NEW PRESIDENT

“CSU is a national leader in higher education, and it has powerful momentum and an upward trajectory that can’t be stopped. Thank you all for giving me this remarkable opportunity to lead this institution. I’m so excited for all that we’re going to accomplish together.”

– Joyce McConnell
incoming CSU president

LEADERSHIP
MCCONNELL HIRED AS NEW COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Joyce E. McConnell, provost and vice president for academic affairs at West Virginia University, is the new leader of Colorado State University. On July 1, McConnell starts her term as CSU’s 15th president as the campus approaches its 150th anniversary on a wave of momentum as a top-tier research institution whose national reputation has surged along with notable strides in enrollment, graduation rates, research funding, private giving, and facilities expansion.

On March 29, the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System concluded a highly competitive five-month search by voting unanimously to hire McConnell from a pool of more than 80 candidates. She will be the first female president at CSU.

Rico Munn, chair of the governing board, described McConnell as an experienced leader with a deep passion for the work of higher education. She has the ability to unite diverse groups in a common drive for excellence, Munn said.
Joyce McConnell waves to a crowd of University students, faculty, and staff as her hiring is formalized by the Board of Governors.

McConnell brings to Colorado’s land-grant university a wealth of experience as chief academic and budget officer at West Virginia’s land-grant university. Like Colorado State, WVU is a top-tier public research institution; it is home to professional schools of law, medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy. There, McConnell has been responsible for the administration of academic policies, curriculum, budgetary matters, facilities, libraries, outreach programs, and research. She has worked with policymakers and helped lead WVU’s recent $1.2 billion fundraising campaign.

McConnell is a lawyer who earned degrees at Evergreen State College, Antioch School of Law, and Georgetown University Law School. She has worked 20 years at West Virginia, starting as an associate professor of law and rising to dean of the WVU law school before assuming her second-in-command leadership role at the university.

She succeeds President Tony Frank, who will begin serving exclusively as chancellor of the CSU System on July 1. Frank is in his 11th year as CSU president and will have served five years in the dual roles of campus president and system chancellor.

Microbiome science—like countless invisible organisms living in and around us—is thriving at Colorado State with the recent formation of the CSU Microbiome Network.

The network’s multidisciplinary members seek to understand how communities of microorganisms, including viruses, bacteria, archaean, and fungi, interact within their shared habitats to influence human and animal health, plant and soil biology, and broad environmental systems. The human gut microbiome, increasingly revealed as a driver of individual health, is just one example of a microbiome, which is defined as an ecosystem of microorganisms.

The CSU Microbiome Network hosted its first academic meeting on campus this month.

WHAT MAKES A “BOMB CYCLONE”?
IT’S ALL IN THE PRESSURE DROP

It might be spring, but parts of Colorado have been hit with double-whammy weather—two rare and intense snow storms, known as “bomb cyclones,” in less than a month.

What makes a storm a bomb cyclone? Start with a cyclone: a large weather system with low pressure at the center and precipitation along the cold and warm fronts, explained Russ Schumacher, an associate professor of atmospheric science and Colorado’s state climatologist. Then add the bomb: central storm-system pressure that drops precipitously and to unusually low levels, causing especially strong wind.

Blizzards that struck Colorado on March 13 and April 10 were preceded by mild conditions and moved onto the Great Plains with snowfall that spawned subsequent flooding, livestock losses, travel disruptions, and power outages.

ACCOLADES
BUSINESS DEAN HONORED BY WOMEN’S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Beth Walker, dean of the CSU College of Business, was recently honored as one of the 2019 Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Business by the Colorado Women’s Chamber of Commerce.

Walker, who joined CSU in 2015, leads a college with more than 2,600 enrolled students. Its undergraduate program in business administration offers nine academic concentrations. The college also offers four graduate degree programs, including its Master of Business Administration program that has jumped in rankings: U.S. News & World Report recently ranked the CSU MBA program as the best in Colorado; Financial Times ranked it No. 10 nationwide.

RESEARCH
NEW NETWORK INVESTIGATES IMPACTS OF THE WORLD’S LITTLEST ORGANISMS

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INSIGHTS
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DISCOVERY
RESEARCHERS DEBUNK NOTION THAT LONG WORK HOURS CAUSE ILL HEALTH

Working long hours harms personal health, right? Maybe not, CSU researchers have revealed.

A review of existing research found no clear, causal link between long work hours and physical and mental health. The finding was published in a paper titled “Long Working Hours and Well-being: What We Know, What We Do Not Know, and What We Need to Know,” published in the Journal of Business and Psychology. The journal gave the research its 2018 Editor Commendation.

The scientific team, including two faculty members from Colorado State, discovered that working conditions and work-related stress cause more health problems than long hours by themselves.