



May 1, 2025 | 6-7:30 p.m.

**Chancellor's Hall and Auditorium,
Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE)**

*Co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences,
Center for Teaching & Learning, School of Education, and
Brian Good with the Best Should Teach Initiative.*



University of Colorado **Boulder**

PROGRAM

Welcome

Kirk Ambrose, Founding Director of the Center for Teaching & Learning

2025 Best Should Teach Lecture:

Alphonse Keasley, Former Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement

Gold Awards | CU Boulder Faculty

Gold Awards | Public School Teachers

Silver Awards | Lead Graduate Teachers

The Best Should Teach Recitation

Reception

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Alphonse Keasley



With over 30 years at CU Boulder, **Alphonse Keasley** has worn many hats—as a faculty member, staff member, and as Associate Vice Chancellor in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement.

Keasley began his career in higher education in 1971 as a faculty member at Oklahoma State University, where he taught courses in audiology, his original field of training and clinical practice. After arriving at CU Boulder in 1974 to pursue doctoral studies, he continued teaching in the Department of Communication Disorders—now known as Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences—where he

led courses in voice and diction, auditory rehabilitation, and clinical practice at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Over his decades at CU Boulder, Keasley developed and taught numerous impactful courses, many of which he personally designed to address evolving student needs and deepen engagement with issues of diversity, inclusion, and global awareness. He launched CU's first successful Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, teaching its summer research course from 1995 into the early 2000s. He also created and taught the honors program course Diversity and Inclusion: Democracy for the 21st Century from 1996 until his retirement in 2020. Among his most cherished teaching experiences was the August Wilson course, developed in collaboration with the Department of Ethnic Studies. The course remains a favorite among alumni who continue to share memories and reflections with him. In 2007, Keasley was selected by CU's Study Abroad Office to design an international course, which took students to South Africa to explore the philosophy of Ubuntu. Though the course formally ran for three years, he continued traveling with small groups of students—supporting their research journeys by covering most of their travel costs with funds earned through unpaid teaching engagements.

Today, Keasley continues to contribute to CU Boulder's educational community through the Leadership Studies Minor, where he teaches as needed and mentors aspiring scholars, performers, and leaders. His passion for teaching, mentoring, and creating inclusive, transformative learning experiences remains undiminished.

2024-2025 BEST SHOULD TEACH GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Kelvin Bates



Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering

Kelvin Bates is an innovative researcher and educator in the field of atmospheric chemistry, specializing in the complex interactions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to harmful air pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter. Bates holds a PhD in chemistry from Caltech and has an impressive background, including postdoctoral work at Harvard University and research at UC Davis and NOAA. His past field campaigns, such as AEROMMA and USOS, have taken him to new heights as he deployed mass spectrometers on aircraft to study the atmosphere in real time. Through collaborative partnerships with renowned organizations such as NOAA and NASA, Bates has taken his research into the field, collecting vital data from aircraft, stationary sites, and vehicles. His work has global implications, contributing to our understanding of air pollution from local to regional scales and guiding efforts to mitigate its impact on both health and the environment.

Bates creates an engaging, hands-on learning environment where students are encouraged to think critically about global environmental challenges. His teaching blends scientific theory with real-world applications, helping students connect what they learn to broader societal impacts. By incorporating discussions, collaborative projects, and fieldwork, Bates ensures that students also gain practical experience that they can apply beyond the classroom. His approach is student-centered, fostering an atmosphere of openness where students feel supported and motivated to engage with the material. Bates is also known for his dedication to mentorship, offering individualized guidance and feedback to help students succeed academically, develop professionally, and contribute meaningfully to addressing environmental challenges.

“His dedication to teaching and mentorship goes beyond the classroom—whether it’s providing guidance on assignments or offering invaluable advice on presentations. Professor Bates’ support has profoundly impacted my CU Boulder experience and given me the confidence to grow as a researcher and future PhD student.”

— Student nomination

Jolene Fisher



Associate Professor, Advertising, Public Relations and Design

Jolene Fisher specializes in the intersections of new media, gender, and strategic communication for development and social change. Her current research focuses on the use of digital games for social change, the role of organizational transparency in building stakeholder trust, and how strategic communication pedagogy can create communities of action on university campuses. Fisher's work helps illuminate how media and communication strategies can be used to address social issues and has been published in peer-reviewed journals like *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *Studies in Comparative Development*, and *Simulation & Gaming*.

As a professor, Fisher is committed to making complex ideas clear and engaging for students. Her approach connects academic theory with practical, real-world applications. Even in large lecture classes, Fisher ensures that students feel involved by incorporating relevant pop culture references, current events, and case studies, making each lesson applicable. She takes a hands-on approach to learning, encouraging students to participate in class discussions, group activities, and collaborative projects. Her interactive style creates a classroom environment where students are empowered to explore, challenge ideas, and engage with the material in a meaningful way, all while being guided toward professional and academic growth.

Before joining academia, Fisher worked as a strategic communication specialist for nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and internationally. She earned her doctorate from the University of Oregon and has taught at both the University of Oregon and the University of Alabama, where she has gained a reputation for providing valuable mentorship.

“Professor Fisher is an incredible mentor both in and out of the classroom. Despite teaching a lecture of 200 students, she makes every class feel personal and engaging by connecting the material to current events and pop culture that resonate with us.”

— Student nomination

2024-2025 BEST SHOULD TEACH GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Peter Hunt



Professor, Classics

Peter Hunt is a distinguished classical historian whose research focuses on warfare, society, slavery, historiography, and oratory in ancient Greece. He earned his MA from CU Boulder in 1988 and his PhD from Stanford University in 1994. His first book, *Slaves, Warfare and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (1998), explores the conflict between the actual participation of slaves and Helots in Greek military conflicts and their depiction by contemporary historians. His second book, *War, Peace, and Alliance in Demosthenes' Athens* (2010), examines how Athenian oratory reveals the Athenians' thoughts and feelings about foreign relations. This work, reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* and awarded the Kayden Prize from CU, exemplifies Hunt's mastery in analyzing primary sources to understand ancient Greek political thought. He has also contributed chapters to *The Oxford Handbook of Demosthenes*, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, and *The Cambridge History of the World*. Hunt is currently working on a commentary on Plutarch's Phocion, further extending his scholarly engagement with ancient Greek history.

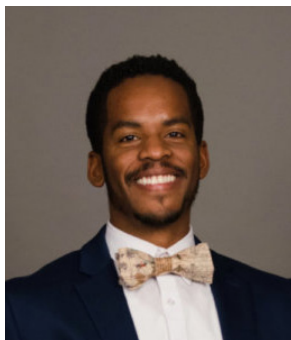
In the classroom, Hunt is known for his commitment to student success, combining rigorous intellectual challenges with an empathetic, supportive approach. His courses foster intellectual exploration while providing individualized support to help students master difficult concepts. Hunt's teaching is characterized by his ability to make complex ideas accessible and create an environment where mistakes are part of the learning process. His classes are known for encouraging critical engagement with the material, using creative discussions and assignments to explore sensitive topics, such as ancient slavery, from multiple perspectives. He is particularly recognized for his thoughtful mentorship, guiding students through the transition from undergraduate to graduate study and offering valuable career advice.



Professor Hunt is the epitome of an excellent scholar and mentor. His expertise on ancient slavery is unparalleled, and his passion for sharing that knowledge with students is evident in every class.”

— Student nomination

Warren Sconiers



Associate Teaching Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Warren Sconiers's research focuses on how climate change affects arthropod diversity and nectar composition, particularly at the Mountain Research Station in collaboration with Katharine Suding. Sconiers' work examines how shifts in plant communities influence arthropod species diversity, with an emphasis on higher latitudes in the Niwot region. His research provides valuable insights into the ecological impacts of climate

change on both plant and arthropod populations.

In the classroom, Sconiers is known for his engaging, student-centered teaching style. He combines scientific theory with practical applications, making complex biological concepts accessible and engaging for students. Sconiers fosters a collaborative learning environment where students feel comfortable exploring ideas, asking questions, and applying critical thinking. His humor, relaxed demeanor, and willingness to connect with students help create a welcoming space for learning. Sconiers also works closely with the Center for Teaching and Learning to enhance engagement in large classes, incorporating evidence-based pedagogical strategies to ensure that students feel supported and motivated to succeed.

Beyond his teaching, Sconiers is dedicated to mentoring students, offering guidance on academic and professional development. His approach to teaching goes beyond the curriculum; he builds a strong course community and encourages students to invest in their learning through both in-class and online interactions. Sconiers' dedication to student success and his commitment to fostering an inclusive and engaging classroom environment make him a standout educator at CU Boulder.

“Thanks to his guidance, I gained the confidence to tackle challenging material and believe in my academic potential. Dr. Sconiers goes beyond teaching—he inspires curiosity, perseverance, and a love for learning that stays with you long after the course ends.”

— **Student nomination**

2024-2025 BEST SHOULD TEACH GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Ben Shear



Assistant Professor, Research and Evaluation Methodology, School of Education

Ben Shear is an assistant professor and a faculty partner at CU Boulder's Center for Assessment, Design, Research & Evaluation (CADRE). His research explores how tests and assessments are used in education policy and research, asking questions like, "What do test scores measure, and how do we know?"

Shear mentors graduate students and teaches graduate statistics courses that encourage students to become thoughtful consumers and producers of quantitative research. He grew up in a small town in Massachusetts and attended high school at the F.W. Parker Charter Essential School, where a dedicated community of educators that included his mother and neighbors Ted and Nancy Sizer shaped his beliefs about teaching and the value of public education.

Before joining CU Boulder, Shear taught high school math at the Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado, and completed graduate studies at the University of British Columbia and Stanford University. Shear strives to provide the kind of mentoring and teaching he has been fortunate to receive, engaging students through projects, critical discussion, and even the occasional magic trick to illustrate statistical concepts. Since 2017, he has coordinated a free summer quant course to support incoming doctoral students as they begin their own research careers. Outside of work, you might find him hiking and rock climbing with his family or learning a new card trick.

“Ben is thoughtful, patient, welcoming, kind and prepared with every class that he teaches. He finds ways to make complicated material digestible, while providing the support necessary for students to feel comfortable approaching him when they don't understand.”

— Student nomination

Harry Mohr Starn, Jr.



Teaching Professor & Director of the Personal Financial Planner Program, Leeds School of Business

With a BS from the United States Military Academy at West Point and an MS in Finance from CU Boulder, Harry Mohr Starn, Jr. brings extensive experience in both academia and the finance industry. Before CU, he was a senior lecturer at California Lutheran University, where he led the Financial Planning Program and directed Distance Learning.

Starn is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), and has authored the 11th Edition of *Practicing Financial Planning for Professionals* and a self-help book for students, *How to Succeed at a Private College or University*. His courses connect real-world financial strategies with academic theory, equipping students with both the technical skills and practical insights needed for careers in financial planning. In the classroom, Starn is known for his engaging teaching style that emphasizes active learning and real-world application. He encourages students to think critically, collaborate with peers, and actively participate in class discussions. Starn fosters an environment of support and inclusivity, offering guidance and mentorship to ensure that students not only grasp complex concepts but also feel confident in applying them. He is dedicated to helping students succeed, both academically and professionally, and takes an individualized approach to mentoring, helping students navigate job opportunities, internships, and career development. Starn's commitment to teaching excellence has earned him several awards already, including the California Lutheran "Demonstrated Excellence in Teaching" award and the United States Distance Learning Association's "Best Practices Bronze Award."



His approach to teaching financial planning is not only clear and practical but also personalized because he genuinely cares about his students' success. Thanks to his mentorship, I not only gained confidence in my abilities but also developed the skills and knowledge I need for my career."

— **Student nomination**

2024-2025 BEST SHOULD TEACH GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Joshua Strayhorn



Associate Professor, Political Science

Joshua Strayhorn is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science at CU Boulder, specializing in formal theory, political institutions, and judicial politics. His research applies game-theoretic models to explore the implications of delegation, oversight, and accountability mechanisms within political and judicial systems, focusing on how these structures impact democratic governance. Strayhorn's work often examines political hierarchies and how various actors

within these systems interact, especially in contexts like the U.S. Supreme Court. His current projects include using sentiment analysis to analyze Supreme Court opinions and investigating how the Court's language towards Congress and dissenting justices changes over time.

Strayhorn earned his PhD from Emory University in 2013 and has been a part of the CU Boulder faculty since then. His approach to teaching reflects his commitment to fostering broad-minded citizens, as he encourages students to engage with diverse ways of thinking and apply them to understanding the complexities of the political world. His courses are built around interactive learning and critical thinking, with a focus on real-world applications. He challenges students to think deeply about political systems, and he emphasizes the importance of gaining exposure to opportunities outside the classroom, such as internships and experiential learning, to enhance their academic journeys. Known for his approachable teaching style, Strayhorn creates a classroom environment where students feel supported in their intellectual growth. He values mentorship and has been recognized with the Faculty Mentorship Award for his commitment to guiding students through their academic and professional paths. Strayhorn believes in creating an environment of trust and respect, where constructive criticism is always aimed at helping students reach their full potential.

“Beyond his academic support, Professor Strayhorn genuinely cares about his students’ success. His mentorship has been invaluable in shaping my academic journey, and I’m grateful for the trust and respect he fosters in the classroom.”

— Student nomination

Maurie Marcil



Kindergarten Teacher at Whittier International Elementary School

Maurie Marcil is a beloved and respected teacher at with over 20 years of service in Boulder Valley School District. Marcil has a remarkable ability to create an engaging and joyful classroom where kindergartners thrive through songs, humor, movement, inquiry, and choice. After decades of teaching and a master's degree in education from CU Boulder, she brings a wealth of pedagogical expertise to her school. Additionally, she continuously seeks professional development opportunities to embrace new ideas and inspire peers. She implements research-based best practices to support students in achieving high levels of academic skill, as well as the habits and characteristics of a life-long learner. Marcil provides masterful differentiation and individualized instruction for students with a variety of learning needs from emerging bilinguals to students with individual education plans to students identified as gifted and talented.

A true leader at Whittier, Marcil has worn many hats: teacher, tutor, after-school class instructor, leadership team member, and International Baccalaureate Coordinator. In every role, she has been a passionate advocate for student agency. Her classroom is a shining example of how to give students voice, choice, and ownership in their learning. From letting students select their favorite words and share about their families to reflecting on their learning through video blogs, she ensures that every child feels seen, heard, and valued. She is an exceptional educator who embodies the spirit of the Best Should Teach Award through her dedication, innovation, leadership, and love for teaching.

“Maurie is a beloved figure in the Whittier community, radiating joy and warmth to everyone she meets. She connects with people, young and old, with authenticity and positivity, helping every learner in her classroom feel seen and valued for who they are. These positive relationships create a learning environment where students feel safe to take risks and take on new learning challenges.”

— Caitlin Kline, Data & Instructional Coach at Whittier International Elementary School

Ashley Beaudoin



Health Teacher at Longmont High School

Ashley Beaudoin is a health teacher at Longmont High School who embodies the qualities of an exemplary educator through her remarkable connection with students in her daily interactions, where she warmly acknowledges each individual, fostering a sense of belonging and value. Beaudoin masterfully balances high expectations with strong relationships, creating a supportive yet challenging learning environment where all students can thrive.

Beyond her direct classroom impact, Beaudoin is dedicated to the teaching profession and the future of education. She was the driving force behind the initiation of the Longmont High School peer mentoring program, tirelessly working to connect upperclassmen with ninth graders. Recognizing the potential of these peer mentors, Beaudoin has also established an opportunity for them to earn concurrent enrollment college credit for their work. This innovative approach not only supports struggling students but also allows peer tutors to explore a career in education, earn valuable college credit, and give back to their school community. Her leadership in transitioning student aides to peer mentors and building a professional study team for participating teachers underscores her commitment to collaboration and the development of effective instructional practices. Beaudoin's comprehensive peer mentoring initiative directly addresses the unique needs of students, providing crucial academic and social-emotional support for their high school success. Beaudoin is a dedicated, innovative, and impactful teacher who undoubtedly deserves recognition as a recipient of the Best Should Teach Award.



Her remarkable connection with students is evident in her daily interactions, where she warmly acknowledges each individual, fostering a sense of belonging and value. Ashley masterfully balances high expectations with strong relationships, creating a supportive yet challenging learning environment where all students can thrive.”

— David K. Baker, Professional Development Coordinator, St. Vrain Valley School District

2024-2025 BEST SHOULD TEACH SILVER AWARD WINNERS

Lead Graduate Teachers

Arts & Humanities

Julius Arnold, Classics
Brittany Ashley, Art History
Daniel Carr, Philosophy
Sam Collier, Theater
Joel Ferst, College of Music
Emily Moyer, Art Practices
Emily Swertfeger, History
Alston Tyndall, Dance
Scout Wood, Religious Studies

College of Media, Communication, and Information


Nihal Alaqabawy, Journalism
Hadassah Ward, Communication

Engineering

Pablo Botin, Mechanical Engineering
Morgan Byers, Computer Science
Allison Cook, Environmental Engineering
William Frantz, Biomedical Engineering
Grace Gomez, Electrical Engineering
Chandra Kanth Nagesh, Computer Science
Arunima Prakash, Aerospace Engineering
Ritu Raj, Chemical and Biological Engineering

Languages & Literatures

Juliette Andre, French and Italian
Rocio Gavira-Dominguez, Spanish and Portuguese
Katherine Henze, English
Daria Makarova, Russian
Hannah Olsson, English
Alla Savelieva, German



Maria Vazquez, Spanish and Portuguese
Yanan Xiang, Asian Languages and Civilization
Taoxuan Xu, Asian Languages and Civilization

Sciences & Mathematics

Ari Geisler, Applied Mathematics
Zack Hazlett, Molecular, Chemical and Developmental Biology
Brianna Hibner, Geology
Stevi Ibonie, Psychology and Neuroscience
Jed Lenetsky, Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences
Henry Li, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Henry Mateo Valle-Ayala, Biochemistry
Alanna Mayberry, Integrative Physiology
Luca Palasti, Geography
Maggie Reardon, Mathematics
Kathryn Sullivan, Environmental Studies
Nikole Scribner Trout, Applied Mathematics

Social Sciences

Kate Arnold-Murray, Linguistics
Kayla Cormier, Speech Language Hearing Sciences
Kelsi Faley, Sociology
Matthew Gee, Ethnic Studies
Anja Gruber, Economics
Peter Karanevich, School of Education
Samantha Register, Political Science

Departments in the Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities annually select one outstanding graduate instructor to serve as a Lead Graduate Teacher. Each Lead has received extensive training on college pedagogy, academic leadership, management, and professional development and then train peer graduate instructors on these topics. They perform videotape observations, micro-teaching sessions, lead workshops on teaching that are specific to their discipline, and help other graduate instructors complete the requirements for the Certificate in College Teaching.

The Best Should Teach Initiative

The Best Should Teach Initiative strives to acknowledge excellence in teaching and academic leadership. The Center for Teaching & Learning manages the initiative in coordination with the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences. The late Lindley and Marguerite Stiles established the initiative in 1996 to promote the ideal that “The Best Should Teach.” A Best Should Teach sculpture, designed by John Haertling, which represents the flame of enlightenment, serves as a visual reminder of the initiative and of the importance of teaching and academic leadership. The School of Education supports the Best Should Teach Initiative by giving Best Should Teach Gold Awards to outstanding teachers in its partner districts. The Best Should Teach Gold Awards also honor outstanding faculty on the Boulder campus and Silver Awards honor Lead Graduate Teachers.

Colleges and Universities with Best Should Teach Initiatives

University of Colorado Boulder, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Eastern Kentucky University, and Fort Lewis College

Lindley J. Stiles

University of Colorado Boulder alumnus Lindley J. Stiles was a lifelong educator who died at age 94 in 2008. He held high-level academic positions, including deanships at the University of Virginia and the University of Wisconsin and a professorship at Northwestern University. Stiles was a policymaker, instrumental in the Brown v. Board of Education 1954 Supreme Court decision, and was known for his advocacy on behalf of under-represented minorities. He believed the most gifted scholars should inform others through teaching. Stiles considered teaching to be the ultimate profession because it nourishes all the others.

Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin

Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin were friends and mentors of Stiles and generous supporters of education, contributing to the Best Should Teach fund on multiple occasions. Their gifts established an endowment to create the Best Should Teach Lecture.



To those to come, I leave the flame!

Hold it as high as you can reach.

If a better world is your aim,

All must agree:

The Best Should Teach”

—*Lindley Stiles*

To support teacher education at CU Boulder, please send your gift to:

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Make checks out to CU Foundation

For questions, contact Micah Abram at
micah.abram@colorado.edu or 303-807-7620.