



# Deming Center for Entrepreneurship

2020-2021 Achievements and Impact



**Leeds** School of Business  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

## **A Note from Erick**

What an amazing year we just completed! Never in my 18 years with Leeds have I encountered such challenges—and so many opportunities to innovate. With all its pivots and adaptations, you might call the 2020-2021 academic year the ultimate exercise in entrepreneurial thinking!

Despite the pandemic and shift to remote operations, we achieved some incredible things. Our students stayed connected and engaged, and there was no dampening their enthusiasm for dreaming and launching new ventures. In one telling example, the student demand for our Now What? startup series was so strong that we had to double the number of appointments we initially offered. Some truly great student-led ventures are going to come out of this experience!

We also doubled down on our commitment to Colorado and social impact with the Rural Colorado Workshop Series and COventure Forward. In addition, we launched a new targeted program for the Southern Ute Tribe and will continue expanding our reach to native communities—and even to incarcerated populations—in the year to come. We were honored to do our part during these challenging times via educating, connecting and supporting our students and community. I couldn't be prouder of how the Deming Center team and the Leeds and CU Boulder communities came together to deliver when it mattered most!

Above all, this year was a reminder of how important entrepreneurship and innovation are to building a resilient and adaptable world. To all of you who helped make this year a success, whether through your time, your investment, or other support, thank you. If you're new to the Deming Center, I hope you'll be inspired to join us in the year to come. There's so much possibility ahead of us.

- Erick Mueller, Executive Director



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## Student Entrepreneur Spotlight

Whether they're just testing the waters of entrepreneurship or growing an established venture, our students are creating positive change through innovation. Meet a few of our student entrepreneurs.



**I'm inspired by women and I want to inspire younger girls by showing them that they can do the same thing. Only 5% of CEOs are female and I'm hoping to change the status quo.**

*Maggie Grout (MGMT '21)*

Senior Maggie Grout is the founder of the nonprofit Thinking Huts, which she started at age 15 after being fascinated with the idea of leveraging technology to create architectural solutions that increase educational opportunities around the world. Thinking Huts is currently in the fundraising process and plans to build the world's first 3D printed school in Madagascar this year.



**As students, we are young and have the advantage of time on our side. I would rather fail now, learn, and move forward, rather than to never try and not know what could have been.**

*Eddy Connors (MGMT '23)*



Sophomore Eddy Connors took a gap year to explore the world and find out what he wanted for his future. He spent three months on a cultural immersion program in Indonesia, which inspired him to start BerBeda—a sustainable lifestyle brand that produces men's athletic shorts using recycled ocean plastic. Eddy's vision is to create positive change through ethical and sustainable business practices.

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## Access for All

The Deming Center helps students from all degree programs incorporate entrepreneurship into their studies. Learn more from students enrolled in the Business Certificate, High Growth Venture (HGV) Fellowship, and Business Minor.



### Daniel Avnieli (MGMT'21) and Luiz Pompeo (MGMT'21)

Daniel and Luiz, both undergraduates pursuing an entrepreneurial studies certificate, are serial entrepreneurs. Their latest venture, Wyzer Capital, is a marketplace for investment advice meant to be accessible to all, regardless of income level, background, or beliefs.

### Nosa Oghafua (MBA'23)

Nosa, an incoming HGV Fellow, is a McKinsey Achievement Awardee and an Obama Foundation Leader who founded Learnira, an educational social enterprise working to make quality education accessible to students in marginalized communities in Nigeria.



### Amy Gillespie (MBA'22)

Amy is a second year HGV Fellow and Founder of The Campfire Experience, a glamping business. She is an investment associate and director of diversity and inclusion for the Deming Center Venture Fund.

### Lane Levine (MechEngr'21)

Lane, an engineering major pursuing a business minor and an avid skier, was part of the team that won the business minor pitch competition. Their business, ReachRak, created an accessible roof rack designed to improve storage in compact vehicles.



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## Supporting Student Entrepreneurs

Many programs looked and felt different this year, yet staff and faculty ensured that the high-quality, supportive programs that students expect from the Deming Center continued uninterrupted.

When the pandemic forced the cancellation of in-person programs such as student trips to South Africa, France, and London, the Deming team pivoted to virtual events. Virtual global internships were a hit for students and even resulted in at least one full-time job offer for a graduating student.

The Deming Center introduced a new series of prizes for the best submitted and published papers by PhD students aimed at encouraging students to move their research into the publication pipeline.

Recognized papers included research into:

- How policy uncertainty impacts venture capital investment at a regional level
- How and when pharmaceutical companies ally with technology startups
- Entrepreneurship's relationship to digital platforms
- The importance of kinship in first-generation family firms

Fall 2021 brought the opening of the Deming Center's new home and a campus Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub in the Rustandy Building. Innovative programming, including a Genius/Entrepreneurship Bar and entrepreneurship workshops for engineering students, will soon take place in the new space.

**The Deming Center has programs to reach students no matter how they want to engage.**

- **Bufs with a Brand**
- **Creative Distillation Podcast**
- **Deming Center Venture Fund**
- **Deming Pulse Newsletter**
- **Demystifying Entrepreneurship Workshop Series**
- **Entrepreneurship & Empowerment in South Africa**
- **Entrepreneurial Solutions**
- **Global Programs**
- **High Growth Venture Fellowship**
- **Now What?**
- **Startups and Sandwiches**
- **Campus programs, including New Venture Challenge, Get Seed Funding, Catalyze CU, and more.**



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## Featured Program: Buffs with a Brand

Just in time for the NCAA's rule changes on Name, Image and Likeness, the Deming Center helped launch Buffs with a Brand for student athletes in August 2020.

Facilitated in partnership with CU Athletics and the SCRIPPS Leadership and Career Development Program, Buffs with a Brand offers comprehensive programming for student athletes focusing on three key pillars: personal brand management, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. This CU program was the first of its kind in the country!

35 CU Boulder athletes from 15+ sports participated in the program's inaugural year, investing time each month to learn about business fundamentals and interact with mentors from the Boulder entrepreneurship community.

For the 2021-2022 school year, Buffs with a Brand 2.0 will reflect updated Name, Image and Likeness legislation and introduce a new cohort of student athletes to the opportunities of personal branding and entrepreneurship.

"I've been inspired throughout this entire program. Here you have student-athletes who are juggling school, sports, social and work commitments, and are perhaps the busiest students on campus. And yet they jumped into learning about how to take advantage of the pending Name, Image and Likeness legislation and how to create amazing careers and lives, whether that includes sports or not. I was very proud to be a part of such an innovative program and see the impact it's had on our student athletes."

- Erick Mueller, Executive Director



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## Deming Center in the Community

### 160 local businesses

assisted by  
COventure  
Forward

### 250 Rural Entrepreneurs

were supported via  
educational  
workshops

### 2 seasons

of the Creative  
Distillation  
podcast—17  
episodes  
and 1,400+  
downloads

### 1 inaugural

Native  
Entrepreneurship  
program

At a time when support for entrepreneurs and small business owners was needed more than ever, the Deming Center extended its reach to help growing audiences and new communities across Colorado.

Programs including COventure Forward and the Rural Colorado Workshop Series were specifically created or adapted to help businesses through the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. For the first time, the Deming Center launched a Demystifying Entrepreneurship workshop specifically for indigenous communities, focusing on the Southern Ute Tribe in Southwestern Colorado.

Other programming like the Creative Distillation podcast by professors Brad Werner and Jeff York reached broader audiences than ever with a diverse range of topics.

What's coming up next for the Deming Center in the community? Be on the lookout for a full Native Entrepreneurship Workshop Series and a new Correctional System Entrepreneurship Workshop Series. Both are communities that have significant potential for business startups to positively impact economic prospects for their members.

**To stay updated and support the Deming Center's programs, visit us at [colorado.edu/business/deming](https://colorado.edu/business/deming). Be sure to sign up for the Deming Pulse e-newsletter and consider making a philanthropic contribution to support the Deming Center's work.**

Thank you for your support. We look forward to another impactful year!