

Community College of Aurora
2013 Self-Study Report



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Acknowledgements

The Community College of Aurora's Self-Study has involved the College community in an extensive analysis of who we are, what we do, and how well we do it. Five committees with members from across the institution gathered and discussed information related to their assigned criteria. They produced working papers that formed the basis for chapters in the report as they learned more about CCA and about what their colleagues contribute and accomplish. As the Self-Study Report took shape, the College community gained a clearer understanding of the College's strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Among the most important aspects of the Self-Study have been the involvement and contributions of so many individuals from throughout the College and beyond. Among these individuals are the following:

- CCA's faculty and staff members served on the Self-Study committees, contributed sections for individual chapters, answered many questions, and read various drafts of the report.
- The President's Executive Leadership Team and the Leadership Council reviewed the report and provided guidance and advice. They and their staff members responded to numerous requests for information and clarifications.
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- Elaine Blasius and Susan Achziger proofread the report.
- Liz VanLandingham designed and produced the final printed version of the report. Ethan Ruzzano posted digital versions and associated digital links. Lee Rasizer took the lead on informing the CCA community about the Self-Study.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Purpose of the Self-Study

The Self-Study provides information and analysis to help the Community College of Aurora (CCA or the College) measure itself in relation to the criteria for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC). It also provides information about the effectiveness of CCA's programs and services, reinforces institutional self-analysis and planning, and strengthens the College's sense of community.

The Self-Study report addresses several audiences. The primary audience includes CCA faculty and staff members, administrators, and major constituency groups. They will use the report to identify the College's strengths and challenges and to improve programs and services. The report will also prepare the Commission's consultant-evaluator team for its visit to the College, April 15-17, 2013. Finally, the report provides information about the College to students and the public.

Preparation of the Self-Study Report

The three-person Self-Study Executive Group has had primary responsibility for writing the College's report, using papers developed by five Self-Study working groups. The working group papers provided basic information and evaluation for the portion of the Self-Study responding to the five criteria for accreditation (Chapters 3 through 7), as well as suggestions about institutional strengths and challenges. (*Resource Room Document 1.1*) As the three writers compiled the report, they gathered additional information from College documents and personnel.

The report consists of 10 chapters. These include an introduction, the College's responses to issues identified by the 2003 and 2010 HLC team reports, evidence and analysis demonstrating how CCA meets the five criteria for accreditation, material on federal compliance, and an embedded request for a change in student population and approval of new locations. During the evaluation team's visit, CCA will provide information in electronic and physical resource rooms. Resource room documents are indicated in each chapter of the report with links to those available electronically. Information about the College is also available on its website. (*Resource Room Document 1.2*)

Profile of the College

The Community College of Aurora is an open-door, two-year institution that offers associate degrees and certificates for students whose goals include transferring to a four-year institution, preparing for entry or advancement in the workplace, or meeting individual career or educational objectives. The College also offers non-credit adult education classes in several areas including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, English as a second language, and citizenship test preparation. It collaborates with businesses, government agencies, and other institutions on workforce training and education.

The College is one of 13 community colleges within the Colorado Community College System (CCCS or System), which is governed by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE or State Board). The governor appoints the State Board's nine voting members with the approval of the Colorado State Senate. The State Board appoints the college presidents, who report to the CCCS president. (*Resource Room Document 1.3*)

The College serves an increasingly diverse student body. In the fall semester of 2012, CCA enrolled 7,618 students, 75 percent of whom were part-time students and 54 percent ethnic minorities. The average student age was 27, and 15 percent were 40 years of age or older.

Located in Aurora, Colorado's third-largest city, CCA serves over 600,000 residents in a 350-square-mile service area that spans portions of three counties (Arapahoe, Adams, and Denver). The service area includes the City of Aurora and eastern portions of the City of Denver. Its population is relatively well educated with nearly 40 percent of those 25 and older having at least an associate degree. In 2010 the median household income was \$64,615. The service area has a higher percentage of Hispanics (26.7 percent in 2010) and a lower percentage of Black/Non-Hispanic (15.0 percent) than does the College's student population.

Table 1.1

Profile of CCA service area population compared to CCA student population

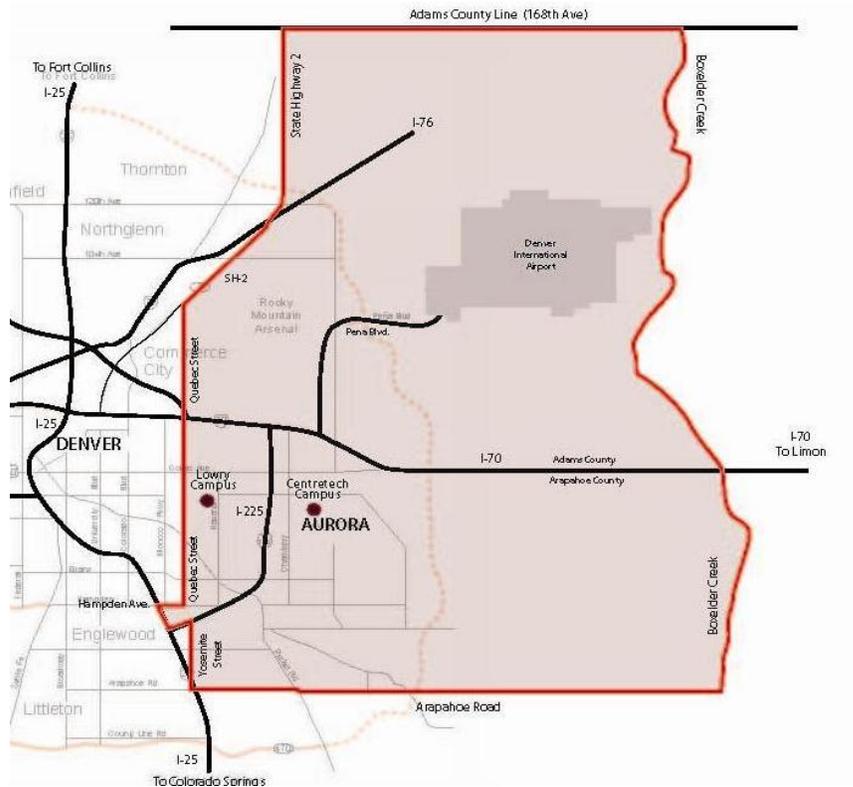
	Service Area	CCA
Percentage White/Non-Hispanic	63.2%	39.0%
Percentage Black/Non-Hispanic	15.0%	27.0%
Percentage Hispanic	26.7%	18.0%
Percentage Asian Pacific Islander	5.3%	7.0%
Percentage American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.9%	2.0%
Population/Headcount	604,855 ^a	7,618 ^b

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; Cognos Mid-Term Extract Fall 2012; City of Aurora Planning Department through ESRI Business Analyst software using U.S. Census Bureau Data.

^a 2010 Census. ^b As of November 26, 2012.

Within CCA's service area are large residential and commercial sections, as well as Buckley Air Force Base and Denver International Airport, the tenth busiest airport in the world. Three major urban redevelopment projects are within or border the service area: the former Lowry Air Force Base; the former Stapleton International Airport; and the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, which has been converted into the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and the Fitzsimons Life Science District. "Original Aurora," the oldest section of the city and now a low-income neighborhood home to many immigrants, lies just north of CCA's two campuses. On the eastern side of the service area is open countryside, one of the few parts of the metro area with room to grow. This complex mixture provides the College with challenges and opportunities for reaching new populations and for creating new programs.

Figure 1.1
Approximate map of CCA service area



SOURCE: City of Aurora Planning Department; CCA Arts and Graphic Design Department.

CCA offers a variety of programs to serve the Aurora-Denver area. The College's associate of arts (AA) and associate of science (AS) degrees prepare students for junior standing in four-year institutions, while the associate of applied science (AAS) degree prepares students for career entry in 23 different areas. The College also offers an associate of general studies (AGS) degree, 42 certificate programs, and articulated degrees with Metropolitan State University of Denver, Pickens Technical College, and Regis University. Of special note are the Integrated Nursing Pathway with the University of Colorado and the articulation agreement with Colorado State University-Global Campus that includes all of the College's AAS degrees and is in addition to the System-wide agreement with CSU-Global for the AA and AS statewide transfer degrees.

New to Colorado and to CCA are the AA degrees with designation in Anthropology, Business, Economics, French, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Spanish. Also new are the AS degrees with designation in Mathematics and Psychology. These designations allow students at the two-year level to pursue focused,

uniform academic programs and seamless transfer into bachelor degree majors with junior status.

CCA seeks to meet students' needs by offering varied schedules for classes. In addition to the traditional on-campus daytime courses held Monday through Friday, the College provides Saturday and evening classes. It also offers a robust online curriculum and schedules hybrid courses that combine online and on-campus learning.

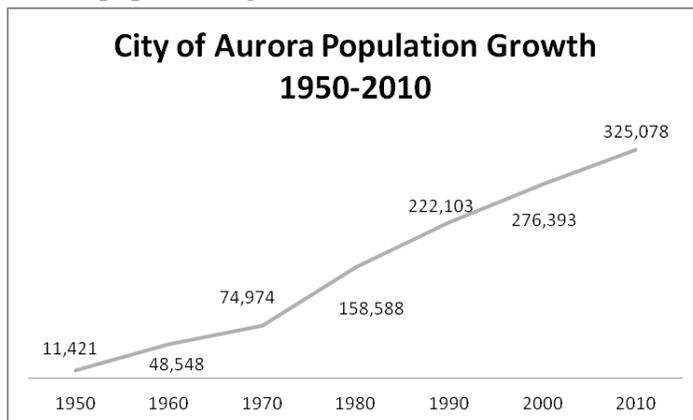
The College provides instruction and a full range of services at two main campuses of approximately equal enrollment. The CentreTech campus is in north-central Aurora, and the Lowry campus is four miles to the west of CentreTech, on the Aurora-Denver border. The College also offers concurrent enrollment courses at 22 high schools. With concurrent enrollment continuing to grow, the College is submitting a request for change in student population and for new locations as part of the 2013 visit (see Chapter 8).

Profile of the Community

Over the last 60 years, Aurora has grown from a small Denver suburb into a full-fledged city with its own identity. Nearly all of Aurora's growth has come since World War II. In 1950, the city's population was just over 11,000. By 1980, the population had grown to nearly 160,000, and in 2010, Aurora had reached over 325,000, making the city one of the 60 largest in the United States. The population is estimated to grow to over 355,000 by 2015.

Figure 1.2

Aurora population growth, 1950-2010



SOURCE: City of Aurora Planning Department, U.S. Census Bureau.

For CCA, the important story of Aurora’s growth in recent decades is not only its expanding population, but also its increasing diversity. Between 1990 and 2000, the majority of the city’s 54,000 new residents were Hispanic, African American, or Asian. During the 1990s Aurora’s Hispanic population nearly tripled in size, increasing from 7 to 20 percent of the city’s population. By 2010 that figure had increased to 29 percent.

Overall, by the year 2010, ethnic minority groups comprised a majority (52.9 percent) of the city’s population. Reflecting this diversity, the 2010 census found that 31 percent of the city’s population spoke a language other than English at home. This increasing diversity presents the College with the challenges and opportunities discussed in the 2003 Self-Study and elsewhere in this report.

When compared to the state averages for Colorado, Aurora has a higher percentage of people living below the poverty rate, a lower per capita income, and a considerably lower percent of its population 25 years of age and older with a bachelor’s degree.

Table 1.2

Comparison of Aurora and Colorado, bachelor’s attainment, poverty, income

	Aurora	Colorado
25 Years and Older with Bachelor’s	25.4% ^a	35.9% ^a
Percentage of Population Living Below Poverty Rate	16.7% ^a	12.2% ^a
Per capita income	\$23,862 ^b	\$30,151 ^b

SOURCE: Department of Commerce, US Census Bureau, State & County QuickFacts; <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/08/0804000.html>.

^a 2011 estimate. ^b 2006-2010 data.

The recession that began in 2008-09 hit Aurora hard, with some areas of the city among those with the highest rates of unemployment and home foreclosures in the state. In response, CCA convened a jobs taskforce that established scholarships, offered resume-writing and other workshops for job-seekers, and created ExpressEd courses. These courses started more frequently and could be completed more quickly than standard courses, allowing students to gain new training and return to the workforce sooner. The promotion of ExpressEd courses was discontinued in 2012. (*Resource Room Document 1.4*)

History of the College

The Colorado Legislature established the statewide system of

community colleges and a board to govern them in 1967. One of the colleges, the Community College of Denver (CCD), opened in 1968. In 1972, CCD established the Aurora Outreach Program, which became the Aurora Education Center (AEC). The AEC operated under its own executive director in a building provided by the City of Aurora.

In 1982, the governing board for the community colleges and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education approved a master plan for the creation of the Community College of Aurora. At the same time, the city set aside 21 acres for the College near a proposed new city center. In 1983, the state Legislature passed the bill permitting the conversion of the AEC to an independent college.

CCA opened at a time when community college growth had leveled off and costs were rising. A thrift-minded Legislature required that the College find economies of operation; consequently, CCA made minimal initial investments and avoided duplication of programs, services, and facilities. Some features of the College to result from this mandate were:

- a campus leased from the CCA Foundation (beginning in 1991);
- a high ratio of adjunct faculty members to regular faculty members;
- use of the Aurora Public Library (APL) as CCA's main library; and
- classes meeting at many locations throughout the service area.

Several of these features remain while others have changed. The CCA Foundation continues to own the CentreTech campus, leasing it to the College, and the ratio of adjunct faculty to regular faculty remains high. In 2009, CCA stopped using the Aurora Public Library as its main library, shifting to providing services through the library at the CentreTech campus, several departmental libraries, and electronically. The College no longer offers classes at the range of sites it did in the past, but it has expanded its concurrent enrollment offerings to a number of high schools, including four that the Higher Learning Commission approved as additional College locations in 2010.

Adjunct instructors have always taught a large proportion of CCA classes, and they continue to do so. These instructors bring to the classroom expertise from business, industry, and the community.

Reflecting the quality and contribution of the adjunct faculty, College constituencies have consistently given high ratings to CCA's instruction and to the relevance of its educational programs, as evidenced in the course evaluations students complete each semester. The levels of students' agreement with statements about instructors and instruction-related items are illustrated in the following table:

Table 1.3
Student Evaluations; Aggregated Responses, 2009 through 2011,
Selected Questions^a

Question	Percentage answering Strongly Agree/Agree
Instructor was knowledgeable in subject matter.	93.4%
I was challenged to think/analyze/evaluate ideas.	92.4%
I was expected to communicate clearly/accurately.	92.1%
Instructor's explanations were clear.	90.5%
Instructor clearly explained grading of assignments.	88.7%
This class will be useful beyond the classroom.	88.6%
Instructor set high expectations.	88.2%
Instructor graded/returned work in a timely manner.	88.2%
I would recommend this course to other students.	85.8%
I would recommend this instructor to other students.	85.5%

SOURCE: Office of Institutional Research.

^a Questions related to instructional quality and relevance of CCA instructional programs.

At the same time, the College recognizes the need to increase the number of regular faculty members in order to ensure more consistency and continuity in instruction and to increase support to individual students. The College increased the number of regular faculty members from 17 in the spring of 1993 to 50 in the fall of 2012. During the same period, the number of adjunct faculty members grew from 243 in the spring of 1993 to 373 in the fall of 2012.

Table 1.4
Growth in faculty headcount, 1993-2012

Year	Regular	Adjunct
1993	17	243 ^a
2002	33	330 ^b
2012	50	373 ^c

SOURCE: CCA Human Resources; CCA Office of Institutional Research, IPEDS Human Resources Reports.

^a 1993 CCA Self-Study Report Using 1992-93 Common Data Set.

^b IPEDS 2002-03 HR Report.

^c Preliminary IPEDS 2012-13 HR Report.

The Legislature originally designated the College to be a “college without walls,” and until 1991, CCA operated solely in leased facilities. In the 1990s, the College became a dual-campus institution with two full-service campuses, CentreTech and Lowry, both in Aurora. It took a number of years before CentreTech was no longer officially considered or referred to as the main campus and, unofficially, some still refer to it as the College’s main campus.

CCA opened the three-building CentreTech campus in 1991 on land leased by the CCA Foundation from the City of Aurora, with buildings built by the Foundation using bonds. In 2000, the College completed a fourth building at CentreTech, the Student Centre, using bonds raised by the students, and soon thereafter added a state-funded theater and offices to the Fine Arts Building (previously known as the Forum).

In 1994, the Air Force closed its operations at Lowry Air Force Base. CCCS (then known as the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System) took over the northeast corner of the base for use as an education campus. CCA’s president at the time, Dr. Larry Carter, played an instrumental role in helping the System acquire the 156-acre parcel from the Air Force.

CCCS originally intended to create a cooperative facility on the Lowry higher education parcel, involving many community colleges as well as four-year colleges and universities. The campus, which was to focus on high-technology education and practical skill-development, was given the acronym HEAT (Higher Education and Advanced Technology) Center.

Initially the College occupied three buildings at Lowry, where it offered a variety of programs and courses. In 2001, the System changed its plan for Lowry, closing the HEAT Center, and CCA greatly expanded its presence there while discontinuing satellite

campus locations. The College opened a student residence hall (since closed) at Lowry; moved science, computer, business, and arts courses to the campus; developed a full set of student services; and consolidated existing programs and science labs into a more campus-like setting. The Colorado Film School, the Center for Simulation, and public service and community-focused programs are also now housed at Lowry. In 2011, CCA completed the first phase of planned improvements with renovations and an addition to the West Quad Building (formerly Building 903). The CCA Foundation's "Changing Lowry, Changing Lives" campaign is financing the improvements.

In early 2008, CCA explored expanding to southeast Aurora by locating a satellite campus in a commercial area near E-470, a privately funded toll road on the far eastern edge of the metro area. Projections in the preceding three to four years had anticipated rapid growth all along E-470. CCA's expansion was shelved when the economy slowed and the anticipated growth did not materialize.

The College has developed its own occupational programs but has also articulated with existing occupational programs at the Aurora Public School District's Pickens Technical College (formerly T.H. Pickens Technical Center). Pickens is located about a half-mile east of CCA's CentreTech campus. (*Resource Room Document 1.5*)

Accreditation History of the College

In 1983, the Community College of Denver's (CCD) Aurora Education Center became the Community College of Aurora. CCD agreed to oversee the development of educational programs and services at CCA, while the North Central Association (NCA) processed the College's application for candidacy status.

1984 CCA filed an institutional Self-Study report with the NCA and an evaluation team visited the College.

The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education granted CCA candidacy status.

1986 CCA submitted another Self-Study report and an NCA evaluation team made a second visit to the College.

The Commission granted the College continuation of candidacy status.

1988 CCA filed an institutional Self-Study report and an evaluation team visited in April.

- The Commission granted initial accreditation for five years.
- 1993 The College filed a Self-Study report in February and an evaluation team visited in March.
- The Commission granted accreditation for 10 years.
- 1997 The Commission conducted a visit focused on the College's program offerings at the Higher Education and Advanced Technology (HEAT) Center at the Lowry campus.
- CCA's Statement of Affiliation Status was changed to authorize a full-service degree site in Aurora/Denver.
- 1999 The Commission voted to extend CCA's accreditation to include distance delivery of associate degree programs.
- 2000 The Commission validated the decision by the Institutional Actions Council of the NCA to extend CCA's accreditation to include distance delivery programs coordinated through Colorado Community Colleges Online.
- 2003 CCA submitted a Self-Study report and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) team visited.
- The Commission extended the College's accreditation for 10 years with the stipulation that the College submit a three-year monitoring report on assessment of student learning.
- 2006 The College submitted the monitoring report in June of 2006.
- 2007 The Commission notified the College that it had accepted the monitoring report and no further action was needed.
- 2010 The College submitted a report with a request to extend its accreditation to cover new degree locations at four concurrent enrollment high schools and an HLC team made a focused visit.
- The Commission extended CCA's accreditation to include new degree locations at four high schools with the following stipulation:
- “Concurrent credit offered to an individual high school student may exceed half that needed for an associate degree only at the following locations: Aurora Central High School, William

Smith High School, Rangeview High School, and Overland High School. Such students may earn a full associate degree at those locations but, to be eligible for concurrent enrollment, must satisfy normal admissions and placement standards for students who have already earned a high school degree.”

2011 CCA began a comprehensive, College-wide self-study process to prepare for the 2013 HLC site visit.

Significant Developments Since the Last Comprehensive Evaluation

The College has continued to change since the last Self-Study and evaluation team visit in 2003. The changes include the following developments:

- 1) College leadership has changed significantly. After more than a decade with Dr. Linda S. Bowman as president, CCA began the 2012-13 academic year with a new president, Alton D. Scales, and a new vice president of instruction, Xeturah Woodley. The College’s current vice president for student affairs, Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven, started at CCA in 2011, and Richard Maestas, the vice president of administrative services, joined the College in 2009. Since the last accreditation visit in 2003, the College has had—including interims—six individuals in the instructional vice president role and five in the student affairs vice president role, and has added an associate vice president. Of the current instructional deans, one joined the College in 2007, one in 2009, and one in 2012. In 2005, the College instituted a system of faculty chairs on twelve-month contracts to administer the instructional departments, contributing to continuity during this period of change.
- 2) The College has grown and expanded. Student enrollment, following a dip just prior to the recession, rose dramatically for several years, primarily because of a large increase in concurrent enrollment. This has contributed to greater opportunity for high school students, many previously underserved by CCA. Equally significant has been the growth in faculty positions and even greater growth in staff positions. Student support and service departments are larger and have new programs to promote student retention and success. Staff members increasingly articulate the need for written processes and procedures. Concurrent enrollment has been a particular challenge with its rapid expansion and related efforts to determine administrative and instructional processes.

Table 1.5
Growth in faculty and staff from 2005-06 to 2011-12

	2005-06	2011-12	Percent Change
Regular Faculty	27	47	74.1%
Adjunct Faculty	320	382	19.4%
Staff	75	169	125.3%
Total	422	598	41.7%

SOURCE: IPEDS HR Reports.

- 3) Since 2003, the Lowry Campus has flourished with major new facilities and programs such as the Center for Simulation, the Integrated Nursing Pathway with the University of Colorado, and the Community English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. These programs and others like them had not opened or were just getting off the ground a decade ago. Long-time CCA programs such as those in science, business, art and design, and the Center for Workforce Development have continued to thrive. With the renovation of the West Quad Building in 2011, Student Affairs received room for an expanded presence at Lowry. In spite of these changes and many improvements inside the buildings, the Lowry campus still appears physically much like it did when it was a U.S. Air Force Base. The CCA Foundation is raising \$5 million for additional renovations and landscaping, an amount to be matched by the College. (*Resource Room Document 1.6*)
- 4) CCA's student body has continued to diversify, a trend noted in the 2003 Self-Study report. There is no longer an ethnic majority in the student body; groups traditionally labeled as minorities now collectively constitute a majority. Immigrants and refugees are a major part of this change as evidenced by the massive growth in ESL enrollment since 2003. In 2003, the non-credit community program at Lowry did not exist; in 2011-12, its enrollment for five sessions totaled about 2,500 (these are not included in CCA headcount numbers). The for-credit college prep ESL program had 65 FTE in 2006-07; in 2011-12, it had 188 FTE. The enrollment level of Hispanic students (with the exception of those enrolled through the high schools in concurrent enrollment) still does not match their representation in the population in Aurora due, in part, to issues of documentation. The Hispanic population in Aurora is also young, disproportionately not of college age. Of considerable concern, as it was in 2003, is that the diversification of the faculty and staff has not matched that of the student enrollment.

Table 1.6
Growth in ESL programs, FY2007-FY2012

Fiscal Year	Academic ESL Headcount	Community ESL Headcount
FY2007	329	1389
FY2008	470	1304
FY2009	574	1433
FY2010	557	1369
FY2011	629	1431
FY2012	650	1503

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; COGNOS Data Extracts; CCA Community ESL Demographic Data.

- 5) Assessment of student learning has improved. The 2003 HLC Evaluation Team called for a monitoring report in 2006, a requirement CCA met following three years of intensive efforts by a faculty assessment committee. Over the next few years, the assessment efforts emphasized the development and use of rubrics for the College’s Lifelong Skills. In early 2010, the College undertook an “assessment of assessment,” with a working group recommending that the institution focus assessment on two of the six Lifelong Skills (critical thinking and writing) across the institution, provide departments with more flexibility to assess students’ learning in their disciplines’ knowledge, and improve assessment schedules and reporting. (*Resource Room Document 1.7*) As one part of an effort to provide more institutional support for the faculty-led assessment process, the College created an assessment staff position (.5 FTE) in Institutional Research in the summer of 2011.
- 6) Instruction has continued to innovate. The technology of instruction has evolved through College-wide changes including the use of an electronic instructional platform. Faculty-driven initiatives such as those for the use of iPads in the classroom, a National Science Foundation grant for bringing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into teaching, and a grant-funded project to use SMART boards have also contributed to more technology-focused instruction. The use of simulation has expanded from the Emergency Medical Services program to wider implementation across the College with nine major grants funding immersive and game-based learning in three instructional divisions in 2012-2013. (*Resource Room Document 1.8*)

CCA faculty members have transformed what was once known as “developmental education” into the Department of Academic

Enrichment (AcE) to provide instruction and academic support for under-prepared students. The program runs parallel to the college experience and focuses on fostering students to become more sophisticated readers, writers, and mathematicians. The program serves a critical community need in Colorado where, according to a report released by ACT in 2012, only 25 percent of high school graduates in 2012 met college-readiness benchmarks in all four subject areas tested by the ACT.

As indicated earlier, the number of regular faculty has increased. The process for hiring new regular faculty members is more rigorous than in the past with required teaching demonstrations, public forums for candidates, and interviews by the president the norm in recent years. Announcements of faculty openings are distributed nationally. The standard for department chairs is now a 12-month contract (with some exceptions) and more responsibilities than in the past.

- 7) Student Affairs, including its programs for designated groups such as veterans and first-generation low-income students, has grown substantially since 2003. This growth has included significant reorganization of the division including the formation of a Student Success Center that houses all the cohort-based student success programs including ASCENT, First-Year Experience and Transitions, Scholar Support and Programming, and TRiO Student Support Services. Collaboration with Instruction on retention has intensified and work has begun on finding the most appropriate advising model for the College. Among the recent additions have been requiring a new student orientation for all first-time college students, academic achievement courses to prepare students for college, and an expanded Office of Student Life with staff and activities at the Lowry campus. In the fall of 2012, the College hired a career services coordinator to strengthen the help it gives students as they identify a career path and learn job-search skills. In addition, the College has contracted with Aurora Mental Health to provide counseling services to students on campus for the first time in College history. (*Resource Room Document 1.9*)

The support infrastructure for Information Technology (IT) is stronger than it was in 2003 with a help desk and increased collaboration and communication between Instruction and IT. Technology has continued to evolve with wireless access now available across both campuses, iPads in widespread use, and a new VoIP phone system added in 2012. A great deal of information now flows to faculty, staff, and students via the College's intranet portal. Emergency alerts go out using the

ConnectED system via email, voicemail, and text message.

- 8) Although the College has not constructed an entire new building since 2003, it has made significant physical improvements on both campuses. At CentreTech, CCA has added an observatory, expanded the number of parking spaces, and made numerous internal building changes to improve customer service. New classrooms and offices have been created from corridors and storage space. At Lowry, the College has moved the Colorado Film School into its own building; added student services, instructional, and meeting space in the West Quad; outfitted more rooms in the Center for Simulation and the Disaster Management Institute; upgraded labs, classrooms, and student spaces in all the buildings; and improved external lighting. (*Resource Room Document 1.10*)
- 9) The College has worked hard to achieve a strong financial position, but funding cuts from outside the institution have been a challenge. Tight management and conservative spending practices over the years mean the College is in a good financial position. At the same time, reduced state funding, greater reliance on tuition, and defaults on financial aid loans continue to be challenges, as does finding ways to generate savings for funding innovative programs through reducing unneeded expenditures.
- 10) The College's relationship with the community has continued to grow stronger and its image has become even more positive during the past decade. Former President Linda Bowman built close ties with Aurora and other east metro leadership and community organizations. The CCA Foundation, through giving campaigns and sponsorship of events such as its annual scholarship luncheon, expanded the College's presence and reputation in the community. A concerted effort by a growing Communications Department has resulted in far wider press coverage for CCA, while online advancements including the re-design of the College's website and successful social media presence are working to attract potential students and provide information about the College. (*Resource Room Document 1.11*)

Closer ties with the area's K-12 schools have resulted from the expansion of concurrent enrollment and a variety of other collaborative efforts. Individual faculty and staff participate in Leadership Aurora and in community activities. The College has been particularly active in Original Aurora, the low-income neighborhood to the northeast of the Lowry campus.

The achievements and activities of CCA instructional departments—including the Colorado Film School's recognition as

one of the world's top 25 film schools, the Science Department's Sherlin Lectures and public observatory nights, the regional first responder training involving several departments, and Online Learning's support for faculty—have been an important component in strengthening the College's image. (*Resource Room Document 1.12*)

- 11) CCA's safety and security infrastructure is much larger and more professional. In 2003, CCA employed one security officer at the CentreTech campus. The current force includes a director and an assistant director of security (both retired Aurora Police Department officers), two additional security officers, and four student employees. The Colorado Community College System is responsible for security on the Lowry campus and employs nine security officers who provide coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With the assistance of an Emergency Planning Steering Committee created by the President's Cabinet in late 2010, CCA has also completed an emergency response plan, formed an Incident Command Team, recruited and trained evacuation wardens for all floors of all buildings, designated and equipped incident command centers on both campuses, and undertaken a wide range of improvements in communications equipment, electronic locks, and other safety and security measures. (*Resource Room Document 1.13*)
- 12) Monitoring and oversight requirements have grown and—while of benefit and for compliance with state and federal regulations—have also added to the workload and stress of College employees, especially support staff. The College has also implemented new systems and procedures, such as FLAC (Faculty Load and Compensation), which have added additional workload requirements.

The Self-Study Process

The College president, Alton D. Scales, provides executive oversight for all matters related to accreditation. The accreditation liaison officer reports to the president and convenes the Executive Group which has had direct responsibility for conducting the Self-Study, writing the report, and preparing for the Higher Learning Commission team visit. A Steering Committee has provided guidance on the conduct of the Self-Study, focusing on the working groups as they gathered information and drafted papers on each of the HLC criteria.

Executive Group

The Executive Group has included Ruthanne Orihuela, instructor in Spanish and department chair for Performing Arts and Humanities; Dr. Geoffrey Hunt, instructor in History and department chair for Social Sciences; and Dr. Christopher Ward, executive director of grants and planning and director of the Aurora Language Center. Dr. Ward is the College's accreditation liaison officer. Dr. Hunt joined the Executive Group in the summer of 2012 when Richard Gentile, dean of instruction for mathematics, science, and public service, left the College.

Steering Committee

The 14-member Steering Committee includes the Executive Group members, the 10 co-chairs of the five working groups, and a representative from fiscal affairs, as suggested by CCA's HLC liaison, Robert Appleson, during his visit to the College in September of 2011. The co-chairs were selected in the spring of 2011 based on suggestions from the Executive Group, consultation with the president, and discussion and final approval by the president's Cabinet. The selection process aimed to find a group that represented a range of instructional departments, student affairs, and other campus units, such as the CCA Foundation. The process also sought people who had been at CCA for various lengths of time, came from both campuses, represented the range of diversity at the College, and had interests and talents in organizing groups, evaluating data, and writing high-quality working papers. (*Resource Room Document 1.14*)

The Steering Committee met three times during the summer of 2011 for orientation and training. The orientation included discussion of the accreditation process, consideration of the timelines, and review of the responsibilities of the co-chairs and the working groups. The training included sessions conducted by the Office of Institutional Research on College data and by the Executive Group on evaluative writing.

Working Groups

The Executive Group described to co-chairs the importance of recruiting members for the five working groups from throughout the College, forming groups that had the skills to gather and evaluate information and that reflected a variety of perspectives on each criterion. Members were recruited during the late summer of 2011. To find volunteers, the Executive Group sent an email to the College distribution list, inviting participation. The responses to the email resulted in about a dozen new working group members. The Executive

Group had final responsibility for reviewing the makeup of the groups and adding volunteers to ensure the best possible composition for each group. (*Resource Room Document 1.15*)

Preparations

In addition to the selection and training of the working group co-chairs, preparations included kick-off events at both campuses, notification of the president's Cabinet and other College groups about the Self-Study, and meetings with key campus units including the Offices of Information Technology and Communications. All Steering Committee and working group members were invited to the kick-off events on September 1, 2011, which included a presentation by the president, overview of the self-study process, reviews of the responsibilities of the co-chairs and the working group members, discussion of the HLC criteria, and time for questions and discussion. Meetings with the Office of Information Technology and the Office of Communications were the first steps in developing a data team and a communications team. These meetings were followed in late September and early October by the development of a shared computer drive and a communications plan. (*Resource Room Document 1.16*)

Resources

The College has committed substantial resources to the self-study effort. CCA sent representatives to the HLC Conference in Chicago in both 2011 and 2012: four in 2011 (the Executive Group and the chair of the Faculty Assessment Committee) and six in 2012 (the Executive Group, the chair of the Faculty Assessment Committee, the director of assessment and institutional effectiveness, and the vice president for student affairs). The College has also established and funded a separate financial account for the self-study process, from which it has paid adjunct faculty for their time on the working groups. The Steering Committee members and the working group members were given work time to carry out their duties.

Because the five working groups' information-gathering and writing process overlapped with the development of the revised HLC criteria, the groups were organized around a draft version of the criteria. As the Executive Group prepared the Self-Study, its members moved materials or made other needed adjustments to align what the working groups produced with the current Self-Study requirements which included the following criteria:

1. Mission
2. Integrity

3. Academic Programs – Quality, Resources, and Support
4. Academic Programs – Evaluation and Improvement
5. Resources and Planning

The committees met regularly from September 2011 through January 2012 to gather and evaluate information. In January and February 2012, committees submitted reports to the Executive Group, which reviewed them and then met with the working group chairs to discuss additions to the reports. The Executive Group used the reports to draft criteria chapters of the Self-Study. Preliminary chapter drafts were then reviewed by working group chairs in the fall of 2012.

Chapter 2 Response to the 2003 and 2010 Higher Learning Commission Team Reports

Responses to the 2003 and 2010 Higher Learning Commission Team Reports

In their reports following a comprehensive visit in 2003 and a focused visit for new locations in 2010, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) teams raised concerns and made a number of observations and recommendations. The College addresses these items from the teams' reports below:

The College's Response to 2003 Team Concerns

“Limitations with part-time instructors: inadequate communication; lack of uniform application of assessment procedures, continuity in decisions and direction, attention to individual students. The college should periodically reevaluate full-time to part-time ratio.”

Increasing the number of regular (full-time) faculty members has been a College priority since 2003, despite tight annual budgets and competing financial requests. CCA faculty members have voiced this priority regularly and administrators have supported additions of new positions. The priority was included in the 2010-13 Instructional Plan which was approved by the President's Cabinet in June 2010. With this support, the number of regular faculty positions rose from 33 in the fall of 2002 to 50 in the fall of 2012. (*Resource Room Document 2.1*) The College is also part of an initiative that extends across the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to raise regular faculty members' salaries up to the national average for community college faculty over the next five years. (*Resource Room Document 2.2*)

Table 2.1
Ratio of Credit Hours taught by Regular Faculty to
Credit Hours taught by Adjunct Faculty

Year	Regular:Adjunct
Spring 1993	1:9.3
Fall 2002	1:5.8
Fall 2012	1:4.6

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; Cognos Mid-Term Course Extract; 2002 CCA Self-Study Report.

In re-evaluating the ratio of regular-to-adjunct faculty members, CCA faculty and administrators—while aware of the College’s financial position—have recognized the value of adding regular faculty members. Regular faculty offer leadership, consistency, and the capacity to carry out important instructional functions including curriculum development, committee work, and the creation of new courses and programs. They provide departments with the capacity to grow and contribute to student success and retention. At the same time, adjunct faculty members continue to be valued for bringing immediate real-world experience from their employment to their teaching.

In addition to adding regular faculty members, the College has addressed the limitations cited in the 2003 report by strengthening support for adjunct faculty. CCA has an adjunct faculty job description which both the instructor and the department chair sign. (*Resource Room Document 2.3*) New adjunct faculty members attend a faculty-run orientation held prior to the start of their first semester of teaching, attend a follow-up problem-solving session later in the semester, and participate in a mentoring program, also run by their faculty peers. All adjunct faculty members are required to complete an online Desire2Learn (the course management platform, also called D2L) training course and then to put their grades, syllabi, and attendance into D2L. (Adjunct faculty members who teach concurrent enrollment courses in the high schools are not subject to the D2L training and use requirements because the schools do not use the D2L platform.)

CCA communicates with adjunct faculty members through department chair supervisors, interaction with regular faculty members, an adjunct distribution list on the College email system, and all-faculty and departmental meetings. Department chairs have access to D2L courses taught by adjunct faculty members, providing them with a tool to monitor and provide coaching and feedback on those courses. Department chairs also provide adjunct faculty members with regular performance evaluations which include, at minimum, student evaluation feedback and classroom observations.

CCA pays adjunct faculty members to attend meetings such as the all-faculty and departmental meetings that precede the opening of the fall and spring semesters. Adjuncts are also paid to attend professional development events, including the annual faculty in-service day. They are also encouraged and paid to participate in departmental activities such as the analysis of student work (part of the College’s assessment program).

“If enrollment keeps increasing, the college should upgrade and add more full-time staff in its Instructional Resource Center [now the Learning Resource Center].”

The College has upgraded the Learning Resource Center (LRC) (*Resource Room Document 2.4*) and added LRC staff as enrollment has increased. CCA’s enrollment (unduplicated headcount) grew from 5,443 in the fall of 2004 to 7,842 in the fall of 2011. While more than 1,400 of these students were concurrently enrolled and using their high school libraries, the LRC was still serving a student population nearly 25 percent larger than a decade earlier.

Over that same period, the number of LRC staff positions grew from one part-time professional librarian and one part-time library assistant to the current level: a full-time library director with a master in library science degree, a full-time library assistant with a bachelor of arts degree, and a full-time administrative assistant. The LRC hires five to eight work-study students per term and also utilizes graduate students from the School of Library Science at the University of Denver. In addition to increased staffing, the LRC at CentreTech now has additional quiet study areas as well as group study and instructional/meeting spaces, added in a 2011 remodeling project. At Lowry, the College has added the Science Resource Center and library collections for the Paralegal Program, the Colorado Film School, and the Art and New Media Program.

Since the College stopped using the Aurora Public Library as its library in 2009, the LRC has significantly upgraded the online resources available to students and faculty in number, type, and scope. Currently, the LRC provides access to 14 relevant databases through a consortia agreement managed by the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Library Consortium. Credo Reference is a tool that brings many of these together and offers its own reference materials. America’s Historic Newspapers puts primary sources in the hands of CCA history students. Access to over 30,000 e-books has greatly expanded and complemented the physical collection. The LRC also provides one-on-one, small group, and online research assistance sessions and 24/7 research assistance through a statewide cooperative, *AskAcademic*.

The Division of Instruction continues to advocate for additional staff and library upgrades especially for the Lowry campus. The 2010-13 Instructional Plan has as its third strategic goal “Create, maintain, and/or expand support services and delivery modalities for student success” with financial resources for support staff and technological support among the specific recommendations. In fall 2012, Perkins funding allowed the College to expand library services to the CTE

programs at Lowry with the hiring of a librarian to support library holdings at that campus, increase research instruction for CTE classes, provide one-on-one research assistance, and help build departmental collections.

“A monitoring report on assessment is required by June 30, 2006.”

The College submitted a monitoring report (*Resource Room Document 2.5*) in June of 2006 to meet the evaluation team’s requirement. The report described how the College had improved assessment of student learning, developed an assessment plan that addressed the team’s concerns, and used CCA’s existing Lifelong Skills and the assessment of occupational skills to build that plan.

The report’s first section included a history of assessment at CCA, a summary of the roles CCA faculty members and administrators were playing in assessment, and an account of the College’s assessment resources. The report’s second section described how the College had accomplished what the evaluation team had required and how it was using the team’s findings to improve assessment. The final section explored the College’s strengths and challenges as it continued to develop assessment.

The College’s HLC staff liaison, Dr. Robert Appleson, indicated to CCA’s president in a letter dated January 29, 2007 that the report had been reviewed and accepted. No further action was required. The staff analysis attached to the letter indicated that “the report addressed each of the expectations identified by the visiting team in 2003” and that it presented “evidence of sufficient progress in all areas.”

“Attracting and retaining talented candidates from under-represented groups will continue to challenge CCA.”

“Institutional Diversity – CCA should increase the number of full-time employees that are minorities.”

The College continues to face the challenge of attracting and retaining candidates from under-represented groups. The percentage of employees, including adjunct instructors, who were minorities (African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian), increased only slightly from 16 percent in 2005-06 to 17.1 percent in 2011-12. Within these numbers, there was a drop in the percentage of employees that were African American from 8.3 percent to 4.8 percent and an increase in the percent who were Hispanic from 3.6 percent to 6.4 percent.

As CCA has tackled this issue since 2003, Human Resources has directed that search committees be diverse and that committees choose the best person from among a pool of candidates regardless of that person's race, ethnicity, gender, or other demographic characteristics. It has assumed that to increase the number of employees from underrepresented groups, the number of minority candidates in the candidate pools should be increased.

The strategy for diversifying applicant pools has been to advertise positions in the appropriate media. Through much of the decade, CCA chose national media such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as the best places to advertise. A more focused approach, emphasized in the last year, has been to announce openings in publications such as *Black Issues in Higher Education* and *Hispanics in Higher Education*. In August 2012, the President's Cabinet authorized spending additional funds for advertising in these and other targeted publications.

However, although CCA has used advertising to increase the diversity of candidate pools, it has not collected demographic data about applicants and so does not know the demographic composition of past applicant pools. Also unknown is the extent to which advertising in specific publications increases the diversity of applicant pools. What is known is that the portion of employees who are minority group members does not match that of the student body nor that of the community.

Recent discussions have begun to ask if the interview and selection processes may have unintended biases that work against those who are different by race, ethnicity, or other characteristics from the majority of the committee members and the College. A proposed solution is training to help faculty and staff understand such biases and how to offset them in the interview process.

“CCA should add new ways to communicate policy and procedure changes to part-time faculty and to employees at multiple locations.”

The development of the CCA website and intranet portal means that policies and procedures are now available to those who seek them via tabs on the portal that lead to a policies and procedures repository. Also, all adjunct faculty have College email accounts and are expected to check them regularly, increasing the number of people who can be informed via email distribution lists. Finally, because the College pays adjuncts to attend all-faculty, departmental, and other meetings, more employees hear about policy and procedure changes announced at these meetings. These efforts appear to be bringing results: Data from

the 2011 survey of adjunct faculty showed high to very-high percentages of those responding agreeing that they had full knowledge of key College policies and procedures.

Table 2.2

Adjunct Faculty knowledge of CCA Policies and Procedures

	Agree/Strongly Agree
I have full knowledge of:	
CCA’s Early Alert System	94.1%
CCA’s Student Conduct Policy	92.6%
CCA’s Emergency Procedures	83.7%
CCA’s Academic Freedom Policy	67.2%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; Adjunct Faculty Survey 2011.

In addition to improving communication, CCA has also codified and clarified many policies and procedures in the past year. During the interim presidency of Dr. Geri Anderson in 2012, the College contracted with a consultant to develop a full set of formal written policies and operational procedures, a first for the College. This comprehensive approach, with clear directions for regular and systematic updating, will make it much easier to communicate to employees—including adjunct faculty—when changes occur. *(Resource Room Document 2.6)*

The project fully documented all primary operating policies and procedures for the College into a centralized set of organizational guidelines covering academic and student affairs, finance, human resources, and overarching institutional planning, safety, and information technology practices. The guidelines will serve as an orientation tool for faculty and staff new to the College or their position, a reference for frequently asked questions, and a resource for important but less frequently used practices and procedures. They include references and links to major state regulations and CCCS policies.

The challenge that remains is drawing employees into what is largely a self-service system where they find documents in the portal and ensuring they can navigate through and understand the documents.

“CCA should communicate its grievance policies and procedures to faculty and contract employees more broadly and frequently.”

Regular College employees receive copies of grievance policies in the packet given to them as new hires. The policies are also located on the portal (*Resource Room Document 2.7*) and employees can contact Human Resources with their questions. Grievance policies differ for categories of employees, so classified employees, for example, have a different set of policies than do faculty members. These policies and procedures are also included in the faculty handbook prepared in the fall of 2012 and in formal policies and operational procedures prepared by the consultant.

“With experienced employees retiring, CCA should address succession planning.”

CCA has not undertaken formal succession planning, a topic of interest in many higher education institutions at the time of the 2003 visit. Over the past decade, even as the College has grown, many of its units have remained small. A department with just one or two full-time people is not unusual. Instead of focusing specifically on succession planning, the College has emphasized informal mentoring by supervisors and the identification and engagement of exceptionally talented employees who seek challenges and recognition to keep them from moving to other institutions. In recent years, there has been some increase in the direct appointment of people to higher positions as a way to advance talented employees.

“Travel reductions limit contacts for program development and curricular innovation. CCA should restore funds for professional travel for regular faculty and administrators when finances permit.”

Professional travel for CCA employees in the year following the 2003 visit was very modest. College financial records show that CCA spent only \$1,248 on outside travel and related expenses (lodging, meals, and miscellaneous) in 2003-04. Since then, the amount spent for travel has grown, particularly in the last several years, and in 2011-12, the College spent \$46,673 for out-of-state travel. The authorization process for travel has been restrictive, however, easing somewhat in the last several years.

The restrictive approach to travel was not based solely on a lack of professional development funds. Rather, concerns about public perceptions of expenditures of tax monies, and of the activities of state and state higher education employees, played an important role in shaping travel approval. Just a month prior to the team’s 2003 visit, the governor of Colorado issued an executive order concerning state employee travel that emphasized cost-savings through means such as requiring pre-approval of all out-of-state travel. In the fall of 2005, the

president of the Colorado Community College System issued a travel policy indicating that travel was a sensitive expenditure and emphasized the need for budgeting and approvals.

These proclamations, followed by the recession and shrinking higher education budgets, led to practices that restricted travel. For example, approval by the President’s Cabinet (now Leadership Council) was, and still is, required for all out-of-state travel. The source of funding is an important consideration in these decisions, and those requests for travel paid for by monies not from the general fund (e.g., grants) have been more likely to be approved over the years. In addition, travel for critical compliance, grant compliance, and accreditation is generally allowed. The College also has the responsibility to limit the number of travelers to any particular event.

The benefits of professional travel for conference attendance and for other exposure to innovation have been widely recognized at CCA. The Instructional Plan for 2010-13 encourages support for faculty growth and development and specifically asks that funding be provided for professional development and conference attendance.

Table 2.3
Spending on faculty and staff travel

Year	In-State	Out-of-State
2003-04	\$4,319	\$5,567
2005-06	\$9,569	\$14,726
2007-08	\$11,127	\$34,182
2009-10	\$14,003	\$24,073
2011-12	\$29,212	\$61,685

SOURCE: CCA Finance Office.

“Building signage needs improvement, including removal of unattractive canvas banners.”

The College has taken several steps since 2003 to improve signage at both its campuses. At CentreTech, CCA has added an illuminated sign to the Fine Arts Building that is visible from Chambers Road, a main Aurora thoroughfare. At Lowry, the improvements have included removing an unattractive canvas banner and replacing it with an illuminated sign above the new (in 2011) entrance to the West Quad Building.

The College is working with an architectural firm on a long-range facility plan for the Lowry campus. (*Resource Room Document 2.8*) The

plan includes a new signage program that will remove the remaining canvas banners and replace them with directional and building signage for the entire campus.

Interior signage at both campuses has been improved with signs, directional arrows on some signs, and regular updates when employees change or move to new offices.

“CCA has comprehensive workforce preparation and training services, but may want to expand continuing education to markets such as retirees to earn additional revenue.”

The College does not have a history of offering leisure learning or similar continuing education courses for the general public, including retirees. From its founding, CCA was asked not to compete with the City of Aurora’s Parks and Recreation Department, which offers many of the typical leisure-learning opportunities. Because of this history, the College has not considered continuing education for the general public as a priority nor seen it as a significant source of revenue. In recent years, several metro colleges have closed or significantly reduced their workforce training and continuing education programs due to poor financial returns from these efforts.

However, in 2003, CCA created a large non-credit English as a Second Language (ESL) program in response to the dramatically changing demographic makeup of the community and has encouraged departments to expand their continuing education offerings to targeted audiences, primarily in business and government.

CCA launched its Community English as a Second Language (CESL) at the Lowry campus in 2003 when the great need for adult ESL classes became apparent. This non-credit program, supported by student fees, records more than 2,500 enrollments over five sessions each year. The program has, at various times, delivered specialized classes for those interested in learning health care English and for those holding “au pair” visas who are required to enroll in college-level courses during their stay in the United States. In 2012, the CESL program began to offer classes that prepare immigrants to take the test to become U.S. citizens. (*Resource Room Document 2.9*)

Instructional departments have expanded their continuing education offerings in a variety of market-driven ways. Some departments use for-credit continuing education to meet the needs of companies such as Pinnacol Assurance, Staples, and Raytheon. Programs for these companies meet each company’s specific workforce and training needs and serve 80 to 120 students per year. College departments have found

that continuing education revenue can fluctuate. The Colorado Film School, for example, earned significant revenues at one point through the teaching of Avid classes (digital editing software), but those have dropped off considerably.

Other departments have focused their continuing education on contracts with government agencies. CCA has trained air marshals for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and conducted large-scale simulations such as the 2011 Operation Mountain Guardian in which many local and state law enforcement and other agencies participated. (*Resource Room Document 2.10*) The Health Science, Emergency Medical Services, and Public Service Departments offer continuing education to both specific agencies and to the community at large.

Training is often specific to industry-required certifications such as First Aid, Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Among the largest of these efforts has been the training of more than 830 commercial airline flight attendants, pilots, and airline security personnel and supervisors since 2005 under the TSA/Department of Homeland Security Crew Member Self-Defense Training Program.

“Certificate completers have grown tremendously and CCA should consider ways to get completers to stay at the college and earn associate degrees.”

Occupational programs report that some students earn certificates to get jobs and then continue, part-time, to finish degrees while they work. However, among the challenges for encouraging degree completion are the cases where employers require only a certificate. In this situation, students focus on completing the certificate. In other cases, individuals come to the College seeking a certificate to refresh or enhance their skills in a particular area, whether or not they relate to certificates or degrees they may have previously earned.

The College is actively seeking ways to encourage and assist the growing number of certificate completers who go on to earn a degree. This position is articulated in the 2010-13 Instructional Plan as “Continue to develop sustainable short-term certificates that are designed to meet workforce needs and act as building blocks for future degrees.” Departments are implementing this idea in various ways.

The Computer Science Department, Art and Design Department, and the School of Business have restructured course work and embedded

certificates within each of the degrees they offer. This restructuring was a direct attempt at increasing degree completion by stair-stepping the curriculum into manageable components. Collectively, this affected 19 degrees and 24 certificate programs over the last three years. The Criminal Justice program has done similar restructuring and embedding of certificates.

Institutional Research has been working with departments across the College to create student tracking databases that help to pinpoint and follow students to determine those who may have, or will soon have, a certificate and could be targeted for efforts to encourage degree completion.

“The team observed very low numbers of graduates from occupational programs. The college may need to study enrollment by program and attrition and completion rates with possible new strategies for increased retention and completion.”

Increased student retention and completion in all areas of the College, including occupational programs, are CCA priorities. The College has generally focused on institution-wide strategies for retention and completion. Among these recent strategies are the following:

- Mandatory new student orientation for all first-time college students instituted in 2012.
- Workshops to prepare students to take the Accuplacer placement exam.
- An early-alert program and a pilot of Course Signals, an early intervention system that warns students who are at risk of underperforming in a course.
- Support services for cohorts of students who are recipients of select scholarships.
- College success classes in Advanced Academic Achievement (AAA).
- Academic support to 160 TRiO Student Support Services students.
- A Student Success Center on the CentreTech Campus housing all cohort-based student success groups.
- Student success workshops presented in classes as a substitute for, or as a supplement to, the instructor.
- The statewide Degrees with Designation programs allowing transfer (AA and AS) students to declare a “major” at the community college level.
- Implementation of Degree Works to help students determine what courses they need to finish their degrees or certificates.

Individual programs have also taken steps to increase retention and completion. One example is the School of Business, which has piloted an integrated three-part program for improving student success. Historical data and student performance outcomes provide faculty and administrators with detailed information on the number of degrees and certificates awarded, the percentage of degrees and certificates awarded to minority students, and fall-to-fall retention of full-time and part-time students. A master calendar of course offerings ensures that full-time students can achieve degree and certificate completion in the least possible number of semesters. Through student success coaching embedded in the core business curriculum, students set personal, career, academic, and completion goals. Coaching became a universal requirement for all entering business students in the 2012-2013 academic year.

“The College is making efforts to reach the growing Hispanic community (credit/non-credit ESL, employees studying Spanish, community partnerships). Additional steps could include a profile of the Hispanic population, additional community/industry scholarships for Hispanic students, bilingual recruitment and student services documents, and focus groups with Hispanic students to develop retention strategies.”

In the fall semester of 2004, CCA enrolled 634 Hispanic students, 11.6 percent of the College’s total student enrollment. By the fall of 2011, Hispanic enrollment at the College had increased to 1,411, 18 percent of the total enrolled. The increase was heavily influenced by concurrent enrollment. Of the 1,411 Hispanic students, 498 were enrolled in CCA classes through area high schools. The 913 enrolled at CCA in other than the high school programs constituted 14 percent of the enrollment. Aurora’s Hispanic population is relatively young, thus a preponderance of such enrollments at the high schools is to be expected.

Table 2.4

Aurora Hispanic population by age

Age	Hispanic Population	Total Population
19 or Under	43.1%	30.3%
20-34	27.3%	23.2%
35-54	23.3%	27.3%
55 and Over	6.4%	18.2%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey 2011 3-year Estimates.

Through the Aurora Language Center (ALC), the College is now serving significantly more people from the Hispanic community than it did in 2003. In 2011-12, Spanish speakers were the largest group among those who enrolled in the ALC's Community ESL classes at the Lowry campus, with 1,250 enrollments. The College's Center for Workforce Development, particularly through its Career and Household Opportunities for Income and Community Services (CHOICES) program with Adams County, serves a significant Hispanic population. The CHOICES case managers are bilingual, and more than 30 percent of the CHOICES clients are native Spanish speakers.

Over the past decade, CCA has been a major supporter of the City of Aurora's Integrating Immigrants Initiative in north Aurora. The College was one of four founding members of the Original Aurora Community Integration Collaborative (OACIC), the formalization of the Initiative under a multi-year grant from the Colorado Trust's Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Initiative. The mission is to help both immigrant and long-term residents better understand one another and form a more connected community in Original Aurora, a neighborhood with a large Hispanic population.

In one project, CCA and its Emergency Medical Service Program collaborated with OACIC, the Aurora Fire Department, and the Aurora Police Department to deliver a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program comprised entirely of Spanish-speaking immigrants. The training, conducted in Spanish, prepared the group to provide assistance to their community and workplace during disasters when professional responders might not be available. The training culminated with a mock drill on a Saturday in March, 2011, at CCA's Center for Simulation on the Lowry campus.

Among other efforts, CCA has worked to develop a relationship with the Mexican Consulate in Denver, including hosting the Consul General on a visit to the Lowry campus in 2011. Individual faculty and staff members are encouraged to attend activities and events in the community targeted to the Hispanic population, such as a monthly breakfast for Latina women in Denver.

Student Affairs staff conducted focus groups with high-achieving Latino and African-American students during the spring 2012 semester to identify the factors that contributed to their success. The students in the groups indicated that the top reasons they chose CCA were its proximity to their homes, its cost and affordability, the College's reputation, the diversity on campus, and the flexibility of CCA's course offerings. They also indicated that they attributed their success at CCA to the College's high quality, accessible faculty members,

campus engagement and the sense of community on campus, and support from their families.

The College's Response to the 2010 Team Concerns

“Careful attention should be given to ongoing assessments of student learning data for concurrent enrollment for both general education and career coursework as compared to the native college offerings.”

Assessment data for student learning outcomes are collected from all CCA departments for both College-wide Lifelong Skills and for departmental skills. Each department works to ensure assignments measuring these skills are embedded in courses across all modes of delivery (traditional, online, concurrent enrollment, etc.), and that the results are compared for all modes of delivery. Common final exams or essay prompts are one method used to gather data on departmental skills.

In addition to assessing student learning outcomes at the departmental level, College-wide data are collected and analyzed on the Lifelong Skills (currently this effort is focusing on two skills: critical inquiry and written communication). Department chairs use the results to work with faculty to identify action items for improving performance in all sections of a course where performance is not meeting expectations. The following year the performance is evaluated again to determine whether the action items have brought the performance to the level expected.

Implementing assessment in the high schools has been a challenge, but a major rollout in 2011-12 produced significant results, as reported in the Faculty Assessment Committee's 2011-12 report. To increase high school participation rates, some departments have begun to require high school instructors to assist with the grading of assessment assignments at the end of the semester.

The 2011-12 annual report presents data comparing the learning of concurrent students and native college students for critical thinking and written communication. Results were reported for various modes of delivery (face-to-face, concurrent, hybrid, online) and emphasized which areas had the highest percentage of students meeting an acceptable or superior demonstration of skills. (*Resource Room Document 2.11*)

For the critical inquiry skill, concurrent enrollment classes had the highest percentage of students rated as acceptable or superior in four of the five subcategories (problem definition, problem interpretation, support, personal response). However, the analysis of the written

communication skill found strikingly different results for concurrent students. Concurrent courses had the lowest percentage of students assessed as demonstrating acceptable levels of skill in three of four subcategories (grammar/mechanics, clarity/organization, language use). In the fall of 2012, CCA department chairs and coordinators began to address the areas showing lower skill levels through such means as distributing guidelines for writing in specific disciplines to the high school instructors and providing a common writing assignment with an accompanying template to guide students in developing their assignment essays.

“The College is encouraged to fully document the concurrent enrollment process over the current and future academic years in preparation for the comprehensive accreditation visit.”

The College began to document the concurrent academic processes in 2011-12 and is documenting the enrollment process in 2012-13. The College has a concurrent enrollment handbook that is updated each year. (*Resource Room Document 2.12*) Among the documented processes are the following:

- The Center for Outreach and Recruitment (COR), with support and assistance from the partnering high school counselors, has developed processes and procedures for advising and enrollment into college classes.
- High school counselor advisory committees in two districts assist the College in identifying qualified high school students.
- CCA representatives, high school counselors, and assistant principals meet twice per semester to plan for offering classes in their high schools.
- Each high school now has its own Accuplacer site, which gives CCA the option of accessing reports by high school and tracking students' academic success.

“As the program develops, the College and partner school districts should make a concerted effort to reach those students who are less likely to continue their education at the post-secondary level.”

The high school districts are putting in place specific structures and processes to encourage high school students to graduate from high school with at least one college class on their transcript. To support this effort, the districts are designing the concurrent enrollment program to meet their specific needs and goals. For example, the Aurora Public Schools (APS) are developing career and technical education pathways in the high schools that will lead to the completion of a degree or certificate. They are also recommending that Accuplacer testing for all 11th graders be preceded by Accuplacer preparation workshops, so students are able to score into the highest level possible.

The Denver Public Schools (DPS) are working with Instruction to develop block scheduling so that they can transport groups of students who have successfully completed a concurrent enrollment class in the high school to the CCA campus to take additional classes. The Cherry Creek School District (CCSD) is focusing on enriching the academic experience at the high-school level by offering students the option of taking general transfer pathway courses that will transfer to any four-year institution after graduation.

For its part, the College has plans for its admissions counselors to partner with high school counseling offices each spring to work with students who have not applied to a college and those who have indicated an interest in attending CCA. The counselors would provide application assistance and admissions counseling to prepare students to enroll at CCA.

To help ensure that all students—including those identified as less likely to attend college—succeed in college, the Concurrent Enrollment academic coordinators plan to pilot orientation sessions in partner high schools beginning in the fall of 2013. The orientation would include material such as how to use D2L and the College library, how to read a syllabus, and how to check one's progress toward earning a degree through Degree Works.

“The criteria used for screening the students for entering the program should be examined annually to ensure they adequately assess a student’s potential for success in the program.”

The two school districts with the largest concurrent enrollments, the Aurora Public Schools and the Cherry Creek School District, have focused on increasing the number of concurrent enrollment students. More needs to be done to adequately screen students beyond requiring they have appropriate Accuplacer scores. What a “successful” student looks like is not completely clear and College faculty and staff need to determine characteristics of successful students. Success may also come from orienting students to College parameters for success and from providing resources such as the Learning Resource Center and workshops on research skills, financial literacy, and student-centered learning and responsibility.

In conjunction with a monthly counselor advisory committee, CCA staff members discuss ways to find students who are ready to enter college-level courses and successfully complete those courses. The committee prefers to have all freshmen and sophomores take College classes in their high schools before attending a class on the CCA campus. In one of the partner school districts, all classes are offered only in their high school with no option to attend class on the CCA campus.

Chapter 3 Mission

Criterion One: The institution’s mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution’s operations.

Introduction:

This chapter focuses on the Community College of Aurora’s (CCA or the College) mission, the communication of that mission internally and to the public, and the guidance the mission provides to the College’s operations. The chapter presents evidence and discusses core components of Criterion One relating to the understanding of the mission, its public articulation, the relationship between the mission and diversity, and the ways in which the mission demonstrates commitment to the public good. The Self-Study Working Group on Mission helped to gather and analyze information for the chapter.

Community College of Aurora Mission Documents:

The College articulates its mission through a mission statement and in related documents that include an institutional vision, a set of College values, strategic goals, and a list of the Lifelong Skills in which CCA expects all students to demonstrate proficiency.

College Mission:

The Community College of Aurora provides lifelong educational opportunities, prepares the current and future workforce, and promotes excellence in teaching, learning, and service to our diverse community.

College Vision:

The Community College of Aurora aspires to be the college of choice for the eastern metro region.

College Values:

- Respect
- Quality
- Access
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Collaboration

College 2010-13 Strategic Goals:

Goal 1: Increase student retention, completion, and transfer rates.

Goal 2: Continually improve student learning.

Goal 3: Increase student enrollment.

Goal 4: Strengthen human resources.

Goal 5: Strengthen the College's visibility and community relations.

College Lifelong Skills:

- Communication
- Critical Inquiry
- Personal Responsibility
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Technology
- Aesthetics

Core Component 1. A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Data from surveys of faculty, staff, and students provide evidence about how these groups understand the College's mission, the degree to which they believe it is being achieved, and their role in that achievement. The addition of many new positions and regular turnover in existing positions has been one challenge to a broad understanding of the College's mission. The number of full-time staff, for example, nearly doubled between 2005-06 and 2011-12, from 95 to 165, meaning that many new people had to develop an understanding of CCA's mission, values, and vision, as well as learn to use them to guide College operations.

Survey of CCA Regular Faculty and Staff

In 2008, the Colorado Community College System (CCCS or the System) began surveying regular faculty members (but not adjunct faculty members) and other employees at all System colleges every two years. These surveys have asked employees about their understanding of their institution's mission and goals, the degree to which they think the institution is meeting its mission and goals, and their understanding of their own roles in achieving the institution's mission and goals. Data on employee understanding of the College mission are also available for years prior to 2008 from surveys

conducted by CCA's Office of Institutional Research. (*Resource Room Document 3.1*)

Table 3.1 shows that in both 2008 and 2010 large numbers of regular faculty and staff members agreed that they had knowledge of the College's mission and goals, believed that the College was achieving them, and understood how they could do their part in helping to achieve them.

Table 3.1

Faculty/Staff knowledge and understanding of CCA's Mission and Goals

	2008	2010
	Agree/Strongly Agree	Agree/Strongly Agree
I know the mission, vision, and goals that have been set by my college		
Faculty	100%	95.4%
Staff	100%	88.7%
I believe that the College is achieving its mission, vision, and goals		
Faculty	86.7%	90.9%
Staff	89.7%	80.6%
I understand how to do my part in helping the college to achieve its mission, vision, and goals		
Faculty	100%	95.3%
Staff	96.7%	90.0%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; CCCS Staff and Faculty Surveys, 2008 and 2010.

Survey of CCA Adjunct Faculty Members

CCA's Office of Institutional Research (IR) has surveyed adjunct faculty members periodically. In the spring of 2012, IR prepared and used an updated and expanded instrument for this survey. (*Resource Room Document 3.2*) The new survey instrument includes statements on mission and goals, about which adjunct faculty members were asked to express their level of agreement or satisfaction (from strongly agree/very satisfied = 4, to strongly disagree/very dissatisfied = 1). Questions in 2012 were more detailed than in the past, with items assessing both knowledge and understanding of various practices and procedures. IR reported mean scores for each item.

Survey results showed that the mean score for adjunct faculty members' knowledge of CCA's mission was 3.02. For strategic goals knowledge, the mean score was 2.84 (where strongly Agree = 4, Agree

= 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1). As points of comparison, the average mean score for all items on the survey was 3.09 and for department goals and objectives it was 3.29. The mean scores for adjuncts' knowledge of the College's mission and goals were the second lowest of any survey item. The only item on which adjuncts indicated they had a lower level of knowledge was CCA's academic freedom policy (2.75).

Survey of CCA Students

In 2010, CCCS surveyed students at all its colleges electronically, using Survey Monkey, and reported results by institution. The survey did not ask direct questions about students' understanding of their college's mission, but did ask students about their agreement or disagreement in a variety of areas related to CCA's mission using the following statement: "I think that this institution is highly committed to the following" More than 70 percent of those responding to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that the College is "highly committed" on the five items from the list most closely related to the College's mission as shown in Table 3.2. (*Resource Room Document 3.3*)

Table 3.2
2010 Student Satisfaction Survey: results related to CCA Mission

The College Is Committed To:	Agree/Strongly Agree
Quality of Education	83.7%
Older, Returning Students	79.9%
Offering Training Related to Today's Job Market	75.9%
Students of Color	72.9%
Students With Disabilities	71.4%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; CCCS 2010 Student Satisfaction Survey

Summary of Surveys

These data suggest that the College could do more to communicate information about its mission and goals to adjunct faculty members who are less familiar with the institution as a whole than with the area in which they teach. Results from the 2012 faculty and staff surveys should be monitored to try to determine if continued growth is affecting employee knowledge and understanding of basic information about the College. Asking students more directly about their

understanding of the goals and mission of CCA should be considered for future student surveys.

Guidance to College Operations

The mission and related documents guide the operation of the College. While the mission provides overall direction, the strategic goals give specific and timely direction. For example, the first of the five current goals, “to increase student retention, completion, and transfer rates,” has had a major impact on how the College has structured programming, hired new staff, and added resources.

Likewise, the goals of increasing enrollment and improving students’ learning have guided CCA in its rapid growth since 2010 and, in a major effort in 2011, to improve the focus and organization of assessment of student learning. In turn, assessment results have guided improvements in curricula and teaching. These goals prompted, for example, the development of the College’s 2011-14 Student Success Strategic Plan and the renewed attention given to the direction of assessment in the summer of 2011. (*Resource Room Document 3.4*)

Deans, directors, and department chairs request that those who report to them use the strategic goals to develop their unit and personal goals for the following year. College leadership groups use the goals to guide their discussions of the budget. The Lifelong Skills provide similar direction within Instruction, guiding faculty members as they design curricula and courses. Chapter 6 has additional information on this topic.

The current vision reminds the College that it competes with many institutions for student enrollment, and of the effort needed to provide the education residents choose. A characteristic of that education at CCA – quality - is articulated in the College’s values.

The College values provide a unique kind of guidance, influencing specific decisions about the direction of the College. For example, the value that CCA gives to access to higher education has provided a rationale for expanding concurrent enrollment. In other cases, the values offer a general expectation of how members of the College community work together. These include how the value of collaboration sets the tone for approaching new challenges, as evidenced in the cooperation found in the 2011-12 effort to implement the Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC), the new process for approving instructional pay. FLAC implementation required months of preparation and training, learning new processes, and increased work

time and attention by employees at all levels during especially busy periods of the year. Staff and faculty met these challenges with a high level of collaboration. (*Resource Room Document 3.5*)

1.A.1 The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Colleges within CCCS develop mission documents and strategic plans that respond to the needs of their service area and that are aligned with the mission and goals of the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). CCCS has its own mission documents, including a mission statement, strategic goals, and a vision that help to guide member colleges, including CCA. The System's statewide mission is as follows:

“To provide an accessible, responsive learning environment that facilitates the achievement of educational, professional, and personal goals by our students and other members of our communities in an atmosphere that embraces academic excellence, diversity, and innovation.”

Development of the Mission

Guided by its commitment to the community it serves and the mission of CCCS, CCA developed its current mission statement through discussion with many stakeholders over a number of months in 2001. Advisory boards, students, and College employees provided ideas and suggestions with approval by the President's Cabinet. The College's mission is aligned with CCCS's legislated mission as reflected in statute and in SBCCOE policy:

“... offering a broad range of general, personal, vocational, and technical education programs ... to fill the occupational needs of youth and adults in technical and vocational fields, to provide two-year transfer educational programs to qualify students for admission to the junior year at other colleges and universities, and to provide a broad range of programs of personal and vocational education for adults.” (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201, SP 2-40)

The College will conduct its next regular review of the mission statement in conjunction with the strategic planning process scheduled for the middle of 2013.

Development of the Vision

The College developed the current vision statement in 2003 during the period when CCA was assuming full responsibility for the Lowry campus. The vision's theme is that people have choices about where they enroll, and if CCA desires to be their first choice, it will need to effectively compete for students, attract enrollment, and serve the entire east metro area.

Development of Our Values

Following the 1993 Self Study, the College formally adopted a set of values (respectful, exemplary, collaborative, empowering, and responsive) that focused primarily on interpersonal relations. In 2001, the College's Cabinet Advisory Council considered these original values. After discussing what these values did and did not include, the Council developed revised values and distributed them to the CCA community for comment and suggestion. The Council used the responses to develop values that relate to a broader range of College goals and activities. These now include respect, quality, access, diversity, inclusion, and collaboration.

Development of Our Strategic Goals

CCA developed the College's strategic goals for 2010-13 through the comprehensive college-wide planning process described in Chapter 7. Ideas for the goals originated in numerous meetings of stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, the College Advisory Board, the CCA Foundation board, and community members. Following their review by the Cabinet Advisory Board, the Cabinet adopted the goals in April of 2010. The goals then guided faculty and staff in the development of their annual performance plans, became the basis for operational-level plans such as the 2010-13 Instructional Plan and the 2011-13 Student Success Strategic Plan, and guided discussions about College budget and program development. (*Resource Room Document 3.6*)

Development of Our Lifelong Skills

The College's Lifelong Skills were developed in an extensive process in the 1990s that included gathering information from other institutions, surveying employers, and holding discussions among College faculty members. They have been reviewed since that time, but not altered substantially. The skills are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

1.A.2. The College’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Academic Programs

The College’s academic programs are consistent with its stated mission. Key sections of the mission statement and examples of academic programs that support those sections are discussed below.

“Lifelong Educational Opportunities”

The College’s mission indicates that it will provide “lifelong educational opportunities.” CCA accomplishes this part of its mission by serving students who vary widely in age, offering non-credit adult education in addition to numerous credit programs, holding informal learning events open to the community, focusing student learning on the Lifelong Skills, and providing educational options for College employees and their families.

As shown in Table 3.3. below, the College enrolls students of all ages, providing them with lifelong educational opportunities. At one end of the age span, college-ready students as young as ninth grade earn CCA credit through concurrent enrollment. The explosive growth in concurrent enrollment has contributed to a drop in the average age of all CCA students from 28.6 years of age in the fall semester of 2005 to 27.4 in the fall of 2012.

Table 3.3
Profile of CCA students by age, Fall 2012

	College Campuses	High School Campuses	Overall
19 or Younger	18%	100%	29%
20-24	26%	0%	23%
25-29	17%	0%	15%
30-34	13%	0%	11%
35-39	8%	0%	7%
40-54	14%	0%	12%
55 and Older	3%	0%	3%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; Cognos Mid-Term Data Extract, Fall 2012.

During the same time, a substantial number of people in their 40s and above (17 percent of total headcount in the fall of 2012) attended the College. Slightly over 200 students 55 and older enrolled in the fall of 2012, and in 2012 the College publicly recognized a 91-year-old veteran who was enrolled in art classes. Senior Citizen Grants, which give a 50 percent discount on tuition for Colorado residents 60 and older, and CCA Retiree Grants, which give the same discount, encourage older adults to enroll at CCA. In 2011-12, the College awarded more than \$45,000 in senior citizen grants. (*Resource Room Document 3.7*)

Over the past decade, CCA has increased its offering of community-focused adult education opportunities, including classes that prepare immigrants and refugees to take the test for U.S. citizenship and non-credit English as a Second Language classes. The College's Community ESL program at Lowry, the largest of these efforts, enrolls about five hundred students in each of its five eight-week sessions each year.

CCA departments present a range of informal educational opportunities to which the community (including College employees and students) is invited and at which the audience is often intergenerational. Among these opportunities are events such as the twice-yearly Sherlin astronomy lectures; art, music, dance, and drama performances at the end of each semester; Math Day for Girls; National Writing Day; plays staged in multi-performance runs each fall and spring; the Globalization Committee's 2012 Interfaith Dialogue series; and the Colorado Film School's student film shows in mid-December and early May. (*Resource Room Document 3.8*)

Faculty members, with staff and student assistance, present other informal education events open to the public each year, including the International Festival, awareness events hosted by psychology classes about topics such as mental health and eating disorders, the Great American Smokeout, and Take Back the Night, a day-long event to raise awareness about sexual violence and its prevention. Institutional Research is constructing a database for tracking attendance at these events, which should be in use by 2013.

CCA also provides "lifelong educational opportunities" through its long-time emphasis on the Lifelong Skills. All students are expected to develop competence in these skills, in addition to mastering occupational and discipline knowledge. The skills include written and oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, technology, aesthetics, and personal responsibility. CCA's faculty selected these skills following extensive discussion and consultation

with employers and other educational institutions. Students will find these skills useful for employment, in further educational efforts, and in everyday life.

Finally, the College ensures that lifelong educational opportunities are available not only to students and the community, but also to its own employees and their families. This commitment is demonstrated financially through CCA Employee Enhancement Grants (benefitted employees receive up to 9 credits of tuition a year and adjunct faculty members 5 credits), and CCA Family Enhancement Grants (legal spouses, parents, children, and siblings can enroll for up to 9 credits a year). The grants can be used at other community colleges. In 2011-12, the College awarded more than \$28,000 in Employee Enhancement grants, more than twice what it awarded just four years earlier. (*Resource Room Document 3.9*)

Table 3.4
Employee Enhancement Grants, FY2008-FY2012

Year	Grant Amount
FY2008	\$12,555.05
FY2009	\$14,499.50
FY2010	\$31,400.00
FY2011	\$35,059.15
FY2012	\$28,270.85

SOURCE: CCA Financial Aid Office.

“Prepare the Current and Future Workforce”

A prominent component of CCA’s mission is to “prepare the current and future workforce.” The College carries out this part of its mission through degree and certificate programs that lead directly to employment or prepare students for transfer, customized training, and participation in the State of Colorado’s Colorado First and Existing Industry grant program. The College also addresses this focus of its mission by emphasizing innovative approaches to workforce education, promoting transfer into four-year degrees and the careers they lead to, highlighting possible student career paths in its marketing, and expecting all students to master the Lifelong Skills vital to success in the workplace. Students have special opportunities to prepare for the world of work through internships such as those at the National Space Center, and direct training with professionals in

Fire Science, the Colorado Film School, the Police Academy, and other programs.

The College also collects and reports data each year on its recent graduates to determine who among them are employed, whether or not they are working in jobs related to their training, how much they are earning, and their views on their CCA education. Table 3.5 summarizes these data.

Table 3.5
Spring 2012 Employment and Wage Data for CCA Graduates^a

	Career/Technical Graduates	Transfer Graduates
Employed or Continuing Education	83.8%	90.0%
Employed	72.4%	71.7%
Continuing Education	27.0%	65.8%
Average Hourly Wage	\$20.27	\$13.85

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; VE-135 (Annual Survey of Graduated Students)

^aSurvey of Graduates from 2010-11, conducted Spring 2012.

The more than 40 certificate programs offered by CCA prepare students for immediate employment. In addition, the College offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of General Studies, and Associate of Applied Science degrees in a broad range of disciplines, many with a specific workplace focus. The Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees in designated fields of study allow a student to transfer to a public college or university in Colorado as a junior in that field of study, on his or her way to a career.

CCA disbanded Workforce Solutions, its formal customized training unit, in 2004 when the unit was no longer financially viable. Since the unit was disbanded, individual instructional programs have provided training to companies and other employers under a decentralized approach. These training offerings have ranged from math classes taught at a local cabinet manufacturing plant, to the training of air marshals for the Transportation Security Administration, to courses for Raytheon employees, to onsite business and ethics classes at Pinnacol Assurance. A major Workforce Solutions responsibility, the managing of state training grants to area employers (see Colorado First and Existing Industry grant program below) became the responsibility of

the College's grants office and is now the responsibility of the Director of Strategic Partnerships.

The State of Colorado's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) provides job training subsidies to companies that are locating or expanding in Colorado through the Colorado First and Existing Industry (CFEI) grants. CCCS jointly administers the grants with OEDIT. Local community colleges, including CCA, assist companies in submitting grants and then oversee the funded projects. In some cases, colleges may also provide some or all of the training for a company's grant. (*Resource Room Document 3.10*)

CCA has managed two to three such grants annually over the last five years, but has rarely provided training as companies' requests have grown much more specialized. In the spring of 2012, the Community College of Denver closed its unit that had worked with CFEI grants and CCA assumed responsibility for CCD's service area, increasing the number of grant applications substantially from three or four a year to more than 15 in 2012. For 2012-13, CCA is managing grants for 12 companies that were successful in the CFEI competition.

The College's Center for Workforce Development prepares citizens to enter the workforce in yet another way. The Center operates under contracts with the human services departments of Adams and Arapahoe Counties for case management and focused education for 350-400 TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) clients each year to transition them into paid employment. Depending on the contract, the Center has offered a mix of instruction preparing clients for work (soft skills, resume writing, etc.) and, where necessary, to take the GED tests. (*Resource Room Document 3.11*)

The Center also operates the CHOICES (Career and Household Opportunities for Income and Community Enhancement Services) program, an innovative effort by Adams County to prevent low-income households from going on to TANF through a year of case management and training focused on quickly increasing income. In any given month, the CHOICES program has approximately 150 clients in short-term job training, some studying at CCA and others enrolled at public and for-profit institutions in fields in which the College does not offer training, such as big-rig truck-driving or Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Workforce preparation is a source of many of the College's most innovative activities. For example, beginning in the late 1990s, CCA responded to the growing efforts to develop a bioscience industry in

Colorado by developing a biotechnology program (closed in 2011). Grants, first from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and later from the Colorado Institute of Technology and the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program, funded CCA to train and support high school teachers and develop student skills and interest in bioscience careers.

A second major innovation contributing to workforce preparation has been the College's adoption of simulation to improve instruction, first in Emergency Medical Services in 2005, and then through establishment of the Center for Simulation at Lowry. Long used for training in fields such as aviation, simulation brings the realities of the world of work to students and to professionals returning to upgrade their skills. In 2012, the College received nine Immersive and Game-Based Learning grants from the Colorado Community College System to run and develop projects which introduce simulation and related activities to the classroom in areas as diverse as film, the arts, business, computers, physical anthropology, political science, and paralegal studies. (*Resource Room Document 3.12*)

At CCA, the workforce preparation is not limited to the obvious occupational programs and specialized outreach efforts. The Art and Design Department, for example, opened an art gallery in 2011 at the Lowry Campus as part of a program to train its students for careers in arts management. The gallery experience has since been built into the department's foundations course. (*Resource Room Document 3.13*) In the same building, the Community ESL program offers a "life skills" curriculum with an emphasis on the language skills immigrants need at work.

In addition to offering the specific programs discussed above, the College promotes workforce preparation by assisting students in their career choices and preparation. The Communication Department focuses marketing efforts on messages related to preparation for work and the opportunities CCA offers students to get that preparation. These have included the overall messages of "real life" learning and learning "beyond the book." The office has done several poster series, used in various advertising venues, that emphasize careers and preparation for the workplace. The College's course schedules and catalog covers also feature career-oriented photographs.

Promoting transfer to four-year institutions and into the degree programs that lead to bachelor-level and higher careers is another way in which CCA contributes to workforce preparation. Advising develops and maintains relationships with baccalaureate degree-

granting institutions, organizes transfer fairs, and arranges four-year college visits. The Transfer Success Program in the Student Success Center also organizes college visits and assist students with completing a transfer plan. *(Resource Room Document 3.14)* Information for students is available through the Transfer Options section on the CCA website.

To increase support for students, the College hired a full-time career services coordinator in September 2012. The coordinator assists students with career exploration and selection, alignment of academic programs with career goals, job search strategies, resume writing, and interviewing skills. That employee will also be planning job fairs, strengthening relationships with local employers, and working with career and technical programs to explore internship opportunities. *(Resource Room Document 3.15)*

Data on Workforce Preparation

In the spring of 2012, CCA’s Office of Institutional Research surveyed students who completed a CCA degree or certificate program in academic year 2010-11. This annual survey is required by the State of Colorado for completers of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, although CCA also surveys those completing transfer degrees. The survey found that while finding employment related to CCA education and training remains a challenge under current economic conditions, those completers who are employed speak highly of how well CCA prepared them for the workplace:

Table 3.6
CCA Contribution to Employment

	Employed Career/Technical Program Graduates	Employed Transfer Program Graduates
Employment Related to CCA Program	54.8%	30.2%
CCA Enhanced Ability to Get/Keep Job	91.2%	88.5%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; VE-135 (Annual Survey of Graduated Students)

^a Survey of Graduates from 2010-11, conducted Spring 2012.

Among the challenges for meeting this portion of the mission statement have been finding an effective approach to collaborate with the state’s workforce centers, anticipating what fields will have job

openings when students graduate, locating sites for students to do their required practica, and finding professional development opportunities for faculty in industry. Overall, however, CCA programs and activities appear to be very consistent with this portion of the mission statement.

“Promote Excellence in Teaching and Learning”

CCA’s mission describes a commitment to promoting excellence in both teaching and learning. This commitment to excellence is reaffirmed in the College’s list of values. The College promotes high-quality teaching through recognition, professional development, a process of developing work plans and evaluating progress on those plans, and student course evaluations. Among the effective professional development activities in recent years have been workshops run by the assessment committee focused on student learning.

CCA recognizes excellence in teaching through annual awards. The Tom Brosh Award for Adjunct Faculty recognizes instructors who have at least five academic years of teaching at CCA and who have provided outstanding service to students and to the College. (*Resource Room Document 3.16*) The Dr. Linda and Roger Bowman award recognizes one or more members of the CCA faculty who have made a significant difference for CCA students. Those receiving these awards continue to be honored through posters with their photographs displayed around the College and plaques in the Administration Building listing the names of all those who have received the awards since their inception.

All regular faculty members submit annual work plans and are evaluated on those plans. Teaching is the most important section of those plans, the one to which 65 percent of effort is assigned. Adjunct faculty members have contracts and are also observed and evaluated by the chair of the department or by his or her representative. Students also evaluate instructors each semester.

To promote excellence from the beginning of each instructor’s employment at the College, CCA holds new faculty orientation prior to the start of the fall and spring semesters. The orientation sessions are followed later in the term by a mid-semester problem-solving session. (*Resource Room Document 3.17*)

In the CCCS survey in spring 2010, 90.4 percent of responding CCA students rated the content of their courses as very good or good. Respondents also rated as very good or good the faculty enthusiasm for the subject matter (91.2 percent), faculty knowledge of the subject

areas (89.6 percent%), faculty encouraging participation (88.8 percent), and fair and unbiased treatment of all students (88.0 percent).

CCA's Division of Instruction requires that students have the opportunity to evaluate their classes each semester. The process for collecting these evaluations has been automated so that department chairs and deans receive results much more quickly than in the past, allowing them to provide feedback to instructors and make decisions about class assignments for the next term. However, the automation was accompanied by a reduction in evaluation response rates, an issue addressed by instructional deans and chairs with considerable success, as shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7
Course Evaluation Response Rates

Semester	Sections with Evaluations	Student Completions
Fall 2009	53.7%	35.2%
Spring 2010	43.8%	31.5%
Fall 2010	66.3%	27.7%
Spring 2011	71.8%	27.1%
Fall 2011	62.1%	21.7%
Spring 2012	76.6%	36.6%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research

To promote excellence in learning, the College assesses student learning, both of the Lifelong Skills and of program content, and uses the assessment data to improve the quality of the education it offers. In 2011, the College president requested a review of assessment efforts with improvements suggested by an assessment working group. The College added a new position, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, to assist in implementing those improvements. CCA's assessment efforts are described fully in Chapter 6.

CCA also promotes excellence in learning through an honors program. Students who have completed six or more credits and who have a GPA of at least 3.25 work with instructors to develop honors project assignments which are submitted to department chairs for approval. If a student earns an A in the course and successfully completes the approved project, the College places an honors notation on the student's transcript for that course. (*Resource Room Document 3.18*)

Table 3.8
Student Honors Projects, FY2009-FY2012

Year	Completed Projects
FY2009	24
FY2010	22
FY2011	28
FY2012	35

SOURCE: CCA Honors Program

Excellence in learning is recognized at two luncheons each year. Student Success Awards, a recognition initiated by CCA faculty members, are given out each December. The CCA Foundation holds its annual scholarship event each April, inviting both donors and student recipients. Student excellence is also recognized by the student honor society, Phi Theta Kappa. To be eligible for society membership, students must be enrolled at CCA for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester and must have a grade-point average of 3.5. (*Resource Room Document 3.19*)

Specific initiatives, some spanning years and departments, demonstrate the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. Among the former are those that take a completely new approach to what was once called developmental education, but which at CCA is now the Academic Enrichment (AcE) Department. AcE, its successful innovations, and changes in developmental education are discussed in Chapter 5.

CCA also supports excellence in teaching and learning through the Student Success Center. The Center brings together the ASCENT program (fifth-year program for concurrent enrollment students), the First-Year Experience and Transitions program, the Scholar Support and Programming Office, and the TRiO Student Support Services program. The Center has developed a mission of promoting student success through dedicated support in an inclusive and authentic academic community, and a vision of providing leadership and opportunity for increased student access, success, and completion through innovative student success strategies.

Student Support Services

CCA's student support services are consistent with its mission statement, including the mission's emphasis on preparing students for a lifetime of education, workforce preparation, and service to a diverse

community. The College's student support services have grown significantly both in size and in sophistication over the last decade. Providing full services on the Lowry campus has been a major initiative which received a boost with the opening of new space for these services in the 2011 renovation of the North Quad. This space allows additional staffing at Lowry, including the Student Life staff, whose offices moved to the West Quad from the CentreTech campus in the summer of 2012.

To help ensure that students begin their CCA education with the knowledge about the institution and the higher education processes they need to succeed, the College began a required new-student orientation for all first-time College students in 2012. (*Resource Room Document 3.20*) Among the other supports for students are the testing center, the accessibility services office which arranges accommodations and assistive technology for students with disabilities, and tutoring to prepare students for their Accuplacer assessment test and help them do well in the classes in which they are enrolled. In November of 2010, the College also created a position to support student transitions that has since evolved into the First-Year Experience and Transitions programming.

The support for the mission's emphasis on workforce development is evident in the creation of a new position, the Coordinator of Career Services, with a mandate to develop and implement a comprehensive career services program for CCA students.

Support services for students at CCA reflect the diversity described in the College's mission statement. The College provides accessibility services including accommodations for eligible students and a range of assistive technology, an office serving veterans, an international student advisor, and a TRiO Student Support Services program that began in 2010.

Also reflecting the focus on diversity are the scholarships and related support programming administered through the Student Success Center, such as the Mile High United Way Pathways Scholarship program for low-income, first generation, African-American students from the metro Denver and Aurora service areas. For cohorts of students on these scholarships, the College provides research-based support such as targeted advising, early alert, orientation, and help in making social connections. Student retention data indicates the success of these services. For example, the Mile High United Way scholar cohorts have a 79 percent retention rate, the Latin American Education Foundation scholars have a 66 percent retention rate, and the Denver Scholarship Foundation scholars have a 50 percent retention rate. In

comparison, the overall retention rate for all scholarship students is 38.5 percent. (*Resource Room Document 3.21*)

The College’s enrollment profile is consistent with its mission statement.

CCA’s student body includes students of all ages, both preparing for and already participating in the workforce. The enrollment profile generally reflects that of the College’s service area, with several important exceptions. Reflecting its mission as an institution that provides lifelong education, CCA enrolls students who range in age from their mid-teens into their nineties. The growth of concurrent enrollment, which in the fall of 2012 accounted for nearly one out of every seven CCA students, has brought in many students of traditional high school age. All but two of the students attending concurrent enrollment classes in the high schools in the fall of 2012 were under age 19.

The CCA student profile reflects, and in some cases exceeds, the ethnic diversity of the surrounding community, as stated in the College mission statement. However, as with the age distribution, the overall distribution by ethnicity is influenced by concurrent enrollment as shown below in Table 3.9. Enrollment of Hispanic students outside of concurrent enrollment continues to lag, with issues of documentation and the relative youth of the population possible factors in that lag.

Table 3.9
Profile of CCA students by ethnicity, Fall 2012

	College Campuses	High School Campuses	Overall
White	41%	30%	39%
Black	28%	17%	27%
Hispanic	16%	34%	18%
Asian,/Pacific Islander	6%	9%	7%
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	3%	2%
Unknown	7%	8%	7%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; Cognos Mid-Term Data Extract, Fall 2012.

1.A. 3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

The College plans by developing strategic goals, which become its priorities. The current goals align well with the College's mission:

Goal 1: Increase student retention, completion, and transfer rates

Goal 2: Continually improve student learning

Goal 3: Increase student enrollment

Goal 4: Strengthen human resources

Goal 5: Strengthen the College's visibility and community relations

During the past four years, the College has budgeted additional resources to support the implementation of these strategic goals. For example, the Communications Department added a position in 2010 to coordinate social media, seen as an important means of increasing enrollment and strengthening College visibility. To support the strengthening of community relations, CCA added a Director of Strategic Partnerships and Resource Development. In developing the budget for the first phase of the Lowry renovation (opened in 2011), the focus of the work was on areas to serve students rather than on administrative offices or campus beautification.

Core Component 1. B. The Mission is Articulated Publicly.**1.B.1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.**

CCA makes its mission statement and related documents public through a variety of channels, as illustrated below. The web is now the primary focus of College communication to the public and when the College website was redone in 2009, the mission statement and related documents were given more prominence than they had on the previous website. The Communications Office occasionally asks students if they know the mission of the College on Facebook or Twitter.

Table 3.10
Location of Mission Statement and Related Documents

	Website	College Catalog	Posters	Bookmarks	Banners
Mission	X	X	X	X	
Vision	X				
Values	X	X		X	
Strategic Goals	X	X	X	X	
Lifelong Skills	X	X	X	X	X

SOURCE: CCA Office of Grants and Planning

CCA’s mission is also communicated informally to various constituencies. The College president, for example, regularly makes statements about the mission and goals in meetings and in directives to College personnel. The College and the CCA Foundation host presentations and events at which the College’s mission and goals are presented to the community both directly and indirectly.

1.B. 2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission.

The mission, vision, and values may be the least well-known and the most in need of a fresh look. The goals and Lifelong Skills have been addressed repeatedly in recent years in many venues. Perhaps because they are so well established, the mission, vision, and values have not received as much attention.

1.B.3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The mission and vision identify the nature of CCA’s programs and services. These are to be of the highest quality and focus on employment skills. Programs and services are for a constituency that is diverse, that expects learning to span their lifetimes, and that values learning not only in preparation for a career, but during that career. The constituency lives primarily in the College’s service area of Aurora and surrounding communities and is made up of people who have choices about where they enroll for their education. The scope of the mission focuses on job preparation and, somewhat surprisingly, does not explicitly mention transfer.

1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.**1.C.1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.**

The Community College of Aurora's mission statement specifically references "our diverse community." That use of "diversity" is deliberately broad, encompassing the obvious aspects of cultural and ethnic diversity; but, in addition, it engages diversity of socio-economic status, religion and faith, age, ability, academic preparation, gender identification, sexual orientation, political persuasion, and other differences. The College has aggressively and successfully embraced its role in the increasingly multicultural community of Aurora and its wider service area. Specific examples are given in the following section (1.C.2).

1.C.2 The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

The College has promoted a variety of activities over the last decade to attend to the diversity of its constituencies. Three major initiatives demonstrate this attention: Expanding concurrent enrollment to provide opportunities for the population now coming through the community's schools, developing the Aurora Language Center to serve the more than 100,000 Aurora residents who do not speak English at home, and globalization of the curriculum to bring international and multicultural perspectives to the entire College community. At the same time, in some areas, including the ethnic diversification of the College faculty and staff, CCA still faces challenges.

Concurrent Enrollment

CCA is committed to open access. The College expresses this commitment through strong support for concurrent enrollment, especially as a means for all college-ready students to have access to classes in the immediate semester and for the longer term, as more of them decide to continue their education at CCA. Concurrent enrollment is discussed more fully in Chapter 8, CCA's request for change in student population and for the approval of five new high school locations.

English-as-a-Second-Language Learners

The College Preparatory ESL Program at the CentreTech campus offers for-credit ESL courses that prepare students for college-level academic work. In the spring of 2011, 40 percent of the students were from east Africa, including 29 percent from Ethiopia, 4 percent from Somalia, and 4 percent from Sudan. (*Resource Room Document 3.22*) Another 8 percent were born in Mexico with the remainder of the enrollment coming from 70 countries. In 2006, for-credit ESL accounted for 2 percent of the College's total annual FTE; by 2011, the College doubled that program to 4 percent of the College's total FTE (and 6 percent of total unduplicated headcount). Out of 50 regular faculty positions at the College, three are in ESL, a pragmatic measure of the College's commitment to serving our diverse society.

The College's not-for-credit Community ESL Program (CESL) for adult learners is located on the Lowry campus close to neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrant and refugee households. CESL courses provide students with life-skills English, the specific language they need for success at work or in their daily lives, such as communicating with their children's teachers or making doctors' appointments. The country-of-origin with the highest number of students represented in the program has been Mexico, followed by Ethiopia. Students have come from more than 50 countries. While preparing adults to enter college has not been the primary focus, 130 CESL students matriculated into CCA between 2009 and 2011. (*Resource Room Document 3.23*)

Globalization of the Curriculum

Globalization of the curriculum has brought international and multicultural perspectives to the entire College. For instance, in the Performing Arts and Humanities, the faculty has added courses in Cross-Cultural Story Telling, Survey of World Music, and Survey of World Mythology. In the English Department, Survey of World Literature has replaced Survey of Western Literature. In History, the College no longer offers the Western Civilization survey courses, instead offering the surveys of World Civilization. In Anthropology and ESL, faculty members have introduced "BaFa, BaFa," a cross-cultural communication simulation, as a standard component of the curriculum. Anthropology has also created and deployed Cultural Anthropology Monopoly (the rules vary for different cultures) as a content module.

The Theatre Department has also explored themes of diversity. In the fall of 2008, Theatre faculty member Stacey D'Angelo interviewed

students, and from their life stories wrote and produced *Glimpses: Portraits of the Soul*, presenting student insights on navigating a multicultural world. The play was selected as the showcase performance for the 2009 Rocky Mountain Theatre Association annual conference. The spring 2010 production was *ANON(ymous)* by Naomi Iizuka, a re-telling of Homer's *Odyssey* which further examined cultural differences, and the fall 2010 production was *Romeo and Juliet – Reinterpreted*, in which the divide between the Montagues and Capulets was based on hearing and deaf cultures, with shadow interpretation for all actors. In 2012, following the Aurora movie theater shooting in which four CCA students died, the Theatre Department produced *Glimpses: The Rising Dawn...A Community Stands United*, another series of stories of CCA's diverse community. **(Resource Room Document 3.24)**

As part of its professional development for globalization of the curriculum, CCA sent a total of four faculty members on the Council on International Educational Exchange's International Faculty Development Seminars in 2008 (South Africa, Chile and Argentina) and 2009 (China, Senegal). Sending faculty on these seminars was dropped as of 2010.

Diversifying Faculty and Staff

In some areas, CCA has not met the challenges of diversity to the degree that many would hope, although the College's faculty and staff have grown considerably in recent years. In 2005-06, CCA employed a total of 95 full-time faculty and staff. In 2011-12, the total of full-time faculty and staff had increased to 203. The number of part-time employees also grew over the same six years, but by a much lower percentage, with 327 part-time in 2006-07 and 395 in 2011-12.

In contrast to this overall growth during this six-year period, the percentage of the total workforce that was white, non-Hispanic increased from 77.9 percent to 81.3 percent. This change was in marked contrast to the changes in the student body, which has become non-white. While the percentage of workforce that was Hispanic increased from 3.6 percent to 6.4 percent over the six years, the percentage that was African American (non-Hispanic) *decreased* from 8.3 percent to 7.0 percent as did the percentage that was Asian/Pacific Islander, from 3.6 to 3.2 percent. Over the same years, the portion of the workforce that was female decreased from 51.7 percent to 49.8 percent.

Community Efforts

CCA participates in community-wide efforts that promote diversity, particularly in the City of Aurora's Original Aurora Renewal (OAR) area, the older section of the city in north Aurora, close to the College's Lowry campus. The OAR area, the center of the city 50 years ago, is poor and diverse, with high crime and unemployment rates, but with economic development and employment opportunities owing to the conversion of the former Fitzsimons military hospital into the largest healthcare and health education complex in the Rocky Mountain area.

1. D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

CCA's mission is focused on the public good: providing lifelong educational opportunities, preparing the present and future workforce, and emphasizing that the teaching, learning, and service for the diverse Aurora and service area community are of the highest quality. The origins of the College as an institution demanded and fostered by a growing suburban/urban community that did not have its own higher education institution have solidified this commitment.

1. D.1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

That the College serves the public, not just itself, is widely assumed and regularly practiced at CCA. The institution's growth at Lowry, its decision to invest in concurrent enrollment, and the design of its schedule are three examples of CCA's commitment to its educational obligation to the public.

Over the last two decades, CCA's presence at the former Lowry Air Force Base has grown from offering a few classes to Lowry's current status as a campus of the same size and importance as CentreTech. CCA has had no "main" campus for a number of years and actively discourages the use of the term. Lowry, while offering CCA space to grow, comes with significant challenges. The buildings and infrastructure, such as streets and drainage, are from the era when Lowry was an aging Air Force base.

Developing the campus has required a major commitment of resources and flexibility on the part of faculty and staff. Lowry is surrounded by neighborhoods that have low education levels, substantial poverty,

high crime rates, and that continue to change ethnically, linguistically, and culturally, as shown below in Table 3.11. CCA is committed to the public good of making the campus a center of opportunity and excellence as exemplified in the College's current "Transforming Lowry, Transforming Lives" initiative.

Table 3.11
Characteristics of population near CCA Lowry Campus

	1-mile radius	3-mile radius	5-mile radius
Families Below Poverty Level	32.3%	19.1%	15.9%
Median Age	29.6	33.8	35.0
Housing Renter Occupied	56.4%	46.0%	46.3%
Language Other than English at Home	47.7%	10.7%	19.7%
Median Household Income	\$45,154	\$53,271	\$54,393
Per-Capita Income	\$20,795	\$27,969	\$30,462

SOURCE: City of Aurora Planning Office; City-Data.com; U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

Another example of CCA's focus on the public good is the College's strong commitment to concurrent enrollment. Bringing the opportunity to enroll in college classes to qualified students in area high schools has required extensive efforts of department chairs, faculty members, and the student affairs staff. Additional College departments have also contributed to the concurrent enrollment efforts. For example, during the summer of 2012 the library staff worked to make access to the CCA library materials easier for high school students.

A third example of CCA's commitment to the public good is the College's course schedule. CCA does not offer highly specialized courses that are scheduled because they are of interest to those who propose to teach them. Rather, the schedule contains the courses that students need, run at times convenient to them, and scheduled conservatively so as to avoid inconveniencing students with cancelled classes. The growth of fully online and hybrid courses has helped with this effort, as have an extensive schedule of night and Saturday classes, ensuring that course offerings match what students need to complete their degrees or certificates.

Finally, many specific decisions reflect the College's commitment to fulfilling its obligation to the public, even when those decisions have required time and resource commitments. These include the establishment of the Integrated Nursing Pathways program with the

University of Colorado, the re-opening of the Diesel Program in the summer of 2012 with long-time partner Wagner Equipment Company, and the training provided over the years for the Transportation Security Administration. A range of departments and programs provide their resources to the community. The Learning Resource Center at CentreTech, for example, opens its doors to members of the public who want to use the Center's computers, and the library is negotiating with the Aurora Public Library (APL) to make the CCA library a location for pickup of APL holds.

1. D.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

As a public, open-access community college, CCA has no investors to whom it provides financial returns, makes no contributions to a related or parent organization, and does not support external interests. The College's public educational responsibility comes first. CCA's commitment to this responsibility can be seen in how it works to improve assessment of student learning, judges programs on their importance to the community as well as on their financial status, develops a schedule based on student needs rather than on the generation of maximum revenue, and strives for excellence in new initiatives.

CCA evaluates existing and potential programs in both Instruction and Student Affairs to justify their continuation or implementation. While financial considerations are important in these evaluations, they are not the sole criterion for making a programmatic decision. For example, the College continues to offer Early Childhood Education (ECE) because ECE serves a public good. Children, parents, and providers in Aurora and the surrounding area are served by the teachers educated at the College. Likewise, the Emergency Medical Services program, which is expensive to offer relative to many other College programs, is not judged solely on its cost-effectiveness. CCA's service area benefits from having trained emergency medical personnel and from the ongoing training available to first responders through the EMS program and the Center for Simulation.

The design of CCA's program and course offerings also demonstrates the primacy of the College's educational responsibilities. Offering only transfer courses requiring no specialized equipment or facilities would offer the maximum financial benefit to the institution; however, CCA designs its offerings based on student and community needs with a mixture of low-cost and higher-cost programs.

Even as it seeks to meet student and community needs, the College, led by its faculty, takes seriously the responsibility to make sure the programs it offers are of high quality. As concurrent enrollment has expanded, the faculty has demanded that College courses taught in the high schools be equivalent in quality and rigor to courses taught on campus. College faculty members, with backing of instructional administrators, have denied College credit when a course did not meet the quality and rigor expected of CCA course offerings. The faculty has also led a push for more guaranteed transfer courses, promoted the implementation of degrees with designation, and worked with CTE programs and their advisory committees to ensure relevance and currency. Faculty and staff participation in day-to-day campus events, class field trips, tutoring, and many other activities also contribute to program quality and students' positive experiences.

1. D.3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

CCA engages with identified external constituencies and communities of interest and regularly responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow. Over the past decade CCA has had a strong commitment to community engagement, led by the president, CCA Foundation, and numerous programs and individuals. Faculty and staff regularly participate in the Aurora community. At the same time, the history of the College as one established by the community has meant there are individuals, businesses, and institutions who expect to collaborate with the College and participate willingly in initiatives and activities.

A good deal of CCA's engagement with constituencies and communities focuses on determining how the College's instructional programs and courses can serve the community's needs, what new programs CCA may need to initiate, and what changes should be made in existing offerings. The requirement that all regular faculty members have community involvement as part of their annual work plans and that occupational programs all have industry advisory boards are two of the more formal aspects of this work.

Student Life operated a student food bank for several years but it had to be discontinued prior to the 2012-13 year due to resource issues. However, the Student Life staff continues to work with students to provide opportunities for service and volunteerism to our surrounding communities including working at community food banks and conducting food drives on campus.

The institution, College units, students, and individual faculty and staff members engage with the community in a wide range of activities. Some of these are listed below.

Participation in Community Leadership:

- Several employees participate in the Aurora Chamber's year-long Leadership Aurora training each year;
- Membership on boards and in organizations such as the Aurora Chamber, the Aurora Economic Development Council, Downtown Aurora Visual Arts, and the board of Arapahoe-Douglas Works (local workforce center);
- Long-time participation in the North Aurora Weed and Seed Project (federal crime prevention grant);
- Participation on planning and community groups such as the City of Aurora's Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemorative Committee; and
- Student engagement in service learning activities in the community for courses such as Intercultural Communication.

Use of College Space by Community Organizations:

- State Legislators for community presentations;
- Aurora Water for its annual Water Day that brings hundreds of youth to campus;
- Charter schools (housed and collaborated with several of them);
- Arapahoe-Douglas Works (housed some offices for three years);
- Team preparing to work security at the 2008 presidential inauguration trained in the police academy gym at Lowry; and
- Various training sessions for community groups.

Emergency Response Community, Public Safety, and Homeland Security:

- Operation Mountain Guardian and other large simulations to train first responders and law enforcement;
- Training of air marshals for the Transportation Security Administration; and
- Credit for prior learning for first responders (EMS, fire, police) to assist them as they return to CCA for college degrees.

Service to Veterans and the Military:

- *Greatest Generation* video produced; now in the Library of Congress.

Service to Underserved and Underrepresented:

- Tax Preparation Project;
- City of Aurora – gang initiative;
- Downtown Aurora Visual Arts/Arts District;
- Jobs Task Force at height of recession;
- Low-cost citizenship and ESL classes;
- Open-entry computer classes started when recession hit;
- Blood drives;
- Highline Canal cleanup;
- 9News health fair host;
- Colorado Taskforce for Higher Education for Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth; and
- Colorado Coalition for the Educational Advancement of Latinos.

Service to K-12 Education (in addition to concurrent enrollment):

- Assistance with pathway and curriculum development;
- Participation in Aurora Lights, a health career pathways project with Aurora Public Schools and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus;
- Math Day for Girls;
- School counselor breakfasts;
- Biotechnology training for high school teachers with NSF grant; and
- International Day of the Girl.

Formal Recognition by the Community of CCA's Role

The community recognizes the integral role CCA plays in Aurora and surrounding areas. The City of Aurora's current Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the city council, includes several pages about the College (Chapter IV, Section M) describing CCA's mission and its facilities, programs, and new initiatives in Aurora. The plan states support for CCA to provide a full range of post-secondary and adult-education opportunities, for the CCA Foundation's efforts to build philanthropic and private foundation support for CCA, and for the College to provide educational opportunities in the southern portions of Aurora. (*Resource Room Document 3.25*)

The City of Aurora's Community Development Division's 2012 Action Plan also includes CCA in several areas. The plan states that the College is one of a group of partners helping to strengthen the economic vitality of the community. Tasks to help reach the goal include English language acquisition, job skills development, and

employment linkages. CCA is also included as one of the agencies helping to enhance the economic vitality of the community through the support of the resident workforce. Among the activities are training, language, and skill development for low-income residents. (*Resource Room Document 3.26*)

Strengths:

- The College has a mission statement and related documents which are relatively well understood and accepted and which provide guidance to College operations. That mission statement was developed and adopted through a participatory process which included administrators, staff, faculty, students, and community members.
- The College offers a high-quality learning environment in both general education and occupational programs.
- Faculty and staff have a strong commitment to the College and to the community as evidenced by a long list of events and involvements.
- CCA serves an increasingly diverse student population.

Challenges:

- The mission statement and related documents have not been reviewed or renewed in more than a decade, even as the College and community have changed. The mission statement, for instance, allows for, but does not specifically mention, preparing students for transfer.
- The addition of new positions, personnel turnover, and the large number of adjunct faculty members all challenge a broad and deep understanding of the mission and related documents.
- The relative lack of diversity of the faculty and staff may make it difficult for them to connect with students and their lives and experiences.
- Many faculty members are not fully cognizant of the details and meaning of the Academic Freedom policy.

Opportunities:

- The College can revisit the mission statement and related documents to consider needed updates and revisions.
- The Instructional Division has formed a Faculty Diversity Hiring Task Team to proactively work to diversify the makeup of its regular faculty members.

- The College can provide professional development to help the faculty and staff understand CCA's diverse students.

Chapter 4 Integrity Ethical and Responsible Conduct

Criterion Two: The Community College of Aurora acts with integrity: its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Introduction:

This chapter focuses on the integrity of the College's operations and relationships with its various constituencies. It presents evidence and discusses core components of Criterion Two relating to financial, academic, and personnel functions, and addresses policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. The Self-Study Working Group on Integrity helped to gather and analyze information for the chapter.

Core Component 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, and personnel functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Financial

The Community College of Aurora's (CCA or the College) budgeting and financial monitoring procedures ensure integrity in fiscal affairs. Budgeting is conducted by the College leadership, and monitoring of expenditures within the College follows Colorado Community College System (CCCS or the System) procedures. The College controller meets monthly with the financial staff of CCCS to share information and receive updates on policies and procedures in order to ensure the College is in compliance for financial reporting. Each year the College is audited by an external firm.

The Leadership Council (called the President's Cabinet until August 2012) is comprised of the senior leadership of the College, including vice presidents, associate vice president, deans, and directors, and meets bi-weekly. This body is responsible for budget allocations. The College has historically used a "base plus" budgeting model. In this model, the Leadership Council creates an initial budget by starting with the previous year's budget and then adjusts for external mandates and specific internal College decisions relative to personnel, operating costs, etc. The Leadership Council develops the budget based on a complete record of expenses to date and projected for the remainder of the year, previous years' histories, and plans and initiatives that promote the College's Strategic Goals. (*Resource Room Document 4.1*)

As the Administrative Services, Instructional, and Student Affairs units prepare for the year's budgeting process, deans and department

directors may request additional funding through their vice president. College initiatives are ranked on a number of criteria which take into consideration strategic priorities, return on investment, and other factors. The Executive Leadership Team then adjusts and adopts the final budget based on proposed revenue and expenditures and includes as many of the ranked initiatives as budget projections allow. This system makes incremental changes and seeks to link the budget process to College initiatives.

The College endeavors to continually improve its ability to respond to budgetary needs across the College. Currently, the Academic Affairs Executive Council is developing a more formal process for instructional budgeting, linked to the new program review process discussed in Chapter 5.

Colorado's state budget is severely constrained by a series of state constitutional amendments, effectively limiting the state legislature's discretionary funding decisions to roads and bridges, corrections, and higher education. One of those constitutional amendments, the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), is the most restrictive tax measure in the nation, stipulating that state revenues in excess of a floating measure must be refunded to the taxpayers. From 1997 to 2007, higher education's share of the state budget dropped from 14.6 percent to 10.1 percent.

In an attempt to ease some of the financial squeeze on higher education funding and to improve access to higher education for low-income and under-represented students, the state enacted a new funding system in 2004, known as the College Opportunity Fund (COF). COF essentially redistributes state appropriations for higher education directly to resident undergraduate students by creating a stipend that can be used to help defray tuition costs at the student's school of choice. COF is available to students who have resided in Colorado for one year, and to veterans with an honorable discharge and a DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), regardless of length of residency. Students do not directly access COF funds; rather, they designate which school they wish to attend and their COF stipend is applied to their tuition bill. Each semester's class schedule lists a student's total cost of education, with and without the COF stipend, so students can see clearly how COF affects their tuition and fees.

Table 4.1 illustrates the redistribution of state funding that has occurred since the creation of COF, resulting in the elimination of direct state appropriations and an increase in COF-funded tuition revenue.

Table 4.1
Changes in distribution of revenues

	FY2001	FY2006	FY2011
State Appropriations	6,679,821	0	0
Tuition & Fee Revenues	5,397,289	12,068,371	17,658,119
State Grants & Contracts ^a	1,024,413	3,161,534	3,907,994
Federal Grants & Contracts ^b	1,670,180	4,137,145	11,330,857
Other Sources	1,814,229	1,597,870	1,627,640
Total College Revenues	16,585,932	20,964,920	34,524,610
As a Percentage of Total Revenue			
State Appropriations	40.4%	0%	0%
Tuition & Fees	32.5%	57.6%	51.0%

SOURCE: CCA Budget; CCA Financial Affairs.

NOTE: In 2005, the Colorado legislature created student stipends which transferred funding from State appropriations to student tuition reimbursements.

^a Includes State-supported scholarships.

^b Includes PELL grants.

The Leadership Council finalizes the College budget after the Colorado General Assembly passes the annual state budget in mid-May and the General Assembly allocates funds to COF. Though no state appropriations go directly to the community colleges, the General Assembly sets the ceiling for tuition increases, and the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) then sets tuition rates. Groups outside the College also make decisions that affect CCA expenditures, such as compensation levels for state classified employees. Thus, the overall College revenue budget is mostly determined externally.

CCA conducts its financial affairs utilizing internal and external systems of checks and balances. The College maintains all of its financial records according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Generally Accepted Government Accounting Principles. The College is subject to an annual audit by the Colorado State Auditor as part of the audit of the CCCS. The state auditor contracts with KPMG, a national CPA firm, to perform this audit. The state auditor then forwards the report to the Legislative Audit Committee, which releases it to the public. These annual audits ensure integrity. (*Resource Room Document 4.2*) CCA makes its budgets, audits, financial statements and other financial information available to the public. Those who would like the information may make a request to the vice president for administrative services after the state Legislature releases the information. To this extent, the College is open and transparent in its financial administration; however, posting

the budget, audits, and financial statements on the College website would make this information more easily accessible.

Beginning in summer 2012, CCCS adopted a new Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) system to track and pay regular and adjunct faculty members. The system employs multiple levels of authorization and approval to verify salary levels and contract payments. Through this system, administrators, regular, and adjunct faculty members can see exactly what they are being paid, for what, and when. The FLAC initiative is extremely labor-intensive and presents an important challenge to the College. Even though the College hired four employees to help administer the new system, FLAC also requires significant time from staff at multiple levels to regularly prepare and approve payroll.

Academics

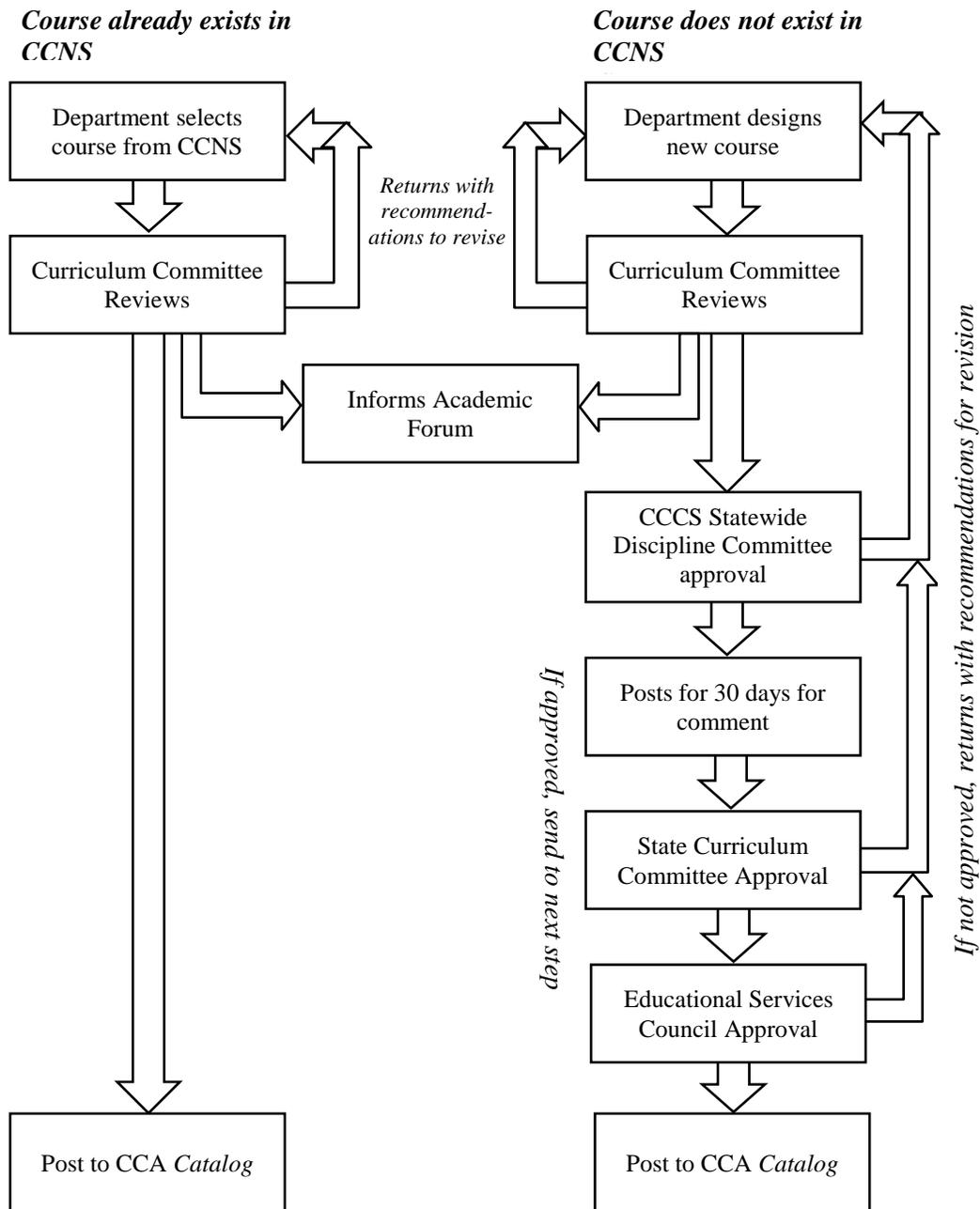
The College is committed to academic integrity, as is CCCS. Operating within the policies of CCCS, and drawing upon the CCCS as a resource, the College ensures the quality of instruction through a variety of means.

In order to standardize outcomes and content for community college courses, CCCS has established the Colorado Community College Common Course Numbering System (CCNS). The CCNS includes all courses taught both at community colleges and at area technical schools. The two non-system local-district community colleges (Colorado Mountain College and Aims Community College) have matched their courses to the CCNS as well. Each course listing includes credit hours, a course description, expected competencies, and a course outline along with a listing of all CCCS colleges offering that course. Every course taught must meet at least 80 percent of the listed competencies. This system helps ensure a common experience for all students, facilitates transfer across CCCS, and streamlines the evaluation to all Colorado public colleges and universities. Also, the CCNS allows a CCCS college to import an existing course from the statewide listings so that the college can expand its offerings without having to build a new course “from scratch.”

Faculty members drive the College’s curriculum. A department desiring the addition of a course to the College *Catalog* either selects a course from the CCNS, or designs the new course in consultation with the department chair (at CCA, chairs are regular faculty members on twelve-month contracts). The department then submits the proposed new course to the faculty Curriculum Committee, which approves it as submitted or recommends changes. The Curriculum Committee also informs the College’s Academic Forum of the new or revised course.

The associate vice president of instruction adds the course to the catalog. If the course is entirely new, the vice president of instruction submits the course to the CCCS office. After approval by the appropriate Statewide Discipline group, the course is posted for thirty days on an electronic bulletin board and then advances to the State Faculty Curriculum Committee (SFCC), comprised of two faculty members from each college. If approved by the SFCC, it advances to the Educational Services Council, comprised of the chief academic officer of each college, and, if approved there, becomes a new commonly described course. This intensive process ensures the quality of each course.

Figure 4.1
 Flowchart of how a course is approved and enters the Common Course Numbering System



To simplify transfer between colleges (whether two-year to two-year or two-year to four-year) the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) has organized a faculty-driven structure of Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (gtPathways), in which selected courses are certified to transfer, even in isolation from a degree. All gtPathways courses at the community college level are in CCNS; not all CCNS courses also qualify as gtPathways courses. The College is able to nominate a CCNS course for gtPathways status, after approval by the College Curriculum Committee.

To approve a gtPathways course, CCCS office submits the proposed course to a faculty Statewide Discipline Chair for review by all the regular faculty members in the state in that discipline. Upon approval by those faculty members, the Statewide Discipline Chair submits the course to SFCC, where it is reviewed by a working group of two-year and four-year and university faculty members. If approved at that level, it continues on to the Guaranteed Transfer Council (comprised of two-year/four-year/university senior faculty and deans) for final approval. Again, this measured process ensures the consistency and quality of each course, so both students and receiving institutions know the content and skills mastered in each course.

Academic integrity is also dependent upon the quality of the instruction. At the College, regular and adjunct faculty members for occupational programs must have a master's degree in their discipline or a closely related discipline, or the appropriate industry-specific professional certification. That certification has been ensured by the associate vice president of instruction. Effective January 2013, career and technical certification will be ensured by the dean of health sciences, public safety, and Lowry campus.

In general education courses, all instructors at the College must have a master's degree (or higher) in their disciplines, or a master's degree in some area plus eighteen graduate hours in the discipline in which they teach. The Human Resources department obtains official transcripts for verification. That standard is confirmed upon hire by department chairs.

The College provides instructors with a model syllabus which serves as a template upon which each course syllabus is based. (*Resource Room Document 4.3*) Every semester, both the department chair and the department's administrative assistant check all class syllabi to verify that all components are present. Model syllabus components include course description, competencies and outcomes, and a content outline to accord with CCNS. In addition, a syllabus must include

college policies regarding academic integrity, Lifelong Skills, and accessibility services.

Supervisors observe every instructor. Most faculty members are observed by either their department chair or discipline coordinator. Online courses are observed by department chairs and by the staff of the Office of Online Learning. Concurrent enrollment faculty members are observed by their department chair or their concurrent enrollment coordinator. Regardless of mode of delivery, students have the opportunity to evaluate every course, anonymously and electronically. That feedback is supplied to faculty members and instructors, as well as deans and department chairs, after grades are posted but before the next semester, in time to modify syllabi if necessary.

The College's assessment program gathers information on student acquisition of Lifelong Skills as well as discipline-specific content, and departments use that information to design and re-design instruction to enhance student learning. The College's assessment process is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

Every course at the College uses DesireToLearn (D2L) as a course management platform. The D2L sections are password-protected. Email communication and grade information are managed within that protection, ensuring FERPA compliance.

CCA has clear and transparent guidelines established for grading, classroom management, and the use and development of syllabi and curriculum. These documents are available to students and faculty on the CCA website as separate pages, and in the *Catalog* and the *Student Code of Conduct*. (**Resource Room Document 4.4**) The College has established and published a "model syllabus" that explains grading procedures.

Online courses follow a common rubric based on criteria from the Quality Matters rubric, an industry standard developed by MarylandOnline. (**Resource Room Document 4.5**)

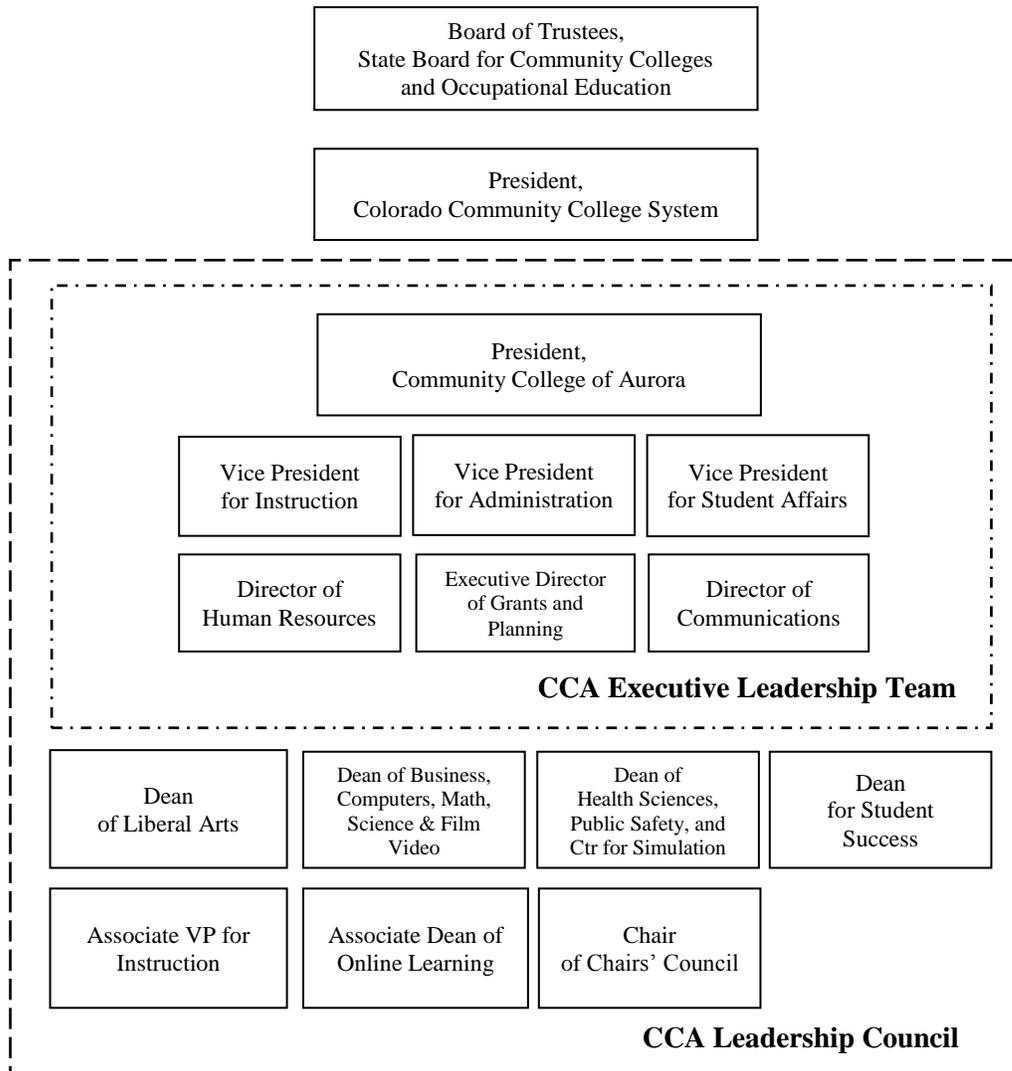
Personnel

The College complies with applicable federal and state laws pertaining to human resources and follows applicable laws governing hiring and termination.

The College president reports to the president of the Colorado Community College System, who reports to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE).

Reporting directly to the CCA president are the three vice presidents and the directors of the Communications Office, the Grants and Planning Office, and the Human Resources Office. That group makes up the Executive Leadership Team, the strategic management lead for the College. The Executive Leadership Team, with the addition of the academic deans, the associate vice president of instruction, the associate dean of online learning, and the dean of student success, together form the Leadership Council, the body responsible for institutional leadership and policy development. Each vice president leads one of the College’s three units: Instruction, Student Affairs, and Administrative Services.

Figure 4.2
Visual representation of Executive Leadership Team and the Leadership Council



The College uses the following regular employee categories: faculty, administrator (exempt), technical/professional (also exempt), and classified. Classified employees are part of a statewide system governed by the State of Colorado, which has oversight for this category of employees. The State of Colorado has recently conducted a study of Colorado classified employee compensation as compared to regional and national norms, and is currently analyzing gaps or variances. Classified employees have not received a raise since 2008; however, the Governor recommended a 3 percent pool for raises for classified employees in his November 1, 2012 budget message. All regular faculty and classified and exempt staff are eligible for health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance. All nonstudent employees, including adjuncts, participate in PERA and are eligible to participate in various tax-sheltered annuity plans (401K, 403b, 457). PERA members contribute a fixed percentage of their salary to the retirement trust fund and employers contribute a percentage of pay to the trust fund. PERA is a substitute for Social Security for many Colorado public employees.

In addition to regular employees, in fall 2012 the College employed 373 adjunct faculty members, temporary employees who teach roughly 77 percent of the credit hours. With only 50 regular faculty positions, the regular-to-adjunct faculty member ratio is 1:7.5. Adjunct faculty members receive no benefits except for membership in the Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA). The College has three levels of adjunct faculty pay, based on semester hours taught and professional development, ranging from \$665 - \$765 per credit hour. At present, College adjunct faculty members can teach no more than 25 credits in fall/spring combined, and a maximum of 10 credits more in the summer. Thus, an adjunct faculty member at the top of the pay scale, teaching 11 three-credit courses in a calendar year, can earn a maximum of \$25,245. Despite this circumstance, the adjunct faculty members are strongly committed to the College and its students. Adjunct faculty members indicate this in their response to College surveys. For example, in an adjunct-only survey in 2008, where 1 meant “strongly disagree” and 4 indicated “strong agreement,” the respondents averaged a score of 3.74 for the item “I feel that my job is important” and 3.69 for the item “I like my job.” (*Resource Room Document 4.6*)

CCA’s hiring practices emphasize participation by co-workers, immediate and higher levels of management, and persons with diverse perspectives. Consequently, the process tends to be thorough and comprehensive, with a history of good results. Hiring has usually been competitive, and, except for a few exceptional direct-appointments, has solicited applications from a regional or national pool. Effective July 2013, President Alton Scales has established that the College’s

standard practice will be to advertise positions nationally. Positions are advertised through higherjobs.com, and through the *Denver Post* (which runs nationally online). In addition, Human Resources publishes openings in media targeting diverse populations.

All regular College employees (those receiving benefits) receive an orientation and have professional development opportunities available from in-house programs. Employees can take professional development courses offered by instructional units, the Human Resources Department, and the CCCS office.

The College has always been aggressive about paying adjuncts in a timely manner, and has frequently paid the adjuncts one entire pay cycle earlier than other CCCS colleges. The new FLAC process has standardized this pay process system-wide. When an employee does not get paid due to College oversight or error, the College runs a special payroll cycle to get the missing check to the employee in a timely manner.

Through the College Foundation, regular College employees working at least half-time in a benefit-eligible position may take up to nine credit hours tuition-free at CCA, per academic year. Adjunct faculty may take up to six credits per year without paying tuition. That benefit can be transferred to dependent children, a spouse, a parent, or a sibling. In addition, CCCS offers a tuition-reimbursement plan in which employees and dependents eligible for insurance benefits can be reimbursed up to 12 credit hours per semester, with a maximum of 24 credit hours per year, per Board Policy 3-60. (***Resource Room Document 4.7***) For the CCCS plan, the courses must be job related, applicable to a degree, or career enhancing, and may be taken at any of the System's thirteen colleges. Employees take the classes on their own time or, if the class is relevant to their job and their supervisor approves, on paid time.

Employees in administrative, professional-technical, classified, regular and limited faculty positions are eligible to participate in insurance plans, which include health, dental, life, and vision insurance. In addition, these staff members are eligible to accrue leave time, including four hours per month of K-12 leave (leave to volunteer at any of the state's participating public/private schools).

Unique in CCCS, the College department chairs are faculty members on 12-month contracts. In CCCS, faculty members do not receive vacation time, so the College established a 12-month faculty leave program to provide those faculty members on 12-month contracts with personal leave similar to that of exempt employees.

Supervisors administer a performance evaluation for each administrator, professional/technical/classified employee, and regular faculty member. The evaluations are based upon a previously agreed-upon work plan that outlines goals and objectives, employee self-appraisals, and supervisors' overall assessment of the employee's goals, accomplishments, and performance of job duties. Each unit determines the details of its evaluation process. In years in which funding is available for raises, the ratings are linked to compensation through separate salary pools for administrators, technical/professional staff, and faculty. Beginning in 2012, CCCS has adopted a program of 360° evaluations of all members of Leadership Council, with input from peers and subordinates as well as supervisors. In 2013, CCCS is adopting a simplified program for faculty evaluations. And, beginning in 2012, SBCCOE has mandated a five-year program to raise faculty salaries incrementally to bring them up to a national average.

The College does not operate any Auxiliaries.

Core Component 2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control and accreditation relationships.

CCA's extensive website is its primary means of communication to the public. The public has access to relevant CCA procedures as well as complete information about College people and programs. Printed documents such as brochures and catalogs refer the public to the website for more information. Each semester's *Schedule*, produced in print and replicated online, includes information on tuition and fees, add/drop procedures, registration and advising, and withdrawal deadlines. (*Resource Room Document 4.8*)

Withdrawal deadlines, both with and without refunds, are listed in all course syllabi. Phone numbers for all department chairs and administrative assistants are listed with each course prefix in the *Schedule*.

Programs

The CCA website contains program information including, but not limited to: departments, programs, class schedules, online learning, degrees and certificates, and transfer options. The *Catalog*, accessible as a printed document and through the website, contains program and contact data for all students in need of more information. Departments update all specific semester schedule information and provide it to the College Communications Department each semester for dissemination

to the community. The “Departments” link on the website lists all programs in detail.

Degree Requirements

Requirements for all degrees and certificates are found online as well as in the print *Catalog*. The College conforms to commonly accepted standards for program length and requirements. Students can run their own degree check from the student page on the College website (tracked through the Degree Works program), and find the deadlines for application for graduation. The College no longer levies a fee for applying for graduation or transcripts.

Costs

All costs associated with student enrollment, tuition, and fees can be found on the website’s “Tuition & Fees” page and in the *Schedule*. The website also has links to financial aid, contacting financial aid staff, a “Paying for College” page, and a video on the process of paying for College. Although the College’s bookstore is a third-party vendor, cost information for required class materials is available on the CCA Bookstore’s website, which is searchable from the College’s website.

Faculty and Staff

CCA offers information about its faculty on department pages on the website. The Faculty Profiles page highlights specific faculty from the College. It is updated periodically.

Regular and adjunct faculty members’ academic credentials are printed in the College *Catalog*. Faculty and staff profiles are continuously being updated by the College Communications Department.

Accreditation Relationships

Accreditation relationships are listed on the College website under “About the College.” The College outlines its relationship with and recent reports to the Higher Learning Commission on this page and has posted the Mark of Affiliation which links directly to CCA’s accreditation information on the HLC website. Also described are the College’s two programs with external accreditation: Emergency Medical Services and Paralegal. The EMS program is directly accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (COAEMSP); COAEMSP in turn is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The Paralegal

program is accredited by the American Bar Association. (*Resource Room Document 4.9*)

Articulation Agreements

To further protect students' investments in their education, beginning in 2011, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) authorized Degrees with Designation which function as statewide transfer articulation agreements. These degrees "identify the courses a student at a Colorado public community college must complete as part of an associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS) degree to be guaranteed to be able to complete a bachelor's degree program (BA or BS) at any Colorado public four-year college or university that offers that bachelor's degree program." A student earning an AA in History, for instance, is guaranteed acceptance with junior standing in a four-year school's BA in History program and can complete that BA in sixty more hours. These are not new degrees: the transcript and diploma indicate an AA or AS degree "with a concentration in..." The Degrees with Designation are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

With the addition of Degrees with Designation, CCCS has modified the Banner student information system to add a field to track declared designations. For the first time, faculty can identify students intending to "major" in specific disciplines and work with them to understand career goals and advise them on course selection. The Degrees with Designation also help guide the College in planning for additional regular faculty positions to provide leadership in the various designations.

Transfer credit relationships are explained in full on the "Transfer Options" section of the website.

In addition to the statewide articulations established by the Degrees with Designation, the College has formal "three plus one" articulations with two accredited, private, non-profit universities: Regis University and Columbia College-Denver. In these articulations, students can complete their first three years of instruction at CCA and then finish a bachelor's degree in one additional year at the four-year school. Also, the University of Colorado-Denver guarantees admission to any community college student who graduates with an AA or AS degree.

Security

The College provides all prospective students and CCA employees with the Campus Security Policies and Procedures and the most recent campus crime statistics in the Annual Security Report. This is part of the Federal Law No. 101-542, the Student Right-to-Know and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus

Crime Statistics Act of 1999 (formerly the Campus Security Act of 1990). The annual security report for each campus is available on the CCA Homepage; paper copies are also available. The daily crime logs are available at the Security Office on each campus and posted on the CCA website. (*Resource Room Documents 4.10 and 4.11*)

2.C. – The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to insure its integrity.

State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education

The College operates within the framework of a larger state community college system, and many of its foundational policies and procedures are developed and overseen by that larger entity. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) is the state policy and coordinating board for Colorado's public higher education system. The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE), which controls the 13 state system community colleges in Colorado, governs the Community College of Aurora. SBCCOE is the central policy and coordinating board for all system community colleges and establishes policy on legislative, academic, and fiscal matters.

The legal authority of the board is defined in Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201: *"There is hereby established a state system of community and technical colleges, which shall be under the management and jurisdiction of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education."* The SBCCOE's duties include control of physical facilities (if built by the state), tuition and fees, appointment of college presidents, review and approval of curriculum, and transfer articulation. The Board also must approve capital budget requests, allocation of funds, and formal academic programs.

The SBCCOE is a nine-member lay board appointed to four-year terms by the Governor of Colorado and confirmed by the Colorado Senate. Two non-voting members represent students and faculty from the state system community colleges. The governor appoints one board member from each congressional district in Colorado and three at large.

The State Board establishes foundational policies, which are administered by the CCCS president and by the college presidents. The policies may direct the presidents to develop common procedures by which to affect those policies; those procedures in turn can be

subdivided for complex issues. Beyond that, each college enjoys considerable autonomy in how it implements those measures.

Community College of Aurora Foundation

The Community College of Aurora Foundation serves a different function at the College than is true for the foundations that support the other CCCS colleges. For example, at the CCA's CentreTech campus, the Foundation is the College's landlord.

Since CCA was established as a "college without walls," classes were initially held in various facilities throughout the area. Within a few years, however, the need for permanent facilities became apparent. In 1985, the CCA Foundation was created to finance and manage the acquisition and construction of the Administration, Classroom, and original Fine Arts Building on CCA's CentreTech campus. The CCA Foundation is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation that provides funding and other resources for the development of the College. The CCA Foundation initiated a partnership with the City of Aurora through which \$12 million in bonds were sold to build a campus in the CentreTech Business Park, and in 1991, the new facility officially opened for classes. In a unique arrangement, the majority of buildings on the CentreTech campus are owned by the Foundation and leased to the state. Those bonds will be paid off in November 2015. At that time the Foundation may choose to donate the buildings to the state, or may elect to retain ownership.

The CCA Foundation is governed by a voluntary board of business and community leaders and occupies office space at the CentreTech campus. The Foundation's executive director reports to the Foundation board and has a "dotted line" reporting relationship to the College president. Board members serve three-year, renewable terms. The board meets five times per year, and the executive committee and the executive director meet monthly with the College president. The Foundation plays a vital role in fundraising for the College and has spearheaded the "Transforming Lowry, Transforming Lives" capital campaign. This campaign seeks to raise \$5 million in an effort to continue the conversion of a portion of the decommissioned Lowry Air Force Base into a 21st-century learning space for CCA students.

(Resource Room Document 4.12)

For thirty years, through different boards and college presidents, this somewhat-unique relationship between the College and the Foundation has been successful.

The Community College of Aurora Advisory Council

Each System college has a local College Advisory Council, as specified in state statute and SBCCOE policy. Made up of representatives of the College's service area and constituencies, CCA's seven-person Council advises the College president and the State Board on the area's education needs. The Council also serves as a liaison between the College and service-area employers, school boards, and governments.

The Council includes two school district superintendents, the CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, a bank president, the city manager of Aurora, the owner of an automobile dealership, and the CEO of the Medical Center of Aurora. (*Resource Room Document 4.13*)

2.D. – The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

CCCS and the College support freedom of inquiry for faculty as outlined in State Board Policy BP 3-20 "Due Process for Faculty," which is available on the CCCS website. This policy references the AAUP "1940 State of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments." In the 2008 Adjunct Faculty Survey, with 1 as a low rating and 4 as high, the adjunct response for "I am aware of the College policy on academic freedom" was 3.01; "CCA is effective at communicating policies and goals regarding freedom of inquiry" had a response of 2.87. In the 2008 Regular Faculty survey, 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "I am satisfied with the level of independence that I have in how I teach my classes." (*Resource Room Document 4.14*)

The College website explains students' rights in the classroom under "Rights, Freedoms, & Responsibilities," including their right to "inquire about, discuss, or express any view, provided they do not infringe on the rights of others." The College also affirms students' rights to express their views, to assemble to discuss issues, and to distribute written materials on campus in its Student Right to Know documents regarding student rights, freedoms, and responsibilities. (*Resource Room Document 4.15*)

2.E. – The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

The College maintains a climate of ethical use of knowledge. Research activities are coordinated through the CCCS Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Director of Library Services monitors Fair Use and copyright observance, and the College negotiates licensing

from ASCAP and BMI for music access and pays for use of theatre scripts. Course syllabi and instructors discuss the definition and consequences of academic dishonesty, D2L's Turnitin software filters electronic assignment submissions for plagiarism, and the associate vice president of instruction administers the disciplinary system for academic dishonesty infractions.

2.E.1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

The Office of Institutional Research generates reports about the College and makes summaries and analyses available to the College and the community at large. Though rare, all research involving human subjects must be reviewed by an outside committee (the Institutional Review Board, or IRB) to ensure that it meets several criteria related to the safety and well-being of the participants. The Office of Institutional Research collects and reviews all requests for research on or by CCA students and faculty, which are then reviewed and approved by the CCA Leadership Council and the Colorado Community College System IRB before they can continue. (*Resource Room Document 4.16*)

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Every College course, regardless of location (on-campus, concurrent enrollment in high schools, online) or modality (face-to-face, hybrid, online), follows the Model Syllabus. Each course syllabus contains a clear definition of academic standards for appropriate credit and citation of information. In addition, each syllabus explains the consequences of academic dishonesty. Instructors review the syllabus in class on the first day of a given course and in online courses students are encouraged to review the syllabus' components. The definition of academic dishonesty is found in the *Catalog* as well as on the College website.

All instructors use the Desire2Learn (D2L) course management system to manage course content, grades, and attendance. When students submit work electronically, instructors can enable the Turnitin Originality Checker, allowing students to submit their work, look at the Turnitin analysis of percentage of non-original phrasing, and withdraw their work for correction before the final due date. While the software alerts faculty members to potential plagiarism and points the faculty member to likely original sources for the passages in question, Turnitin is also a tool for students to improve their documentation of sources and develop improved paraphrasing skills.

Composition classes address the ethical standards for information use. Both General Education and Occupational programs require a composition course; the Diesel Power Mechanics program substitutes Technical Writing for Composition, though those classes also emphasize ethical standards for information use. Outside of Composition or Technical Writing courses, instructors teach the standards of citation appropriate to their disciplines.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides extensive guidance on the ethical use of research and information sources in several ways. Library staff members make classroom visits to speak on research, in which they stress the importance of citing sources and demonstrate how to extract proper citation information from College databases. They also suggest additional resources for creating and checking citations—from the Purdue Online Writing Lab to free citation generators like KnightCite and Easybib. All students in English Composition I or II use the *DK Handbook* ancillary “MyCompLab” which includes Noodlebib for generating citations automatically. Library staff members teach students how to use the automatic citation and bibliography generators in Microsoft Word. The Academic Search Premier EBSCO online database also contains automatic citation and bibliography generators. One specific responsibility of the new Perkins-funded librarian on the Lowry campus is working with Career and Technical instructors to guide their students in ethical use of information. Finally, through the library, NetTutor allows students to submit papers electronically and receive live feedback on their citations. The Writing Studio also provides guidance on avoiding plagiarism.

Ethical use of information is also stressed when students come in for one-on-one assistance with research. The LRC is currently formalizing resources that will be available through the MyCCA portal on proper documentation of references through citation in American Psychological Association (APA), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), and Modern Language Association (MLA) formats. Beginning in fall 2012, all students in the required English Composition II classes (The Research Paper) prepare three papers: one historical, using *The Chicago Manual of Style*; one an anthropological ethnography, using APA style; and the last an English composition, using MLA style.

Research workshops are offered to students, and staff and faculty are always welcome to attend. These sessions also cover ethical information use, although it is a small part of an hour-long workshop.

The LRC piloted new workshops and tutoring focused on using, evaluating, and citing sources in late fall 2011 and spring 2012.

2.E.3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

As mentioned previously, the College policy on academic dishonesty is found in the *Catalog*, on the website, and in every College syllabus. When instructors or staff members detect evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, they forward that evidence to the associate vice president of instruction, in accordance with established policy. The College keeps a college-wide database to track academic dishonesty. A first offense merits a grade of zero on the assignment and a warning letter from the associate vice president of instruction. A second offense merits an F in the course and suspension for a semester. A third offense warrants expulsion from the College. Since 2003, the College's Academic Dishonesty file lists 341 first offenders, 11 second-time offenders, and no third-time offenders, an indication of the effectiveness of progressive discipline. (*Resource Room Document 4.17*)

Academic dishonesty definitions and consequences are also covered in the Annual Security Report.

Strengths:

- The College ensures integrity in operations through measures such as following CCCS fiscal policies, undergoing financial audits, standardizing course outcomes, evaluating faculty qualifications and teaching effectiveness, and following standard hiring practices, compensation, and benefits.
- Efforts have begun at the State and System level to correct compensation gaps for classified staff and regular faculty members.
- The College's robust website provides complete information to its students and the public regarding its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control and accreditation relationships. Additionally, students have access to their own academic and financial records through the College's MyCCA portal.
- The State Board is sufficiently autonomous in its governance of the College.
- The CCA Foundation operates for the benefit of the College.

- The College maintains a climate of ethical use of knowledge through the CCCS Institutional Review Board, instruction in appropriate citation of information, and adherence to the College's policy on academic dishonesty.

Challenges:

- The College depends heavily on adjunct faculty members. There is an ongoing challenge around finding resources to equitably compensate employees across the College.

Opportunities:

- Posting the budget, audits, and financial statements on the College website would make this information more easily accessible.

Chapter 5 Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

Criterion Three: The Community College of Aurora provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Introduction:

This chapter evaluates the multiple ways in which the College addresses each of the criterion's five core components. Varied data sources are used to examine the College's commitment to high quality educational offerings throughout its various locations and modalities. These sources are incorporated into the chapter as evidence of the College's efforts to provide consistent education of the highest quality, even as enrollment increases and the student body makeup evolves. A summary of the College's strengths, challenges, and opportunities follows.

Core Component 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

The Community College of Aurora (CCA or the College) is a comprehensive community college offering transfer, career, and technical programs of study. The College awards associate of arts (AA), associate of science (AS), associate of general studies (AGS) and associate of applied science (AAS) degrees, as well as certificates. In addition to its college-level courses, the College offers a robust developmental education sequence in reading, English, and math, as well as a college-preparatory English as a Second Language (ESL) sequence for the College's non-native English speakers. CCA also offers non-credit opportunities through some of its occupational programs, its community ESL program, and for Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) clients through the College's Center for Workforce Development. With enhanced federal emphasis on community college delivery of GED preparation (effective January of 2014), the College may need to explore expanding its GED program beyond the classes now limited to TANF clients.

That CCA's degree and certificate programs are appropriate for higher education is evidenced through their courses' inclusion in the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS or the System) Common Course Numbering System (CCNS) database. The database is used across all 13 colleges in CCCS and each course offered has a consistent course number, title, credits and contact hours, course description, learning outcomes (competencies), and topical outline. In

order for a class to be approved in the CCNS, it must follow an established course approval process, described in Chapter 4. At any point during the process, the proposed course may be disapproved for failing to meet academic standards. (*Resource Room Document 5.1*)

Guaranteed Transfer (GT) courses ensure the College's graduates can move their degrees seamlessly into the next level of higher education. The 60-credit AA and AS degrees awarded are primarily comprised of a general education core as well as a number of elective courses. All of the College's general education core courses, with the exception of the required three credits in public speaking or interpersonal communication, are courses that are guaranteed to transfer to all four-year public institutions of higher education in the state of Colorado, meaning that they have gone through the gtPathways process described in Chapter 4 and have been approved as meeting the statewide designated requirements for the particular discipline. (*Resource Room Document 5.2*) Electives that count toward the AA and AS degrees include any guaranteed transfer course not counting toward the general education core for the degree, as well as a limited number of non-guaranteed transfer courses that are typically accepted in transfer.

Prior to the 2010-11 school year, the College allowed any 100-level or higher course to count as an elective toward the AA and AS degrees. In 2010-11, the College faculty and administration discussed the benefits of limiting students' course selection in order to focus and guide them toward completion of their degrees. The decision was made to limit course options for the AA and AS degrees to include all guaranteed transfer courses and a limited number of additional courses. The AA and AS degree pathways offered by the College today are more clearly delineated, and student advising is much more focused on helping students complete general education requirements early as they hone in on their educational and career goals. (*Resource Room Document 5.3*)

Over the past decade, CCCS has negotiated formal articulation agreements with the state four-year colleges in three areas: Engineering (2009), Early Childhood Education (2004; updated 2012), and Elementary Education (2006; updated 2012). Table 5.1 provides information on how many students have declared these degrees as opposed to pursuing a general AA or AS degree.

Table 5.1
Legacy Articulation Degrees and dates in which they were
implemented at CCA

Degree Designation	Date Implemented	Number of Students Declared Fall 2012
Associate of Arts		
Early Childhood Education	Fall 2004	19
Elementary Education	Fall 2006	21
Associate of Science		
Engineering	Fall 2009	27

SOURCE: Colorado Department of Higher Education; COGNOS Course Extract, Fall 2012.

For the past three years, CCCS administrators and the administration and faculty of all 13 colleges within the System have worked with the public four-year institutions in the state to develop approved Degrees with Designation—opportunities for students who know what they wish to major in to complete the first 60 credits of their bachelor’s degree at a two-year institution and then have guaranteed acceptance into—and transfer of all 60 credits to—the Colorado public four-year institution of their choice. The new Degrees with Designation not only link the College’s degree programs with those of other institutions of higher education, they also support the College’s strategic goal of increasing student retention, completion, and transfer rates.

In 2011-12, the first seven of these Degrees with Designation were instituted; in 2012-13 four more went into effect, and with the legacy articulations mentioned above, the legislative mandate to have 14 Degrees with Designation by 2016 was ahead of schedule. The College is finding these Degrees with Designation a useful tool to help students declare a specialization early and monitor their own progress along the path to completion and transfer. CCCS is hopeful that even more designated degrees will be developed. The program is relatively new, and students are just now starting to declare their intended specialization, but the Degrees with Designation offer an easily understood pathway upon which student and faculty members can build. As seen in Table 5.2, two programs, Business and Psychology, have shown rapid growth in student declaration of these Degrees with Designation because of advanced marketing of the degrees.

Table 5.2
Degrees with designation and dates in which they were
implemented at CCA

Degree Designation	Date Implemented	Number of Students
		Declared Fall 2012
Associate of Arts		
Anthropology	Fall 2012	1
Business	Fall 2011	97
Economics	Fall 2011	3
French	Fall 2012	0
History	Fall 2011	3
Political Science	Fall 2012	10
Psychology-AA	Fall 2011	32
Sociology	Fall 2012	6
Spanish	Fall 2011	3
Associate of Science		
Mathematics	Fall 2011	7
Psychology-AS	Fall 2011	9

SOURCE: Colorado Department of Higher Education; COGNOS Course Extract, Fall 2012.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and certificate programs that the College offers are designed to respond to the workforce needs of the community and the region. All CTE programs and courses within programs are developed by the program chair or coordinator, with guidance from the program's Advisory Board. Once designed, degrees and certificates are vetted through the College's Curriculum Committee, the CCCS CTE review process, and then by CCCS, the Higher Learning Commission where needed, and the U.S. Department of Education for financial aid approval. CTE programs also undergo a program review every five years to verify that programs are meeting statewide benchmarks. In addition to the System's approval and review processes, the College's Paralegal and EMS certificate programs are accredited by their corresponding accrediting agency. (*Resource Room Document 5.4*)

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

The College's courses and programs are rigorous and of high quality. In order to maintain currency and relevance, regular faculty from all

13 colleges in the System participate in discipline group meetings once a year and are in contact via email to discuss issues that arise in the discipline throughout the year. A State Discipline Chair is elected at the annual meeting and serves as a point of contact for CCCS, disseminating information from the System to the discipline faculty and promoting the discipline's agenda within the System. At the annual conferences, faculty bring forth recommended changes to courses and/or course content and discuss the need for and creation of any new courses to be put forward for approval within the Common Course Numbering System (CCNS). In addition, the discipline group discusses the possibility of putting courses forward for the gtPathways process to have them approved as guaranteed transfer courses to the state's public four-year institutions.

Every Career and Technical program at the College has an advisory board that is convened at least once per semester to discuss the program's continued ability to address the community's current workforce needs. The advisory board reviews and approves curriculum, helping to determine which competencies and skills are to comprise a certificate, and the level at which these competencies are to be incorporated into courses to most effectively meet workforce needs. The advisory board also recommends and supports internships and job placement and approves Perkins Technology Grant proposals submitted to the System. (*Resource Room Document 5.5*)

3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Does not apply to CCA—not addressed in Self-Study

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

The College assures program quality and learning goals across all locations and modalities through a combination of measures. As described in Chapter 4, every course offered at the College exists within the System's CCNS and has therefore been vetted at both the institutional and System levels. Within the CCNS, each course has a number, title, course description, specific credits and course contact hours, specified learning outcomes (referred to as core competencies) and a topical outline. Colleges in the system must adhere to these specifications, and each course needs to include at least 80 percent of

the material in the topical outline, although additional content may be added.

The College ensures that these minimum requirements are met by building all syllabi with a model syllabus template which includes all the above-mentioned information pulled from the CCNS, in addition to quality assurance measures instituted by the College. The model syllabus upon which every course section's syllabus is based includes:

- A reminder of the six Lifelong Skills the College has determined to be critical skills all graduates will take with them—personal responsibility, technology, communication, critical inquiry, quantitative reasoning, and aesthetics—and a statement on which of these skills the course will focus;
- Information on the College's Academic Dishonesty policy and the consequences of submitting plagiarized material as one's own; and
- A breakdown of the grade calculation and a course calendar so that students know what readings, assignments, and assessments are due, and when.

An electronic copy of every course syllabus is due to the academic departments' administrative assistants on or before the first day of class. Department chairs then review and approve syllabi for content and rigor and the revised syllabi are stored on the College's instructional drive. (*Resource Room Document 5.6*)

The College works to ensure that the quality and rigor of online and hybrid courses are consistent with that of face-to-face course sections. Over the past academic year, the College's Division of Online Learning and Instructional Technology has worked to create quality assurance measures in every CCA online course. The division worked with each online instructor to move courses into a uniform course “shell” in the College's Desire2Learn classroom management system. The course shell was created following the criteria of the Quality Matters (QM) rubric, an industry-standard guide to online quality developed by MarylandOnline.

While the content of courses varies, the uniform format helps online students navigate their courses, find the tools and information they need, and contact their instructors more easily. An added benefit to the uniform shell is that it allows department chairs and faculty mentors to conduct classroom observations for online course sections more efficiently and effectively. The division created an observation rubric based on the same criteria as the QM rubric. It was approved through Chairs' Council and can be used by anyone checking online courses for quality standards. (*Resource Room Document 5.7*)

As with online and hybrid course sections, course sections offered for concurrent enrollment in area high schools are held to the same expectations of quality, content, and rigor as other face-to-face sections offered on campus. Quality courses start with quality faculty, and consistent minimum qualifications to teach are adhered to across modalities and locations, including online and concurrent enrollment. In addition, concurrent enrollment course syllabi are developed with the College's model syllabus components, CCA department chairs review and approve the textbooks and syllabi, student work is collected at least once per semester, appropriate course sections participate in assessment of student learning, faculty are observed at least once per year, and students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on instruction via student evaluations.

Student evaluations from 2009 through 2011 indicated high satisfaction with the quality of instruction at the College. Table 5.3 illustrates this general satisfaction across sections, locations, and modalities; however, there are several areas of concern. One is the significantly lower evaluation of the use of the course textbook in concurrent enrollment sections. Several high schools do not provide students with their own textbooks; others do not allow students to take their textbooks home. Decreased reliance on the course textbook for instruction may contribute to the perception by students that instructors in high school settings do not use the textbook to promote learning. Another area of concern is the reduced sense of instructor preparedness and of creative problem-solving in online classes. Online education places increased responsibility on the student, which, coupled with increased reliance on course texts and materials, may contribute to these results.

Table 5.3
Student Satisfaction with instruction by type of course
 Spring 2012 Student Evaluations five highest and five lowest rated questions, percentage
 answering Strongly Agree/Agree^a

Question	Face-to- Face Component ^b	Online Only ^c	High School ^d
Highest Rated Questions			
I came prepared for class.	95.7%	91.2%	93.0%
I participated in class activities.	95.4%	90.7%	91.3%
The class began and ended as scheduled.	94.7%	89.6%	95.7%
Instructor expected me to meet deadlines.	93.8%	93.6%	91.8%
Instructor was knowledgeable about subject matter.	94.0%	84.1%	95.1%
Lowest Rated Questions			
Instructor used textbook to help me learn.	83.8%	85.5%	71.9%
I was able to contact instructor outside of class.	79.5%	85.5%	76.1%
Class required technology for research/assignments.	77.6%	87.0%	76.9%
We solved problems creatively.	79.9%	60.4%	71.2%
I was expected to interpret numerical data.	54.8%	48.0%	48.1%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research; CCA Student Evaluations Database.

^a These are the highest and lowest rated questions when responses are aggregated; table shows differences across course types.

^b Includes hybrid courses that meet face-to-face but also have an online component.

^c Includes self-paced computer courses that can be completed only online.

^d These are courses where the entire course is offered on a high school campus to high school students for college credit.

Quality assurance is measured through several direct and indirect measures, including the College's assessment process, student evaluations of courses, and student satisfaction surveys. The College's quality assurance processes are discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 6.

Core Components 3. B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

The College's general education program provides students with a quality educational experience that fully prepares them for transfer to four-year institutions or to enter the workforce as productive and engaged citizens. The College offers 100- and 200-level coursework

with appropriate content and rigor in every course. All of CCA's courses exist in the CCCS's Common Course Numbering System and have consequently gone through multiple levels of approval of content and rigor. In addition, 60.2 percent of general education courses taught at CCA are designated Guaranteed Transfer, which means they have gone through the gtPathways approval process and are guaranteed to transfer to the four-year public institutions in the state of Colorado.

3.B.2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college student should possess.

CCA articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. Students can learn about CCA degrees and certificates, as well as the purpose and content of each degree and course within that degree, on the College website and in the *Catalog*. CCCS has set a minimum 31-credit, six-content area general education curriculum. The College's AA degree includes 37 general education credit hours and its AS degrees includes 39 general education credit hours divided among the same six content areas specified by CCCS. (*Resource Room Document 5.8*)

The College's general education program is grounded in the philosophy that every student should graduate with certain transferable lifelong skills in addition to competence in occupational and discipline knowledge. Since the mid-1990s, the College has worked to integrate into every course section the six Lifelong Skills its faculty members worked to develop. The College believes these skills—personal responsibility, critical thinking, communication, technology, quantitative reasoning, and aesthetics—are fundamental for a college-educated individual to possess and are, consequently, embedded in each CCA course. The Lifelong Skills align well with the Colorado Department of Higher Education's (CDHE) core competencies of critical thinking, mathematics, reading, technology, and written communication. The learning outcomes that the CDHE defined for each of these competencies support also the specific competencies that the College has developed for each of its Lifelong Skills. (*Resource Room Document 5.9*)

Students' acquisition of these Lifelong Skills has been the focus of the College's assessment practices. Faculty members are involved in

creating the assessment tools and assessing random samples of student work which inform the Assessment Committee of College-wide successes and areas of concern. Including specific Lifelong Skills the course will cover in every course syllabus, as well as displaying the Lifelong Skills posters in every classroom, helps keep instructors and students aware of the skills. Instructors can point to the syllabi and posters to remind students how what they are learning in the classroom is helping to develop the skills and attitudes that will serve them well throughout life.

The spring 2012 Adjunct Faculty Survey demonstrates that faculty understanding of and satisfaction with the College's Lifelong Skills is high, rated a 3.33 on the 4.0 survey scale. (*Resource Room Document 5.10*) Student perceived knowledge and mastery of and exposure to the Lifelong Skills, however, could be higher. As discussed in Chapter 6, more work can be done in making the Lifelong Skills more apparent in course lessons.

3.B.3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The degree programs offered by CCA engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. As mentioned above, critical inquiry and communication are two of the Lifelong Skills the College has used to assess student learning over the last decade. In 2011-12, all College departments began a focused assessment of the same two skills of written communication and critical inquiry, so that the Assessment Committee could draw College-wide conclusions about student acquisition of these skills. The results of the 2011-12 assessment cycle showed areas for improvement. In critical inquiry, students in online and hybrid sections scored lower than students in face-to-face and concurrent enrollment sections. In written communication, students in concurrent enrollment sections scored lower than students in other sections. College-wide assessment results show variance in acquisition of assessed skills by both modality and location. This data has allowed the College to develop action items for this year's assessment cycle that target specific populations in different ways. (*Resource Room Document 5.11*)

The College is committed to developing skills that are adaptable to the changing environments students will encounter after graduation. CCA has been focused on simulation as an important learning tool, and simulation exercises are present throughout the College, from the Center for Simulation to interdisciplinary crime scene and trial

simulations which incorporate anthropology, criminal justice, biology, chemistry, and paralegal students; to the immersive classroom environments in ESL, translation and interpretation, and world languages. The College's tagline "Go Beyond the Book" is witnessed in its interactive classes, where students are pushed to explore their world, ask questions, and develop their own answers.

3.B.4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

Aurora is an incredibly diverse city in which one in three households speaks a language other than English. CCA's service area includes urban, suburban, and rural areas in Arapahoe, Adams, and Denver Counties. The neighborhoods range from affluent to economically depressed and include many with large immigrant populations. This kaleidoscope is present at the College and in its courses and programs. Indeed, one of the College's greatest assets is its diverse student body, which allows for the exploration of ideas and concepts from many social and cultural perspectives. Included in the efforts to serve the community appropriately are the College's credit and non-credit programs in ESL.

CCA faculty members have incorporated cultural diversity into the curriculum and human diversity into their teaching practices. These changes are visible in the course schedule, where courses with a global focus have replaced courses limited to the Western European world. Within courses, too, faculty members have worked to provide greater diversity of content. Examples include a shift away from solely Roman and Greek mythology to analysis of Native American and other myth traditions in World Mythology, as well as efforts to introduce linguistic and multicultural perspectives into the preparation of the College's EMS students. Several faculty professional development opportunities have centered around cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural competency in the past few years, as well as opportunities to experiment with different teaching and learning styles and the incorporation of Universal Design elements into instruction to respond more effectively to the learning needs of all students.

In the 2011-2012 academic year, 2,750 community members participated in the Community ESL classes (a not-for-credit program to aid Aurora's immigrant populations in the acquisition of basic English proficiency to help them succeed in the workforce), and more than 1,900 students enrolled in sections of CCA's College Preparatory ESL program (a for-credit program to aid the College's non-native English speakers to hone their academic English skills in order to

further their education, obtain a degree or certificate in a new area of study, or revalidate degrees from their home countries). As Table 5.4 shows, enrollment in both ESL programs has increased substantially over the past five years.

Table 5.4
Participation in English as a Second Language

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
College Preparatory ESL (Credit)					
Enrollments	1,039	1,397	1,508	1,836	1,921
Sections	60	90	97	104	109
Faculty	16	21	26	22	21
Community ESL (Non-Credit)					
Enrollments	1,697	1,863	2,235	1,947	2,750
Classes	91	110	126	114	170
Faculty	21	23	21	22	16

SOURCE: COGNOS Course Extracts (credit); Aurora Language Center (non-credit).

To promote dialogue on campus, one of the College's committees has been the Global Initiatives Committee, tasked with creating opportunities for cross-cultural encounters for students in and out of the classroom. The Global Initiatives Committee has served the College and community by bringing in authors, dignitaries, and visionaries to discuss their efforts at making the world a better place, while at the same time organizing an annual Global Citizens' Conference at which student research projects were on display. In 2007, Dr. Hassan Basri Awang Mat Dahan arrived at CCA from Malaysia as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar, spending three weeks providing guest lectures and public forums. His visit led to a campus-wide reading project, as well as the creation of the College's meditation room for students of many faiths. Since then, additional GIC-sponsored visitors include Dr. William Wei (Asian Studies), Ethan Casey (American journalist in Pakistan), Francis Bok (escaped Sudanese slave), and Todd Shea (disaster response volunteer).

The Committee has also supported community groups focused on diversity and has helped sponsor the College's annual International Day, an opportunity to bring the world to the College and to learn from the College's diverse student body about their cultures. Despite budget reductions in 2011-12 and a restructuring of faculty service assignments in 2012-13 (the Global Initiatives Committee is no longer supported by a faculty member on reassignment), faculty members remain committed to providing students a global education and

continue to be active in helping the College community tap into its broad diversity as a resource for enhanced learning.

A large component of the College's diversity comes from its veteran and disabled student populations. The College's Accessibility Services Office and Military/Veterans' Services Office are two of the busiest on campus, with students finding both academic and emotional support to help them on their success journey.

The Accessibility Services Office staff members are active in supporting professional development in diverse learning styles and Universal Design principles, presenting to faculty in 2008 and 2010, and to instructional and student support staff in 2012. The College strives to provide accessible education for all students, and the Accessibility Services Office works closely with faculty to provide appropriate accommodations to students while still maintaining rigor and compliance to course competencies and learning outcomes. Students can find assistive technology support as well as four accessible computer work stations in the Accessibility Services Office on the CentreTech campus. There is also at least one accessible computer work station in every career and technical classroom, and all College computer labs have accessible work stations.

The Military/Veterans' Services Office serves veteran students who are receiving VA educational benefits. The office includes a reception and resource area with dedicated computers that veterans can use to register for classes and apply for VA benefits. The office also oversees the College's advising and assessment services on Buckley Air Force Base, located less than a mile from the College's CentreTech campus. In August 2009, the VA implemented a new GI Bill called the Post 9-11 GI Bill. Prior to the new bill, there were approximately 125-150 veterans using benefits at CCA. That number has more than doubled since the Bill went into effect and has been consistently around 300 and as high as 350. The Military/Veterans Office assists all of these veterans, as well as veterans who are in other VA educational benefit programs, with their degree plans and VA benefits.

The College's Student Life Office oversees College clubs and organizations. One of the College's most active student organizations is the International Student Association. This club works to promote diversity and cultural awareness on campus through a variety of well-attended events throughout the year, including the College's International Festival each spring, a cultural awareness Jeopardy game presented in various venues, cultural film nights at the Colorado Film

School, and field trips to downtown Denver to visit the capitol and art museum.

3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

The College is committed to promoting excellence in scholarly and creative work among both faculty and students. Though the focus of the College faculty is on teaching and learning and not published research and creative work, the faculty is still quite active in the area of scholarly pursuits. Ten percent of the full-time faculty annual evaluation is based on professional development, which some faculty members dedicate to publishing or to presenting at state and national conferences. The adjunct faculty process for movement from one pay level to the next is tied to professional development hours, with the goal of keeping faculty members current and engaged in their discipline. This may include scholarship such as publications or conference presentations.

Students are expected to develop research writing skills and produce quality research projects throughout the general education program at the College. All courses approved as guaranteed transfer have CDHE requirements to ensure the acquisition of critical thinking, mathematics, reading, technology and/or written communication skills. For example, every student enrolled in a social science course at the College must complete a significant out-of-class writing assignment which constitutes at least 20 percent of the student's final grade. All AA, AS, AAS, and AGS degrees granted by the College require successful completion of at least one Pathways course in Arts and Humanities, Communication, Mathematics, Natural and/or Physical Science and Social and/or Behavioral Science, thus ensuring a student's acquisition of the skills mentioned above. In the College's 2011-12 assessment cycle, all departments participated in assessment of student ability in the areas of written communication and critical inquiry. Results of this College-wide assessment process are discussed in Chapter 6. (*Resource Room Document 5.12*)

The College promotes excellence in its student body through an active Phi Theta Kappa chapter dedicated to leadership, fellowship, service, and scholarship. CCA is a leader within the PTK region—the Colorado regional director was on the College's Student Affairs staff through 2012 and the Colorado regional president is a CCA student. CCA's PTK chapter participates in multiple scholastic and service events throughout the year, including two regional conferences, one international conference, the annual Honors in Action Symposium, and

the sponsorship of annual service projects like the Highline Canal Cleanup and the 9 Health Fair. The College also hosts the Colorado Region’s annual PTK Boot Camp, an opportunity for chapter officers from around the region to determine the honors studies to be conducted by their institution for the following year.

The College seeks opportunities to promote scholastic endeavors for students wishing to push themselves beyond a course’s requirements through the Honors Project option. Students with a 3.25 GPA or higher who have completed at least six credits at the College may initiate a research project related to the topics of a course, but which does not comprise a component of the course grade. These students work closely with their instructors to delve deeper into the course material and conduct rigorous research on a subject. Those who complete their project and the course with an A have the course designated as an honors course on their transcripts. In Spring 2012, the College ran an entire honors section for Accounting, based on students’ tax preparation community service learning project, greatly expanding honors project participation. Table 5.5 documents participation in honors projects over two academic years. Though student participation increased considerably in the 2011-12 academic year, the number of classes participating declined. More work could be done to promote honors projects and the benefits to students and faculty participants.

Table 5.5
Participation in Honors Projects

	Number of		
	Projects	Students	Classes
Fall 2010	15	15	10
Spring 2011	13	10	11
Fall 2011	6	6	6
Spring 2012	28	25	7

SOURCE: Honors Program.

NOTE: Students were able to conduct multiple projects. More than one student in many classes participated.

Colorado Film School students and faculty members are actively engaged in creative work. CFS students create more than 1,000 original films each year. All CFS faculty members engage in professional production as well. Students and faculty have worked together on film and commercial projects which have won both regional and national awards. (*Resource Room Document 5.13*)

The College's clubs and organizations also promote creative student endeavors. Poetic Motions, Theatre Club, Dance Club, Fade In (a club for film students), and CCA Film Fans encourage creative and artistic expression and discussion through club-sponsored events throughout the academic year.

Each fall from 2008 to 2010, the College's Global Initiatives Committee organized a Global Citizens Conference. A universal theme such as climate change or health and medicine was selected. The committee shared the theme with faculty early in the semester and encouraged student projects around the topic from multiple disciplines. Research papers, poster sessions, and panel discussions were examples of creative and critical student work displayed at this conference. With budget restrictions and shifting College priorities in the 2011-12 academic year, the Global Citizens Conference was no longer viable. The conference was replaced by a lecture series and committee support for the International Festival held each spring. With a new regular faculty position in political science for 2012-13, an international focus is coalescing around efforts to institute a Model United Nations to be held April 5-6, 2013. The Political Science Department just received a \$38,500 CCCS immersive learning grant to pay for this simulation.

CCA is a member of the Colorado Space Grant Consortium, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)-funded education program whose purpose is to help develop the next generation of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) professionals through active engagement in hands-on research and engineering projects. The Science Department's main goals for the Space Grant program are to enhance students' ability to transfer to four-year institutions, increase the likelihood that students will complete their degree upon transfer, and increase participation of students in the STEM fields. In the past four years, approximately 20 students have participated in Space Grant-sponsored projects. Student projects have included flight time on the High Altitude Student Payload and on the Reduced Gravity Education Flight Program, both national, NASA-sponsored competitive programs. Two of the students have received NASA internships and one received an internship at Lockheed Martin. A number of students have successfully transferred to institutions such as Metropolitan State University and the Colorado School of Mines.

Core Component 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

The College's regular faculty members have direct oversight of the Curriculum and Assessment Committees, and consequently play a

vital role in the College’s programs from their development and planning stages through to implementation, instruction, and assessment of student learning.

The College maintains consistent content, rigor, and quality of instruction and acquisition of stated learning outcomes across all sections of all courses, including face-to-face, hybrid, online, and concurrent enrollment sections. The College faces a unique challenge in that its adjunct faculty members are responsible for 77 percent of the College’s instruction, based on credit hours. Because of the small percentage of instruction carried out by regular faculty, much of the responsibility for quality instruction at the College depends on the excellence of its adjunct faculty members. Table 5.6 shows the number of regular and adjunct faculty members teaching credit courses at the College. Though regular faculty numbers have grown, so too have adjunct faculty numbers, and the regular to adjunct faculty member ratio has remained the same.

Table 5.6
Faculty Teaching Credit Courses
Fall Semesters, by Contract Status

	Fall 2006	Fall 2008	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
Regular Faculty	31	36	43	50
Adjunct Faculty	235	335	391	373

SOURCE: IPEDS Human Resources Survey.

NOTE: Data are as of October 31 of each year.

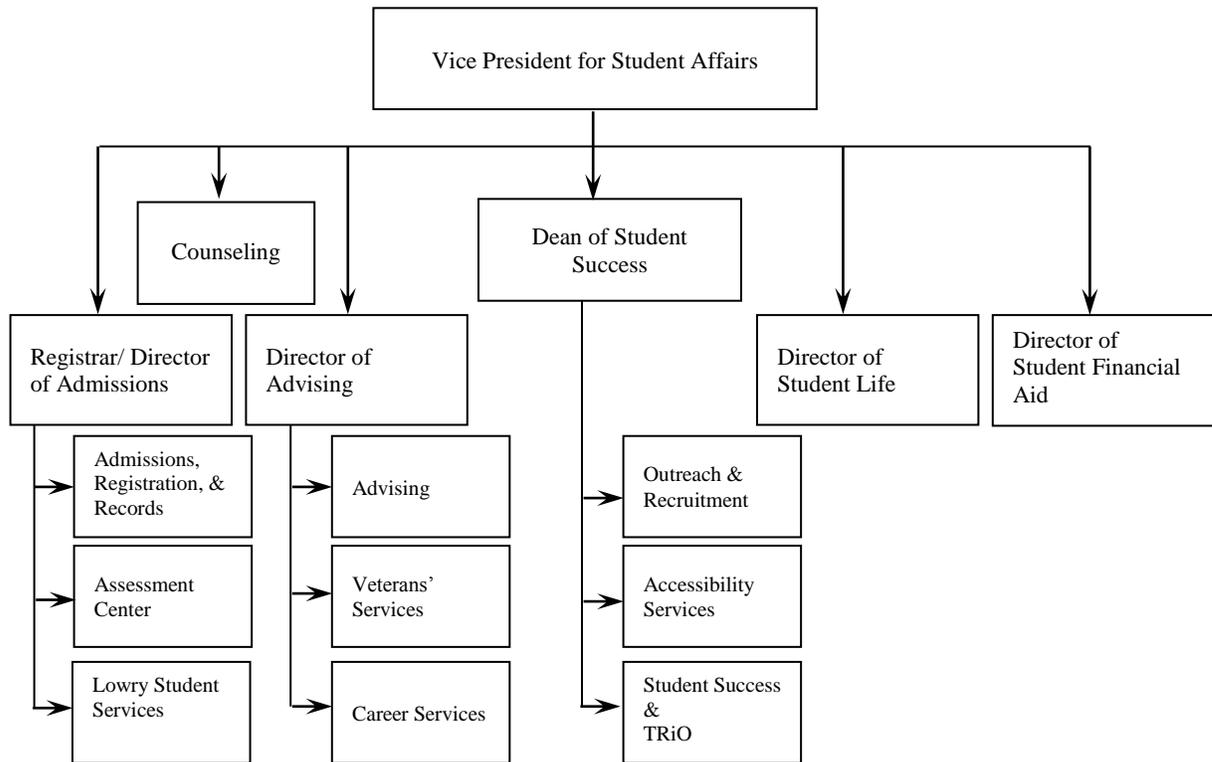
The College maintains consistency through verification of instructor credentials, approval of syllabi (which include the same course description, learning outcomes, and topical outline for all sections), approval of textbooks, collection of sample student work across all sections for assessment purposes, classroom observations of learning, and end-of-semester student evaluations. The College also employs a faculty mentoring system by which new faculty members are paired with regular or returning adjunct faculty members who act as guide and resource during the first semester of instruction. (*Resource Room Document 5.14*)

Student Affairs staff members are appropriately qualified and dedicated to the success of the College's student body. Student services offered under the Student Affairs Division include those provided by the Admissions, Registration and Records Office, the

Advising Center, the Center for Outreach and Recruitment, the Financial Aid Office, the Military/Veterans Services Office, the TRiO Student Support Services and Student Success Center, the Accessibility Services Office, the Office of Student Life, the Career Services Office, and Lowry Student Services. Student Affairs has staff actively engaged in scholarly research and professional development in order to ensure the College is offering support services that are data-driven and keeping pace with national best practices. (*Resource Room Document 5.15*)

That said, the Student Affairs Division is dependent upon part-time staff in some offices, where demand is greater than the support currently available. While professional development opportunities are available to both part-time and full-time support staff, challenges still exist in providing targeted, relevant professional development opportunities that address staff member areas of interest or areas of needed improvement based on annual evaluations. The division has begun to look at ways to offer more focused professional development to its staff. Beginning in spring 2013, the division has begun opening late once weekly to allow time for staff professional development.

Figure 5.1
Student Affairs Organizational Chart



3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

The College exhibits stability in the ranks of its regular faculty members (Table 5.7), which facilitates ongoing assessment and improvement of student learning and provides an experienced cadre from which the adjunct faculty members can learn. However, many long-serving faculty members are approaching retirement age, so there may be some increase in turnover in the next few years. Among adjuncts, turnover is just over 25 percent fall-to-fall due, in part, to fluctuation of enrollment demand and to the movement of adjuncts from college to college in the metropolitan Denver area. Still, that relatively steady corps of adjuncts provides consistent opportunities for student learning. Table 5.8 outlines the requirements for moving from one pay level to the next as an adjunct faculty member, and Table 5.9 shows that in fall 2012, 18 percent of adjunct faculty members have taught at the College for more than four semesters, and another 16 percent have taught for more than six. This returning adjunct faculty pool has also demonstrated a commitment to their own professional development, both in pedagogy and in the content areas, as well as a commitment to getting to know the College and its culture.

Table 5.7
Percentage of faculty teaching in Fall 2010
who were also teaching in Fall 2011

	Total Teaching Fall 2010	Still Teaching Fall 2011	Percent Turn-Over
Faculty 9 Month FT	27	26	4%
Faculty 10-12 Month FT	2	2	0%
Faculty 11-12 Month FT	13	13	0%
Faculty Limited FT	1	1	0%
Adjunct Faculty	391	284	27%

SOURCE: COGNOS Coursefile Extracts.

NOTE: This table looks only at Fall 2010 faculty and whether they were teaching in Fall 2011.

Table 5.8
Adjunct Faculty Pay Levels

Level 1
Entry-level

Level 2
Minimum of 4 semesters of teaching (12 credit hours)
Complete New Faculty Orientation & D2L training
Completion of 4 hours for Faculty Development

Level 3
Additional 2 semesters of teaching (12 additional credit hours)
Completion of an approved year-long project (30 hours) –OR–
Completion of 15 hours professional development in pedagogy
Completion of 15 hours professional development in content area

SOURCE: CCA Human Resources.

Table 5.9
Number of Adjunct Faculty at each
faculty pay level, Fall 2012

Position	Level	Number
Adjunct	1	242
Adjunct	2	67
Adjunct	3	64

SOURCE: IPEDS Human Resources Survey;
Instructional Support.

Service to the College and community makes up 25 percent of a regular faculty member's annual work plan and evaluation. College service has generally consisted of chairing or sitting on a College committee, service on a search committee, or other work devoted to student learning and success. Through the 2011-12 academic year, the College's regular faculty members were expected to serve on one or two College committees per year as part of their service to the College. In 2012-13, standing committees were suspended, with the important exceptions of the Curriculum and Assessment Committees, and faculty were encouraged to develop service plans around areas in which they are passionate and in areas of the College and community in which they feel compelled to serve.

A faculty member chairs the College's Curriculum Committee, which consists of faculty members from various instructional departments. The committee ensures that program additions to the course *Catalog*,

whether they are already in the Common Course Numbering System or newly designed programs, are appropriate to the mission and degree levels of the College. Because the Curriculum Committee facilitates the internal review process and approves or disapproves changes to courses or programs, faculty members who serve on the committee must have a global understanding of the College and its curriculum in order to make effective recommendations. Continuity of faculty members is critical in this regard. Curriculum Committee decisions are shared at Academic Forum, a monthly meeting of all regular and adjunct faculty, as well as representatives from the College's student affairs staff. Curriculum Committee-approved classes are forwarded to the vice president of instruction (VPI) for approval. New courses, once approved by the VPI, are sent to the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) office for external review.

A faculty member also chairs the Assessment Committee whose membership includes faculty members, administrators, and the director of assessment and institutional effectiveness. The CCA assessment process has always been faculty-driven, from the development of the College's six Lifelong Skills to the evolution of the rubrics used to assess student acquisition of these skills. The Assessment Committee is responsible for developing, facilitating, monitoring, and reporting on the assessment processes of the College each year. Assessment is a College-wide endeavor that requires the time and dedication of regular and adjunct faculty and staff. Without the participation of adjunct faculty in the assessment process, assessment data would be incomplete and assessment analysis would be less reliable. The assessment process is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

Regular faculty members at the College are hard-working, dedicated educators. As enrollment grows, the time that regular faculty members spend in the classroom and on instructional tasks is reduced due to an increased need for them to provide administrative support for programs and departments. Twelve-month faculty department chairs and nine-month regular faculty members are responsible for a large portion of their programs' administrative support in the absence of sufficient administrative assistance.

Table 5.10 illustrates that the Instructional Division makes use of only seven full-time and three part-time administrative assistants for its 16 instructional departments. These numbers, coupled with increasing enrollments, have placed a strain on regular faculty members. Table 5.11 shows the increases in enrollment in credit courses over the past few years. The College has managed to serve more students with fewer course sections by increasing course enrollment caps, running fewer low-enrolled sections, and making more strategic use of its

CCCOOnline course section options. Although support staff numbers have increased significantly over the past three years (see Table 7.4), most of that increase was in the Student Affairs Division. The College understands the need for increased administrative support in Instruction in order to allow its faculty members to focus more of their time and effort on instruction and curricular concerns in their respective areas of expertise.

Table 5.10
Full-Time and Part-Time support staff, Fall 2012

	Fall 2010		Fall 2011		Fall 2012	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Instructional Support Staff						
Classified	9	2	10	3	7	3
Student Affairs Support Staff						
Classified	14	1	14	0	14	0

SOURCE: IPEDS Employees by Employment Category; Human Resources.

Table 5.11
Annual Unduplicated Headcount and number of classes taught
by Fiscal Year

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
Number of Classes	2,154	2,382	2,639	2,900	2,918
Headcount	7,966	8,896	10,223	11,527	12,570

SOURCE: COGNOS Coursefile Extracts.

NOTE: This includes online, hybrid, and individual instruction classes.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

All instructors at the College are appropriately credentialed. As mentioned in Chapter 6, one of the preliminary ways the College ensures the quality of instruction is by ensuring its instructors are properly trained. The College has set as a minimum requirement for faculty teaching general education courses a master’s degree in the teaching field or a master’s degree in another discipline plus 18 graduate credits in the teaching discipline. This is the minimum qualification standard for all College instructors, including those teaching online and concurrent enrollment sections, and is verified upon employment. Faculty members teaching in Career and Technical

Education disciplines must be appropriately credentialed upon hire and maintain proper credentialing in order to continue teaching at the College.

Currently, the office of the associate vice president of instruction maintains records of CTE instructor credentials and sends out an email reminder when credential updating is needed. These responsibilities will shift to the dean of career and technical education in January 2013. Concurrent enrollment instructors submit a Request to Continue Teaching form at the end of the academic year if they wish to continue teaching concurrent classes the following year. At that time, demonstration of proper and up-to-date credentialing is required of all concurrent CTE instructors.

3.C.3 Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

College faculty members are evaluated annually, although evaluation procedures and criteria for evaluation differ for regular and adjunct faculty members. Currently, regular faculty members are evaluated based on their weighted performance in four areas—teaching effectiveness (65 percent), professional development (10 percent), service to the College (20 percent) and service to the community (5 percent). The System presidents are currently developing a new performance evaluation structure that should be adopted for 2013-14. This change is designed to simplify the performance evaluation structure. (*Resource Room Document 5.16*)

Under the current model, regular faculty members develop their annual work plan with input from their supervisor at the start of each academic year. The work plan is signed by both faculty member and supervisor. Mid-year, the faculty member and supervisor meet to discuss progress toward completion of the work plan and any changes that need to be made. At the end of the academic year the faculty member submits a self-appraisal and narrative achievement of goals. This is reviewed by the supervisor who submits an overall performance evaluation based on the faculty member's performance in each of the evaluation areas. Supervisors rate faculty performance as either "needs improvement," "meets expectations," "exceeds expectations," or "outstanding." Classroom observation and student evaluation of instruction also play an important role in the end-of-year evaluation of regular faculty members.

Adjunct faculty members are evaluated on teaching effectiveness and ability to adhere to the minimum expectations laid out in the adjunct job description that each instructor signs at the start of every semester.

(Resource Room Document 5.17) Instructors are observed by their supervisor and feedback from observations is provided to each instructor. Student evaluation of instruction is also an important mechanism for department chairs to determine the effectiveness of each instructor. Student evaluations are made available to department chairs and to instructors shortly after final grades have been submitted. This provides the instructor ample time to make adjustments to course syllabi and teaching methods, if necessary, prior to the start of the following semester, and provides the department chair sufficient time to intervene or make staff changes if student evaluations of instruction warrant.

3.C.4 The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

The College's faculty members keep up to date in their fields. Regular faculty members are evaluated on an annual basis and 10 percent of their evaluation is based on their professional development for the year. Faculty members submit their annual work plan for the year to their immediate supervisor, and teaching load, service to the College and the community, and professional development plans are all discussed and approved. Professional development opportunities include pedagogical and content-area workshops, conferences, webinars, and study toward advanced degrees.

Adjunct faculty members are also encouraged to develop professionally and maintain currency in their disciplines. The College promotes professional development in its adjunct faculty by tying increased pay levels not only to hours taught at the College, but also to professional development hours in pedagogy and the content area. All new adjuncts must complete New Faculty Orientation and Desire2Learn training (8 hours total) in their first year of hire at the College. While the pay-level process is explained in the Faculty Handbook and at the time of hire, there has been little consensus across departments and divisions regarding what constitutes good professional development. As with regular faculty professional development offerings, there needs to be a more explicit adjunct professional development plan and that plan needs to be widely understood and adhered to. In addition, department chairs should be encouraged to do a better job of urging their faculty to move through the process and participate in targeted professional development activities that would improve their instruction and/or content-area knowledge.

Table 5.12
Development/Training expenditures per FTE
employee by Fiscal Year

	Expenditures per FTE Employee
FY2009	\$271.00
FY2010	\$106.00
FY2011	\$133.00

SOURCE: NCCBP Table 20; CCA Office of Institutional Research.

Until 2002, the College's Faculty, Staff and Organizational Development Committee was responsible for the provision of professional development opportunities to all service areas of the College. In 2002, the College saw a need for increased professional development specifically targeting the instructional area and created the Faculty Development Committee, which was comprised of faculty representation from each division. This change saw the reduction of staff dedicated to providing professional development from 2.5 to zero. Faculty serving on this committee did so as part of their service to the College.

In 2010, the committee was renamed the Professional Development for Instruction Committee (PDIC) and was charged with providing meaningful professional development opportunities to the faculty. The PDIC is responsible for developing the annual faculty in-service day as well as coordinating other professional development opportunities throughout the year for regular and adjunct faculty.

In addition to the College's PDIC, the Human Resources Department, the Assessment Committee, and the System offer professional development opportunities for faculty and staff throughout the year. Examples from the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years include sessions on dealing with difficult people; multiple sessions on topics related to assessment; various webinars on topics such as game-based learning, adjunct faculty support and professional development; and the System's service learning and assessment conferences.

CCCS has begun a professional development program for College administrators. In 2010, the System inaugurated an annual Dean's Academy, and the College's dean of liberal arts was a participant in that first year. CCCS runs a Presidents' Academy every other year, and includes monthly professional development at the Presidents' Meetings. Working with the American Council on Education, the System will offer a Chairs' Academy beginning in the summer of 2013.

Funding to support faculty members' external professional development so they remain current in their disciplines is a challenge that was highlighted in the College's last Self-Study in 2003. The College remains conservative regarding funding for out-of-state professional development opportunities. Funds for faculty travel are currently handled at the departmental level, where departments may allot a certain amount of the total department operating funds to travel expenses to and from conferences. The College allows for limited national and international travel when such opportunities provide College-wide benefit and when approved by Leadership Council, the College president and, in the case of international travel, by the Colorado Community College System president.

The College has begun conversations to address a sense of frustration among faculty and administrators alike that professional development opportunities have not been satisfactory over the past several years, and that the opportunities available do not necessarily address areas where people desire or require improvement. The College is developing a more strategic plan for professional development and in spring 2013 hired a full-time director of faculty development. This individual will provide organizational leadership and support to faculty by creating, implementing, and evaluating professional development curricula, programs, and opportunities for CCA faculty.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

The College's student-centered philosophy is bolstered by the relationships that students develop with their instructors, both inside and outside the classroom. In fact, students point to instructor responsiveness as an important contributor to their success and overall experience at the College. The College ensures that instructors are accessible for student inquiry in several ways. State Board policy requires regular faculty to work a minimum of forty hours per week. A new College policy was adopted in fall 2012 stipulating that regular faculty members need to be on campus a minimum of 30 hours and an average of four days per week. Faculty department chairs need to be on campus a minimum of 30 hours and an average of five days per week. The College's model syllabus upon which every syllabus is based includes contact information for the instructor as well as office hours. (*Resource Room Document 5.18*)

Regular faculty members hold set office hours and are also available by appointment for students with scheduling conflicts. While not all adjunct faculty members hold fixed office hours, every course section has a Desire2Learn course shell through which students can access their grade and attendance records, as well as email their classmates

and instructor. Instructors of online and face-to-face courses generally respond to student email within 24 to 48 hours, excepting weekends and holidays. Several departments around the College have also begun offering tutoring hours to students, staffed by both adjunct and regular faculty members. Tutoring by faculty is available for students of science, business, art, ESL, and Spanish. This is in addition to the tutoring services offered through the College's Academic Support Lab, and is another way by which faculty—both adjunct and regular—demonstrate their availability and commitment to students.

The College's regular faculty numbers have grown over the past ten years. Regular faculty hires this past academic year were primarily in the areas of the new Degrees with Designation that the state has instituted. The College's regular faculty-to-student ratio is 1:76; when adjunct numbers are added, faculty to student ratio becomes 1:22. The College recognizes that continuing to increase the number of regular faculty members would enhance consistency of instruction across modalities and would also provide increased opportunity for student inquiry, as more faculty members would be on campus more hours. The College is challenged to maintain adequate office space for its growing adjunct faculty numbers, as more spaces are turned into classrooms, workrooms, student affairs, or administrative offices.

3.C.6 Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

The College employs appropriately qualified student support staff and offers suitable training and professional development opportunities to its diverse staff, including those in enrollment services, financial aid advising, academic advising, and student life.

The Financial Aid Office employs eight full-time staff members: a director, assistant director, advisors, and an administrative assistant. All staff members have the minimum of a bachelor's degree except the administrative assistant. Two staff members hold master's degrees. All staff members have prior higher-education experience. The Financial Aid Office belongs to the Colorado Association of Financial Aid administrators (CAFAA), Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (RMASFAA), and National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Financial Aid Office staff members participate in regional, state, and national professional development trainings.

The Admissions, Registration and Records Office (AR&R) employs 9.6 FTE staff members. Three staff members hold associate's degrees and four hold bachelor's degrees. The department has a combined 80+ years of experience in higher education. The registrar and assistant registrar are members of AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers) and the department has a membership in RMACRAO (Rocky Mountain Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers). Staff members also participate in BUMS (Banner Users of the Mountain States). Various members of the staff have attended RMACRAO meetings over the years and have both presented and participated in BUMS and RMACRAO annual conferences. Finally, many of the staff members in AR&R are members of CCCS job-specific groups (Registrars Group, Registration Power Users, Credentials Evaluators, etc.) and receive job-specific professional development through the CCCS.

The Testing Center employs 2.5 FTE staff: one full-time coordinator, one full-time proctor and one half-time proctor. The coordinator holds a master's degree and the proctors are both classified as administrative assistant I in the state classified staff system and have each completed some college-level coursework. The coordinator participates in the RMCTA (Rocky Mountain College Testing Association) and is a member of NCTA (National College Testing Association). The proctors are both new to their positions at CCA and in testing, but they will be afforded the opportunity to participate in these groups as appropriate.

The Advising Department employs seven full-time staff members: one director, four advisors, one VA-certifying official, and one career services coordinator. Five staff members have bachelor's degrees, four staff members hold master's degrees, and two staff members are adjuncts. The department also employs eight part-time advisors. Five have bachelor's degrees, and four hold master's degrees. Two are adjuncts, and one provides tutoring services to students. Academic advisors have attended regional and national NACADA professional development conferences. The VA-certifying official has attended VA-certifying official conferences and workshops. The career services coordinator has attended the Colorado Career Development Conference.

The Office of Student Life employs three full-time staff members: a director, coordinator, and administrative assistant. One staff member holds an associate's degree, one staff member holds a bachelor's degree, and one staff member holds a master's degree. All staff members have prior higher-education experience and the director has worked in the role of Director of Student Life for eight years.

Members of the Office of Student Life attend a variety of local and national conferences to encourage professional development and improvement of the Student Life program. Recently, two members of the office attended the National Orientation Directors Association Conference to assist in improving the College's New Student Orientation offered. They also assisted in creating and implementing two local conferences including the Student Leadership Conference and the System's Student Leadership Academic Council Conference.

TRiO Student Support Services employs four full-time staff members: a director, advisor, advisor/tutor coordinator, and administrative assistant. One staff member has a bachelor's degree, two staff members hold master's degrees, and one staff member holds a doctorate degree. All staff members have prior higher education experience and the director has previous experience managing federal grants. TRiO Student Support Services belongs to ASPIRE, a regional association of various TRiO programs operating in the Rocky Mountain region. TRiO staff members have attended regional and state ASPIRE professional development events. Because the TRiO Student Support Services program at CCA is relatively new to the institution, these opportunities for professional development have provided a foundation for the TRiO Student Support Services staff to build their program.

In addition to departmental professional development opportunities, the Student Affairs Division has offered programs on student success and Latino student recruitment and retention, a webinar on professional competencies, division-wide training on Strengthsquest (personality inventory) and diversity, budget training for supervisors, and informational programs about careers in student affairs. The division also has a monthly newsletter, is creating a professional development committee, and is looking at scheduling dedicated professional development time each month. Staff also participate in professional development opportunities provided through CCCS (such as the annual Student Affairs conference and issue-specific workshops on topics such as disability services and orientation), through the community (Mental Health First Aid training), and through professional organizations (especially in the areas of financial aid, advising, and orientation). (*Resource Room Document 5.19*)

Core Component 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

3.D.1. CCA provides student support services suited to the needs of its populations.

CCA students need placement testing, academic and financial advising, veteran services, disability accommodations, College orientation, tutoring, writing, research assistance, and help in successfully navigating their College careers. The College's Student Affairs Division and its instructional support services provide the assistance that students require.

The College's Admissions, Registration and Records, Financial Aid and Academic Advising offices work in concert to provide students a seamless start to their College careers. Four of the five full-time advisors hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and have had prior advising and/or student affairs experience. Three hold master's degrees. Several of the College's full-time and part-time advisors are also adjunct faculty at the College and are therefore in a unique position to effectively advise students. Admissions personnel and academic advisors undergo lengthy on-the-job training involving shadowing of trained advisors and then reverse shadowing as they begin the advising process. Professional development opportunities are provided through the System in the form of multiple student affairs workshops throughout the year. Full-time advisors are also provided a membership to NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) and attended the national conference in 2011-12. Part-time advisors attended the NACADA regional conference in 2012.

Additional student support services found at the College include:

- **The Military and Veteran Services Office** provides academic advising and assistance with educational benefits through the Veteran's Administration (VA). This office certifies enrollment for 300 - 350 veteran students who are using VA educational benefits. The CCA Foundation also offers a Veterans Scholarship for those veterans who are no longer eligible for VA educational benefits. This scholarship awards up to ten part-time students \$250/semester, and up to five full-time students \$500/semester. Seven scholarships were awarded during the first semester it was available (Spring Semester 2012).
- **The Testing Center** provides testing services for CCA students and the community, including Accuplacer for new students, make-up exams for current students, CLEP and DSST (previously Dantes) exams for students wishing to gain credit for prior learning, and testing for students needing specific accommodations. Accuplacer services are offered at both campuses, as well as at concurrent enrollment sites and at nearby Buckley Air Force Base.

- **The Accessibility Support Office** provides services for students with learning or physical disabilities, including accommodations requests, computer access and assistive technology, career support, and scholarship opportunities.
- **TRiO Student Support Services (SSS)** is a federally funded program that helps 160 students who are either first generation, have demonstrated financial need per federal guidelines, or have a documented learning or physical disability earn a degree and transfer to a four-year college or university to earn a bachelor's degree. To this end, SSS provides participants with an assigned advisor who helps them with educational and transfer planning, understanding financial aid programs and options for financing their education, applying for scholarships, and developing skills to be successful in their academic endeavors. Participants also have access to resources such as tutoring in key academic areas.
- **The Career Services Office** provides online and face-to-face resources to assist students with career exploration, career skills development, and internship/employment opportunities. The services provided include: career advising, online career resources, career development workshops, online internship and job boards, career and skills assessments, employer networking opportunities, and career/job/internship fairs and events. The goal of the department is to prepare students to research, plan, and navigate their individual career paths.

In addition to the campus offices listed above, the Student Affairs Division has implemented several programs designed to help students on their journey toward successful completion of their associate's degree or certificate at the College.

- **New student orientation** – CCA instituted a mandatory new student orientation program in the summer of 2012 for all new full-time and part-time students. The program provides new students with an overview of how the College works and assists them with advising and registration.
- **Student success workshops** – These workshops fit within a normal class period and provide skills students need to be successful in their classes such as time management, study skills, and library research. Trained workshop facilitators have presented over 25 of these workshops at both the CentreTech and Lowry campuses since the late spring of 2012.
- **Early alert** –The early alert program is facilitated through the Advising Center and provides faculty a timely opportunity to alert advisors if a student is in need of additional intervention.

- **Advancing Academic Achievement (AAA) classes** – During the fall 2012 semester, the coordinator of first-year programs and transitions developed a program for transfer students which included a focused AAA class during the fall semester and ongoing mentoring and transfer opportunities (such as college visits) in the spring.

Instructional support services provided at the College include:

- **The Academic Support Lab** is located at the CentreTech campus in the Classroom Building, Room 109. Math tutoring, Writing Studio, ESL tutoring, and computer assistance is provided to students during the semester. In addition, Writing Studio and math tutoring is scheduled at the Lowry campus in Room 208 of the North Quad. The tutoring schedule is available in MyCCA in the Academic Support section of the Student tab of the portal. Real-time, online math and English tutoring is available through NetTutor; asynchronous writing review is available through NetTutor's Paper Center. NetTutor is accessible through D2L.
- **Writing Studio** tutors in the Academic Support Lab review student papers written for English or content-area courses. Students secure 30-minute sessions through the Academic Support section on the Student tab in MyCCA. Sessions are held in the Academic Support Lab in C109 at the CentreTech campus and in the North Quad, Room 208, at the Lowry campus. Online assistance is also available through NetTutor accessed through D2L. In both cases, tutors address the paper's thesis and its support, organization, stylistic issues, citations and bibliography, and mechanics. All Writing Studio tutors are College adjunct faculty members and all NetTutor tutors hold master's degrees.

3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

The College is dedicated to meeting the needs of its diverse student body. Approximately 60 percent of incoming students enter with a need for multiple courses in developmental English, reading, or math. The College's focus on student success is present in its Academic Enrichment Department's (AcE) creative work to make the developmental courses more relevant and effective in providing students the skills they need to succeed in college.

Prior to 2009, the College's developmental education program included no integrated or accelerated options for students. In 2009, the College brought on a new department chair for the developmental sequence and the AcE Department began a process of creating pathways for students to move more quickly through their pre-collegiate course requirements. Research shows that extended time in the developmental sequence reduces the likelihood of success, retention, and completion of college-level courses (*Resource Room Document 5.20*). As Table 5.13 illustrates, the College has seen significant increase in success rates in its accelerated developmental English and math courses, as compared to its traditional course offerings. Students now have several opportunities to accelerate their developmental education sequence or to integrate two developmental courses or levels into one semester. The AcE Department's goal is to have most students complete their developmental education sequence in one semester or to receive supplemental support as necessary while taking college-level courses.

Table 5.13
Academic Enrichment success rates (Grade of A-B-C) by length of course for Fall 2008 through Spring 2012

	ENG 060	ENG 090	MAT 060	MAT 090
15 Weeks (Traditional)	56.6%	63.5%	63.4%	61.9%
10 Weeks	63.5%			
7.5 Weeks (Accelerated)	67.4%	74.3%	72.1%	71.0%

SOURCE: Annual Report, Academic Enrichment.

The implementation of these significant changes to the College's developmental education offerings has required significant collaboration with content-area instructors at the college level in order to ensure the appropriate depth of curriculum in each course. While still fairly new, the data collected on student success in these integrated and accelerated sections of English and reading is promising. Data show that students who complete an accelerated program in English/Reading outperform students in non-accelerated pathways in the developmental sequence and have equal or higher success in college-level English composition.

In addition, students in the integrated ENG/REA course do just as well or outperform students in non-integrated pathways and perform equally well in college-level English composition. Because of the success of these models in English and reading, the AcE department launched two integrated math courses as of spring 2012. The

department is still awaiting final data on student success in and beyond these courses, but students had a higher pass rate for these integrated options than for the non-integrated options. (*Resource Room Document 5.21*)

In August 2011, the state of Colorado assembled the Developmental Task Force to reduce the amount of time a student spends in developmental education to a semester or less. The AcE department chair has been an active member on the task force and one of CCA's regular English faculty members will be part of the statewide implementation team. While the task force recommendations will not be finalized until the State Board votes on February 13, 2013, the AcE Department has been working towards a smooth transition by piloting and scaling up current course offerings aligned with the task force recommendations. (*Resource Room Document 5.22*)

For English and reading, the final draft of the task force recommendations include a one-semester preparatory course for students testing two levels below college (which is currently 060) and replacing a traditional four-course sequence. It is also recommended that students testing one level below college (into what is currently 090) be mainstreamed into their ENG 121 course with a supplemental support course or mainstreamed into a discipline course with supplemental support.

The AcE Department currently offers a series of integrated ENG/REA courses that enable students to be prepared for college in one semester and will scale up the number of sections for Spring 2013. The AcE Department is also piloting two sections of ENG 121 with supplemental support in spring 2013 in anticipation of the task force recommendations being approved. Finally, in collaboration with the Social Science and Science Departments, the AcE Department has begun a pilot that allows students who test one level below college to have access to discipline courses with supplementary support. These efforts will continue in spring 2013 as the AcE Department collaborates with the Communication Department to offer LIT 115 with supplementary support.

The task force has also recommended that developmental preparation in math be reduced to one semester for most students. Recognizing that all students do not need College Algebra (MAT 121) to graduate, the task force has recommended two pathways for students. The quantitative numeracy pathway is designed to prepare students for non-Algebra transfer-level math courses (MAT 107, MAT 109, MAT 155, MAT 120, MAT 135 etc.), whereas the STEM pathway is designed to prepare students for MAT 121. To prepare for these changes, the AcE Department has scaled up the number of sections of

MAT 96, which is a combined MAT 90 and MAT 99 course and is comparable to the STEM pathway. (*Resource Room Document 5.23*)

The academic needs of English language learners who want to enter higher education are served through CCA's College Preparatory ESL program. Originally part of the Developmental Education Department, the College ESL classes have been offered under their own department since 2002. The department focuses on preparing immigrant and international students for the expectations of college-level work in terms of linguistic, technological, and cultural competence. ESL courses offer advancement through required remedial coursework parallel to Academic Enrichment. Students who finish advanced-level ESL courses are considered by CCA to have satisfied the same prerequisites and are therefore eligible to enroll in all 100-level courses at CCA. According to an informal analysis by Academic Enrichment, ESL students demonstrate similar rates of success in freshman composition courses when compared to their Academic Enrichment peers.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

The College is committed to student retention and completion and recognizes the critical role that effective advising plays in helping students succeed. The mission of College advisors is to partner with students to guide and empower them in developing, implementing, and completing academic plans that further their career and life goals. Academic advisors assist students in selecting the correct courses for placement, prerequisite, and program requirements. Advisors guide students in selecting the right courses to complete a degree or certificate at CCA and/or to transfer to a four-year institution. The College's Admissions, Registration and Records, Financial Aid and Academic Advising Offices work in tandem to provide students with comprehensive placement and advising from their very first experience at the College to ensure that students are academically and financially prepared for a successful college experience.

Advising is currently provided on a drop-in basis, with no appointment required. Online advising is also available through the website via online chat. A Getting Started checklist is available to new students both online through the College website as well as in the Admissions, Registration and Records, and Advising Offices on both campuses. Appropriate English and mathematics placement is determined by ACT or SAT scores, the evaluation of prior college transcripts, or the evaluation of student Accuplacer scores for English,

reading, and math. Students meet with an academic advisor when one of the following requirements is met:

- Accuplacer assessment is complete or ACT and SAT scores are available.
- Completion of New Student Orientation – only required for students who have never attended college after high school graduation.
- Returning student or student new to CCA who has taken classes at another college.

Academic advisors encourage students to complete any developmental courses prior to enrolling in college-level content courses and use program sheets, which are updated yearly, to help students map out their schedules for the upcoming semester. Advisors also make use of the online Degree Works program to help students track their progress toward a declared degree or to help them decide between paths of study.

As mentioned previously in the discussion of Core Component 3.A., in 2010-11 the College streamlined its list of elective courses that would count toward an AA or AS degree. This was done in an effort to encourage students working toward transfer to four-year institutions to focus their education on those courses whose content would transfer most seamlessly. Students still have ample course options for these degrees. In addition, for the student population not interested in transfer but interested only in earning an associate's degree, the College offers an AGS degree that is not nearly as limited.

In the current advising model, students are required to see an advisor only once if they are new to CCA. After that there is no formal process for working with students or providing additional guidance throughout their educational career. The Advising Office has begun to look at more "intrusive," purposeful advising options that would provide additional check-in points throughout a student's progress toward his/her degree. The College will soon be purchasing the Scheduling and Reporting System (SARS) which will allow the Advising Department the ability to schedule appointments. The Advising Department has also incorporated in-classroom advising for the first time during the spring 2013 semester to provide registration assistance to English and math AcE classes. The College is proud of the multiple one-on-one contacts made with its at-risk populations (first generation and/or TRiO students, students identified by faculty through the College's Early Alert process, students on academic probation, etc.). Monitoring of these students is led by student affairs

staff, but depends heavily on faculty involvement and provision of reports.

Students in the College's ESL and Academic Enrichment programs receive in-class advising throughout the semester, and despite the fact that the College has no formal mechanism for faculty advising, many regular faculty members also advise students throughout the semester. Career and Technical Education faculty and staff members provide academic advising for students in their programs. Faculty advising has also become especially common in the disciplines for which the new Degrees with Designation have been established. Increased enrollment has placed strains on the College's ability to consistently provide personal check-ins and follow-ups with students, and the new push to develop creative advising solutions will need to consider the fiscal feasibility for any model suggested. In 2010-11, an ad hoc committee was formed to research the feasibility of a faculty advising program at the College; however, it was determined that this option was not viable on a large scale because of the workload already placed on faculty. (*Resource Room Document 5.24*)

3.D.4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

CCA provides students and instructors with the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning, as specified below.

Technological Infrastructure

Both CentreTech and Lowry are wireless campuses, with free wireless access for students and staff. Faculty and staff also have access to a secured wireless network on each campus in order to access their documents in a password-protected environment. Faculty and staff also have virtual access to their desktop through Citrix. In addition, almost every classroom on each campus includes (at a minimum) a computer station with Internet connection, overhead projector, and screen. Several classrooms also have document cameras and/or SMART Board projectors and software acquired in 2011 in order to make learning even more interactive. Laptop carts are also available on both campuses in an effort to create mobile computer labs when necessary.

Challenges exist in ensuring that bandwidth is sufficient for instructional technology to function consistently on both campuses, as well as in proper training of faculty to effectively use the SMART Board technology. The College's IT staff works hard to provide prompt support when there are issues; however, with a growing College and a limited number of IT staff members on hand, there has been a need for increased support and improved IT operations over the past several years.

The College website is the main technological tool used to provide information and resources to students and instructors. The website's public page contains general information about the College, its programs, news and events, information for alumni, and the College's Foundation. From this public page, students and instructors can gain access to the MyCCA portal which provides individualized information about course schedules, student finances, employment concerns, and student and faculty resources, as well as access to an individual's College email account. Through this portal, students and faculty also gain access to their course homepages (through the course management system Desire2Learn), within which they can access course content, grade, and attendance information, as well as contact information for instructors and classmates.

The Division of Online Learning and Instructional Technology offers training and general support for students and faculty in the Desire2Learn (D2L) classroom management system and for online courses, as well as for specific hardware-software configurations around the College. The division facilitates a D2L training course as well as one-on-one assistance for students. Basic D2L training is required for all instructors and is offered once every two weeks. Individualized training and support are provided to instructors on a one-on-one basis due to the broad variety of available hardware and software configurations, but also to accommodate instructors' specific interests in various technologies such as SMART Board, Symposium, Camtasia, Softchalk, iPads, laptop computers, immersive learning, lecture capture, blended learning, clickers, and captioning for ADA compliance.

Library Resources

The College's Learning Resource Center, located on the CentreTech campus but fully accessible online, provides a wide variety of resources and services to students to support their learning and research needs. Such resources include the library catalog; access to over 30,000 eBooks through ebrary; access to more than 15 subscription databases; small group study rooms; quiet study areas; a

computer lab with printer access; course reserves; one-on-one, small group, and online research assistance; and interlibrary loan services.

Library services have also been provided at the Lowry campus in the form of the Science Library, which opened in the fall of 2006. The library quickly grew out of its original 170 square-foot office, as student usage of the space was greater than anticipated. The original library had one computer with Internet access, one microscope, and a handful of books. It now has six computers, three brainstorm-study tables, six microscopes complete with slide sets from each of the biology classes offered in the department, most of the models used in the anatomy and physiology classes, tutorial DVDs, chemistry models, career planning materials, and 900 books, textbooks, and reference books.

The Paralegal Department also houses its own library resources, comprised of roughly 1,275 books and reference materials. Paralegal students also have access to the legal research database Westlaw.

In 2012 the Learning Resource Center requested and received Perkins Grant funding for innovative instructional support at the Lowry campus, where the majority of Career and Technical Education programs are offered. The grant provides for a new full-time librarian position on the Lowry campus to integrate information literacy into CTE learning and instruction via in-class instruction, one-on-one research appointments, and online real-time instruction and research assistance. Funding was also provided for the creation of an LRC@Lowry Kiosk to be located in the campus's open lab.

Scientific Laboratories and Collections

Students at the College have the opportunity to learn in state-of-the-art science laboratories. The College has made a commitment to high-quality student laboratories by paying for equipment with high-cost course fees. Examples include:

- The Astronomy area has a 15-foot Pro-Dome observatory located on the CentreTech campus. The observatory is outfitted with a Celestron C-14 telescope on a computer-controlled mount, with Apogee Alta-U[^] CCD and color filter wheel with Bessel BVRI filter set. Astronomy students also have access to C-8 and C-11 telescopes, portable ten-inch and five-inch Maksutov Cassegrain telescopes and fifteen pairs of binoculars.
- Chemistry has a ThermoScientific Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrometer and a Hewlett-Packard Gas Chromatograph Mass

Spectrometer that the organic chemistry students use when conducting their experiments.

- The General Biology lab contains a salt-water tank where students can watch the organisms they are studying and chemistry and biology students have Genessus 10S UV-Vis Spectrophotometers for conducting labs.
- Biotechnology students have multiple PCR Thermocyclers and an ABI 310 single capillary electrophoresis-based DNA sequencer.
- Biology has at least one microscope for every two students in each class.
- Anatomy and Physiology have multiple anatomical models for each class.
- Geology students benefit from two light microscopes and eight stereoscopes. The department also has mineral, rock, and fossil collections for use by students.
- Within the Social Sciences Department, Anthropology students benefit from an extensive skeletal and fossil collection for studying human and primate anatomy, human diversity, and evolutionary concepts.

Performance Spaces

Students are provided performance and simulation spaces throughout both campuses. The Larry D. Carter Theater on the CentreTech campus provides a venue for performing arts students to perform theatre, dance, and musical pieces each semester. The dance/yoga studio, music practice rooms and instruments, and the theater provide classroom space for practice and rehearsal prior to the student productions each semester. The CCA Foundation played an integral role in fundraising to build the theater in 1998 and has plans to incorporate a new amphitheater into its Lowry development capital campaign project.

Students in the EMS, police, fire, and first responder programs gain quality, hands-on experience in the College's Center for Simulation. The state-of-the-art Center provides a multifaceted learning environment where students prepare for their careers by being placed in real-time scenarios. The Center played an integral role in the 2011 Operation Mountain Guardian Emergency Exercise, a day-long multi-jurisdictional operation and in the 2012 American Medical Response's National Clinical and Safety Championships. CCA faculty were vital to the exercise design and planning, and CCA students in Emergency Services, Theatre, and Film were able to participate in the exercise, receiving a valuable opportunity to simulate the real-world scenarios in which they may someday work. The Center's Disaster Management

Institute (DMI), opened in 2010 through use of federal funds, is equipped with the most current communications capabilities to allow both CCA students and working professionals to experience and train in management of simulated disasters of all types and sizes.

Prior to 2008, both visual and performing arts were housed under one department on the CentreTech campus. Student artwork was exhibited throughout the Fine Arts building at the end of each semester and art was featured in some display cases and hallways around campus. In 2008, the department structure shifted creating the Department for Performing Arts and Humanities and a new Art Department. A new department chair was hired and the visual arts moved to the Lowry campus. The Art Department has continued the practice of displaying student work at the end of each semester in the hallways and exhibit cases throughout the campus.

In 2011, the Art Department proposed the idea of a traditional art gallery to display student, faculty, and professional work. The administration was supportive and dedicated a large room in the campus's North Quad for this purpose. The CCA Foundation also approached a donor who agreed to fund operating expenses for the gallery. The Donna Morevec Gallery at CCA opened in February of 2012 and has exhibited the work of students, faculty, local arts organizations, and regionally recognized professional artists. The gallery employs student interns to accomplish the work of the gallery. Students and the community at large are able to experience current professional work and participate in workshops or other educational events that accompany each exhibit.

3.D.5 The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

The College provides guidance to students in the effective use of research and information resources through a variety of services. Students are expected to conduct research in most general education guaranteed transfer courses. Students are notified of the College's Academic Dishonesty Policy, the definition of academic dishonesty, and the consequences of policy violation in every course syllabus across the College. Students can access the Learning Resource Center's (LRC) catalog, a host of subscription databases, the College's eBook collection (with access to over 30,000 eBooks) as well as interlibrary loan services through the student portal, so that the information they require is available both on and off campus. Because many of these services and ways to access them may be new to or misunderstood by CCA's students, the LRC offers frequent open houses and "tech petting zoos" in order to draw students in and

provide an overview of its resources and how to access them. Students can find LRC hours through the College portal and are able to chat live with LRC staff during operating hours and have access to AskAcademic, a 24/7 online resource for research questions of all types.

In addition to providing these information resources, the College offers students the support they need to use and cite these sources effectively. The LRC offers one-on-one research appointments, as well as drop-in research opportunities to students needing individual attention throughout the multiple research and writing stages. They also provide research instruction sessions to entire face-to-face, hybrid, and online classes. College faculty in multiple areas, most notably the physical and social sciences, have worked with LRC staff to develop discipline-specific resources to improve student success in their classes, particularly those with a large research component or historically low success rates.

The guidance provided to students throughout the research process is well received by students and has had a positive effect on student success. The College does face some challenges in this area, however. The Learning Resource Center is staffed by three full-time employees—one degreed librarian, one assistant with a bachelor's degree, and one administrative assistant, in addition to several hourly or work-study student employees. All are located primarily on the CentreTech campus. As of fall 2012, the College also has one full-time temporary librarian on the Lowry campus, a position funded by a Perkins Technology grant. The College hopes to make this a permanent position since the demands on library staff are many and the full-time employees are stretched too thin, particularly during peak research weeks each semester. Adjunct faculty members from around the College have begun to offer research sessions in their disciplines with much success; however, the College's student body has grown substantially, especially over the past three years, and this seems to be an area where additional staffing is warranted.

Another challenge for the effective provision of research assistance is the fact that many students do not attend classes primarily on the CentreTech campus. Indeed, nearly 50 percent of the College's on-campus enrollment is at the Lowry campus, 20 percent of student enrollment is in online course sections, and nearly 20 percent of the College's enrollment is at high schools throughout the College's service area. As student services at the Lowry campus improve and expand to accommodate its significant enrollment growth, so too must the library services presence and provision of instructional services improve.

the library services presence and provision of instructional services improve.

As stated previously, all students have access to the College's information resources through the student portal available online, and students are guided to these resources by instructors from within their online course home pages as well as through the College's new mandatory New Student Orientation. The College's library staff conducts research presentations in the concurrent enrollment classes in area high schools; however, there needs to be increased communication between the school districts' library staff and the College's. There are important opportunities to leverage existing resources in the high schools to provide training and guidance in the research process that have not yet been sufficiently addressed.

Core Component 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational experience.

3.E.1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

As its mission states, “the Community College of Aurora provides lifelong educational opportunities, prepares the current and future workforce, and promotes excellence in teaching, learning, and service to our diverse community.” The co-curricular opportunities—such as those provided by student organizations and clubs, annual community service projects, and interdisciplinary and hands-on educational experiences—are suited to the institution's mission and enhance the overall educational experience of its students. The College's status as a “commuter” or “cafeteria” campus, with many students juggling family and employment responsibilities while squeezing in classes on a part-time basis, works against large numbers of students being able to participate in co-curricular programs.

The Office of Student Life oversees the Student Government Association and the 10 student organizations that are active on campus. This includes two honor societies (Phi Theta Kappa and Phi Beta Lambda) and multiple special interest clubs. Each club provides an opportunity for students to become engaged and active on the College campus while offering students important leadership opportunities to assist in their development and preparation for eventual employment. (*Resource Room Document 5.25*)

The Office of Student Life has increased its intent to benefit students' education outside the classroom by offering a variety of educational

programs range from a six-week financial series to finals preparation, Black History month, and time-management and study skills.

Instructional departments are also providers of critical services to the community. The Business Department provides annual tax return filing assistance to low-income families through its very successful participation in Tax Help Colorado. Through student efforts in the 2012 filing year, area families received almost \$3 million in tax refunds. Table 5.14 illustrates the benefits of this program to the community, as well as the co-curricular educational benefits to students.

Table 5.14
Tax Help Colorado-Community College of Aurora

	2008	2010	2012
Number of Clients Served	340	1,008	1,426
Total Refunds	\$523,064	\$2,375,009	\$2,890,850
Number of Student Volunteers	15	31	45
Volunteer Hours	N/A	1,223	1,764

SOURCE: CCA Business Department.

The Math Department encourages young women’s interest in pursuing degrees in math and engineering through their annual sponsorship of Math Day for Girls. The Social Sciences Department provides Aurora’s largely immigrant population information on paths to citizenship at its annual Constitution Day celebration. The EMS, Police Academy and Fire Safety programs help prepare area first responders for large-scale emergency response through their regular disaster simulations, such as 2011’s Operation Mountain Guardian or 2012’s hosting of the American Medical Response’s National Clinical and Safety Championships.

Beginning in 2007 and continuing until 2011, the College hosted the Greater Metro Denver Regional History Day, the regional venue for students competing in National History Day. This entailed History faculty members and instructors visiting middle school and high school history classes to teach students how to research and write in history, judging the individual school competitions, and running the regional contest each April. Winners went on to the state competition and winners of the state competition went on to the national competition in Washington DC. In 2011, a victim of its own success, the regional competition attracted 1,800 students, which exceeded the

College's capacity, so the College passed off its sponsorship to a consortium of school districts for the 2012 competition.

The College's focus on real-life learning is shown in faculty efforts to take students beyond the classroom experience. From physical anthropology classes' field trips to the primate exhibit at the Denver Zoo, to the Math Department's annual Pi Day celebration, to political science faculty and student participation in Election Night events at the College's Simulation Center and the Model United Nations, faculty work hard to provide quality educational experiences for their students. Additional examples of co-curricular faculty-led activities offered to CCA students include the English Department's orchestration of National Day on Writing events, the Science Department faculty working with students to submit a successful grant proposal to NASA which allowed them a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fly on a zero-gravity flight at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, and the interdisciplinary efforts of faculty to develop a murder case simulation for students in physical anthropology, EMS, paralegal, biology, chemistry, history, and theatre classes to work together to solve.

3.E.2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

The College's taglines have changed over the years but its commitment to student acquisition of transferable skills that go beyond the classroom has remained the same. From "Real-Life Learning" to "Aspire, Explore, Achieve" to the current "Go Beyond the Book," the College remains loyal to its mission to "provide lifelong educational opportunities, prepare the current and future workforce, and promote excellence in teaching, learning, and service to its diverse community."

The College's focus on acquisition of the six Lifelong Skills demonstrates its commitment to developing its graduates into knowledgeable and engaged citizens. Critical inquiry, written and oral communication, technology, quantitative reasoning, aesthetics, and personal responsibility are the skills the CCA community believes its students need in order to launch successful careers, to continue their educational journey upon transfer, and to contribute to society. Faculty and staff members are committed to demonstrating how these skills are equally applicable in the classroom and in the student's everyday life. The College's various simulation-centered learning

experiences, as well as its focus on immersive and interdisciplinary approaches to student learning are ways in which the College demonstrates its dedication to taking learning “beyond the book.”

Student Life offers many opportunities to students, including providing community service. Examples of service learning projects the students provide to the Aurora community include the annual Highline Canal Cleanup, 9Health Fair, Take Back the Night, Food Bank of the Rockies, Central Library of Denver, and monthly STD testing. Table 5.15 provides a summary of student participation in selected service projects.

Table 5.15
Number of students in service projects

Service Projects by Students	
2004 -2012 Highline Canal Cleanup (annual)	500-600 participants annually
2004-2012 9Health Fair (annual)	300-400 participants annually
2011-2012 SGA/PTK Food Bank of the Rockies	10 participants each drive
2008-2011 Fall Psychology Club Food/Clothing Drive	20-50 participants each drive
2012 Two Summer Fundraisers for Colorado Fires	10 each drive

SOURCE: Student Life.

Strengths:

- The College provides a rigorous educational experience for students, as evidenced by its course content and oversight mechanisms, general education guaranteed transfer courses, and articulation agreements with four-year institutions and statewide Degrees with Designation.
- The Colorado Common Course Numbering System (CCCNS) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education guaranteed transfer process both facilitate course development and seamless transfer.
- The College employs highly qualified and credentialed regular and adjunct faculty members with diverse backgrounds and work experience. CCA’s 12-month faculty department chair model provides a layer of administrative support that is appropriately experienced in the teaching disciplines and which gives faculty voice to the College’s decision-making process.
- The College has increased staff support in both online learning and concurrent enrollment to ensure the quality and

consistency of course offerings regardless of location or modality.

Challenges:

- The College lacks sufficient administrative assistance for the Instructional Division. Administrative support staff is needed to handle enrollment increases and the additional administrative workload they bring.
- The College needs to increase its number of regular faculty members. Regular faculty members provide increased consistency across course sections and increased opportunity for student-teacher interaction and inquiry. They also provide necessary oversight of instructional and curricular matters.
- There is a need for additional library staff members to support learning throughout the College.

Opportunities:

- Both Instruction and Student Affairs are restructuring the delivery of professional development opportunities. There may be value in looking at a cross-divisional team responsible for developing a College-wide program of opportunities.
- Although there is good advising and tutoring support in the basic skill areas, e.g. English, Developmental math, etc., the College can expand and strengthen such support across disciplines.
- Hiring additional degreed librarians would support learning resources throughout the College.
- The recommendations of the Colorado Developmental Task Force, to be voted on by the State Board on February 13, 2013, provide a substantive restructuring of developmental education to promote student success and completion.
- With a new president, a new vice-president of instruction, and recommendations from the HLC, 2013 would be a prime moment to review and revise the College's planning and budgetary processes to ensure that academic quality measures and student success initiatives remain central to the College's focus.

Chapter 6 Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Criterion Four: The Community College of Aurora demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Introduction:

This chapter examines the Community College of Aurora's (CCA or the College) policies and procedures for ensuring quality educational programs throughout the institution, and focuses on the ways in which the College seeks to continually improve student learning through appropriate assessment processes and changes based on results of that assessment. This chapter also reviews the College's reporting of and attention to student success rates for retention and completion. A summary of the College's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement follows the discussion of the criterion's three core components.

Core Component 4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

4.A.1 The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

The College maintains a practice of regular program review across the College through its annual assessment process in all instructional departments, as well as through the annual internal program review process for all academic departments, and the external program review process that all Career and Technical Education Programs undergo every five years.

The College's assessment process is discussed more fully below under Core Component 4B. Department chairs develop program assessment plans each fall with faculty input and submit them to the Faculty Assessment Committee for review. Departments conduct their assessments and collect data throughout the fall and spring semesters. Data are analyzed first at the department level and results are used to develop informed action steps that become part of the next year's assessment plan. Departments report on results from the past year as well as action items to be introduced the following assessment cycle in areas where there is room for improvement. These department assessment reports are then reviewed by the Faculty Assessment

Committee in order to report on any College-wide trends. (*Resource Room Document 6.1*)

Department chairs submit annual chair reports, which highlight departmental successes and initiatives, present important data such as program FTE and average class size in relationship to previous years, and request resources that tie into department and College goals. With turnover in the vice president of instruction position in 2010, the interim vice president of instruction worked with instructional deans to develop a database to facilitate program reviews within each department. This database was to take the place of annual chair reports, with parts being completed by division dean and others by department chairs. When the current vice president of instruction was hired in 2012, the idea of dean/chair-developed program reviews was maintained, although the original database format was adapted. Department chairs submitted preliminary department data for the first of these program reviews in November 2012. These program reviews will drive the development of a comprehensive academic master plan. They will also aid in Instructional budget preparation and will be used to assess the needs and priorities of the instructional faculty and staff in order to help inform Leadership Council when budget discussions begin in early 2013. (*Resource Room Document 6.2*)

Career and Technical Education (CTE) degrees and certificates and their courses are initially developed internally by a CTE department at one of the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS or the System) 13 colleges and are then vetted through the process of approvals by a dean, Leadership Council when funds are required, and the College's Curriculum Committee before submission to the System for program approval. CTE programs consist of courses that either already exist in the College *Catalog* or, if they are new courses, must go through the approval process to become part of the System's Common Course Numbering System (CCNS). Program proposals must include documentation from industry in the service area as well as from federal and state labor agencies demonstrating a demand for the career path that the program will fill, and a list of area specialists from the community who will serve on the program's advisory board. (*Resource Room Document 6.3*)

CTE program participants' completion rates and post-program employment rates are monitored through the College's Office of Institutional Research. Each program's advisory board meets a minimum of once each semester to ensure the program's continued value to the community and to review changes to its curriculum. Program quality is also ensured by the employment of appropriately credentialed instructors. Each CTE program comes up for review

every five years, at which time it must report on the occupations for which students will be prepared upon completion of the certificate, after also completing a four-year degree program, and after completing an advanced degree. In addition, a program must list current articulation agreements, explain what steps have been taken to comply with Gainful Employment, and explain why (if applicable) the program is not meeting state benchmark data for enrollment, completers, and placement. (*Resource Room Document 6.4*)

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

CCA evaluates the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential or other forms of prior learning. The College follows the CCCS's Education Services Council policy for the transfer of credit that was developed and approved in 2006 as a system-wide procedure. This policy is consistent with accepted practice across higher education institutions. The College employs a full-time registrar, assistant registrar, and academic credential evaluator. All assist in the evaluation of college transcripts. (*Resource Room Document 6.5*)

The College awards credit for prior learning based on Board Policy 9-42 of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE or state board), which states, "The State Board supports the concept of lifelong learning to meet the retraining, upgrading and personal enrichment needs of students. It is the policy of the board that a student's experience outside the college classroom shall be evaluated for college credit at the request of the student." (*Resource Room Document 6.6*) The College makes clear in its description of prior learning contained in its Credit for Prior Learning Handbook that credit for prior learning "is not awarded for experience, but rather for college-level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained as a result of their prior learning experience." Credit for prior learning can be obtained through appropriate scores on standardized tests such as CLEP or DSST (formerly DAN TES), through institutional challenge exams which are evaluated by designated subject experts at the College, through the use of published guides for evaluation of military transcripts, or through the development of a portfolio to be evaluated by a subject-matter expert. (*Resource Room Document 6.7*)

Students wishing to receive credit for prior learning first review the College *Catalog* to determine for which course or courses they feel they have relevant, equivalent college-level experience. The student

meets with an academic advisor to discuss the different methods and steps for requesting credit for prior learning and for transfer information, and determine which method will be pursued. Students can sit for standardized tests at the College's Testing Center. If pursuing the portfolio or challenge exam, students are directed to the appropriate department chair or subject-matter expert to have paperwork filled out and to set up a day and time to submit their portfolio or sit for their challenge exam. There is no cost to the student to take a challenge exam or to have a subject expert review a portfolio. The College charges 50 percent of the in-state tuition, less fees and the College Opportunity Fund (COF) stipend, for credit for prior learning. Students pay these charges prior to CCA credit being transcribed.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The College evaluates credits earned at regionally accredited institutions of higher education to determine if those credits will be accepted in transfer. Courses accepted in transfer must match the content and meet or exceed the rigor of CCA as determined by the professional judgment of the College's credential evaluator or department chair. Students who have previously attended any college must complete the College's application for admission, indicating prior colleges attended. Transfer students who intend to pursue a degree or certificate at CCA must meet the College's assessment requirements. Most transfer students have completed either developmental or college-level courses. When the official transcript from the previous institution is received, those courses are evaluated to determine if the prerequisites for CCA classes have been met.

Students must be enrolled at CCA and have a declared major in order for their transcripts to be evaluated. The college where credit was initially earned must mail an official transcript directly to CCA. CCA then evaluates transfer credit course by course, based upon the student's declared degree or certificate. Generally, grades of "C" or better are accepted in transfer. CCA may choose to transfer "D" grades on a case-by-case basis, determined by the student's chosen program and whether a "D" grade may be used to meet degree or certificate requirements. Depending on the program of study at CCA and courses taken, some courses are not eligible for transfer after seven years.

The College sends written confirmation of the credit awarded to each student for whom a credit evaluation is completed. Students can also check the status of their transfer credits by viewing their unofficial

transcripts online in their MyCCA account. Credit is typically evaluated and posted to the student record within 30 days of receipt of official transcript at CCA. Documents become the property of the College and are not released to the student or transferred to other institutions.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

CCA maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including concurrent enrollment programs. It assures that its concurrent enrollment courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its on-campus course offerings.

The College, although part of the 13-college Colorado Community College System, maintains authority over the prerequisites it sets for courses. The exceptions to this autonomy are the prerequisites for math, English, and developmental education, which are set by the Colorado Department of Higher Education. (*Resource Room Document 6.8*) Prerequisite holds are placed in Banner as the term schedule is created and students must demonstrate appropriate placement prior to enrolling in these courses. This is true of all College course sections, regardless of location or modality. Students in concurrent enrollment sections as well as on-campus, online, or hybrid sections of courses must have sufficiently high ACT or Accuplacer scores in order to enroll in these courses and receive college credit for the course. Additionally, Banner holds are placed on higher-level courses when lower-level prerequisite courses are in place as stipulated in the College *Catalog*.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the College maintains the content and rigor of all courses—regardless of location or modality—through a number of means. The College has high hiring standards for faculty in all disciplines. Faculty teaching the College’s general education courses must possess a master’s degree in their teaching discipline or a master’s degree in another discipline plus 18 credits of graduate study in their teaching discipline. Very rare exceptions are made to this rule; however, exceptions do exist. An example would be in the College’s

dance program, in which no guaranteed transfer courses are offered and where potential instructors must demonstrate exceptional dance preparation and instructional experience. Within the Career and Technical Education disciplines, faculty members are appropriately credentialed and must maintain proper credentialing in order to continue teaching for the College. All instructors in the College's concurrent enrollment program and its online course offerings must meet the College's minimum qualification requirements.

Student learning outcomes and the topical outline for each course's content are determined by the System's Common Course Numbering System (CCNS). The College's model syllabus—a universal syllabus format used in every course the College offers—includes the CCNS course description, learning outcomes and topical outline, as well as a course calendar demonstrating the course's content. Textbooks, including those used in concurrent enrollment and online sections, are approved by department chairs prior to adoption to verify that course content is appropriately covered. (*Resource Room Document 6.9*)

The College's Concurrent Enrollment Handbook guides the oversight relationship that department chairs have over concurrent enrollment faculty and their course sections. Each year faculty are observed, students' coursework is collected, and concurrent enrollment sections of courses participate in the departments' assessment of student learning to verify acquisition of course learning outcomes as well as the College's Lifelong Skills. Finally, student evaluation of instruction is a valuable tool for department chairs to verify acquisition of learning outcomes and gain valuable feedback from students regarding the course, its content, instruction, and their perceived success in meeting the course's learning outcomes. (*Resource Room Document 6.10*)

Maintaining control over proper student placement in high schools has not been a problem for the College; however, Accuplacer testing of incoming high school students has often occurred at the beginning of a semester, as opposed to the semester prior to enrollment in their high school courses. Consequently, Accuplacer cutoff scores have often been determined after students' schedules for the year have been set, leading to course sections in which some students are taking the course for college credit and some are not. The College's message is that these courses are to be taught as college courses and the content and rigor cannot vary, regardless of the percentage of students enrolled in the course for college credit. Classroom observations, participation in departmental assessment measures, and review of student work and evaluation of instruction help to determine whether standards of rigor

are being met, but instructor concerns over this issue have yet to be sufficiently addressed. (*Resource Room Document 6.11*)

Another challenge that CCA has faced over the past few years is low student participation in the course evaluation process. In 2009, the College moved from paper evaluations to an online course evaluation system. With online course evaluation being completely optional and anonymous, the College has struggled to increase the percentage of students who complete their course evaluations. Evaluation response has been particularly low in concurrent enrollment. Online section student response has also been consistently lower than face-to-face course sections taught at one of the College’s two campuses. In the spring 2012 semester, faculty members and deans across the College worked with the director of assessment and institutional effectiveness to develop strategies to increase the number of course sections being evaluated and the number of students within each section who completed their evaluations. Special attention was given to increasing student response rates in online and concurrent enrollment sections.

As Table 6.1 shows, spring 2012 evaluation rates were the highest recorded since moving to the online system, with 76.6 percent of course sections having student responses and 36.6 percent of all enrolled students completing their evaluation of instruction. Student response in concurrent enrollment sections increased to 38.2 percent in spring 2012 from 12.9 percent in fall 2011. It is still a challenge to get students in online sections to complete their evaluations, although there was a modest gain in this area. The College needs to continue these successful efforts moving forward, as student response to instruction provides a valuable indirect measure of student learning.

Table 6.1
Student Evaluation of Instruction Participation by Term

Term	Sections Participating	Students in Classrooms Participating	Students in Online Participating	Students in High School Participating
Fall 2009	53.7%	38.1%	23.0%	10.6%
Spring 2010	43.8%	34.7%	27.7%	4.9%
Fall 2010	66.3%	28.7%	21.4%	6.1%
Spring 2011	71.8%	29.4%	19.7%	10.5%
Fall 2011	62.1%	24.3%	18.1%	12.9%
Spring 2012	76.6%	39.5%	20.0%	38.2%

SOURCE: Office of Institutional Research Student Evaluations Response Rates Report August 2012.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

CCA’s Paralegal and Emergency Medical Services programs are nationally accredited by specialized accrediting agencies—the American Bar Association (ABA) and the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (COAEMSP), respectively. The Paralegal program completed both its self-study and site visit in 2011. The EMS program submitted its self-study and had its site visit in fall 2012. Though not separately accredited by an external accrediting body, the College’s Police Academy underwent certification by the state prior to its inception in 1994. Graduates of the program must sit for the POST (Police Officer Standards and Training) exam. Table 6.2 shows that of 137 students to take the POST exam from 2010 through 2012, 132 (96 percent) passed the exam. Accreditation relationships are listed on the College’s website. (*Resource Room Document 6.11*)

Table 6.2
Students pass rates on the P.O.S.T.

	# of Classes	Passed	Failed
2010-11	4	67	1
2011-12	4	55	3
2012-13*	1	10	1

SOURCE: Annual POST Report; Criminal Justice Department.
NOTE: There will be 3 more 2012-13 classes taking the POST exam.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

The College uses several different means to assess whether programs are effective in preparing students for transfer or for employment after graduation. The College’s Office of Institutional Research surveys recent graduates from Career and Technical Programs regarding their satisfaction with CCA and with their courses, as well as their employment status. Periodically, the College surveys transfer graduates as well. This report is shared with deans and department

chairs and is then posted on the College’s internal website, as well as on the Colorado Community College System website. (*Resource Room Documents 6.12 and 6.13*)

As Table 6.3 demonstrates, over 90 percent of responding graduates in both CTE and transfer degree programs reported being employed or continuing their education.

Table 6.3
Post-Graduate Survey of CCA Students

Year of Graduation	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Year of Survey	2010	2011	2012
Career/Technical Graduates			
Number of Graduates	349	500	439
Response Rate	41.0%	41.6%	39.6%
Continuing Education or Employed	85.3%	84.6%	83.8%
Average Hourly Wage	\$15.00	\$20.13	\$20.27
CCA Met My Educational Goals ^a	94.4%	90.8%	90.8%
CCA Helped Me Find/Keep Job ^a	86.4%	86.8%	91.1%
Transfer Graduates			
Number of Graduates	224	233	274
Response Rate	46.4%	46.4%	43.8%
Continuing Education or Employed	92.7%	94.4%	90.8%
Average Hourly Wage	\$14.52	\$12.80	\$13.85
CCA Met My Educational Goals ^a	94.2%	96.2%	94.2%
CCA Helped Me Find/Keep Job ^a	91.1%	86.0%	89.7%

SOURCE: CCA Office of Institutional Research, Survey of Graduated Students.

Average hourly wage for CTE graduates is consistently higher than that of transfer graduates, though both averages are significantly above the minimum wage for the state (\$7.78/hr.). The post-graduation survey data also demonstrates high satisfaction in both CTE and transfer graduates with the quality of the education they received at CCA and affirms the College’s ability to meet students’ educational goals and prepare them for the workforce.

There are challenges around gathering information from students post-graduation. This is a time-consuming project that is dependent on graduates volunteering to participate in the survey. In addition, with the exception of several career and technical certificate programs, tracking student data post-graduation is not currently mandated and so

is not an institutional priority. The limited 2.5 FTE staffing in Institutional Research requires that IR requests be prioritized.

In addition to post-graduation employment rates, the monitoring of academic transfer is another way the College measures academic achievement. The College has worked to more clearly delineate the coursework to be completed if a student is working toward an associate of arts or associate of science degree. Prior to the 2010-11 school year, the College allowed any course 100-level or higher to count as an elective toward the AA and AS degrees. In 2010-11, the College faculty and administration discussed the benefits of limiting students' course selection in order to provide a more appropriate preparation for transfer. The new Degrees with Designation have very specific requirements and electives and, therefore, help students focus their course of study even further, presenting a clearer path to completion. Acquisition of data regarding student success after transfer is challenging due to FERPA requirements, and the Degrees with Designation are still too new for reliable and substantial completion and transfer information to be available. The College has begun tracking transfer through its participation in the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) and the National Clearinghouse. Table 6.4 shows that the College is at or above the national median for both full-time and part-time students in all areas except part-time completion.

Table 6.4

National Community College Benchmark data on Community College Transfers to Four-Year Institutions within 3 years of enrollment, CCA Graduates compared to participating colleges nationally^a

Status as of Fall 2011 (Within 3 Years of Enrollment) ^b :	CCA Fall 2008 Enrollees	National Median	National Ranking ^c
Full-Time, First-Time Students			
Completed Community College	24.2%	20.2%	65 pctile
Transferred to Four-Year Institution	18.2%	16.8%	54 pctile
Completed or Transferred	42.4%	37.5%	68 pctile
Part-Time, First-Time Students			
Completed Community College	5.8%	6.5%	42 pctile
Transferred to Four-Year Institution	13.0%	10.6%	63 pctile
Completed or Transferred	18.8%	18.4%	53 pctile

SOURCE: National Community College Benchmark Project 2012; National Student Clearinghouse.

^a The National Community College Benchmark Project is a voluntary data consortium providing benchmark and peer comparison data to colleges across the U.S.

^b The Benchmark Project counts three-year completion and transfer rates as follows: First, the institution identifies any first-time enrollees in Fall 2008, then queries the National Student Clearinghouse for any students who completed or transferred by Fall 2011. The three years for completion and transfer consist of Academic years 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11.

^c Percentile rank shows percentage of colleges that fall below the reported CCA number; for instance, a 65 percentile rank for full-time first-time students completing community college within three years shows that 65% of colleges participating had fewer than 24.2% of their students completing community college within three years. In 2012, the percentile rank compares CCA to 272 other participating community colleges nationally. A complete list of colleges that participated is available at the Benchmark Project website, <http://www.nccbp.org/content/peer-institutions>.

Core Component 4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

The College is committed to assessment of student learning and the ongoing improvement in both student learning outcome attainment and a deepening culture of assessment throughout the Instructional Division. The recent history of assessment at the Community College of Aurora has been through three phases since 2003.

The first of these phases started in response to HLC findings regarding CCA’s assessment practices. The 2006 monitoring report on assessment resulted from the College’s 2003 site visit. (*Resource Document Room 6.14*) The College took this opportunity to develop plans for use of direct and indirect measures of assessing our Lifelong Skills, to empower department chairs with greater responsibility for assessment in their areas, and to place more emphasis on student involvement in the assessment process. During this phase, a capstone course was created that was a requirement for an AA degree. Students

in the course were expected to create and present projects that demonstrated a synthesis of the Lifelong Skills that were acquired through their prior coursework. The results were not what the College expected: students saw little value in taking this last three-credit course and preferred to transfer without completing a degree, hurting the College's graduation rates. The 60 + 60 credit agreement with the four-year institutions that came into being later might have encouraged students to complete, but without it, the College phased out the capstone course concept and returned its emphasis to developing the Lifelong Skills across the curriculum.

In 2005-06, cross-disciplinary teams were formed to create rubrics for each of the Lifelong Skills. The College offered training for faculty on using the rubrics and creating rubric-inspired assignments that would help ensure a continued emphasis on teaching these skills in all sections of all courses. (*Resource Room Document 6.15*) Course syllabi began to include references to which Lifelong Skills would be featured in a given course. During the summer of 2007, each department created a grid showing which Lifelong Skills were emphasized in which courses, and the grid prompted conversation and planning devoted to developing College-wide coverage of each skill. (*Resource Room Document 6.16*)

The next phase of the assessment process's evolution came with a move to dual reporting at the department level for the 2008-09 school year. Each department was asked to develop a plan for assessing at least one skill that was intrinsic to their program (e.g., written communication in English; quantitative reasoning in Mathematics), along with at least one Lifelong Skill that was extrinsic to their area. The results from the assessment of intrinsic skills were used at the department level to identify and address opportunities for improvement within the core competencies of a given program. The results from the extrinsic skill assessments were examined from a College-wide level to help determine if students were able to demonstrate these skills across the curriculum. The Faculty Assessment Committee continued to provide leadership and support for faculty by reviewing plans each fall and analyzing and assimilating results each spring. The committee also created educational resources for faculty that included an introduction to the Lifelong Skills and the College's assessment practice during New Faculty Orientation, a series of workshops specific to each skill and rubric, and the development of podcasts with suggestions for creating rubric-inspired assignments. (*Resource Room Document 6.17*)

The successes of this phase included significant buy-in and participation from the faculty, an improved ability to recognize or

create assignments that measured what the College wanted to know, and, most importantly, growing evidence that our students were indeed acquiring and demonstrating proficiency with our Lifelong Skills. There were also some areas of concern, however. Student involvement in the assessment process, outside of their classroom activities, tapered off. Some departments felt that the intrinsic skill portion of their assessment was not allowing them to measure the skills or competencies that mattered most within the disciplines, and the College-wide summary of the extrinsic skills attainment was proving to be too broad for trend identification.

In the summer of 2011 an Assessment Working Group was formed to “assess our assessment” and recommend improvements for the 2011-12 academic year and beyond. In this current phase, the College has moved away from the “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” distinctions. The working group found that there was not enough deep data to draw significant conclusions about student learning College-wide, nor was there a sense that the Lifelong Skills allowed departments to measure the learning outcomes that mattered most internally. The dual reporting format remains, but departmental assessments are no longer limited to a particular Lifelong Skill. While some departments still choose to assess one of those skills because of its direct link to their curriculum, other departments have taken the opportunity to measure content-specific elements that provide improved identification of the need for meaningful curricular changes. (*Resource Room Document 6.18*)

CCA’s commitment to the Lifelong Skills remains strong, however, and every department across the college has focused this year on assessing both written communication and critical inquiry. Cross-College data for these two skills will allow the Assessment Committee to provide better information about our students’ needs and successes. In 2011-12, the College also renewed its commitment to student participation in the assessment process by surveying students and asking them about their awareness of the Lifelong Skills, their level of agreement that these skills are important skills to acquire, and their level of confidence that they are developing these skills in their CCA coursework. As Table 6.5 shows, more work can be done in making the Lifelong Skills more apparent in the course lessons. This survey data comes from only 100 CCA graduates, and the College recognizes the need to involve students more fully in the assessment process and engage with students regarding Lifelong Skills acquisition.

Table 6.5
Fall 2011 Lifelong Skills Student Survey

	Mean ^a
How useful is the skill of Personal Responsibility?	3.5
How useful is the skill of Communication?	3.4
How useful is the skill of Technology?	3.2
How useful is the skill of Critical Inquiry?	3.0
How useful is the skill of Quantitative Reasoning?	3.0
How useful is the skill of Aesthetics?	2.9
How useful are the Lifelong Skills outside college?	2.9
How well were you exposed to Lifelong Skills in classes?	2.7
How well have you mastered Lifelong Skills?	2.7
How well do you know CCA's Lifelong Skills?	2.2

SOURCE: CCA Assessment Committee's Fall 2011 Student Survey of Lifelong Skills.

^aScale: 1=not at all; 4=very well or very useful.

The results of the 2011-12 assessment cycle showed areas for improvement. As Table 6.6 illustrates, students in online and hybrid sections scored lower than students in face-to-face and concurrent enrollment sections in critical inquiry. In written communication, students in concurrent enrollment sections scored lower than students in other sections. Although the Department Assessment varied across all departments, a promising result is that 73.3 percent of departments had a clear “Closing the Loop” process to use their results to improve student learning in the upcoming assessment cycle. College-wide assessment results show variance in acquisition of assessed skills by both modality and location. These data have allowed the College to develop action items for this year’s assessment cycle that target specific populations in different ways. (*Resource Room Document 6.19*)

Table 6.6

College-Wide Assessment results by type of course

Percentage of students showing an acceptable or superior demonstration of skill

	Face-To-Face	Online	Hybrid	High Schools
Written Communication				
Grammar/Mechanics	76.2%	87.1%	76.9%	69.3%
Clarity/Organization	75.9%	69.9%	76.9%	64.0%
Language Use	76.7%	83.9%	79.5%	68.0%
Content	74.9%	72.0%	69.2%	73.3%
Critical Inquiry				
Problem Definition	79.3%	80.0%	88.2%	91.7%
Problem Interpretation	75.5%	54.3%	52.9%	83.3%
Supporting Evidence	72.5%	54.3%	52.9%	83.3%
Personal Response	62.8%	62.9%	41.2%	80.0%
Conclusions	69.1%	60.0%	76.5%	75.0%

SOURCE: CCA FY2012 Annual Assessment Report.

In fall 2012, the Assessment Committee developed a new 18-month assessment cycle to respond to some of the perceived problems with the old 12-month cycle. In the old model, data collection, analysis, discussion, action items for implementation, and reporting were all due at the same time. Consequently, department chairs felt that there was too little time for thoughtful reflection on assessment data before annual reports were due in May. The Assessment Committee considered models that would separate the data collection from its analysis and reporting, thereby ensuring adequate time for reflection, discussion, and thought about appropriate action items. In the new assessment cycle, to begin in 2013-14, in any three-year period there will be two 18-month assessment cycles—one focusing on Lifelong Skills and the other on Departmental Skills. (*Resource Room Document 6.20*)

4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

At the College level, CCA’s six Lifelong Skills have been the focus of assessment of student learning for more than a decade. As mentioned above, the College as a whole is in its second year-long assessment cycle for the Lifelong Skills of written communication and critical inquiry. Each department has developed an effective assignment, approved by the College’s Faculty Assessment Committee, by which to assess student achievement in these two areas. Departments assess

student achievement of these skills via a faculty-developed and approved rubric for each skill, and instructors are encouraged to share the rubric with students prior to completion of the assignment so that students know the basis upon which their grade for the assignment will be determined. Wherever possible, random samples from all sections of courses undergoing assessment—traditional, hybrid, online, and concurrent enrollment—are assessed in order to verify student achievement of skills across all sections and modalities. After every assessment cycle, data are analyzed at the department level, action items for the next assessment cycle are determined, reports are submitted to the Assessment Committee for review and approval, and the Assessment Committee then generates a report based on College-wide data and trends.

At the department level, faculty members have been given the freedom to determine the assessment processes that best capture student achievement of learning outcomes within their department. These processes are designated as Departmental Assessment. For some departments, student success on national exams has been the assessment tool of choice; for others, a common final exam for all sections of a gateway course has been selected; still others have chosen to continue their assessment of one of the Lifelong Skills not currently the focus of the College-level assessment. This freedom of the department chair to consider which assessment strategies best capture student achievement of learning outcomes came at the suggestion of several department chairs prior to the 2011 Assessment Working Group recommendations. They felt that by confining assessment to only the College's six Lifelong Skills, an important measure of student achievement—that of program-level skills—was not being captured.

At the course level, student learning outcomes are explicitly stated in each course syllabus and come directly from the System's Common Course Numbering System. An instructor's coverage of areas of the topical outline is shown in the weekly course calendar, also included in every course syllabus. The model syllabus upon which every course syllabus at the College is created also includes a section on how each student is to be evaluated, based on achievement of the course's outcomes. (*Resource Room Document 6.21*)

4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

The College's assessment processes around its curricular programs are discussed above. Data from department assessment reports inform the

following year's assessment plan, and action items are instituted to address any shortcomings or areas for improvement. The Faculty Assessment Committee reviews assessment reports from all departments and develops the College's annual assessment report each year. (*Resource Room Document 6.22*)

There is a shorter, less robust history of assessment of co-curricular programs at the College. Over the past 18 months, the Division of Student Affairs has conducted focused conversations on the role of assessment in student affairs, including developing assessment projects for each department and identifying student learning outcomes.

All department directors within Student Affairs submitted annual reports at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 academic year which included baseline data on the measures they currently had in place and the data that they were collecting. The majority of the units, including Student Life (which administers many of the College's co-curricular programs), have concentrated on usage and satisfaction data, both of which are important, but no longer sufficient. There are many questions the division has begun to ask concerning students and the services provided. Intentional assessment that focuses on answering these questions will advance the Student Affairs Division's ability to provide services and programs that enhance student retention and success.

The division used to have a student services satisfaction "report card" but it has not been consistently used for some time. Student Affairs staff members revised this satisfaction survey during the fall 2012 semester and departments will begin to use it during the spring 2013 semester.

To move the assessment agenda beyond usage and satisfaction, the division began to focus on the topic at leadership meetings and staff retreats. Early in the summer of 2012, the leadership of the division met for a retreat that focused on retention in student affairs. An invited speaker from another community college guided the conversation. Following this was another retreat early in the fall semester to follow up on the topic and to finalize departmental assessment projects. After this meeting, each department submitted its individual assessment projects which were incorporated into a student affairs research agenda for the 2012-2013 year. (*Resource Room Document 6.23*)

Student Life provides an example of progress made in this area, as they have identified student learning outcomes for many of the co-curricular programs they provide, including the orientation program

and the leadership series for student government members and student organization leaders. (*Resource Room Document 6.24*) In addition, the Office of Student Life has developed a new tracking system for all student life events and activities. This system tracks the number of participants at each event, their demographic information, and how much a student is participating individually. By utilizing this information, the Office of Student Life will be better able to serve students in the future by understanding what types of students are attracted to which type of program initiatives. (*Resource Room Document 6.25*) Along with the tracking system, the Office of Student Life has recently developed a new survey tool for students who participate in its programs to assess each individual program's learning outcomes. This evaluation will be given out to all participants at the end of each program. The Office of Student Life will finalize its assessment process by creating and implementing a satisfaction survey for all students who participated in at least one Student Life program. Students who did not participate will be sent an interest survey to assist in designing programs that meet these students' interests and needs. (*Resource Room Document 6.26*)

4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Each year, department chairs submit an assessment plan to the College's Assessment Committee. This plan follows a carefully developed template which requires the department chair to reflect upon the previous year's assessment results and action items prior to building the current year's plan. Template instructions require explanation of ways that last year's assessment data are to be used to inform the current year's plan. Department chairs are also responsible for submitting an end-of-year assessment report which is based on the same template and designed to encourage analysis of results and determination of action items for the upcoming assessment cycle. (*Resource Room Document 6.27*)

The Assessment Committee recognized the need for assessment results and action items to be communicated to the department if real improvement of student learning was to occur. "Assessment for assessment sake" was to be avoided at all cost, and assessment results and needed changes to instruction were to be communicated widely. To that end, the annual assessment plan template also requires department chairs to either include the minutes of any meetings they had with their faculty to share assessment results or to copy and paste any communiqués sent to their departments regarding the previous year's student outcomes and action items for the upcoming year. The chairs' annual end-of-year assessment reports are submitted only after

the current year's results and needed action items have been communicated to department faculty (the email sent to faculty regarding these results must be copied into the template prior to submission).

4.B.4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

CCA's assessment of student learning has evolved and developed over the last decade, driven by the College's faculty and validated by state and national trends. In the late 1990s, CCA faculty members designed the six Lifelong Skills (communication, aesthetics, critical inquiry, technology, quantitative reasoning, and personal responsibility) prior to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's development of its Core Competencies (*Resource Room Document 6.28*) and CCCS's establishment of its general education requirements. These six skills have stood the test of time and there exists an institutional understanding of the universal value of the Lifelong Skills and a culture of assessment across all disciplines; however, the College's 2011 decision to add a departmental assessment to the annual assessment report has helped make assessment more relevant to faculty. Indeed, the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile, based on a student's competence in five key areas—applied learning, intellectual skills, specialized knowledge, broad, integrative knowledge, and civic learning—validates CCA's focus on both program-specific achievement and acquisition of the six Lifelong Skills.

Conducting assessment each year rests on the shoulders of regular and adjunct faculty members. The Faculty Assessment Committee has always included a faculty chair as well as other members of the faculty. Faculty members develop assessment rubrics and departmental assessments, and collect assessment data from multiple course sections. Many departments also depend on faculty members to participate in data analysis, and department chairs share assessment results and action items for the upcoming assessment cycle with the faculty. To ensure the gathering of accurate data, all faculty members must be aware of assessment assignments, their purposes, and their criteria for evaluation and share that information with their students. In an effort to recognize the substantial commitment and collaboration it takes for a department to produce its annual assessment report, the Faculty Assessment Committee selects one department per year to receive the "Top Program Assessment Award." The award recognizes the department's significant contribution to student learning.

Core Component 4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

The College is committed to improving retention and completion rates. Its strategic goals set improved retention, completion, and transfer rates as a priority and the College has made changes in both Student Affairs and Instruction that have positively affected student retention rates over time.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

The College's five strategic goals were approved by Cabinet in 2009. The first of these goals is to increase student retention, completion and transfer rates. In January 2010, Cabinet further defined this goal in the following manner:

“CCA will raise its student retention, completion, and transfer rates annually through 2013. To achieve this goal, the College will focus on improving student engagement and academic success. Strategies for these improvements will include, among others: Strengthening support services for all students taking classes in alternative formats, including online; addressing student needs for financial aid, recreation, and social activities; strengthening programs such as developmental education, ESL, tutoring, and orientation; and upgrading facilities at the Lowry and CentreTech campuses. The College will provide students and potential students with a clearer understanding of career pathways and of the opportunities available through transfer articulation agreements. Measures: Annual changes in student retention, student completion, and student transfer rates.”

In 2010, an Instructional Plan was developed based on the College's five Strategic Goals as they related to instruction. Faculty members were heavily involved in the plan's development and the plan includes goals that address student success across all course delivery modalities, improved evaluation of learning, and an insistence on high quality instruction that responds to the needs of the College's diverse student population. (*Resource Room Document 6.29*)

In 2011, the College convened a strategic enrollment management taskforce representing broad cross-College membership. Members provided their expertise to subcommittees in the areas of traditional and non-traditional student recruitment, financial aid and scholarships, student engagement and success, marketing, communications and community relations, and assessment and evaluation. Each subcommittee made recommendations that fed into the Student Success Strategic Plan and that tied back to the College's five strategic goals. This plan examines the pre-college, college, and completion needs of its diverse student body and makes recommendations around which the College should focus its energies in each of these stages in order to improve student success. The plan includes fifteen recommended strategies which specifically address the College's strategic goals of increasing student retention, completion and transfer rates and improving student learning, as well as the College's Instructional Plan goals of providing academic programs that foster foundational skills, building discipline-specific expertise, and creating, maintaining, and/or expanding support services and delivery modalities for student success. (*Resource Room Document 6.30*)

The College has seen many structural changes designed to better address student success initiatives and which confirm its focus on retention and completion. Improved student success is an objective to which both Student Affairs and Instruction are committed. Since 2010, restructuring in Student Affairs has been driven by the need to improve retention, completion, and transfer. These changes have included the creation of a dean of student success position. The dean oversees the Center for Outreach and Recruitment as well as the newly established Student Success Center. This Center, opened in 2012, houses the First Year Experience, Transitions, and Scholar Support programs, as well as the College's TRiO Support Services staff. (*Resource Room Document 6.31*)

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

The College collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs in order to determine how well it is meeting the goals it has defined in these areas. The College uses the Common Data Set developed by the Association of Institutional Research in concert with College Board, Peterson's, and *US News & World Report* to generate its annual institutional profile. Seven years of institutional data are available to College faculty and staff through the College's portal, and each year's data include general information as well as information on enrollment and persistence, as

well as degrees conferred. IPEDS data submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics is also available on the College portal. Information about the College’s graduation rates and degrees conferred is included in this report. (*Resource Room Document 6.32*)

Table 6.7 illustrates the College’s positive trend in fall-to-fall retention rates over a five-year period. There is still work to be done, but all areas of the College are committed to increased retention and completion for students and look for ways to continue to improve retention and completion rates year over year.

Table 6.7
Fall-to-Fall retention rates of regular, non-concurrently-enrolled college students by year

	First Fall: Next Fall:	Fall 2006- Fall 2007	Fall 2008- Fall 2009	Fall 2010- Fall 2011
Regular College Students Enrolled		4,733	5,106	6,055
Percent Returned Next Fall		36.2%	41.6%	42.0%

SOURCE: COGNOS Demographic Cube extracts.

NOTE: Retention rates are based on students who were NOT enrolled in concurrent, high school classes. ASCENT students were counted as high school students.

NOTE: Retention percentages are calculated on students who did not graduate from CCA and therefore would be expected to return.

Table 6.8 demonstrates the College’s progress in improving retention rates for various demographics since 2006. The College has seen significant improvement in retention rates for male students as well as in its minority populations. The College’s retention of part-time students is an area of concern, especially as this describes the majority of the College’s students.

Table 6.8
Fall-to-Fall retention rates of regular, non-concurrently-enrolled college students by demographic characteristics

	First Fall: Next Fall:	Fall 2006- Fall 2007	Fall 2008- Fall 2009	Fall 2010- Fall 2011
Total Enrolled		4,733	5,106	6,055
Percent of Full-Time Returned		43%	51%	49%
Percent of Part-Time Returned		34%	39%	39%
Percent of Female Returned		38%	42%	43%
Percent of Male Returned		33%	41%	41%
Percent of Minority Returned		37%	42%	41%
Percent of Non-Minority Returned		35%	41%	42%

SOURCE: COGNOS Demographic Cube extracts.

NOTE: Retention rates are based on students who were NOT enrolled in concurrent, high school classes. ASCENT students were counted as high school students.

NOTE: Retention percentages are calculated on students who did not graduate from CCA and therefore would be expected to return.

Table 6.9 illustrates the College’s retention rates by certificate or degree sought between June 2007 and September 2011. Retention of students pursuing certificates and associate’s degrees rose during these three years. Retention and completion efforts by the College have focused on these two areas during the captured timeframe. The College needs to continue its current efforts and examine new avenues by which to increase retention rates.

Table 6.9
Fall-to-Fall retention rates of regular, non-concurrently-enrolled college students by degree sought

	First Fall: Next Fall:	Fall 2006- Fall 2007	Fall 2008- Fall 2009	Fall 2010- Fall 2011
Total Enrolled		4,733	5,106	6,055
AA Degree-Seeking Returned		41%	43%	43%
AS Degree-Seeking Returned		41%	49%	46%
AAS Degree-Seeking Returned		37%	46%	43%
AGS Degree-Seeking Returned		39%	43%	44%
Certificate-Seeking Returned		30%	33%	34%

Source:COGNOS Demographic Cube extracts.

Note: Retention rates are based on students who were NOT enrolled in concurrent, high school classes. ASCENT students were counted as high school students.

Note: Retention percentages are calculated on students who did not graduate from CCA and therefore would be expected to return.

The College also collects information on degree completion. Table 6.10 presents the number of degrees and certificates awarded over a five-year period. While the College can track degree completion, it faces a challenge around effectively tracking student progress toward graduation since the state of Colorado has not allowed community

college students to declare a major. Consequently, there are challenges around establishing student cohorts and effectively tracking their progress toward completion. With the newly developed Degrees with Designation comes an opportunity to begin tracking cohorts of students through their course sequence. Institutional Research has also recently created student tracking databases for particular programs such as EMS, Paralegal, Business and Academic Enrichment (AcE). These databases provide information on courses taken, last date of enrollment, and student success rates. Programs are beginning to use these databases to track success and retention in currently enrolled students and should eventually be able to use them to track graduates as well.

Table 6.10
Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Fiscal Year

	Fiscal Year of Graduation				
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Certificate of Less than 1 year	115	197	246	219	177
Certificate of More than 1 year	137	88	176	158	135
Associate of Applied Science	119	113	120	116	121
Associate of General Studies	61	69	92	105	125
Associate of Arts/Science	176	174	196	221	214
Total Awards	608	641	830	819	772

SOURCE: SURDS Annual Degrees Awarded Report

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

The issue of student retention and completion has prompted College-wide discussion and has led to multiple changes in both instruction and student services. As a result of the recommendations made in the Student Success Strategic Plan, Student Affairs has already implemented an assessment process for departments within the Student Affairs Division and created the Student Success Center to provide one-on-one advising, academic support and interventions to the College’s cohort-based student programs. The College has identified barriers to retention and completion and has instituted policies to help students overcome these barriers. For instance, after seeing that students who did not understand the support services available to them were less likely to persist, Student Affairs has implemented a mandatory orientation for new students that introduces students to the support services available to them, and also helps students navigate

other potential barriers such as the registration process. Additionally, the advising staff are considering different types of advising models that may be more intrusive and perhaps more mobile in an effort to increase interactions with students throughout their college career, not just at the outset. Student success workshops on topics such as time management, financial literacy, and research strategies have been introduced and are offered as options when an instructor can't be in class or even as standard course content at the beginning of the semester. The College's Early Alert system was developed as a tool to help increase retention and promote dialogue between student and instructor before the tipping point for success is reached.

Student retention and completion have also guided improvements in the advising tools used by academic advisors. Degree sheets explaining degree requirements for general AA, AS, and AAS degrees, as well as for the newly established Degrees with Designation, help both advisor and student determine the courses needed for a degree and to help the student stay on track. The College's advisors also make use of Banner's Degree Works program as another tool for students to visualize their progress toward degree completion.

The College's Strategic Goals and its Instructional Plan have also led to organizational change within the Instructional Division. In 2009, in response to growing enrollment in online course sections, the College hired an associate dean of online learning. This position is responsible for coordinating the design of online course shells in the College's course management system Desire2Learn, and providing leadership in the effective use of technology to improve instruction and student learning across the College. In the Career and Technical Education areas, success coaches have been employed to provide academic support and career counseling to students in an effort to improve persistence.

Another instructional effort aimed at improved student retention and success was the 2009 Developmental Education Department restructure, which helped reduce the amount of time a student spends in developmental education courses before beginning college-level coursework. The Business, Paralegal, Computer Science and Art and New Media Departments have begun scaffolding their courses so that certificates feed into associate degrees and students gain skills progressively on their way toward completion. (*Resource Room Document 6.33*) In an effort to encourage students to declare one of the state's 14 Degrees with Designation, the Instructional Division has begun planning around the creation of guaranteed class schedules designed to improve retention and completion by allowing a student to plan one or two semesters ahead.

The College has seen improvements in its retention, completion and transfer rates as a result of many of these initiatives. Between 2007 and 2011, the College's retention rate improved from 36 percent to 42 percent. The College is also interested in its performance as compared with other comparable institutions in the state and nationwide. The College has been participating in the National Community College Benchmarking Project since 2010. A 2005 cohort of first-time, fulltime students was followed for six years, and, of those, 32 percent completed or transferred in six years. A 2008 cohort of first-time, fulltime students was followed for three years, and, of those, 42 percent completed or transferred in three years. The percentage of completers has gone up even as the time to completion has been reduced. These numbers confirm that the College's efforts to improve retention and completion are having a positive effect. Institutional Research will present the 2012 report to Leadership Council in February 2013. Data from the report will be used to consider ways to continue to improve the College's completion rates compared to external peers.

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

The College's Institutional Research Office (IR) researches and exercises good practice in its collection and analysis of information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs. IR also works with programs in implementing these practices. The College collects and reports data in these areas based on IPEDS definitions in order to ensure data is standardized and comparable across time, and also in comparing the data to other institutions. Although IPEDS definitions are used to report summary information on external and internal reports, raw data are also analyzed and reported internally using consistent methods and agreed upon internal definitions.

IR uses SPSS to analyze quantitative data collected in Banner, a commonly used administrative software solution for higher education. Quantitative data includes direct measures of student outcomes as well as student, program, and institutional characteristics that may contribute to student persistence or may indicate a barrier to student persistence. IR both reports aggregate data to the College and provides raw data to programs along with the expertise to analyze the

raw data. The College also collects indirect measures through qualitative techniques, including survey and focus group data on what students find to contribute to their success or what constitutes a hindrance. Student Affairs recently conducted focus groups to help identify factors that allowed Hispanic and African American students to successfully persist and complete programs at CCA. (*Resource Room Document 6.34*)

The College also works with the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) to implement good practices in data collection and analysis. For instance, groups such as the thirteen CCCS college registrars and IR offices work to improve the application process to CCCS colleges, including collecting better data on the educational goals of entering students. Retention, persistence, and success will be defined differently for students looking for a first degree compared to students with other purposes, such as learning a new skill for a job or taking classes for recertification in a career.

Data is collected on term-to-term and year-to-year retention. IR has begun development of several tools to help programs collect progression data (persistence and success in courses and programs over time) and to identify factors that help students successfully persist. These tools include the student tracking databases mentioned above that identify not only student progression over time in a program, but also demographic and other factors that may increase persistence and completion or that may indicate that intervention may be necessary. These databases are also being modified in order for programs to track students from interest in a program, through retention and persistence in the program, and finally to completion (graduation or transfer to a four-year institution), and past completion to success in careers or further degrees.

One best practice of the institution is to realize that some data needs to be broken out by student characteristics in order to identify factors in retention, persistence and completion that may be different across groups of students. For example, when reporting for our internal audience, institutional data is often presented alongside data from which high school concurrent enrollment students have been culled. These students represent a different population whose success rates must certainly be examined, but whose retention rates must be looked at differently.

Strengths:

- The College maintains the quality of its educational offerings through measures such as program review, evaluation of the credit it transcripts and accepts, control of course prerequisites, and the monitoring of faculty qualifications.
- CCA assures course content and rigor by insisting on high faculty standards, requiring the use of a model syllabus, observing faculty teaching, and soliciting student evaluation of instruction.
- The College evaluates the success of its graduates with a survey a year after graduation and the monitoring of academic transfer.
- During the past two years, the College has revitalized its culture of assessment, improved its assessment processes, and reaffirmed its commitment to the Lifelong Skills. The College's Assessment Committee has demonstrated its ability to adjust the processes as evidenced by its adoption of a new 18-month cycle for 2013-14.
- As CCA has adopted activities to support student retention and completion, the College's fall-to-fall retention rate for regular, non-concurrently enrolled students improved from 36.2 percent for fall 2006 to fall 2007 to 42 percent for fall 2010 to fall 2011.

Challenges:

- The timing of the administration of the Accuplacer results in concurrent enrollment courses in which some students are taking the course for college credit and some are not.
- Increasing student participation in the course evaluation process has been a challenge, especially since the process was converted from paper to electronic administration.
- The College faces challenges in reaching many completers, making tracking and follow up difficult.
- While students generally comprehend the utility of the six Lifelong Skills, they appear to require more direct instruction in them and the ways they manifest themselves in each of the courses taught at the College.

- The College has struggled for a decade to collect normed assessment data that provides a picture of student learning of the Lifelong Skills across years and departments.

Opportunities:

- CCA has an opportunity to begin to increase the use of program reviews for planning and resource allocation.
- With the recent revitalization of assessment and the College-wide focus on consistently assessing critical thinking and written communication, CCA has the opportunity to collect more comprehensive student learning data and to use the data for planning and budgeting.

Chapter 7 Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

Criterion Five: The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Introduction:

This chapter examines the Community College of Aurora's (CCA or the College) policies and procedures for ensuring and maintaining the availability of resources over time, and focuses on the ways in which CCA seeks to continually improve its practices and student learning. A summary of the College's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement follows the discussion of the criterion's four core components.

Core Component 5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

5.A.1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources

As discussed in Chapter 4, CCA meets its commitment to its students, employees, and the community by maintaining fiscally and ethically sound business practices. While CCA has operated during the last decade in an era of steady reductions in state support for higher education, the College has maintained the resources and infrastructure it needs to support its programs, activities, and commitment to student learning.

Colorado's state budget is severely constrained by a series of state constitutional amendments, effectively limiting the state legislature's discretionary funding decisions to roads and bridges, corrections, and higher education. One of those constitutional amendments, the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), is among the most restrictive tax measures in the nation, stipulating that state revenues in excess of a floating measure must be refunded to the taxpayers. From 1997 to 2007, higher education's share of the state budget dropped from 14.6 percent to 10.1 percent.

In an attempt to ease some of the financial squeeze on higher education funding and to improve access to higher education for low-income and under-represented students, the state enacted a new funding system in 2004, known as the College Opportunity Fund (COF). COF essentially redistributes state appropriations for higher education directly to resident undergraduate students by creating a stipend that can be used to help defray tuition costs at the student's school of choice. COF is available to students who have resided in Colorado for one year, and to veterans with an honorable discharge and a DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), regardless of length of residency. Students do not directly access COF funds; rather, they designate which school they wish to attend, and their COF stipend is applied to their tuition bill. Each semester's class schedule lists a student's total cost of education, with and without the COF stipend, so students can see clearly how COF affects their tuition and fees. (*Resource Room Document 7.1*)

The Colorado General Assembly sets the ceiling for tuition increases, and the State Board for Community College and Occupational Education (SBCCOE or State Board) sets tuition rates. Groups outside the College also make decisions that affect CCA expenditures, such as compensation levels for state classified employees. Even for tuition, the overall College revenue budget is mostly externally determined: the College is told what the COF amount will be, as well as the rates for tuition, general fees, and course fees.

In this climate, the College has been very conservative in its budgeting and in its expenditures, relying on creativity and high productivity to provide instruction and services to an expanding student population. This approach has protected the College, to a degree, but has also strained its capacity to respond effectively to increasing demands. For example, the student population has increased faster than the College's facilities and regular faculty members have been able to accommodate readily.

As tuition has become a more important component of CCA's budget, the College has consistently planned for an annual 2 percent drop in student enrollment. That caution has been rewarded by annual student enrollment increases that exceeded its conservative estimates. In 2012-13, the College is operating within a General Fund budget of \$30,078,000, and by statute, total General Fund operating expenses will be approximately \$30,078,000. (*Resource Room Document 7.2*)

Table 7.1 shows how College revenues have grown and changed over the last decade.

Table 7.1
Changes in Distribution of Revenues

	FY2001	FY2006	FY2011
State Appropriations	6,679,821	0	0
Tuition & Fee Revenues	5,397,289	12,068,371	17,658,119
State Grants & Contracts ^a	1,024,413	3,161,534	3,907,994
Federal Grants & Contracts ^b	1,670,180	4,137,145	11,330,857
Other Sources	1,814,229	1,597,870	1,627,640
Total College Revenues	16,585,932	20,964,920	34,524,610

As a Percentage of Total Revenue			
Appropriations	40.4%	0%	0%
Tuition & Fees	32.5%	57.6%	51.0%

SOURCE: CCA Budget; Financial Affairs.

NOTE: In 2005, the Colorado legislature created student stipends which transferred funding from State appropriations to student tuition reimbursements.

^a Includes State-supported scholarships.

^b Includes PELL grants.

Given the College’s reliance on student fees and tuition, it is notable that in FY 2011-2012, 5,693 students received some type of financial aid, 45 percent of the 12,570 total unduplicated students in that year, and up from 33 percent in FY 2002-2003. The dramatic rise in the federal grant and contract line (which includes Pell monies) in Table 7.1 shows this same dramatic increase over a longer period, FY 2001 to FY 2011.

On the expense side, compensation – the total payments to all employees – represents over 80 percent of the College’s total expenditures. As a part of the annual budget, the College maintains a staffing pattern which shows the amounts expected to be spent for salary, PERA (state retirement plan), insurance, and Medicare for each individual employee. Operating costs and expenses are allocated to departments and divisions for goods and services and represent between 5 percent and 10 percent of the total College budget. The final 10 to 15 percent of the budget are institutional expenses, a wide variety of costs over which the College has little control. These are monitored centrally and include worker’s compensation and other insurance premiums, grant match amounts, utilities, rents, retirement costs, bad debt expenses, telephone, and postage.

The recession had a measurable effect on State funding for CCA’s operation. Federal educational stimulus funds in FY 2009-2010 and FY 2010-2011 allowed the SBCCOE to maintain the COF without reduction. Now recovering, the College’s Composite Financial Indicator (HLC Institutional Update 2011-2012) was 4.9 at the end of

fiscal year 2010-11, signifying increased strength in net assets.

(Resource Room Document 7.3) Over time, Pell funds coming to the College have grown. In 2011 and 2012, however, funding reductions for the Federal Pell Grant program eliminated Pell grants for the summer semesters, forcing many students to interrupt their academic progress.

CCA's unrestricted fund balance between 2002 and 2012 indicates a consistent pattern of increase. From a 2002 balance of \$5.7 million to a 2012 balance of \$11.3 million, reserves have increased 98 percent, demonstrating the College's fiscal responsibility over the last decade and positioning CCA well in the event of any unforeseen reduction in financial resources. But, out of a more than \$30 million annual budget, only 5 percent is not committed. The bonds on the College's CentreTech buildings will be paid off at the end of 2015, which will release another 5 percent for College initiatives. *(Resource Room Document 7.4)*

Human Resources

The College has been very conservative when considering requests for new regular faculty positions and in filling such positions when they become vacant. Each request is reviewed by executive staff members to ensure that the requested hiring is in line with the needs of the College and its programs. Likewise, new programs are added with consideration of current trends and the needs of the students and the community. In line with this conservative approach to personnel expenditures, CCA has relied on a high number of adjunct faculty members and a smaller cadre of regular faculty members to meet its instructional needs, as shown in Table 7.2. In fall 2012, CCA employed 373 adjunct faculty members (including those teaching concurrent enrollment classes in the high schools) and 50 regular faculty members. Overall, adjuncts teach 82 percent of the credit hours and 88 percent of the sections; regular faculty members teach 18 percent of the credit hours and 12 percent of the sections. Adjusted to exclude high school sections and online sections, adjuncts teach 77 percent of the credit hours and 83 percent of the sections, while regular faculty members teach 23 percent of the credit hours and 17 percent of the sections.

Table 7.2
Faculty Teaching Credit Courses
Fall Semesters, by Contract Status

	Fall 2006	Fall 2008	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
Regular Faculty	31	36	43	50
Adjunct Faculty	235	335	391	373

SOURCE: IPEDS Human Resources Survey.

NOTE: Data are as of October 31 of each year.

This level of adjunct participation is possible because of the availability of a large pool of qualified instructors in the Denver metropolitan area. Particularly for Career and Technical programs, the adjuncts bring current industry and agency expertise to their courses, ensuring that students graduate ready to enter employment with appropriate skills. The College pays its adjunct faculty members for training and uses three ascending pay levels to recognize and encourage continued service and professional development. The College also uses experienced adjuncts for committee assignments, curricular development, and advising, paying supplemental contracts for those important activities. Further, the use of adjuncts gives the College the flexibility to accommodate the fluctuating needs of the community and student body.

The College has long recognized the need for additional regular faculty members, balancing that need with the need for more staff in other critical areas such as student support services, facilities, and information technology. While adjunct faculty members bring enthusiasm, energy, expertise, and dedication to their classrooms, regular faculty members supply the leadership, continuity, guidance, and oversight needed for high-quality teaching and learning. In 2010, Colorado began deploying AA and AS Degrees with Designation, in effect, majors which guarantee that upon graduation, community college students enter their four-year transfer institutions with junior standing in their disciplines. These new designations have guided the creation of new regular faculty positions in the belief that Degrees with Designation should have at least one regular faculty member to guide their development. Table 7.3 shows the current distribution of regular faculty positions in the Degrees with Designation. Partially as a result of this impetus, the number of regular faculty positions has risen from 46 in fall of 2011 to 50 in fall of 2012

Table 7.3
Degrees with Designation and Regular Faculty Assigned to each Area

Degree Designation	Date Implemented	Regular Faculty Assigned to Area
Associate of Arts		
Anthropology	Fall 2012	1
Business	Fall 2011	3
Economics	Fall 2011	0
French	Fall 2012	0
History	Fall 2011	1
Political Science	Fall 2012	1
Psychology-AA	Fall 2011	1
Sociology	Fall 2012	0
Spanish	Fall 2011	2
Associate of Science		
Mathematics	Fall 2011	3
Psychology-AS	Fall 2011	1

Legacy Articulation Degrees

Associate of Arts		
Early Childhood Education	Fall 2011	0
Elementary Education	Fall 2011	1
Associate of Science		
Engineering	Fall 2011	0

SOURCE: Colorado Department of Higher Education; Department Chairs.

The majority of College employees work within the Instructional Division, but in addition to the total of 423 regular and adjunct faculty members, the College now has 170 classified or exempt staff members, 115 hourly employees, and 121 work-study/student hourly workers. In Student Affairs, beginning in fall of 2010, the College amplified and energized its efforts to facilitate student success by creating coordinated organizational structures and adding new personnel, including a first-year experience and transitions coordinator and a dean of student success. In October 2010, CCA received a five-year renewable grant through TRiO Student Support Services, funded at roughly \$219,000 each year. The grant supports four full-time staff members who focus on retaining, graduating, and transferring 160 students.

Table 7.4 illustrates the overall expansion in College employees from Fall 2009 through Fall 2011, showing growth in almost all categories. Professional support staff grew especially rapidly in this period with an increase from 37 full-time staff in 2009 to 64 in 2011.

Table 7.4
 Employees by Year
 By Full-Time Status and Job Classification

	Fall 2009		Fall 2010		Fall 2011	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
Regular Faculty	45	--	43	--	47	--
Adjunct Faculty	--	336	--	391	--	382
Executive/Administrative	27	2	24	2	32	3
Professional Support	37	6	47	4	64	5
Clerical	36	5	33	5	42	5
Skilled	0	0	3	0	2	0
Service	20	0	17	0	16	0
Total Employees	165	349	167	402	203	395

SOURCE: IPEDS Human Resources Reports.

Physical Resources

CCA has two campuses: the original CentreTech campus and the Lowry campus five miles west on the site of the former Lowry Air Force Base. The College continually examines physical operations on both campuses to provide safe working and learning environments that meet changing needs in instruction and services for students. Without funds for new construction, CCA has concentrated on renovating existing spaces with the goal of serving students more effectively. For example, at the CentreTech campus, the 2009 remodeling in the Administration Building allowed Enrollment Services, Advising, and Financial Aid to consolidate on the ground floor to support increased student access and speed enrollment. In fall 2012, the Placement Testing Center relocated from the Student Centre to the Administration Building (at the cost of one classroom), so incoming students could complete their entire registration process in one building.

Office space for adjuncts has been reduced to accommodate regular faculty members, while what were once faculty offices in the Student Centre now house the Communications Office and Online Learning. The Facilities Department lost its last on-campus storage space, with its conversion to a classroom. Student Activities offices have been moved from the student-funded Student Centre at the CentreTech campus to the Lowry campus to make room for Student Success offices and improve opportunities for students at Lowry to participate in College activities. Finally, one new parking lot was completed in 2009 at CentreTech.

On the Lowry campus, buildings 901, 903, and 905 define the “Quad.” Now renamed the North Quad, West Quad, and South Quad, these buildings served as the original U.S. Air Force Academy from July 1955 to August 1958 and have been the core of the College’s Lowry campus during the last decade. However, each building was constructed as a stand-alone classroom structure and lacked appropriate space for student services and meetings. To address these shortcomings, the CCA Foundation led the Lowry Expansion Initiative, a \$1.4 million project that created a unified entrance to the Quad buildings and added meeting space, a welcome desk, Enrollment Management and Advising centers, and a café in the West Quad (Building 903). The remodeled facility opened in September 2011. The Boettcher Foundation contributed a \$150,000 challenge matching grant, a grassroots campaign raised \$100,000, the CCA Foundation contributed \$250,000, and the College added the rest. (*Resource Room Document 7.5*)

The College’s Colorado Film School moved into its own renovated building at Lowry in 2006. The Science laboratories moved from the Center for Simulation (Building 859) to what were formerly general education classrooms in the West Quad Building, more than doubling lab space while creating room in the Center for Public Service programs. Funded by two Congressional appropriations, the CCA Foundation, and College monies, the Disaster Management Institute is a state-of-the-art, working command-and-control center in the Center for Simulation where students and professionals from area agencies practice responses to complex emergencies.

The bonds that paid to build the CentreTech campus will be paid off in November 2015. At that time, the CCA Foundation may donate the buildings to the state or continue to retain ownership.

Technological Infrastructure

The College makes steady incremental technological advances to its infrastructure and programs, but also produces vital catalytic innovations, many of which are invisible to the users. This is done in both the classroom and in the office settings. In August 2007, the College had fewer than 800 computers on two campuses, maintained by an Instructional Technology (IT) staff of seven. Communication between the CentreTech and Lowry campuses was on a hardwired T3 line. Today, that inter-campus link is provided by a wireless 100 megabit Wide Area Network. As of September 2012, the College had nearly 1,400 computers, the majority of these housed in classrooms and labs. Eight full-time and two part-time employees serve the College’s IT needs.

Since 2007, CCA has converted almost every classroom into a “smart” classroom, with an instructor computer station and ceiling-mounted overhead projector. The College has made the same enhancements to its group meeting spaces, including the Todd Bergren Room at the Lowry campus and the Forum and the Student Rotunda at the CentreTech campus. Dame Ware software provides the IT Help Desk with remote desktop capability, enabling the technicians to instantly access classroom, lab, and office computers to solve difficulties, even while a class is in session. In 2011, matching grants totaling \$41,000 from the Morgridge Foundation and the CCA Foundation funded acquisition, installation, and faculty training to equip 11 classrooms with SMARTboards.

From former reliance on desktop hard drives, faculty and staff now store files on a variety of virtual drives, some shared and some not, accessible to CCA personnel from any location. The College’s telephone system was converted in the summer of 2012 to Voiceover Internet Protocol (VoIP), which, among other advantages, linked the College’s voice and e-mail systems, increasing access from any location.

Both campuses feature open Wi-Fi networks, with 1 gigabyte access points to allow simultaneous use by multiple users. From local storage in 2007, the College has shifted to a shared storage system with redundancy, an uninterruptable power system, and automatic back-up diesel generators. Avamar, an outside vendor, provides automated back-up service.

Over 80 percent of the servers are virtualized and three classrooms are totally virtualized. These technical changes mean that College users have secure computer networks. Those networks, however, are not consistently reliable due to bandwidth limitations.

The College offers many online, hybrid, and open-entry courses to meet the needs of each student. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS or the System) uses a common course management platform for all online instruction. In January 2010, CCCS shifted from Blackboard to Desire2Learn (D2L) and CCA elected to implement D2L not only for online instruction, but also as an ancillary for all courses, whether online, hybrid, or entirely face-to-face. Every regular and adjunct faculty member is trained on D2L, and for every course, at minimum, students can turn to D2L 24/7 to find their syllabus, grades, course email, and attendance. Most courses also add content modules and many use the online discussion feature as well.

Both D2L and the Banner student information system have sufficient bandwidth statewide to support normal operations but lack the capacity to handle loads at semester start and semester end. D2L also slows down under the midterm load, since many instructors have their classes submit all assignments electronically through D2L.

5.A.2. The institution’s resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

CCA’s resource allocation occurs through an open, collaborative budgeting process in which leadership from across the College participates. Honoring the priority of educational purposes is ensured by these leaders’ shared commitment to students and their learning and by the strong representation of leadership from instructional units in the process. That the College ensures that unrestricted revenue is dedicated to sustain the quality of CCA’s academic programs, ahead of other institutional claims, is illustrated by the allocation of 53 percent of operating expenses toward instructional-related costs in 2011-12 (IPEDS). Revenue is not disbursed to any superordinate entity. *(Resource Room Document 7.6)*

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities.

The College’s mission (*The Community College of Aurora provides lifelong educational opportunities, prepares the current and future workforce, and promotes excellence in teaching, learning, and service to our diverse community.*) is extremely broad without being prescriptive, and the College is well organized to meet its mandate, accomplishing the goals incorporated in the statement as described in Chapter 3. However, as CCCS has adopted Guaranteed Transfer courses and statewide articulation agreements, it is notable that the mission statement does not explicitly refer to the College’s role in preparing students to go on to complete their studies at four-year institutions. In this regard, CCA, with its success in transitioning students to bachelor-degree programs, appears to be more than meeting its mission.

5.A.4. The institution’s staff members in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

As discussed in Chapter 4, CCA’s regular and adjunct faculty members for occupational programs must have a master’s degree in their discipline or a closely related one, or the appropriate industry-

specific professional certification. Each faculty member completes a credentialing application and presents documentation demonstrating that they are qualified to teach in the subject area. That certification has been ensured by the associate vice president of instruction. Effective January 2013, career and technical certification is ensured by the dean of health sciences, public safety, and Lowry campus.

In general education courses, all faculty members and adjunct instructors must have a master's degree (or higher) in their discipline, or a master's degree in some area plus eighteen graduate hours in the discipline in which they teach. The Human Resources Department obtains official transcripts for verification. That standard is confirmed upon hire by department chairs.

For CCA classified staff, the recruitment and selection process is conducted by an individual certified in selection by the State of Colorado, Department of Personnel and Administration. The state has specific minimum qualifications for each position classification. The state completes an objective comparative analysis of desired qualifications for all candidates that meet the minimum requirements. Once the screening process is complete, the state ranks the candidates based on the results of the analysis. The College receives a list of the top six ranked candidates and is able to consider those candidates for the position. (*Resource Room Document 7.7*)

As new policies, procedures, and regulations affect CCA, the System or the College provide ongoing training for faculty and staff members, as needed. Instruction-specific professional development includes the new faculty orientation and a mid-semester tune up for new faculty members and adjuncts, workshops throughout the year, and an annual day-long faculty in-service program during Thanksgiving week. Faculty members have planned and conducted instructional professional development. In January 2013, the College appointed a director for faculty professional development on a limited contract to help guide this important area.

CCCS has begun a professional development program for college administrators. In 2010, the System inaugurated an annual Dean's Academy; CCA had one dean participate in that first year. CCCS also operates a Presidents' Academy every other year and includes monthly professional development at the presidents' meetings. Working with the American Council on Education, the System will offer a chairs' academy beginning in the summer of 2013.

5.A.5 The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

The budget process, conducted at the Cabinet (now Leadership Council) level, has always been notable for its collegial nature, without infighting over which unit gets what resources. For the past decade, Cabinet members have met in the spring, considered the institution-wide needs and resources, and agreed by consensus on preliminary allocations. The College has historically used a “base plus” budgeting model. In this model the initial budget is constructed by starting with the previous year’s budget, then making adjustments for 1) external mandates and 2) specific internal College decisions relative to personnel, operating, and other costs. After the Colorado General Assembly passed the state budget, Cabinet has adopted a final version of the College’s budget and sent it for approval to the State Board. The Board examines it for major changes from the previous year’s budget and for how well it supports System goals. (*Resource Room Document 7.8*)

Since 2011, the budget process has been in transition to a system that is more integrated across the College. Moving forward under the College’s new president, the Leadership Council will develop the budget based on a complete record of expenses to date and projected for the remainder of the year, previous years’ financial histories, and plans for the coming year. In Instruction, program reviews will help guide that development. As the College units develop their budgets, deans and directors may request additional funding through their vice president. Currently, the Academic Affairs Executive Council is developing a more formal process for instructional budgeting that is linked to the College Instructional Plan and departmental program reviews. The FLAC system, explained below, will allow CCA to establish a precise baseline for future budgeting, course by course. The Executive Leadership Team will adjust and adopt the final budget before sending it on to the State Board for approval.

The College has rigorous and well-developed processes for monitoring expenses. Encumbrances of salaries, large purchase orders, and contracts help to control expenses. Even with budgeted funds, all purchase orders must be signed by a department chair or director, and then signed by a dean. A tightly restricted number of departments use procurement cards, similar to credit cards, for purchasing operating materials. Across the College, only 62 cards are in use, and deans and directors review procurement card expenditures monthly.

Beginning in summer 2012, CCCS adopted a new Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) system to track and pay regular and adjunct faculty members. That system employs multiple levels of authorization and multiple signatures to approve salary and contract payments. By this system, administrators, faculty members, and

instructors can see exactly who is being paid, for what, and when. However, this initiative is extremely labor-intensive, so FLAC presents an important challenge to the College. Even though the College hired four employees to process the new system, FLAC also requires people at a number of levels to be available regularly to do the laborious work of preparing and approving payroll.

To be sure the College is in compliance for financial reporting, the controller meets monthly with the financial staff of CCCS to share information and receive updates on policies and procedures.

Core Component 5.B. The institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

5.B.1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE or the State Board) is the governing authority for the state system of community colleges, of which the College is a member. The board consists of 11 members: nine appointed by the Governor with the consent of the State Senate; one member, non-voting, is a student at one of the colleges; and one member, non-voting, is a community college faculty member. The State Board appoints an executive officer, the System President, who, with supporting staff, performs the executive functions of the board through CCCS.

The College reports to, and collaborates with, the governing board through the Presidents’ Council which consists of all the community college presidents and is advisory to the State Board. CCA’s president is a member of the Council, participates in this forum, and reports back to the College’s Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Council on issues discussed by the Presidents’ Council and seeks their views on these issues.

CCA also engages with the governing board through the State Faculty Advisory Council (SFAC). Like the Presidents’ Council, SFAC serves in an advisory capacity to the State Board. It is comprised of faculty representatives from each of the community colleges, and its chairperson is the faculty representative on the State Board. A faculty member from CCA participates in this forum and reports periodically to the Executive Leadership Team and the Leadership Council on

SFAC discussions as well as to the Chairs Council and Academic Forum.

Internally, CCA engages its constituencies in the institution's governance in a variety of ways. The Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Council each meet several times a month with the president for discussion and decision making. The members of these groups represent the leadership of virtually all units from across the College. To strengthen faculty representation in governance, the Leadership Council recently added the faculty member who chairs the Chairs Council to its membership. The Chairs Council and Academic Forum meet monthly to engage faculty members and Student Affairs staff (in the case of Academic Forum) in College governance.

More informally, over the last decade the College has a history of convening periodic all-College meetings to provide information on important topics. The president generally presides at these meetings and other leadership attends, giving members of the College community the opportunity to ask questions and voice opinions to decision-makers. The College's planning processes also have a history of meeting with constituent groups to seek opinions and offer opportunity for comment. A common pattern has been to convene at least four sessions on a topic, two at each campus, one during the day and one in the late afternoon as students and faculty arrive for the start of evening classes.

College governance also utilizes information from surveys of faculty, staff, and students to guide decision making. For example, in addition to large-scale annual or bi-annual surveys of these groups, the College has used Survey Monkey to get rapid input for specific decision making. This was the case with Cabinet decisions about CCA smoking regulations, which were informed by data gathered using Survey Monkey. (*Resource Room Document 7.9*)

5.B.2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The SBCCOE establishes policy on legislative, academic, and fiscal matters for the College. The administrative structure of its chain of command and responsibilities ensures an effective communication and reporting structure with the College. The president reports directly to the president of CCCS, who reports to the State Board.

The State Board also receives advisory information to help it make informed decisions. The Board appoints the seven-member CCA College Advisory Council, composed of residents from the College's service area. (*Resource Room Document 7.10*) The Council advises the College and State Board on such issues as tuition and fees, budgets, instructional programs, degrees and certificates, and academic standards. As described above, the State Faculty Advisory Council (SFAC) advises the System resident, and the SFAC chair sits as a non-voting member of the Board.

The State Board also gets direct information from the College. The Board meets each February at CCA as part of its rotation of meetings to System colleges, and each September, Board members tour the colleges (including CCA) to learn about operations and specific programs. Each month the College President, with the assistance of College Communications, summarizes recent CCA accomplishments to the Presidents' Council. On occasion, CCA and its units invite State Board members to special College events.

There are no pending notable lawsuits, complaints, or news stories in the media that would suggest the State Board does not function effectively.

5.B.3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

At the College level, the formal structures for involvement of various constituencies are undergoing clarification and evolution. Part of that process is the creation of constituency-specific bodies, often with representation from other groups.

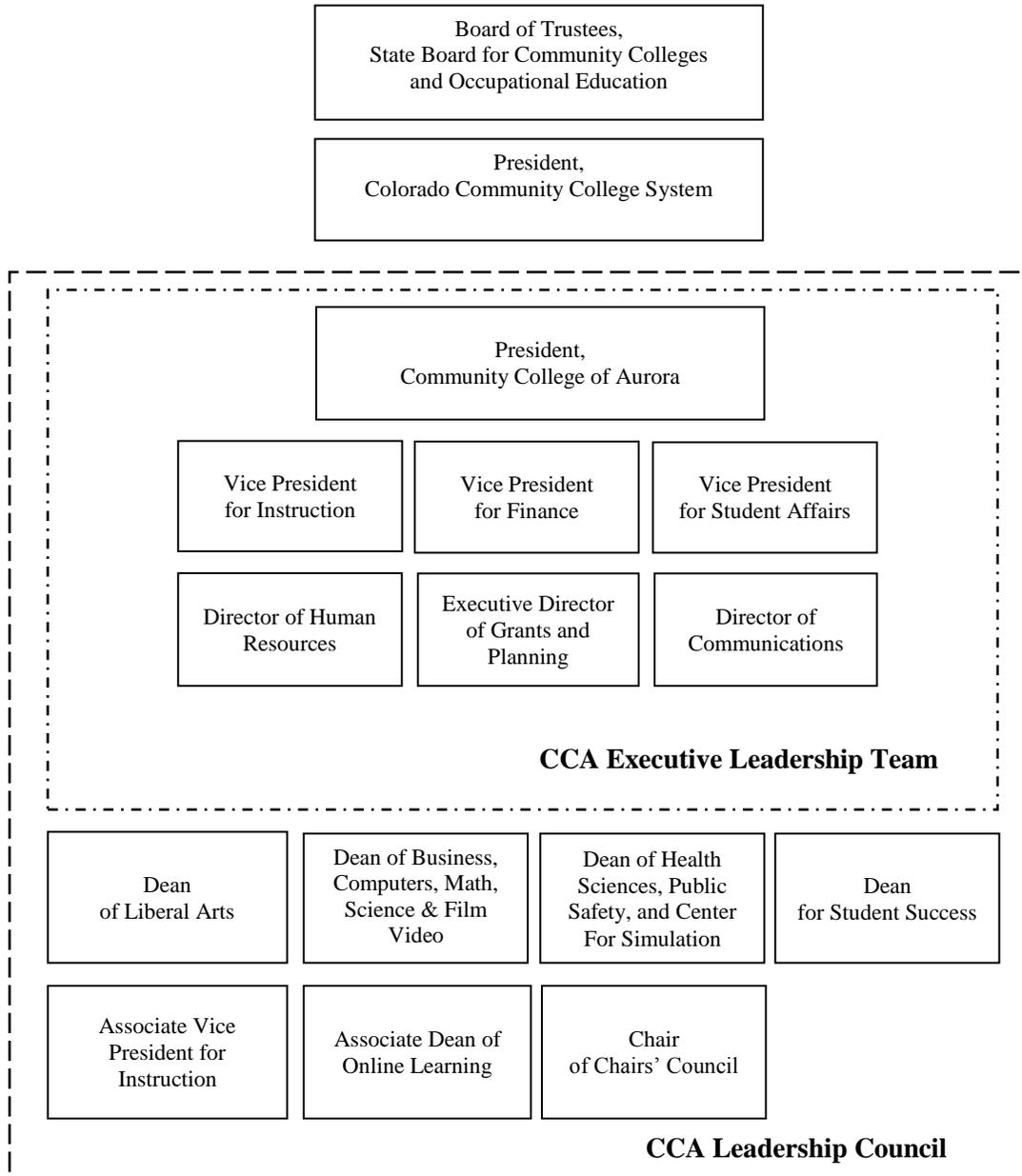
The Student Government Association of the College represents the student body and has served as a liaison between the faculty, administration, and the student body. This body is organized by a constitution and bylaws. Through spring 2012, the elected student government president was a member of the Cabinet Advisory Council, which met with Cabinet once a month. After reorganization, the Cabinet Advisory Council no longer exists, and the College will need to find another vehicle for student input.

Reporting directly to the CCA president are the three vice presidents and the directors of the Communications Office, the Grants and Planning Office, and the Human Resources Office. Each vice president leads one of the College's three units: Instruction, Student

Affairs, and Administrative Services. The president's direct reports make up the Executive Leadership Team. Meeting twice monthly, the Team serves as the strategic management lead for the College. The Team provides advice and counsel to the president, prepares items for consideration or decisions, and coordinates activities and work across divisions.

The Executive Leadership Team, with the addition of the academic deans, the associate vice president of instruction, the associate dean of online learning, and the dean of student success, together form the Leadership Council, the body responsible for institutional leadership and policy development. The Leadership Council is the lineal descendant of the old Cabinet. Meeting twice monthly, the decisions and proposals of this body are offered to the president for review and approval. The Council serves to enhance communications within the College and community while providing College-wide leadership and support for strategic priorities and goal accomplishment.

Figure 7.1
Visual representation of Executive Leadership Team and the Leadership Council



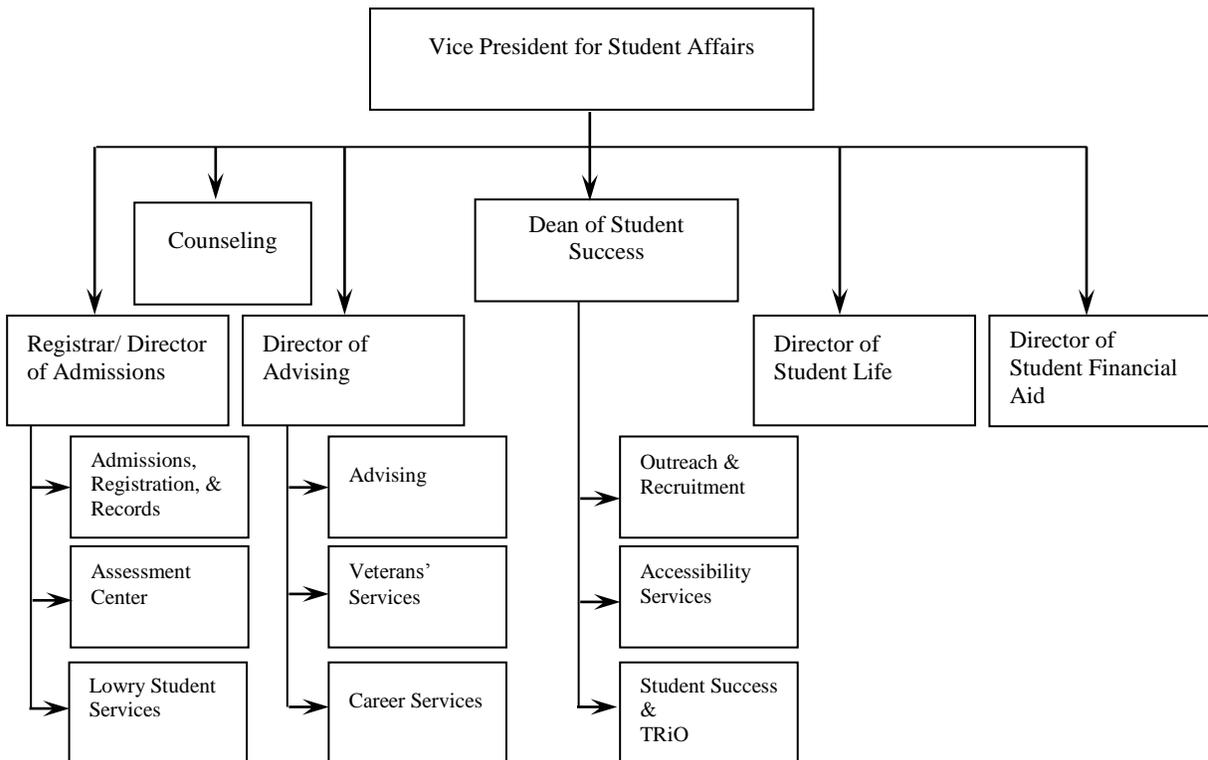
The Chairs' Council consists of the chairs of the respective College departments. The elected chairperson of that Council attends the Leadership Council once a month and the Academic Affairs Executive Council weekly. The Chairs' Council no longer includes the vice president of instruction or the deans.

Beginning fall 2012, the instructional deans, the chairperson of Chairs Council, and the vice president of instruction have begun meeting weekly as the Academic Affairs Executive Council. At each meeting, the group generally addresses and resolves one issue.

Each college president is required by the State Board to ensure that the college has a faculty forum. There has been no faculty-only forum since 2001. Instead, the College has had an active Academic Forum that meets no less than monthly during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year. That Forum also includes representatives from Student Affairs, and together the Instructional and Student Affairs teams discuss issues that affect and promote student learning. The decisions of this body are referred to the Chairs Council for review and approval. The Academic Forum’s makeup and role are currently under review.

The Student Affairs Division holds a bi-monthly meeting with all of the directors, assistant directors, and key Student Affairs personnel including the dean for student success and the vice president of student affairs. The Leadership Council is informed of the decisions and proposals made by this body.

Figure 7.2
Student Affairs Organizational Chart



Core Component 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

The College's strategic goals 2009-2013, adopted near the conclusion of the strategic planning process in 2009, directly link to the College's mission and reflect College priorities:

- Goal 1: Increase student retention, completion, and transfer rates.
- Goal 2: Continually improve student learning.
- Goal 3: Increase student enrollment.
- Goal 4: Strengthen human resources.
- Goal 5: Strengthen the College's visibility and community relations.

Since the adoption of the goals, CCA has aligned resources to support their implementation. To increase student retention, completion, and transfer rates, for example, CCA has significantly expanded Student Affairs staff with responsibilities for achieving this goal. Among their efforts has been the creation of the Student Success Center. To support improvement in student learning, the College has added regular faculty positions and strengthened assessment with a director of assessment and institutional effectiveness position.

Improving developmental education is another area where College resources have gone toward strengthening student learning. This has included a total re-structuring of the developmental sequence and innovative partnerships with Biology and the Social Sciences to accommodate and advance students through their developmental requirements on an accelerated and effective schedule. To further these initiatives, the College has added faculty members to the Academic Enrichment Department (AcE), but to date has not been able to commit ongoing significant funding to other areas to complement the efforts in AcE.

Among the resources devoted to strengthening the College's human resources have been authorizing more employee travel to conferences and the recent hiring of a director of faculty professional development. To strengthen the College's visibility and relations with the community, CCA has expanded the Communications team, adding a staff member to work with social media. Since 2009, the College has also funded a position with responsibilities for strategic partnerships.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

As described in the preceding section, the College-wide planning process sets College priorities that drive annual budget allocations. The initiatives that most clearly support these priorities have had a higher probability for funding. The resources allocated for additional AcE faculty members to support student learning and for positions in Student Affairs that focus on student retention, success, and transition are examples of this process. Annual performance plans provide supervisors with a measure of employee success in meeting College priorities. During much of the past decade in Instruction, annual chair reports (now discontinued) included information on departmental assessment of student learning. Moving forward, the Instructional Program Reviews will be an integral part of the planning and budgeting process.

The College has not linked budget allocations to a program's assessment scores. However, assessment results do inform instructional strategies for the following academic year.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The College's comprehensive planning process in 2008 and 2009 culminated in the Cabinet's adoption of the five strategic goals in April of 2009. The process gathered input via meetings with both internal and external constituent groups. Meetings with the College Advisory Council and the CCA Foundation Board provided external perspectives. Internal perspectives came from meetings with the Academic Planning Council (now Academic Forum), Cabinet Advisory Council, Student Government, Student Affairs, the Administrative unit, advisors, custodians, and open forums for the entire College community. All constituents were presented with a statement of the College's mission, vision, and values as preparation for these meetings. Drafts of the strategic goals were also discussed by the Cabinet Advisory Council prior to presentation to, and approval by, the Cabinet.

Once the College-wide planning process was completed, the strategic goals became the framework for the development of unit-level plans, and, less directly, for individual annual performance plans. Cabinet also utilized the strategic goals as it developed annual budgets, reviewing requests for new allocations in light of how well each helped the College achieve a goal.

Using the framework of the strategic goals, a committee of regular faculty members, adjunct instructors, a dean, and the associate vice president of instruction, developed the 2010-2013 Instructional Plan. After discussion across the Instructional unit, including a half-day meeting with all regular faculty members in March of 2010, the Plan was adopted by Cabinet. Its emphases, reflecting the perspectives of a wide range of faculty members who participated in the planning process, included the following:

2010-2013 Instructional Plan

Strategic Area 1: Develop and maintain instructional techniques that provide strong core academic skills to accommodate a student population with diverse entry needs and diverse ongoing needs.

- 1.1: Provide academic programs that foster foundational skills and provide opportunities to build discipline-specific expertise.
- 1.2: Maintain high academic standards and establish clear relationships for transfer opportunities.
- 1.3: Create, maintain, and/or expand support services and delivery modalities for student success.

Strategic Area 2: Promote critical and strategic approaches to curricular and program development for both General Education and Career and Technical Education.

- 2.1: Create new programs and modify existing programs to meet the changing needs of the service area's demographic.

Strategic Area 3: Support effective teaching and learning.

- 3.1: Ensure the stability of the teaching faculty.
- 3.2: Provide and support opportunities for faculty growth and development.
- 3.3: Foster an interdisciplinary and intercultural focus in teaching and learning.
- 3.4: Promote continued assessment of student learning.

(Resource Room Document 7.11)

The Instructional Plan frames the structure within which faculty members develop their annual work plans. In some departments, each item in an annual work plan is linked specifically either to one of the Instructional Plan goals, or, if focused on larger institutional or community priorities, one of the College's strategic goals. Other work plans do not make the specific links, but department chairs and division deans reference the strategic goals in directing faculty energy and conducting evaluations.

In a similar use of the strategic goals in 2011, the College convened a Strategic Enrollment Management Planning Task Force. Members of

the task force represented broad constituencies across the College and provided their expertise to subcommittees in the areas of traditional and nontraditional student recruitment, financial aid and scholarships, student engagement and success, marketing, communications and community relations, and assessment and evaluation. The recommendations of these subcommittees went into the creation of the College's current Student Success and Retention Plan. (*Resource Room Document 7.12*)

A new administration offers a college an opportunity to re-examine its mission, values, and strategic goals. The College will begin that process in Spring of 2013, relying upon the HLC Self-Study and Evaluation Team Report as a starting point.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

The 2008-09 strategic planning process included discussions of capacity, which have continued at the College. Among the topics discussed were expansion of regular faculty, facilities, parking lot expansion, preventive maintenance, adding more instructors and staff to the College, and classroom space. The College plans each year for a 2 percent reduction in enrollment. During the rapid enrollment growth of the "Great Recession," College facilities were strained. The College has accommodated that increased enrollment by creative scheduling and conversion of ancillary spaces to classrooms. The College continues to show enrollment gains, and, since afternoon capacity remains ample, may need to expand course offerings into times less popular with the student body.

Table 7.5
Fall Enrolled Students by Selected Campus
Unduplicated Headcount^a

	2006	2008	2010	2012 ^b
CCA CentreTech Campus	2,706	2,990	3,750	3,922
CCA Lowry Campus	2,437	2,551	3,172	3,126
CCA Online Courses	839	1,159	1,534	1,582
CCCS Online Courses	573	527	910	1,251
CCA High Schools	48	170	1,401	1,442

SOURCE: COGNOS Course Enrollment End-of-Term Snapshots.

^a A student enrolled in courses on the CentreTech campus and the Lowry campus will be counted once in each campus.

^b Fall 2012 data are as of November 26, 2012.

The Colorado General Assembly has very little discretion over the state budget, due to citizen initiatives. Forced to rely upon tuition and fees, the College has shifted from a concern with FTE growth to an emphasis on average class size. This strategy has meant offering fewer courses and sections, but has also provided an opportunity (with the new Degrees with Designation) to help students focus on those courses that will move them through the transfer process and on to their four-year collegiate destination.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

The campus-wide meetings held during the planning process that developed the College’s current strategic goals included discussion of technology, demographic shifts, and globalization—among many others—with particular emphasis on demographics shifts. Because of the rapid changes in the College’s service area, demographic trends were a particularly important consideration. The discussion included a review of shifts in demographic trends for enrollment at the College for the years 2002-2008, and projected population increases in the Aurora service area to 2015. Additional information presented included the changes in enrollment in the Aurora Public Schools from 1997-2006, and information from the City of Aurora Planning Department regarding ethnic make-up, average household income, occupational numbers, residential and commercial property growth, and anticipated maximum population. Discussion on the topic of demographic trends by constituents included the diversity of languages spoken in Aurora homes and the comparison of ethnicity between the Aurora Public School District, Cherry Creek School District, and CCA. (*Resource Room Document 7.13*)

While issues of globalization arose in the campus-wide discussions during the strategic planning process, the College has tended to address globalization through discussions that result in specific initiatives. These include the development of the Aurora Language Center, faculty departments globalizing the curriculum, faculty members and staff forming a Globalization Committee, and the organization of an annual International Festival.

Other emerging factors include the impacts of federal and state legislation, and the expansion of College classes to qualified high school students.

The College could enhance the existing strategic planning process by preparing a specific plan to address the College's goals for technology and a schedule for implementation of new technological infrastructure.

Core Component 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

5.D.1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

The College's primary documentation of performance comes through the work plans that all regular employees complete each year and supervisors' evaluations of how well employees have accomplished those plans. While the processes and timelines differ for various groups, such as classified employees and regular faculty, all work plans begin with an annual self-assessment and evaluation by a supervisor followed by discussion of those assessments and evaluations. Taking into account College and unit goals, each employee's own career goals, and results of the just-completed evaluations, employees then develop a work plan for the coming year. The plan is discussed with, and approved by, each employee's supervisor. Generally, a second-level supervisor also reviews the evaluations and plans. The various steps in the process are thoroughly documented with work plans signed by each employee and supervisor with copies sent to Human Resources for filing.

(Resource Room Document 7.14)

CCA also develops and documents evidence of performance in specific areas of the College. Two of the most comprehensive efforts are in Instruction, focused on improving how well CCA does in providing high-quality teaching and learning. The College collects and disseminates Student Evaluations of Instruction for every class. The evaluations are now collected electronically, allowing rapid analysis and distribution of the results. Deans and department chairs receive this information soon after the end of each semester, allowing

them to use it to guide the improvement of performance and, in some cases, make decisions about teaching assignments. CCA also collects and analyzes assessment of student learning data, and instructional departments use these data to improve instruction. These processes and results are thoroughly discussed in Chapter 6.

5.D.2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

As an institution, and within its various units, the College builds on its experience to refine and improve its procedures and practices.

An important example of learning and improving to enhance institutional effectiveness lies in the College's revision of its Developmental Education courses. Developmental Education used to be divided between Math and English, with Development English and Reading linked to English and Development Math linked to Math. But, many students required academic enrichment in both English and Math. Not all instructors had the skills or experience to effectively teach both transfer-level and developmental courses. In Fall 2009, the College combined all developmental education into the Academic Enrichment (AcE) program, which has developed new courses and linkages to improve and shorten the entire developmental sequence. That system has proved effective enough that it is now incorporated in the new state-wide developmental education program.

Some institutional lessons are hard ones. Seeking to support Colorado's emphasis on "new energy," the College piloted a photovoltaic technology certificate; experience revealed a lack of local jobs in that industry, and CCA had to terminate the program.

Many of the College's organizational structures have operated more by custom than by formal procedures. In like manner, committees frequently have had blurred membership and functions. That casual approach has encouraged communication across the College, but it has also served to diffuse decision making and responsibility. The College has now grown to a point that suggests the need for clarification of those relationships.

The College has hired a contractor to assemble all of the College's procedures and practices in one repository and to conduct a gap analysis to identify any missing components. With a new administration in summer 2012, the College is analyzing those practices in regards to efficiency and capacity and modifying organizational structures and relationships as it moves forward.

Not all students matriculate according to their initial plan. In Film Video, Criminal Justice, and Business, the College has embedded certificates within the degree programs, so students complete certificates as they progress towards graduation.

Within its resources, the College must be efficient in the methods by which it addresses its mission. Through experience, CCA steadily revises those methods to expand its capabilities. The College used to place students on a wait list when the class they desired was full. That wait list required staff to contact a student or the student's voice mail, alert them of any opening, and then wait 24 hours for the student to act, before moving on to the next student on the wait list. Wait lists remain for science lab courses, but for other courses, the College has eliminated wait lists, and the system of weekly roster purges for non-payment opens up full courses for additional student enrollments.

In Fall 2010, the College attempted to combine Academic Advising and Financial Aid into one unit, to foster improved service to the students. The two functions were not compatible, and based on experience, the College divided those areas into two departments in January of 2012.

To enhance CCA's capabilities to support student learning, the College has restructured and expanded the Student Affairs division. A Dean of Student Success oversees Recruitment, Accessibility Services, and Student Success and TRiO. In November of 2010, the College created its First-Year Experience and Transitions program, and CCA began a required new student orientation for all first-time College students in 2012.

The support for the mission's emphasis on workforce development is evident in the creation of a new position, the Coordinator of Career Services, with a mandate to develop and implement a comprehensive career services program for CCA students.

College support for concurrent enrollment began with one course of reassignment time for one faculty member in 2006. As concurrent enrollment has grown, that effort has now expanded to seven full-time positions and executive-level oversight.

Without sustainability, nothing else can succeed. Analysis of average class size and number of scheduled sections, has prompted the College to "right-size" the number of sections in order to raise average class size. This promotes better classroom discussion, and increased instructional efficiency.

Strengths:

- The College maintains the resources and infrastructure it needs to support its programs, activities, and commitment to student learning.
- Despite the tight financial situation of the last decade, the College has successfully grown and developed the Lowry campus and its programs.
- CCA has appropriately qualified faculty and staff with increasing opportunities for training and professional development.
- The College, as part of CCCS, has a governing board that is knowledgeable and engaged. The College engages its internal constituencies in governance, involving administrators, faculty, and staff in setting academic standards and requirements.
- CCA's current strategic goals were developed through an extensive and inclusive process that utilized information about the demographic changes and diversity of the community. The College has aligned its resources, including the allocation of staff positions, to support those goals.
- CCA has an institution-wide system to develop annual work plans, evaluate performance, and utilize information from those evaluations to improve performance. Student evaluation of instruction and assessment of student learning provide additional information for performance improvement.

Challenges:

- The College continues to face a challenging fiscal environment with declining state support, growing dependence on tuition, and little control over the level of many expenditures.
- For an institution of its size, CCA has a very small regular faculty. In this situation, determining which programs should be allocated regular faculty positions can be difficult.
- An ongoing challenge is the timely development and implementation of degrees and certificates that meet workforce needs and lead to employment for graduates.
- Increased enrollment and growth in the number of College employees in recent years has strained space in many College buildings.
- The College's processes for monitoring expenses, while rigorous, have grown in complexity, requiring additional employee time and effort. The Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) system is a recently implemented example.
- Obtaining timely and accurate budget information, especially at the unit level, can be a challenge.

- The historically collaborative budgeting process is linked informally to planning and the evaluation of operations and has no direct link with assessment of student learning.
- The College last engaged in institution-wide planning during the development of its current goals in 2008-09 and of an instructional plan the following year. During this period, a number of non-instructional units have operated without written plans.

Opportunities:

- The relatively strong financial situation of the College offers an opportunity to reorganize budgeting processes, improve the provision of budget information to College units, and assist employees in meeting monitoring obligations.
- Degrees with Designation offer one path to consider when allocating regular faculty positions.
- The arrival of a new administration offers an opportunity to continue to revamp and strengthen the College's governance structures.
- Completion of the self-study and the team's visit is an appropriate time to engage in institution-wide planning and to complete written plans in specific areas of the College such as facilities.

Chapter 8 Request for Change in Student Body and Approval of New Locations (Concurrent Enrollment)

Introduction:

The Community College of Aurora (CCA or the College) is requesting a change in student body, reflecting the growth in our concurrent enrollment in the high schools over the past several years. The College also seeks location status for the five high schools where it currently offers 50 percent or more of the courses needed for a certificate.

Concurrent enrollment makes up nearly 25 percent of the College's student body and consists primarily of students taking CCA classes at their high schools, taught almost entirely by high school teachers hired as CCA adjunct faculty members (a few CCA instructors go to the high schools to teach). A much smaller number of high school students come to CCA's two campuses for concurrent enrollment in classes taught by CCA instructors and another small group is enrolled at the College through ASCENT, a fifth-year high school program for students who have completed at least 12 credits of concurrent enrollment prior to the end of their senior year. The change request and this chapter focus on the large group enrolled in CCA courses in the high schools.

The change in the College's student body reflects the diverse demographics of the high schools in CCA's service area, Colorado's educational structure where students as young as ninth grade can enroll in concurrent classes, and the schools' strong endorsement of concurrent enrollment. CCA's mission, national and state emphases on college access and completion, and state legislation have also contributed to the change in student population.

The number of high schools where the College offers 50 percent or more of the courses needed for a College certificate also continues to grow beyond the four approved as locations by the HLC in 2010.

(Resource Room Document 8.1) CCA seeks approval for an additional five high schools as locations included in the College's accreditation. These are schools where the College's course offerings have reached the 50 percent threshold. They are in two districts in CCA's service area:

- Aurora Public Schools: Gateway High School, Hinkley High School, Vista Peak High School
- Cherry Creek School District: Cherokee Trail High School, Smoky Hill High School

Additional information about these high schools is contained in response to questions in Part 2 of the Substantive Change Application for Additional Locations. (*Resource Room Document 8.2*)

Characteristics of the Change Requested

How will the proposed changes impact the historical intent, mission, nature, culture, organization, and people of the Community College of Aurora (CCA)?

The change in student population does not significantly impact CCA's intent, mission, and nature. If anything, this change aids the College in fulfilling its stated mission and carrying out the intent of those who founded the College, as discussed in Chapter 3. The expansion of concurrent enrollment offerings to additional high schools reinforces the College's community focus and strengthens relationships with area school districts. At the same time, the changes impact the College's culture, its emphasis on collaboration, and its reliance on adjunct faculty members and faculty department chairs.

College Culture

The gap between CCA's "college culture" and the culture of the high schools impacts the College. CCA faces the challenge of acculturating several thousand high school students to become college students in a situation where they are enrolled in college-level classes, but remain in their high school environment where they are taught by high school teachers hired as CCA adjuncts. The College is working to find ways to instill appreciation for college-level content and rigor, as well as identification with CCA, in students and teachers whose experience and daily work are focused in the high schools.

Collaboration

A positive impact of the change in student body has been the collaboration between Instruction and Student Affairs (previously Student Services) as the two divisions have worked together to manage concurrent enrollment and teach and support students in the high schools. Devising the best approaches to enroll students in classes, providing instructional oversight, and improving student support services has required extensive collaboration. This collaboration is continuing as CCA makes changes in the structure of concurrent enrollment in the spring of 2013.

Another positive collaboration has been between the College's faculty members and the high school teachers who become CCA adjunct faculty members for purposes of concurrent enrollment. By sharing

strategies and knowledge of each other's systems, the faculty members at all institutions are better able to promote and encourage student success.

With the growth in the concurrent student population, the College has hired additional staff and shifted existing staff to new responsibilities. In the fall semester of 2012, staff members representing the equivalent of 11 full-time employees were working directly with concurrently enrolled students in the high schools. In addition, many of the faculty department chairs devote considerable time to administering concurrent enrollment in their departments. While most of the staff positions are funded by the College, the equivalent of 2.5 full-time employees are supported by the Cherry Creek School District and the Aurora Public Schools.

Adjunct Faculty

From its beginning, CCA has relied on adjunct faculty members to teach the majority of its classes. The quality of the College's instruction depends on the excellence of these instructors. With most concurrent enrollment taught by high school teachers hired as adjuncts, CCA and its department chairs face challenges in assuring excellence and providing preparation equivalent to that provided to other adjuncts.

Leadership Role of Department Chairs

The growth in the student population and in the number of high schools has meant new leadership responsibilities for the College's faculty chairs. The chairs are responsible, among other things, for determining whether high school instructor credentials are sufficient to teach specific college-level courses; interviewing potential instructors and orienting them to the College; department-based assessment in which concurrent sections participate; conducting classroom observations at the high schools; evaluating instructors; and for ensuring that learning outcomes are met in the high school environment. As a group, chairs have begun to collaborate more in Chairs Council as they seek common solutions to concurrent administrative issues, including those arising from the major responsibilities given to the Chairs Council for concurrent enrollment in 2010. (*Resource Room Document 8.3*)

What changes, if any, will occur in the mission statement and mission-related documents (vision, goals, and purposes)?

Because service to the diverse high school student population through concurrent enrollment fulfills the College's long-standing mission, CCA has not modified its mission statement and mission-related

documents in response to the growth of that population and to the increase in the number of high schools where it offers concurrent enrollment classes.

What changes, if any, will occur in the number, demographics, and composition of the student body?

Discussion of the change in the composition of the CCA student body begins with the following points:

- Most of the growth in CCA's student body related to concurrent enrollment consists of students taking CCA classes in their high schools. A considerably smaller group comes to CCA to attend classes on campus. ASCENT students are a third concurrent group and they attend classes on CCA's campuses. (*Resource Room Document 8.4*)
- While the large group of students taking classes in the high school impacts the College in some ways, these students have virtually no interaction with other CCA student populations. Thus, for most students enrolled in CCA classes and for many employees who teach or work on the CentreTech or Lowry campuses, the changes in age distribution, ethnicity, and other characteristics apparent in the statistical profiles are not readily visible.

The concurrent population in the high schools differs in a number of ways from the population of CCA students who are enrolled elsewhere. Data from profiles of the College produced in 2012 by Institutional Research demonstrate some of these differences: (*Resource Room Document 8.5*)

- Concurrent students were more likely to be Hispanic (28 percent to 14 percent) than were other students.
- Concurrent students were much less likely to be African American (13 percent to 29 percent).
- Concurrent students were less likely to be first-generation students (30 percent to 49 percent).
- Concurrent students were much younger (16.3 years of age as compared to 29.5 years).
- Concurrent students were enrolled, on average, in fewer credits (73 percent taking less than 6 credits as compared to 21 percent for students attending on campus).

Possible explanations for some of these differences include the following:

- The specific array of high schools where CCA currently offers concurrent enrollment courses influences the demographic profile.
- Historical enrollment patterns at the College have had Hispanic enrollment at levels lower than that of the service area population while African American enrollment has been higher.
- Students enrolled in non-concurrent classes must present proof of legal residency; concurrent-enrollment high school students are not required to present such proof.
- Data collection in the high schools offers challenges such as the high percentage of students who do not answer “yes” or “no” when asked about their first-generation status.
- Differences directly related to students’ high school status, such as those for age and part-time status. Few high school students are over 18 and few enroll full-time in concurrent classes.

Specify the timeline used to implement the proposed changes.

Spring 2008 to Spring 2009

- The Colorado Community College System (CCCS or the System) College Pathways representatives develop standards for concurrent enrollment.
- Passage of concurrent enrollment legislation and policies emphasizing student access.
- Demand increases with rapid concurrent enrollment growth at CCA service area high schools.

Summer 2009

- Several high schools are at or near offering 50 percent of the courses needed for a CCA degree.
- The College and its partners plan for the new concurrent enrollment environment and growth.

Fall 2009

- Metro-area community college presidents, vice presidents, and System personnel initiate efforts to standardize concurrent enrollment practices across colleges and districts.
- CCA develops and approves, through Chairs Council and Academic Forum, a statement of standards for concurrent enrollment classes. (*Resource Room Document 8.6*)
- CCA and Aurora Public Schools (APS) launch a Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Council.

Spring 2010

- CCA's faculty deliberation of the new Instructional Plan includes concurrent enrollment. (*Resource Room Document 8.7*)
- Faculty members recommend that ongoing responsibility for developing concurrent enrollment policies and procedures be assigned to the Chairs Council.
- Chairs Council develops a concurrent enrollment faculty handbook. (*Resource Room Document 8.8*)
- CCA submits a location change request to the HLC and a focused visit follows.

Summer 2010

- Recommendations from the vice presidents of the five metro-area community colleges about pricing structures, enrollment procedures, and "memoranda of understanding" with school districts go to the college presidents for approval.
- Chairs Council recommends new concurrent enrollment procedures.
- College and district personnel continue to meet.
- The HLC approves four new CCA concurrent high school locations.

Fall 2010

- The College implements timelines and standardized processes to assure courses taught at high schools are equivalent to those taught at other College sites.
- The College updates the concurrent enrollment handbook as the program evolves and enrollment increases.

Spring 2011

- Increased focus on assessment of student learning and completion of course evaluations at high schools.
- Discussions begin with Denver Public School Northeast Quadrant on the new procedures for implementing concurrent enrollment in their restructured schools.

Fall 2011

- CCA implements streamlined processes for hiring high school adjunct faculty in a manner consistent with the College's hiring practices.
- Mentoring of faculty at high schools and observation of all classes at high schools begins.
- The College hires concurrent enrollment academic coordinators.

- Instructional personnel at the College work with high schools on developing clear concurrent enrollment pathways.

Spring 2012

- The College moves to have students use the online application for concurrent enrollment registration and announces the change to districts in preparation for the fall enrollment cycle.
- The metro-area community colleges make changes to the concurrent enrollment agreement and registration form to increase processing efficiency.

Fall 2012

- CCA restructures the concurrent enrollment academic coordinator position with three full-time positions reporting to the Office of Instructional Support.
- The College hires a liaison for Cherry Creek high schools.
- Enrollment Services and Instruction increase cooperation to include joint meetings, projects, and the setting of common timelines.
- Piloted initiatives include new student orientation, Accuplacer preparation, faculty development programs, and an online class offering in ENG 121.
- The College increases efforts to ensure compliance by concurrent instructors.
- CCA supports concurrent instructors through professional development and mentoring by Chairs and regular faculty.
- The College invites the high school instructors to attend new faculty orientation at CCA and holds a mid-semester problem-solving session specifically for the high school instructors.
- The library increases outreach to the high schools.
- Specific enrollment timelines are implemented within the school districts in order to strictly adhere to the College's enrollment, registration, and census dates.
- High school staff are supported and coached to improve their responsiveness to the required timelines.
- Launch of CCA/Cherry Creek School District Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Council; the CCA/APS Advisory Council continues to meet.
- The College conducts a needs assessment of concurrent enrollment organizational structure and processes.
- The College decides to move all responsibility for concurrent enrollment to Instruction.

Spring 2013

- Planning to begin for a pilot orientation program in the high schools, focusing on strategies for successful student concurrent enrollment and college experiences.
- Work to begin for developing separate concurrent enrollment handbooks for counselors and assistant principals and updating the existing faculty handbook.
- Discussions continue about the reallocation of resources, including personnel and budget, from Student Affairs to Instruction.
- The transition to Instruction is anticipated to be completed in March of 2013.

Institution's History

What experience, if any, has the institution had in changing its mission or student body?

CCA has had a consistent mission since its inception. For 30 years, the College has held to its commitment to serve its diverse service area through the provision of quality teaching and learning opportunities for students seeking to transfer or to enter the workforce. The College has not changed its mission, although it has sometimes changed how it fulfills that mission.

Over the same period, the College has had considerable experience with a changing student body, reflecting ongoing demographic changes in its service area brought about by immigration, fluctuations in the housing market, and other external factors. For more than a decade, the percentages of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students have increased while the percentage of students who are white has dropped. (*Resource Room Document 8.9*)

One example of CCA's successful response to changes in the student body can be seen in how it has addressed the needs of adult immigrants and refugees. In 2003, as the growth in the population of those with limited English skills became apparent in Aurora, the College established a community (non-credit) ESL program at its Lowry campus. That program now draws about 500 adults to each 8-week session with students from more than 100 countries and 70 language groups enrolled in 2012.

What are the reasons and driving forces for the (proposed) changes?

National, state, and local forces have driven the change in CCA's student body and the increase in the number of high schools where the College offers concurrent enrollment courses. The 2010 change

request report discusses these forces and reasons in detail. (*Resource Room Document 8.10*)

National interest in student access, completion, and success has set the context for CCA's commitment to concurrent enrollment. Significant legislation established concurrent enrollment as state-level policy in Colorado. This legislation included the 2008 Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) and the 2009 Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA). Often cited as an impetus for such legislation is the "Colorado Paradox." The paradox states that while Colorado has attracted large numbers of highly educated adults, the numbers of Colorado youth, particularly ethnic minorities, who finish high school and go on to college remains unacceptably low. The Colorado Department of Education reports, for example, that for the class of 2011, the on-time graduation rate for white students was 81.1 percent while for African American students it was 64.6 percent and 60.1 percent for Hispanic students. Finding ways to interest youth in college and helping them acquire college credits before they graduate high school are important means to get more Colorado youth into and through higher education.

On a local level, the commitment by College and area school district leadership has also been a driving force in the expansion of concurrent enrollment. The College, led by its former president, Dr. Linda S. Bowman, shared a vision with local school districts, particularly Aurora Public Schools and its superintendent, John Barry, that concurrent enrollment was important for a district that had undergone substantial shifts in enrollment in the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly with explosive growth of its immigrant population.

Also instrumental in promoting the College's concurrent enrollment expansion was Dr. Matt Gianneschi, hired as vice president of student services (now student affairs) in 2009. As an education advisor to Governor Bill Ritter just prior to moving to CCA, Gianneschi helped to develop the legislation that drove concurrent enrollment and related reforms. He brought a vast knowledge of concurrent enrollment and a passion for what it could do for Colorado students.

Institutional Planning for Change of Study Body

What are the institution's plans to implement and sustain the proposed changes? (How has CCA implemented the change to date?)

CCA is sustaining the changes in student population and the increase in locations where the College offers 50 percent or more of the courses required for a certificate through appropriate staffing, effective communication, and proper planning.

Appropriate Staffing

The growth in the number of students and high schools has increased the need for effective collaboration between the College and the schools. To encourage this collaboration, CCA shares two employees (its concurrent enrollment admissions counselor and the APS pathways coordinator) with Aurora Public Schools and one (its concurrent enrollment liaison) with the Cherry Creek School District. These employees have a dual presence at the College and in the district high schools and are able to help navigate the two systems more effectively than might staff members employed by a single system.

The College's director of outreach and recruitment has had responsibility for concurrent enrollment in Student Affairs. Reporting to this position is a staff of six who aid in admissions, testing and placement, enrollment, and monitoring of concurrent populations. In Instruction, oversight of concurrent enrollment has rested with the associate vice president of instruction. Over the last several years, the College has added Instructional support positions to manage the program and ensure consistent quality and rigor across all course sections. In 2012-13 there are three full-time concurrent enrollment academic coordinators responsible for facilitating the multiple quality-control requirements. The coordinators provide an important point of contact for high schools when instructors or administrators have questions or concerns. In addition, they collect course syllabi and student assessment materials, schedule classroom observations, and assist with student evaluation of instruction.

On the financial side, the College's director of fiscal operations and its general accountant have primary responsibility for the third-party billing process that includes billing the school districts for the students' tuition for concurrent enrollment classes. This process includes verifying the charges for each student, moving charges from the student account to the sponsoring third-party (district) account, creating invoices, following up on payment, and handling questions and problems related to concurrent enrollment billing.

Effective Communication

The College has regular schedules for meetings with school district personnel about concurrent enrollment. Monthly meetings with counselors (advisory committees) focus on outreach and enrollment processes. Counselors receive the concurrent enrollment faculty handbook and timelines for identification, admissions, assessment, advising, and enrollment of students in concurrent enrollment classes. Twice-yearly meetings with counselors and assistant principals focus on class offerings, Accuplacer testing, application process, and issues

that arise between the high schools and the College. In addition to participating in these meetings, instructional and student affairs staff members meet every other month to coordinate timelines and processes for administration of concurrent enrollment. In addition, the College leadership for concurrent enrollment meets once a month with APS administrators.

Planning

Since the inception of the concurrent enrollment program, staff members from Instruction and Student Affairs have shared responsibility for its administration. The retirement of the director of outreach and recruitment early in the fall 2012 semester provided an opportunity to examine the current administrative structure and consider changes that would improve both internal and external processes and make more efficient use of staff. In September, the President's Leadership Council discussed creating a concurrent enrollment unit at the College that would be inclusive of all concurrent enrollment functions and combine staff from Instruction and Student Affairs under one leader.

While there was support for this idea, there was also interest in conducting a needs assessment and gathering information from the College's peer institutions regarding the size, structure, and funding of their concurrent enrollment programs. One of CCA's academic deans conducted an assessment and in early December reported to the Leadership Council. (*Resource Room Document 8.11*) Her conclusion was that CCA would be best served by having one administrative unit for the program and the members of the Council concurred. The decision was then made to move all of concurrent enrollment under Instruction. Conversations began in December 2012 regarding the reallocation of resources from Student Affairs to Instruction, including personnel and funds, with plans to have the transition complete by March of 2013.

What impact might the proposed change have on challenges identified as part of, or subsequent to, the last comprehensive visit or reaffirmation panel recommendation and how has the institution addressed the challenges?

CCA had its last comprehensive visit in 2003 and had a site visit in 2010 in association with the College's request that its accreditation be extended to cover four high school locations. The following section addresses selected challenges expressed by the 2003 and 2010 evaluation teams.

Challenges from the 2003 Comprehensive Visit

To continue to improve assessment of student learning across the institution, including systematic data collection and rigorous analysis of that data.

The changes in student body and the increases in the number of high schools mean assessment data must be collected from more students and high schools. CCA began to collect data from the high schools in 2009 and continues to do so with comprehensive inclusion of concurrent enrollment sections in the 2011-12 assessment process. While there are occasional logistical challenges, the task is a manageable one, especially as more data are collected electronically and with the help of the academic coordinators. In addition, CCA's Institutional Research department has expanded in the past several years with the naming of a Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness in 2010. The College anticipates being able to collect and analyze any needed assessment data. Assessment of student learning is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

To maintain the quality of instruction, including faculty quality, in an era of diminishing resources.

To assure the quality of instruction for more sections at a growing number of high school sites, CCA collects résumés and official transcripts for all high school teachers hired as adjuncts; observes all instructors teaching College courses in the high schools; and administers evaluations of instruction to concurrently enrolled students at the high schools. The CCA department chairs play important roles in this work. (**Resource Room Document 8.12**)

To increase the numbers of students, particularly minority students, who complete AA and AS degrees.

The change in student body and growth in the number of high schools enhances the College's ability to increase the number of students who complete degrees. The concurrent high school student population, which includes significant numbers of minority students, receives an early introduction to college academic expectations and is able to transition to college-level studies without the expense of tuition or the need to travel to another location.

To more effectively meet the educational needs of underrepresented groups and of immigrants not eligible for resident tuition.

The change enhances the College's ability to address these challenges. A significant percent of qualified high school students taking CCA classes through concurrent enrollment in their high schools are

members of underrepresented groups and/or are immigrants not eligible for resident tuition. Both groups benefit from taking CCA classes without having to pay the usual cost of college tuition. The ASCENT program then allows students to remain in high school for a fifth year while taking a full load of credits at CCA, providing a mechanism for those not eligible for resident tuition to earn an associate's degree. (*Resource Room Document 8.13*)

Inadequate Communication with Part-Time Faculty and Staff

Since 2003, the College has implemented email distribution lists, including one for adjunct faculty members, to communicate important information regarding changes to System policies and College procedures. While every adjunct is provided a College email account, department chairs indicate that many concurrent enrollment faculty members in the high schools do not consistently check their CCA accounts. The most effective way to communicate with faculty in the high schools appears to be through their district email, but district emails are not included in the CCA distribution list. This is an area for review in the ongoing discussion around concurrent enrollment.

Increased Hispanic Student Enrollment

The 2003 visiting team noted the College's challenge in reaching the Hispanic population within its service area. Increased concurrent enrollment has positively impacted the College's ability to serve more of its Hispanic population with 34 percent of concurrent enrollment students being Hispanic, in comparison with only 14 percent of students on the College's campuses.

Concerns from the 2010 Team Visit Regarding Concurrent Enrollment

Complete Documentation of the Concurrent Enrollment Process

Since the 2010 visit, the College has been documenting processes and timelines for student enrollment, faculty hiring and evaluation, course offerings and prerequisites, instructional supervision, financial oversight, and student data reporting. The faculty handbook for concurrent enrollment will be reformatted for the 2013-14 school year with individual sections for various stakeholders. The College developed a concurrent enrollment database in 2011 that tracks instructor syllabus submission and completion of such items as paperwork, assessment assignments, and course evaluations. (*Resource Room Document 8.14*)

Reaching Students Less Likely to Continue

The College recognizes that this is a particularly difficult issue and seeks guidance from the HLC visitation team. Students in the high schools still face barriers to participation in concurrent enrollment. Among those barriers are the entrance requirements for most courses. To address this barrier the College is offering Accuplacer preparation workshops in some high schools this year. These have been very successful at CCA in recent years, preparing those about to take the Accuplacer to perform to their highest capabilities. (*Resource Room Document 8.15*) Another barrier, even for courses such as Business 115 which has no prerequisites, is getting parents to complete and return documents needed for students to enroll in concurrent courses. To address this issue, CCA is piloting orientation sessions for all 11th graders and their parents in some schools this year. These sessions explain how to participate successfully in concurrent enrollment.

Describe the administrative structure (accountability processes, leadership roles) necessary to support these proposed changes.

Support for the change in the student population and the increase in locations offering 50 percent or more of the courses for a certificate spans the College. It includes a wide range of service units such as Fiscal Affairs, Institutional Research, Human Resources, and Communications. However, the central leadership and responsibility for concurrent enrollment currently bridge Instruction and Student Affairs pending the 2013 transfer to Instruction. Decisions about concurrent enrollment ultimately come to the president and his Executive Leadership Team and to the larger Leadership Council.

The vice president for instruction provides overall leadership and accountability for Instruction, including the concurrent enrollment instruction at the high schools. The associate vice president reports to her and has direct responsibility for Instruction's role in concurrent enrollment. The three concurrent enrollment academic coordinators report to her.

The vice president for student affairs provides overall leadership and accountability for student recruitment, enrollment, advising, and student services. The dean of student success, who supervises the director of outreach and recruitment, reports to her.

The College's instructional deans are charged with ensuring that department chairs provide appropriate oversight for all the instruction at CCA, including concurrent enrollment at the high schools. The department chairs meet monthly at the Chairs Council, a forum for discussion and decision making about issues such as concurrent enrollment. The chairs whose departments offer concurrent enrollment

have direct responsibility for the concurrent enrollment instructors and courses in the high schools.

What controls are in place to ensure that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures and other communications will be/ has been accurate?

The College Communications Department produces all College advertising and brochures and produces or approves all communications to the public. The department designs and prints concurrent enrollment brochures with copy provided by the director of outreach and recruitment, the coordinator of concurrent enrollment partnerships, or the vice president of student affairs. The directors of financial aid and fiscal affairs and the associate vice president for instruction and the vice president of student affairs review brochures' content for accuracy upon each printing.

The College's main method of communication is the College website which has information for high school students interested in earning college credit and credit toward high school graduation. Copy for these pages is written and maintained by the coordinator of concurrent enrollment partnerships. (*Resource Room Document 8.16*)

How does CCA ensure that the financial planning and budgeting for the change are realistic (projected budgets, recent audit reports, revenue streams, cost of facilities and projected facility and equipment costs)?

The College utilizes a number of processes to ensure realistic financial planning and budgeting for the growing concurrent student population and the expansion to additional high schools. The vice president for administrative services regularly discusses concurrent enrollment budgeting and related fiscal issues with the Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Council whose members are aware of the costs and benefits of the change in population and addition of more high schools.

- CCA utilizes standardized agreements with the school districts developed by the Denver metro-area community colleges and approved by the System's legal office. (*Resource Room Document 8.17*)
- The State and CCCS set parameters for budgeting, including the amount each student is credited with through the College Opportunity Fund (COF) and the rate of tuition.
- Costs for facilities and equipment in the high schools are covered by a set amount (5 percent of the student share of tuition) that CCA pays to the school districts in addition to the amount of the tuition. This provides the College with a high

level of certainty about what facility and equipment costs will be in a given year.

- CCA is subject to regular audits (see Chapter 4) and the last audit report found no issues and was an unqualified audit opinion with no comments.

What are CCA’s projected revenues and expenses?

Revenue streams are determined by the number of credit hours the concurrent enrollment students take. The data in the following table illustrate the growth of the revenue stream over the last four years:

Table 8.1

Concurrent Enrollment Revenue and Expense; Fiscal Year 2010 – 2013

	Tuition Rate	Credit Hours	Total Revenue	Total Expense	Net Revenue
FY-2010					
Concurrent Enrollment	150.30	2836	426,251	(417,357)	8,894
FY-2011					
Concurrent Enrollment	158.25	7,686	1,216,310	(1,176,395)	39,915
FY-2012					
Concurrent Enrollment	167.85	14,469	2,428,622	(2,254,880)	173,742
FY-2013-Projected					
Concurrent Enrollment	174.75	14,450	2,525,138	(2,426,831)	98,307

SOURCE: R. Maestas, V.P. Administration.

NOTE: Facility and administrative expenses (overhead) are not included in the Total Expense lines and for FY2013 this would result in Net Revenue of approximately zero.

The expenses indicated are those directly attributable to concurrent enrollment. There are a variety of other costs as well, including the considerable time department chairs devote to concurrent enrollment administration in their departments and work by senior-level administrators, Human Resources, Institutional Research, and other departments.

What are CCA’s projected enrollment and staffing needs?

Enrollments are projected based on conversations with counselors at the area high schools. The projected number of credit hours for FY2013 is essentially the same as FY2012 actual credit hours. A shortage of high school teachers who are qualified is currently a major factor in limiting current enrollment growth.

As the College weighs future enrollment, it must balance the costs and the benefits. As indicated in the previous section, if the costs of all personnel who contribute to the work on concurrent enrollment are considered, the College may not break even on expanded enrollment and the growth in locations. Contributing to the costs of doing concurrent enrollment is the present situation where the College returns tuition plus 5 percent to the school districts while not getting the full amount for the COF that comes to it as part of the arrangement. Instead of paying \$62 for each of the credit hours taken at CCA, the state pays a lump sum of about \$8 million, less than the \$9 million the College would get with a straightforward calculation of the number of credits generated multiplied by \$62.

On the other side of the enrollment/finance equation is the benefit that concurrent enrollment growth has contributed to CCA's place in the System's funding formula, which is based on FTE. The significant increase in concurrent enrollment numbers in the high schools has helped CCA maintain a positive ranking in the formula compared to other colleges.

The College will continue to consider its staffing needs, weighing the information from the November 2012 needs analysis with consideration for the level of service it wishes to provide to the districts. The College will also continue to consider what might be an ideal concurrent enrollment number taking into account the demand for concurrent enrollment by schools and community and the knowledge that additional growth does not appear to pay for itself.

How does CCA assure that promotion, marketing, and enrollment for the new student body stay in balance with the college's actual resources and technical capabilities?

The College uses its ongoing leadership groups, oversight procedures, and decision-making processes to assure that its promotion, marketing, and enrollment in the high schools are within its resources and technical capabilities.

The vice presidents for Administrative Services, Instruction, and Student Affairs bring information about concurrent enrollment to meetings of the President's Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Council. These groups, for example, held the initial discussions in the fall of 2012 about the need for an analysis of concurrent enrollment and the possibility of a transfer in responsibility within the College. The Academic Affairs Executive Council, Chairs Council, and meetings of Student Affairs directors provide additional

forums for considering the resources required for the growing student population of concurrent students in the high schools.

Over the last year, the College has become more assertive in driving discussions with the high schools about what courses CCA can offer through concurrent enrollment. The College may not offer certain courses for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- There is no qualified instructor in the high school to teach the course
- A CTE course is not part of an approved pathway in the district
- In the case of developmental education, the course does not move into a college-level class
- There are not enough qualified students
- Assessment has shown that students are not educationally ready to take a college-level class
- The school does not have the equipment or laboratory needed for the class.

The technical capabilities required for the change in student body and for offering courses that comprise 50 percent or more of a certificate are essentially the same as those required for the College's existing student body and certificate locations.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Describe the involvement of appropriately credentialed faculty and experienced staff necessary to accomplish the proposed changes (curriculum development and oversight, evaluation of instruction and assessment of student learning outcomes).

All courses offered by the College, including those in the high schools, must exist within the CCCS's Common Course Numbering System (CCNS). This is a database of all courses that have been submitted by College faculty and approved by the System's Curriculum Committee. To further promote consistency, CCA has also implemented a model syllabus used for all course sections. The syllabus includes the CCNS course title, description, credits, contact hours, learning outcomes, and a course calendar demonstrating when and how the topical outline is covered. Instructors, including high school adjuncts, submit syllabi to their department administrative assistants at the start of each semester for auditing and archiving. The College continues to work on ensuring the quality of syllabi in all concurrent enrollment classes in the high schools. The CCNS and the model syllabus are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

When a new high school instructor requests to teach concurrent enrollment courses for the College, part of the hiring process is the submission of a course syllabus designed by the faculty member following the model syllabus. (*Resource Room Document 8.18*) Department chairs review the syllabus, approve the textbook, and determine whether the course demonstrates appropriate college-level rigor. The chairs also review applicants' transcripts and resumes just as they do for any new adjuncts. Most require a face-to-face interview and a teaching demonstration. At the time of hire, department chairs orient concurrent enrollment faculty to CCA's six Lifelong Skills and the ways in which these skills are to be incorporated into instruction.

The System office has outlined requirements for hiring high school faculty members to teach career and technical education (CTE) courses. If a secondary instructor has a current CTE endorsement issued by the Colorado Department of Education in the teaching area, then CCA honors that secondary credential and issues a post-secondary CTE credential, valid for the same period of time as the secondary credential. If the high school instructor does not have a secondary credential, she/he must meet the post-secondary requirements and apply for the credential. Chairs must then honor that credential.

Concurrent enrollment course sections participate in department and College-wide assessment processes. Student acquisition of department-specific learning outcomes as well as acquisition of the Lifelong Skills is assessed and compared with student learning in on-campus, hybrid, and online sections of the same course. All faculty members at the College are observed by their department chair or coordinator, regardless of location. Opportunity for student evaluation of instruction is also provided for every course section at the College, including high school sections. (*Resource Room Document 8.19*)

Concurrent enrollment instructors fill out a Request to Continue Teaching Concurrent Enrollment form at the end of each academic year. Department chairs consider assessment results, classroom observations, and student evaluation of instruction when determining whether to approve these yearly requests to teach. (*Resource Room Document 8.20*)

What change, if any, will occur/has occurred in the programs offered by the institution?

The increases in the concurrent enrollment student population and in the number of high schools have not altered the programs that the College offers. Concurrent enrollment students continue to pursue associate's degrees and/or certificates that the College offers its traditional student body.

Institutional Staff and Faculty Support

What impact will/has the proposed change have/had on the institutional staffing and support services? Explain any increases in faculty and staff listing any new, changed, or eliminated faculty and administrative positions?

In the fall semester of 2012, the College had the equivalent of 11 full-time staff members (11 FTE) dedicated to implementing and managing the concurrent enrollment program. As stated earlier, the associate vice president for instruction, the deans (both instructional and student affairs), department chairs, Finance, Human Resources, Institutional Research, and other staff provide support to the program.

Rather than addressing this change from the perspective of what additional staffing and support services are needed as the program grows, the College plans to conduct job and task analyses to determine how the work of managing the concurrent enrollment program can be divided among those currently assigned to the program.

What impact will/has the proposed change have/had on faculty workload and overall composition of the faculty (full-time, part-time, and adjunct)?

While the change in student population has not had a significant impact on the composition of the regular (full-time) faculty, the College has added to its already large group of adjunct faculty members. The full-time high school teachers hired to teach as CCA adjuncts have continued in their high school environments while also having to learn to navigate the administrative structures and expectations of CCA. And, having identified those qualified instructors through the concurrent enrollment system, the College has recruited a number of them to teach additional College sections during summer semesters or evenings when they are not working at the high schools.

The large student population served through concurrent enrollment in the high schools has impacted the workload of the chairpersons of the 11 departments that offer concurrent courses. Department chairs are responsible for the oversight of their departments, including faculty hiring, mentoring, and annual observation of full- and part-time faculty. Most of the chairs overseeing concurrent enrollment have an additional 25 to 34 course sections to oversee, and an additional 16 to 20 adjunct faculty members who are located away from CCA's campuses in the high schools. Department chairs are reassigned from 60 percent of their teaching duties to run their departments; however, concurrent enrollment oversight requires a significant portion of that

reassignment time, meaning less time to attend to other areas of responsibility. The three concurrent enrollment coordinators were hired to help mitigate some of the burden on the department chairs. The coordinators work closely with the chairs to gather information, schedule observations and evaluations, follow up on missing requirements, and act as liaisons with high school counselors and assistant principals.

Student Support

Describe how CCA will make/had made learning resources and support services available to students (student support services, library resources, academic advising, and financial aid counseling).

High school counselors provide a great deal of the support for students taking concurrent enrollment in the high schools. For example, the counselors are trained to help advise students and CCA staff members meet regularly with the counselors to provide them with academic information for students. Staff members from CCA's Center for Outreach and Recruitment go out to the high school sites to proctor Accuplacer testing and collect concurrent enrollment paperwork.

All concurrent enrollment students are included in CCA's Early Alert and progress reporting systems at the College. The names of those in the high schools who are identified as having a neutral or negative Early Alert or progress report are forwarded to the high school counselors who meet individually with each student about his or her progress.

The library staff members from the Learning Resource Center are available to go into the classes at the high school and teach digital literacy and how to access CCA digital library resources. Tutoring is handled by the adjuncts at the high school providing one-on-one tutoring. All online resources, including Net Tutor, are available for concurrently enrolled students at the high schools.

The College is currently in the process of developing a Concurrent Enrollment Orientation in the high schools and will add additional schools, one in each district, in the fall of 2013. Concurrent enrollment students are also invited to attend CCA's transfer fairs each semester. The College pays for buses and coordinates high school students' attendance.

The CCA Accessibility Services Office, not the high schools, approves accommodations for concurrently enrolled students with disabilities in College classes in the high schools, although the high school provides the accommodation. Concurrent enrollment students follow the same

procedures as other students for requesting the accommodation. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in high school are governed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) law for all their high school classes; however, in their college classes in high schools, their accommodations are governed by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) law.

Evaluation and Assessment

Describe the measures CCA will use/has used to document the achievement of its expected outcomes.

Outcome One: The CCA courses taught at the high schools will be comparable to CCA courses taught at the College's other sites.

Faculty members who teach CCA courses at the high schools and the courses they teach are evaluated in the same way instruction is evaluated at the College's other sites, using the following measures:

Measure: Teacher Observations

CCA conducts faculty teaching observations to foster the ongoing professional development of its full- and part-time faculty and to assure that students receive high-quality instruction. These observations include all faculty members teaching at all College sites including high schools. Following each observation, the observer meets with the faculty member to discuss what was effective and what improvements could be made. (*Resource Room Document 8.21*)

Measure: Student Evaluations of Instruction

CCA gives students in all courses, including those offered concurrently at the high schools, the opportunity to evaluate their classes online at the end of each semester. The rapid feedback from these evaluations is used to help determine which adjunct instructors will return to the College and to assist continuing faculty to improve instruction. The concurrent enrollment sections are treated the same as courses taught on the CCA campuses, and the evaluation reports for concurrent enrollment instructors are prepared as part of the reports prepared for the other sections. (*Resource Room Document 8.22*)

Measure: Comparisons by Success Rates, Grades, and Course Performance

Success Rates and Grades

CCA's Office of Institutional Research compares the success rates of high school students who take courses through concurrent enrollment at their high schools with the success rates of CCA students taking the same courses on the CCA campuses during the same period. Because the success rate comparisons use grade data, comparisons of grade distributions can also easily be carried out. The first of these studies covered the period from fall 2007 through fall 2009. The study found that 81.1 percent of high school students taking college-level courses through CCA as concurrent enrollment students at their high schools succeeded in their courses. CCA students taking the same courses on the CCA campus during the same period had a success rate of 67.6 percent. A more recent report looked at success rates in a wider variety of teaching modes. (*Resource Room Document 8.23*) In FY2012, the success rate of high school students taking college-level courses through CCA was 84.8% and the success rates of students taking face-to-face traditional courses at CCA was 76.2%. This report found that the lower success rates tended to be for students in courses with an online component. Since these courses were not looked at separately in the earlier report, this may help explain why the earlier report showed such a discrepancy in success rates between concurrent enrollment courses and other CCA courses. CCA continues to use other data (such as observing teachers and collecting assessment data) to ensure that high success rates in concurrent enrollment courses reflect student achievement.

Course Performance - Common Exams and Assignments

Some departments, including Science and Performing Arts, use common examinations or assessment assignments in all sections of a course, including those in the high schools, to aid in evaluating the consistency of the rigor and student understanding across all teaching modes and locations. Individual instructors may use different evaluation methods or count the essays as different percentages of the student's semester grade, but they all evaluate the same standard outcomes.

Outcome Two: Students who complete CCA courses at the high schools will enroll in additional higher education.

The College has the capability to track students who complete its courses at the high schools to determine how many continue at CCA, using identifiers already in the registration system. The College can also track how many of the students who complete CCA courses at the high schools enroll in other institutions, using, among other methods, queries to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Measure: Continuation at CCA

The College has the capability to track concurrent enrollment students through their CCA enrollment records and their CCA student numbers; it also has the students' expected dates of graduation from high school. Concurrent enrollment courses are given a separate section number and a separate campus location (usually the high school abbreviation). To track concurrent enrollment students into CCA, the Office of Institutional Research or the student affairs institutional researcher searches for student identification numbers of students enrolled in these concurrent enrollment courses in the following semester's enrollment file to determine if the students (a) continued in concurrent courses, or (b) enrolled at CCA as new college students. (*Resource Room Document 8.24*)

Measure: Continuation to Other Institutions

The College's student affairs institutional researcher will soon begin to track concurrently enrolled students who enroll at other institutions. CCA will be able to track concurrent enrollment students who enroll in Colorado public institutions of higher education and, through the National Student Clearinghouse, track students who enroll anywhere in the United States. Another possibility is to request permission from concurrently enrolled students and then to query both public and private higher education institutions in Colorado about whether those students who gave permission have enrolled at their institutions.

Outcome Three: Students who complete CCA courses at the high schools will demonstrate mastery of the College's Lifelong Skills at levels equivalent to students who complete comparable courses at the College's other sites.

CCA uses mastery of six Lifelong Skills as the basis for determining student learning with a current focus on assessing two of these skills, writing and critical inquiry. All faculty, adjunct and regular, participate in the College's assessment of student learning. The six Lifelong Skills that all students—including those concurrently enrolled at the high schools—should acquire as they take CCA courses include communication, critical inquiry, intra/interpersonal responsibility, technology, quantitative reasoning, and aesthetic perception. In FY2012, concurrent enrollment students scored higher in critical inquiry skills than students in other types of courses at CCA. However, they scored lowest in written communication skills. Currently CCA is working on a response to the FY2012 Annual Assessment Report with action items that will enable instruction to address these findings.

Describe how the assessment of student learning is integrated into the assessment program.

Assessment of student learning in courses taught at the high schools is identical to the assessment that faculty members conduct for courses taught at the College's other locations. Assessment results for students in the high schools are reported as a separate category in CCA's annual assessment report.

Chapter 9 Federal Compliance

1. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

The Community College of Aurora (CCA or the College) designs and manages credit courses and degree and certificate programs following standard practice in higher education as well as in accordance with federal and state requirements for measuring and awarding academic credit. The College follows ratio guidelines developed by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS or the System) to determine credit hours and the appropriate ratio of contact hours to credits based on various course types. Certificate and degree program lengths are comparable to those of similar programs found in other accredited higher education institutions and comply with state and federal requirements. CCA's tuition is set by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE or State Board) and is consistent across all state community colleges.

Credits and Contact Hours

In Colorado, institutions of higher education follow Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) contact hour requirements where one contact hour is defined as a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction with at least a five-minute break between hours. CDHE guidelines provide further direction for determining the specific credit hours to be awarded for student work in courses and programs using the base contact hour—defined as 750 minutes of section meeting time over the course of a semester—to establish the *minimum* number of weekly contact hours needed to receive one credit. For example, a three-credit-hour lecture course would need to meet the equivalent of three 50-minute blocks each week, for a total of 2,250 minutes per semester. (*Resource Room Document 9.1*)

To assist faculty members, department chairs, deans, and others with ensuring that CCA's courses conform with these requirements, CCA describes the guidelines for calculating the ratio between credit and contact hours for different types of courses, including online and hybrid in a written policy: *CCA Instruction 2.5: Academic Issues – Contact and Credit Hour Calculations*. The document also describes the measures the College uses to ensure compliance, including checks by department chairs prior to submitting courses for inclusion in the class schedule and a second review by the *Catalog* and scheduling team. (*Resource Room Document 9.2*)

All credit courses offered at CCA must be approved by CCCS and included in the system-wide Common Course Numbering System

(CCNS). The CCA Curriculum Committee, the State Faculty Curriculum Committee (a committee including two faculty representatives from each state system community college), and the Educational Services Curriculum Committee (a committee of the vice presidents of instruction from each state system community college) review and approve courses prior to their inclusion in CCNS, as described in Chapter 4.

CCNS was developed to reduce redundancies and duplication of effort in course development and to ensure consistency in designation, curricula, and competencies among similar courses offered by all other Colorado public community colleges. Course equivalencies are designated and monitored through CCCS's Common Course Numbering System.

Course credits are specified by the CCNS but the contact hours may vary from college to college based upon instructional activity type. The course schedules of a college may be audited periodically by CCCS or the CDHE to determine that the contact hours are in compliance with the CDHE-designated ratios.

The College has prepared the *Worksheets for Institutions: A. Credits and Program Length and B. Clock Hours* and will make them available to the Higher Learning Commission visitation team and place them in the resource room. (**Resource Room Document 9.3**)

Course Structure

Most of the College's fall and spring semester courses are 15 weeks in length and most summer semester courses are 10 weeks in length. However, CCA also offers late-starting courses and courses of less than 15 weeks to meet student needs and provide them with multiple college-entry points. Among these are five-week open-entry courses. Other CCA scheduling options include hybrid classes, which combine traditional face-to-face instruction with online activities and content, and online classes delivered via the Internet.

Program Length

The CCCS and CDHE also specify the length requirements for degree and certificate programs. The associate of arts, associate of science, and associate of general studies degrees must be at least 60 semester credits in length. The associate of applied science degrees may be 60 to 75 credits in length. Certificate programs must be a minimum of two courses with a maximum length of 45 credits. Information about

program and graduation requirements may be found in the College *Catalog*. (*Resource Room Document 9.4*)

Tuition

Tuition at CCA is consistent with the tuition charged by other Colorado Community College System institutions. Tuition and fees are established by the State Board through legislative enactment (C.R.S. § 23-60-202(1) (c)). (*Resource Room Document 9.5*) Tuition rates and additional fees are clearly listed in each semester's course schedule. Tuition rates are standard for all courses but differ for students who are residents of Colorado versus nonresident students. CCA has no courses for which it charges differential tuition for high-cost programs, although some programs have additional equipment, technology, or other fees.

Beginning with the fall 2005 semester, the State of Colorado enacted sweeping reforms establishing the College Opportunity Fund (COF), which is also discussed in Chapter 7. Rather than subsidizing higher education for in-state students by giving a block of money directly to each college, the state, via the Colorado Community College System, now sends this money as a tuition stipend to the institution if the student authorizes this use of her or his stipend. The stipend money appears as a credit on each student's tuition bill. Information about COF is readily available online, in the College's *Catalog*, and in the schedule of classes. Information is also available on the website of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. (*Resource Room Document 9.6*)

The SBCCOE approves all fees and charges. CCA's general fees include a high-cost course fee, an instructional technology fee for math and science courses, a student activity fee, a student enrollment charge, a student bond fee, a student government program fee, and a parking fee.

Special program fees to help offset high equipment, technology, materials or related costs for particular programs include the following: the Fire Safety Program equipment fee, film and video lab charge, Basic Law Enforcement Training charges, the Paralegal law library access charge, private instruction fees, arts materials charges, and Emergency Medical Provider equipment costs. Other charges students may incur are for international student applications, returned checks, emergency student loans, and challenge/portfolio charges for credit for prior learning applications. All fees and charges, with notations on those that are refundable and those that are not, are listed each semester in the course schedule and on the CCA website. (*Resource Room Document 9.7*)

2. Student Complaints

CCA welcomes input from students and views complaints received from them as an important part of its feedback process. The College has both informal and formal arrangements for processing and addressing student complaints with the aim of resolving them at the lowest possible level of responsibility and as rapidly as possible. To this end, faculty and staff members are encouraged to provide assistance to students and to take action to resolve their complaints as soon as possible. The letter that the director of the Accessibility Services Office sends to students approved for accommodations is an example of how the College expects all units to provide students with information about complaint procedures and offers them multiple options for presenting their concerns:

“If you disagree with the approved accommodations, please contact me so that we may discuss your concerns. If you are still not satisfied, you may submit a written appeal to Elena Sandoval-Lucero, Dean of Student Success, 16000 E. CentreTech Parkway, Ste. A105, Aurora, CO 80011, or send it through e-mail to Elena.Sandoval-Lucero@ccaaurora.edu.” (**Resource Room Document 9.8**)

Students have several avenues for presenting concerns, including going directly to an individual or department or utilizing specific procedures, such as those dealing with financial aid appeals, problems with a class, or extenuating circumstances. For example, students can submit a *Problem with a Class* form to the chair of the department responsible for the class to report a problem and request resolution. The chair follows up on the issue with the student and then submits a results form with the decision to the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar maintains files of these problem/resolution results. (**Resource Room Document 9.9**)

Historically, students have sometimes gone directly to College administrators with their complaints. Those with concerns about a fiscal issue have called or sent a message to the vice president for administration who logged them on a spreadsheet in order to track their resolution. The vice president has maintained the message logs for future reference with a note placed into the Banner system and paper backup information put into a file. (**Resource Room Document 9.10**) Likewise, students with instructional concerns have taken these to academic deans, and students have often brought complaints to the attention of the president who has shared them with appropriate offices for resolution.

Starting in the spring of 2013, to further ensure that students are heard as well as to facilitate timely problem solution and data-tracking, CCA

is implementing an additional avenue for communication of complaints or concerns, especially if students are not sure which individual, office, or process can best assist them. The procedure is modeled after the CCCS System President's Procedure SP 4-31 Student Grievance Procedure and is available to students along with a form that can be submitted electronically. The form goes to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs where it is logged in and directed to the appropriate person or office for investigation, action, and resolution. Issues that fall under the purview of the vice president of administration, the vice president of instruction, or the President's Office (including Human Resources, Communications, and Grants and Planning) are addressed and recorded through those offices. (*Resource Room Document 9.11*)

Each vice president will assure that every formal written complaint received through this process is recorded on a standard spreadsheet, including the date of the complaint, the name of the student and her or his student number, the name(s) of the respondent(s), the actions taken in response to the complaint, and the resolution of the complaint. Each vice president will also use a consistent numbering convention (for example, VPSA-# for issues being addressed through Student Affairs, or VPI-# for issues being addressed through Instruction). If complaints cannot be resolved through an informal process, the vice president of the appropriate area will assure that a formal process is afforded the student following the College's complaint procedure.

3. Transfer Policies

For students who wish to transfer credit to CCA, the College evaluates credits earned at regionally accredited institutions of higher education to determine if those credits will be accepted in transfer. Courses accepted in transfer must match the content and meet or exceed the rigor of CCA as determined by the professional judgment of the College's credentials evaluator or a department chair. Students who have previously attended any college must complete the application for admission to CCA, indicating all prior colleges attended. Transfer students who intend to pursue a degree or certificate at CCA must take the Accuplacer or have appropriate ACT or SAT scores or college-level coursework that would qualify for an exemption.

Students must be enrolled at CCA and have a declared degree path in order for their transcripts to be evaluated, a request they can make via the College's website. (*Resource Room Document 9.12*) The college where credit was initially earned must mail an official transcript directly to CCA. CCA then evaluates transfer credit course by course, based upon the student's declared degree or certificate. Generally, grades of "C" or better are accepted in transfer. CCA may choose to

transfer “D” grades on a case-by-case basis, determined by the student’s chosen program and whether a “D” grade may be used to meet degree or certificate requirements. Depending on the program of study at CCA and courses taken, some courses are not eligible for transfer after seven years.

The College sends written confirmation of the credit awarded to each student for whom a credit evaluation is completed. Students can also check the status of their transfer credits by viewing their unofficial transcripts online in their MyCCA account. Credit is typically evaluated and posted to the student record within 30 days of receipt at CCA. Documents become the property of the College and are not released to the student or transferred to other institutions.

CCA provides an appeals process for students who disagree with the initial decision regarding their transfer credit to ensure credit transfer decisions are considered thoroughly and fairly, including from the student’s perspective. Academic advisors provide information on the transfer process, including appeals.

CCA’s transfer policies are available to students and the public in the paper and electronic versions of the College’s *Catalog* or on the “Transfer to CCA” section of the College website. (**Resource Room Document 9.13**) The guidelines for transfer of credit were developed and approved in 2006 by the CCCS Education Services Council as a system-wide procedure and can be found in the document “Transferring Credit to a Colorado Community College System (CCCS) College.” (**Resource Room Document 9.14**)

4. Verification of Student Identity

CCA verifies the identity of students who participate in its distance education courses or programs. The College does not charge any additional fees related to verification of student identity.

College staff members keep abreast of new technologies for student identification and may look at them more seriously in the future. To date, staff members have judged these technologies to add cost and additional work for students so they have recommended that they not be adopted.

The College takes steps to ensure privacy for students who participate in distance education courses. Students access their online courses by using a secure login and passcode. Students are assigned a student number when they are admitted and use that number, along with a password, to log in to a secure portal site (MyCCA). To further ensure

security, students are required to change the password the first time they log in and passwords expire periodically and must be changed.

Once logged in at this site, students have access to their College records, as well as a link to their courses in D2L, the College's learning management system. Course access in D2L opens on the first day of class and closes two weeks after the course ends.

Students can see only their own materials. While there is an area in D2L where students can complete a profile and a few include their phone number and other personal information, the majority do not use this option. Instructors have access to only their own courses and only department chairs have access to all courses in their departments. The D2L system administrator and online learning staff have access to all courses for technical purposes. Department chairs have access to all course shells in their areas for evaluation purposes.

Some instructors use proctored exams for distance education courses, and, for these exams, physical student identification is required. However, most online instructors use timed exams in D2L or other software, such as MyMathLab. Most, if not all, online courses include a discussion component. This allows instructors to become familiar with individual student abilities and writing styles, which helps to ensure testing integrity.

5. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

a. General Program Requirements

The College's Title IV program is in good standing and has not been subject to any of the following:

- U.S. Department of Education Title IV program or other reviews related to the Institution's responsibilities in regard to maintaining its Title IV programs;
- Inspection or audit by the Office of the Inspector General;
- U.S. Department of Education suspension, termination, fines, letter of credit, or heightened monitoring actions.

The Colorado Community College System periodically conducts internal auditing processes to ensure compliance with generally acceptable standards and accounting procedures. CCA does not have any outstanding compliance issues related to financial responsibility standards: limitation, suspension, or termination actions, audits, or

default rates. The most recent audit was conducted in 2012 by KPMG and is accessible on the Colorado General Assembly website.

(Resource Room Document 9.15)

The TRiO Student Support Services program at CCA has been funded through Title IV since 2010. The program is responsible to a program officer in the U.S. Department of Education for maintaining compliance with OMB and EDGAR regulations while working under the structure of federal TRiO legislation. The College TRiO director and grant accountant are responsible for ensuring that all fiscal decisions are documented and justified according to regulations while staying true to the federal TRiO legislation. The TRiO program at CCA has not been flagged for auditing nor has it failed to comply with any regulations or legislation as evidenced by budget approvals from the U.S. Department of Education and ability to spend grant funds since 2010.

b. Financial Responsibility Requirements

The College's financial practices follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the Colorado State Fiscal Rules. The Rules are available on the website of the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration. *(Resource Room Document 9.16)*

CCA is audited by an independent audit firm (KPMG) annually as required by the State Controller's Office, which provides an annual Financial Audit and an OMB Circular A-133 audit. CCA's audit is a part of the Colorado Community College System annual audit.

c. Default Rates

The College's official two-year default rate rose from 2005 to 2008, leveled off for 2009, and decreased significantly in 2010 from 2009. The unofficial three-year rate rose slightly for each year 2005 through 2008, but the official rate for 2009 was higher at 21.6 percent

Table 9.1
Two-and Three-Year Financial Aid Default Rates

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Two-Year Official	10.1%	12.0%	13.0%	16.2%	16.2%	12.5%
Three-Year Official					21.6%	
Three-Year Unofficial	12.8%	13.5%	15.2%	16.3%		

SOURCE: CCA Financial Aid Office.

The 21.6 percent three-year default rate for 2009 represents 166 in default and 768 in repayment as of August 5, 2012. CCA's three-year default rate for 2009 was in the middle for all CCCS colleges, with six colleges reporting lower rates and six reporting higher. (*Resource Room Document 9.17*)

CCA is very concerned about students' loan indebtedness and their ability to repay their loans. The College has taken the following steps to minimize default rates:

- Convening a default task force in the spring of 2012 to look at the default rate from a holistic perspective with membership that includes the academic deans, the associate vice president of instruction, the director of advising, the director of financial aid, the assistant director of financial aid, the dean of student success, and the director of fiscal operations. (*Resource Room Document 9.18*)
- Sending counseling letters to students who fall below six credit hours, students who withdraw, and recent graduates.
- Sending letters each semester to borrowers who are between 31 days to 360 days delinquent informing them about their repayment and rehabilitation options.
- Offering financial literacy workshops on an ongoing basis.
- Assisting delinquent borrowers or default borrowers as they visit the Financial Aid Office.
- Sending financial aid staff members through national financial literacy certification training to become certified to properly assist students and conduct workshops.
- Hiring a management counselor in the Financial Aid Office to monitor CCA's delinquent and default borrowers, explore better ways to communicate and monitor default rates, and explore ways to decrease default rates.
- Considering outsourcing some financial literacy prevention programs to ECMC Solutions, a provider of default-prevention services, to learn more about default-rate management and provide immediate service to the students who are in need.

The CCA Financial Aid Handbook provided to students and their families contains a section on loans, including alternative or private loans. The manual generally describes where these loans are available, how they work and factors to consider in assessing loan options. CCA requires all first time borrowers to attend a loan counseling session prior to submitting their loan request. The session covers borrower rights and responsibilities and also talks about how to manage loans after college.

d. Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures

The College provides the campus security policies and procedures and the most recent campus crime statistics to all current and prospective students and to all CCA employees. This reporting is in response to the Federal Law No.101-542, the Student Right-to-Know and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1999. The College's Department of Security compiles and releases the annual security report (Jeanne Clery Action Informational Report). Links to the reports for the CentreTech campus and for the Lowry campus (whose security is the responsibility of the Colorado Community College System, which shares the Lowry campus with CCA) are on the CCA website under Campus Safety and Security. Paper copies of the reports are available from the Security Office on the CentreTech campus. The website also contains links to the daily crime log and the local sex offender registry, as well as information about crime reporting, discrimination, and sexual harassment. (*Resource Room Document 9.19*)

The Community College of Aurora does not participate in intercollegiate athletics.

e. Student Right to Know

The College makes information available on its public website that provides interested stakeholders with information on FERPA and privacy of student records, financial aid, gainful employment, health and safety (including the institution's Clery report and information on drug and alcohol prevention), voter registration, the Student Code of Conduct and Complaint Procedure, and the institution's Equal Opportunity/Non-discrimination Policy. (*Resource Room Document 9.20*) In addition, the College has included information within the College portal on all of these topics as well as the College's accreditation information.

To comply with federal legislation, specifically the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and to meet the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission, CCA has developed a new, more comprehensive section of its website that is available through the College's home page and which lists the information that it is required to provide, along with links to the offices or documents where that information can be found. In addition to the information currently available through the Legal Notices link, this includes information on facilities and services for students with disabilities, the cost of attendance (including a net price calculator), refund and return of Title

IV policies, and retention, graduation, and transfer-out rates. (*Resource Room Document 9.21*)

The College's website has also added more specific information on student diversity, transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements, copyright policies and sanctions, student activities, career services, job placement rates for graduates, information for veterans, sexual harassment and Title IX information, and the freedom of information act. The College has also revised the institution's Student Complaint Policy and has placed the information, along with an electronic complaint form, in a more accessible location on the website.

f. Required Information for Students and the Public

The College provides complete and accurate information about its calendar, grading, admission, program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies through a variety of publications including the *Catalog* and the course schedule. The *Catalog*, the course schedule, and a student handbook are available online. The course schedule is available online and is also printed for wide distribution. The *Catalog* has both a searchable database and an alphabetical listing of contents to help ensure students are able to access the information they need. (*Resource Room Document 9.22*)

g. Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance

The College has two Satisfactory Academic Progress policies. One is for institutional academic progress and follows CCCS policy. The other policy is for financial aid and follows federal regulations. These policies are available in the online College *Catalog*, the printed *Catalog*, and through the "Financial Aid" section of the website. (*Resource Room Document 9.23*)

CCA informs students of its attendance policy through both the catalog and through instructors as stated in class and on the course syllabus. The CCA catalog states that regular, punctual class attendance is necessary if students are to obtain maximum benefits from instruction. Students are expected to comply with attendance policies set by individual instructors. They are expected to make up any classroom work assignments or other course requirements that are missed due to their absences.

Institutional Academic Progress

Recognizing the value of measuring academic progress for all students, the College has established a practice for measuring and

notifying students of their academic progress based on CCCS policy. Because the practice is intended to be informational and not punitive, CCA has implemented Academic Alert strategies early in the term to assist students who are experiencing academic difficulties.

The primary academic standing categories include good standing, probation, and suspension. There are also academic alert, probation continuing, suspension 2 and 3, and reinstatement after suspension (1, 2 and 3). Suspended students are not allowed to begin enrollment in a subsequent semester until they have completed their sit-out semester or have successfully appealed for early reinstatement with an academic advisor.

As soon as the majority of the grades are submitted each term, but no more than 10 days after the grading deadline, the Registrar's Office calculates students' academic standings, notifies them of their status (if they have moved into a standing worse than their prior standing, i.e. probation to suspension), and indicates their end-of-term standing on their Unofficial and Advising (but not Official) Transcript. In addition to making the transcript notation, the Registrar's Office keeps the spreadsheets showing each student's end-of-term status and the letter that was sent to each student that term.

The Academic Progress Policy (or Probation/Suspension Process as the College refers to it internally) is documented in the *Catalog* in the My Student Record section (*Resource Room Document 9.24*) and in the System's Educational Services procedures. (*Resource Room Document 9.25*)

Financial Aid Standards of Academic Progress

The CCA Financial Aid Office is responsible for ensuring that all students applying for or receiving federal, State of Colorado, or designated institutional financial aid funds, are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. The standards apply to all applicable financial assistance programs including Federal Pell Grant, Federal Family Education Loans (Stafford and PLUS), as well as assistance from the State of Colorado and the College. These standards are applied to a students' entire academic history at CCA, including periods when financial aid is not received. Specifically, the standards are:

- Cumulative GPA requirement – Students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 for all credits attempted.
- Cumulative completion rate – Students must complete at least 67 percent of cumulative attempted credit hours.
- Maximum time frame – Students must complete their educational degrees or certificates by the time they have

attempted 150 percent of the number of credit hours required for a specific program.

A student who meets all criteria is considered to be in good standing and eligible to receive all types of aid. A student who was previously in good standing but fails to meet one of the Standard Academic Progress criteria is placed on probation but can continue to receive aid. A student who fails to meet the criteria while on probation is placed on financial aid suspension and is unable to receive aid. Aid may be reinstated based on a successful appeal or when the student is once again able to meet the required criteria. (*Resource Room Document 9.26*)

h. Contractual Relationships

CCA does not have contractual relationships related to its academic program.

i. Consortial Relationships

CCA does not have consortial relationships related to its academic program.

6. Institutional Disclosures

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

CCA provides accurate, timely, and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation, programs, locations, and policies. College Communications is responsible for disseminating this information through a variety of media. These include:

- Press releases and pre- and post-events articles; (*Resource Room Document 9.27*)
- Print materials including the view book, brochures, and posters; (*Resource Room Document 9.28*)
- Channel 54, the College's television station. (*Resource Room Document 9.29*)

College Communications became responsible for the CCA website in 2009 when it established a web committee and revamped the entire site with the intention of making it easy for prospective students to access information. The department has established and manages the

official Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter accounts for the College. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to participate in discussions on these media. The College follows the policy adapted by CCCS and adheres to effective social-media guidelines approved by College leadership. (*Resource Room Document 9.30*)

The College discloses its affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission through its website as well as in the College *Catalog*. CCA notifies stakeholders on the home page regarding its affiliation with HLC and provides additional information on accreditation, a link to the HLC website, and links to copies of reports sent to the HLC over the last decade. (*Resource Room Document 9.31*)

Review of Student Outcome Data

CCA reviews all the institution's academic programs each year. The institutional program review addresses enrollment, successful completion of courses and programs, graduation rates, and areas of strength and improvement. The institution monitors failure rates (D, F, W grades) and success rates (A, B, C grades) by course, prefix, department, and division. In addition to the institutional program review, CTE programs are reviewed every five years in alignment with CCCS requirements. As a part of the five-year review, the College analyzes whether the program's students are employed in the given field, if the job outlook for program graduates remains competitive, and how graduation/success rates compare to those of similar programs across the state. This data is collected annually in the VE-135 follow-up report. Each spring, the Office of Institutional Research contacts each program's completers from the previous year to ask them a series of questions that provide the data for the report.

The College's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Paralegal programs each have an external accreditor to whom they report outcome data. The Committee on Accreditation of Education Programs for the Emergency Medical Service Profession (CoAEMSP) and the American Bar Association (ABA) require institutions to measure successful completion of the program they accredit and to use national exams for certification. The programs are also required to regularly report post-graduation employment rates.

Additionally, all CTE programs are required to have Advisory Boards. These groups provide feedback on the quality of the program and the employment outlook for students with the degrees and certificates the program awards. Advisory boards also suggest changes to the degrees and certificates to help students be more employable.

Standing with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards

The College discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any specialized, professional, or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which CCA has a presence. The College does not hold any specialized accreditation with a single agency that covers one-third or more of either the College's offerings or its students.

The following CCA programs are accredited or approved by special agencies:

- Paralegal – The Standing Committee on Paralegals of the American Bar Association. (*Resource Room Document 9.32*)
- Emergency Medical Services – The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs upon the recommendation of the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions. (*Resource Room Document 9.33*)
- Police Academy – The Colorado Attorney General's Office through the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board. (*Resource Room Document 9.34*)

The Integrated Nursing Pathway Program at CCA is offered in partnership with the University of Colorado College of Nursing. While CCA holds no special accreditation for this program, the CU College of Nursing is accredited by the National League for Nursing and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

The College is not affiliated with any other federally recognized institutional accrediting body.

The College is affiliated with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third-Party Comment

In January 2013, the College used the following methods to notify its community constituents in of the self-study process and invited them to submit third-party comments to the Higher Learning Commission:

- Advertisements placed in newspapers in the College's service area;

- Letters sent to local school districts and public officials;
- Emails to the College's community partners list including the Chamber of Commerce;
- Posting on the CCA website (www.ccaurora.edu);
- Publication in *Intercom*, the College's campus newsletter; and
- Posting on the CCA Facebook page.

The College then sent copies of the notices to the Commission.
(Resource Room Document 9.35)

CCA used the following wording in these notifications for third-party comments:

The Community College of Aurora (CCA) is seeking comments from the public about the College in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The College will host a visit April 15 – 17, 2013, by a team representing the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. CCA has been accredited by the Commission since 1988. The team will review the College's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit written comments regarding the College on the Higher Learning Commission's website at www.ncahlc.org or by mail to the Commission at:

*Public Comment on the Community College of
Aurora
The Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411*

Comments must be in writing and address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. They must be received by March 15, 2013.

Chapter 10 Summary and Application Status

Summary

The Community College of Aurora has engaged in a two-year, comprehensive Self-Study that has led to a clearer understanding of our strengths, challenges, and opportunities. It has offered continuity of information and a point of reference as a new administration arrived at the College in 2012 and will provide the basis for College planning in 2013 and beyond.

The self-study process began with research done by five groups recruited from across the College. The groups used the information they collected to prepare preliminary papers on each of the five HLC criteria. The co-chairs of those groups, who comprised the Self-Study Steering Committee, presented their reports and discussed them with a three-person Executive Group and served as readers of the first draft of the Executive Group's report. Later drafts of the report were reviewed and commented on by the College president; his Leadership Council, comprised of vice presidents, deans, and others who report directly to the president; and faculty members.

In addition to requesting information from many sources at CCA, either directly or through the College's institutional research staff, the Executive Group asked individuals with specific roles and expertise to review selected sections of the report. Chapters were also read and critiqued by a student working for the executive group. The retired dean of another Colorado community college, who had spent many years as an HLC consultant evaluator, critically reviewed the document.

The Executive Group was comprised of one administrator (previously an adjunct faculty member) and two faculty members, both of whom serve as department chairs and one of whom had served a three-year term as an interim dean. Student Affairs had a strong voice in the process via review and comments on the entire document, with particularly active participation by the vice president for student affairs and the dean of student success.

As part of the Self-Study, the College has reviewed the HLC Assumed Practices, prepared the documents that are required to be submitted with the Self-Study report prior to the evaluation team's visit, and is organizing an extensive resource room linked to the report.

The Report Components

Introduction and Response to the 2003 and 2010 Team Reports

Following an introductory chapter, the Self-Study report discusses how the College has responded to the recommendations made by the HLC team that came to CCA for the 2003 visit for continued accreditation and those of the team that came in 2010 to respond to the College's request for changes in locations (then termed sites) as CCA expanded its concurrent enrollment offerings at four local high schools.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Responses to Team Recommendations

Criteria for Accreditation

This self-study document addresses each of the five criteria and their core components and provides evidence that the Community College of Aurora meets these criteria for accreditation. The evidence and related evaluative discussion is presented in the chapters identified below. Each chapter also contains the College's strengths, challenges, and opportunities in addressing that chapter's criterion.

Chapter 3 - Criterion One – The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Chapter 4 - Criterion Two – The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Chapter 5 - Criterion Three – The institution provides high-quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Chapter 6 - Criterion Four – The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Chapter 7 - Criterion Five – The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Request for Change in Student Population and New Locations

The College submitted Part 1 of the application for Change in Student Population in November 2012 and has submitted the remainder of the student population change request as Chapter 8 in this Self-Study

report. On the advice of its HLC liaison, the College has also submitted Part 1 of the application for New Locations. These requests recognize the significant number of high school students taking CCA classes through concurrent enrollment as well as the continued expansion of the number of courses offered in the high schools that are part of CCA certificates.

Chapter 8 – Request for Change

Concluding Chapters

Chapter 9 - Federal Compliance

Chapter 10 – Summary and Application Status

Request for Continued Accreditation

The Community College of Aurora is seeking continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The College is also seeking approval of its request for a change in student population and for the College's accreditation to cover eight additional high school locations where 50 percent or more of the courses needed for a certificate may be offered.

Criterion One: Mission

Co-chairs:

Sylvester Brandon Associate Director of Development, CCA Foundation

Geoff Hunt Faculty Department Chair, Social Sciences

Members:

Fred Brown Board Member, CCA Foundation
Roger Dickson Network Administrator, Information Technology
Thomas Dillon Faculty, Biology
Jennifer Fox Adjunct Faculty, Academic Enrichment
Deborah Hoefler Assistant Director, Financial Aid

Chris Hunt Administrative Assistant, Facilities
Bradley Jacobson Coordinator, Scholar Support and Programming
Megan Kinney Director, Library Services

Criterion Two: Integrity

Co-chairs:

Natasha Turner Faculty Department Chair, Early Childhood and Teacher Education
Scott Wakefield Faculty Department Chair, Art and New Media Design

Members:

Josh Evans Adult Education Coordinator, Center for Workforce Development
Barbara Francis Adjunct Faculty, Anatomy and Physiology
Beth Lattone Interim Faculty Chair, Emergency Medical Provider/Fire Science
Technology
Ana Martin-Mejia Faculty Coordinator, World Languages
Peggy Norwood Director, Faculty Professional Development
Mark Ortiz Adjunct Faculty, History
Rene Simard Director, Advising
Andree Swanson Adjunct Faculty, Business
Angie Tiedemann Director, Student Life
Liz VanLandingham Director, College Communications

Criterion Three: Academic Programs – Quality, Resources, and Support

Co-chairs:

Martha Jackson-Carter Faculty Department Chair, Science
Chris Tombari Faculty Department Chair, English as a Second Language

Members:

Susan Achziger Faculty, English

Charles Butterworth	Adjunct Faculty, Biology
Barbara Francis	Adjunct Faculty, Anatomy and Physiology
Rhonda Hattar	Faculty, Biology
Sasa Jovic	Faculty, Mathematics
Heidi McKinnon	Administrative Assistant, Human Resources
Laurie Munro	Adjunct Faculty, Anatomy and Physiology
Mark Ortiz	Adjunct Faculty, History
Elena Sandoval-Lucero	Dean, Student Success
Margaret Uchner	Faculty Coordinator, Paralegal and Criminal Justice

Criterion Four: Academic Programs – Evaluation and Improvement

Co-chairs:

James Gray	Faculty Department Chair, Mathematics
Libby Klingsmith	Coordinator, First Year and Transition Programming

Members

Leigh Bessey	Director, Center for Outreach and Recruitment
Geoffrey Chadwick	Faculty, Film/Video Media
Matthew Earnhardt	Faculty, Business
Mary Graham	Manager, Instructional Support and FLAC
Elizabeth Hirsh	Faculty Coordinator, Anthropology
Reniece Jones	Director, Accessibility Services
Audra Pickett	Faculty, Academic Enrichment
Stephanie Plum	Acting Director, TRiO Student Support Services
Scott Reichel	Faculty Department Chair, English and Communication

Criterion Five: Resources and Planning

Co-chairs:

Daniel Sandoval	Director, TRiO Student Support Services
Tamra Schmitt	Faculty, Accounting and Business

Members:

Daniel Bapple	Computer Systems Technician, Information Technology
Allison Cepello	Counselor, Financial Aid Counselor
Michael Davis	Assistant Director, Facilities
Debbie Irvine	Specialist, Human Resources
Nick Lozano	Clerk, Accounts Payable
Michael Manaton	Faculty Department Chair, Business
Andree Swanson	Adjunct Faculty, Business

Community College of Aurora Organizational Chart

