



Presidents Leadership Class

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

SPRING/SUMMER 2017 – COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The Director's Cut

We hope that this newsletter finds you all in good health and spirits! With the spring semester almost disappeared in the review mirror and the upcoming semester coming into focus, I'd like to take a moment to update our community on several items you might find interesting.

Early in the spring semester the First Year students learn about Human Centered Design and rapid prototyping in the course Community Issues in Leadership, then apply that learning to a semester-long design challenge hosted by a community partner as their Group Design and Community Service Project. The purpose of this project is to develop our students' insights, skills, and abilities as leaders who are proactive and involved with their communities along three main lines: 1) Apply human-centered design to explore challenges in collaboration with their community partner; 2) Explore how community partner leaders develop within, and give service to, the specific communities in which they work; and, 3) Learn about how these communities shape people's leadership styles and perspectives. This spring we partnered with [Impact on Education](#), [Integrated Work](#), [The Wayfaring Band](#), [Avid4Adventure](#), [Community Food Share](#), and [Zonta Foothills Club of Boulder County](#).

Each April we have the distinct honor and pleasure to administer the selection process for the [Alvin G. Flanagan and Walker Family Scholarships](#). These scholarships are open to students in PLC, Leeds School of Business, and the College of Media, Communication and Information. [Alvin Flanagan](#) was one of PLC's founders and a Lifetime Trustee of the Student Leadership Institute. His professional colleague and friend [Cecil Walker](#) continues to be very involved with the selection interviews, and is regularly joined by his son Rich Walker (CU alumnus and current PLC Board of Advocates member) and daughter-in-law Karen Harty Walker (CU alumna). This year, which was the 35th for the Flanagan, nearly \$50,000 was awarded across 35 students between the two scholarships. You can learn more about the Flanagan and Walker, and all our PLC scholarships [here](#).

In late July we will once again send forth a band of merry and determined students for seven days in the Rocky Mountain National Park for our [Applied Leadership Wilderness Course](#). Their backcountry time is preceded by three days of training on campus. Organized and overseen by our Manager of Operations & Experiential Learning, [Silas Binkley](#), this is a completely student led operation once in the field. This course counts as a lower division Walkabout for the participants and an upper division Walkabout for the two trip leaders. This year we had two of our Board of Advocates members underwrite the \$450 course fee for three students with high financial need!

We're going to Cuba in spring 2018! Well, at least 15 of our students accompanied by [Dr. JulieMarie Shepherd Macklin](#) and one PLC Class Advisor. In an effort to establish a study abroad component within PLC's curriculum we collaborated with CU's Education Abroad office to evolve the spring offering of our existing course Global Issues in Leadership into a Global Spring course, which combines normal on-campus instruction and a 10-day abroad component in Cuba after the semester ends. Learn more about [Global Spring Cuba 2018 here](#). In anticipation of your question, yes, we are considering alumni participation in 2019 if all goes well in 2018. This is an expensive course for the students, so if you're interested in assisting financially this year, please contact me. At this time, we do not believe the Trump Administration's recent changes to the Cuba travel policy will prevent us from going in 2018.

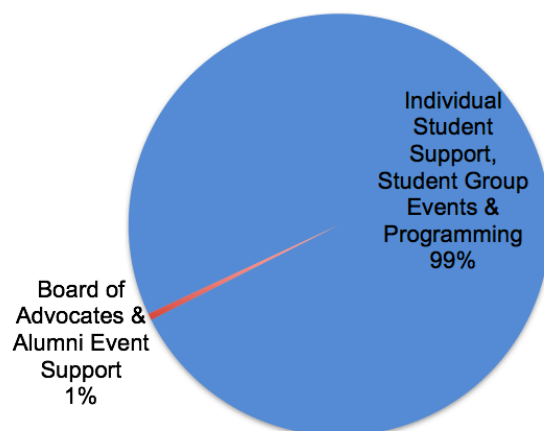
There are so many ways for you to stay in touch with PLC through our [website](#), with [your fellow alumni](#) and the [PLC Alumni Club](#), the [PLC LinkedIn group](#), email, [telephone](#), or [simply by stopping by for a chat](#). You're always welcome to reach out to the [staff and faculty](#), as well as the [PLC Board of Advocates](#). Please keep your contact info current in [CU's Alumni Association database](#).

Finally, we occasionally get inquiries from alumni about linking up with fellow PLC'ers in their local area. We can help with that! If you're interested in organizing a PLC meet-up where you live or travel to, please contact me so we can provide you with the basic outreach information. We've seen meet-ups as simple as no-host happy hours to organized dinners. We've even used CU's videoconferencing platform to broadcast this past April's [PLC Summit](#) live to a meet-up in Colorado Springs.

Curious about some aspect of PLC that we're not addressing in our newsletters or on our website? Please let me know at stephen.dinauer@colorado.edu. We'd love to hear from you! Oh, and by the way, this fall marks PLC's 45th year!

Steve Dinauer
PLC Director
stephen.dinauer@colorado.edu
303-492-7181

PLC Gift Fund Planned Distributions: Fiscal Year 2018



How You Can Help!

Visionaries who saw the need to offer a unique experience to students and to pay it forward started PLC in 1972. Their vision continues today in a PLC community that provides financial support to our current students and to our programming. Your contribution has a first-order effect on students either individually or across the PLC program, and stays here at CU Boulder. Any amount makes a positive difference. You can even designate your support to a specific activity, e.g., First Year Orientation or Welcome BBQ, by contacting [Steve Dinauer](#).

[Donate Now](#)

-----PLC Alumni Club Update-----

The PLC Alumni Club is now in its fourth year of existence and continues to gain steam. The Alumni Club is organized under the CU Boulder Alumni Association, and is currently headed up by Kerry Masock (PLC 2007) and Cait McHugh (PLC 2004). All PLC alumni are automatically members. The purpose of the Alumni Club is to continue to develop and support extraordinary leaders through an active and engaged alumni network. We encourage PLC alumni to support the club and each other

through their active personal involvement in the club and its activities, events, and initiatives, and through their personal support of the club and PLC through investment of time, energy, or philanthropy.

Thanks to the hard work of a group of about 20 PLC alumni, the Alumni Club put on the following engaging and entertaining events over the past year:

- During Back to Boulder / Homecoming Weekend, the Alumni Club hosted a Friday afternoon open house at the PLC Office, a Friday happy hour at the St. Julien Hotel, and a Saturday pre-game tailgate on the Koelbel Lawn. Expect more of the same this fall!
- In November, nearly 50 PLC alumni gathered at the Denver Press Club for the Alumni Club's annual meeting.
- In late April, the Alumni Club presented its Fourth Annual PLC Alumni Lecture in Denver's RiNo District. Nearly 40 PLC alumni came together for a pleasant reception and an engaging conversation with community leaders on the current status of public education in Colorado.
- Be on the lookout for the second annual PLC Alumni Club Day of Service this August!

The Alumni Club has focused on obtaining and maintaining up-to-date contact information, creating new and innovative forms of engagement opportunities, and being a support network for PLC alumni everywhere. The planning meetings for all of our engagement opportunities are as fun as the main events, and all alumni are welcome to attend. Although all PLC alumni are automatically members, your email is not automatically included in our system. Please contact Kerry or Cait: kerry.masock@colorado.edu or cait.c.mchugh@gmail.com to get on our email list.

More importantly though- Please update your information with the University at this link! <http://www.colorado.edu/alumni/update>

-----*Alumni Spotlights*-----



Dionne Williams, MPA
Deputy Director,
Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs,
Denver, CO
PLC Alumna (1995)

Whenever I reminisce about my time at CU, PLC is usually a part of those memories. But I wasn't so sure at the beginning that I was a good fit for the program. Sometimes I had a hard time relating to the coursework, and I found the debates in recitation classes to be equal parts stimulating and aggravating. It was hard at times to envision how I would use the lessons from PLC in my life and career.

When I left CU, I took some time finding the right path. I started a family and explored several different careers, ultimately landing at the State of Colorado's Department of Revenue. Before that job, I had never considered working in government. But I immediately found my calling, and I have worked in the public sector ever since. I spent several years working on various teams for the State, and in 2007 I became an employee of the City and County of Denver working in the Treasury Division. I came to love the process of creating and implementing policy, and working with constituents on the issues they face every day as they try to access everything our city has to offer.

Government work can be rewarding but also thankless, and we must work hard to avoid getting stuck in the bureaucracy that inevitably comes with any public service. I learned in PLC how important it is to stay engaged and always be mission-focused, never forgetting the population you are serving. Becoming involved in the community I live in means listening to citizens even when they are sharing a complaint, working hard to make their lives and experiences better, and acting as a steward for limited resources. I always start a new project by asking myself who I am serving and what they need, and making sure my work fits into our mission.

It was during a PLC evening lecture that I first met Michael Hancock, a guest speaker from the Urban League of Denver who is now the Mayor of Denver and one of the most influential people I've ever worked for. I got the chance to work on his task force in 2013 that was focused on rolling out retail marijuana sales in the city, and it was a fascinating experience. Later that year I joined the Department of Parks and Recreation as part of the Recreation division's senior leadership team, and I had the privilege of working on a program to give Denver's youth free access to recreation centers and cultural venues. I later moved to the Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs, where I am now the Deputy Director and continue to work every day on behalf of youth in the City. My career journey has been very rewarding, and I can point to PLC as an important experience that shaped who I am as a leader and continues to influence the way I think about my work every day.

Romain Vakilitabar
Founder & Chief Artist, PathosVR
PLC Alumnus (2010)

College was a very circuitous journey for me. During my first year, a good friend, Jared Leventhal (who I'd met in my PLC recitation) and I started a business called The Fifth Season and we recorded the stories and memories of elderly people to preserve their legacy for generations to come. It was the most meaningful work I had ever done. Speaking with people who were at the last chapter in their lives, hearing their philosophies on life, ruminating in similar philosophies about regret, love, family, changed the way I viewed the world and how I would go about living my life.



After my sophomore year, I thought it'd be worth it to "drop out" of school to grow the business. After noticing the lack of potential for scale, as well as the difficulty in marketing the service, we decided to pause our operations. Because I was already out of school, and didn't want to reenroll midway through the year, I sought out other opportunities. I connected with a former PLCer who had become my mentor, and he was excited to bring me on as his apprentice. His name is Daniel Epstein, and he was piloting a new project - Unreasonable at Sea - a partnership with Semester at Sea that put 10 social entrepreneurs on a ship to help them conceptualize their business on a global scale with the help of world renown mentors. I had the best of both worlds - working with inspiring social entrepreneurs, as well as getting the chance to study and meet with students my age

Upon my return from the voyage, my parents were adamant about me earning my degree. So I did. And although it was hard, after having experienced a unique year off school, I tried to take full advantage of the amazing resources available at CU. But I also was constantly thinking about what the education could look like. I met Eric Glustrom, Daniel Epstein's roommate, who was thinking about the same questions. I quickly befriended him, and had the opportunity to dream up a new university model while working at Watson University. I spent a year working at Watson while finishing up classes at the University of Colorado. It was tough to juggle both, but instrumental in helping me see the dichotomy between what exists today in education, and what could be improved upon for the

future.

I worked at Watson for 3 years, helping it go from a semester program, to the world's first degree-bearing incubator. During those three years, we graduated 67 changemakers from 30 countries who had mobilized over \$12 million in funding and 100 employees for their social ventures. After hiring a couple new team members who would work on scaling the organization, I felt like the work I had intended to do was done, and it was time to pass the baton to team members who could take it much further than I could. I felt like there was a new idea that I needed to help bring to light. I left last fall to start PathosVR, a company which creates empathy-based Virtual Reality experiences to change how we perceive the world.

The idea behind PathosVR came after noticing that the root cause of many of world's problems originated from a lack of understanding for one another - a lack of empathy.

I did my very first Virtual Reality project around changing the common perception around "global poverty". The VR experience, entitled "My Beautiful Home" takes place in "Africa's Biggest Slum" in Kenya. The experience takes place from the perspective of a woman who calls that slum her home, and audiences have a chance to step into her reality and experience the slum from her perspective and narrative. It was featured at the Boulder International Film Festival, The Earth Day Film Festival, and the National Film Festival for Talented Youth. My second project "Strangers" debuts in September 2017 and is about those who feel forgotten in America's heartland.

Virtual Reality is still in its infancy. Many people have not experienced it. But they will. And though its biggest investor is the video game industry, I hope that people will recognize the beauty in almost literally "walking a mile in someone else's shoes..."

-----Student Spotlights-----



Conor McNamara: PLC '14
Computer Science

Conor McNamara will be a senior this fall studying computer science engineering with minors in leadership studies and business. During his time at CU, Conor has spent the summers interning at Liberty Global Inc. in Amsterdam, as well as BMGI in Denver. This summer, he will be working at Arrow Electronics in Denver as a Marketing Intelligence Intern.

Beyond academics, Conor is involved in an assortment of activities. In addition to being a PLC scholar, he's also active with the Engineering Honors Program, the Theta Xi fraternity, and the CU outdoor program.

Conor spent his junior year as a Discovery Learning Apprentice at the Institute of Cognitive Sciences at CU, where he conducted research on data mining and machine learning techniques. He was published for his research and presented his work at an international conference in Canada.

Conor has especially enjoyed his PLC experience and loves the community that PLC has provided him. In addition, he is grateful for the opportunities the program has given him to meet professionals in his industry and explore multiple career paths. For his upper-division walkabout, Conor served as a student trip leader for the 2016 PLC Applied Leadership Wilderness Course. With a passion for the outdoors and adventure, Conor hopes to one day climb all the fourteen thousand foot peaks in Colorado (he's already hit 46!).

After graduation, Conor hopes to pursue a career in the computer science industry or work as a

professional outdoor guide. With a passion for creating positive change, Conor wants to work on projects that are making the world a better place, regardless of the industry he is in.



PLC Sends 28 Scholars to 2017 Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation's Colorado Leadership Alliance Summit

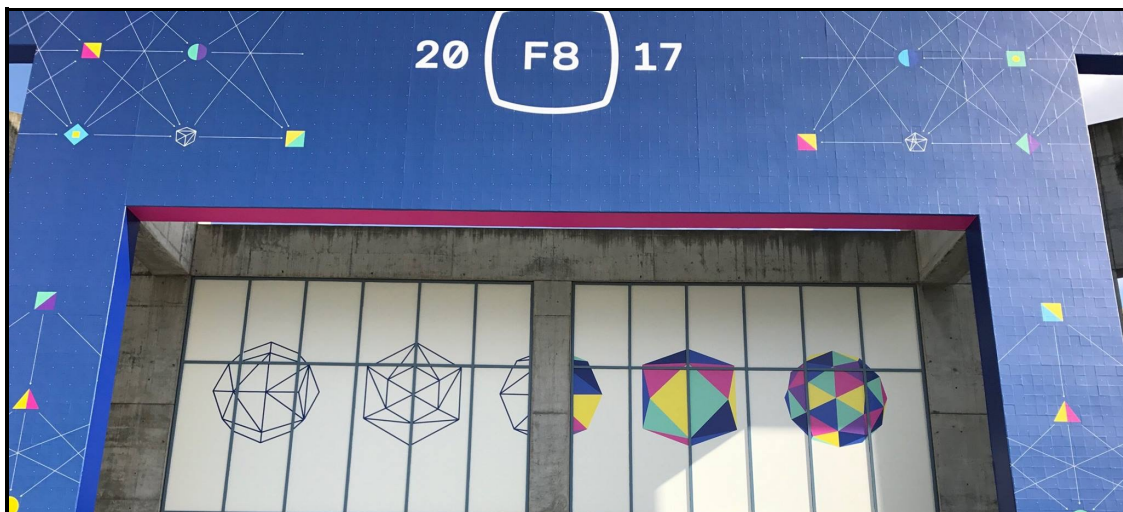
Students from member schools spent the day workshopping with *deliberative dialogue*. The event concluded with Denver Metro leaders engaging with the students on mentor walks.

The Summit offered a powerful new approach to leadership. Instead of framing leadership as a singular endeavor championed by a strong and charismatic leader, it transformed leadership into a platform for effective deliberation. By remaining passionately unbiased, leaders of this facilitative style are able to give every stakeholder a voice and create solutions to complex problems that the community had full input in forming. I hope to embody this type of leadership. - Michael Anthony ('15)

PLC'ers attend the National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS), United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

2017 PLC attendees: Breanna Williams ('13), Paula Pulido ('16), Katherine Beaudry ('16), Sydney Burckhardt ('15)

"I highly recommend attending NCLS because visiting students get one-on-one interaction with USAFA cadets, which allows them to ask any and every question they have about the military, the academy, and leadership. The experience I got attending NCLS changed my life and my perspective on the world." - Breanna Williams





Elijah Staple ('14) interns with Facebook in San Jose, CA

Elijah Staple recently spent time in San Jose, CA for the Facebook F8 Developers Conference. Elijah has interned at Facebook the past two summers as a software engineering, and is currently learning about new technology Facebook is working on, and how developers outside of the company can use it.

-----Recruitment & Selection Updates -----

The 2017-18 academic year brings some exciting changes in the workings and ways of the Recruitment and Selection team for PLC.

Team Members

This will be the first year that we have invited a sophomore to serve on the R&S team along side an upperclassman. We had such overwhelming success with two sophomores running the Experiential Weekend program last year that we decided to open more positions up to sophomores who exhibit a genuine excitement for the program and the staff positions. Sophomore Alice Mueller will partner with junior Eileen Klawitter on the team helping to find and select the cohort of 2018. In an effort to connect the alumni network to the current students in PLC, we have included a short introduction to the R&S team members below.



**Eileen Klawitter: PLC '15
International Affairs**

After two years of college Eileen finally declared an International Affairs major because of the broad knowledge base it provides. She has found that the IA major uses geography, political science, and other influencing factors to explain and give her a solid understanding of international policies, economics, language, and government relations. Apart from her IA major and being a PLC scholar, Eileen is also a member of Gamma Phi Beta sorority, Phi Sigma Pi honors fraternity, and works with Girls on the Run, a non-profit organization with a focus on

empowering girls through running. Through her R&S position on the PLC Student Staff, Eileen hopes to work on and improve her skills and confidence in her presentation and public speaking skills. When asked why she applied for the position she said,

"I applied for the R&S position because I love PLC. PLC gave me a home when I first came to CU. I have made my lifelong, best friends, and have grown exponentially as a student, writer, communicator, and member of my community. I want to help other students to have the same experience and opportunities. I want to ensure the strength of PLC for years to come by putting my best foot forward to recruit the next amazing cohort."

Alice Mueller: PLC '16
MCDB & Philosophy of Law and Society

Pursuing degrees in both biology and philosophy, Alice has a particular interest in developing the critical thinking skills needed for careers in science policy, law, or regulation. Alice recently attended CU in DC to study science policy with PLC alumnus, Dr. Joseph Pesce, and she currently volunteers at the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center in Denver, compiling resources for the center's expansion. In addition to R&S, Alice is a member of the CU Mock Trial team and serves on the Center for Student Involvement Board. In her R&S work Alice aims to develop into a more approachable and efficient communicator with her teammates as well as with prospective applicants.



Selection Interviews

As is the norm, we plan to interview about 25-30 students from out-of-state along with the 160 on-campus in-person interviews. In the past for students who simply cannot come to campus, we have done everything from one-on-one phone interviews to panel video-conferencing. This coming selection cycle we are trying something new to streamline the interview process of our remote applicants and to engage alumni panelists who cannot travel to Boulder. Next spring we will be using a common human resources video-interviewing platform called [HireVue](#). This web-based program allows us to submit tailored questions that the applicants then respond to in a recorded video. The applicant can access the system at their convenience within a defined window of time to record and submit their interview. There are no do-overs! We will then evaluate the interviews with a 3-5 member panel – a panel that doesn't have to be in the same room, the same city, or even the same time zone. Through the 24/7 accessibility of HireVue, panelists will watch and score applicants from their location at any time and at their own pace, and submit their assessments and comments just as they would if they were with us on campus. The PLC staff and faculty will also likely conduct select follow-on interviews with the highest scoring remote applicants. Much more information will be communicated as the panelist invitations go out in January 2018. But, if you have wanted to participate in interviews but just live too far away, this is your chance!

-----Save the Dates!-----

- **First-Year Welcome BBQ (all cohorts invited): August 23, Koenig, CU Boulder**
- **Second-Year Orientation: August 25, Chautauqua Park, Boulder**
- **First-Year Orientation: August 26 & 27, Cal-Wood, Jamestown, CO.**
- **First Day of Fall 2017 Classes: August 28**
- **First PLC Lecture: August 29**
- **Homecoming Weekend: October 27-29**