



**CSU  
PUEBLO**



## **To Be Innovative Or Not To Be?**

### **That Is NOT A Question.**

Being innovative has never been as crucial as it is today for higher education institutions. Higher education has, over its history, moved very slowly, favoring small changes with much skepticism when it comes to significant or radical changes. This approach may have served higher education well in the past, but can we afford to continue on the same path of incremental change? My personal belief is that we need to take calculated risks or risk being left behind.

Over the past few years, we have had innovative ideas that are currently being implemented. One of those is the School of Creativity and Practice (SoCaP), built to directly utilize resources from several departments, including Media Communication, Art and Creative Media, and Music. SoCaP has introduced integrated curricula, utilized shared faculty lines and is working on a new innovative degree program in Gaming and Immersive Design. The path from an idea towards a successful innovation is not a simple feat. It requires passionate leadership coupled with a

willingness to collaborate, be flexible and sacrifice time and energy.

I am excited about the future of SoCaP because of the current leadership at the college level as well as the departments. This leadership behind SoCap is of a distributed nature. It includes Dean Leticia Steffen, Associate Dean Juan Morales, the school's director Aaron Alexander and department chairs Jon Pluskota and Mark Hudson. It also encompasses all of the faculty willing to cross the artificial boundaries of their traditional disciplines to work in new, complex and sometimes murky, interdisciplinary environments that mimic the true nature of the current work environments. Although questions about the potential for success of new major innovations are legitimate, a guarantee for success of disruptive innovations, such as SoCaP, is forged by the will of this interwoven and broad-based leadership of administration and faculty.

I believe the new programming and collaborative spirit will serve the students and faculty well. I challenge all faculty, staff, and administrators on our campus to think outside of the traditional boundaries, build collaborative networks, and find the inner strength to lead amid uncertainty. **I promise to do my best to support such endeavors, for being innovative is the only way to be.**

***-Mohamed Abdelrahman***

***Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs***

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## SCHOOL RECOGNITION

The School of Creativity and Practice welcomed several new faces over the past year. Mark Hudson assumed the role of chair for the music department. Hudson brings 40 years of experience in music education to his new role. Jon Pluskota took on the role of chair for the Department of Media Communications. Pluskota has taught in higher education for the past 11 years,



most recently at the University of Southern Mississippi. Matt Garcia (assistant professor in the School of Creativity and Practice), Dustin Hodge (visiting professor of Media Communication) and Kim Pluskota (adjunct art professor) all joined the SoCaP faculty. SoCaP showcased the work of these new faculty members in an exhibition at the CSU Pueblo Fine Art Gallery Oct. 4-22. In addition to featuring the work its faculty, SoCaP has provided its students with opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained throughout the semester. This included the Pueblo Keyboard Arts Festival, the CSU Pueblo Today, the student newspaper and Rev89, the student-run radio station. SoCaP students have also learned from some of the top professionals in their industry. The American String Quartet provided students with a masterclass Oct. 27. A piano masterclass with Dror Biran, an associate professor of music at the University of Cincinnati who has performed in concert halls world-wide, occurred Nov. 4. "The Music Department and Music faculty of CSU Pueblo are striving to make fulfilling and joyful performance opportunities once again available to young musicians in the region," Hudson said.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Arjan Pokharel currently plays in the CSU Pueblo wind ensemble, the collaborative ensemble and the flute choir as a flutist. Playing in three different groups has helped him grow as a musician. A senior Music major with an emphasis in music performance, Pokharel will graduate with a degree in May. Pokharel's journey to CSU

Pueblo started in his native country of Nepal. His family immigrated to the United States when he was two-years-old.

Pokharel grew up in Montana and began his collegiate career at Montana State University. After studying computer science for three years, Pokharel decided it was more important to pursue a career that matched his passions. "I've always been involved in music in some way or another," Pokharel said. "When I went to do computer science, I thought of just the career aspect of it. I didn't take into account that my passion really just lied in music." Three years ago, Pokharel transferred to CSU Pueblo where he hopes that he can turn his enjoyment of music into a career in teaching. "I want to graduate school," Pokharel said. "After that, I want to find a place to teach. I think that teaching is really the best way to learn."



After having to adapt to a new way of playing during the pandemic, Pokharel is excited to have the return to playing in front of a crowd. "You're making a connection as a performer with the audience," Pokharel said. "It was a lot simpler when we only had to play in front of a camera, but it didn't have the same magic as playing in front of a live audience."

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## DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY



# PROFESSOR WEBINAR

On Wednesday, Nov. 10, Distinguished University Professor, Dr. Alegría Ribadeneira hosted a webinar entitled “On Serving Students Well: Insights from the Field of Heritage Language Teaching.” If you missed this informative lecture, or just want to review its lessons, please watch the video by clicking [here](#) or on the image below.



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## KEY DATES

**11/ 29:** Spring job offer initiation deadline

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# PROVOST'S OPEN OFFICE HOURS

**12/7: STEM** / 9:30-10:30am / **CHEM 104**

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