



COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE OF  
DENVER



## DR. MARIELENA DESANCTIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

March 2025

### Economic Mobility

#### Summer & Fall 2025 Registration Bash

Community College of Denver (CCD) recently hosted its annual Registration Bash on March 10-11, 2025, as part of the college's ongoing commitment to improving student retention rates.

"The atmosphere was buzzing with excitement, fueled by freshly made popcorn, refreshing lemonade, and fun swag giveaways, including reusable tote bags packed with valuable student resource information," said **Gary Cooper-Sperber**, Senior Academic Advisor.

The event attracted over 150 students, both new and returning, who took this opportunity to plan ahead for their academic careers at CCD. A team of 11 academic advisors and two senior academic advisors provided personalized guidance, helping students navigate course selection and develop their paths to success.

The Registration Bash represents one of CCD's strategic initiatives designed to enhance student engagement and improve retention by ensuring students receive the guidance they need to successfully plan their academic futures.



# Economic Mobility cont.

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## Colorado Technology Association & Community College of Denver Host Collaborative Event

On March 5, the [Colorado Technology Association \(CTA\)](#) partnered with Community College of Denver (CCD) to invite and assemble a group of CEOs and CIOs of companies in Colorado that are looking for high quality graduates to serve in the technology sector. The **2024 Colorado Tech Industry Report**, published by CTA, quantifies the Colorado tech industry's **economic** and **workforce** impact, as well as that of the state's innovation infrastructure. The report highlights that economic opportunity for graduates of technology degrees and the economic vibrancy of the technology sector in Colorado. From the report, we learn that:

- The tech industry directly accounts for 10% of Colorado's employment and 20% of the state's gross domestic product (GDP).
- Colorado is the third most concentrated tech industry economy in the nation, behind only Massachusetts and New Mexico.
- Over the last five years, the tech industry added 47,440 net new jobs, the most jobs added by any major industry in the state.
- The total tech industry is predicted to grow at a rate of 11.5% in the next five years. This is the 5th highest projected rate in the nation.

Participants provided expert, constructive, and specific **advice** to our academic team to ensure that the Community College of Denver is a best-in-class institution in preparing students for the **high wage** and **high demand** opportunities in Colorado's thriving technology sector. Participants included: Co Bank, FirstBank, Craig Hospital, Zayo Group, Akkodis, Globant, Point Solutions Group, Bright Path Executive Coaching and Consulting, Cyber Qubits, Hitachi Vantara, Denver Economic Development and Opportunity, Arapahoe/Douglas Works, and the Colorado Workforce Development Council.





# Education for All

## Success for CCD at the Georgia State University (GSU) CIBER Business Competition

For the second consecutive year, CCD placed in the [Georgia State University CIBER International Business Case Study Competition](#). Schools from around the country traveled to Atlanta, GA from February 27-28, 2025, to compete in the event.

During the competition, students collaborated in the fields of Finance, Accounting, Marketing, and Management & Operations to solve complex business cases. The experience provided participants with the valuable opportunity to network with peers from various institutions while gaining practical knowledge about real-world business challenges.

CCD was proudly represented by students **McKayla Thornton**, **Sajjid Altameemi**, **Kennan Catabagan**, and **Bianca Rubbico**. Thornton secured a win for CCD with her team placing second in the competition, and a \$350 cash prize. Other colleges in attendance included: Alabama State University, Albany State University, Allen University, Bethune Cookman University, California State University, Sacramento, Claflin University, Georgia State University, Grambling University, Howard University, Johnson C. Smith University, Morehouse College, Oakwood University, and Rust College.

"This truly enriching opportunity allowed our students to showcase their skills, to connect with experts, exchange knowledge and skills, and gain valuable insight into the world of international business. All of our students were instrumental in securing a second-place finish and walking away as winners," said **Dr. Sheryl Smith**.

This achievement highlights CCD's continued excellence in business education and the quality of its student preparation for professional challenges in the business world.



Professor Chuck Roy, Instructor Gwendolyn Odom, and Dr. Sheryl Smith pictured with CCD CIBER student attendees.



CCD student, McKayla Thornton, pictured with the team she was paired showing off their well-deserved trophies and check.

# Empowered Talent

## Conversation Day Spring 2025

Community College of Denver (CCD) held its third annual Conversation Day on March 7, 2025, bringing together more than 200 employees to engage in discussions on three key topics: the college's **Mission & Vision, Red Tape at CCD**, and the **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) 10-year Assurance Review**.

**Jennifer Ferguson** and **Kaylah Zelig** led the HLC breakout sessions, where participants from all departments formed groups and discussed how to prove that CCD engages in the four main criteria measures: mission, integrity, teaching and learning, and institutional effectiveness. **Peter Lindstrom** and **Alberto Teixeira** hosted the Red Tape sessions, where employees discussed processes at the college that people find problematic for the executive team to review. This exercise helped aid prioritizing the topics to create solutions such as improved communication and additional training, revise processes for efficiency, or a combination of both. **Frederik Creugers** and **Joe Abraham** from [Beyond Academics](#) led the Mission & Vision sessions. This provided employees the opportunity to brainstorm about the future of CCD via anonymous online submissions followed by Q&As.

The event served as a valuable opportunity for connection and engagement among CCD faculty and staff as the institution continues to adapt and innovate its operational and communication practices. This gathering reflects Community College of Denver's ongoing commitment to implementing improvements that benefit both students and employees.



VP of Workforce and Community Partnerships, Katrina Wert.

## Katrina Wert Honored by Hensel Phelps

CCD's Vice President of Workforce and Community Partnerships, Katrina Wert, was honored with The Iron Woman Award by [Hensel Phelps](#) on Saturday, March 22, 2025.

This achievement recognizes Wert's **commitment** to workforce development and her **efforts** to provide women in construction with necessary resources, training, and support for success. This recognition comes from the incredible work Wert spearheads through the WORKNOW coalition on behalf of CCD.

The [WORKNOW](#) coalition supports advancement and retention in support of long-term career growth. Through the Center for Workforce Initiatives (CWI), the coalition hires apprentice and direct hire positions in skilled trades or professional services.

For community college students specifically, learners often come from construction management programs or engineering programs.

"It is an honor to accept this award a member of the WORKNOW coalition and the Center for Workforce Initiatives at Community College of Denver. However, I am most excited about the more than **3,500 workers** and **peer mentors** we've helped advance through careers in construction through upskilling, retention support and income growth," notes Wert.



# Partner of Choice

## Health Sciences Career Fair

CCD hosted a Health Sciences Career Fair on Monday, March 10, 2025, creating valuable networking opportunities for students in the health sciences pathway. The event connected students with 15 employers from across Denver, supporting both student career development and the future needs of the healthcare industry.

The fair featured prominent local healthcare employers including Amazing Care Home Health, HCA Healthcare, Children's Hospital Colorado, Intermountain Health, Radiology Imaging Associates, Denver Public Schools, Brighton Hospice, CommonSpirit Health, Kaiser Permanente, Reunion Inverness Rehabilitation Hospital, Life Care Center of Littleton, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Christian Living Communities, Colavria Hospitality, and UCHealth.

"I'm incredibly proud of the success of this event, which clearly demonstrates that employers are eager to collaborate with the Community College of Denver and recognize the value of our students," commented **Everett Driscoll**, Industry Navigator. "The event's success was made possible by the dedication of our faculty and staff at Lowry, who worked tirelessly to promote it across campus and in classes. With this kind of collaboration, I'm excited about the potential of future events, and I'm confident we can continue to build on this momentum to achieve even greater things ahead."

The career fair drew more than 100 students from various health science programs, including 31 from surgical technology, 44 from radiology, 20 from nursing, six from sterile processing, and 10 English language learners and other students. This career fair provided CCD students with essential industry exposure and professional connections to advance their healthcare careers.



CCD students and local employers from across the Denver Metro area.



Students interacting with many of the local employers.



Community College of Denver faculty and staff lending a helping hand during the Health Sciences Career Fair.

# Power of 13

## President DeSanctis Participates in Aspen Institute Convening

President Dr. DeSanctis represented CCD and the Colorado Community College System at an exclusive funder convening hosted by the [Aspen Institute](#) at their Washington, D.C. headquarters on March 31, 2025. The strategic gathering focused on elevating the essential role of community colleges in delivering enhanced value to both students and employers.

The event brought together current and former college presidents and representatives from approximately **20 philanthropic organizations**. Participants engaged with Aspen Institute senior leadership in substantive discussions about reform initiatives and strategic priorities needed to position community colleges as catalysts for talent development and economic mobility nationwide.

Key topics addressed during the convening included:

- Strategies** to strengthen talent development and economic mobility pathways
- Approaches** to align funding with successful reform efforts that improve job prospects for community college and bachelor's degree graduates
- Action** plans for achieving more equitable and improved student outcomes
- Practical** steps forward that account for current field challenges and opportunities

This high-level engagement demonstrates the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and Community College of Denver's commitment to remaining at the **forefront** of national conversations about higher education innovation and excellence.



Spring time on the Auraria Campus.