

WE ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING SUCCESSFUL FUTURES™



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

UCCS College of Business
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS

FROM THE DEAN

Greetings,

As we close the 2024–2025 academic year, I'm proud to reflect on the incredible strides we made together. This year showcased innovation, resilience, and dedication to advancing our mission. We set out to improve our programs, strengthen community impact, and prepare students for the evolving business world—and we achieved those goals.

Our reaffirmation of AACSB accreditation—now 35 years strong—is a testament to our enduring commitment to excellence in business education. This milestone demonstrates the institution's commitment to academic requirements, collaboration, and ongoing development.

We introduced new initiatives like the Weidner and Norwood Real Estate and Property Management program and a Space and Cyber Enterprise Management graduate specialization and certificate. These programs aim to strengthen Colorado's workforce and continue our long-standing tradition of serving our community's workforce development needs. Our priority remains supporting learners through efforts such as the ROAR program, experiential learning, and mentorship, ensuring every student has opportunities to succeed.

We are not just adapting to artificial intelligence (AI)—we are leading its thoughtful integration into business education. Through our AI Summit, faculty development workshops, and Coursera and Copilot 365 initiatives, we are equipping our faculty and staff with the tools and insights to lead in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Our integration of analytics and AI across curricula ensures our students are not just prepared for the future—they are shaping it.

Our faculty continue to lead with distinction, producing impactful research and earning national recognition. Their work enriches our classrooms and strengthens our reputation as a hub of thought leadership and innovation.

As we look ahead, I am energized by the momentum we've built and the opportunities that lie before us. Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are not only educating future business leaders—we are shaping a more innovative, inclusive, and resilient future.

- Dean Thomas Aicher, Ph.D.



UCCS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AWARDS & RANKINGS





WHO WE ARE

UCCS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

The UCCS College of Business was established in 1965 with a vision to build successful futures for students and the business community in the Pikes Peak Region and beyond. For over 50 years, the College of Business has offered innovative and industry-aligned curriculum to prepare professionals for a meaningful career in business. The College of Business is accredited by AACSB which ensures that our students receive a top quality business education.

A keystone of our College is the commitment to the UCCS Ethics Initiative, which works to instill a higher standard of ethics in students. College of Business students receive personalized guidance from dynamic faculty with real-world experience in their field. The College of Business offers experiential learning opportunities at each stage of students' academic journey, providing them with an immersive business education.

OUR MISSION

The UCCS College of Business delivers a future-oriented business education to support workforce and economic development for southern Colorado, the state, nation, and world. We prioritize and empower learners at every stage of their educational journey, develop innovative research that contributes to scientific discovery and effective business practice, and serve as a hub for our community in productive discourse, practical learning, and social responsibility.

OUR VALUES



LEARNERS FIRST



BUILD COMMUNITY



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

35
YEARS OF AACSB
ACCREDITATION



30
years
OF ONLINE
EDUCATION

MILITARY FRIENDLY

GOLD
SCHOOL



one of
8
PGA & AACSB
ACCREDITED
PGA GOLF MGMT.
PROGRAMS

15+ years
WITH THE UCCS ETHICS
INITIATIVE

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Dr. Larry Plummer

*El Pomar Chair of Business & Entrepreneurship
& Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship*

UCCS College of Business recently welcomed Larry Plummer, Ph.D. as the El Pomar Chair in Business & Entrepreneurship. Plummer also serves as an Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and the Interim Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship.

Plummer is an expert on regional entrepreneurial dynamics and the role of entrepreneurship in local economic development. His research has been published in top journals, including the Journal of Business Venturing, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, and the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal. He has received awards from the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings and is a three-time recipient of the Ivey Research Merit Award.

Beyond his academic pursuits, Plummer is committed to mentoring the next generation of entrepreneurs. Plummer leads several initiatives dedicated to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Under his leadership is the El Pomar Institute for Innovation and Commercialization (EPIIC), which helps individuals and organizations transform innovative ideas into economic opportunities.

With a strong emphasis on communication, collaboration, and resource-sharing, EPIIC aims to build a thriving startup community, particularly in Southern Colorado.

In regards to EPIIC, Plummer states, "My predecessor Dr. Tom Duening deserves a lot of credit for laying the foundation of what we're building at EPIIC today. I would also like to recognize Luke Doster, EPIIC Program & Outreach Manager. Without him, we wouldn't be where we are today. Their contributions and the support of the El Pomar Foundation have been invaluable in pushing our entrepreneurial programs forward."

Beyond EPIIC, Plummer oversees the Center for Entrepreneurship, which promotes entrepreneurship, venture creation, and economic development in Southern Colorado.

The center achieves these goals through extensive research, teaching, and service activities. Its faculty members are active scholars and authors, presenting their work on entrepreneurship in venues around the world. Additionally, the center supports students by offering an entrepreneurship minor, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue their own business ventures.

A new and exciting initiative under Plummer's guidance is the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV). This premier training program is designed exclusively for post-9/11 veterans who aspire to start and grow their own businesses. The data-driven program provides cutting-edge business education, hands-on training, and ongoing support—all at no cost to participants. By equipping veterans with the skills and resources they need to succeed as entrepreneurs, the EBV program not only empowers individuals, but also strengthens the broader economic landscape.

"We are actively recruiting students, mentors, and industry experts to collaborate and contribute to our various efforts and programs. I am seeking specialized experts in areas like intellectual property law, access to capital, and key industry sectors like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and human performance," said Plummer.

The College of Business is grateful to have Plummer and eagerly anticipates the positive impact that UCCS entrepreneurship programs will continue to have on our community.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

DR. CAROL FINNEGAN - INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS



Dr. Carol Finnegan has played a pivotal role in advancing international student mobility, a central priority of the College of Business (COB). Since 2020, the COB has tripled its faculty-led study abroad programs, now offering immersive experiences in Germany, France, and Japan. These programs are enriched by country-specific Business Culture seminars and the annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day event each January. "The bonds you create on study abroad trips last for a lifetime," says Dr. Finnegan, underscoring the lasting personal and professional impact of global learning.

To further broaden access and regional engagement, the COB is piloting virtual international consulting courses this academic year with partners in Central and South America. More than 30 students have also participated in semester-long study abroad experiences at partner universities and through international education providers in Germany, Spain, Japan, France, the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands. Additionally, the Sport Management and PGA Golf programs have placed students in internships across the UK and Europe. The COB has also welcomed over two dozen students from European and Japanese partner institutions to study at UCCS. Collectively, these initiatives provide transformative opportunities for students to develop cross-cultural competencies and enhance their global career prospects.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS CONFERENCE

DR. SANDEEP SUNTWAL & DR. DAVID KOCSIS

Assistant Professors of Information Systems in the College of Business, Dr. Sandeep Suntwal and Dr. David Kocsis have played a key role in hosting the Front Range Information Systems Seminar (FRISS), most recently in October 2023 and September 2024. FRISS is a one-day seminar that brings together information systems departments from universities across Colorado's Front Range, including UCCS, University of Denver, CU Boulder, CU Denver, CSU Fort Collins, University of Northern Colorado, and CSU Pueblo.



The seminar serves as a dynamic platform for faculty and Ph.D. students to share research, foster academic connections, and spark cross-institutional collaborations. As Dr. Kocsis explains: "In a single day, faculty and Ph.D. students discover not just what their peers across the Front Range are investigating, but who they are as scholars and potential collaborators. FRISS isn't just about presenting research—it's about fostering academic connections, sparking cross-institutional partnerships, and communicating complex ideas to fellow information systems professionals. FRISS creates the kind of belonging and intellectual community that makes our field stronger along the Front Range."

BUILDING COMMUNITY

SPACE & CYBER SUMMIT: CROSSROADS OF SPACE AND CYBERSECURITY

The Space & Cyber Summit: Crossroads of Space and Cybersecurity, presented by the College of Business and sponsored by Deloitte, brought together experts and community members to explore developments in the space and cybersecurity sectors. Held at the Ent Center for the Arts, the event was open to UCCS students, faculty, staff, and the broader community, offering an opportunity to engage with industry leaders.

Designed to inform and inspire, the Space Cyber Summit provided an in-depth look into the critical intersections of space and cybersecurity. By hosting experts to discuss pressing topics and offering networking opportunities, the summit showcased the College of Business's role as a hub for innovation and community engagement. Attendees heard from panelists representing the aerospace, defense, and intelligence sectors, who investigated how space policy shapes national security, infrastructure, and technological advancement.

Keynote Speakers:

- LTG Thomas James, Deputy Commander, U.S. Space Command
- Debbie Wheeler, Chief Information Security Officer, Delta Airlines

Space and Cyber Ops Panelists:

- Will Burns, National Intelligence Operations and Managing Director at Deloitte
- Eric Hipkins, National Intelligence Operations and Managing Director at Deloitte
- LTG Mark Schwartz, Former Chief of Staff, Joint Special Operations Command
- Lt Gen John Shaw, U.S. Space Force, ret.

The Summit concluded with a networking reception, fostering connections within the local space-cyber community.

Tommy Aicher, Dean of the College of Business, opened and closed the summit, highlighting its significance. "This event exemplifies our commitment to preparing our students and the broader community for the challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving space and cybersecurity industries," said Aicher. "The insights shared today underscore the importance of collaboration between academia, industry, and the public sector to ensure a secure and innovative future. A heartfelt thank you to all keynote speakers, panelists and behind-the-scenes organizers of this event. I am especially grateful to College of Business alum, Debbie Wheeler, for her wonderful presentation and valuable insights. The UCCS College of Business takes great pride in having her as a part of our community."

Eric Hipkins, the driving force behind the Summit and a panelist from the Space & Cyber Ops Panel remarked, "As we look to the future, the integration of space and cyber capabilities will play a critical role in shaping both commercial and defense strategies. It is through events like this that we build the bridges necessary to strengthen the collective goals, collaboration, and community within Colorado."



LEARNERS FIRST

EXTENDING AACSB BUSINESS ACCREDITATION

The UCCS College of Business has once again maintained its business accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International. Founded in 1916, AACSB International is the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools that offer undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in business and accounting.

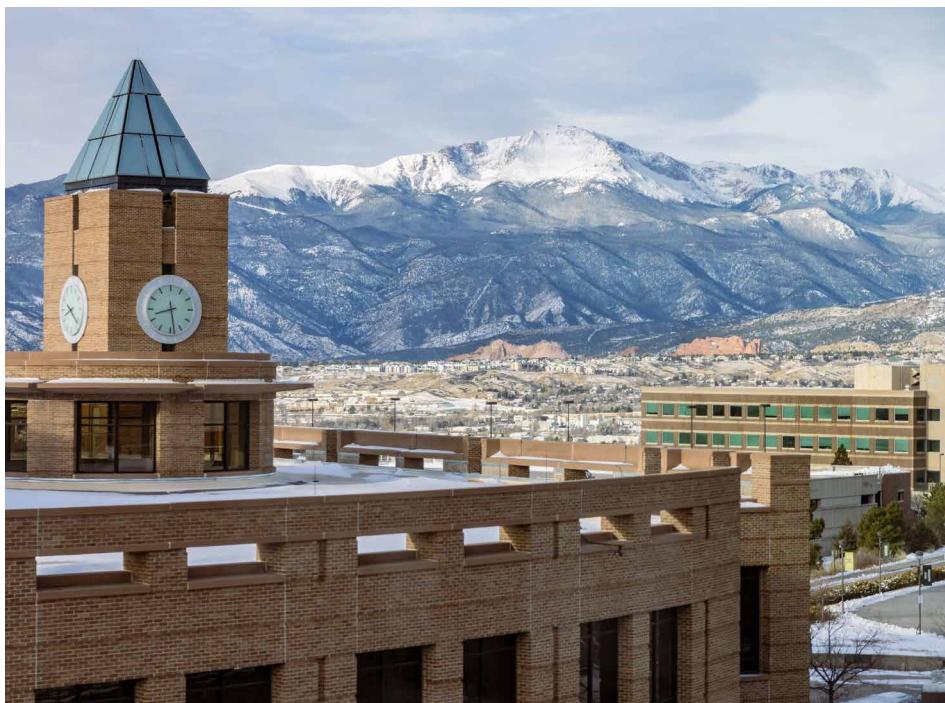
AACSB Accreditation is the hallmark of excellence in business education and has been earned by only six percent of the world's leading business programs. AACSB-accredited schools are leaders in teaching, research and societal impact.

The AACSB accreditation team conducted their assessment November 3 – 5, 2024, meeting with faculty, staff and administration. This month, the College of Business received official notification that their accreditation had been extended for another six years.

"The AACSB distinction means top-notch business education – an accolade we've earned now for 35 consecutive years," said Tommy Aicher, Dean of the College of Business. "One of the things that always impresses me about our college is that we come together and put our best efforts forward, day in and day out. While it is easy to point to a single day, this is representative of five years of time and effort we placed into improving and evolving our college."

The College of Business first received accreditation from AACSB International in 1990. For over 35 years, UCCS has demonstrated a commitment to innovation, impact and teaching excellence in business education. In the reaccreditation announcement, AACSB lauded UCCS for their work in the following areas:

- **R.O.A.R.:** This COB program is designed to prepare students for a seamless transition from college to career upon graduation. ROAR is required for all business undergraduates and focuses on career exploration and planning, professionalism, networking, mentorship, and experiential learning.
- **The Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative (DFEI) Collegiate Program:** Launched in 2010, DFEI Collegiate Program at UCCS provides a resource for principle-based ethics education, serving students, educators, and the business community. This program hosts a plethora of engagement opportunities each year including ethics speakers, workshops, competitions, and conferences, as well as an annual business ethics case competition.
- **The COB Recording Studio:** This tremendous asset allows the COB to supplement in-class and online courses with state-of-the-art videos and instruction.



The AACSB Peer Review Team was impressed with the College of Business's culture. Everyone—faculty, staff, and students—were highly engaged and collegial. The students, in particular, showed immense pride in being part of UCCS College of Business. The Peer Review Team even mentioned taking some of UCCS's practices back to their own schools.



AACSB
ACCREDITED

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

PATRIOTS TO PROS BOOTCAMP

The PGA Golf Management program at UCCS runs Patriots to Pros, an initiative designed to support transitioning service members and veterans in pursuing careers as PGA professionals. Since its inception, the program has made a profound impact—providing a meaningful pathway into the golf industry for dozens of former military personnel. Now in its third year, Patriots to Pros has grown from a simple idea into a nationally recognized model, even earning praise from the PGA for its innovative approach to veteran support.

“As a veteran myself, I’m honored to see this program take off like it has,” said Principal Program and Internship Coordinator of PGA Golf Management Jon Husby. “Transitioning military members and veterans are often tasked with the unique challenge of looking for a new opportunity that they truly enjoy—many of whom are further along in life than the traditional high school graduate or college student. Patriots to Pros seeks to meet this challenge and empower this diverse group of individuals into achieving a rewarding career in golf.”



EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CYBERSECURITY



Terri Johnson Akse, Assistant Teaching Professor of Cybersecurity, has been a driving force behind the Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS) initiative at UCCS. WiCyS is an international nonprofit founded in 2013 through an NSF grant, dedicated to advancing women in the traditionally male-dominated field of cybersecurity. The UCCS student chapter continues to thrive with active participation from students across nearly every college, including the College of Business.

Terri’s leadership and mentorship have helped shape the chapter into a vibrant community that offers hands-on experience, professional development, and meaningful connections. She also serves on the national WiCyS Career Growth Hub Committee, supporting resume reviews, mock interviews, and mentoring for conference attendees.

“WiCyS is incredibly meaningful here at UCCS. The students in the WiCyS chapter are from nearly all of the colleges across campus and it is a space where they feel seen, supported, and inspired. I’ve watched them grow in confidence, lead events, compete in cyber competitions, and network themselves into potential careers. It is truly one of the most rewarding parts of my job!”—Terri Johnson Akse

HUB OF LEARNING & INNOVATION

UCCS PGA Golf Management Program Achieves Exceptional Accreditation Results

The PGA of America has completed its rigorous 5-year accreditation review of the UCCS PGA Golf Management Program, delivering outstanding results that exceeded review standards.

The evaluation team delivered resounding praise for the program's outstanding preparation, exemplary delivery, and superior overall quality. When asked about the outcome, the College of Business Dean, Thomas Aicher noted, "This result is a remarkable testament to this program's excellence. This is an extraordinary achievement for the PGAGM team. I congratulate Mark Bacheldor, Jon Husby, and Paul DeSandro for their superb work in developing a strong accreditation report that showcases the commitment to their students, and the consistent adherence to the high standards they have established for this program."

The evaluation team offered only three minor suggestions for enhancement, underscoring the program's already exceptional standards. This distinguished outcome places UCCS among the elite tier of PGA Golf Management Programs nationwide and reflects the unwavering dedication and expertise of our faculty, staff, and students. As the program director, Mark Bacheldor noted, "The reaccreditation result confirms UCCS's reputation as a premier location for aspiring PGA professionals and reaffirms our position as an industry leader in delivering world-class PGA Golf Management education."

We extend our deepest gratitude to Kristen Nolting for her exceptional dedication to the students of the PGA Golf Management Program. Her personalized, intentional approach to advising has made a lasting impact—guiding students not only in their academic journey but also in their professional and personal growth. Kristen's unwavering commitment, genuine care, and insightful mentorship have enriched the program and inspired countless future PGA professionals.



UCCS COB Student Honored as Rocky Mountain Regional Collegian of the Year

The UCCS College of Business celebrates **Cerenity Faith Ford**, named the 2025 Rocky Mountain Regional Collegian of the Year by Delta Sigma Pi. This award recognizes an exceptional collegiate member who exemplifies the Fraternity's values and purpose through leadership, service, and character.

Cerenity's achievement reflects not only her dedication but also the excellence of UCCS's College of Business in fostering future leaders. As part of this honor, she received a specialized badge, a certificate, and a cash award for educational purposes funded by the Delta Sigma Pi Leadership Foundation. She will also be recognized at the Grand Chapter Congress or a spring LEAD event and featured in *The Deltasis*.

HUB OF LEARNING & INNOVATION

AI DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

UCCS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AI SUMMIT

AI is rapidly transforming both business and higher education, and the College of Business is embracing this progress. Faculty and staff came together on campus for a full-day AI Summit to explore its impact and opportunities.

The focus of this summit was to provide information and understanding of AI, how it will develop, and how to successfully implement it in the classroom, research, or within workflows.

Keynote speaker, Victor Cho, CEO of Emovid (an AI enhanced, multimodal messaging platform for businesses) stated, “I had the honor of joining Thomas Aicher and the amazing UCCS College of Business staff, who spent an entire day unpacking what AI will mean for their world. This is exactly the kind of proactive planning and hands-on skill-building that every .EDU needs to be doing.”



“We created the AI Summit because AI isn’t just the future—it’s already here,” said Dr. Magan Calhoun, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Assistant Teaching Professor of Accounting. “As a College of Business, we have a responsibility to help our faculty, staff, and students understand how to use these tools in smart, ethical, and effective ways. This event was our way of giving people the space to explore what’s possible, get hands-on, and start thinking about how we lead—not just react to—what’s next.”

Overall, the event was a great success, with participants learning or appreciating new aspects of AI. One particular highlight from the day was a panel discussion composed of UCCS students – who each shared their experiences, answered questions, and gave personal insight toward AI usage at UCCS.

THE AI ADVANTAGE: ADVANCING BUSINESS EDUCATION THROUGH INNOVATION

The College of Business is equipping faculty and students for a future shaped by artificial intelligence and data-driven decision-making. To support this initiative, the Dean authorized one-time funds for COB faculty to attend workshops on teaching with AI during summer and fall 2024. Many faculty have already participated, and the curriculum has been strategically revised to embed AI and analytics across academic programs.

Analytics integration is expanding across multiple degree tracks. In the MBA program, new electives include Human Resource Management Analytics, Applied Data Visualization, and Business Intelligence for Managers. A data visualization focus has also been added to the elective Customer Focused Processes: Quality Management & Metrics. Undergraduate accounting students on the CPA track are now encouraged to take Descriptive Analytics in Business, and a new cross-listed elective, Accounting Data Analytics, is available across undergraduate, MBA, and MSA programs. The College launched an undergraduate emphasis in Supply Chain Management and Analytics in fall 2024 and introduced an MBA emphasis in Business Analytics in spring 2025.

AI concepts are further integrated into courses such as Financial Decision Making, Information Systems, Strategic Management, and the R.O.A.R. career curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Martin Key introduced a new elective, The AI Advantage: Elevating Your Career Path, and the College’s executive education program—Strategic Artificial Intelligence, offered in partnership with Zschool—helps professionals leverage AI for innovation and long-term success.

HUB OF LEARNING & INNOVATION

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT & REAL ESTATE EMPHASIS

UCCS, in partnership with Weidner Apartment Homes and Norwood Development, is bringing a four-year degree in Property Management and Real Estate to the UCCS Downtown campus in 2025.

The new program will be established with \$2 million in joint funding, split evenly between Weidner and Norwood Development. Both groups will also gain seats on the Program Advisory Board to provide guidance to the College of Business. UCCS will support the program by committing \$2.1 million towards operations and scholarships.

"Our students will be entering into a field with a high growth potential and a significant upward mobility," said Thomas Aicher, Dean of the College of Business. "The opportunities for placement after graduation are limitless with the number of job openings in the city, the state, and nationwide."

The program will offer a comprehensive real estate asset management curriculum focused on instruction, experiential learning opportunities, internships and attendance at local and national industry events.

"Norwood is thrilled to contribute to bringing this specialized program to our city," said Norwood CEO Chris Jenkins. "We anticipate many graduates will choose to stay and work in Colorado Springs, enriching our community with locally trained professionals who understand the distinct real estate market and property management needs of the area. Well-trained property managers play a crucial role in ensuring the high-quality maintenance and operation of both residential and commercial properties, which in turn enhances the overall livability and appeal of our city."

Weidner has brought similar real estate programs and program-related scholarships to institutions in Alaska, Indiana, Oklahoma and Wisconsin.

"Leaders nationwide hold the CU system in tremendous regard," said Dean Weidner, Weidner's Founder and Chairman. "We are honored to provide students with an industry-leading property management curriculum through our partnership with Norwood Development."

The program comes with a renovation of the UCCS Downtown campus and will double the footprint of the space.

"Having the chance to renovate the UCCS Downtown site and host a new program out of it is incredibly exciting," Aicher said. "Our students will benefit from taking courses at the heart of the city and having the networking opportunities that come with being based in the Downtown area. We're also excited to see how this renovation will benefit our community partners, as we anticipate being able to offer a lot more to the Downtown community."

On top of supporting the start of the program and expanding UCCS Downtown, the partnership with Weidner and Norwood will provide students with financial and job placement support.



HUB OF LEARNING & INNOVATION

KIRK DANIELSON - PERSONAL FINANCE COURSE

“The best investment you can make is an investment in yourself... The more you learn, the more you’ll earn.” – Warren Buffett

Financial literacy—the ability to understand and effectively use financial skills such as budgeting, managing debt, planning for retirement, handling student loans, and investing—is essential for long-term personal and financial success. Yet, according to the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), 66% of Americans are considered financially illiterate.

To help address this need, Kirk Danielson, assistant teaching professor of finance, is offering a new course: FNCE 1200 – Personal Finance. Open to all UCCS students, this course is designed to kickstart students’ financial literacy journey by teaching practical, real-world skills that support academic achievement and lifelong financial well-being. College is a significant investment. Our goal is for students to graduate not only with a degree, but also with the tools to make informed financial decisions, reduce stress, and build a stable financial future.

ACCOUNTING STUDENTS OUTPERFORM OTHER COLORADO UNIVERSITIES

Accounting students at UCCS performed highly in the latest 2023 CPA Examination performance results, released in December 2024.

Brian McAllister, Wilcox Endowed Professor of Accounting and Team Lead of Finance, Accounting and Business Law at UCCS, attributes this success to “our students’ hard work and commitment toward their accounting studies and the high quality of UCCS’ accounting program and faculty. Our accounting faculty are proud that we offer a personalized accounting program and that we ‘know our students.’”

As the CPA examination evolves, so too does the UCCS accounting program. The examination now features three core sections: financial accounting, auditing and regulation. The fourth section offers a choice between business analysis and reporting, information systems and controls, and tax compliance and planning.

- National Ranking: UCCS ranks 37th out of 283 medium-sized accounting programs nationwide (87th percentile) for first-time CPA exam pass rates, with an impressive 63.6% pass rate. UCCS is the top-ranked Colorado university in this category.
- State Ranking: UCCS ranks third in Colorado for overall pass rates across all CPA test events, with a 62.1% pass rate.

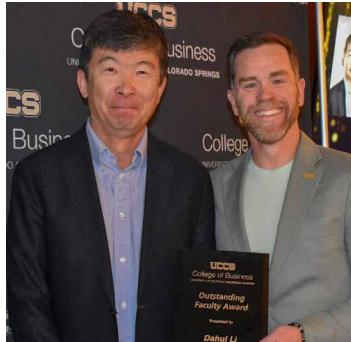


FACULTY RESEARCH & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AWARDS

OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD

Dr. Dahui Li



Dahui Li, J. Daniel Couger Endowed Chair of Information Systems, has made a tireless and meaningful impact on the College of Business through his excellence in teaching, research, and service. Known for consistently high student evaluations and a strong record of peer-reviewed publications, Dahui brings both rigor and enthusiasm to the classroom. His leadership

extends beyond campus as president of the Midwest Association for Information Systems, senior editor for the *Journal of the Midwest Association for Information Systems*, editorial board member for the *Journal of Information Technology*, and associate editor for several other academic journals.

Within the College, Dahui has played a key role in shaping the Executive DBA program, serving on both the EDBA Committee and the EDBA Admissions Committee. His service also includes membership on the Provost Search Committee, chairing the Cybersecurity Management Search Committee, and advising the Tableau User Group. Students frequently highlight his passion for the subject matter and his engaging, energetic teaching style, "Professor Li made the class feel inviting and eager to learn. Having an 8am class is hard to teach, so the fact that the professor made it so fun is impressive. I would absolutely take another class with Dahui Li!" – UCCS Student

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AWARD

Dr. Dayna Herbert Walker



Dr. Dayna Herbert Walker, Assistant Professor of Human Resources and Management, is a dynamic scholar whose research bridges academic rigor with real-world relevance. Over the past year, she has published three peer-reviewed journal articles and has a fourth forthcoming, covering topics such as leadership, workplace attachment, and the integration of generative AI in business education. Dr. Herbert Walker continues to present her work at leading academic conferences around the world and maintains a robust research pipeline, including innovative studies on defensiveness, social equity, and AI in strategic planning.

OUTSTANDING TEACHING PROFESSOR SERVICE AWARDS

Todd Endres, MA, SPHR & Terri Johnson, MS, CEH



Todd Endres, Assistant Teaching Professor of Management and Human Resources and Faculty Director of the ROAR Program has devoted countless hours to student success, career readiness, and employer partnerships. He continues to look for ways to improve our ROAR program and advance our students' success. In addition, Todd chairs key university committees, mentors student leaders, supports SHRM certification efforts, and represents us in community HR forums. His leadership even extends to veteran-focused nonprofit work and pro-bono executive coaching. He was a member of the Vice Chancellor of Advancement and Engagement search committee and is committed to the future of this campus with a depth of knowledge in human resources.



Terri Johnson, Assistant Teaching Professor of Cybersecurity Management, consistently works to promote cyber efforts, both for UCCS and the community. Her dedication is amazing. Her work on joint initiatives and courses, highlighting the intersection of cybersecurity with criminal justice, engineering, and communication has grown the cyber program to new heights. She also serves on the steering committee for the Career Growth Hub for the Women in Cybersecurity National Conference. Johnson advises, coaches, and assists the Mountain Lion Cyber Club and speaks in K-12 schools on careers in cybersecurity. Johnson is exceptional in supporting students and cybersecurity programming. The growth in the college's undergraduate emphasis is directly tied to her tremendous efforts.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Jill Bradley-Geist & Dr. Zhe "Cliff" Li

Dr. Jill Bradley-Geist, Associate Professor of Management, has demonstrated exceptional service across the College of Business and the broader university. From chairing and serving on multiple dissertation committees, mentoring faculty and students, and leading a key tenure-track search, to contributing to university-wide efforts such as the Grievance Committee and Veterans Affairs Council, her impact is both wide-ranging and deeply felt. Jill also elevates the college's national profile through her editorial leadership with top academic journals and active participation in international conferences. In recognition of her dedication and leadership, Jill will step into the role of Associate Dean of Faculty beginning in Fall 2025.



FACULTY AWARDS (CONT.)



Dr. Cliff Li, Assistant Professor of Finance, has provided outstanding service to the University, College of Business, and the Accounting, Finance, and Business Law Team throughout 2024. A highly engaged and thoughtful contributor, Cliff brings insightful ideas and a collaborative spirit to every initiative he supports.

He currently serves as the elected College of Business representative on the University's Faculty Assembly and is an active member of the MBA Team. In Spring 2024, he chaired the successful search for an Assistant Teaching Professor in Accounting. Cliff also plays a key role in maintaining and enhancing the finance curriculum, ensuring it remains current and impactful.

A Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), Cliff serves as the College's primary contact for the CFA University Affiliation Program and as Faculty Advisor for the CFA Institute's Research Challenge. His academic contributions include reviewing papers for several prestigious journals, further demonstrating his commitment to scholarly excellence. Cliff's leadership continues to grow—he will serve as the next Team Lead for the Accounting, Finance, and Business Law Team beginning in the upcoming academic year.

OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD

Dr. Shujia "Sue" Mei

Dr. Sue Mei, Assistant Professor of Accounting and Taxation, teaches what has historically been a very difficult undergraduate course within the College, "Individual Income Tax." Despite this, Mei's student surveys average a very high rating. Sue was also a presenter on using NotebookLM for teaching, research and learning at the College's AI Summit earlier this month.



"I really enjoyed taking this course with professor Sue Mei. She is extremely knowledgeable on the subject, and does a great job effectively communicating the information. She is always available for assistance outside of class, and is prompt and timely with her responses to any questions. This course was very difficult, it's a lot of information and the material is not easy, but I feel like I gained a solid foundation and increased my knowledge of Individual Income Tax, which I contribute to the professor and the way she teaches the subject." - UCCS Student

OUTSTANDING TEACHING PROFESSOR AWARD

Dr. Lauren Nelsen

Dr. Lauren Nelsen, Assistant Teaching Professor of Quantitative Methods, has done an outstanding job revamping our quantitative and business analytics courses to meet the ever-changing needs of students. Despite teaching some of the most challenging courses, Lauren consistently earns high marks from students in post-course surveys.



"You are one of my favorite instructors from UCCS. All semester you showed how much you care about your students and their well-being and success. You were always organized with lectures and every week we knew what to expect and what was to come." - UCCS Student

PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

RESEARCH IN THE FUTURE OF MARKETING

Dr. Martin Key



Dr. Martin Key, Professor of Digital Strategy & Marketing and Team Lead of Marketing, Strategy, and International Business is a respected scholar with prestigious publications, Dr. Key brings both academic rigor and industry relevance to his work. His forthcoming article, "The Current State of Marketing Doctoral Programs: Trends, Challenges & Opportunities" in the *Journal of Marketing Education*, presents findings from a global survey of 251 doctoral program directors. The study offers a comprehensive benchmark for evaluating marketing PhD programs and highlights key trends in curriculum design, including the prominence of consumer behavior and the emerging roles of digital marketing and strategy. Dr. Key's research continues to shape the future of marketing education and elevate the visibility of UCCS on a national and international scale.

RESEARCH IN ACCOUNTING

Dr. Assma Sawani



Dr. Assma Sawani, Assistant Professor of Accounting and Faculty Director of MSA Program is a respected scholar with top tier publications and a strong commitment to advancing accounting education. Her recent co-authored article, "The Effect of the Convergence Project Between FASB and IASB on the Nature of US GAAP and IFRS," published in the *Review of Accounting Studies*, explores how convergence efforts have influenced the principles-based nature of global accounting standards. The study reveals that while IFRS remains more principles-based than U.S. GAAP, both standards have adopted more rules-based characteristics over time—highlighting a shift in global accounting practices. Dr. Sawani's research offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers and practitioners navigating the evolving landscape of financial reporting.



SUCCESSFUL FUTURES



Class of 2024, B.S. in Business Management Emphasis



Class of 2025, B.S. in Business PGA Golf Management Program



Class of 2025, B.S. in Business Sport Management Emphasis

Amanda Ford

What began as a practical decision to stay close to home and finish college quickly turned into a transformative journey for Amanda Ford. A Business Management major with a Political Science minor, Amanda immersed herself in campus life through four years of service in the Student Government Association, culminating in her role as Director of Finance. Her leadership helped secure funding for key initiatives like ROAR Daze and student stipends, while her passion for advocacy extended to local politics and education reform. Now working in Harrison School District 2 and pursuing her teaching license, Amanda credits UCCS for helping her discover her voice, her purpose, and a future rooted in impact. "You shouldn't follow anyone else's path," she says. "You should create your own."

Noah Hennig

After stepping away from college and feeling uncertain about his future, Noah Hennig reignited his passion for learning through the PGA Golf Management program at UCCS. What began with a cold email to a golf course turned into a life-changing opportunity that led to lifelong friendships, a renewed work ethic, and a clear career path. Now preparing for an international internship at The Grove near London, Noah is gaining hands-on experience in tournament operations—his favorite aspect of the industry. He credits the tight-knit community of the program and the support of his family for helping him find direction. "Surround yourself with good people and make sure you like what you're doing," he advises. "That's what makes all the difference."

Gabby Gareau

As a Marketing and Communications Intern with a professional football club's foundation in London, Gabby is gaining hands-on experience in everything from social media strategy and event branding to player appearances and public speaking. A standout project includes leading marketing efforts for the foundation's flagship fundraising events and presenting to visiting university groups at the iconic London Stadium. Her creative work—graphics, photos, and written content—has been featured across newsletters, match day materials, and club platforms. Gabby's internship reflects the power of combining classroom knowledge with real-world application, and her drive to make an impact through storytelling, community engagement, and global sports marketing.

ALUMNI FEATURES



Danielle Gaffney

Danielle Gaffney's journey from an uncertain high school graduate to Tax Partner at Stockman Kast Ryan + Co is a testament to the power of mentorship, resilience, and self-discovery. Encouraged by her mother to explore accounting, Danielle found her footing at UCCS, where faculty like Associate Teaching Professor Sheri Colcun-Trumpfeller helped spark her passion and confidence. After securing an internship that led to full-time employment, she rose through the ranks while earning her degree in just three years—graduating summa cum laude. Now leading a team and helping clients reach their goals, Danielle credits UCCS for laying the foundation of her success and encourages students to embrace uncertainty, learn from setbacks, and forge their own unique paths.

Class of '13, B.S. in Business, Accounting Emphasis



Zita Quentin

Zita Quentin has built a successful career as a financial software consultant, working with major corporations like Oracle and Philips—all while pursuing her passion for wildlife photography. A triple MBA graduate from UCCS, with degrees in degrees in Finance, Accounting and Information Systems, Zita credits her education and mentors, like Professor Emeritus Kirk Wilcox, for laying the foundation of her professional success. Her photography has taken her across the globe, capturing powerful images of big cats, including a one-eyed mountain lion named Blinka in Chilean Patagonia—an experience that deeply resonated with her as a UCCS alum. Zita was honored as a Silver Graduate at the 2024 fall commencement and hopes to continue engaging with the UCCS community through talks and exhibitions that raise awareness for wildlife conservation.

Class of '05, Master of Business Administration



Justin Miller

Just a decade after graduating from UCCS with a degree in business, former Mountain Lion soccer player Justin Miller now serves as CEO of Rush Soccer—the largest youth soccer organization in the world. Combining his passion for the game with his business acumen, Justin has built a career focused on empowering young athletes. He credits his UCCS education and mentors like Associate Professor Mingming Zhou for helping him navigate early challenges and shape his leadership style. Justin hopes to give back to the UCCS community through mentorship and speaking engagements, encouraging students to build meaningful relationships and embrace opportunities with confidence and humility.

Class of '14, B.S. in Business, Finance Emphasis

UCCS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS RETIREMENT FAREWELL

Dr. Jeffery Ferguson

PROFESSOR OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Honoring 47 Years of Impact, Leadership, and Service--

Dr. Jeffery Ferguson joined the College of Business in 1978, and one word defines his extraordinary tenure: service. His commitment to students, colleagues, the university, and the community has been unwavering. Jeff has been more than a colleague; he's been a mentor and a steady presence. He helped Dean Aicher find his footing, always offering wisdom, thoughtful conversation, and a well-timed laugh.

Over the years, Jeff has shaped the College in countless ways, serving as Team Lead, Associate Dean, MBA Program Director, and more. He led with humility, always focused on what would best serve students and the institution. His impact extends beyond campus. His decades of service to the Lewis Palmer School District—recognized with his induction into their Hall of Fame—reflect his deep commitment to community.

Academically, Jeff has authored 36 peer-reviewed publications with over 4,300 citations, significantly contributing to the field of marketing. His excellence in the classroom earned him multiple College of Business Teaching Awards and the UCCS Outstanding Teacher Award. Fittingly, his specialty is service marketing—a field that mirrors his own values.

His peers recognized his integrity and heart by naming him Outstanding Faculty Member in the College of Business—twice. But Jeff's true legacy lies in the stories he's shaped, the students he's inspired, and the example he's set.

"For over forty years, Dr. Ferguson has been a beacon of integrity, humility, and service. His influence will remain woven into the fabric of UCCS long after his well-earned retirement. For students, colleagues, and the community alike, he leaves a legacy not just of academic excellence—but of heart."

—Dr. Venkat Reddy, Professor of Finance; Chancellor Emeritus



Dr. Rebecca Duray

PROFESSOR OF OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Celebrating 27 Years of Dedication, Leadership, and Service--

Dr. Rebecca Duray retired in December 2024 after 27 years of distinguished service to the College of Business, the UCCS campus, and the broader academic community. Her career was defined by excellence in teaching, scholarship, and leadership—earning her unanimous support for emeritus status from the College's Primary Unit Evaluation Committee.

Rebecca taught over 85 course sections, reaching nearly 2,400 undergraduate and graduate students. She held numerous leadership roles, including Associate Dean, Team Lead, and Chair of the College's Online Undergraduate Launch Taskforce. Her service extended across campus, contributing to faculty and administrative search committees, review panels, and strategic initiatives.

Her scholarly contributions are equally impressive, with numerous publications, over 4,900 citations, and editorial roles at top-tier journals. She held leadership positions in national organizations such as the Decision Sciences Institute and the Academy of Management, and chaired the 2022 DSI Conference Program.

Rebecca's legacy is deeply personal as well. She mentored faculty, shaped academic programs, and built lasting friendships. Her influence continues to be felt in the culture of collaboration and care she helped foster.

"She is a great teacher, a great researcher, and was always willing to take on administrative or service tasks when needed. Whether it was department chair, associate dean, or serving on a committee, she would step up and take on whatever was asked of her. She also has been a great mentor to other faculty members, which is another way she has left her mark."—Dr. Greg Stock, Former Associate Dean, College of Business

Rebecca leaves behind a legacy of integrity, generosity, and impact. One that will continue to shape the College of Business for years to come.

SPECIAL THANKS

Dean's Advisory Board 2024-2025

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Program Director of the Career
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