



COLORADO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

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January 24, 2025

This regular written report presents highlights from the Academic and Student Affairs Division.

Academic Affairs

Strengthening Our Foundation: Investments for High Impact Initiatives

During the [November 2023 SBCCOE Meeting](#), the Board approved a one-time investment for CCCS Program and Curriculum Operations to support operational improvements following significant operational delays that resulted from the diversion of staffing resources to support other Board approved High Impact Initiatives and simultaneous loss of key staff members in March of 2023. Delays in processing new and revised degrees and certificates, especially in Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas, further resulted in downstream impacts at the colleges preventing them from offering new programs to students in a timely manner. The Board approved funding included a 3-year, term-limited Director of Curriculum Operations to address backlogs, develop technical guidelines, and train staff. Additionally, this position is tasked with identifying and implementing process improvements and efficiencies, so we are not just caught up, but better than before our staffing challenges. Kate Monteith was hired into this role on August 1, 2024. This one-time investment also included funding for improvements to the CTE Gateway system and an integration project between Banner, our student information system (SIS). The Banner-Gateway integration project is nearing completion. We are very pleased to have worked collaboratively with CCCS IT and the CTE team on this and other recent projects.

The approval process for CTE degrees and certificates has many steps to ensure quality and sustainability of our schools' programs. These steps include development by the colleges, review by CTE program directors and system and college financial aid officers for compliance, and technical review by our SIS experts. Though these reviews are essential to maintain quality, the time to complete processing has been cumbersome in the past. Colleges reported waiting many months from their submittal of a program until students were able to declare an award. Especially in career and technical areas, delays of this length had a significant detrimental impact on service to our students. One goal of Academic Affairs in academic year 2025 was to find and implement efficiencies and to clear the backlog of pending program approvals. We have been successful in this goal and have plans to expand this work.

By June of 2024, existing support staff were able to clear the years long backlog of program approvals that had been awaiting processing since as early as Spring of 2022. Since August 2024,

the three full-time staff of the CCCS Curriculum Team have completed work on 68 CTE programs, including at least one for each system college and processed all of the program approval backlog from the summer. This was a significant amount of work. CTE programs include all degrees and certificates within a CTE area for a college; for example, one degree and seven certificates in Cosmetology at PCC or five degrees and three certificates for Non-Cisco Networking at ACC are under a single program's umbrella. With the backlog now cleared, the completion time expectation for the SIS steps is 2 weeks; with most programs being completed within 1 week.

Improved communication between the system and the colleges was both a goal and an outcome of this project. We've developed and distributed guidance for the colleges which has reduced back and forth communication and thus time to completion. Building strong working relationships with college CTE directors and leadership has helped streamline our ability solve problems and develop solutions with our college partners. Together with our increased partnering with other areas in CCCS, we are seeing dramatic improvements in communication and collaboration.

Academic Affairs is continuing to look for additional ways to shorten the time it takes colleges to move from program development to being able to offer awards to students. Moving forward, we are working closely with the CTE team in their work to revise the overall program approval workflow within the CTE Gateway System. This will further reduce processing time by allowing the SIS specialists in the Curriculum team to address technical problems earlier in the workflow and to have more opportunities to circle back to colleges throughout the workflow.

In addition to career and technical education programs, Academic Affairs is establishing procedures to process non-CTE certificates, transfer associate's degrees, and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees. Non-CTE certificates have the potential to significantly impact our students' opportunities. These include basic skills that align with a Colorado Department of Higher Education approved certificate, certificates that support intellectually and developmentally disabled students, and high-level science certificates that prepare our students to matriculate directly from CCCS schools into doctorate-level programs in pharmacy and other medical fields. We are excited to continue expanding these opportunities. Academic Affairs is utilizing the 'Power of 13' by beginning the process of gathering best practices and guidelines for BAS degrees that will help colleges streamline the development of new programs.



Student Affairs

Student Affairs is working on many personnel changes. The Director of Student Affairs job posted, and the team eagerly awaits filling this vacant position. The CCCOnline Dean of Student Affairs moved from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs on Feb 1 and was welcomed to the SA team. Finally, SA has hired a system Director of Accessibility Services, who starts on Feb 10, to guide all 13 colleges, assist colleges as needed, and work to help us better serve our learners.

Student Affairs is also working to invigorate Study Abroad, many of our colleges already participate and SA is meeting with foreign embassies to explore options and re-forming the Study Abroad functional group to help ensure our rural students also have access to Study Abroad.

Student Affairs and IT have partnered to create a process for the new Adult HS Diplomas as authorized under Senate Bill 24-051, Board Policy (BP) 9-30, Approval of Academic Programs, and SP 9-30e – High School Diplomas. This process is being piloted with CCD and expected to Launch on Feb 10.

Transfer

Reisher Bridge Scholarship Navigators are working with the system Financial Aid team to disburse scholarships for the spring 2025 semester. Collaboration with the 13 colleges across the system has begun to identify 2025-26 Bridge scholars through an interest form. It was created to be able to include all students planning to transfer regardless of Bridge to Bachelor's school identification or participation. Planning for spring semester recruitment trips around the state are underway.

Equity & Inclusion

The Equity and Inclusion Council is preparing for the Equity Retreat with the Presidents on January 28th, 2025. All College Presidents have confirmed attendance, and the total count is at 45 participants including key senior leaders from the System Office. The teams will work on developing Equity objectives, goals and key equity measures for the year. The day will be facilitated by Dr. Dwinita Mosby Tyler from the Equity Project, LLC.

Financial Aid

Carolee Goldsmith, Dean Wilson, and Tim Spahn led the Gainful Employment and Financial Value Transparency (GE/FVT) reporting initiative, facilitating system-wide interdepartmental and interinstitutional collaboration. Workgroups were established with department leaders from various colleges. As these groups faced technological challenges posed by National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and Ellucian, multiple pivots and team restructurings took place to overcome reporting obstacles and resolve data errors. Webex chat groups were created to allow colleges real-time direct access to the System Office and other



institutions for help navigating issues. Collectively harnessing the Power of 13, all colleges successfully met the reporting deadline of January 15.

The vacant Financial Aid Specialist position was filled on January 6. The financial aid team is fully staffed at this time.

Colorado State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training

Per our annual Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), our agency has conducted the following Supervisory and Risk-Based visits:

Supervisory Visits

- Sage Truck Driving School – Denver
- IBMC College – Fort Collins
- IBMC College – Longmont
- IBMC College – Greeley
- William Howard Taft University

Risk-Based Surveys

- Arizona College of Nursing - Aurora

Please find below two pieces of legislation that will have an impact on veterans and our agency role:

Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act (Public Law 118210)

This law was signed into law by President Biden on January 2, 2025. This new legislation will have an impact on our agency. I have highlighted a few sections below that will impact our role.

Section 204: Risk-Based Surveys Notice to Educational Institutions. Requires VA, or State Approving Agency to provide no more than two business days of notice to an educational institution before conducting a targeted, risk-based survey of the institution.

Section 205: Title IV Participation. Amends title 38 U.S.C. § 3675(b)(4) to clarify that the State Approving Agency (SAA) or Secretary of VA when acting in the role of an SAA, must ensure that the educational institution is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 or, if it does not participate, VA has waived the requirement.

Changes VA administration of Section 1015 of Isakson Roe. Now VA can provide a waiver to schools more liberally for three reasons including they cannot participate, or they simply choose not to participate or is in the process of making a good-faith effort to submit an initial application for approval to participate in program.

A waiver under this clause may not to be provided for a period longer than 36 months.

Sections 206 (a-c) and Section (d): Oversight of Educational Institutions: Approval Requirements and Risk-Based Surveys.

Sections 206(a) and 206(b) amend 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) §§ 3675(b) and 3676(c), to add an additional approval requirement that requires an educational institution to agree to notify the State Approving Agency (SAA), or VA when acting in the role of an SAA, if the institution becomes subject to a government action or event in 38 U.S.C. 3673(e)(3). The educational institution must notify VA or the SAA not later than 30 days after the date the institution becomes subject to such action or event.

Section 206(c) amends 38 U.S.C. § 3679(f)(1) to add a new paragraph (I), that would require an SAA or VA to take certain actions against educational institutions that do not comply with the new requirements in 38 U.S.C. §§ 3675(b) and 3676(c)(14), as added by sections 2(a) and 2(b) of the proposed legislation. Specifically, the SAA or VA could take action to submit a recommendation that VA publish a warning on the VA website about the school; suspend the school approval by disapproving new enrollments; or revoke the school approval by disapproving all enrollments.

Section 206(d) establishes a deadline for VA to develop a database for collecting risk-based survey data no later than 180 days from the date of enactment.

Section 207: Digital Transcripts. Amends Title 38 U.S.C. 3674(b) by requiring educational institutions to make available to each eligible person or Veteran a copy of their official transcript in a digital format.

Section 209: Commercial Driver Programs. Amends section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, to create an exemption the 2-year rule as it applies to approval of commercial driver education programs.

There is no waiting period if the branch is located in a state in which the same commercial driver education program is offered by the same educational institution at another branch of that educational institution in the same state that is approved.

There is a one-year waiting period if the branch is using the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location in a different



state that is approved under 38 U.S.C. chapter 36 by a State Approving Agency (SAA) or the Secretary when acting in the role of an SAA

Rudisill Decision Update

On April 16, 2024, the Supreme Court of the United States decided that if you served two periods of service; one that qualifies for the Montgomery GI Bill® (MGIB) and another that qualifies for the Post 9/11 GI Bill® (PGIB), you may be able to receive 48 months of benefits. This ruling will now allow many veterans who initially qualified for the MGIB and relinquished this benefit to be able to use the PGIB, will now be able to receive an additional 12 months of entitlement.

Program Approvals

Our office met all program approval requirements for Fiscal Year 2024. Completed 58 reapprovals, 130 modified, 8 withdrawals, and 4 suspensions for this year. The Colorado ELR returned four approvals during Fiscal Year 2024.

Transfer

Reisher Navigators are presenting virtual Reisher Information Sessions in an effort to recruit students for the 2025-26 cohort. Navigators also continue to provide workshops and one on one appointments for current scholars navigating that transfer process. They have made changes to their website and compiled necessary data reports for the Denver Foundation regarding fall enrollment for the pilot cohort.

Workforce Solutions

Emerging Industries and Financial Education

Work progresses in Emerging Industries, including a VP Presentation on funding for faculty professional development, college-facing mini-grants for clean energy projects, and work-based learning opportunities in climate resilience connected to NSF CO-WY Engine funding. Financial Education initiatives include round 1 mini-grants to nine colleges, with round 2 opening in April, and micro-credential enrollment for CCCS staff, faculty, and students.

Credit for Prior Learning & Badging

The CPL Community of Practice is updating policies, expanding toolkits, and improving communications. Work is progressing on CAEL Credit Predictor Pro and Standard tools. Badging efforts are expanding, particularly in Behavioral Health microcredentials, with policy and technology integrations.



Behavioral Health and Rural Mental Health Development

Scholarship awards have begun for QHBA coursework through the Colorado Skills Institute. Meetings with university partners on articulation agreements are progressing, and funding has been received for credentialing K-12 CTE teachers in Behavioral Health. Four RMHDP colleges are offering in-person mental health counseling services, with two also providing distinct case management services.

Grant Updates and Workforce Resilience

Skill Advance Colorado has awarded 36 grants, including 10 Mini Grants, with a deadline of April 1, 2025, for FY25 applications. Workforce Training Innovation Program has three current projects, with applications accepted year-round. The Mobile Learning Lab and Registered Apprenticeship Support Program are also ongoing. The Rural Business Training Assistance Program is a new initiative serving colleges with rural business partners. Workforce Resilience reports show 23 rural grantees submitted quarterly reports, and 200 individuals enrolled in training programs. The Lumina Foundation phase I and II grants are concluding, with final reports due January 31, 2025. The Chancellor's Summit on Adult Education is scheduled for June 2-3, 2025, with registration opening by the end of January.

CTE Highlights

- In November, the CTE team hosted a two-day Data Summit for CTE Directors, Institutional Research and Registrar partners to meet about and dive into CTE data practices, outcomes data, and collaborate on a variety of topics geared to improving our collection, reporting, storytelling, decision-making, and ultimately our service of learners in CTE programs. Over 160 participants from across Colorado engaged in sessions that included national presenters as well as CCCS and local district/college presenters.
- In January, checks for first and second quarter reimbursement for Career Technical Act (CTA) funds, which is the state investment in secondary CTE programs were distributed to 144 districts and schools across the state. Training for districts on how to access and report for CTA in the next cycle will happen throughout the spring.
- In collaboration with the Advance CTE national team, our team unveiled a new recruitment toolkit. This resource is designed to help schools and districts create student-driven recruitment materials aligned with student voice.
- This month, our CTE team is gearing up for the Spring Career and Technical Organization Student Leadership Conferences, set to begin in February.