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CSU System awards eight projects with venture capital funding

DENVER – August 15, 2013 – The Colorado State University System today announced that eight projects will move forward with funding from the CSU System Venture Capital Fund, a new initiative to support innovation and promote collaboration in higher education.

The CSU System Board of Governors launched the program with $1.5 million in May, and a request for proposals was issued in June. Seventy-three applicants responded to the RFP, with total requests exceeding $19 million. A review committee evaluated the projects and selected the final awardees based on criteria that focused on innovation, collaboration and prospects for financial sustainability. The final eight projects range from nearly $20,000 to $496,465, with a total investment of more than $1.4 million.

“The CSU System is funding an exceptional set of projects that embody an entrepreneurial spirit that we must continue to grow and foster for the future success of our university system,” Chancellor Mike Martin said. “Higher education in Colorado is facing a divestment from the public sector, and the CSU System Venture Capital Fund demonstrates our commitment to doing everything we can to support and develop innovative programs that will help build durable and efficient institutions to stand the test of time.”

Awardees include:

- **Enterprise Student Partnership Program**, a new venture from CSU in Fort Collins for $496,465
- **Colorado Policy Analytics and Learning Scale**, a new venture from CSU-Global Campus for $330,000
• **CSU Local Government Collaboration**, a new venture from CSU in Fort Collins for $250,000
• **Cultivating Colorado**, a new venture from CSU in Fort Collins for $157,000
• **Integrated Planning and Advising Services**, a joint new venture from CSU and CSU-Pueblo for $83,368
• **4-H STEM Kits for Educators**, an instructional project from CSU in Fort Collins for $36,200
• **Object Modeling System Curriculum**, a research and instructional project from CSU in Fort Collins for $30,000
• **Emergent Ag Innovation Clusters**, a new venture from CSU in Fort Collins for $19,897

The Enterprise Student Partnership Program is an initiative to enroll entities – such as private corporations, nonprofit organizations and government units – as “students” of the university system, thus providing educational and other opportunities on all three CSU System campuses. After a two-year pilot, the program is expected to be self-sufficient and to generate new revenues for the university.

The Colorado Policy Analytics and Learning Scale (CO-PALS) Program seeks to transition at-risk students from area community colleges to the CSU-Global Campus, a 100 percent online university, to complete their four-year degrees. With a focus on collaborating with community colleges and creating comprehensive student support, the program seeks to increase retention among students who might not otherwise complete their degree.

An initiative proposed by the Colorado Futures Center at CSU and the Regional Economics Institute at CSU will create a Local Government Collaborative to conduct research and serve as a resource for local municipalities and counties throughout Colorado.

The CSU System Venture Capital Fund is open to students, staff and faculty of the CSU System, and projects, programs or initiatives of up to $500,000. Proposals must seek to improve higher education, with a focus on supporting academic programs, expanding the system’s statewide presence, creating financial sustainability, or improving Colorado’s future. The CSU System plans to offer an RFP through the venture capital fund annually.

“The CSU System recognizes that there is risk, that it’s possible not all of these ideas will work, but we understand that we must become more entrepreneurial in order to maintain quality and promote economic sustainability,” Martin said. “The inaugural year of the CSU System Venture Capital Fund demonstrates the tremendous talent and creativity within the students, faculty and staff at each of our campuses. I look forward to seeing what impact this first round of projects has on our system and the state.”
ABOUT THE CSU SYSTEM

The CSU System Board of Governors has nine voting members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate, and six non-voting members who are faculty and student representatives from CSU, CSU-Pueblo and the CSU-Global Campus. The board provides oversight to ensure effective management, accountability and leadership at all the CSU System universities. More information: www.csusystem.edu.

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