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For Immediate Release

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Colorado College Faculty Awarded Tenure, Promotion, and Emeriti Status

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—March 13, 2026—Colorado College congratulates five Assistant Professors on their tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Eight faculty members also received emeriti status following approval of their retirement at the end of the 2025-26 academic year. One additional faculty member was bestowed emeriti status in memoriam following her passing earlier this academic year.

The faculty promotions were presented by Dean of the Faculty Emily Chan and approved by the Board of Directors at their annual winter meeting held Feb. 19-21 on campus and will take effect July 1. Each faculty member has met CC's high expectations in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service.

Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor for five faculty members (photos attached):

Liliana Carrizo, Assistant Professor of Music and the Christine S. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Music, has made significant contributions to Colorado College's curriculum and student learning through innovative course development and dedicated student mentorship. Since joining the faculty, she has introduced several new courses, including the international course *The Musical Crossroads of Panamá*. An interdisciplinary ethnomusicologist, Professor Carrizo studies musical memory, diaspora, trauma, and cultural identity within Iraqi Jewish musical traditions. Her forthcoming monograph, *Singing with Ghosts: Musical Hauntings of Iraqi Jewish Biographical Songs*, is under contract with the University of Illinois Press. External reviewers have recognized her scholarship as theoretically rigorous and ethnographically grounded.

Chantal Figueroa, Assistant Professor of Sociology, is a dedicated educator whose courses emphasize rigorous academic inquiry while fostering an environment that supports student learning and growth. Her teaching encourages students to critically examine social systems and their broader impacts. Her scholarship explores mental health within social and political contexts, with particular focus on the effects of

state violence in Guatemala. Her work has been widely recognized for its community-engaged approach and contributions to global conversations on mental health. Her publications include “[Mental Health as an Educational Outcome](#)” ([Disability and the Global South](#)) and forthcoming work in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization. At Colorado College, she has strengthened the Sociology curriculum through the Health and Society concentration. Beyond the college, Figueroa has provided expert testimony on more than ninety Guatemalan asylum cases and served as a technical advisor to the Guatemalan Congress on mental health policy.

[Cayce Hughes](#), **Assistant Professor of Sociology**, is an engaging, student-centered teacher whose courses emphasize intellectual rigor and active participation. Through structured readings, discussions, simulations, and student-led activities, he fosters a collaborative learning environment that encourages critical thinking and open dialogue. Students and peer observers emphasize his clear instruction, accessibility, and thoughtful feedback, while advisees describe him as a supportive and candid mentor. Professor Hughes’ scholarship [examines forms of formal and informal surveillance](#) and explores how [low-income Black women navigated and responded to scrutiny and disinvestment during COVID-19](#) pandemic emergency food support programs.

[Adam Light](#), **Assistant Professor of Physics**, is an excellent educator who engages students in active learning and maintains high academic standards while fostering a classroom culture in which students are comfortable making mistakes and learning from them. An experimental plasma physicist, Professor Light has sustained an active research agenda with both external [NSF grants](#) and internal grants and deeply involved student researchers. He studies atmospheric pressure plasma physics and its applications, including studying the [breakdown of polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#) and the modification of surface chemistry using plasma jets. [The Light Lab](#) provided research opportunities and helped students develop scientific independence and competence through hands-on experimentation, combining mechanical and electrical design as well as the collection and analysis of data.

[Brandon Shimoda](#), **Assistant Professor of English**, is a creative and engaging teacher whose courses cultivate a supportive workshop culture centered on care, connection, and the development of student voice. Across courses ranging from Beginning Creative Nonfiction Writing to advanced seminars, he combines carefully curated readings (often paired with author visits), reflective writing practices, and structured workshops that help students take artistic risks and grow as writers. Professor Shimoda is an acclaimed writer and editor whose scholarship and creative practice engage Japanese American incarceration, history, memory, and autobiography. During the review period, he published three major books—[Hydra Medusa \(2023\)](#), [The Afterlife is Letting Go \(2024\)](#), and the co-edited anthology [The Gate of Memory: Poems by Descendants of Nikkei Wartime Incarceration \(2025\)](#)—alongside a substantial body of essays and poems; his work has earned major recognition, including the Colorado Book Award for Creative Nonfiction.

Emeritus status was granted for nine faculty members:

Rick Furtak (2003), Associate Professor Emeritus of Philosophy

Claire Oberon Garcia (1991), Dean Emerita & Professor Emerita of English

Eve Grace (1993), Associate Professor Emerita of Political Science

Hong Jiang (1999), Professor Emerita of Chinese

Jonathan Scott Lee (1993), Professor Emeritus of Philosophy

Dwanna McKay (2016), Associate Professor Emerita of Race, Ethnicity, & Migration Studies, *In Memoriam*

Carol L. Neel (1981), Professor Emerita of History

Patricia L. Waters (2001), Professor Emerita of Psychology

Shawn Womack (2011), Professor Emerita of Theatre & Dance

“On behalf of the Board, we extend our congratulations and deep appreciation to the faculty members recognized for their accomplishments and sustained dedication to teaching and scholarship,” said Kyle Samuel ‘92, Chair of the Colorado College Board of Trustees.

About Colorado College

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts institution in Colorado Springs, Colorado, founded in 1874. Known for its innovative Block Plan, students take one class at a time in intensive 3½-week segments, allowing for deep focus and engagement in and beyond the classroom. With approximately 2,200 undergraduates, the College offers 42 majors, 30 department minors, and 24 thematic minors, as well as Master of Arts in Teaching. Colorado College holds the Research Colleges and Universities designation from Carnegie and ACE and is consistently recognized as a top Fulbright and Peace Corps producing institution. A leader in sustainability, the College was the first in the Rocky Mountain Region and eighth in the nation to achieve carbon neutrality. For more information, visit www.coloradocollege.edu.

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