



COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE OF  
DENVER



## DR. MARIELENA DESANCTIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February 2025

### Economic Mobility

#### Transfer Summit: CCD and MSU Denver

Community College of Denver (CCD) and Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) have been chosen to participate in a year-long initiative led by the [Aspen Institute and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities \(AASCU\)](#). Selected from a competitive pool of applicants, these two institutions are among only 10 national partnerships to join this prestigious program. Their participation highlights a shared commitment to excellence in higher education and a focused effort to eliminate barriers to student success, particularly in the pursuit of baccalaureate degrees.

Leadership from CCD and Metro State University Denver (MSU) came together on Tuesday, February 25, to commemorate this historic partnership of participating in **Cohort 4 of the Transfer Student Success Intensive**. The year-long program focuses on streamlining transfer systems between two-year and four-year institutions. Through targeted professional development, CCD and MSU vow to develop stronger articulation pathways to increase the number of students successfully completing

their bachelor's degrees.

CCD **President Dr. DeSantis** and MSU Denver **President Dr. Janine Davidson** signed a document to memorialize the initiative. This act of leadership is a powerful example of how both schools strive for student success. The cohort is comprised of 13 community colleges and 10 four-year institutions.

CCD looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with MSU Denver over the next year, tailoring strategies for **sustainable transfer infrastructure reform** between the two colleges to identify and support student needs. CCD is honored to have been selected for this opportunity by the Aspen Institute and AASCU.



# Education for All

## Spring 2025 Transfer Fair

At CCD, a vital role of the college's mission is to give every student every opportunity possible to advance their education beyond CCD. On February 18, CCD held its **Spring 2025 Transfer Fair**.

This year, **18 four-year institutions** participated in the Transfer Fair, including: Adam State University; AdventHealth University Denver; Colorado Mesa University; Colorado State University (Fort Collins); Regis University; MSU Denver; University of Colorado, Denver; University of Colorado, Boulder; University of Nebraska at Omaha; University of Northern Colorado; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; University of Denver; Western Colorado University; Colorado School of Mines; University of Phoenix; Colorado State University Pueblo; University of Wyoming; and Western Governors University.

Scores of students attended the event and had the opportunity to explore bachelor's degree pathways that could lead to expanded career opportunities **and** increased earning potential in as little as two years after transfer. Students were encouraged to take advantage of **free transcript requests from February 18-21**, allowing them to send official transcripts to their preferred institutions at no cost.



Colorado State University was one of the 18 four-year institutions to attend the Spring 2025 Transfer Fair.

## Ourglass Recognized with Another Award

CCD student editorial magazine, "**Ourglass**", continues its impressive record of awards, earning recognition from the [National Council of Teachers of English \(NCTE\)](#) with the REALM First Class Award. The Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) First Class is the contest's **highest award** on a national level.

The NCTE have anonymous judges from high schools and colleges across the nation. This year, CCD's own, **Professor Brian Dickson**, served as a judge for the high school division. Over 400 magazines were submitted, with only 125 being given the REALM First Class title, with the CityHawk community prevailing!



"What makes this work so meaningful is doing it together: students, colleagues, other partnerships. "[Ourglass](#)" has been around since 1980. There's a lineage here dating back to **Susan Symons** to **Leonard Winograd** and **Sue Samuelson**, to **Jeff Becker** and **Gretchen Occhionero** passing it to me, and now it's back in their hands. We have won so many awards over the years," added Dickson.

This award and recognition not only celebrate the hard work, dedication, collaboration, and creativity from students, but will also be helpful upon graduation in the real world. The job market is competitive; having the 2022-2023 "Ourglass" edition itself allows for student editors and designers to utilize and leverage the content for their professional portfolios. This will be useful in interviews, having collaborated on a big project with many moving parts.

Honorable mentions go to Ourglass student editors **Milo Halpern**, **Riley Nguyen**, and **Remy Koehler** and student designers **Jennifer Deleon**, **Auggie Rodriguez**, and **Mean Zuiverdeen**. Without these students with pivotal roles in the production of the magazine, this world-renowned achievement wouldn't have been possible.



# Empowered Talent

## CCD Hosts February Town Hall: Legal Updates and Strategic Communications in Focus

CCD convened its second Town Hall of 2025 on February 14, delivering a hybrid format that accommodated both in-person and virtual participation. The meeting addressed several critical institutional matters that are impacting the spring semester. Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Associate General Counsel, **J. Patrick Warwick-Diaz**, provided a presentation about the system's legal infrastructure and operations. His presentation aimed to alleviate employee concerns regarding the impact to CCD of the current political landscape, emphasizing the comprehensive legal support available to the college.

Executive Council engaged the audience in an exercise to gather the means in which employees are supporting students and each other; and recommendations for additional support from the leadership team. The findings revealed a strong desire for **enhanced communication channels** and **increased face-to-face departmental interaction**. This feedback aligns with broader initiatives to strengthen the CCD community. College leaders also presented updates on the development of the strategic plan and the Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation efforts, underscoring the institution's commitment to educational excellence.

Finally, the CFO, **Alberto Teixeira**, led a conversation about the budget development for fiscal year 2026; and the opportunities to engage in professional learning sessions hosted by the budget department over the next two months. The meeting demonstrated CCD's ongoing commitment to fostering collaboration between departments while prioritizing both student and employee success.



## Community College of Denver Recognized as Top Places to Work in Communications

Ragan has recognized CCD as one of the [“Top Places to Work in Communications for 2025.”](#) The exclusive award was granted to only 59 companies and institutions were awarded the title, with big names such as The Home Depot and Carnival Cruise Line being among those.

The prestigious recognition from Ragan validates CCD's commitment to fostering an exceptional workplace for communications professionals, and in turn, for all professionals. It reflects not only CCD's dedication to excellence in communications but also our broader institutional values of **integrity** and **healthy work environment**. As CCD continues to serve a diverse student population and support dedicated faculty and staff, this award reinforces that our approach to building a supportive, dynamic workplace sets a standard in higher education communications.



## Empowered Talent cont.

### Strategic Planning Engagement ThinkSpace Sessions Demonstrate Strong Institutional Commitment

CCD recently conducted a comprehensive strategic plan development sessions through multiple ThinkSpace sessions on February 6 and 7, facilitated by Beyond Academics. These structured dialogues brought together a robust cross-section of institutional stakeholders, including staff, students, faculty, instructors, and community members.

The sessions were strategically designed to gather anonymous feedback that will inform the development of CCD's strategic priorities in alignment with the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) overarching strategic framework.



ThinkSpace Sessions on February 6 & 7, 2025.



Community College of Denver (CCD) Foundation hosted the first-ever "Day of Giving."

## Partner of Choice

### CCD Foundation "Day of Giving"

On Feb. 19, 2025, the **CCD Foundation** hosted the first-ever "**Day of Giving**", a day dedicated to supporting the immediate needs of our students and fostering a spirit of community at CCD. Alumni, staff, and faculty were encouraged to contribute to funds directly benefiting students, sign up for future volunteer opportunities, set up payroll deductions to donate to the Foundation, and volunteer their time to support a hands-on initiative filling **student care bags**.

The student care bag event drew **31 volunteers**, including participants from local partner **ANB Bank**. Working in shifts throughout the day, volunteers packed **500 care bags** to be distributed to students at the Auraria campus, Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMC), and Lowry campus. These care packages included a variety of useful items such as snacks, school supplies, coupons for free products, and more, all intended to provide a bit of extra support for students as they navigate the Spring 2025 semester.

In addition to filling care bags, the event provided an opportunity for faculty, staff, and alumni to donate to the **CityHawk Cares Fund**, a newly established fund supporting urgent student needs. The payroll deduction option, with 65 current participants, provides **over \$15,000** in donations every year, directly impacting students with much-needed scholarships.

The success of the day was a testament to the generosity and commitment of the CCD community. Not only did the event provide immediate support to students, but it also highlighted the powerful impact of collective action. In addition to the volunteers who filled bags, CCD is grateful to the following community partners who provided bags, snacks, and items for our student care packages: **ANB Bank, Autowash, Caring for Denver, Credit Union of Denver, Denver Health, Snooze, and Trader Joe's**.

The CCD Foundation looks forward to making "CCD Day of Giving" an annual tradition, and we are excited for the continued ways we can support our students and strengthen the college's community.



## Partner of Choice cont.

### CCD Foundation Supporters Reception: Celebrating Scholars and Donors

On Wednesday, February 5, the **Community College of Denver (CCD) Foundation** hosted an inaugural **scholar & donor** reception on the Auraria Campus to celebrate and honor the recipients of our scholarship awards and the generous donors who make these scholarships possible. This event, attended by 56 supporters and students, provided a unique opportunity to engage, network, and foster a deeper connection to the **Foundation's mission** to transform lives and the Denver community.

The event created a welcoming atmosphere where scholarship recipients could personally meet and thank the individuals whose generosity directly impacts their educational journey. Through student and donor stories, a special message from CCD **President Dr. Marielena DeSanctis** and personal conversation with students, donors had the chance to hear firsthand about the transformative effect their support has on students' lives.

Featured speakers at the event included **Jose Rael**, a former community college student and current CCD Foundation Board member. He spoke about the power of education to **change the trajectory** of an entire family and create generational change. Attendees also heard from current CCD student **Heather Hall**, who is working toward her bachelor's in Cannabis Business and has plans to work toward her Ph.D. and start her own business. These speakers highlighted the role scholarships play in making higher education accessible, and the impact donors can make in helping shape the lives and futures of CCD students.

The CCD Foundation looks forward to continuing to build upon the success of this event and will work to build deeper connections and relationships between the Denver community and Community College of Denver students in the years to come.

## Power of 13

### CCD Highlights Affordable, Accessible Higher Education on 9News "Colorado and Company"

**CCD President DeSanctis** and current full-time student **Jonathan Peralta** appeared on **9News' "Colorado & Company"** on Feb. 3, 2025, to address the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) commitment to expanding higher education access across the state.

In a conversation with host **Claudia Garofalo**, Dr. DeSanctis articulated the system's foundational mission of accessibility, highlighting streamlined enrollment processes that facilitate academic opportunities for prospective students regardless of their background or circumstances.

The discussion showcased CCD's **successful concurrent enrollment initiative**, which enables high school students to pursue college credits, accelerating their path to degree completion while gaining invaluable collegiate experience. Peralta offered firsthand testimony about how this program has shaped his academic trajectory.

As a CCCS institution, CCD demonstrates its commitment to accessibility through tuition rates that are 50 percent lower than traditional four-year institutions. The college's comprehensive student support framework includes academic tutoring, professional development workshops, and individualized guidance—resources specifically designed to **promote student persistence and achievement**.

The institution continues to distinguish itself through its ability to serve a diverse student population, from dual-enrollment high school students to career professionals pursuing additional credentials. CCD's educational model emphasizes academic excellence while maintaining the flexibility essential for today's learners to advance their educational and professional aspirations.