



Winter  
2015

# The Connection

*Engaging Colorado's Development Community*

Colorado Career Development Association

## President's Corner

**Dear Colorado Career  
Development Association  
(CCDA) Members,**



"Happy 2015 Everyone! What an exciting year to be involved in career development in the state of Colorado. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we are excited to have the National Career Development Association (NCDA) annual conference in Denver this Summer. For our current members, we are able to offer the opportunity to volunteer for a greatly reduced or even free registration. If you are not a member, now is a great time to join as volunteer spots are still available, though they are filling up rapidly. Because CCDA is conscious of the limited budgets of many of our members, we have decided to change our normal agenda for the Spring and encourage our members to use their funds to attend the NCDA conference if

possible. The speakers they have lined up are amazing. In addition, we have planned many career events instead of our regular Spring training, so there will still be plenty of other CCDA networking and career related events,

including graduate student events, a volunteer day, and a co-sponsored Colorado event at the NCDA conference, so watch your e-mails for more details on these exciting upcoming events! I look forward to seeing you at one or all of these soon."

Sincerely,  
Nena Davis, CCDA President

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## Upcoming CCDA Events!

### *Career Connect - Northern Colorado*

Come mix and mingle with career development professionals and grad students from various locations and paths.

**Wednesday, February 25th, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

**BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, 2670 East Harmony Road, Fort Collins, CO 80528**

For more information contact:

Claire Benton at [ccbenton@gmail.com](mailto:ccbenton@gmail.com) or Amanda White at [ammwhite@gmail.com](mailto:ammwhite@gmail.com)

<http://www.coloradocareerdevelopment.org/event-1845917>

### *Save the Date - CCDA Spring Day of Service*

Join CCDA on **Friday, April 24th** for a morning of volunteering and networking lunch.

CCDA's Day of Services will take the place of our spring conference this year. We encourage our membership to put funds that would have been spent to attend the spring conference towards attending the NCDA Conference in Denver June 30-July 2. Stay tuned!

### *Watch for a CCDA sponsored networking event at NCDA.*

For more information about the NCDA Conference go to:

[http://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/conference\\_home](http://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/conference_home)

## Rich Feller Award Nominations

**Consider nominating a colleague for this award! The process is easy!**

**The recipient of this award will be recognized for making valuable contributions to the career development field and receive a cash gift and plaque.**

**Complete the [Rich Feller Award Nomination](#) (opens as a PDF)**

**by Friday, March 13, 2015.**

**All nominees will be announced in the spring.**

## Annual Rich Feller Award

### **Tips for Writing a Letter of Recommendation**

*By Cori Shaff*

*University of Colorado-Boulder*

In 2008, CCDA established the annual Rich Feller Award in honor of our colleague, mentor, and friend, Rich Feller (<http://www.stemcareer.com/richfeller/>). This award is the opportunity to recognize contributions of career development professionals. Last year, CCDA honored local coach and consultant, Linda Sollars. Linda was nominated by two colleagues who wanted to recognize the many ways she contributes to our field with her work investing in a variety of populations.

At one point during our academic, personal, and professional careers, we have requested a colleague, friend, or supervisor to write a recommendation letter on our behalf. However, the first time you are approached to write a letter on behalf of a candidate can be intimidating. How do you start? What should you include? How much time will it take? For those who have written letters before, it can be hard to know if your approach is correct and what to include to best highlight the candidate's contributions, skills, and/or accomplishments. The truth is, there is no right way to write a recommendation letter. Recommendation letters provide insight into experience, strengths, and skills from the point-of-view of a person who has worked directly alongside the candidate.

### **WHAT WORKS**

1 - Provide context on how you know the candidate and for how long. Are you a former or current supervisor, student, mentor, colleague, or do you know the candidate

personally?

2 - Include the award that the candidate is applying/being nominated for.

3 - Describe the strengths, skills, or work experiences that set the candidate apart and makes them the most qualified. Point to specific and recent examples of what the nominee has done and, specifically within [C]CDA, how they have contributed to the field of career development and the Association. For example, mention a project or ongoing experience that relates to the goals of the award. Tip: Have the candidate's resume in front of you to jog your memory. Don't forget to include examples that aren't on their resume for an added bonus!

4 - Discuss why the nominee is a strong candidate. How does this person (or possibly group in the case of NCDA awards) exemplify the selection criteria specified by the award? Tip: it's helpful to have the description of the award in front of you so you can pull specific examples which are unique to the award.

Learn more about the award and nominate your colleague today:

<http://www.coloradocareerdevelopment.org/richfelleraward>

Portions of this article, Help Recognize Hard Working Career Development Professionals and Give Writing a Recommendation Letter a Try, by Lauren Little and Susan Wade, originally appeared in NCDA's quarterly print magazine, Career Developments - Servicing the Career Needs of Military Veterans (Winter 2014, Vol. 31-1). Copyright © December 2014. Reprinted with permission.

## **On the Horizon: Increased Demand for Adult Career Development in Colorado**

*By Jennifer Jirous*

*Colorado Department of Education  
Adult Education and Family Literacy*

In June of 2014, the Colorado State Legislature passed the Adult Education and Literacy Act. This legislation secured funding for a statewide adult education and literacy grant program administered by the Colorado Department of Education. Eligible recipients of the grant are required to be part of a collaborative workforce development partnership that is focused on increasing the number of low-literacy, low-skilled working-age adults who acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills and move to postsecondary credential attainment and employment.

This legislation addresses two critical education and workforce issues in Colorado: Research indicates that 9% of the total state population lacks a high

school diploma or the equivalent. Many of these adults do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills that prepare them to participate in the current workforce, and existing education programs are not focused on preparing students for a transition to postsecondary education and, ultimately, employment. In addition, Colorado has a substantial “middle skills gap” between the number of jobs available that require some postsecondary education but less than a four-year bachelor’s degree, and the number of workers with the skills and training to fill those jobs.

The intersection of these two issues has raised the awareness that Colorado cannot meet its workforce, educational-attainment, or poverty-reduction goals without helping more working-age adults acquire the skills they need for success. The goal of this grant program is to address this issue through the implementation of an Adult Career Pathways model. This model and the workforce development partnerships that the grant funding requires will enable the state to serve a larger share of the state’s eligible adult populations and ensure that more adults can reach skills acquisition, postsecondary credential attainment, and employment.

According to Hinkley, Mills, and Cotner (2011), “A career pathway is a coherent sequence of rigorous academic and career/technical courses that lead to an associate degree, a bachelor’s degree and beyond, and /or licensure. Pathways are developed, implemented, and maintained by partnerships involving employers, educators, and community leaders.” Based on unique strengths and needs of this adult population, the adult career pathway model does not look the same as with traditional students. Hinkley, Mills, and Cotner (2011), identify seven components of the adult model with career development comprising a large portion of several of the components. As Colorado implements the Adult Education and Literacy legislation, the involvement by the career development community will be critical for success. Although career pathways programs and services take many forms, every program requires collaboration of secondary, postsecondary, and business entities and requires career development interventions that are unique to this population.

Recipients of the grant include Aims Community College, Community College of Aurora, Colorado Northwestern Community College, Northeastern Junior College, Emily Griffith Technical School, Community College of Denver, Asian Pacific Development Center, Unlimited Learning Center, and Mile High Youth Corps, and RiseUP Community School.

For more information on grant recipients and/or how to get involved contact Jennifer Jirous, Adult Workforce Partnerships Manager, [Jirous\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Jirous_j@cde.state.co.us).

*Adult Career Pathways: Second Edition (2011). Hinckley, R., Mills, D., & Cotner, H. CORD Communications, Waco, TX.*



## Scholarship Released!

Each year, CCDA offers **scholarships to two professionals and two students** (enrolled in at least 6 credit hours) who are working or studying to work in the area of career development.

Scholarships awarded for 2015-2016 apply to one year of membership dues, \$100 towards the annual NCEA Conference (Denver June 30 – July 2), and registration for the CCDA Fall Training, **a value of more than \$250.**

## Scholarship Process

Those interested in applying can submit the **scholarship application** by **Tuesday, March 10th at 5 pm.**

A committee of Board members will select the recipients, and they will be notified in late March.

## Expectations

Scholarship recipients will be required to submit an article for the CCDA newsletter, join a CCDA committee, or participate in a service event during their scholarship year.

If you have questions, please contact the CCDA Connections Chair, Claire Benton, at [cbenton@bouldercounty.org](mailto:cbenton@bouldercounty.org).

## Gender Equity and Non-Traditional Careers

By Lauren Jones  
Colorado Community College System

Gender Equity and Non-Traditional Careers by gender is still a hot topic in 2015! Today’s workplace has altered just slightly when it comes to who we recruit, hire and retain. Our secondary schools hold the power in supplying the exposure of non-traditional career pathways as options for their students’ postsecondary & workforce success. Seamlessly, our postsecondary institutions, along with their partnership with industry & business, hold the power to supply the readiness, realities, strategies, and real-world experience for the successful placement & growth in the workforce. Colorado Career & Technical Education (CTE)

maintains the mission to supply targeted technical assistance to postsecondary institutions who have missed their non-traditional career program enrollment and completion data points. Colorado CTE also facilitates professional development through grant funds to our postsecondary and secondary programs to increase the exposure to non-traditional career exploration, gender equity pedagogy, best practices, and - most importantly- helping to alter the mindsets and belief systems connected to gender bias. **CAREERS HAVE NO GENDER!**

Some resources to learn and explore within your own advising and counseling practices: [www.coloradostateplan.com/genderbalance.htm](http://www.coloradostateplan.com/genderbalance.htm) and our partners at National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity [www.napequity.org](http://www.napequity.org) (their annual conference is April 20-23, 2015 in Washington D.C.)

Peruse this recent brief article too: <http://www.cnet.com/news/intel-pledges-300m-to-build-a-more-diverse-work-force/>

For more information, contact: Lauren Jones, [lauren.jones@cccs.edu](mailto:lauren.jones@cccs.edu)

## ***Analytics in Higher Education Career Centers***

*By Jon Schlesinger  
University of Colorado-Boulder*

"Analytics is an overarching concept described as data-driven decision making" (Van Barneveld, Arnold, & Campbell, 2012, p.6). While businesses have been using analytics and collecting data on customers for a while, some areas of higher education have been slower to catch on. In higher education, some departments use this type of data driven decision making, particularly among recruitment, finance and budgeting, advising, and online learning environments; however, the use of analytics in other areas of higher education is slower to catch on (Bichsel, 2012). If you have ever shopped and used a company credit card or a savings reward card, you've helped tell the store more about your purchasing habits. Stores can use this information to target advertisements and savings as well as help them understand how to stock their stores and have the products they expect you to purchase. Higher education follows this model of data collection for data-driven decision making, tracking customers, and analyzing their habits.

Career centers could be the next be area to begin using analytics. Centers are data rich, we have a lot of information about the populations that utilize our services. By setting up even a simple program to



track and analyze this data, we can learn about our populations and take action based on that data. In addition to anecdotal information, analytics is a crucial component of telling our story. In most higher education institutions, the stakeholders of career centers report to faculty or administrators trained as researchers, who often value data. Consider annual reports as one example. Most offices produce some type of annual report, generally this information is reported and put in a drawer. While annual reports have their place, the single number is of little use other than to see the inevitable change over time. Analytics allows us to dig deeper into the data to better understand what those numbers mean. **With analytics we can begin to answer questions such as: who uses your center, what populations and issues do you deal with most, what services are under/highly utilized, what are your staffing needs, what predictions can you make about future needs.**

Gathering and analyzing this data can help practitioners and administrators report on the effectiveness of their centers. In this time of increased scrutiny on higher education, we should be doing everything we can to continue to advocate for our services on campus. Analytics can help us understand unique student usage. For example, how many individual students utilized your services last year? How was that reflected in the overall population? Additionally, usage data is helpful for human resource allocation. How many counselors do you need on staff and how many appointments do they need to offer? This type of detailed data can help change the narrative of how your office works and the types of services offered. Many career centers face the perception they are only focused on business or engineering. Anecdotally, this might even ring true for some staff. However, by digging deeper into the data and understanding it better, we can provide data to stakeholders to shift the narrative.

Establishing a program of data collection does not need to be a complicated undertaking. I've developed five guidelines to help establish a program; while not comprehensive it established the foundation to begin. First, create buy-in amongst your staff. It's important to remind them that we're not collecting data just to collect it, the data has to be actionable. We want to begin to establish, "smart data, not big data" (Phillips, 2013, p.55). Second, review what data you have, and third, check it for accuracy. Data that comes from your registrar or the staff is going to be more reliable than student entered information. Having access to a unique student identifier, such as student ID number, will make collecting this data simpler as well. Fourth is to begin to collect your data, and fifth, start to analyze it. Starting to use analytics in higher education career centers begins by creating a

culture of asking questions and using the data to create actionable answers.

For more information on analytics in higher education career centers, or how to get an initiative started, contact [jon.schlesinger@colorado.edu](mailto:jon.schlesinger@colorado.edu). Jon is the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Communication at CU-Boulder Career Services.

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## Networking: Less Pain for More Gain

By Carly Einstein  
University of Denver

Networking is a necessary component of the job search process, yet most people fear it and, in fact, go to great lengths to avoid it. This article provides tips on how to teach clients, including seasoned professionals, about networking, from gaining buy-in to specific activities in the classroom.

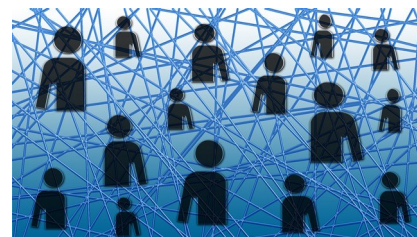
As a career advisor to graduate students at a university, some of whom are well into their careers with decade's worth of contacts, talking about networking can be a challenge. The reality is that even the most extroverted professionals can still feel like deer caught in headlights when it comes to meeting new people, exchanging business cards, and following up. So, as career advisors to diverse populations, from undergraduate students to baby boomers, how can we help our clients overcome – *and ultimately master* – their networking fears?

**First off, buy-in is key.** Essentially, we need our clients to *believe* that networking is worth their time so they can stop avoiding it and learn our strategies. In order to do this, we first have to understand the populations we work with, how they think, and what their perceptions of networking are. These associations will vary widely depending on their experiences. It's our job to uncover these details by combining what we know from our training with what we have learned from individual clients.

For instance, some universities have targeted undergraduate student fears by replacing the

traditional language with less intimidating phrases like "making connections" and "building relationships."

In my own work place, where I advise doctoral-level scientists and statisticians, I use data to gain trust. Meaning, I make sure all my marketing materials include networking stats from trustworthy resources (i.e. Department of Labor and Statistics) regarding how much more successful their job search will be if they create pre-established relationships with colleagues and acquaintances. For the less analytical job seekers, articles and anecdotal stories can challenge their pre-conceived notions with real-world evidence.



**Second, once your clients are paying attention, let them practice.** In group settings, where the stakes are low but the opportunity to practice is high, clients have a chance to see what networking is about without experiencing failure that can impact their careers. Specifically, providing clients with multiple role-playing scenarios allows them to try out different tactics, from one-on-one conversations (much like a real-life "informational interview") to "mock happy hours" where they can experience what it's like to engage with larger amounts of people in a short period of time.

During a networking workshop, before I launch into specific scenarios, I always start with an engaging activity that demonstrates the basic components of networking – *asking questions and listening thoughtfully* – in order to break down barriers. Students find three non-professional items in common with their neighbor. During this activity, they become visibly more comfortable after learning these random facts, and more willing to engage in professionally-focused activities.

**Finally, show them your human side.** Having watched enough TED TALKS and attended Toastmasters meetings, I have learned that personal anecdotes not only keep people interested but also help them remember the concepts they've been taught. When I am working with students, I always close my networking workshops with a personal story, sharing my own blunders and successes. This strategy engages clients on a deeper level and makes them realize that even the career expert is human.

For more information, contact Carly Einstein, [carly.einstein@du.edu](mailto:carly.einstein@du.edu)

**Consider contributing your expertise to the CCDA newsletter!**

Submit your articles and contributions to *The Connection* editor:  
Kendra Rodriguez, [kendra.rodriguez@cccs.edu](mailto:kendra.rodriguez@cccs.edu)



Colorado Career Development Association  
[www.coloradocareerdevelopment.org](http://www.coloradocareerdevelopment.org)

Join our LinkedIn group!

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