

Chapter 2

GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

This chapter addresses the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) for the Community College of Aurora (CCA/College). The Introduction and General Institutional Requirements Committee reviewed College policies and records to determine if the College was meeting the requirements. The committee provided sufficient information and evidence to determine that CCA is meeting the General Institutional Requirements.

Mission

GIR 1. The Community College of Aurora has a mission statement, formally adopted by the governing board and made public, declaring that it is an institution of higher education.

CCA has the following mission statement, revised in 2001:

The Community College of Aurora provides lifelong educational opportunities, prepares the current and future workforce, and promotes excellence in teaching, learning and service to our diverse community.

CCA's mission statement is aligned with the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) legislated mission as reflected in statute and in State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) policy:

“ ... offering a broad range of general, personal, vocational, and technical education programs ... to fill the occupational needs of youth and adults in technical and vocational fields, to provide two-year transfer educational programs to qualify students for admission to the junior year at other colleges and universities, and to provide a broad range of programs of personal and vocational education for adults.” (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201, SP 2-40) (Resource Room document 2.1)

CCA makes the statement public through the Community College of Aurora Schedule and the College Web site. The College will publish the statement in the 2003-2004 *Community College of Aurora Catalog*. (Resource Room document 2.2)

The Community College of Aurora provides lifelong educational opportunities, prepares the current and future workforce, and promotes excellence in teaching, learning and service to our diverse community.

Five purposes guide the College in the fulfillment of this mission:

1. To provide the first two years of college and university education for students who wish to transfer to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.
2. To provide occupational education for students who are seeking job preparation, career mobility and/or job retraining along with just-in-time workforce development and on-site customized training for business and industry.
3. To offer education that strengthens the academic backgrounds of the students and prepares them to pursue their educational and career goals.
4. To offer diverse educational experiences that are responsive to the needs and interests of persons in the community who desire to enhance their occupational, intellectual, cultural, social or personal development.
5. To assist students in selecting, entering, continuing and completing their course of study by providing effective academic advising and student support services.

These purposes are based on the legislation establishing the state system of community colleges (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201). Over the years, the wording and order have changed slightly, and CCA added the second part of Goal 2. They appear on Page 6 of the 2002-03 *CCA Catalog*. (*Resource Room document 2.2*)

GIR 2. The Community College of Aurora is a degree-granting institution.

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) have approved CCA to award associate degrees and certificates. CCA offers the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of General Studies (AGS) and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees. The College granted its first degrees and certificates in May 1983.



Authorization

GIR 3. The Community College of Aurora has legal authorization to grant its degrees, and it meets all the legal requirements to operate as an institution of higher education wherever it conducts its activities.

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) has the authority and power to define the requirements of appropriate degrees and certificates and to authorize the awarding of degrees at all community colleges in the Colorado Community College System (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-202). SBCCOE's authority related to formal academic programs is subject to review by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). (*Resource Room document 2.1*)

CCA forwards requests to offer degree-granting programs to SBCCOE, which makes recommendations for approval to CCHE. CCHE's final review and approval gives CCA the authorization to award the degree. All of the degrees the College grants have successfully gone through this approval and authorization process.

The Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-207 and 23-1-108 and 109 pertain to the authority of CCHE to designate service areas. Board policy, SP 9-20b, defines CCA's service area to include portions of three counties: Arapahoe, Adams and Denver. (*Resource Room documents 2.1 and 2.3*)

GIR 4. The Community College of Aurora has legal documents to confirm its status: not-for-profit or public.

CCA is a public institution and a part of the state system of community and technical colleges (Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-205). (*Resource Room document 2.1*)

The College has obtained 501(c)3 status for its foundation. Legal documentation confirming not-for-profit status for the CCA Foundation is available in the NCA resource room. (*Resource Room document 2.4*)



Governance

GIR 5. The Community College of Aurora has a governing board that possesses and exercises necessary legal power to establish and review basic policies that govern the institution.

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) is the state policy and coordinating board for Colorado's public higher education system. The Commission's legal authority is referenced in the Colorado Revised Statutes 23-1-102: *"There is hereby established a central policy and coordinating board for higher education in the state of Colorado, to be known as the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, referred to in this article as the 'Commission.' The duties and powers delegated to the Commission by this article shall apply to all state-supported institutions of higher education, including, but not limited to, all postsecondary institutions in the state supported in whole or part by state funds, and including junior colleges and community colleges, extension programs of the state-supported universities and colleges, local district colleges, and area vocational schools and specifically the regents of the University of Colorado and the institutions it governs. The governing boards and institutions of the public system of higher education in Colorado, including the University of Colorado, are obligated to conform to the policies set by the Commission within the authorities delegated to it in this article."* (Resource Room document 2.1)

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE), which controls the 13 state system community colleges in Colorado, governs the Community College of Aurora. SBCCOE is the central policy and coordinating board for all system community colleges and establishes policy on legislative, academic and fiscal matters. SBCCOE also controls programs for the state's district colleges and vocational schools.

The Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-104 defines SBCCOE's legal status: *"There is created a state board for community colleges and occupational education, which is referred to in this article as the 'board.' The board is a body corporate and has the authority to adopt and seal and to receive, demand, and hold for all occupational educational purposes and for any educational institution under its jurisdiction such money, lands, or other property as donated, bequeathed, appropriated, and/or otherwise made available to the board, and it may use such property in the interest of community and technical colleges and occupational education in this state."* (Resource Room document 2.1)

The legal authority of the board is also defined in Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201: *"There is hereby established a state system of community and technical colleges, which shall be under the management and jurisdiction of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education."* (Resource Room document 2.1)



The duties of the board, with respect to the state system, are further defined in the Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-201 et.seq. The defined duties relate to establishment of new community colleges, physical facilities, tuition and fees, appointment of chief administrative officers, review and approval of curriculum, and transfer articulation. They also relate to capital budget requests, allocation of funds, college policies related to formal academic programs, acquisition of properties and the core transfer program. *(Resource Room document 2.1)*

GIR 6. The Community College of Aurora’s governing board includes public members and is sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution.

The SBCCOE is a nine-member lay board appointed to four-year terms by the governor of Colorado and confirmed by the Colorado Senate. Two nonvoting members represent students and faculty from the state system community colleges. The governor appoints one board member from each congressional district in Colorado and three at large. *(Resource Room documents 2.1 and 2.5)*

Colorado Revised Statute 23-60-104 states: *“No appointed member shall be an employee of any junior college, community or technical college, school district or agency receiving vocational funds allocated by the board, state or private institution of higher education, or state or private occupational school in the state. No appointed member shall be an elected or appointed statewide official of the state of Colorado or member of the governing board of any state-supported institution of higher education.”* This provision assures that the board is autonomous from the administration and ownership of the colleges within the Colorado Community College System. The current members of the governing board are representative of the public interest and understand the educational and training needs of the College’s service area. *(Resource Room document 2.1)*

Members of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education as of January 2003:

- Jeannie G. Reeser, Chair
 - Lena A. Elliott, First Vice Chair
 - Andrew B. “Andy” Wyatt, Second Vice Chair
 - Stephen A. Chapman
 - Patricia A. Erjavec
 - Jerry L. Heimlicher
 - Barbara McKellar
 - Greg Romberg
 - Tamra J. Ward
 - Erin McNulty, Nonvoting Student Member
 - Esther Williams, Nonvoting Faculty Member
- (Resource Room document 2.5)*



GIR 7. The Community College of Aurora has an executive officer designated by the governing board to provide administrative leadership for the institution.

Colorado Revised Statutes 23-60-202 grant the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education authority to appoint the “chief administrative officer” of each community college. The SBCCOE appointed CCA’s current president in the summer of 2000 at a regularly scheduled State Board meeting. The College president reports directly to the president of the Colorado Community College System, who reports to the State Board. (*Resource Room documents 2.1 and 2.5*)

GIR 8. The Community College of Aurora’s governing board authorizes the College’s affiliation with the Commission.

The Community College of Aurora is authorized to affiliate with the Commission on Higher Learning of the North Central Association as stated in State Board Policy 2-40: “*State system colleges are authorized to affiliate with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.*” (*Resource Room document 2.6*)

Faculty

GIR 9. The Community College of Aurora employs a faculty that has earned from accredited institutions the degrees appropriate to the level of instruction offered by the Community College of Aurora.

All CCA faculty members have the appropriate training and experience to teach their courses. The College has clearly stated criteria for hiring regular and adjunct faculty. These criteria differ for faculty who will teach general education core and transfer courses and for those who will teach occupational courses. The College hires general education and transfer faculty with a master’s degree in the subject they will teach. Alternatively, they may have a master’s degree in an area related to the subject they will teach with a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the subject taught. Those teaching occupational courses must have a prescribed combination of experience and education. (*Resource Room document 2.7*)

GIR 10. A sufficient number of the faculty are full-time employees of the Community College of Aurora.

During the fall 2002 semester, CCA employed 33 regular faculty, equivalent to 29.25 FTE, most of whom were performing administrative duties in addition to their teaching duties. All programs for the following degrees—Associate of General Studies (AGS), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS)—are overseen by at least one regular faculty member.

The SBCCOE appointed CCA’s current president in the summer of 2000 at a regularly scheduled State Board meeting. The College president reports directly to the president of the Colorado Community College System, who reports to the State Board.

All CCA faculty members have the appropriate training and experience to teach their courses.

The 1993 NCA visiting committee cautioned the College against “ ... moving toward more traditional staffing patterns.” The ratio of credit hours taught by regular faculty to the number of credit hours taught by adjunct faculty in the fall of 2002 was 1:5.8, compared with a ratio of 1:9.3 in 1993.

GIR 11. The Community College of Aurora faculty has a significant role in developing and evaluating all of the institution’s educational programs.

CCA faculty members generate many ideas for new courses and programs. To begin the process for gaining approval of these courses or programs, faculty members take their ideas to their deans. Upon receipt of such a proposal, a dean may ask the faculty member to gather evidence supporting the need for the new course or program. The evidence may include the results of an environmental scan or a needs assessment. If the dean approves the concept, the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) reviews the proposal.

The ILT, which includes the vice president for instruction, the deans and the department chairs, then charges faculty with developing the course curriculum for review by the division’s curriculum committee. The curriculum committee checks that the curriculum designers have integrated lifelong skills, defined student learning outcomes, and aligned teaching methodologies and assessment practices with the outcomes. After the curriculum committee approves the program or course, the committee forwards it to the ILT for approval. Proposals for new programs then go to the System for final approval. Part of that approval process includes a review by all of the System colleges’ vice presidents of instruction. *(Resource Room document 2.8)*

Development of courses offered for credit by the Workplace Solutions Center or the Small Business Development Center follow the same procedures as other credit courses. The instructor and the customer usually jointly develop Workplace Solutions’ noncredit courses. The director develops the Small Business Development Center’s three-hour seminars.

At least once every five years, a team of college and/or external reviewers examines each certificate and associate degree program. The team assesses each program based on a report that program faculty members prepare after conducting a self-study of their certificate or degree program. In the case of the AAS degree, the advisory committee for the program is also involved in the review. The program advisory committee, which includes faculty teaching in the program, is also responsible for continual assessment of the program to assure that it is meeting market needs. *(Program reviews are in Resource Room document 2.9)*

At least once every five years, a team of college and/or external reviewers examines each certificate and associate degree program. The team assesses each program based on a report that program faculty members prepare after conducting a self-study of their certificate or degree program.

Educational Programs

GIR 12. The Community College of Aurora confers degrees.

The Community College of Aurora confers four associate degrees, including the Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science, the Associate of Applied Science and the Associate of General Studies. CCA conferred its first associate degrees in 1983. The College awards degrees each semester and posts the appropriate degree on a student's transcript at the end of the semester in which the student completes the degree requirements. State Board policy 9-40 lists the degrees granted. (*Resource Room document 2.10*)

GIR 13. The Community College of Aurora has degree programs in operation, with students enrolled in them.

The Community College of Aurora offers programs with sufficient enrollment to support degree and certificate offerings as indicated in the reports of students by degree and major for spring 2002. (*Resource Room document 2.11*)

GIR 14. The Community College of Aurora's degree programs are compatible with the institution's mission and are based on recognized fields of study at the higher education level.

The degrees the College offers, described in the response to GIR 12, are compatible with its mission described in the response to GIR 1. The Community College of Aurora offers degrees common to institutions of higher education and based on recognized fields of study. Other Colorado community colleges offer virtually all the courses CCA offers. The same system-level mission statement covers these colleges.

GIR 15. The Community College of Aurora's degrees are appropriately named, following practices common to institutions of higher education in terms of both length and content of the programs.

State Board Policy 9-40 identifies the criteria for titles, length and general content of degrees offered by the System's community colleges. The approved associate degree titles are Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of General Studies (AGS) and Associate of Applied of Science (AAS). Policy 9-40 also identifies the minimum of 60 total semester credit hours for all associate degrees and a minimum of 15 semester credit hours of general education requirements for the AAS degree. The recently enacted "King Bill" (HB 01-1263) made the 60-credit-hour minimum, the credit-hour maximum as well for AA and AS degree programs. (*Resource Room documents 2.12 and 2.13*)



GIR 16. The Community College of Aurora’s undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution’s mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry.

All associate degree programs have a designated general education requirement. The College’s general education requirements follow State Board Policy 9-40, which states in part: *“General education is ‘general’ in several clearly identifiable ways: It is not directly related to a student’s formal, technical, vocational or professional preparation; it is part of every student’s course of study, regardless of his or her area of emphasis; and it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts and attitudes which every educated person should possess.” (Resource Room document 2.12)*

The Community College of Aurora identifies general education courses for specific degree programs in the 2002-03 *CCA Catalog*. AAS degrees generally require 15 to 21 hours of general education courses; the AGS degree requires a minimum of 30 or 33; and the transfer degrees (AA and AS) essentially consist of general education courses, some of which are included in a statewide “core.” *(Resource Room document 2.2)*

GIR 17. The Community College of Aurora has admission policies and practices that are consistent with the institution’s mission and appropriate to its educational programs.

The Community College of Aurora is an open-access institution. CCA accepts any applicant who is at least 16 years of age and, on occasion and with permission of the College president, accepts applicants younger than 16. The College’s admission practices comply with the admissions policies stated in publicly distributed documents. Some of the associate degree programs have additional admissions policies and requirements that are described in the *CCA Catalog* and other printed publications. The *2002-03 CCA Catalog* spells out the College’s admissions policies in detail on Page 7. *(Resource Room document 2.2)*

GIR 18. The Community College of Aurora provides its students access to those learning resources and support services requisite for its degree programs.

Students have access to laboratories on both the CentreTech and Lowry campuses. All science labs are at Lowry. The equipment and transportation technology program and its shops are at Lowry. The film and video technology program also has intensive hands-on use of equipment at Lowry. The Aurora Public Library (APL) serves as the College’s library, and its main branch is within one-half mile of the CentreTech campus. The APL is building a new facility for its Martin Luther King branch on Colfax Avenue, just northeast of Lowry. The College also has online resources, including access to information through information networks and computer databases at both campuses, electronic media and access to other libraries. Students in the paralegal program have use of the University of Denver Law Library.

“General education is ‘general’ in several clearly identifiable ways: It is not directly related to a student’s formal, technical, vocational or professional preparation; it is part of every student’s course of study, regardless of his or her area of emphasis; and it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts and attitudes, which every educated person should possess.”

The College provides student support services such as admissions, registration, assessment, testing, academic advising, tutoring and financial aid counseling at both campuses and housing and food service at Lowry. The Learning Resource Center on the CentreTech campus provides a variety of services that support learning: tutorial labs, career services, job-search assistance and services for students with disabilities.

Finances

GIR 19. The Community College of Aurora has an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency at least every two years.

The Community College of Aurora is subject to an annual audit by the Colorado state auditor as part of the audit of the Colorado Community College System. The state auditor contracts with a national CPA firm to perform this audit. The most recent audit was completed at the end of October 2002. In December 2002, the state auditor forwarded the report to the Legislative Audit Committee, which released it to the public. (*Resource Room document 2.14*)

GIR 20. The Community College of Aurora's financial documents demonstrate the appropriate allocation and use of resources to support its educational programs.

The Community College of Aurora allocates resources into seven major categories, including instruction, academic support, student services, institutional support, operation and maintenance of plant, scholarships and auxiliary. This self-study document provides evidence and documentation of the appropriate allocation and use of resources. (*Copies of recent and current budgets are in Resource Room document 2.15*)

GIR 21. The Community College of Aurora's financial practices, records and reports demonstrate fiscal viability.

The College has demonstrated its fiscal viability in reports of recent audits that an independent accounting firm conducted. The firm completed the last audit for the year ending June 30, 2002. There were no College-specific audit exceptions.

The College develops the budget in the spring based on a complete record of expenses to date and projected for the remainder of the year, previous years' history and plans for the coming year. All units of the College contribute to the process.

The College provides student support services such as admissions, registration, assessment, testing, academic advising, tutoring and financial aid counseling at both campuses and housing and food service at Lowry.

During the year, the College tracks expenditures using the Financial Reporting System (FRS). FRS is a widely used accounting system that enables each unit of the College to monitor its expenditures. FRS also allows the accounting department to monitor the expenditures of all units. The College distributes monthly budget reports to the managers of each cost center. In addition, departments have online access to the most current information. Encumbrances of salaries, large purchase orders and contracts help to control expenses. (*Resource Room document 2.16*)

The Community College of Aurora maintains all financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Public Information

GIR 22. The Community College of Aurora’s catalog, or other official documents, includes accurate descriptions of its educational programs and degree requirements, its academic calendar, its learning resources, its admissions policies and practices, its academic and nonacademic policies and procedures directly affecting students, its charges and refund policies, and the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.

The College publishes the *CCA Catalog* annually and makes it available, free of charge, to all CCA students. The catalog contains an academic calendar, general College information, admissions requirements and policies, financial aid information, a summary of educational costs, graduation requirements, services and resources for students and general student information. It also includes the student code of conduct, academic regulations, a description of each educational program, certificate and degree program requirements, official course descriptions and the names, titles and academic credentials of all faculty, professionals and technical staff and administrators. (*Resource Room document 2.2*)

The College publishes the *CCA Schedule of Classes* each semester. It includes the academic calendar, new student information, registration dates and information, tuition and fee charges, the College refund policy, general College information and the listing of courses offered for the semester. CCA makes this publication readily available to all students both in printed form and on the College Web site. (*Resource Room document 2.2*)

The *CCA Student Handbook* informs students of the student code of conduct, the academic dishonesty policy, discipline-related policies, the student grievance process and general policies that affect students. The handbook also describes the College’s accreditation status, resources available to the students including clubs and organizations, and housing policies and procedures. The handbook is available to all enrolled students. (*Resource Room document 2.17*)



GIR 23. The Community College of Aurora accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated.

The Community College of Aurora accurately discloses its standing with accrediting bodies in official documents and publications. The documents indicate the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredits the College. The *Community College of Aurora Catalog* and the *CCA Student Handbook* also identify the College programs accredited by specialized accrediting agencies. (*Resource Room document 2.17*)

GIR 24. The Community College of Aurora makes available upon request information that accurately describes its financial condition.

CCA makes its budgets, audits, financial statements and other financial information available to the public. Those who would like the information may make a request to the vice president for administrative services after the state Legislature releases the information. (*Resource Room documents 2.14 and 2.15*)

