

communique

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-COLORADO SPRINGS

Faculty member heeds active duty call

David Fenell likes to do things differently.

The CU-Colorado Springs professor of education and licensed psychologist rides a full-dress Harley Davidson and, until recently, had a mouthful of orthodontia.

Now, as most of his colleagues are preparing to deliver mid-term exams, Fenell is at Fort Bragg, N.C., to assist in training and evaluating Army Special Forces soldiers.

“I got my braces off and was just elated,” the perfect-smiling Fenell said. “And then I got home and found my orders in the mail. It was a short celebration.”



Service

David Fenell, right, stands with his daughter, Navy Ensign Maija Fenell, and son, Marine Lieutenant Nathan Fenell, last year at the Women in Military Service Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery.

Fenell serves as a lieutenant colonel in the Army Medical Service Corps. As a reserve member, he was mobilized by Presidential Executive Order to active duty last week to assist in the assessment and selection of candidates for Special Forces positions that many think are key to the U.S. war on terrorism. He left for North Carolina on Friday.

“Special Forces soldiers are the world’s best. To be selected for Special Forces a soldier must have incredible physical fitness, outstanding mental abilities and have

the right psychological makeup,” Fenell said. “It’s my job to assess the psychological qualifications of the candidates.”

Fenell’s orders say he may be called to duty for as long as a year, a sobering thought as he attended to a myriad of personal details, including saying goodbye to students and colleagues, last week. What could be even more sobering than leaving the relative safety of campus and classroom for active military duty? For Fenell, it was the realization that his daughter, Maija, a Navy ensign, and son, Nathan, a Marine lieutenant, are also likely headed to war. Fenell’s wife, Ruth Ann, a school counselor intern at Cheyenne Mountain High School and CU-Colorado Springs graduate student, is the only family member who isn’t being deployed.

“The entire university has been supportive,” Fenell said. “My students are sad but other faculty are stepping up to take my classes. The dean, the vice chancellor, the chancellor — everyone has been supportive.”

Fenell is the first faculty member called to active duty. However, several other faculty members, and more than 300 students, are reserve unit members who may be called to active duty as the nation responds to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

Chancellor to host University Forum

Chancellor Pam Shockley will host a University Forum at 10 a.m. Oct. 18 in the University Center theater.

Shockley plans to outline university goals for the fall and spring semesters and update the campus on issues such as the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel, proposals for new degrees to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, construction projects and scholarship fund raising.



Pam Shockley

All faculty and staff are invited to the forum. Refreshments will be provided.

Overheard

“If Sparky could just lift his leg and pee on PeopleSoft, then that would solve everything.”

—anonymous university worker

Building plans go on shelf

Building projects at CU-Colorado Springs went into the freezer last week as a result of state revenue shortfalls.



Disagreements between the Colorado Legislature and Governor Bill Owens about spending priorities ended when the latest state revenue estimates, which predict a \$354 million shortfall, were released. With the new estimates, plans for CU's building projects were effectively shelved.

Because it is currently under construction, the renovation of Main/Cragmor will continue, according to Cleve McDaniel, vice chancellor, Administration and Finance.

Placed on hold are commitments for \$10.3 million in state funds for renovation and expansion of Engineering and Applied Science, a \$6 million renovation of Dwire Hall and a \$3.3 million plan to begin planning for construction of a Beth-El College of Nursing and Sciences complex.

In a recent visit to campus, President Elizabeth Hoffman stressed that CU building plans were still needed and that she believes delays in state funding are temporary.

Corporate recruiters descend on campus

Representatives from 30 companies will be in the University Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today to discuss job opportunities with students.

Most positions are full-time entry-level careers for 2001 and 2002 graduates. Many recruiters will be available to discuss internship opportunities for current students.

This event is a supplement to the annual March Spring Career Fair. To see a list of participating companies, visit <http://web.uccs.edu/studentsuccess> and click on "Career Services."



Sparky puts paws to work for campus benefit

Who's the most powerful creature on campus?

It's Sparky, the wonder dog, that annoying PeopleSoft toolbar icon that presides over a \$1.3 billion operating budget for the entire University of Colorado system.

Need to generate a purchase order? You gotta go through Sparky first. Want to check the status your department's budget surplus for the month? Gotta run it past Sparky.

Like "Clippy," the paperclip icon that pops up on Microsoft Word documents, Sparky has a habit of being there when you least want to see him. Just ask frequent PeopleSoft user Steve Chambers, director, Office of Institutional Research.



"You don't buy anything without going through Sparky," Chambers grumbles. "We have a \$34 million software system that's under the control of a dog."

"We all work for Sparky."

While nobody's advocating that Sparky ought to be sent dog-paddling down the river in a cement overcoat, there are murmurings that Sparky's days should be numbered.

"I think he's old," said one university employee. "He just kind of does whatever he wants to do."

Another department head, who works almost daily with PeopleSoft, agrees.

"He's kind of slowing down. He used to fetch a whole lot quicker."

Some people think he's taking our purchase requisitions and hiding them in his hole for too long."

It should come as no surprise, however, that the professed dog lovers are making a plea for clemency.

They say the white and gray icon with the red ball in his mouth is just doing his job. He's faithful. He's cheerful. And he only appears when you're in trouble, like when you have forgotten a project code, or a sub-class number.

"I love dogs," says Gayanne Scott, budget analyst. "And Sparky's usually our friend. He's a bailout button. His only problem is he just can't think out of the box."

So maybe it's just PeopleSoft, the finance and human resource software, that's making everyone growl?

Employee of the Quarter

Doers
profile

Chemistry staff member finds humor in daily grind

Surrounded by rubber gloves, goggles, beakers, roundworms, microscopes, hotplates and metal cabinets plastered with hazard symbols and skull and cross bone labels, Connie Pitman is in her element.

Pitman is responsible for safety in the chemistry and biology departments — a job she’s been steadfastly plugging away at for the past 16 years. On Thursday, she was presented with the Employee of the Quarter award for her dedication. Here’s what some of the nominees had to say about Pitman:

“More than any other person, she ensures that the learning environment at CU-Colorado Springs is safe and stimulating. With respect to safety, she has created a safety training program that is administered to all lab students, staff and faculty who teach or work in the lab.”

Pitman, who has a small office attached to the science computer lab, orders supplies ranging from explosive salts to clams and spiders, organizes and labels explosive solvents, develops, tests, and teaches student lab experiments, administers annual exams to professors to ensure that they comply with safety procedures, and oversees the collection and storage of hazardous waste.

Name: Connie Pitman

Age: 45

Birthplace: Torrington, Wyo., population 5,600

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Favorite Hobby: Playing the flute and singing in the choir at Circle Drive Baptist Church.

Sign Taped to Office Door: Support Bacteria – they’re the only culture some people have.

So, what’s the best part of your job?

I enjoy every part of it, but I especially love preparing the organic labs. I prepare some of the experiments ahead of time to see if they work and I enjoy mixing chemicals together to see what happens. I guess you could say I like the hands-on part of the job.

As the designated safety czar for the chemistry and biology departments, I’m sure you’ve seen your share of foolhardy behavior in the labs. What’s one that springs to mind?

Once a student picked up an unlabeled beaker that she thought contained water. She poured it into something else and it spewed all over the place and we had to call the paramedics. Luckily she had her goggles on but it burned the inside of her nose. I always stress to students to never assume they know what is in an unlabeled container. This one happened to contain acetic anhydride, a substance that has a vigorous reaction.



Connie Pitman

Do you have a favorite molecule?

Benzaldehyde. Because it smells good – like almond oil.

Refrigerators in science labs can be scary places. Jars of formaldehyde with unmentionables floating in them, unexplained substances growing in petri dishes. What’s the most frightening thing you’ve ever encountered in a science building fridge?

Chocolate mint ice cream. Actually, it was in the freezer. But it was scary, nonetheless, because the refrigerator was supposed to be used only for radioactive isotopes.

That reminds me. I have something strange growing in a Tupperware container in my refrigerator . . .

I could probably identify it for you.

'All I have to give is my loyalty' pledges new citizen

When Tara Dubey raised her right hand and swore allegiance to the United States three weeks ago, it was a day of heightened and complex emotion.

A native of India, Dubey had thought hard before renouncing citizenship of her homeland to pledge loyalty to a new country — a country that nurtured her and her husband's careers, a country that educated her children, and a country that now is under attack.



Tara Dubey

She watched in disbelief as the Sept. 11 strikes on Washington and New York shattered the nation's symbols of power and wealth.

"At first I was scared," said Dubey, a professional research associate in the Office of Sponsored Programs. "I began to think that if they could attack the United States, nowhere else in the world was safe."

And now, as the U.S. military begins to wage war against terrorists, her feelings are becoming even more complicated.

Dubey is a follower of Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi's principles of nonviolent resistance but she is quick to point out that Gandhi never advocated cowardice.

To underscore this, she cites the Bhagavad-Gita, an important Hindu epic that describes a conversation between a warrior and his Lord, disguised as a charioteer, who stresses that one must do one's duty with detachment.

"Being sincere to your duty should be a top priority," she says. "Not even a soldier wants to go to war, but when it is his time to fight, he should fight."

This topic, not surprisingly, held sway last week at a campus celebration of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, a growing event that Dubey has coordinated since her arrival in Colorado Springs in 1999. More than 200 people attended the affair to honor Gandhi's birthday and to discuss ways of embracing peace during a time of mounting tensions.

At the forum, said Dubey, there were no easy answers.

One thing, however, is certain. Dubey says she is deeply happy to have taken the citizenship oath.

Dubey has been in the United States now for 12 years — 10 of them as a prominent plant biologist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and at West Virginia University Institute of Technology. While she retains a deep love of India, particularly the city of Jabalpur where she still has family, the United States has her devotion.

"This country has given me so much," says Dubey. "I believe that whoever is giving me air and water and food and shelter, I have a duty to give something in return.

"And all I have to give is my loyalty."

Architects laud University Center design

The remodeled CU-Colorado Springs University Center is "one of the best of its time," according to the Denver chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

A panel of architects from Mexico City reviewed outstanding architecture in Denver-area public and private sectors and awarded H + L Architecture, Denver, the Honor Award for its work to remodel and expand the University Center.

In awarding the highest achievement award, judges used words such as "Transparent," and "one of the best, of its time, simple materials, language is carried through inside and out."

The four-phase \$5.38 million renovation and expansion of the University Center was possible because of a \$4.50 per credit hour student fee approved by students.



The University Center officially opened this fall and features:

- An expanded University Bookstore that boasts 2,000 square feet of additional space
- Office spaces for campus student organizations
- A copying center
- Conference room and lounge space
- Student art exhibit area
- Convenience store
- A tiered theater
- Aerobic exercise room and additional space for campus recreational activities
- Remodeled meeting rooms, a game room and cafeteria.