



University of Colorado **Boulder**

**Smead Endowed Chair
in Space Technology**

in the

**Ann and H.J. Smead Department
of Aerospace Engineering Sciences**

**College of Engineering
and Applied Science**





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) seeks an outstanding scholar in space technology to become the Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology in the Ann and H.J. Smead Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences. This tenured position is targeted at the level of Associate or Full Professor and will include responsibility for developing and leading an externally funded research group, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, and engaging in university and professional service. Additionally, the Smead Endowed Chair will be a leader in The Smead Program, helping the program grow to be the most prestigious Ph.D. aerospace engineering fellowship program worldwide mentoring future leaders in aerospace.

THE ANN AND H. J. SMEAD DEPARTMENT OF AEROSPACE ENGINEERING SCIENCES

CU Boulder's [Ann and H.J. Smead Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences](#) (AES) is nationally recognized, ranked #5 among public university peers by U.S. News and World Report. AES is known for teaching

and research that address both challenges and opportunities facing the aerospace profession. Students engage extensively through both classroom-based and hands-on learning in our modern facilities. CU Boulder aerospace alumni are working at top companies and research labs, including the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Johnson Space Center, BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin, and many other aerospace companies and government institutions. Additionally, AES faculty and alumni have founded several start-up companies, including Black Swift Technologies, Advanced Space, and Blue Cubed.

AES is home to 60 tenure-track, research, and instructional faculty, with over 550 graduate students, and over 1,200 undergraduates. AES's vibrant community of engineers and scientists tackle challenges in aerospace technology and science. The Department had research awards of about \$40 million last fiscal year. Ongoing [research activities](#) in Smead Aerospace span five focus areas:

- ▶ Astrodynamics and Satellite Navigation Systems (ASN)
- ▶ Autonomous Systems (AUT)



► Bioastronautics (Bio)

► Fluids, Structures, and Materials (FSM)

► Remote Sensing, Earth and Space Sciences (RESS)

AES researchers and faculty are organized into four world-class research centers to address multidisciplinary aerospace research topics: the Aerospace Mechanics Research Center (AMReC); the Research and Engineering Center for Uncrewed Vehicles (RECUV); the Colorado Center for Astrodynamics Research (CCAR); and the BioServe Space Technologies Center (BioServe). Individual faculty also have their own laboratories to conduct aeronautics, astronautics, and computational research.

Colorado is a national leader in aerospace and industry partnerships, which play a key role in AES's research and education programs.

According to the [Colorado Space Coalition](#):

► Colorado ranks first in the nation for per-capita private aerospace workers

► Colorado has the second largest aerospace economy

► Colorado has more than 400 aerospace companies providing space-related products and services

► Colorado employs more than 190,000 individuals in space-related jobs

Candidates are encouraged to learn more about the [educational mission](#) of the department.

THE POSITION

The Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology recognizes leadership, creativity, and technical excellence in space research. The department is seeking an experienced faculty member in the area of space technology research, a field that includes broad areas of study related to technologies enabling space flight, atmospheric re-entry of Earth or other bodies, technologies to sustain life in space, space weather,



space mission development, exploration of solar system bodies, as well as space-based remote sensing technologies. Tenured faculty in the department typically include 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% leadership and service.

The Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology will work closely with the Smead Program Director and other program-affiliated faculty to further enhance and raise the profile of The Smead Program. The Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology will serve on The Smead Program Steering Committee, which is responsible for budgetary and strategic oversight of the program, and on the Smead Scholar Selection Board.

THE SMEAD PROGRAM: EXPLORE. ACHIEVE. LEAD.

The [Smead Program](#) consists of Ph.D. student scholars and faculty internationally recognized for their research and character. The Smead Program is a strong community who support one another's

continual growth and future goals. Through regular connections with participants, alumni, and leaders in the field, the program has built — and continues to grow — a diverse network in the fields of industry, academia, and government. The Smead Program is focused on leaders who will make an impact that benefits not only the aerospace community, but the future of humanity. The Smead Program is governed by The Smead Program Steering Committee and informed by the Smead Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences, College of Engineering and Applied Science, and program participants.

There are five main pillars of The Smead Program that contribute to leadership, impact, and community:

1. Scholars (PhD students)
2. Faculty Fellows
3. Byram Distinguished Visiting Professor
4. Smead Endowed Chair of Space Technology

5. Smead Post-Doctoral Fellow

COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must have an understanding and appreciation for aerospace engineering fundamentals, as well as excellent management and organizational skills and a willingness to learn quickly.

Candidates will be expected to engage in undergraduate and graduate teaching and mentoring. The department seeks candidates who are strongly interested in or demonstrate effectiveness in teaching, mentoring, and inspiring diverse students of all races, nationalities, and genders, including first-generation college undergraduates. Additionally, candidates must maintain an externally funded research program in their technical area.

The successful candidate will engage in partnership with members of The Smead Program and support the program's outreach, marketing, and communications efforts, as well as assist in recruiting new program participants.

In addition, qualified candidates will possess:

- ▶ A research doctorate in aerospace, aeronautical, or astronautical engineering, or a closely related engineering or physical/chemical science discipline
- ▶ The ability to meet [University standards](#) and unit criteria for tenure and appointment at the Associate Professor rank or full Professor rank as applicable. These criteria generally include having an established and ongoing program of original research, a strong publication record, a demonstrated ability to obtain external funding, and a record of high-quality teaching and mentoring
- ▶ Excellent communication and interpersonal skills along with the ability to teach and work in a highly collaborative environment

EMPLOYMENT TERMS

The anticipated academic year (9-month) salary range for this position is \$130,000 to \$180,000 for an Associate Professor and \$170,000 to \$260,000 for a full professor plus a moving allowance and a signing bonus within CEAS guidelines. A recruitment incentive is available within Department guidelines.

As the Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology, the successful candidate will have access to annual discretionary funds of \$100,000. These funds may be used for costs such as travel, supporting graduate students, equipment, publications, etc. The Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology may also use up to 10% of the annual discretionary funds as an additional academic year salary for their 9-month appointment. A relocation stipend may be available within CEAS guidelines.

Tenure-track faculty benefits include eligibility for:

- ▶ [Gender-neutral paid parental leave](#)
- ▶ [Housing down-payment assistance programs](#)
- ▶ [Dual-Career & Relocation Resources](#)
- ▶ [Teaching, research, professional development](#)

The University of Colorado offers excellent [benefits](#), including medical, dental, retirement, paid time off, tuition benefit, and free public transportation within Boulder. CU Boulder is one of the largest employers in Boulder County and offers an inspiring higher education environment.

The University of Colorado Boulder has implemented a [reference check program](#) with respect to final candidates for tenured faculty appointments. The reference check program is intended to allow CU Boulder to collect and review information about a candidate's conduct at their current and previous institutions, specifically conduct related to sexual misconduct, harassment, and/or discrimination, before making hiring decisions. All final candidates for tenured faculty appointments are required to complete an Authorization to Release Information.



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE

The College of Engineering and Applied Science is the second largest school or college on the CU Boulder campus and boasts top-tier rankings for both its graduate and undergraduate engineering programs. Earning the 11th spot among public graduate programs and 17th nationwide for undergraduate engineering. Multiple specialty areas are also ranked within the top 20.

Equally importantly, we are committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and academically excellent community. Our approximately 250 tenure-track, 120 instructional-track, and 30 research-track faculty serve more than 6,000 undergraduate students, 1,300 master's students, and 850 PhD students. Our college has three core foci: (i) Research & Innovation, (ii) Education, and (iii) Inclusion. We believe that our college's success requires faculty who actively work to create an inclusive culture within the college and are committed to the [campus plan of creating and sustaining supportive campus environments](#).

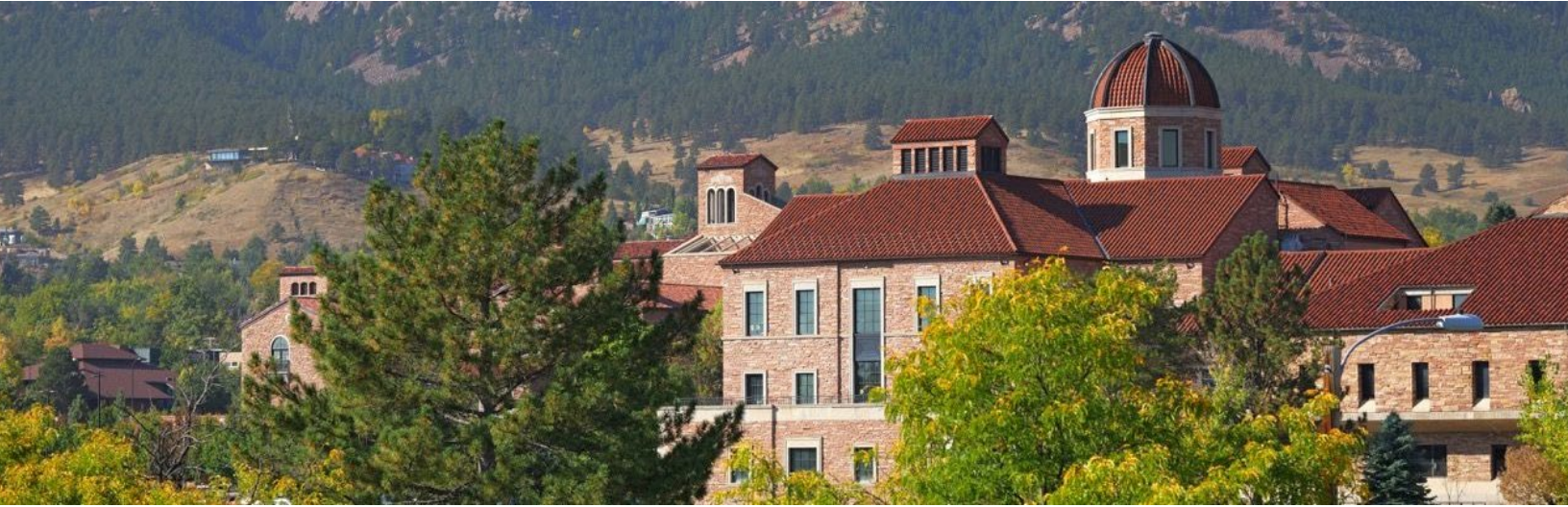
To learn more about the College of Engineering and Applied Science please visit our [website](#).

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

Nestled against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, CU Boulder stands as a beacon of academic excellence and innovation. CU Boulder is Colorado's flagship public institution and among the most research-active public universities in the country. As one of only 36 U.S. public research institutions in the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU), it is a cornerstone of higher education, deeply committed to the pillars of teaching, research, and service.

With eight distinguished colleges and schools, CU Boulder boasts an enrollment of over 38,800 students guided by a dedicated faculty comprising more than 1,200 tenured, tenure-track, and teaching-track professors. As the largest campus within the renowned University of Colorado system, CU Boulder prides itself on fostering a vibrant academic community that nurtures intellectual curiosity and encourages groundbreaking exploration.

CU Boulder serves as a dynamic hub of innovation and community engagement, with a steadfast dedication to regional economic development earning prestigious recognition, including the Innovation and Economic Prosperity award from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. Across the University, the shared vision is to emerge as a leader in identifying and addressing the humanitarian, social, and technological challenges of the 21st century. Guided by a shared commitment to integrity, respect, inclusiveness, and openness, CU Boulder continues to advance its mission of teaching, research, and service.



In its research mission, CU Boulder stands at the forefront of discovery and innovation. Garnering over 3,700 research awards and gifts totaling more than [\\$766 million in fiscal year 2025](#), the University is committed to advancing the economy, culture, and health of Colorado, the nation, and the world. CU Boulder's twelve [research institutes](#) account for more than half of all sponsored research dollars at the university, and they employ some of the most productive researchers in the country. With more than 3,000 faculty, researchers, students, and supporting staff, the institutes make a major contribution to the university's research and

education missions as well as the local and area economy.

Federal agencies contributed \$526.8 million to support CU Boulder's research endeavors last year, underscoring the University's significant impact on national research priorities. In addition to federal support, in FY 2025 CU Boulder's sponsored-projects portfolio benefited from collaborations with industry partners, other universities, and international collaborators. The University also received generous support from foundations, private entities, and individuals. Contributions from these sources amounted to \$239.7 million, reflecting the diverse funding landscape that supports CU Boulder's research ecosystem.

TO APPLY

The University of Colorado has engaged Opus Partners (www.opuspartners.net) to support the recruitment of the Smead Endowed Chair in Space Technology. Craig Smith, Managing Partner, and Jeffrey Stafford, Senior Associate, are leading the search. Candidates should send the following materials as individual PDF files to jeffrey.stafford@opuspartners.net:

1. **Cover Letter:** A one-page cover letter describing your interest in the position and summarizing your personal academic goals.
2. **Resume/CV:** A current curriculum vitae.
3. **A Statement of Research Philosophy:** A statement of your experience and plans for research and/or

creative work that contributes to the body of knowledge in your field and provides broader benefits to education and society. Candidates with an experimental component to their research should provide a concise summary of anticipated financial and space needs. (2-3 pages)

4. **A Statement of Teaching Philosophy:** A statement of your experience and plans for teaching and mentoring a diverse student body and developing inclusive pedagogy practices. (2-3 pages)

5. **Leadership, Service and Community Contributions Statement:** In this statement, describe your leadership and service experience, and demonstrated ability to contribute to a supportive campus community. Please provide details on your track record, calibrated to your career stage, that describe the specific role you played in these efforts. These could include, but are not

limited to service on committees, outreach activities to broaden engagement in or with engineering, or serving on advisory boards or task forces contributing to policies or regulations. In addition, describe your plans to contribute to our campus plan to [Create Supportive Environments](#), and the [College of Engineering and Applied Science Strategic Vision](#). (1-2 pages).

Nominations, recommendations, and inquiries should go to the same address. Every effort will be made to ensure candidate confidentiality. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, however for full consideration please apply by November 15, 2026. The search process will remain confidential until the final stage of a public campus visit.

In compliance with the Colorado Job Application Fairness Act, in any submitted materials, candidates may redact or remove age-identifying information such as age, date of birth, or dates of school attendance or graduation. Candidates will not be penalized for redacting or removing this information.

CU is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. We are committed to creating a workplace where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and we encourage individuals from all backgrounds to apply, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.



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