



Presidents Leadership Class  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

PLC  
ALUMNI

## Alumni Newsletter January 2021

### Food for Thought

#### The Power of Together

*written by Ted Hamstra, PLC 1979*

It would be pretty easy to be somewhat skeptical or maybe even highly concerned about what the future holds after the collective uncertainty we have all experienced in varying degrees over the past year.

Personally I have naively decided to err towards optimism and wanted to share the 2021 New Year's Resolution that I borrowed from a long suffering Cleveland Browns football fan's sign he was holding as his home team finally entered the NFL playoffs a couple of weeks ago after a very, very, very long absence;

"100% Hope and 0% Expectations; Just Glad to Be Here".

My 40 years of involvement with PLC have shown me time and time again what can be accomplished when people work together no matter where they come from or what the beat of the drum they march to is. Orientation Weekends, Recitations, Group Lectures, Service Projects, Board Meetings, Interview Panels, Mentoring, PLC Annex Housing on the Hill (and even a group Walk-About Adventure where 6 of us boarded a plane Sophomore year only to jump out of it 20 minutes later and land together (eventually) in a field somewhere near Loveland, CO).

As a country it doesn't hurt to remind ourselves that our "go to" instinct as Americans has always been to rally during times of crisis and extend a helping hand to our neighbors. (think 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, floods, forest fires and various other calamities big and small).

Breathe a sigh of relief once things calm down for you personally and then seek out ways to help those in your family or community who are still struggling or who just need someone to talk to.

I think we can, and should, try to reclaim some common ground with and for each other.

Realizing that we have all have faced a common struggle may make reaching a better place "together" much more achievable than we think!

# Upcoming Events

## Help us select the PLC 2021 Cohort!

Once again, we are trying something new for PLC Interviews! This year due to COVID-19, all of our panel interviews will take place live and on the Zoom platform. We would love for you to join us for this new version of PLC Interviews 2021. We will host interviews on March 12, 13, 15, 16, 18.

Please click on the link below to choose your day/session. Some days will have sessions both morning (8a-12p) and afternoon (1p-5p), and others may just have one session.

Once you register, you will receive an email confirming your day/session and assigned panel (by lead panelist). Further communications will come from both Jessie Kasynski and your lead panelist, so please be diligent about checking your email for important information and your assigned zoom link.

If you are joining us for the first time or the tenth time, we thank you for helping us review and select the newest cohort of the Presidents Leadership Class.

**Register to Become an  
Interview Panelist**

**Contact Jessie Kasynski  
with Questions**

## You are cordially invited to join us to Think & Drink with your fellow Alumni!

Beginning at the end of April 2020, the PLC Alumni Community hosted weekly Think & Drink events. Our sessions showcased a diverse array of alumni who represent different eras of PLC as well as unique disciplines, business, and mindsets.

**The Think & Drinks happen on a monthly basis with the meet ups taking place on the first Thursday of every month at 4p MDT.**

Please feel free to share these events with your PLC friends and encourage folks to check it out. We would love to see you jump on a call and say hello and share your thoughts and insights about the topics at hand.

You can find the logistical details for upcoming sessions below. We are looking forward to 'seeing' you!

Join us for our monthly  
PLC Alumni

## Think & Drink

The First Thursday of Every Month  
4p mountain time

- Alumni facilitators from various PLC cohorts
- Timely and thought-provoking topics
- Interactive and engaging activities
- Laughter, lively conversation, and community

<https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/92969961429>

The Zoom link is standardized:

<https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/92969961429>

Our upcoming monthly sessions will  
be:

February 4th  
March 4th  
April 1st  
May 6th

Stay tuned to the Alumni Facebook  
page and your email for information  
about our presenters and topics!

*Announcing AMP!*

## PLC's Revived and Renewed Alumni Mentoring Program

Current students Jeffrey Erickson and Jasmine Szabo are thrilled to announce their plan to revitalize PLC's Alumni Mentoring Program this Spring! The new **Alumni Mentoring Program** offers flexible ways for you to engage with current students through a wide array of exciting programming opportunities.

The first of these opportunities will occur on **February 10 from 7:00pm to 8:00pm** over Zoom during the official Spring 2021 launch of the Alumni Mentoring Program. Join us to meet the current cohorts of PLC students in a short event about professional networking that will balance fun opportunities to socialize among the cohorts with meaningful professional development discussion. The event will feature small conversational groups of alumni and current students, as well as a short presentation from our very own alumna **Morgan Flynn from the 2011 cohort**.

Join us to hear more about all AMP opportunities to come. We can't wait to see you there!

**Update your Mentor Profile**

**Request More Information**



### **Save the Date, Alums!**

Believe it or not, the Presidents Leadership Class will be celebrating its **50th birthday in the Fall of 2022!** We are in the process of planning a great weekend of events and celebrations. We are hoping to highlight the incredible accomplishments of our alumni over the years, the work that our current students are engaged with, and look forward to many more years of success for PLC.

Stay tuned for more information in the next few months! If you'd like to be involved in the planning of the 50th Anniversary weekend, let us know.

**Submit photos for the  
Anniversary weekend here!**

## **Alumni Spotlights**

### **Dr. Anitra Romfh, PLC 1992**

*Doctor, Stanford University*



Dr. Anitra Romfh is a cardiologist at Stanford University who specializes in caring for adult survivors of congenital heart disease. Dr. Romfh began her journey at CU Boulder and is a PLC alumni from the class of 1992. She always knew she wanted to be a doctor but took the path less traveled, earning her undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering. Engineering provided Dr. Romfh with the problem solving skills to tackle technical challenges through teamwork. This paired well with PLC as she reflected on how her time in the program really gave her the tools to take on leadership initiatives.

PLC gave Dr. Romfh a close-knit group to be connected with inside a large university. She found peers she admired and loved listening to the class speakers; learning about the difference these leaders were making in local Colorado communities was inspiring. To this day she remembers reading the "Seven Habits of a Highly Effective People" and believes that all of the classwork and experiences within PLC gave her the tools to find herself as a leader. For Dr. Romfh this looks like understanding people and bringing out the best in them.

Being a doctor was the perfect combination of human connection and science for Dr. Romfh. She knows that being a good cardiologist means looking into the patient's life as a whole and creating a safe space for open conversation. Good health is going to come from all aspects of life, not just from heart health, so Dr. Romfh places an importance on fostering a trusting doctor-patient relationship. She finds it a gratifying gift to be able to move patients towards health with each interaction.



## **Scott Burt, PLC 1980**

*Senior Vice President, Chief Intellectual Property Officer & General Counsel Conversant Intellectual Property Management Inc.*



Scott Burt is a member of the PLC cohort from 1980. He works for Conversant Intellectual Property Management as the Senior Vice President and has practiced law for over 30 years. In college, he received a bachelors in Mathematics, emphasizing in Computer Science. He took these analytical skills to University of Denver for law school where his interest in Intellectual Property and patent law sparked. When in PLC, he learned that your background can aid in finding passions, but is not predictive of where people will end up. This lesson matches his math background and legal career.

Mr. Burt's time in the Presidents Leadership Class was the highlight of his college experience. He especially loved his first year recitation, and remains in contact with many of his classmates. He enjoyed first year lectures and the great insight they provided from different businesses and people. Burt even has fond memories of the interview process, where he brought a copy of his own application for reference, showing great preparedness and initiative, securing his spot in PLC. As a CA, he developed additional friendships with younger students. His life long friendships with his PLC friends have been a constant in his life.

In his legal career, he has travelled all over the country and world. His favorite place to travel is London, England. He very much likes that the job keeps his mind challenged and technologically savvy. His greatest lesson from PLC and his career is that it is okay to go away from a designated path; the best places are unforeseen places.

# Cohort Spotlight

## It's PLC 2003!

Take it from '03 - they know what This cohort's recent claim to fame community is all about. Since they has been their involvement in the graduated from PLC, this group of Think & Drinks that have been running folks has kept in incredible contact since last Spring. 21 members of their with one another. From deep and cohort have attended at least one lasting friendships to professional happy hour. That's almost half! Below collaborations, this class has really is a photo from our November 2020 gone above and beyond to stick edition where they ended up having a together as a unit. record 13 folks from their cohort attend, two of whom were panelists

This cohort is spread out all over the for the discussion that evening.  
US in DC, IL, CO, CA, MD, WA, UT, SC,  
ND, and MI. Collectively, they have a Special thanks to Sharon Read and  
wealth of expertise in their fields of Ashley Elmlblad, 2003 Class  
medicine, consulting, arts, education, Champions, for pouring so much time  
finance, and tech start ups! and energy into ensuring a true sense  
of connectedness amongst their  
peers!



# PLC Today



## Service Update

*a note from PLCer Jordan Lee (2019)*

Hello from PLC Service! This semester, we have continued integrating service into the PLC experience by fostering new and existing service partnerships in education, mental health, and social justice. We have continued working with Active Minds, a national organization focused on de-stigmatizing mental health and suicide prevention, on the "Help Others to Help Yourself" service initiative. We also began working with Empower Community High School, supporting online tutoring platforms and helping unpack and assemble furniture. Individual PLCers have also volunteered outside of these PLC opportunities by phone-banking for the election, serving meals at Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, and working on diversity and inclusion initiatives in their sororities. Next semester, we look forward to expanding our partnerships to work with some incredible organizations started by PLCers, including Unmask the Racism (shown in the photo above) and Connecting Flight.

**PLC Service Page**





## **Connecting Flight**

*a note from PLCers Will Pryor (2018) and Austin Spafford (2018)*

Two members of the PLC 2018 cohort, Will Pryor and Austin Spafford, founded a nonprofit organization named Connecting Flight. Connecting Flight's goal at CU is to find concrete, cost-effective, and research-backed improvements to wellness programming and to aid administrators in the implementation of those improvements in an engaging manner. Their student perspective combined with their use of academic research lends Connecting Flight a unique value to CU Boulder. Currently, they are developing a measurement system with faculty advisors to analyze the effectiveness of the cognitive behavioral therapy-based programming being implemented this semester in the College of Engineering and Applied Science. As Connecting Flight grows, their hope is to expand the programs they measure, consistently bringing better approaches and new ideas to university administrators.

To gain traction and spread their message, Connecting Flight is built around a solo circumnavigation attempt. This flight is designed to share Connecting Flight's message through a powerful metaphor and fly-a-thon. This immense challenge speaks to the complexity, community, and spirit required to build mentally well lives. Connecting Flight believes that in order to change community values, we must show that the sky is the limit and push for innovation in wellness programming.

**Connecting Flight Website**



### **Featured Current Student Profile**

Say hello to Anushka Kathait! Anushka is a member of the PLC 2019 cohort from Denver, Colorado and Strategic Communication Coordinator on student staff. She is studying Computer Science and Economics.

Despite what her choice of majors may suggest, Anushka is happiest when contributing to her community and hopes to spend her life doing so. She currently volunteers as a developer for Blueprint Boulder (an organization that builds software pro bono for local nonprofits), a student member of the Computer Science Departmental Action Team setting up a new study space in the Engineering Center, and a dance teacher at a nonprofit dance studio in Denver. She also enjoys serving as a mentor to K-12 students from communities underrepresented in STEM.

Anushka is an avid dancer and claims to be minoring in "busting a move". She is grateful to have been able to continue holding dance practices over Zoom last year!



### **Featured Current Student Profile**

Meet Jake McGrath! Jake is a senior in the PLC 2017 cohort and a member of the engineering honors program from Littleton, Colorado. Currently, Jake is finishing his last semester in Aerospace Engineering with minors in Applied Math Leadership Studies. In the fall, Jake will begin his masters degree in Aerospace Engineering specializing in autonomous systems as a part of the Bachelors Accelerated Masters (BAM) program.

Outside of PLC, Jake was involved in Designing for Defense, a national design completion sponsored by the Department of Defense. Jake has also been heavily involved in research with Dr. James Curry from Applied Mathematics researching Wi-Fi data. Jake is finishing his last semester of undergrad as the CEO and CFO of his senior projects team. The team has been tasked with creating an apparatus for securing and wirelessly releasing large weather balloons for high altitude stratospheric research. The project has been sponsored by Dr. Dale Lawrence and is in support of the Hypersonic Flight In The Turbulent Stratosphere (HYFLITS) program.

Jake has become passionate about computer science and cyber security. He is in the process of starting a software company, M-Tech, which provides user focused software to user focused organizations. M-Tech has done a considerable amount of work for PLC like the MyPLC mobile apps, the service tool, and an email marketing tool used by the recruitment team. In his free time, Jake is a private pilot and enjoys flying with his parents. He also enjoys drone photography and has a newfound excitement for 3D printing.



# Reconnect



## Class Champion Initiative

To support our commitment to the reengagement of our Alumni Community, we are increasing efforts from our Class Champions. These Champions will be striving to reconnect with all of our alumni, pushing out information about the program, current students, involvement opportunities, event invitations and much more!

If you have any questions about who your Champion is, or if you have any interest in becoming a Class Champion, please contact [emily.allen-1@colorado.edu](mailto:emily.allen-1@colorado.edu).

**Become a PLC  
Mentor**

**Join the Alumni  
Board**

**Make a Donation  
to PLC**

**Click here to update your contact information with us!**



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Presidents Leadership Class condemns the May 25th killing of George Floyd and the deaths of every other unarmed life taken by police brutality, including Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, David McAtee, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others before them, and also condemns the violence committed against peaceful protesters by police. Our program supports the catalyzed response seen around the country by peaceful protesters demanding justice for black lives lost and advocating for the dismantling of systemic racism. Additionally, PLC supports our black, indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) students and alumni and will continue to do so.

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The Presidents Leadership Class at CU Boulder acknowledges that the University sits upon land within the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho peoples. Further, we acknowledge that 48 contemporary tribal nations are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado.

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You can see all statements issued PLC students, faculty, and staff by visiting the PLC homepage here <https://www.colorado.edu/plc/>.

**Go Buffs!**

[www.colorado.edu/plc](https://www.colorado.edu/plc)

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