioral Genetics, Ph.D. 2002, University of Colorado Boulder. She was previously a Senior Research Associate at IBG. Her research focuses on specifying the mechanisms (both neural and genetic) underlying individual differences in executive functions and their relations to everyday self regulation as well as various forms of psychopathology. She uses a variety of approaches, including twin studies, neuroimaging, and computational modeling.



July 2014—**June Gruber**, Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology, Ph.D. 2009, University of California Berkeley. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Yale University and Director of the Positive Emotion and Psychopathology (PEP) Laboratory. She examines how positive emotional features relate to psychological disturbance and health in people with bipolar disorder or depression, as well as in healthy people.

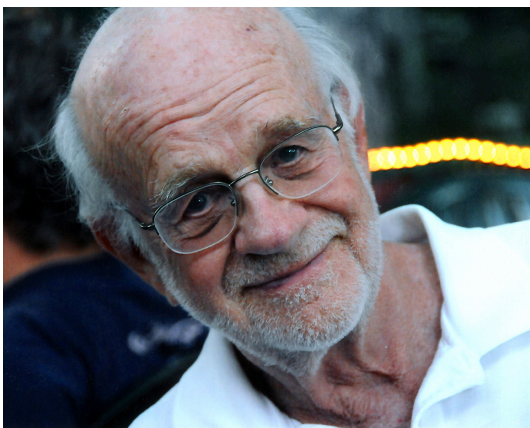


August 2014—**Scott Vrieze**, Assistant Professor, Institute for Behavioral Genetics, Ph.D. 2012, University of Minnesota. He is currently a Research Investigator in Biostatistics at the University of Michigan. He studies genetic and environmental influences on addiction, with a specific focus on substance use and abuse in adolescence and early adulthood.



August 2014—**Michael Saddoris**, Assistant Professor, Behavioral Neuroscience, Ph.D. 2008, Johns Hopkins University. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina. His research focuses on the physiological and neurochemical bases of natural reward learning and how this knowledge can provide insight into the pathological consequences of addictive drugs.

Professor Don Weatherley Retires After 53 Years



Professor Don Weatherley, a highly regarded and well-loved faculty member, is retiring after 53 years in the psychology department. At a moving retirement party held in May, he was honored with a “Certificate of Deep Appreciation” from the department. Chair Lew Harvey, who presented the certificate, read the following encapsulation: “You are an extraordinary person. You have touched the lives of students and colleagues with your kindness, good humor, empathy, sympathy and wisdom. Since you joined the faculty of the Department of Psychology at the University of Colorado in 1960, you have tirelessly contributed to the well-being of the department in numerous ways. You have been a superb colleague, an insightful mentor, a beloved teacher, an advocate for excellence. You have worn many hats: as Director of the Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology, Director of the Raimy Psychology Clinic, and Associate Chair for Undergraduate

Education. Our department, our profession, our community are way, way richer because of you. Thank you.” Photos of the retirement party can be found at psych.colorado.edu/news.html under the May 2013 heading.

Professor Weatherley says he’s not planning any drastic changes for his retirement and is likely to continue to supervise graduate students on a volunteer basis. He’ll also maintain his private practice, continuing to work with psychotherapy clients as he has throughout his career.

When he reflects on his 53 years here, it’s the department’s ambience that seems the most meaningful to him. He describes the department as “highly respectful, accepting, and warm. It’s a culture that brings out the best in everyone – students, faculty and staff, and I feel privileged to have been a part of that community.”

Renewed Accreditation for Clinical Psychology Grad Program



Professor Mark Whisman

The Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology has just been approved for renewed accreditation for the maximum limit of seven years. Accreditation from the American Psychological Association (APA) means that a program meets the standards of quality set forth by the APA. The APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA) grants accreditation of three to seven years, with the number of years granted based on the professional judgment of the CoA.

The accreditation process, which began two years ago, required completion of a written self-study and an external peer review, including a site visit of faculty from other universities and a review by the CoA. Director of Clinical Training Professor Mark Whisman and Program Assistant Shelley Gomez spent a whole summer preparing and writing the self-study, which involved providing detailed information about the program's training philosophy, model, goals, objectives, and methods, and included information on the faculty, students, alumni, and curriculum.

"We are very excited about the outcome of the accreditation process," Professor Whisman says. "We have an exceptional group of faculty, graduate students, and alumni, and it is very rewarding to have the quality of the program recognized by the APA."

Highlights from Alumni News on our Website

Alumni who sent us updates over the past year are listed below. You'll find a full account of their news, as well as updates submitted by other alumni over the years, on our Alumni News website at <http://psych.colorado.edu/alumni>. Click on the "Alumni News" link. You will initially see a "Permission Denied" message. For login information, email psychology.news@colorado.edu

Vince Ceriello, MPS (BA '59) went on to a degree and long career in business, including teaching, consulting, and working with clients internationally. Now retired in Southern Oregon, he remains very active professionally.

Jacob (Jack) Hautaluoma (PhD '67) will go to Croatia in November to give an invited plenary address to the Croatian Psychological Association meeting in Zagreb. He had been a Fulbright professor there at the University of Rijeka in 1998.

Jan Campbell (BA '71) was ordained by the Lutheran church in 1990. She now enjoys RVing full-time and "workamping" at a fish hatchery in Kentucky.

Brigitte Collinge Whitney (BA '82) shares her thoughts about several articles in the last newsletter and some memories of Professor Chiszar. She was interested in Tim Curran's research since she works with children in relation to the phonetic memory base necessary for reading.

Keith Sealy, MA (BA '89) works at IBM as a senior software designer with a division that produces statistical software for academia and business. He and his wife live in Austin, Texas, and have three children.

Jamie Lewis, MA (BA '93) graduated from the University of Colorado Denver in May with a master's degree in eLearning design and development. She is the

education and product development manager for Investment Management Consultants Association.

Michele Pierson, MA, LMSW (BA '98) works at Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin, Texas, supporting the clinical and behavioral needs of patients. She is married and has a one-year-old daughter.

Joseph Campbell, JD (BA '05) finished law school at Michigan State University in 2011 and now works at a law firm in Detroit, Michigan, which specializes in medical malpractice defense.

Inbar Hanouna, MA (BA '08) completed his master's in psychology at Boston University in 2011 with a focus in behavioral medicine. He is currently a researcher at Boston University working on arthritis and behavioral implications of rheumatic disease research.

Anastasia Dementyeva (BA '10) works at the Boulder Center for TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation) as a TMS Technician. She is also in the process of applying to Psy.D. programs in clinical psychology.

Kelsey Page (BA '11, Psych & Spanish) moved to Paris and works with the world's largest independent social media advertising agency, We Are Social, helping international luxury brands integrate social media platforms into their marketing plans.



Visit our Alumni News website for updates from alumni who sent us news.

To find Alumni News website go to:
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Click on the **Alumni News** link.

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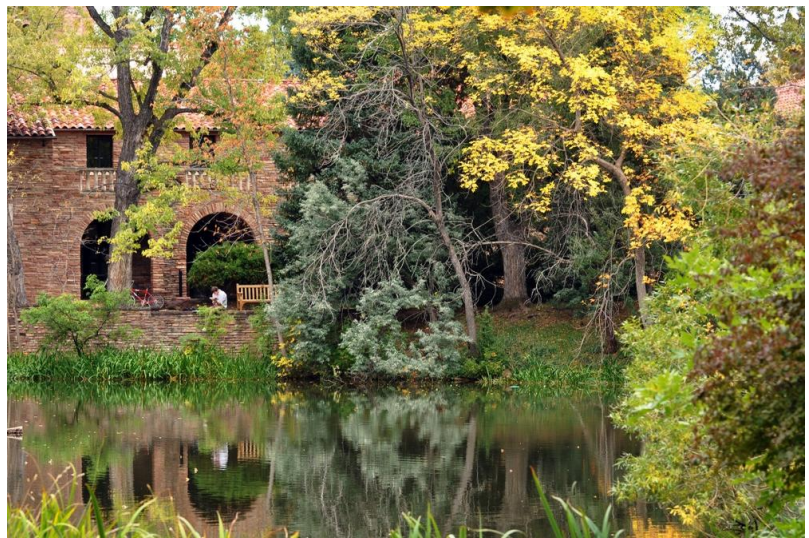
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- Your name
- Your degree(s)
- The year that you graduated from CU

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information about yourself
such as:

- Professional activities
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- Other activities of interest
- Insights into how your CU degree has helped to shape your life and work

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