

Problems viewing this email? [Try it in your browser.](#)



Towards an Equitable Educational Environment: In The Business of Dreams

Note: I shared the letter below as part of the spring convocation schedule and touched a little on it as part of my address. However, I believe it is important to share it again through the Provost's Corner and welcome your feedback.

I am not a first-generation college student. My father is a college professor who valued education, knew the system, and provided a clear pathway for me to follow. He was among the first from his entire village ever to make it to college. When he started, he did not have the best preparation or resources. With help along the way from understanding educators who saw his dream and went out of their way to lend him a helping hand, he persisted, balanced life and education, and went all the way to achieve his doctorate and eventually became a university professor. Education changed his life, our lives, and the lives of many others who saw him as a role model. *I cannot help but wonder, where would I be if he had not carved a path for me to follow?*

I am lucky to have the opportunity to serve at a **selective institution of higher education. Our selectivity criterion is simple: we serve those who dare to dream of a better life for themselves and others.** I work with incredibly talented people who care: with people who dedicate their lives to sharing their

socioeconomic background. They come from rural and urban areas, from families with generations of college education or as the first in their families to embark on this journey. They come with varying degrees of confidence and preparation. One thing is common among those who come our way: they all dream of success.

Our students are not perfect, and neither are we. We work hard to help all who come our way achieve their dreams. Yet, we still lose many. We lose some to life. Some lose faith in their dreams or get lost trying, and some fall through the cracks of the system. Some leave because they feel they do not belong, despite our best efforts. Those who leave belong to some of the most vulnerable groups representing people like my father. People who live in areas where resources are scarce. People who need to balance life and education or lack proper advice or role model. Our institution has been supportive, resilient, and resourceful. We have developed external resources to help our students achieve their dreams for many years, even when our state funding declined. We made incremental progress in the right direction of equity and student success. The current national, state, and CSU System **focus on equity and student success** provides valuable resources that can move us faster than ever in the direction of an equitable educational environment at CSU Pueblo. **More importantly, our increased focus on equity will allow us to take a hard look at our practices and how they impact students differently.**

Some questions that come to mind when I think about achieving an equitable educational environment include:

- How does a hands-on, active approach to learning, and a focus on practical application, keep students motivated?
- How does a flexible schedule for turning in assignments impact the success of a working parent who has a sick child?
- What testing or grading practices reduce implicit biases?
- How does providing second chances or competency-based grading make a difference for a first-generation student who did not have it right the first time?
- What is the optimal collaboration and communication form the faculty members, advisors and success coaches, and tutoring centers to support students?
- Can rubrics relating grades to the level of achievement of student learning outcomes reduce wide variability of grading?
- Does an updated curriculum relevant to the industry and societal issues

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

- What are the best ways to address gender disparities related to student success?
- How do we use data analytics of student outcomes to guide our teaching style?
- What support and development mechanisms do we offer our faculty and staff?

We need to address many more questions to approach equity as an institution. I urge us all to look at student outcomes in our classes and programs and seek ways to support students' dreams better. An essential resource that will be valuable for all of us is the newly relaunched Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the designated group of faculty fellows. The CTL will also launch a series of professional development opportunities for faculty to address issues related to equity in an educational setting.

I am proud to be part of an institution whose vision is to become the people's university. I am proud to work with faculty and staff who are dedicated and sensitive to this vision. **I am proud to be in the business of making dreams come true.**

—**Mohamed Abdelrahman**

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Faculty Recognition



In 2017, there were only six to eight students enrolled in graduate courses in Biology at CSU Pueblo. In that year, Graduate Program Director for the Department of Biology, Claire Ramos took over the program. Now the Biology program boasts over 30 graduate students.

"The growth is largely determined by funding availability and faculty interest in having graduate students," Ramos explained. "We have had some new faculty members who have been much more involved in graduate

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

have pursued their masters or the 3+2 program."

Biology graduate students currently research conservation biology, examine cannabis and its effects, probiotics and their physiological impacts and the immunology of reptiles. All of these students are gaining hands-on experience and preparing for their careers in wildlife management, medicine, or academia.

Ramos' research currently involves how climate change has impacted birds. She also examines how environmental contaminants has impacted bird populations.

"The wildfires we have seen recently really impact air quality, which can have a big impact on bird as they migrate," Ramos explained.

Ramos' love of animals began at a young age and was nurtured by her parents.

"They helped me find some volunteer field work when I was still in high school," Ramos remembered. "I did my first volunteer bird job the summer after my senior year of high school, and I was hooked."

After college, Ramos continued her study of birds, and has gone around the world studying them. Now, she wants to impart that passion for animals and research into her students.

"Basically, I have the best job in the world because I get paid to wander around outside and chase animals and also teach students how to wander around outside and chase animals, which is great," Ramos said.

Student Spotlight



Jacelynn Trujillo serves on the Associated Students Government as the parliamentarian. A sophomore in the Hasan School of Business, Trujillo came to CSU Pueblo as a local kid who graduated from Pueblo County High School.

A 4.0 student in high school, Trujillo faced adversity when she arrived on campus. Dealing with remote learning, a global pandemic and the academic challenge of college, Trujillo knew she needed help in her Economics class. That was when she reached out for tutoring help.

"I ended up finding a tutor that I really liked to help me with my Economics class," Trujillo reflected. "He really ended up helping me throughout the program."

With her tutor, Max Gonzalez, helping her adjust to college, Trujillo persevered. She achieved an A in her Economics class.

"I just needed someone to sit there and explain it to me," Trujillo said. "He helped because he learns the same way I learn."

Getting involved in the tutoring process spring boarded Trujillo into participating in other organizations on campus. Now, Trujillo works in a marketing capacity in the Student Engagement and Leadership office and serves on the Dean's Advisory Council.

"Once you're involved in one thing on campus, you're pretty much involved in everything on campus," Trujillo said. "You meet a lot of great people in those programs."

Pueblo through the 3+2 program.

Distinguished University Professor



CSU Pueblo recognized George Dallam as the third recipient of the Distinguished University Professor award. The Distinguished University Professor award is the university's highest honor bestowed on a faculty member. The award recognizes teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity and service to CSU Pueblo and the community.

"Dr. Dallam's teaching, research and service exemplify the ideal of this prestigious award," said CSU Pueblo President, Timothy Mottet. "His dedication to his field, his students and the community as a teacher scholar make him an invaluable resource for Colorado State University Pueblo."

Dallam has taught at CSU Pueblo for 23 years as a Professor of Exercise Science in the school of Health Sciences and Human Movement and the College of Health, Education and Nursing. In his 23 years on campus, Dallam has received many awards prior to achieving the Distinguished University Professor distinction.

Dallam earned the 2021 Faculty Award for Excellence for Scholarship and Creative Activity. He received the School of Health Science and Human Movement Scholarship Award for academic year 2020-2021.

Dallam also earned an Outstanding Faculty Award in the 2012-13 school year.

"The students in his courses have the opportunity of engaging in tasks and experiments that successfully

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Human Movement Carol Foust. "Dallam has been instrumental in providing opportunities for our students to assist in human research and engage in professional internships at the Olympic Training Center and other cutting edge research and has received top student and faculty teaching evaluations."

He follows David Duncan, Professor in the Hasan School of Business, and Alegria Ribadeneira, Director of World Languages as the third recipient of this prestigious honor. As part of this award, Dallam will lead a professional development discussion later in 2022.

"I am greatly honored to receive this kind of recognition for my efforts at CSU-Pueblo," Dallam said. "I consider that it has been my privilege to work in higher education for so many years and with so many exceptional colleagues, students and friends in the Pueblo community. We all work together to achieve these outcomes and so in honoring me you are also honoring my colleagues, my students, and the university in general. Each person, from maintenance staff to university president, plays an important role in the process we call education and should feel proud of being a part of what we accomplish together. "

Key Dates

Jan. 13: Dean of Undergraduate Studies Candidate Open Forum

Dr. Chad Kinney / 2:30-3:15 p.m. / OSC 008 / <https://csupueblo.zoom.us/j/94614961049>

Jan. 17: Dean of Undergraduate Studies Candidate Open Forum

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

Jan. 24: Dean of Undergraduate Studies Candidate Open Forum

Dr. Matt Traxler / 11- 11: 45 a.m. / OSC 008 / <https://csupueblo.zoom.us/j/94574947905>



CSU PUEBLO

© *|2022|* Colorado State University Pueblo.
All Rights Reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

2200 Bonforte Boulevard
Pueblo, Colorado 81001
[719.549.2100](tel:719.549.2100) | csupueblo.edu