

Presidents Report

Red Rocks Community College | March 2024



Volunteers Unite to Craft Ukuleles for Cancer Patients

During spring break a dedicated group of volunteers and staff gathered in Lakewood, CO, for a charitable initiative aimed at bringing comfort and joy to cancer patients. Organized in collaboration with Blue Star Connection an esteemed nonprofit organization dedicated to providing access to musical instruments for children and young adults facing cancer and other serious illnesses, this event promises to deliver 20 handcrafted ukuleles to uplift the spirits of those in need.

The initiative, spearheaded by accomplished luthier and Red Rocks Community College instructor of lutherie, Seth Gustin.

This partnership is a celebration of the power of community and the healing potential of music. Under the guidance of Seth Gustin, and several other skilled Fine Woodworking employees, volunteers will embark on a meaningful journey of crafting these beautiful instruments, knowing that each strum and chord will bring a moment of solace to someone fighting a difficult battle.

"We believe in the transformative power of music," said Seth Gustin, "These ukuleles are not just instruments; they are symbols of hope, resilience, and the unwavering support of a community that cares deeply for those affected by cancer and other serious life challenges."



Connecting Adult Learners & Leaders (CALL) Conference

The goals of the conference include further strengthening the adult learner community at Red Rocks Community College by connecting them to academic, financial, and career resources and facilitating an overall conversation to provide insight and perspective into this specific student population at Red Rocks. The conference featured keynote speakers, student panel discussions and breakout presentations.



CCCS Strategic Planning Listening Tour

The meeting was held to collect input from the RRCC community regarding the next CCCS Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. Red Rocks had the honor of being chosen as the first school to participate in this statewide listening tour where representatives will solicit feedback from all 13 colleges in the CCCS system!

About 75 were in attendance, including RRCC students, faculty, instructors, staff and administrators, community members and CCCS leadership including:

CCCS Chancellor Dr. Joe Garcia

CCCS Board Chair Dr. Landon Mascareñaz

CCCS Board Rep Brad Rupert

Print Educators of Colorado Exhibit

This exhibit included current Print Educators of Colorado from the Universities, Colleges, Community Colleges, and ART Schools around the state. A wide range of print making processes, installations and methods will be on view in this dynamic, richly layered exhibition.



Women Leaders Panel

The American Association for Women in Community Colleges and RRCC Women Leaders panel was truly inspiring. From sharing their work journeys to discussing mentors, obstacles, and triumphs, it was a powerhouse of wisdom and empowerment.

Panel participants: Michele Haney, Wendy Lubin, Jennifer Kroetch, Jen Macken, and Lisa Fowler.



Opportunity Now Colorado Grant



Colorado Community College System has won a \$1.2 million Opportunity Now Colorado grant from the Office of Economic Development and International Trade! Red Rocks Community College will serve as a strategic partner in developing and scaling workforce training programs in aerospace and quantum technology—two emerging and critical industries for our state.

Theatre Show: Radium Girls

The Theatre Arts and Dance department took us back in time to 1926, when radium was a miracle cure and Madame Curie a global sensation. We watched them bring the gripping true story of the Radium Girls to life – the luminous watch painters whose lives took a dark turn. They sold out all three nights!



Empty Bowl Fundraiser for the RRCC Food Pantry

The Red Rocks Community College Ceramics area hosted an Empty Bowls Fundraiser to benefit the RRCC Food Pantry. All bowls were made by RRCC students and donated to benefit the food pantry which is used by hundreds of students every month. They sold out of every bowl they had.

Mental Health First Aid Training

RRCC offered two (2) in-person courses this Spring on Mental Health First Aid. This training prepares participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health challenge. Mental Health First Aiders learn a 5-step Action Plan that guides them through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support. Mental Health First Aid is a nationally credentialed certification and skills-based course to teach you more about mental health and how to identify, understand, and respond to situations.

RRCC Employees Volunteer Their Time



Academic Affairs donated their time to help pack food for those in need for Jeffco Eats and Food For Thought Denver.

The banner is a horizontal strip with a dark background and four distinct color sections: red, orange, green, and blue. The red section on the left contains the text 'TEACHER EDUCATION REGISTRATION EVENT' in white, with details for the date (Wednesday, March 27, 2024), time (3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.), and location (Red Rocks Community College, Lakewood Campus, Classroom 2215). The orange section says 'Connect With: Advising, Financial Aid, Teacher Education Faculty' with a network icon. The green section says 'Create a Personalized Academic Advising Plan' with a document icon. The blue section says 'REGISTER FOR CLASSES' in a white circle and 'For More Info Register today at: redrocks.cc/ece-reg'. On the far right, there are logos for Red Rocks Community College and the Teacher Education department.

Teacher Registration Event

The Education Department will be hosting a registration event to support students interested in the teaching field. The goal of the event is to support students to be successful in the summer 2024 semester and beyond by connecting them with Advising, Financial Aid, and Teacher Education faculty, to create a personalized academic advising plan, and register for next semester's classes. This event is for ALL students seeking degrees and certificates in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education.

Mental Health Academy

The Mental Health Academy at Red Rocks Community College partners with The Chicago School and Mile High Behavioral Healthcare to offer students a streamlined route to becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor in Colorado. Students receive a preferred tuition rate through the Chicago School as long as they graduate with an AA or AS from RRCC, built in internship opportunities and career mentoring through Mile High Behavioral Healthcare as well as opportunities for loan forgiveness by working with underserved populations post-graduation. The Chicago School Psychology program is led by former RRCC faculty member Chris Zaleski and is primarily an online school (not solely based in Chicago).



Dr. Michele Haney to Receive Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) is set to honor Dr. Michele Haney alongside eight distinguished retiring college presidents and chancellors, presenting them with the Michael Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award at the Society's annual convention in Orlando, Florida, April 4-6, 2024.

Nominated by the students on their respective campuses, these awards are bestowed upon retiring college presidents who have demonstrated unwavering support for student success initiatives leading to stronger pathways to completion, transfer, and employment. These individuals have taken an active interest in supporting high-achieving students and cultivating student leaders within their campuses.

“These college leaders have made student success a priority throughout their career,” says Phi Theta Kappa President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. “This award is special because it comes directly from the students, and it is evidence of the gratitude they feel for the support for them and students like them, both inside and outside the classroom.”

Tax Help Colorado

Red Rocks Community College Accounting students participated in the statewide Tax Help Colorado program volunteering time over seven weekends preparing free tax returns for hard-working families across the Denver Metro area. These IRS certified tax preparers generated **\$499,908** in tax refunds for middle to low-income families, saving thousands in tax preparation fees. This free service is just another example of how RRCC students are giving back to the community. The annual tax site is hosted on the RRCC Lakewood campus and will return next year in early February through mid-March.

Final Site Statistics:

IRS Certified Student Volunteers: **14**

Returns filed: **227**

Total Federal and State refunds: **\$499,908**



Red Rocks Community College Welcomes Landon Pirius as President

Dr. Pirius took the helm as the 10th president of Red Rocks. As much as he had enjoyed his time at CCCS, returning to a college campus had been a dream come true for him. “At the system office, I had a lot of breadth and scope, and the work was all about positively impacting students and communities, but I was so excited to be able to see that impact every day,” he said. “I related to students who were trying to better their lives, and that personal connection drove me to find ways to do even more for them. I went to CCCS to gain statewide perspective and leadership. Now I would apply that at a local level, building upon the programming and partnerships that Red Rocks had at that time.” From the first time Dr. Pirius walked on the Red Rocks campus, he has known the college was special.

“For whatever reason, this place had always felt like home to me,” he admitted. “If it felt like that to me, I knew it must have felt like home to students. There was a very supportive, welcoming, engaged group of people working at Red Rocks. So, coming here felt right. I knew we could do great things together.”