



VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

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

Academic Affairs

In an ongoing effort to increase learning for all students and to address opportunity gaps for historically marginalized students, the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education approved Teaching Excellence grant funds to allow faculty and instructors from across the system to participate in the Active Learning Institute (ALI). The ALI was originally developed at Front Range Community College in 2016 by faculty members Kerri Mitchell and Eric Salahub based on years of research into the science of learning and equity-minded teaching and design. It was then scaled across all CCCS colleges starting in 2022. The Active Learning Institute is a semester long, evidence-based program that utilizes synchronous web meetings to engage interdisciplinary cohorts of faculty and instructors from across the state who work together to become better teachers and improve student learning.

Since the fall of 2022, more than 175 faculty and instructors, representing every college in the CCCS system and from a wide variety of transfer and CTE disciplines, have participated in the ALI and have gone on to redesign courses based on active learning principles. The ALI is widely praised as being among the most meaningful and worthwhile professional development experiences participants have experienced. Here are a few comments from recent ALI participants:

“Before this program, I was a confident educator. I knew my students liked my classes, and they generally performed well. I was naive. The ALI has caused me to reevaluate my teaching practices in the best way possible. Using the science of learning has taught me how to reframe my courses in ways that reinforce concepts and get students to learn what I want them to. ALI has been the most valuable PD I have ever experienced in over a decade of teaching because it provides real-world scenarios and tangible outcomes.”

“As a CTE instructor I thought I was doing nothing but active learning. This course has me rethinking every lesson and creating truly meaningful classes. In just a short period of time I have found that I have more class time for discussions and practical applications as a result of this approach.”

“This is a super valuable course, and a lot of faculty members could benefit from taking this. So many faculty come into higher ed with little to no teaching experience or teaching education, so it is intuitive to teach like you were taught instead of innovating towards a new active learning paradigm.”

One thing the CCCS Active Learning Institute effort has confirmed is that there is a strong desire from faculty and instructors at every college in the system for meaningful professional



development and for opportunities to collaborate across schools and disciplines. The ALI has consistently had waitlists of more than 50 teachers with many applying multiple times to secure a spot. The ALI will recruit for Fall 2024 cohorts starting this April, and in addition to the typical, modality-neutral cohorts, an ALI focused specifically on asynchronous online teaching and course design is planned for Spring 2025. The impact of the ALI on teachers and their students will be addressed with a formal assessment project led by a dedicated researcher who will also work to assess other Teaching Excellent grant projects starting in the Fall of 2024.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Colorado Career and Technical Education (CTE) continues to spearhead initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of educational programming across secondary and post-secondary levels. By fostering collaboration and engaging partners from education and industry, Colorado CTE is ensuring students are equipped with essential skills aligned with workforce demands.

- **Stackable Pathways work:**
 - Colorado CTE has been highly engaged in stackable pathways work, collaborating with partners such as the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and industry leaders. Notable examples of stackable pathways include Behavioral Health, Construction, and Aerospace, which provide students with clear trajectories for career advancement.
 - This effort aligns with the Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) legislation, emphasizing the importance of industry certifications. Close collaboration with partners such as the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and CDE ensures the integration of industry-aligned certifications into educational pathways.
- **Work-Based Learning Community:**
 - To further support educators in the field, Colorado CTE has initiated a Work-Based Learning Community of Practice. This platform facilitates communication, collaboration, and resource development among educators, enhancing their ability to deliver impactful work-based learning experiences to students.
- **Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs):**
 - Colorado CTE remains committed to empowering students through middle, high school, and post-secondary CTOS. These organizations provide invaluable leadership opportunities, connecting students' learning to real-world applications in various industries.
 - During March and April, CTOS will engage over 7,000 students, offering them hands-on experiences that foster leadership development and industry connections.

With the Board's approval of the State Perkins plan in March, Colorado CTE will submit it to the USDOE in April for review. Learner outcome data detailing what CTE concentrators and completers were doing six months after graduation was submitted by districts and colleges in March. Beginning this month, the Colorado CTE team will deliver a series of training for grant recipients on federal and state CTE financial and student data reporting as well as reviewing student data to develop equity action plans in preparation for the new fiscal year. The Innovations in CTE competitive grant call for proposals was issued in March and applications



will be accepted through mid-May. For more information on the state conferences and ways to engage with learners or State Perkins plan, please visit www.coloradostateplan.com.

Student Affairs

Student Affairs has begun working with EAB on two initiatives, 1. A system wide approach to Moonshot for Equity which is a cohort-based program designed to use data to help advise practices in order to close equity gaps, and 2. The Learning Management System integration with Navigate360 which will be piloted with four colleges to help develop a process for early alerts for Colorado Online students.

On behalf of Student Affairs, a consultant has interviewed all 13 community colleges' transfer directors/coordinators on what is needed to make continuous improvements to the Bridge to Bachelor's Degree program and has begun interviewing transfer admissions directors/coordinators at the university partners.

Reisher Bridge Scholarship (RBS) program Navigators are currently identifying students for the 2024-25 Bridge Scholar cohort. Program planning includes developing and hosting scholar orientations at campuses across the system in May and June. The navigators will also train staff at system colleges to help identify and promote the RBS program. Navigators are also working with Bridges to Bachelor's consultant to identify how the two programs can complement each other and expand opportunities for system students on the transfer pathway. Navigators attended a visit day program at Colorado Mesa University to better understand programs and transfer options. They also collaborated with Colorado Mountain College staff to increase their awareness of the transfer Reisher Scholarship program.

Financial Aid

CCCS is continuing the preparations for the importing of 2024-2025 FAFSA's for the thirteen colleges. It is the intent of CCCS to begin loading information as soon as the correct information is released to the colleges.

All institutions of higher education are waiting for corrected FAFSAs. Updates from the Department of Education (ED) include they discovered an additional error in the calculation of the SAI (Student Aid Index). With each discovery of errors in the original processing of student FAFSAs, records must be reprocessed and resubmitted to colleges. ED is currently working the backlog of initial FAFSA submissions. Once the backlog is processed, ED will begin reprocessing FAFSAs with the updated calculation.

Colorado State Approving Agency for Veterans Education & Training

The VA released the new Risk-Based Survey guidance for this year on January 2, 2024; three months after the fiscal year commenced. This delay was due to congressional testimony that required the VA to review legislation to ensure risk factors aligned with federal law. Our allotment of 19 Risk-Based Surveys was modified to five Risk-Based Surveys, and 14 Supervisory/Compliance visits for the coming year.

We have completed four Risk-Based Surveys and Seven Supervisory Visits so far this year. We have met our contractual agreement with the VA by having half of our allotment completed by March 30th, 2024. The VA did extend this deadline until April 30, 2024, due to the delay, but we pushed hard to meet the original deadline as established in our cooperative agreement.



Our office has submitted 128 approvals to the VA for Fiscal Year 2024. The VA is processing our approvals at a much more expedient rate than previous years. This is a positive step in ensuring our veterans and family members have access to their education benefits.

Public Law 117-333, passed on January 5, 2023, mandated the VA and National Association of State Approving Agencies develop a uniformed application that will cover all areas of approval law. This new application has been approved and released on November 15, 2023. The VA and National Association of State Approving Agencies working group is continuing to update and provide feedback to the Office of Management and Budget to include in the next release.

Public Law 117-328 updated Title 38 U.S. Code §3691A – Withdrawal or leave of absence from certain education institutions.

This law provides guidance to academic institutions when a service member is deployed and must take a leave of absence. Numerous concerns from institutions across the United State as well as Pikes Peak State College have arisen since VA sent out notification to schools on November 17, 2023. Our office has engaged with VA Central Office policy and legal division and have requested a Policy Advisory be developed to address the many concerns on how to correctly implement this change. VA Central Office should be releasing this policy advisory very soon. As soon as our office receives the update, we will share with our approved schools in Colorado.

Equity and Inclusion

- February Special Topic: **Building stronger pathways between Community Colleges and the Colorado State University Warner College of Natural Resources**
 - Guest Speakers: **Dr. Rickey Frierson**, Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, CSU Warner College of Natural Resources & **Dr. Monique Rocca**, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Warner College of Natural Resources and Associate Professor in the Department of Ecosystem Science and Sustainability (ESS)
- March Special Topic: **Understanding the Digital Equity Gap and Bridging the Digital Divide in Higher Education**
 - Guest Speaker: **Mordecai Ian Brownlee, Ed.D.**, Community College of Aurora President