

# **Assurance Argument**

# Community College of Aurora

4/24/2019

## 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.  
(This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

### Argument

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*Mission: The Community College of Aurora serves our diverse community by providing high quality instruction and support services to prepare students for transfer and employment.*

*Vision: We aspire to be the College where every student succeeds.*

*Values: Respect, Collaboration, Quality, Access, Diversity, Inclusion*

The Community College of Aurora's (CCA/College) mission is widely understood within the College and the mission, vision, and strategic plan's goals guide its day-to-day operations. The participatory process CCA used to develop and adopt its current mission statement in 2013-14, as well as ongoing efforts to communicate the mission, have contributed to this understanding. What and where CCA teaches, how it supports students, and whom it enrolls are consistent with its mission. Likewise, the College's planning and budget allocations align with and support the mission (as discussed in 5.C.1).

#### **Mission Developed by Process Suited to Institution and Adopted by Governing Board**

CCA developed its current mission and vision statements in 2013-14 as part of the process to craft a new strategic plan for the College. In line with CCA's values of collaboration and inclusion, and to ensure involvement by the college community, the strategic planning committee included faculty and staff from across the institution, and sought suggestions from students, employees, and external partners. The strategic plan, the College's mission documents, and information about the planning committee are available in the [Strategic Plan Booklet](#), which was published shortly after the President's Cabinet adopted the strategic plan, the new mission, and vision statements in February, 2014.

To promote awareness of the new mission statement and related documents, the College posts the documents on its website, distributes the Strategic Plan Booklet and other print pieces, displays the goals on classroom posters, and refers to the mission, vision, and goals regularly in meetings and presidential presentations. The extent to which College faculty and staff members understand the mission is evident from the positive responses to questions on the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS/System) bi-annual [faculty](#) and [staff](#) surveys. More than 91 percent of responding staff and 94 percent of responding faculty agreed or strongly agreed that they know CCA's mission, vision, and goals.

### **Academic Programs, Services, and Enrollment Profile Consistent with Mission**

The College's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission of providing high quality instruction for transfer and employment and support services that help **all** students succeed.

To provide its diverse community with high quality instruction for employment and transfer, CCA offers a mixture of degrees and certificates, some focused on preparation for a specific job or career and others on preparation for the transition to a four-year institution. CCA's instructional programs are offered with flexibility that takes community needs into account. As described in the [College catalog](#), classes are available on-line and in-person, throughout the day, in the evening, and on weekends. Concurrent enrollment courses provide students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school at [little or no cost to their families](#). English as a Second Language classes, preparation for earning a high school equivalency certificate, and instructional programs in areas of community- and employer-need also demonstrate the alignment of CCA's academic programs with its mission.

To promote transfer, the College offers [degrees with designation](#) in 23 areas, which allow students who graduate with a 60-credit Associate of Arts or Science degree to enroll at a public four-year institution in Colorado and to complete a bachelor's degree there with no more than an additional 60 credits. Also aiding transfer are the gtPathways courses, a set of general education courses that the [Colorado Department of Higher Education](#) guarantees will be accepted at public four-year institutions in Colorado. For students whose goal is immediate employment, the College has a range of [career and technical education \(CTE\)](#) programs in areas such as public service (police, fire, EMS), interpretation and translation, film, business, and computer and information technology.

To ensure that all these degree and certificate programs offer the high quality instruction called for in the mission, the College assesses student learning, provides students the opportunity to evaluate courses each term, surveys students who have graduated, and partners with employers and other institutions.

As one means of improving the quality of instruction, the College [assesses student learning](#), with reports of the results included in departments' [annual reviews](#). All students have the opportunity each term to evaluate their courses and instructors through confidential online course evaluations. The [Faculty Performance Planning and Evaluation Handbook](#) provides faculty and

their supervisors with suggestions on how to use the information provided by the evaluations to improve teaching.

The College administers a [Graduate Follow-Up Survey](#) the year following students' completion of a degree or certificate, to learn about their post-completion employment status, their level of satisfaction with their studies at CCA, and if they are continuing their education. Institutional Research (IR) forwards the results as required to the CCCS and summarizes them in a presentation and report to the President's Cabinet. IR then reports the data by program to deans and department chairs for their follow-up to improve instruction. This data also informs program approvals at the System level.

The College's partnerships with employers and other institutions help CCA achieve high quality instruction leading directly to employment and transfer. These partnerships include an apprenticeship with [Wagner Equipment Company](#) through which students earn an Associate of Applied Science in Diesel Power Mechanics; an integrated pathway with the University of Colorado's College of Nursing that leads to a [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#); and other [internship opportunities](#) with varying businesses and organizations.

The College's student support services are also consistent with and support its mission of preparing students for transfer and employment. Two departments focus particularly closely on these outcomes: the Student Success Center and Career Services. Both of these units are relatively new at the College, created within the last five or six years to support student success in areas included in the College's mission, vision, and goals.

The [Student Success Center](#), established in 2013, is comprised of the Transfer Success Program, the federally funded TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) Program, and the new TRiO English as a Second Language (ESL) SSS Program. In addition, the Center aids more than 900 students annually with the transfer process by providing transfer information sessions with four-year partners, scheduling individual meetings for students with transfer representatives, taking students to visit four-year college and university campuses, and providing ongoing academic support and mentorship through TRiO advisors.

The College established the Career Services department in 2012 to provide more support for students in career advising, employment preparation, and links to internships and employment opportunities. The department now offers fall and spring on-campus job fairs, an online job board, a [Career Services Resource Guide](#), and an internship class. Career Services also provides one-on-one resume and interview help and career-related programming, recently hosting a Dress for Success Fashion Show.

CCA's enrollment profile is consistent with its mission to serve a diverse service area that encompasses the city of Aurora and surrounding communities along the eastern side of the Denver metro area. The City's 2016 demographic report, ["Who is Aurora?"](#), describes the diversity of Aurora, which is now a minority-majority city with 20 percent of the population foreign-born. [CCA enrolls a student body](#) that, like the community's population, is continuing to increase in diversity. For example, between FY 2009 and FY 2015 the percentage of the student population that is white fell from 46.1 percent to 39.4 percent, while the Hispanic population

grew substantially from 13.6 percent to 21.6 percent. By 2016, the Hispanic portion of the student body approached the level for Hispanic Serving Institution designation.

### **Planning and Budgeting Priorities Align with and Support the Mission**

The College's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. This is more fully addressed in section 5.C.1.

## **Sources**

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- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 19)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 20)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 43)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 44)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 44)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 45)
- CCCS Faculty Staff Climate Surveys 2014
- CCCS Faculty Staff Climate Surveys 2014 (page number 104)
- CCCS Faculty Staff Climate Surveys 2014 (page number 183)
- CCHE gtPathways Policy 2014
- CDE Concurrent Enrollment Policy 2016
- IE Community ESL Program 2016
- INST 4.1 Academic Evaluation 2013
- INST Course Evaluations 2015
- INST CTE Programs 2016
- INST English Department Review 2015-16
- INST English Department Review 2015-16 (page number 4)
- INST Faculty Performance Planning and Evaluation Handbook 2014
- INST Faculty Performance Planning and Evaluation Handbook 2014 (page number 2)
- INST Faculty Performance Planning and Evaluation Handbook 2014 (page number 3)
- INST Multi-Location Report 2015
- INST Nursing Pathways Program
- INST Wagner Program 2016
- IR CCA Service Area Data 2014
- IR Graduate Follow-Up Survey Summary Report 2015
- IR Graduate Follow-Up Survey Summary Report 2016
- IR Headcount by Ethnicity 2016
- IR Headcount by Ethnicity 2016 (page number 4)
- IR Who is Aurora 2016 2
- IR Who is Aurora 2016 2 (page number 7)
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014
- SA Annual Report 2015-16

- SA Annual Report 2015-16 (page number 39)
- SA Annual Report 2015-16 (page number 44)
- SA Career Services Internship Program 2016
- SA Career Services Resource Guide 2013-2014

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Argument

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The College articulates its mission to the public through recently revised mission and vision statements, a set of college values, and a strategic plan with specific goals. These documents make clear CCA's focus on high quality instruction and student services, preparation of students for both employment and transfer, and the College's aspiration for all students to succeed.

#### Mission Clearly Articulated through Public Documents

CCA communicates its mission through documents on its website, social media, and in the [College catalog](#). A printed [Strategic Plan Booklet](#) is distributed at meetings, community events, and to college visitors. The College President presents the mission to community partners at community events and meetings. CCA introduces students to the mission and vision during mandatory [new student orientation](#) and through mission posters in classrooms and other prominent locations around each campus. Employees learn about the mission, vision, and plan at their onboarding and orientation events.

#### Nature, Scope, and Constituents of Programs and Services Identified in Mission Documents

CCA adopted its current mission, vision, and strategic plan in 2014 after an extensive, institution-wide planning process. The mission statement makes clear that CCA emphasizes preparing residents of its diverse community to transfer to a four-year school or to enter employment. This is a change from the previous mission statement, which did not clearly identify transfer as part of the College's mission. The vision statement was also changed, and now emphasizes the aspiration for CCA to be the institution where all students succeed. The previous vision had an enrollment focus, expressing the aspiration that CCA would be the college of choice for individuals in Aurora and the eastern Denver metro area. Both the previous mission and vision statements were reported in the College's [2013 Self-Study report](#).

The strategic goals articulate additional areas of College emphasis, including enrollment growth, external partnerships, service to the community, and diversifying and strengthening CCA's human resources. The value CCA places on the quality of its instructional and student service programs is also evident in the wording of the mission.

## Sources

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- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 7)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 8)
- CCA Self Study Report 2013
- CCA Self Study Report 2013 (page number 37)
- CCA Self Study Report 2013 (page number 42)
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 6)
- SA New Student Orientation
- SA New Student Orientation (page number 2)

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Argument

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CCA's mission emerges from its relationship with a diverse society. The College's mission documents address that relationship clearly, beginning with the mission statement's mandate to "serve our diverse community." The strategic plan, its goals, and the initiatives to achieve those goals give a detailed description of the relationship and how the College will act. The College's activities and processes reflect the attention to human diversity called for in the mission and are appropriate to the constituency CCA serves.

Society's diversity is clearly visible in the College's student population, where [enrollment in fiscal year 2016](#) had no majority racial or ethnic group, saw a wide range of ages with 27 percent of students over the age of 30, and included more than 60 percent of students who were the first generation in their families to attend college. The College draws many of these students from the city of Aurora, which has grown in the last forty years to a city of over 350,000 with a population that varies greatly by race, language, age, and country of origin. According to the recently published demographic report, "[Who is Aurora?](#)", more than 20 percent of the city's residents were born outside of the United States, nearly one in three speaks a language other than English at home, and more than half are African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or Pacific Islander.

### Institution's Role in a Multicultural Society Addressed

CCA addresses its role in Aurora and the wider multicultural society in its [mission statement](#), [vision](#), [values](#), [strategic plan](#), and other documents, including those developed by internal units and committees. These documents follow State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) policy, as found in the [Board Policy on Affirmative Action \(SB 3-120\)](#) and further delineated in [System President's Procedure \(SP 3-120b\)](#), that require Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System) institutions to have programs that promote diversity and remedy the under-utilization of women and minorities.

The College's vision for success includes **every** student, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, economic status, age, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. The College's values (diversity, inclusion, access, respect, collaboration) articulate its guiding beliefs, its openness to all segments of society, and the manner in which the college community acts together.

The College's strategic plan and the [plan's goals and initiatives](#) address CCA's role operationally. Goal 1 calls for increasing student retention, completion, transfer, and employment with an emphasis on initiatives for reducing group disparities in completion and transfer, tracking student success by group, and supporting equity projects. Among the initiatives for achieving the improvement in student learning called for in Goal 2 is assessing global education opportunities. The College's enrollment goal, Goal 3, includes an initiative for recruiting and retaining under-served populations and its outreach goal, Goal 5, seeks ways for CCA to serve as a resource to its community. Goal 6 calls for the College to diversify its faculty and staff.

Reiterating the message stated in the college mission documents, the Inclusive Excellence Council (formerly the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council) articulates the vision of an institution where all people are included, respected, and supported. [The Council's mission](#) includes fostering equity, diversity, inclusion, inclusive excellence, and opportunities for transforming the campus climate. The mission is also echoed in the College's [Human Resources guideline for Employee Recruitment and Selection](#), which highlights the importance of hiring employees who reflect the diversity of the community the College serves.

### **Attention to Human Diversity as Appropriate to Mission and Constituencies**

With the understanding that a diverse student body is not necessarily indicative of a commitment to the success of those students, the College has created and cultivated efforts that focus on establishing equity and inclusive excellence. Inspired by the guiding principle of inclusive excellence provided by the [Association of American Colleges and Universities](#), the College set into motion a series of steps to: ensure that the college community is welcoming and inclusive, decrease gaps in student outcomes driven by diversity factors by providing accessibility and pathways to success for all students, achieve a workforce that demographically aligns with the surrounding community, and provide opportunities for students to learn about the world and its differences both inside and outside of the classroom.

At CCA, human diversity is recognized as not only encompassing ethnicity and race but also other social identities, values, and beliefs. The College provides opportunities for students to organize and conduct activities based on these identities. The Office of Student Life supports [campus clubs and organizations](#), such as the LatinX Student Alliance, the LGBTQA Student Alliance, and the Rights Options Awareness Resources (ROAR) Women's Coalition.

At CCA, student support services give particular attention to meeting the needs of the College's diverse student population. For example, CCA created the [Brother-to-Brother program](#) in 2015 to help male African American and Latino students build strong study skills, develop leadership abilities, and form a sense of community. To provide support to other groups of students, the College's Office of Disability and Equity serves students with documented physical or learning disabilities, and the College offers tutoring services in math, English, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Furthermore, CCA has made changes to its space to create inclusiveness for all students and employees by offering designated rooms at each campus for meditation and prayer and for lactation. The College has also created [all gender restrooms](#) at both campuses.

The College considers the gap in academic achievement between students of color and white students to be incompatible with its vision and values. The breadth and extent of this gap became apparent several years ago as CCA's Office of Institutional Research began to disaggregate data reports by race and ethnicity. The major impetus for looking at data by group and for exploring ways to correct the situation came in 2013 with CCA's entry into the Equity in Excellence project, a collaboration with the Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). A College team, advised by CUE staff, chose to look at the advising process and mathematics classes to see why African American students were not succeeding at the same rate as their white counterparts.

The project [impacted instruction](#) at the College. The use of CUE developed tools, including the use of data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, equity-focused classroom observations, and equity-focused document reviews, helped faculty reconstruct their classroom practices to be intentionally focused on decreasing the achievement gap. Moreover, through this process faculty were able to identify and modify implicitly held bias and beliefs about which students are most/least capable, the role of racial identity in class success for both their students and themselves, and their own role as a faculty member. To ensure continuation of Excellence in Equity (EiE), CCA [implemented an Equity Leadership Academy](#) in 2015-16 to guide several additional instructional departments through the process.

A long-time challenge for the College has been to increase the diversity of the staff and faculty to more accurately reflect CCA's student population and to create a more inclusive institutional environment. The strategic plan approved in 2014 mandated action on this issue and CCA's [Human Resources organizational guidelines](#) describe steps for making these hires that include: an emphasis on open, competitive searches with a minimum use of direct hires; advertising positions in a range of publications, as well as using current employees' contacts and professional networks; and the use of screening committees whose members bring diverse perspectives, including those based on (but not limited to) gender, race, and ethnicity. Starting in the fall of 2016 College employees will be required to complete training in implicit bias prior to serving on screening committees.

The College has taken and continues to take steps to increase professional development on topics related to diversity and inclusive excellence. The Human Resources department now provides Title IX and online diversity training for all College employees, as does the Special Assistant to the President for Inclusive Excellence. The division of Student Affairs holds six professional development meetings a year, many of which focus on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion such as cultural competence, social equity, and disability rights. The 2015 faculty in-service day included [SafeZone](#) training; Student Affairs staff members were also invited to attend this training.

In 2014, the College created a new position, the [Special Assistant to the President for Inclusive Excellence](#), to help achieve its diversity goals. The Special Assistant, who reports directly to the President, is tasked with working on increasing the diversity of CCA's faculty members and staff, celebrating the diversity of the college community, working with the Inclusive Excellence

Council; continuing the Equity in Excellence work; and aiding in the retention of an already diverse student body.

The Inclusive Excellence Council, also created in 2014, is headed by the Special Assistant to the President. The Council has developed a [statement explaining Inclusive Excellence](#) and stating the steps it plans to take to create Inclusive Excellence at the College. Among these steps is assessing and evaluating the College's practices, policies, and outcomes for inclusiveness, as well as a Campaign for Inclusive Excellence.

To more fully understand the thoughts and experiences related to inclusiveness, the Council commissioned a climate survey during the 2015-16 academic year with separate, but similar, questionnaires for students, faculty, and staff. In addition to gauging the campus climate, the survey also provides benchmark data against which to assess ongoing changes in College processes and activities. The [results of this survey](#) continue to be disseminated and discussed at the College.

CCA gives attention to diversity not only through the curriculum (as discussed in Criterion 3B) but also through a range of extracurricular and public activities for students and the surrounding community. The College hosts an annual Black History Month event, which includes presentations, lectures, and portrayals of important historical figures by national humanities scholars such as Charles Pace, who portrayed Frederick Douglass in 2015, and Becky Stone, who portrayed Rosa Parks in 2016. The College hosts events in celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, an annual luncheon—which includes a guest speaker and student exhibits on influential women—for Women's History Month, and a variety of activities for interfaith understanding that have included panels and visits to a diverse group of religious institutions. In 2016, the College hosted several visits for groups from North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Central Asia through the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

Another activity that gives attention to diversity and has provided hundreds of students with the opportunity to see world issues from the viewpoints of countries very different from their own is the Model United Nations. In 2015, the College began to send a delegation to the national [Model United Nations competition in New York City](#), where the team has represented countries that are home to two of Aurora's sister cities (Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea).

The College theater department produces plays that frequently examine issues of diversity. In 2015, the department performed *Pronoun*, a play that shares the story of a transgender male and his journey, and [Mok'ing-bûrd](#), which tells the story of a young girl on the autism spectrum.

The College's attention to diversity and its role in a multicultural society is not limited to internal activities or constituencies. College program offerings reflect CCA's awareness of the multicultural needs of its service area. Among these offerings are English as a Second Language, which includes both a for-credit, college preparatory program on the CentreTech campus and a large non-credit program at the Lowry campus. The Translation and Interpretation certificate program utilizes the skills of CCA's multicultural student population as it prepares translators and interpreters to meet a growing need for these services in the community. CCA also

recognizes its obligation, as one of the largest public institutions in its service area and in the city of Aurora, to participate in and support community organizations. Among these are the Aurora Chamber Diversity Committee, the Hispanic Chamber, the Black Chamber of Commerce, the Latin American Education Foundation, Aurora Sister Cities International, World Denver, and the City of Aurora's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs and its premier event, GlobalFest.

## Sources

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- AACU Making Excellence Inclusive 2016
- CCCS BP 3-120 and 3-120b Affirmative Action 2001-2008
- CCCS BP 3-120 and 3-120b Affirmative Action 2001-2008 (page number 3)
- HR 4.2 Employee Recruitment and Selection 2013
- INST Equity in Excellence Outcomes 2015
- INST Equity Leadership Academy Proposal 2015
- INST LGBTQ SafeZones Training 2015
- INST Mockingbird Blog 2015
- INST Model UN Overview 2015
- IR Campus Climate Survey Report 2016
- IR Headcount by Ethnicity 2016
- IR Headcount by Ethnicity 2016 (page number 4)
- IR Who is Aurora 2016 2
- IR Who is Aurora 2016 2 (page number 7)
- IR Who is Aurora 2016 2 (page number 17)
- PRES Inclusive Excellence Council Vision Mission Values 2016
- PRES Inclusive Excellence Statement Website 2016
- PRES Lactation, Meditation, All Gender Access Email 2016
- PRES Special Assistant to the President Job Description 2016
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 4)
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 6)
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 7)
- SA Annual Report Brother to Brother 2014-2015
- SA Student Led Organizations 2016

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Argument

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The College's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good both through what CCA states in its mission documents and through its engagement with its constituencies and the community. The mission statement clearly and immediately identifies the College's obligation to serve its diverse community. More specifically, Goal 5 of the [Strategic Plan](#) calls for CCA to "*Increase community partnerships, engagement, and service.*" CCA was founded in 1983 as a "college without walls" by residents of Aurora who believed the city needed its own college. Since then, CCA has engaged with and responded to its community's educational, workforce development, and leadership preparation needs.

### The College Serves the Public

CCA's history of support from the community has nurtured a broad view of the College's educational role, which includes preparing community residents for transfer to four-year institutions; providing students of all ages with degrees, certificates, and short-term training for employment; listening closely to employers and the community to learn what degrees, certificates, and programs CCA should offer; and ensuring that constituencies such as English language learners, adults lacking a high school diploma, and high school youth are not overlooked.

Several examples demonstrate how CCA serves the public in its educational role. In the low-income community that surrounds the Anschutz Medical Campus in north Aurora, CCA is collaborating with the [Community Campus Partnership](#) and its Hire Local program to train residents for employment on the campus through the College's [Adult Basic Education Healthcare Bridge program](#). To respond to the language needs of the area's immigrants and refugees, the College operates the non-credit [Community English as a Second Language \(CESL\) program](#) at its Lowry Campus, where nearly 2,000 adults learn English annually. The CESL program also offers low-cost citizenship classes. High School Equivalency (GED) classes are also offered at the Lowry Campus through the Center for Workforce Development to help adults, who did not finish high school, pass a high school equivalency exam. To serve community youth, CCA's Colorado Film School partners with Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA) to provide a free

[summer film camp](#) for elementary and high school students. The youth attending the camp learn filmmaking, how to work with others, and on-time project completion.

### **The Institution's Educational Responsibilities are Primary**

As a public, open-access community college dedicated to the success of all its students, CCA puts its educational responsibilities above all other responsibilities. The College has no investors and is supported through tuition, fees, and federal and state monies. It does not contribute to a parent or related organization and does not financially support any outside entities or interests.

### **The Institution Engages with External Constituencies and Responds to Their Needs**

Situated in a service area of over 600,000 people, CCA serves a broad community including public education (including high school locations that offer concurrent enrollment), the state workforce system, city and county governments, the military, employers, and organizations such as the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. The service area is home to a wide range of under-served and underrepresented groups in need of educational services and college-level expertise and resources.

In 2007, the College recognized the need for a strategic approach with these many groups and created a new position, the [Director of Strategic Partnerships and Resource Development](#), responsible both for developing and coordinating ties with business, industry, government, education, and other sectors. In 2014, the coordination took another step with the creation of a [partnership plan](#) that designated: who among the College's administrators, staff, and faculty engages with the various entities from each of these constituencies, who from CCA attends various community events, and who serves on organization boards or in other ways provides leadership in the community. As part of the same initiative, the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Resource Development created a database to track current and potential College partners. An annual partner reception and a quarterly electronic newsletter connects the College to these institutions and individuals.

To prepare faculty and staff to understand and work with the community, the College sends several employees each year to participate in the Leadership Aurora training program. Program graduates and other CCA employees participate in the Aurora Chamber board, the Aurora Economic Development Council, the Aurora Mental Health board, the Aurora Human Rights Commission, local school district initiatives, and other leadership positions.

The College's emphasis on community engagement and service extends throughout the institution. For example, the Division of Student Affairs embraces the strategy of developing a work environment that promotes and supports service to the community for those who are interested. In support of this strategy, the Division's Office of Student Life provides students and staff with [community volunteer opportunities](#) and promotes other service opportunities on their website.

The College also invites the community to attend and participate in campus events, as well as to utilize CCA facilities for their own events. Some of the College's public events are: Fall

Convocation, a Safe Trick-or-Treat, the annual Take Back the Night event, which brings awareness to sexual violence, Open Mic Nights, theater performances, and the Sherlin Lecture Series—an astronomy lecture series accompanied by public access to the CCA Observatory. [Community groups use CCA facilities for events](#) such as the 9 News Health Fair, Aurora Water's Waterfest, the University of Colorado Health Sciences mobile mammography van, College Goal Sunday, which assists students with completing their FAFSA applications, and state legislative forums.

## Sources

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- CESL ALC Summer Flyer 2016
- CFWD Anschutz Community Campus Partnership 2015
- CFWD Healthcare Bridge Synopsis 2016
- IE Strategic Partnership Plan 2016
- IE Strategic Partnerships Job Description 2016
- INST Downtown Aurora Visual Arts 2015
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 7)
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014 (page number 9)
- SA Community Engagement Activities 2016
- SA Community Events 2016

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### Summary

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The Community College of Aurora's (CCA/College) mission is widely understood within the institution with the mission, vision, and strategic plan's goals guiding its day-to-day operations. CCA developed its current mission and vision statements in 2013-14 as part of the process to craft a new strategic plan. The planning committee included faculty and staff from across the College, and sought suggestions from students, employees, and external partners. The President's Cabinet adopted the plan and the mission and vision statements in February, 2014.

To provide its diverse community with high quality instruction for both employment and transfer, CCA offers a mixture of degrees and certificates, some focused on preparation for careers and others on preparation for transfer. Concurrent enrollment courses allow large numbers of area high school students to earn college credit at little or no cost to their families. To ensure the quality of its instruction, the College assesses student learning, provides students the opportunity to evaluate courses, surveys students the year after they graduate, and partners with employers and other institutions in program design and for student learning and employment opportunities.

The College articulates its mission to the public through the mission and vision statements, the college values, and the strategic plan. These documents make clear CCA's focus on high quality instruction and student services, its preparation of students for both employment and transfer, and its belief that all students can succeed. Documents related to CCA's mission, vision, and strategic plan are on the College website, in the catalog, and in promotional materials.

CCA's mission emerges from its relationship with the diverse community which surrounds it and which it serves. The community's diversity is clearly visible at the College, where enrollment in 2015-16 had no majority racial or ethnic group, saw a range of ages with 27 percent of students over the age of 30, and included more than 60 percent of students who were the first in their families to attend college.

The College's student support services prepare students for transfer and employment with two departments devoted specifically to these outcomes: the Student Success Center and Career Services. CCA's enrollment profile is consistent with its mission of serving its diverse community with the student population that is white going from 46 percent in 2009 to 39 percent in 2016. The College's planning and budgeting align with and support the mission.

The College's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good. Founded in 1983 by Aurora residents who believed the city needed its own college, CCA has engaged with the area's educational, workforce development, and leadership preparation needs not only through its

programming, but also through faculty and staff involvement in community committees, events, and partnerships.

CCA's 2014 mission, vision, and strategic plan have been the basis for significant improvement since the last comprehensive visit. The mission's diversity emphasis has guided CCA to new efforts in equity and inclusive excellence with staffing and national partnerships for this work; extensive student, staff, and faculty participation; professional development; a climate survey and greater disaggregation of data; and related learning infused into the classroom and co-curricular activities. The focus on high quality instruction and services for transfer and employment has contributed to improvements such as degrees with designation, more use of annual program reviews, better assessment of student learning, growing and effective Student Success and Career Services units, and strengthened partnerships with employers and community organizations.

## **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Argument

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##### **The Institution Operates with Integrity**

To ensure integrity in its financial functions, the Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) observes established rules and policies, utilizes careful controls and monitoring, and makes financial information, including annual audits and budgets, available for public scrutiny.

The College's financial operations are governed by Colorado state fiscal rules, State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE/State Board) policies, and Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System) President's procedures. The College has established [financial guidelines](#), available to all employees on the College portal, that describe how these rules, policies, and procedures guide financial operations such as general accounting practices, budgeting, purchasing, and reporting.

The Vice President of Administrative Services, the Controller, and other staff follow these state fiscal rules, State Board policies, and System President procedures as they conduct the College's financial functions. To ensure the College is in compliance, the Vice President of Administrative Services meets monthly with other business officers from System colleges and the System's Vice President for Finance. The Controller meets monthly with the System financial staff to share information and receive policy and procedure updates. The College also ensures integrity by utilizing internal and external checks and balances and using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to maintain its financial records.

Through the [financial information section of its website](#), the College makes annual budget and financial audit information available to the public. The information includes links to CCA's annual budget data books going back to FY2007 and a link to the current year's budget as presented in June for approval to the State Board. This page also provides a link to the Colorado State Auditor's website where audit reports for the CCCS may be accessed, going back to FY2001. These audits cover all System colleges, including CCA, and are performed by independent public auditors working under contract with the Office of the State Auditor.

To ensure it operates with integrity in its academic functions, CCA follows a series of established guidelines. The College's [academic integrity guidelines](#) state the institution's core principles for integrity in instruction and provides examples of academic dishonesty, its investigation, and its consequences. Other aspects of academic integrity are elaborated in [instructional guidelines](#), including those on commitment to diversity in education, ethical guidelines for selecting textbooks, and the proper handling of academic appeals.

The College recognizes that academic integrity includes not just avoiding dishonesty but also providing students the instructional excellence called for in the College mission statement. One demonstration of this commitment is that of hiring highly [qualified faculty](#). To meet this commitment, regular faculty and adjunct instructors in the liberal arts must have a master's degree in their discipline, or a master's degree in a related field including 18 graduate units in their discipline. Career and technical education ([CTE](#)) [faculty](#) must have at least an associate degree in their content area and verified 2,000 hours in industry-related employment experience.

CCA operates with integrity in its personnel functions through established Human Resources guidelines and procedures, the use of confidentiality and conflict of interest statements, a strong commitment to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, and employee training in ethics and related topics. A [human resources guideline](#) describes the federal, state, and State Board policies that govern these procedures and the personnel resources these governing bodies provide. Numerous [additional guidelines](#) address personnel matters related to issues of integrity, including a code of ethics, the disclosures of gifts, employment of relatives, outside employment, and personnel records and files.

Many CCA employees, particularly those in leadership positions, are also required to sign annual disclosure statements. The College's senior administrators sign statements that cover financial relationships, board memberships, and the acceptance of money or gifts. To ensure that College information is handled with integrity, some College departments require that their employees sign specific confidentiality statements. To remind faculty and staff about their obligations under FERPA, the College registrar sends out a [reminder about FERPA regulations](#) twice each year.

The College has designated the Director of Human Resources as its Affirmative Action Officer, Equal Opportunity Officer, and Title IX Coordinator with the responsibility to coordinate its civil rights compliance activities and grievance procedures. This information is clearly communicated on the CCA website on the "About CCA/Right to Know/Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action" page.

The College operates under a [clear equal employment opportunity guideline](#) of non-discrimination; CCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or pregnancy status in admission or access to employment, educational programs, or activities. The non-discrimination statement is on the College website on the "About CCA/Right to Know/Equal Opportunity" page and in the [model syllabus](#). All regular CCA employees eligible to receive benefits are required to attend a Human Resources orientation that includes ethics-related training. All employees, including part-time staff and adjunct instructors, must

complete annual Workplace Answers training on topics including ethics, Title IX, bullying in the workplace, and sexual harassment.

CCA has created an accessible process for faculty, staff, and students to report academic integrity and code of conduct concerns through the [Refer a Concern or Incident](#) link on the website. The Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs reads the reports and sends them to the appropriate person for follow up and resolution.

The College's auxiliaries include non-credit instruction programs such as adult basic education and community English as a Second Language; military training exercises classified as public service; non-instructional activities funded by student fees, such as student government and student clubs and activities; and auxiliary enterprises, such as parking fees and operations and the beverage vending contract. The College requires auxiliaries to have their own funds and revenues and expects them to at least break even. Most important to ensuring integrity is that auxiliary funds are regulated by the same state fiscal rules, State Board policies, CCCS President's procedures, and College guidelines as other fiscal operations. [State Board Policy 4-20](#) gives particular attention to the authorization and use of student fees.

The College's Institutional Research (IR) department adheres to the System President's procedures on [student educational records](#) and FERPA. The College also adheres to the System's Institutional Review Board ([IRB](#)) [operating procedures](#). Internally, IR establishes processes that ensure the data it provides are used in an ethical manner and that the use follows college guidelines for research. To help ensure the integrity of data, IR regularly convenes a data advisory group representing constituents from across the College to discuss how data can be consistently interpreted and reported.

CCA clearly outlines behavior expectations, explains student rights, and provides information about college services to all students. First-time, first-year students are required to attend orientation, which introduces them to CCA's academic standards, code of conduct, and federal compliance requirements. Student behavior expectations are outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) provided in the college catalog, on the CCA website, and on the internal portal. Additionally, at the beginning of each term, the Vice President of Student Affairs sends an email out to all students explaining their rights.

### **Fair and ethical behavior by governing board, administration, faculty, staff**

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education's [Code of Ethics](#) and the System President's procedure on [conflicts of interest](#) form the basis for the fair and ethical behavior by the Board, System employees, and College faculty and staff. These documents are discussed with new employees. To help ensure that the code is regularly followed, the policy promulgating the ethics code mandates the signing and submission of annual disclosure statements by Board members, System officials, and college presidents and senior administrators. The President's procedures expand on conflicts of interest and provide forms for colleges to use to handle disclosure and approval of employment, supervision, and instructional evaluation of family members; disclosure of amorous relationships between employees and students; and approval by the Board of certain financial transactions.

In addition to operating with policies and procedures that promote integrity, CCA also promotes ethical behavior through a culture based on the values of respect, collaboration, quality, access, diversity, and inclusion. This culture is strengthened through ongoing face-to-face communication efforts including weekly meetings of the President's Cabinet and monthly meetings of the Deans Council, the Expanded Leadership team (cabinet, deans, directors, and chairs), and of all interested college employees at monthly all-college meetings.

## Sources

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- CCA Annual FERPA Notification 2016
- CCCS BP 3-70 Code of Ethics 2005
- CCCS BP 4-20 Student Tuition and Fees 2013
- CCCS IRB Operating Procedures 2007
- CCCS SP 3-70a Conflicts of Interest 2014
- CCCS SP 4-80 Student Educational Records 2016
- FIS CCA Financial Info Website 2016
- FIS Financial Integrity Guideline Examples 2013
- HR CCA HR 4.1 Equal Employment Opportunity 2013
- HR CCA HR 1.1 Governance HR Rules Policies Procedures 2013
- HR Integrity Guidelines Examples 2013
- INST Academic Integrity Guidelines Examples 2013
- INST CCA IN 1.3 Faculty Qualifications 2013
- INST CCA IN 1.4 CTE Credentials 2013
- INST CCA IN 2.14 Academic Integrity 2013
- INST Model Syllabus 2016
- INST Model Syllabus 2016 (page number 6)
- SA Refer a Concern 2016
- SA Student Code of Conduct Website 2016

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Argument

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) presents its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs, control, and accreditation relationships clearly to its students and to the public. The College's website is its primary means of communicating this information to these groups. Through the website, social media, the new college mobile app, the catalog, and other publications, students and the public have access to accurate and up-to-date information about CCA. While not available to the public, the College's internal portal (MyCCA) provides additional information to students, staff, and faculty.

College Communications is responsible for CCA's website, social media, print products, newsletters, and videos. The department's staff works directly with College employees to gather information, produce materials, and check their accuracy prior to dissemination. To ensure the materials present the College clearly and completely, the Director meets periodically with the College President and her cabinet to discuss materials before they are distributed.

On the homepage of the recently redesigned website, viewers can access registration and financial aid deadlines, the semester schedule, the academic calendar, scholarship and grant information, transfer options, campus security reports, and other topics. The website has links to the catalog, a section for future students, descriptions of degree programs, and information on how to get started with an application. To improve access to this information, CCA launched a mobile application for both iOS and Android platforms in early 2016 that allows users to view College information easily and conveniently on their mobile devices. The College also communicates with students, staff, and faculty via MyCCA, with announcements and news about the College, information on College departments, and institutional guidelines and procedures. Through MyCCA, students are able to access their email, degree plan, financial aid status, and other institutional resources.

The [College catalog](#) is CCA's primary document to communicate official academic policies, program requirements, course descriptions, financial information, faculty and staff listings, the academic calendar, and related topics. The catalog is available on the [CCA website](#) as a searchable database, a downloadable PDF, and an electronic flipbook. CCA no longer prints or mails out the [schedule of classes](#), but the schedule remains available on the [CCA website](#) as both a PDF and an electronic flipbook. To help students plan, the College produces a year-long schedule each March that lists guaranteed classes. In place of the formerly printed schedule, the College publishes a [compact information guide](#) for campus distribution that informs current and potential students about registration procedures, department contacts, dates and deadlines, financial obligations, campus locations, and other processes and procedures. To reach the public,

CCA mails a [bi-fold pamphlet](#) with summary information about the College twice a year to 230,000 households in its service area.

CCA utilizes [social media](#) to communicate with students and the public about upcoming events, important dates, and approaching deadlines. To provide more general information related to the College, CCA emails a newsletter, [Campus Connection](#), to all faculty and staff and posts it on the CCA website. Student Life produces a monthly newsletter, [The Fox Times](#), that goes to current students and employees with information about upcoming Student Life sponsored events, updates on student-led organizations, and general campus updates.

The College also emphasizes a personalized approach to communication. CCA has Welcome Centers at both campuses where staff members greet visitors, answer questions, and distribute print materials. The President convenes monthly all-college meetings to increase information exchange across the campuses. Additionally, she communicates with students, employees, and the community in response to tragedy, quickly and compassionately. For example, after the terrorist attacks in Paris, San Bernardino, and Orlando, she sent messages to the college community explaining that at CCA all individuals are welcome and reiterating the institution's values: respect, collaboration, quality, access, diversity, and inclusion.

The availability of information about specific topics is described below:

#### Programs

The website's "Program and Classes" page, linked directly off the homepage, contains information about academic programs and departments, degrees and certificates, online learning, transfer options, and links to the catalog and class schedules.

#### Degree Requirements

Degree requirements are found through the "Program and Classes" page. Students can check their progress toward degree completion on MyCCA using the Degree Check software program, and can find deadlines for application for graduation in the catalog, in the schedule, and on the portal.

#### Faculty and Staff

The employee directory on the College's website lists names, titles, contact information, and office locations. It is updated monthly. CCA provides the educational qualifications of the faculty and staff by department in a directory at the end of the catalog and more detailed information about faculty is found on department website pages, on the website at "Our People/Faculty Profiles," and for selected instructors in videos on the College's YouTube channel.

#### Costs to Students

CCA presents cost and financial information through the website, in the schedule, and in the semester information guide. The website has multiple routes to cost information, including one that can be found on the bottom of the homepage: "Quicklinks/Paying for College/Tuition and Fees." The "Paying for College" page has a link to financial aid information which includes an explanatory video. Cost information for required class materials is available on the bookstore's

website, which is searchable from the College's website, and through a link students see when they register.

#### Control

The College describes its status in the governance section of the CCA Factsheet on the website at "About CCA/College Data" as a public, two-year college operating under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Community College System with control exerted by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. CCA leadership is outlined in the college organizational chart at "Directory" on the website.

#### Accreditation Relationships

CCA's accreditation relationships are described on its website at "About CCA/Accreditation." The page explains the College's relationship with the Higher Learning Commission, displays the Mark of Affiliation, provides links to the HLC website, and describes the College's other external accreditation relationships.

#### Safety and Security

CCA presents information about safety and security to students and the public, including the federally-mandated Annual Security Reports for the [CentreTech](#) and [Lowry](#) campuses, through the "About CCA/[Campus Security and Safety](#)" section of the website and in daily crime logs available at the security office on each campus.

#### Institutional Research Data

CCA's Office of Institutional Research prepares and disseminates data and reports about the College internally and to the public on the "About CCA/College Data" page of the website and on the portal. The department is also working with its data advisory group to publish an institutional fact book about the College in 2016-17.

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## Sources

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- CCA ASR CentreTech Campus 2015
- CCA ASR Lowry Campus 2015
- CCA Campus Security and Safety Website 2016
- CCA Catalog Website 2016
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017
- CCA Schedule Fall 2016
- CCA Schedule of Classes Website 2016
- COMM Campus Connection August 2016
- COMM CCA Social Media Website 2016
- COMM Information Guide Fall 2016
- COMM Mass Distribution Mailer 2016
- SA Fox Times September 2016

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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As one of thirteen community colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), the Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) is governed by the [State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education](#) (SBCCOE/Board) as established by the State of Colorado. The Board sets policy and governs CCCS and its colleges. The [legal authority of the Board](#) is defined in Colorado Revised Statutes section 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." The Board member appointment process, the focus of Board deliberations, structures to receive input from constituencies, a code of ethics, and an administrative infrastructure to carry out Board policy ensure the Board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the colleges.

The Board's nine voting members are appointed to staggered four-year terms by the governor of Colorado and confirmed by the State Senate. The governor appoints one board member from each of the state's congressional districts and three at-large with no more than five members from any one political party. Two non-voting members who represent students and faculty from the System's community colleges serve one-year terms. The Board's priorities are reflected in its [vision statement](#) and [strategic plan](#).

### Governing Board Deliberations Reflect Priorities to Preserve and Enhance the Institution

The Board meets monthly with [meeting agendas and minutes](#) posted on the CCCS website. The deliberations reflect SBCCOE's focus on preserving and enhancing the System colleges, including items related to control of physical facilities (if built by the state), tuition and fees, appointment of college presidents, review and approval of curriculum, and transfer articulation. The Board also must approve budget requests, allocation of funds, and formal academic programs.

## **Governing Board Considers Interests of the Institution's Internal and External Constituencies**

The Board has established a structure through which the interests of both internal and external constituencies are reviewed and considered. The [Presidents' Council](#), comprised of the presidents of all 13 System colleges, is charged with bringing emerging issues to the System President who then takes them to the Board. The [State Faculty Advisory Council](#) includes one faculty member from each System college and makes recommendations on policy and related matters to the System President and the Board. It elects one of its members to serve as the non-voting faculty member of the Board, assuring a direct faculty voice in deliberations. Similarly, the [State Student Advisory Council](#) advises the Board on matters of interest and concern to students and elects one of its members to be the non-voting student member of the Board. The student bodies at each System college with a student government elect one member and one alternative to the Council.

The voices of external constituencies come to the Board in several ways. The diverse individuals who serve on the State Board bring the interests of a wide range of groups and institutions to its decision-making. The Board mandates [college advisory councils](#) to advise the college presidents and the Board on the educational needs of the area each college serves. The Councils are community leaders who meet with the presidents every three months to discuss big picture topics that impact their institutions. [CCA's Advisory Council](#) includes representatives from its service area's major school districts, small business, city government, and a health care/community partnership.

## **Governing Board Preserves Its Independence from Undue External Influence**

The CCCS [Code of Ethics](#), which applies to State Board members as well as to employees, addresses the prevention of undue influence by external parties. The code prohibits Board members and employees from participating in decisions that involve direct benefit to them or to related parties such as family members, trusts, estates, or entities in which a board member has a financial interest. The code also requires that a member give advanced disclosure with Board approval before the member enters into a transaction with an entity in which the member is an officer or has a controlling or substantial interest. In addition, the code forbids the bestowing of preferential benefit, the disclosure of confidential information, the acceptance of gifts, and other activities that could lead or contribute to undue influence by external parties. Board members must complete and sign disclosure statements each year that cover conflicts of interest, gifts, and affiliations.

## **Governing Board Delegates Management to Administration and Academic Matters to Faculty**

As per Section 2 of its by-laws, the Board appoints a chief executive officer (President of the System) who is responsible for implementing Board actions and administering Board policy, and who has the authority to promulgate procedures to implement policy. The Board [delegates powers over personnel matters](#), including appointing and terminating college presidents, to the System President, as well as the authority to sign contracts and other documents on behalf of the

Board. The Board establishes foundational policies, which are administered by the CCCS President and by the college presidents. The policies direct the presidents to develop common procedures for implementing those policies in a variety of areas. CCA has autonomy in how it implements policies.

To help ensure that [faculty have a role in decision-making](#), the Board mandates that each college president ensure that her/his college has a faculty forum to provide “the opportunity for faculty members to communicate and actively participate in the making of decisions regarding matters which affect them.” At CCA this forum is the [Faculty Senate](#), which has input into decisions via monthly meetings between academic leaders and the College President, and the President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs meeting with the senate when requested. In these meetings the senate provides suggestions but does not make decisions for the institution. The senate can also push forward proposals for changes to guidelines and procedures by sending them to the Chairs Council for consideration before they go to the Academic Affairs Executive Council and the President's Cabinet.

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## Sources

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- CCCS Board Meeting Website 2016
- CCCS BP 2-15 Presidents' Council 2004
- CCCS BP 2-25 College Advisory Council 2001
- CCCS BP 2-30 Faculty Shared Governance 2001
- CCCS BP 3-05 Delegation of Personnel Authority 2001
- CCCS BP 3-70 Code of Ethics 2005
- CCCS BP 4-25 SSAC 2010
- CCCS BP 9-30 Approval of Educational Programs 2001
- CCCS SBCCOE Role and Mission 2016
- CCCS SBCCOE Role and Mission 2016 (page number 2)
- CCCS State Board Strategic Plan 2015
- CO 23-60-201 Revised Statute 2010
- INST Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws 2013
- PRES Advisory Council Membership 2015-16

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Argument

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To support its commitment to freedom of expression, the College has developed and implemented the [Academic Freedom and Responsibilities guideline](#) which defines academic freedom according to the [Principles on Academic Freedom](#) maintained by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The guideline addresses freedoms and responsibilities in areas such as public and classroom presentations and discussion, guest speakers, library materials, and research and publications. In addition, [State Board Policy 3-20](#), “Due Process for Faculty,” establishes protection for academic freedom and intellectual inquiry in the course of due process. This information is made available through the CCA website, the CCCS website, and the AAUP website. It is also included in the [Faculty Handbook](#). If faculty or staff feel their academic freedom has been violated, the College and State Board provide procedures for recourse through the [Employee Grievances guideline](#), [Board Policy 3-50](#), and [System President’s Procedure 3-50a](#).

The College supports regular faculty and adjunct instructors in their contributions to excellence in teaching and learning as detailed in the [guidelines on tuition assistance](#). Regular faculty are eligible for CCA Employee Enhancement Grants that pay resident tuition costs for regularly scheduled CCA courses, and during the semesters that they teach, adjunct instructors are eligible for CCA Instructional Grants that pay the resident tuition costs for CCA courses. A [professional development plan](#) guides regular faculty and adjuncts in their efforts, including how adjuncts can advance through three levels of pay as they complete additional faculty development hours. Information on professional development opportunities and credentialing are available through the faculty tab on MyCCA.

CCA's commitment to students' freedom of expression and their pursuit of truth in learning is demonstrated through guidelines that describe student rights and College expectations, programs that support students voicing their views on campus, focus on critical inquiry as one of the Lifelong Skills, and recognition of student academic excellence.

CCA's website explains that [students' freedom](#) in the classroom includes the right to “inquire about, discuss, or express any views, provided such activity does not infringe on rights of others.” Students can “discuss and express in an orderly way any view in support of any cause, without disrupting college operations or infringing on the rights of others.” CCA’s guidelines on [student rights and responsibilities](#) express the College’s commitment to supporting the rights and responsibilities of students as detailed in the Student Code of Conduct and the Code’s alignment with State Board policies and System President’s procedures. CCA’s [student grievance process](#) aligns with the [State Board Policy on student grievances](#).

The College provides opportunities for students to freely express themselves and learn from other students, both through ongoing activities and in response to specific issues and events. The Office of Student Life hosts an Open Mic Night once a term during fall and spring semesters; students are not restricted in the content they can share at this event, which is free and open to the public. Student Life and two academic departments offered activities related to the events and social unrest in Ferguson, Missouri where students had an opportunity to [talk about the social issue](#) and express how it was impacting them. Following the Pulse nightclub shootings, the Responsive Programming Committee organized a [Solidarity with Orlando](#) event where students, staff, faculty, and community members expressed their feelings and grief.

To provide students with an opportunity to present their work in an academic setting and for different student voices to be heard, the School of Liberal Arts hosted its first [Confluence Conference](#) in March 2016. Forty students, nominated by their instructors and then selected by faculty panels, presented their academic research papers. The College also offers the [Honors Project Program](#) for students who want additional learning challenges, and recognizes students' [academic excellence](#) through term honors designations, Phi Theta Kappa membership, and [graduation honors](#).

## Sources

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- AAUP Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure
- Advisory Council Invitation Example
- Advisory Council Roster 2016-2017
- CCCS BP 2-25 College Advisory Council
- CCCS BP 3-20 Due Process for Faculty 2002
- CCCS BP 3-50 Employee Grievances 2012
- CCCS BP 4-31 Student Grievances 2012
- CCCS SP 3-50a Employee Grievances 2015
- COMM Ferguson Panel Talk 2015
- HR CCA 5.6 Employee Grievances 2013
- HR CCA 7.3 Tuition Assistance Programs 2013
- INST CCA 1.2 Academic Freedom and Responsibilities 2013
- INST CCA 5.9 Honors Program 2013
- INST Confluence Detail Program 2016
- INST Faculty Handbook 2016
- INST Faculty Handbook 2016 (page number 7)
- INST Faculty Handbook 2016 (page number 8)
- INST Professional Development Plan 2000
- PRES Solidarity with Orlando 2016
- SA CCA 4.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities 2013
- SA CCA 4.2 Student Code of Conduct, Discipline and Grievance Procedures 2013
- SA CCA 7.2 Recognition of Academic Excellence 2013
- SA CCA 7.4 Graduation Honors 2013
- SA Rights Freedoms Responsibilities Website 2016

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Argument

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The Community College of Aurora's (CCA/College) policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by its faculty, students, and staff.

#### **Institution Ensures Integrity of Research and Scholarly Practices**

CCA provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practices. The College's Office of Institutional Research (IR) supports faculty, staff, and students who wish to do research on live subjects by serving as liaison to the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS/System) [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB). Researchers may not solicit subject participation or begin collecting data until the Board has given clearance. The IR office also provides CCA faculty, staff, and students with consultation about research and survey practices and is itself a key department for research at the College. In its reports about the College, the office follows CCCS procedures for data generation, collection, and reporting, and has created a [data and reporting policy](#) for CCA.

#### **Students Receive Guidance on Ethical Use of Information Resources**

The College offers students guidance on the ethical use of informational resources through classroom instruction, resources and activities of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the Academic Learning Center (ALC), and through the Student Code of Conduct.

Students receive information about ethical standards for information use in composition classes. Every [class syllabus](#) contains identical language that defines plagiarism and outlines the consequences of academic dishonesty. The curriculum for every level of English composition includes at least one assignment with a research component, ensuring that the ethical use of researched material is a topic of class discussion and a practiced skill for all students.

The LRC/Library on the CentreTech campus provides ethical guidance through visits by librarians to CCA classrooms to discuss the research process, including ethical use of information, individual research appointments with students, and an extensive [list of resources](#) on its webpage. The ALC provides [tutoring, writing support, and research guidance](#) on both the CentreTech and Lowry campuses and through its webpage. Writing tutors (who are also

adjunct composition instructors) address ethical issues on the use of information resources with individual students when they note them during the tutoring process, and the ALC's website has variety of citation formatting resources. The College academic dishonesty guidelines are summarized on a link on the website.

The [Instructional guideline on Academic Integrity](#) explains that students who engage in any type of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, are subject to both academic consequences as determined by the instructor, and to disciplinary action as outlined in the College [disciplinary procedures](#).

### **College Has and Enforces Policies on Academic Honesty and Integrity**

The College has comprehensive [guidelines on academic integrity](#) which include definitions of academic dishonesty, steps for investigation of such dishonesty, and the consequence for violations. The College also has [guidelines that explain copyright](#), give suggestions for avoiding copyright infringement, and discuss disclosure of the creation of intellectual property by college employees.

The College enforces guidelines on academic dishonesty which are found in [the catalog](#) and in the [model syllabus](#). CCA also offers resources to help students avoid academic dishonesty as they write. A link in D2L, the College's learning management platform, take students to PaperRater.com, a free website that provides, among other services, a plagiarism checker students can run on their draft. The TurnItIn feature in D2L allows students and instructors to view an "originality report" that highlights all material that has been quoted from a source. When set up instructors set up TurnItIn as a drafting tool, students can double-check that all of their quoted material has been properly cited. When instructors or staff members detect evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, they follow standard procedures outlined in the guidelines on academic integrity. CCA also keeps a college-wide database to track academic dishonesty.

### **Sources**

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- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 18)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 19)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 31)
- CCA College Catalog 2016-2017 (page number 32)
- CCA LRC Services Website 2016
- INST CCA 1.7 Copyrights and Intellectual Property 2013
- INST CCA 2.14 Academic Integrity 2016
- INST Model Syllabus 2016
- INST Model Syllabus 2016 (page number 3)
- INST Model Syllabus 2016 (page number 4)
- PRES CCA 4.2 Data Entry and Reporting Responsibilities 2013
- PRES CCA 4.4 IRB Human Subjects Search

## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### Summary

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. It establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

To ensure integrity in the institution's financial functions, College staff follow State of Colorado fiscal rules, State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (State Board) policies, and Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System) President Procedures as they conduct the CCA's financial functions. To ensure the College operates with integrity in its academic functions, CCA follows a series of established guidelines for instruction and hires highly qualified faculty and instructors.

CCA operates with integrity in its personnel functions through established guidelines and procedures, the use of confidentiality agreements and conflict of interest statements, a strong commitment to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, and employee training in ethics and related topics. The College maintains integrity in auxiliary functions by ensuring they are regulated by the same state fiscal rules and policies as are other fiscal operations.

CCA presents its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs, control, and accreditation relationships clearly to its students and to the public. The College's website is its primary means of communicating this information. Through the website, the new college mobile app, the catalog and other publications, and social media, students and the public have access to accurate and up-to-date information about CCA.

As one of 13 community colleges in the System, CCA is governed by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. The Board sets policy and governs CCCS and its colleges, meets regularly, and deliberates with a focus on preserving and enhancing the System colleges. It has a structure through which the interests of both internal and external constituencies are reviewed and considered.

CCA is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. To support the commitment to freedom of expression, the College has developed and implemented an Academic Freedom and Responsibilities guideline. CCA's commitment to students' freedom of expression and their pursuit of truth in learning is demonstrated through guidelines that describe student rights and College expectations, programs that support students voicing their views on campus, the focus on critical inquiry as one of the Lifelong Skills, and the recognition of student academic excellence.

CCA's guidelines and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge by faculty, students, and staff with assistance from the College's Office of Institutional Research (IR) and CCCS's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The College offers students guidance on the ethical use of informational resources through classroom instruction, the Student Code of Conduct, and the activities of the Learning Resource Center and the Academic Learning Center. The Instructional Policy on Academic Dishonesty explains academic dishonesty, and the College offers resources to help students avoid academic dishonesty as they write.

## **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Argument**

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To ensure that its educational programs are current and at the appropriate level, the Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) has processes and procedures in place to maintain consistency and continuously improve the curriculum. These controls, which are faculty-driven and consistent across all modes of delivery, include faculty development and review of the curriculum for associate degrees that are transferrable to all Colorado's four-year public institutions; Degrees with Designation (DWD) developed in partnership between two-year and four-year faculty across the state; career and technical education (CTE) programs developed in conjunction with employer advisory committees; program reviews every five years; and specialized accreditation of some CTE programs. The State Faculty Curriculum Committee and the CCA Curriculum Committee review and keep the curriculum current. The institution articulates its learning goals for each degree and certificate it offers and makes updates each year in the College catalog. The quality of these programs and their learning goals are consistent across the College and all modes of delivery. Quality is monitored by program assessment as well as required elements such as common syllabi, standard assessments, common competencies, and faculty qualifications.

### **Courses and Programs are Current and Require Appropriate Performance**

Associate degrees conferred by CCA reflect the larger goals of educational attainment that the institution holds for students as defined by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System). The currency and appropriate level of student performance for CCA's

Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of General Studies (AGS), and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees are validated by the [authority granted to the College by the CCCS](#), as [designated by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education \(CCHE\)](#), to confer these degrees.

Curricula for the general AA, AS, and the Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (Degrees with Designation or DWD) are faculty-driven, developed in collaboration with faculty from four-year public institutions, and approved by the [General Education Council of CCHE and by CDHE](#). Programs are at college level and the requirements are detailed and kept current in the [College catalog](#) and on the [College website](#). The required courses that comprise the AA, AS, and DWDs have been developed by faculty within CCCS institutions with required learning objectives and outcomes, and have been approved by CDHE's General Education Council. These approved courses, designated as [gtPathways courses](#), transfer to Colorado's four-year public institutions as undergraduate general education courses. CCA also ensures course and program currency through participation in yearly "Faculty-to-Faculty" conferences, which bring content area specialists together to discuss curricular issues as well as gtPathways course competencies.

The College's Curriculum Committee provides oversight of instructional programs and courses. The [approval process for new courses or changes to existing courses](#) includes a review of the proposed curriculum to ensure both appropriateness and currency of the course content. The Committee is comprised of faculty members from both the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Professional Studies and Sciences, the College scheduler, the assistant registrar, an academic advisor, and the College credential evaluator, each with expertise to contribute to the process. Once department faculty leaders have approval from their dean, they submit proposed courses, degrees, or certificates, or changes to them, to the committee for review and approval. The review process includes discussion among committee members and an opportunity to ask questions of, or seek clarification from, the requestor. Committee members consider the rigor of the course curriculum, its ability to meet student need, and the clarity of its learning objectives. The Vice President of Academic Affairs reviews new programs and courses prior to submission to CCCS for another level of curriculum review and approval.

CCCS has also developed a [Common Course Numbering System \(CCNS\)](#) to ensure that all Colleges within the system deliver the same proficiencies in their courses. Using the competencies as outlined in the CCNS, faculty develop course outcomes to ensure that students' levels of performance are defined and appropriate to the course. These learning outcomes are stated in the course syllabus and are reviewed by departmental chairs.

CTE programs at the College have [employer advisory committees](#) which provide input on program design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and revision. The committees discuss and develop the levels of performance required to enter careers in that industry, recommend the competencies students should master for workplace success, and assure that courses, certificates, and degrees continue to be current for their respective career fields.

CCCS requires CTE programs to go through a program review every five years. Program chairs submit their application to the system for approval by the CCCS CTE managers and also the State Board (SBCCOE). The application includes a new five-year plan, changes to curriculum,

updates to articulations, and employment data for the program. In addition, the chair must address the program's success at meeting required benchmarks. This data comes from a [System-required survey the College administers](#) called the VE-135. The survey collects data from CTE graduates to determine students' employment and education status in the year following graduation, as well as graduates' opinions about their CCA experience. A program can be approved for an additional five years or placed on conditional approval for three years if there are deficiencies that need to be addressed. In addition to the CCCS program review, a regular cycle of College program review for all departments helps programs develop an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement. [The Early Childhood Education program's 2015 report](#) provides an example.

Along with institutional accreditation, several of CCA's CTE programs have specialized approval or accreditation, which means they are subject to periodic reporting requirements and site visits to ensure their quality, currency, and performance levels are meeting industry standards. For example, CCA's Paralegal Program is approved by the American Bar Association, and the EMS Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs upon the recommendation of the Committee of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions. More detail is provided in Criterion 4.A.

Other programs ensure currency through partnerships with outside organizations. For example, CCA is a member of the Cisco Networking Academy. The Academy provides CCA with the most current materials related to Cisco I and Cisco II curriculum content, and in return, CCA meets current industry standards for the type and age of the networking equipment available to students. Instructors maintain Cisco certification through regular examination. The program demonstrates its appropriateness for higher education by preparing students to sit for the [Cisco Certified Network Association \(CCNA\) exam](#).

### **College Articulates and Differentiates Learning Goals for Associate Degrees and Certificates**

CCA offers undergraduate education at the associate degree and certificate levels. In addition to AA, AS, AGS, and AAS degrees, the College offers more than 35 certificates. A full list of the degrees and their corresponding designations, along with the list of certificates, is available in the College catalog and website, both of which are updated annually and reviewed by department chairs. The course requirements for each degree and certificate are articulated on their respective pages in the [catalog](#) and on the [College website](#).

The AA, AS, and corresponding DWD learning goals are based on broad general education requirements accepted by many liberal arts and sciences bachelor's degree programs at four-year public institutions in Colorado. These associate degrees have a designated pathways curricula in Written Communication, Mathematics, Arts and Humanities, History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural and Physical Sciences. The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees prepare students to enter skilled and paraprofessional occupations, to upgrade or stabilize their employment, or to meet individual career goals.

Certificates prepare students to enter the workforce, and they are described in detail in their respective sections of the catalog. The learning goals for certificates are focused on specific technical skills a student needs to learn or to meet specific certification requirements, such as the Cisco certification requirements. Certificates typically range from 15 to 30 credit hours and are often embedded in an AAS degree, so that a student can get a degree by obtaining “stackable” certificates. For example, the Basic EMT certificate and the Paramedic Certificate make up the majority of the Paramedicine AAS degree.

### **Program Quality and Learning Goals Consistent across Modes of Delivery and Locations**

The College utilizes a [syllabus template](#) to ensure that a course’s description, objectives, competencies, and student outcomes are consistent regardless of a course section’s location or modality. For example, while BUS 115 is taught on the Lowry campus in a traditional college classroom, as an online class, and in high schools through concurrent enrollment (CE), all of its sections have the same objectives, competencies, and expected outcomes. Traditional and online courses share identical syllabi, while [CE course syllabi](#) are produced with additional CCA branding.

In concurrent enrollment courses, the monitoring and oversight by department chairs and concurrent enrollment coordinators assures program quality and consistency of learning goals. All CE courses, teachers, syllabi, texts, and lab facilities must be [approved by CCA department chairs](#), and all instructors undergo the same departmental review, selection, and CTE credentialing (if applicable) process as adjunct instructors teaching on CCA campuses. High schools must submit courses and teachers for approval each year. Department chairs include CE instructors in professional development opportunities, trainings, and workshops. In addition, CE instructors have at least one [classroom observation by a CCA representative](#) during the school year to assure instructional quality and course alignment. In 2015, the [HLC multi-location visit](#) evaluator found that the CE program at CCA offers a “truly comparable learning experience to that of students on the CCA campus.”

To ensure program quality, regular faculty members and adjunct instructors, including CE instructors, teaching in all modes of instruction participate in the [College’s assessment of student learning](#). Courses targeted for data collection include all modalities and all locations. Department chairs collect and analyze data to assess learning in each course, as exemplified by the [Social Sciences Assessment Design](#) and subsequent [Assessment Plan](#). Changes in teaching methods are made based on assessment results. This is discussed further in 4.B.

The College ensures quality and rigor in online and hybrid courses by following quality assurance measures. All instructors use a uniform course shell in the D2L learning management system. The course shell follows the criteria of a [Quality Matters rubric](#). The uniform format allows department chairs and faculty mentors to conduct classroom observations for online course sections. Department chairs review online courses to make sure the content is in line with agreed learning goals.

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- IR VE-135 Results 2016
- PRES HLC Multi-Location Report 2015
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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### **General Education Program Appropriate to Mission, Educational Offerings, Degree Levels**

The Community College of Aurora's (CCA/College) general education program is aligned with the mission of the school, which is:

*The Community College of Aurora serves our diverse community by providing high quality instruction and support services to prepare students for transfer and employment.*

CCA's undergraduate general education requirements are grounded in a philosophical framework and articulated in the College catalog. The Lifelong Skills are embedded in its courses and support the general education curriculum developed by the Colorado Department of Higher Education. The general education core offered at CCA complies with the expectations of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) as expressed in the [Statewide GT Pathways Curriculum](#). This CCHE policy requires all community college degree-seeking students to complete studies in Written Communication, Mathematics, Art and Humanities, History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural and Physical Sciences. The College also complies with the [State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education \(SBCCOE/State Board\) policy](#) that requires all member institutions to provide a general education that is not directly related to a student's formal technical or professional preparation, that is part of every student's course of study, and that imparts common knowledge and concepts.

At CCA, each Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), and Associate of General Studies (AGS) degree requires minimum studies appropriate to an associate's degree, abiding by the CCHE and SBCCOE policies previously defined. This distribution of course requirements assures that each student is exposed to broad areas of knowledge and skills that all degree holders should possess. In this way, CCA prepares students for success, whether through transfer or employment, according to its mission.

As a two-year institution, CCA's general education requirements are appropriate in scope and depth to the College's degree and certificate offerings. For AAS and AGS degrees designed as terminal career and technical credentials, a minimum of 25 percent of all courses come from the general education curriculum. For AA and AS degrees designed for transfer to a four-year institution, a minimum of 50 percent of all courses come from the general education curriculum.

### **College Articulates Purpose, Content, Learning Outcomes of Grounded General Education that Imparts Broad Knowledge and Develops Skills/Attitudes CCA Graduates Should Possess**

The purpose and application of the general education curriculum at the College is articulated primarily through the [Lifelong Skills](#), which are taught across the curriculum and which faculty have selected as the broad areas of knowledge and abilities essential to all CCA graduates. As stated in the catalog, the College expects and formally measures student competency in each of these six skills: communication, critical inquiry, quantitative reasoning, technology, aesthetics, and personal and social responsibility. This expectation is also articulated in the [model syllabus](#) used by each course offering.

### **Students Engaged in Collecting, Analyzing, Communicating Information; Mastering Modes of Inquiry and Creative Work; Developing Adaptable Skills**

All CCA programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments. CCA's Lifelong Skills, as described above, are incorporated across all degree programs. Critical inquiry and communication, especially, engage students in activities that require them to be adept at collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. At the core of their learning, whether in a liberal arts or a CTE program, students are challenged by active and engaged learning. From diesel students analyzing an engine's problem, to film students learning how to tell a story visually, to students communicating complex issues in a psychology poster presentation, CCA students are engaged in developing skills to use in the world in which they will live. For example, in [CRJ 127, Crime Scene Investigation](#), criminal justice students collect, analyze, and communicate information about evidence in a simulated crime scene where they photograph, inventory, and collect potential evidence, and later write investigative reports.

### **Institution's Education Recognizes Human and Cultural Diversity of Students' World**

CCA offers several courses focused on exploring, analyzing, and experiencing cultural and human diversity within different disciplines. While diversity is always present in studies such as Anthropology and Sociology, CCA has cultivated courses such as Ethnic Literature, Survey of

African American Literature, History of Jazz, and Environmental Ethics in order to fulfill multicultural general education requirements at institutions with which the College has articulation agreements. This strengthens not only the transferability of CCA's Degrees with Designation, but also CCA's students, as citizens of the world. These cultural and human diversity focuses are especially important in the context of the [College's demographic profile](#), where students of color make up the majority of the student body.

CCA's faculty and adjunct instructors are committed to incorporating cultural and human diversity into their teaching practices in courses for which these aspects are not the focus. Through the infusing of curricular components about diversity, students are afforded the opportunity to learn how other cultures and human populations may be similar to or different from their own. Faculty create these opportunities by engaging students in activities that focus on the diversity of the world around them. For example, EMS students learn cultural sensitivity in the context of responding to emergency calls, and students involved in the Model UN program learn about diplomacy in a multicultural context. Starting in academic year 2016-17, student learning outcomes for Diversity and Global Learning will be embedded in all Social Science courses. Addressing this competency will introduce students to various concepts designed to build their awareness of diversity and the importance of inclusivity.

CCA has recognized the need for a strong campus-wide commitment to inclusive excellence to strengthen the College's educational environment. This has led the College to expand professional development opportunities for faculty to include an emphasis on cultural competency. The [2015 annual faculty in-service](#) focused on the immigrant experience in the college classroom, and on how students from non-traditional backgrounds experience assumptions, stereotypes, and micro-aggressions inside and outside the classroom. Additional efforts within Academic Affairs have included assisting faculty to evaluate their teaching through an equity lens by revising syllabi for inclusivity, adding more authors of color to reading assignments, and holding monthly discussions on equity-oriented readings by faculty. These efforts continue, with an upcoming [Inclusive Pedagogy and Curriculum Training series](#), as well as [other equity-focused events](#) organized by the Equity Leadership Academy. In addition to professional development trainings held on campus to discuss equity in the classroom, each department is required to have at least one [departmental equity goal](#), with more in progress and planning stages.

In further pursuit of establishing an inclusive excellence campus, the College has focused on two challenges in relation to its educational program; first, how CCA can close the achievement gap for students of color, and second, assessing how faculty, staff, and students experience the climate and culture of CCA.

CCA's recent, concentrated efforts at closing the achievement gap for students of color began when it became the state's only community college to participate in the [Colorado Equity in Excellence \(EIE\) Project](#) in 2013-2014. As [part of this pilot study](#), CCA's math department conducted an inquiry and found especially high achievement gaps between African-American students and white students in developmental math courses. Based on this finding, the math department [implemented a new strategy](#) of support for the lowest placing students, and provided equity mentoring for faculty with an emphasis on those who teach the lowest level of

developmental math. [This approach helped narrow the achievement gap for minority students](#), and as a result, it was adopted for more advanced course levels in following semesters.

After the positive outcomes from the math department's EIE inquiry, CCA created an [Equity Leadership Academy \(ELA\)](#). The ELA approaches the achievement gap from institutional and individual practices and structures, rather than from the perspective of student deficits. Through the ELA, department chairs are led through an inquiry process that focuses on these institutional and individual practices. They then select one course in their departments with an identified achievement gap and review race, ethnicity, and instructor data for that course. They review syllabi and observe classes, complete an inventory on the history of the course, and present professional development on issues of identity, classroom culture, socialization, leadership, and how to conduct and respond to difficult conversations on issues of race. The outcome of this work is expected to reduce the equity attainment gap that exists for students of color, especially for Latino and African American males.

### **Faculty and Students Contribute to Scholarship, Creative Work, Discovery of Knowledge**

True to the College's mission to serve "our diverse community by providing high quality instruction and support services to prepare students for transfer and employment," CCA faculty are very involved in creating opportunities for students that foster scholarship and creativity, and in guiding students in the discovery of knowledge. These include:

- [The Confluence Conference](#): At CCA's first Liberal Arts conference in March 2016, 40 students, nominated by their instructors and selected by faculty panels, presented their scholarly work.
- [Honors program](#): This program invites students to complete more challenging and creative work by promoting academic dialogue between highly motivated students and faculty.
- [NASA Team Pioneer](#): Five CCA students submitted a proposal and designed an experiment on gravity and the human cardiovascular system for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The team completed their experiment aboard the microgravity jet at the Johnson Space Center in Houston and then submitted their experiment results in a paper to the Microgravity Flight Office at NASA. The College has continued student interactions with NASA through the [Colorado Space Grant Consortium](#).

Creative work abounds at the College as well:

- CCA's Colorado Film School faculty are heavily involved with students as they create original filmed productions. Each semester the School presents outstanding student work in a juried show at an area theater. Recently, two students produced a commercial for Toyota that aired on national television and [received two Emmy Awards from the Heartland chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences](#).
- The Art and Communication Department showcases student work in juried exhibitions where students, faculty, and outside artists [display their creations](#).

- The Theater Department produces shows each semester that focus on current social issues and diversity, such as the recent productions of [Pronoun](#) and [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#) which addressed topics of gender identity.

Though it is not a requirement for faculty, as CCA is not a research institution, faculty members produce original research, make conference presentations, and publish journal articles and book chapters:

- Psychology faculty member Bitia Behforooz co-authored an article titled "[A National Survey of Revising Practices in the Primary Classroom](#)," published in the journal *Learning Disabilities*. Behforooz also made a poster presentation titled "[PCBs and Attention Measured on the CPT of Young Mohawk Adults](#)" at the spring 2015 Eastern Psychological Association conference.
- Associate Dean of the School of Liberal Arts Chris Tombari presented "[Title IX Administrators: Interpreting a Rapidly Expanding Profession](#)," in December 2015 at the University of Northern Colorado Research Night and "Conflicting Expectations: Academic Discourse, Socialization, and the Experiences of Non-native English Speaking Doctoral Students" in a poster session in May 2015 at the Higher Education Diversity Summit in Denver.
- Sociology faculty member Tanya Cook participated in a roundtable presentation on "The Effects of Patient-Provider Relationships on Rates of Vaccine Refusal" at the Sociologists for Women in Society winter meeting in Memphis in February 2016. The following month, Cook took part in a panel at the Popular Cultural Association/American Culture Association annual meeting in Seattle called "[Always Keep \(Nerd\) Fighting: Fandoms as Reformative Social Movements](#)." Cook is also [writing a chapter](#) in the next edition of the Kendall/Hung Publishing Company textbook *Women's Health: Readings on Social, Economic, and Political Issues*.
- The Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and the School's achievement coach presented at the CCCS Annual Student Services Conference on the Gateway to Success pilot project that increased student success in CCR 092 by pairing it with AAA 109.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

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### College has Sufficient Faculty to Carry Out Faculty Roles

The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) has sufficient numbers of regular faculty members and adjunct instructors engaged in both the educational and organizational processes of the College to ensure high quality programs. To achieve its 21:1 student-to-faculty ratio, CCA employs 57 regular faculty members and 310 adjunct instructors. While budgetary restrictions and state funding cuts make the hiring of additional regular faculty a challenge, the College remains committed to fulfilling this goal, with both the [College Strategic Plan](#) and the [Academic Master Plan](#) having goals to increase the number of regular faculty.

Adjunct instructors teach 75 percent of the class sections at CCA. While this is a high percentage, CCA has a well qualified and dedicated group of adjuncts, many of whom bring work experience and employer connections that strengthen the College's programs, particularly the career and technical education (CTE) programs. For example, the College's Basic Law Enforcement Academy is taught almost exclusively by active law enforcement professionals, many from the Aurora Police Department, who bring real-life experience to the classroom.

[Faculty roles](#) include curriculum development, textbook selection, class scheduling, and the creation of expectations for student performance. Adjunct instructors are invited to participate in all of these activities. Both regular faculty and adjunct instructors are responsible for assessment of student learning and adjusting curricula according to assessment results. CCA has strong

faculty participation on the Curriculum Committee, Assessment Committee, and the Inclusive Excellence Council. Faculty with a leadership assignment (called Lead Faculty) conduct program reviews. Recently, faculty have been instrumental in developing academic content degree maps for advisors and faculty to use to help students with retention and completion.

### **All College Faculty and Instructors are Appropriately Qualified**

All regular faculty and adjunct instructors, including high school teachers assigned as concurrent enrollment adjuncts, must meet CCA and HLC [faculty qualifications requirements](#). To teach general education and transfer courses, an instructor must have a master's degree in the discipline or a master's degree with at least 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline. CTE faculty and instructors must hold a valid Colorado [CTE credential](#) which requires that they have worked a minimum of 2000 hours in their field and have at least a related AAS degree. Once they begin teaching they are required to complete coursework related to education at the post-secondary level. Requests for exceptions to minimum requirements are submitted in writing to the division dean for consideration and, if accepted, given written approval by the dean and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. These exceptions must then be approved by the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) [Board Designated Oversight Committee for Credentialing Review](#).

### **All College Faculty and Instructors are Evaluated Regularly**

To ensure the continuing quality of the CCA faculty, the College follows the [State Board policy on evaluating regular faculty members](#). Faculty are evaluated on their approved work plan. The planning process is collaborative and individualized between the department chair and each faculty member. The department chairs use [classroom observations](#) and [student course evaluations](#) in their reviews of faculty members' teaching performance. They also evaluate their service to the College and the community, all in accordance with [CCA's faculty evaluation handbook](#) and the [System President's procedure](#). Regular faculty members meet annually with their department chairs to set [SMART \(Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound\) teaching and service goals](#). A mid-year and year-end review, when supervisors provide final evaluation ratings, are conducted. Faculty members, department chairs, and deans sign the performance evaluation forms.

While adjunct instructors are not formally evaluated using this process, their teaching is observed annually by the chair or a designee, and student evaluations are reviewed to ensure the quality of their teaching. Before instructors can move up in pay levels they must have their chair's recommendation, which is based on satisfactory observations, completion of mandatory assessment requirements, and positive student evaluations.

### **Professional Development and Resources Ensure Discipline Currency and Teaching Quality**

New faculty and instructors are oriented to the College and their departments. Each department holds an orientation prior to the start of the new semester to provide information about policies and procedures. The College publishes a [Faculty Handbook](#) that outlines expectations and

responsibilities. CCA also requires—and pays for—new regular faculty to complete EDU 260, a three-credit course on adult learning and teaching, while adjunct instructors complete EDU 222, a one-credit course on effective teaching.

Increased faculty development is an [Academic Affairs goal](#) and CCA encourages all faculty and instructors to participate in professional development. College-sponsored opportunities include pedagogical and content-area discussions, workshops, conferences, lectures, and webinars. Each fall, CCA presents a one-day faculty development in-service.

The College provides a stipend to all faculty members to attend professional development in their field of study and each regular faculty member has access to funds annually for [conferences and seminars](#). Additionally, the College pays travel expenses for faculty to participate in the statewide Community College 2:2 conference. Faculty members attend additional professional development opportunities within the Denver area. While the College does not give adjunct instructors a stipend, it does pay instructors when they attend professional development at CCA, and has a system in place for instructors to achieve higher pay levels. One of the [criteria for adjunct pay increases](#) is participation in professional development.

### **College Faculty and Instructors Accessible for Student Inquiry**

CCA ensures that students have access to faculty and adjunct instructors beyond the classroom as a means to maintain the quality of their education. Faculty and adjunct instructors stay after class to help students, go to the tutoring center to meet with them, and hold formalized study sessions. For example, in the fall and spring semesters, the entire science department holds a weekend long event called “Study Palooza,” where students can come in any time and get help as they prepare for their finals.

All regular faculty members are required to keep office hours, posting this information and including it on their class syllabi. While adjunct instructors do not have assigned offices, the College provides space where they can meet with students. Students and instructors have secure email accounts through which to communicate, and every class, regardless of modality, has a D2L course shell including a messaging capability. Concurrent Enrollment instructors have access to D2L but are not required to use it for their classes.

### **College Support Services Staff are Qualified, Trained, Supported**

CCA hires appropriately qualified staff members to provide student support services. All support staff are trained and provided with professional development throughout the academic year. Full-time advising staff are required to hold degrees from an accredited institution, have experience, and go through preparation and training before they work with students. In addition, over the past four years directors hired in the Division of Student Affairs have had at a minimum a Master's degree in Higher Education, Student Affairs Leadership, or Counseling.

Many academic tutors are also qualified adjunct instructors. All tutors go through an orientation, observe tutoring, and receive [additional training](#). The Academic Learning Center holds an annual six-hour workshop for its tutors. Their training is certified by the College Reading and Learning

Association. Academic advisors hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and one year of college-level academic advising experience. There is one advisor who does not hold a bachelor's degrees but has extensive higher education experience. All advisors participate in multiple professional development activities throughout the year.

Financial aid advisors must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and have two years of professional financial aid experience and/or lending experience. CCA's Financial Aid Department provides professional development throughout the year to its advisors. Student Support Services' permanent staff members hold bachelor's degrees, though qualifications vary depending on their role. Professional development activities are available throughout the year. Staff managing co-curricular education hold Master's degrees and have professional experience in leadership development and campus event planning.

## Sources

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- INST Student Evaluations Form 2011
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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

## Argument

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### College Support Services are Suited to CCA Student Needs

The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) supports student learning with services that meet the needs of its diverse student population. CCA students require services that help them learn how to pay for College, determine a career path, choose an academic program, select appropriate coursework, and prepare for successful transfer or employment. Students also have personal needs that, left unmet, can be barriers to their college success.

The College meets these needs by offering a full spectrum of services: academic advising, including advising for international students; admissions, registration and records; testing; financial aid; military and veterans services; disability services; student life; counseling services; career services; and enrollment services for concurrent enrollment. Students can access all of these services at the CentreTech campus and admissions and registration support, academic advising, career services, financial aid advising, and assessment testing at the Lowry campus. The need for on-site counseling has been among the most pressing and with this addition in the last few years, [licensed counselors](#) now meet with students and provide referrals to on-campus and community resources.

CCA students also have needs as members of underrepresented and historically underserved groups, as the first in their families to attend college, as speakers of languages other than English, as current or former members of the military, and as community residents lacking documentation. In response, the College has established programs that address the needs of specific student populations, such as the [Brother-to-Brother \(B2B\) Program](#) which assists Latino and African-American men, the [Military and Veteran Services Office](#) which serves veterans and

active duty military including those from nearby-by Buckley Air Force Base, and Student Success Center (SSC) programs that serve the fifty-seven percent of CCA students who are first-generation, low-income, or both. These programs include the [TRiO Student Support Services program](#), the new TRiO Student Support Services program for ESL students, and the Transfer Success Program (TSP). [The Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment \(ASCENT\)](#) program gives students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree as an extension of concurrent enrollment.

### **College Provides Learning Support, Preparatory Instruction, Direction to Appropriate Courses and Programs**

The College provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. As an open-enrollment institution, CCA admits all students, assesses their readiness for college-level courses, and places them in the appropriate classes. Placement is made by using ACT/SAT and Prior Learning Assessment (including AP, IB, CLEP and DANES) as required by [State Board policy](#). Some students need to take an assessment test to place into classes.

During the 2015-16 academic year, the Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System) colleges transitioned to the Community College Placement Test (CCPT), an assessment test developed specifically for CCCS schools. To ensure that students are as ready as possible to take the CCPT, CCA provides them with [free preparation workshops, workbooks, and online resources](#). The College has also implemented testing appointments to emphasize to students the importance of preparation for the CCPT and to give them time to complete a brief survey that may exempt them from testing. Before they take the CCPT, students are asked to identify their academic interests to determine which math courses they will need. A recent developmental redesign clarified that not every student will require college algebra or calculus and should take the particular math course or courses they need for their specific certificate or degree program.

Students who have scores below the prerequisites for college-level courses may enroll in developmental education classes. [CCCS's developmental education program's recent reforms](#) move students into college-level courses more quickly through innovations such as mainstreaming students into college-level classes while they also take enriched developmental education classes with the same instructors, and adding paired lab courses with developmental education classes.

As part of its effort to prepare students to enter and succeed in college, CCA requires [New Student Orientation \(NSO\)](#) for all new, first-time college students. This requirement appears to be effective; students who attend NSO have a 65 percent fall to spring retention rate compared to an overall CCA retention rate of 42 percent.

While they are progressing through their coursework, CCA students are able to access learning support including tutoring services in math, writing, ESL, and basic computer skills. At the Lowry campus, tutoring is also available in biology, chemistry, economics, and accounting. Tutoring, writing studio, and other resources are available to students either by appointment or on a walk-in basis at [Academic Learning Centers](#) on both campuses and online. CCA also

provides online tutoring for all levels of math and English at no cost through Brainfuse, an online tutoring service.

### **College Provides Academic Advising Suited to CCA Programs and Students**

CCA provides academic advising that meets the needs of students and programs. From the time CCA students have their first contact with academic advising during orientation, the department seeks to partner with students to guide and empower them in developing, implementing, and completing academic plans that further their career and life goals. Because the choices students face are complex, Academic Advising partners with Career Services, International Advising, Military and Veteran Services, Lowry Student Services, the Student Success Center, and departmental advisors. Likewise, the College recognizes that some students and programs may be best served by specialized or localized advising; advisors are embedded in the film school, nursing and health programs, computer science, business, and the liberal arts.

CCA students have complicated family and work schedules. To help plan and track course schedules and progress to degree completion, students and their academic advisors use [DegreeWorks](#), an advising and degree audit program. The program includes a “what-if” function that shows students what happens if they make schedule changes. DegreeWorks is updated annually with the most current catalog information for all degrees and certificates. Advising administers an [Early Alert System](#) so that faculty and adjunct instructors can inform advising and get intervention for students who are having academic difficulty. Similarly, departmental advisors access information through a database that tracks students’ progress in specific CTE and liberal arts programs.

The College is in the [early stages of implementing a curricular maps model](#) based on the research of Complete College America and the Community College Research Center. CCA’s students reflect the characteristics defined in the research and they need to have an intentional and understandable experience that increases their chances of success. To accomplish this, the model will include front-loading English and math courses in program sequences and providing students with an academic map to guide their schedules and course selection. These maps create an identified, structured academic pathway that leads them to the completion of an academic credential, with multi-year options to meet students needs, as demonstrated in the Psychology [2-year](#), [3-year](#), and [4-year](#) maps. Under this more intrusive model, advisors would also intervene at key points in a student’s experience and communicate across disciplines and departments to keep students on their path to completion and success. The expected outcomes, in alignment with the College’s strategic plan, are increased retention and completion as well as a reduced achievement gap.

### **College Provides Infrastructure, Resources to Support Effective Teaching and Learning**

CCA provides students, faculty, and instructors the infrastructure and resources they need for effective teaching and learning.

The Office of Disability and Equity provides support for students, staff, and faculty/instructors who have documented disabilities through the use of [assistive technology](#) including UbiDuo,

Smart Pens, Screen Readers (Kurzweil 3000), Dragon Naturally Speaking, ergonomic computer peripherals, CCTV, JAWS, Zoom Text, and Talking Calculators. The office also provides alternate format resources and the conversion of materials including textbooks, electronic documents, exams, and other print materials into accessible formats.

To provide the needed level of technology support across the institution, the Information Technology (IT) Department developed a [five-year technology master plan](#) in 2014 that has substantially improved the IT infrastructure on both campuses, including the infrastructure which supports instruction. All classrooms on both campuses have at least one computer station with Internet access, a built-in projector, and a screen. Eleven classrooms have SMART Board projectors and software. IT has fitted an additional eleven classrooms with Smart Classroom setups: projectors and speakers in the ceiling and instructor workstations with computers, document cameras, and audio-visual controls. Both campuses have free WiFi for students and staff.

CCA has the sufficient and varied facilities needed to offer its current academic programs. Science has eight combined lecture/laboratories on the Lowry campus for an integrated approach to learning, Astronomy has a Pro-Dome observatory on the CentreTech campus and the Anthropology Department has extensive skeletal and fossil collections to enhance the teaching and learning experience. The Center for Simulation on the Lowry campus is dedicated to hands-on learning simulation. Police Academy students use CCA-provided cars for driving instruction on the road and at a driving range, as well as CCA-provided firearms and ammunition at a shooting range. They also use the CCCS gym for physical training and arrest-control instruction.

Performing arts students have a black-box theater on the CentreTech campus to perform theater, dance, and musical pieces. There are also a dance/yoga studio, music practice rooms, and instruments for student instruction and practice. The main building of CCA's Colorado Film School is a 25,000-square-foot facility that houses classrooms, a screening room, an equipment cage, four computer labs, two finishing suites, an audio post suite, a production bungalow, a library, and a '50s Cafe. A few hundred yards away is a high bay studio with standing sets for shooting exercises, assignments, and projects.

A [space analysis in 2014-15](#) indicated that CCA has sufficient space for classrooms and educational needs. However, the study also found that CCA lacks space for students to study, gather and relax. Adjunct instructors' concerns about a lack of work space on the CentreTech campus have been addressed by creating additional work space and offices, including computer stations, lockers, file cabinets, and laptop carts. Additional space is being renovated to add more work space and a social sciences lab.

CCA participates in several clinical practice sites. EMS is well connected with clinical practice sites at several local hospitals, fire departments, and ambulance services. The Nurse Aide, Phlebotomy, and Healthcare Tech students also participate in the clinical portions of their courses at local hospitals, labs, and long-term care facilities.

HLC's November [2015 Multi-Location Visit](#) found that the infrastructure and resources for CCA's concurrent enrollment program in area high schools "meet the needs of the students and the curriculum."

### **College Guides Students in Effective Use of Research and Information Resources**

CCA provides students with guidance on the effective use of research and information resources through classroom instruction and the activities of the Learning Resource Center (LRC). As part of this guidance, faculty and staff inform students about the ethical use of resources and the consequences of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Additionally, every course syllabus notifies students about CCA's Academic Dishonesty Policy.

In most general education guaranteed transfer courses, CCA students are taught academic research techniques and are expected to conduct their own research. The curriculum for every level of English composition includes at least one assignment with a research component. In the paralegal program, students learn how to use the Westlaw legal research database and various state government websites and print sources.

The [LRC staff collaborates with faculty and adjunct instructors](#) to provide in-class and online information literacy instruction based on the Information Literacy Competency Standards from the Association of College and Research Libraries and the gtPathways Competencies for Information Literacy. The Center has created an information literacy tutorial complete with quizzes and a final assessment. Faculty and instructors can request that students complete the tutorial and email the results to them. The LRC also offers the Online Librarian service, which allows staff to create a discussion thread related to research and information literacy in a D2L course. LRC staff meet with students one-on-one to provide individualized research help, a walk-in research clinic at the Center gives students individual help without an appointment, and the LRC participates in AskAcademic, an external service that provides 24/7 chat reference assistance with librarians.

As students begin to do research and use information, they have access to these resources from on and off campus. They can easily access the LRC catalog, [academic databases to which the College is subscribed](#), the College's e-book collection (with access to over 30,000 e-books), and interlibrary loan services through the student portal. Every course at CCA uses D2L, which contains a research link called OneSearch that takes the students to the LRC databases. At the College, in addition to the Learning Resource Center at CentreTech, the Lowry campus has a science library and a law library where students learn to use specialized information resources.

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- SA Counseling Services Website 2016
- SA DegreeWorks FAQ 2016
- SA Early Alert 2016
- SA New Student Orientation Guidebook 2014-15
- SA TRiO Support Services Website 2016
- SA TRiO Transfer Success Program 2016

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Argument

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#### Co-curricular Programs are Suited to CCA Mission and Contribute to Students' Education

CCA enriches students' college educational experience by providing co-curricular programs aligned with its mission of high quality preparation for transfer and employment. These programs range from faculty-driven activities to programming carried out by the Office of Student Life and other units.

Faculty-driven co-curricular activities frequently build upon CCA's historic strengths in team-based learning, simulation, and immersive learning. They engage students from across the College and from concurrent enrollment high schools, to carry out extended projects which often draw upon or supplement specific course work. Examples of this type of activity include CSI: Aurora and the Model United Nations (MUN).

[CSI: Aurora](#) requires students to cooperate in diverse teams to reach successful results, an important skill to employers. Students apply what they have learned in archaeology, anthropology, criminal justice, paralegal, science, theater, and translation and interpretation classes in a simulated murder investigation and trial. They excavate a grave and retrieve artifacts, process the crime scene, conduct scientific forensic tests, submit written reports, testify as experts, and prosecute the crime.

[CCA's Model United Nations \(MUN\)](#) program is an immersive learning simulation focused on international engagement, community outreach, and interdisciplinary cooperation that started in 2013. Participants take on the role of a national United Nations delegation in simulated UN sessions. Six departments have contributed to the MUN curriculum and more than 750 students have already participated. Sessions focus on significant thematic issues such as weapons of mass destruction, utilizing youth employment for sustainable development, and preserving cultural rights for ethnic minorities. CCA delegations, selected from among those who participate at the College, have competed in the last two National MUN tournaments in New York City and received awards for their efforts.

The Office of Student Life [organizes a wide range of co-curricular events and activities](#) that are holistic and that prepare students for transfer and employment. These include campus-wide

events that promote healthy relationships, diversity and inclusion, community engagement, leadership, and personal strengths awareness. Events take place almost every week and most are in partnership with other campus departments.

Student Life also oversees co-curricular activities that include the Student Government Association (SGA) and [student-led clubs and organizations](#). Participation in SGA and student clubs develops students' leadership capabilities and enhances their educational experience by offering them mentorship from advisors, faculty, and staff. These clubs include Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, LatinX Student Alliance, ROAR-Women's Coalition, Math Club, LGBTQA Student Alliance, Behavioral Science Club, Colorado Film School Producers Guild, Comedy Coalition, and Philosophy.

To further expand student learning through co-curricular activities, Student Life is launching the [myQUEST Leadership Program](#) in the fall of 2016. Open and accessible to all students, the program will focus on self-awareness, collaboration and team development, active citizenship and community engagement, and diversity and inclusion. Students will participate in eight experiences, reflect on those experiences with a capstone project, and earn a leadership certificate.

### **CCA Demonstrates its Claims about Contributions Made to Students' Educational Experience**

Consistent with its stated mission, CCA focuses on employment and transferability. Additionally, the College broadens students' world view through an inclusive and equitable environment that creates a sense of community. The College demonstrates this claim with its focus across the curriculum on the six Lifelong Skills that every CCA-educated person should possess. The Lifelong Skills—Communication, Critical Inquiry, Personal and Social Responsibility, Quantitative Reasoning, Technology and Aesthetics—provide all CCA students with abilities and attitudes that prepare them for the modern workplace as well as the upper-division and postgraduate classroom.

The Lifelong Skills drive many of the activities that support the College's mission. The [Academy for Civic Engagement](#), for example, created the ThankYouAmerica organization, which focuses on the positive role of immigrants in the Aurora community, challenging anti-immigrant narratives, while providing students with practical education in the Lifelong Skill of Personal and Social Responsibility.

CCA's rigorous instruction in all general education disciplines prepares students well academically for transfer. Articulated AA and AS Degrees with Designation feed directly into bachelor-level majors at many Colorado public universities and colleges. To help students transfer, CCA has a dedicated faculty advisor and a degree navigator for students pursuing the Degrees with Designation. Other high-quality [support services that prepare students for transfer](#) include the Student Success Center's Transfer Success Program; fall and spring Transfer Fairs co-sponsored by Academic Advising, Student Life, and the Student Success Center; campus visits to area universities, and transfer planning resources on the College's website.

The College's career and technical education (CTE) programs provide high quality instruction to prepare students for employment as called for in CCA's mission. Helping to assure this quality are the [advisory committees required for all CTE programs](#), which provide guidance on course offerings and the appropriateness of certificates and degrees to employment in the field.

CCA's CTE programs emphasize hands-on experience and simulations that allow students to learn specialized skills in a risk-free environment. The College's Diesel Power Mechanics program's partnership with Wagner Equipment Company is one example of learning through hands-on experience. Students in the program participate in a cohort that alternates between classes at CCA and [apprenticeships at Wagner](#). In less than a year, those who successfully complete the program earn a degree and are guaranteed a job at Wagner. Students in the College's emergency medical services program hone their skills in sophisticated studios that simulate the conditions they will face on the job without many of the risks.

Most CTE programs include internships or other opportunities for students to practice their skills in a workplace setting while gaining confidence and making meaningful connections for their future employment. In addition, [CCA Career Services](#) offers support for students preparing for employment including resume review and counseling, internships, and an online job board.

## Sources

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- INST CCA IS 5.5 CTE Advisory Committees 2013
- INST CSI Aurora 2016
- INST Degrees with Designation Website 2016
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- INST Wagner Program 2016
- SA Career Center Website 2016
- SA myQUEST Website 2016
- SA Student Life Calendar Fall 2016
- SA Student-Led Organization Manual 2015-16
- SA Transfer Planning Website 2016

## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Summary

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) ensures that its degree and certificate programs are current and at the appropriate level through faculty development and review of the curriculum; degrees with designation developed in partnership between two-year and four-year faculty across Colorado; career and technical education programs designed in conjunction with employer advisory committees; program reviews every five years; and specialized accreditation of some programs. The CCA Curriculum Committee and the State Faculty Curriculum Committee review and keep the curriculum current. The College articulates learning goals for all degrees and certificates. Common syllabi and competencies, standard assessments, and uniform faculty qualifications ensure that program quality is consistent and high across all modes of delivery.

CCA's general education program is articulated primarily through the Lifelong Skills, broad areas of knowledge and abilities that the faculty has determined essential for all CCA students to master. The general education core complies with the expectations of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Certificate programs prepare students to enter the workforce and are focused on technical skills for specific careers.

All CCA programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing adaptable skills. CCA's faculty and instructors incorporate cultural and human diversity into their teaching practices, complemented by the College's strong, campus-wide commitment to inclusive excellence. CCA faculty create opportunities for student scholarship and creativity and produce original research, present at conferences, and publish journal articles and book chapters.

The College has the regular faculty, adjunct instructors, and staff it needs for effective, high-quality programs and effective student services. CCA employs 57 regular faculty members and 310 adjunct instructors, many of whom bring work experience that strengthens the programs in which they teach. All faculty and instructors, including high school teachers assigned as concurrent enrollment instructors, must meet CCA requirements. The College evaluates faculty using annual work plans, classroom observations, student course evaluations, and review of college and community service. Faculty and instructors stay current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching through new employee orientation, college-paid education courses, and on-campus professional development opportunities. Faculty receive professional development stipends. All faculty members are required to keep office hours and the College provides space where instructors can meet with students.

CCA hires appropriately qualified student support services staff and provides them with training and professional development. The College offers a full spectrum of support services, including academic advising, testing, financial aid, international student services, veteran's services, accessibility services, tutoring, and career services.

CCA also enriches students' college educational experience with co-curricular programs aligned with its mission of high quality preparation for transfer and employment. Faculty-driven activities such as CSI: Aurora and the Model United Nations build upon institutional strengths in team-based learning, simulation, and immersive learning. The Office of Student Life organizes activities that promote diversity and inclusion, community engagement, leadership, and personal strengths awareness and oversees activities that include the Student Government Association (SGA) and student-led clubs and organizations.

The College's Lifelong Skills provide graduates with abilities and attitudes that prepare them for the workplace and the upper-division and postgraduate classroom. CCA's rigorous general education instruction prepares students academically for transfer and the College has services to assist students with that process. Career and technical education (CTE) programs prepare students for employment and many include internships or other opportunities for them to practice their skills in a work setting. Career Services supports students preparing for employment with resume review and counseling, internships, and an online job board.

## Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

## Argument

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### College Practices Regular Program Reviews

The Community College of Aurora (CCA\College) demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through a process of program review for instructional programs. Academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs are reviewed in the College's two instructional divisions—the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Professional Studies and Sciences—to help ensure the quality of each program.

CCA's [guidelines for program review requirements](#) are posted on the faculty portal and comply with policies and procedures issued by the [Colorado Commission on Higher Education \(CCHE\)](#), the [State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education \(SBCCOE\)](#), and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) [President's Procedures](#). The HLC visit in 2013

indicated the need for the College to develop institution-wide strategic plans. As a result an [Academic Master Plan](#) was developed in 2013, which lays out a requirement for ongoing yearly academic program review.

The College's Institutional Research department (IR) compiles annual data such as success/retention rates, certificate/degree completion, and full-time enrollment for academic programs, which it provides to deans and department chairs each summer. Of primary importance is students' success in their coursework—defined as a grade of “C” or better—and completion rates, as these metrics are key goals of the [CCA Strategic Plan](#), the Academic Master Plan, the [CCCS Strategic Plan](#), and the [CCCS performance funding contract with the State](#). Chairs analyze the data to identify areas of strength as well as areas that need improvement, meet with regular program faculty in their department to discuss the data, and develop interventions to improve performance metrics. The chairs then make recommendations to their deans about interventions for the fall semester for specific programs, and receive additional feedback.

This review process has helped identify several areas of deficiency and led to interventions with good results. One focus has involved gatekeeper courses in English, Philosophy, Political Science and History which have high enrollment but lower success rates (below 70 percent). The School of Liberal Arts achievement coach, in coordination with departmental chairs, regular faculty, and adjunct instructors, collected quantitative and qualitative data, conducted literature reviews related to discipline-specific pedagogy, and articulated interventions for the fall 2016 semester for these courses in order to raise success rates. As an example, the Philosophy department examined two gatekeeper courses: Ethics and Introduction to Philosophy. Each of these courses underwent a quantitative [analysis](#) which contributed to the development of [interventions](#) and a new [assessment plan](#) for the next review cycle.

In addition to the yearly internal program review, CCCS requires all CTE programs to complete an [additional comprehensive review](#) every five years to be renewed. Program status after this review is posted at the System office's website. Under the guidance of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the School of Professional Studies and Sciences, the programs review the data collected through the VE-135 survey (which includes employment and completion data), review curriculum, address any deficiencies noted by CCCS, and write a [new five-year plan](#). If program outcomes are not meeting mandated levels of achievement or student cohort success rates, then the program is placed on a conditional renewal and interventions are implemented, or the decision can be made to phase out the program. For example, CCA's marketing program failed to meet the above-mentioned criteria and the decision was made by the department and Dean, in consultation with the College's Vice President for Academic Affairs, to discontinue this program.

### **CCA Evaluates all Credit it Transcripts Including for Prior Learning**

CCA guarantees the quality of the credit it transcripts by centralizing [the evaluation process](#) through the College's credentials evaluator. This includes credits completed at CCA, transferred in from outside institutions, and credit for prior learning which is non-college or experience-based.

Credit for coursework completed at CCA is established as part of the Common Course Numbering System (CCNS), and the quality of these credits is officially evaluated and determined via a [System-wide protocol](#). This evaluation involves statewide discipline faculty, vice presidents of instruction, the State Faculty Curriculum Committee, and final approval by the Educational Services Curriculum Committee. Exceptions apply for certain completed CCNS courses that have mandated curricular updates within specific time frames, such as some computer or accounting courses. For example, the credentials evaluator will not transcript credit for a CCNS computer course which was taken seven or more years ago due to the rapid advancement of knowledge in this discipline.

The College evaluates credits earned at regionally accredited institutions of higher education to determine if those credits will be accepted in transfer. Courses accepted in transfer must match the content and meet or exceed the rigor of CCA as determined by the credential evaluator or department chair. In addition to credits awarded by institutions of higher education, CCA also evaluates and awards credit for high school students with appropriate scores on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests with scores that have been set by CDHE.

Some non-college and/or experienced-based learning is evaluated through CLEP, DSST (Dantes), and Challenge Exams. Results are evaluated against the State of Colorado's requirements outlined in the [Credit for Prior Learning Handbook](#). In order to meet the standards of quality for credit, the prior learning must meet college-level curriculum equivalency, reflect learned competencies which are applicable to the planned course of study at CCA, and demonstrate a minimum of a "C" grade.

Other non-college and/or experience-based prior learning relies on evaluation guided by [System policy](#) and carried out by the departmental chair or their subject-matter designee before the College transcripts it as credit. For example, students with EMS training at non-accredited institutions may qualify for some prior learning credit, but only after the chair of the College's EMS program evaluates the amount of hours and content. The credentials evaluator will enter credit based on the judgment of the subject-matter experts who examine syllabi, curricula, or other materials necessary to evaluate the prior learning experience. Subject matter experts also assist in evaluating portfolios that document the acquisition of college-level competencies through work/life experiences such as travel.

Due to course equivalencies established by the CCNS, which are used throughout CCCS, credits transferred from System institutions are accepted automatically at CCA, as are transfer credits from certain Colorado-area, CCCS-approved vocational schools. Course credits from post-secondary educational institutions outside of the CCCS are accepted by CCA based on specific standards established in [the College's guidelines](#), which are informed by [State Board policies](#).

To aid in this evaluation, if deemed necessary for certain transfer requests, the College utilizes resources provided by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, the CCCS office, and the Transfer Evaluation System (TES), which is a national interactive database of course data from institutions of higher education.

## **CCA Maintains, Exercises Authority over Educational Quality including over Concurrent Enrollment**

CCA has in place organizational structures to ensure that the academic leadership, which includes the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the deans, and the chairs, maintain and exercise authority over the quality of educational programs. The academic leadership has authority over and monitors the key areas that affect quality, including prerequisites, rigor, expectations for student learning, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including concurrent enrollment programs.

The College maintains and exercises authority over prerequisites through oversight by the Curriculum Committee and academic leadership. The Curriculum Committee is the primary entity responsible for maintaining CCA's independent and internal review and approval process for prerequisites. Prerequisites are determined during the development of initial course proposals, which are submitted to the Committee by the department chair. The Committee has clearly established policies and [procedures for changing a course's prerequisites](#). When making a prerequisite change, the requesting chair must follow a four-step approval process: dean approval, advisor approval, curriculum committee approval, and finally approval by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Academic Affairs Executive Committee (AAEC), the Assessment Committee, and the Curriculum Committee maintain and exercise authority over course rigor and expectations for student learning by ensuring the competencies, scope of topics, and outcomes—which are listed in course syllabi across the College—are taught and assessed in College courses. Chairs, regular faculty, and adjunct instructors work together to develop curricula that are both rigorous and meets the CCNS competencies. Posted course outcomes are both content- and competency-based. Additional competencies align with CCA's institutional Lifelong Skills and are embedded in every course.

New course proposals are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, which verifies that the course meets College standards for rigor and learning outcomes. To ensure broad perspectives on new courses and programs, the Dean of Retention and Student Success, an Assistant Registrar, and the Transfer Evaluator serve on the committee. The Vice President of Academic Affairs signs off on each new course and sends it to the State Faculty Curriculum Committee for approval and inclusion in the CCNS. Any course that receives a guaranteed transfer designation (gtPathways) requires additional scrutiny by the CDHE Educational Services committee and a final review. This additional scrutiny ensures CCA is providing content consistent with offerings statewide, and that students are achieving comparable competency.

Expectations are maintained with the help of the oversight of the Assessment Committee. The committee requires programs to articulate expectations for certain learning outcome achievement levels depending on the course. For example, a program may seek to attain the goal of 75 percent of its students achieving a score of 3.5 out of 5 or better on that program's rubric. These rubrics spell out in detail expected learning outcomes on a scale that moves from an unacceptable to a superior demonstration of learning.

Beginning in fall 2015, the Assessment Committee required each academic program to articulate program competencies. This is particularly important for CCA's 17 Degrees with Designation (DWD), which provide transfer pathways to Colorado four-year public institutions. These degrees must adequately prepare students for junior standing upon graduation from CCA. The competencies help program faculty, in collaboration with their department chair, to determine what their students must know and be able to do upon completion of a course or sequence. In addition to assessment, chairs monitor success rates across the curriculum. For example, if the success rates are too high for a particular course, this may indicate that some rigor has been lost or the course has deviated from the course standards.

CCA's CTE programs maintain rigor and student learning outcomes through review by [internal advisory committees](#) which provide input on the planning, conducting, and evaluating of the programs. Membership, functions, and priorities of each committee follow guidelines provided in the [Colorado CTE Advisory Committee Handbook](#).

As standards of rigor are determined by course level, so too are expectations for student learning. As a two-year institution, CCA offers courses primarily at freshman and sophomore levels. In terms of rigor and expectations of learning, these level differences are addressed in CCNS protocol and CCA follows them accordingly. Freshman 100-level courses are introductory in nature; the scope of topics and expected competencies reflect this. In turn, sophomore 200-level courses expect students to further develop and demonstrate competencies in their work.

The Academic Affairs division maintains and exercises authority over student learning resources including the [Academic Learning Center \(ALC\)](#) and the [Library/Learning Resource Center \(LRC\)](#). Both the ALC and the LRC are under the authority of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who meets regularly with their directors. Both centers are staffed with full-time directors, assistants, and support specialists. The ALC provides writing, math, and computer tutoring, as well as various workshops on grammar and math-related topics, at labs on both campuses. The LRC provides students access to research databases, computer labs, and training in research skills through one-on-one help, online tutorials, and classroom sessions. Trainings include topics such as using database search engines, information literacy, and how to conduct research for class requirements. Both the ALC and the LRC are promoted widely to students, regular faculty, and adjunct instructors each semester.

Information technology is also a necessary part of the College's infrastructure which allows it to provide access to learning resources, and falls under the authority of the Vice President of Administration. There are several [computer and printing labs](#) on each of CCA's two main campuses, free WiFi throughout all buildings, and internet projectors in every classroom. Several classrooms are equipped with SMART Boards, advanced overhead projectors, and recently with updated technology-equipped podiums. All students, faculty, and instructors use the Desire to Learn (D2L) learning management system, which enhances communication between students and faculty/instructors, helps students self-monitor their course progress, and makes it easier for students to submit assignments and receive feedback. Additionally, every D2L course home page provides easy access to all research databases provided by the College.

CCA maintains authority over the quality of its regular faculty and adjunct instructors by following policy that ensures the HLC guidelines are followed. All faculty members and instructors teaching guaranteed transfer courses must have a master's degree in their content area from an accredited institution or a related master's degree plus 18 graduate credit hours in the content area. CTE faculty and instructors must have education in their field of work and required hours of work experience and/or specific credentialing as a condition of employment. This is discussed further in 3.C.

The College's Human Resources (HR) department posts minimum education and experience requirements with every faculty job posting, and screens resumes before they are sent to the search committee chair. Files with mandatory official documents such as transcripts and background checks are kept for all regular faculty and adjunct instructors hired by the College. The Vice President of Academic Affairs reviews faculty qualifications in academic programs to ensure compliance with HLC guidelines and they are updated each year in the catalog. For CCA's CTE programs, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the School of Professional Studies and Sciences regularly verifies faculty qualifications as mandated by CCCS.

CCA has full authority over standards for concurrent enrollment (CE) classes taught in high schools. Since courses taught at the high schools are transcribed as CCA courses, they must meet the same standards as on-campus courses. Since 2011, the growth in concurrent enrollment has been significant and rapid. Therefore, CCA has strengthened the administration of its CE program and included [processes that are designed to maintain equivalency](#) and [follow the System's Statement of Standards](#) for course outcomes and student achievement at the CE sites.

The College requires all [CE instructors to meet the same qualifications](#) as those who teach at the Lowry or CentreTech campuses. In addition, in order to maintain authority and rigor, each CE instructor submits a [course request](#) for the upcoming academic year and the appropriate department chair evaluates the request. The request requires an unofficial transcript, a resume, and an initial syllabus using the CCA model syllabus template. Department chairs not only evaluate the instructors' credentials, but also assist with course development, syllabi revision, and assessment projects to ensure they align with the counterpart courses. The same course competencies, scope, and curriculum standards are required. CE instructors are observed at least once per academic year by a CCA representative, usually the CCA department chair under which the course falls. If the instructor is new to CCA or has not been active within the last 12 months, HR requires completion of a new hire packet, which includes a background check.

### **Institution Maintains Specialized Accreditation as Appropriate**

CCA has three programs—Paralegal, Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Police—that are accredited by specialized external accreditation entities. All three programs are in good standing with their accreditation agencies.

Paralegal: CCA's Paralegal Program has been [approved by the American Bar Association](#) (ABA) since 1998. The ABA approves programs based on compliance with the ABA Guidelines for the Approval of Paralegal Educational Programs. In addition to reporting to the ABA to show

compliance, the program hosts a site visit by the ABA following the submission of each application for renewal, which is done every 7 years.

Emergency Medical Services: This program is accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs](#) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP). The program submits an annual report to CoAEMSP on retention, positive placement, and other key metrics. The program is required to submit an action plan and follow up reports for any metric in the annual report that falls below the CoAEMSP benchmark. Fire/EMS had its most recent site visit by CoAEMSP in May 2013 and received its letter confirming continuing accreditation status, effective January 16th, 2014.

The Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy: In the state of Colorado, certification for law enforcement officer training is carried out by the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (POST). The POST Board provides oversight, syllabi material, and specific course and skills training requirements to all Colorado law enforcement POST academies including CCA's Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy. The College's training academy is reviewed every five years, and [passed its most recent review](#) in July 2015.

### **College Evaluates Success of its Graduates**

Using data prepared by Institutional Research, CCA evaluates the success of its graduates to ascertain whether the College is achieving its mission of preparing students for employment and transfer. With the results of the evaluation, CCA is able to monitor how well its degrees and certificate programs result in related employment and enrollment in transfer institutions. For data on the employment of students after they have finished a degree or certificate, the College uses a [state-mandated graduate follow-up survey](#), referred to as the VE-135. For data on the transfer of students who have finished a degree or certificate, the College uses data from the National Student Clearing House.

While CCCS requires CCA to collect VE-135 data for CTE programs, CCA also collects data on associate degree/transfer graduates in order to aid in the review of the quality of its programs. IR contacts graduates for details about their employment or continuing education, and creates reports that reflect data trends and provide feedback on the impact and viability of the College's programs. An [overall report](#) on the survey's findings is presented to College leadership, and reports are prepared for each of the institution's two instructional divisions, [the School of Professional Studies](#) and [the School of Liberal Arts](#), and sent to their deans and department chairs.

These reports help CTE programs track trends over time in order to evaluate whether these programs are accomplishing their purposes and to establish that there is reason to continue them. Criteria used to gauge effectiveness and viability of a program include the number of graduates and job placement rates of graduates. This data is used in program review to establish future program needs, in conjunction with statewide economic reports and an internal tracking database, which CCA uses to help longitudinal tracking of students in CTE programs. These reports also provide useful feedback for transfer programs. While the data provide less direct

measures of program success or viability, they do provide insight into students' progress toward baccalaureate degrees and how students utilize their transfer degrees in the workforce.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Argument

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*NOTE: Since its 2013 HLC visit, the Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) has made the changes recommended by the visitation team to its assessment processes. The description of these changes are embedded in the following assurance argument rather than being articulated in a separate monitoring report.*

#### **College Has Clearly-stated Student Learning Goals, Effective Processes for Assessing Them**

The College is committed to educational achievement by the ongoing assessment of student learning. Student achievement at CCA is centered on institutional-, program/degree-, and course-level learning goals. Institutional-level outcomes and assessment focus on the knowledge and skills that are important for students to master by the time they leave CCA, and emphasize the [College's Lifelong Skills](#). Program/degree-level outcomes encompass the knowledge and skills students should have upon completing their program/degree, and the goals guiding those outcomes are established and defined by departments, as shown in the [Philosophy department assessment plan](#). Course-level outcomes are determined by the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS/System) Common Course Numbering System (CCNS), as seen in the [CCNS entry for Introduction to Philosophy](#). Faculty and chairs make the decisions about which course competencies to target for assessment cycles. Outcomes developed for each level of assessment are provided to students through [course syllabi](#).

CCA's assessment committee has clearly established procedures that keep these goals in mind, resulting in an effective process for the continuous assessment of student learning. The [College's assessment model](#) is guided by the following:

Alignment of Lifelong Skills with course and program competencies: Before 2013, the College assessed student learning based on six official college-wide common Lifelong Skills: Critical Inquiry, Communication, Personal and Social Responsibility, Quantitative Reasoning,

Technology, and Aesthetics. A goal was set to incorporate the assessment of Lifelong Skills into the College's new course and program assessment process by relating the Lifelong Skills to specific course competencies and program outcomes, as seen with the [Translation and Interpretation \(TRI\) program](#). In this way, Lifelong Skills are now flagged alongside the College's course and program assessments.

Implementing course and program level assessment: The 2013 HLC visit alerted CCA to the need to develop an assessment practice that was more thorough in regard to course-level competency, as well as more summative by assessing whether students have learned specific skills upon completion of a specific program/degree. Prior to this visit, CCA's assessment of student learning focused solely on institutional outcomes based on the College's Lifelong Skills, but in response to the HLC directive, the assessment committee adopted the goal of adding two additional levels of assessment, and implemented it in two stages. These additional levels have created a more effective assessment process that provides a multidimensional examination of student learning outcomes across disciplines.

In the fall of 2013, the first stage of the revised assessment model was implemented. All instructional department chairs, working with program faculty, began course competency assessment. This level of assessment utilizes the official course competencies posted on the official state-wide CCNS board. Then, in the fall of 2015, the second stage of the assessment model was introduced, in which regular faculty began to develop discipline-specific program-level outcomes for programs that did not have articulated outcomes. These program outcomes were finalized in the spring of 2016, laying the groundwork for the College to begin program outcome assessment in the fall 2016 semester, as demonstrated in the [TRI program assessment plan](#).

Increasing flexibility of assessment to enhance authenticity: Prior to 2013, Lifelong Skills rubrics were utilized across programs for assessment purposes. This resulted in assessments that were not equally meaningful or authentic across curricula; as a result, assessments were not equally useful. As part of the College's revised assessment model, faculty are afforded greater flexibility to develop distinct measures, select specific course competencies, and tailor rubrics relevant to their disciplines, in order to more meaningfully assess student learning. For example, the College's [Early Childhood Education program uses tailored rubrics](#) to assess their discipline-related competencies in ways that are more meaningful to them.

Lengthening the assessment cycle: CCA's assessment cycle has been lengthened to provide one semester for planning, four semesters for data collection, and one semester for compiling and analyzing data, reporting findings, and developing interventions for the next cycle. This two-year cycle allows for the emergence of trends in the data and provides time for data analysis that does not coincide with the summer semester when many faculty are off-contract.

In the first semester of the cycle, [department chairs submit plans](#) to the assessment committee. The plans must include which course-level and/or program-level outcomes will be measured, the rationale behind the selection of these outcomes, measurable and attainable benchmarks or thresholds which are set by the department according to their selected outcomes, a specific description of the measure to be utilized, and how data will be collected. The plan must also

include an indication of how the department will use the results to improve student learning outcomes. The assessment committee reviews these plans and returns them to the department chairs for revisions, if needed, before a final review by the deans.

After the departments collect and analyze their data, [chairs submit reports](#) to the assessment committee detailing their findings and proposed interventions for the next cycle. These reports must demonstrate to the committee that a department will use their data to determine areas for improvement in student learning for the next cycle and measure the effectiveness of interventions. The committee requires the report to discuss why the department is either making changes or choosing not to make changes for the next cycle.

### **College Assesses Achievement of Learning Outcomes for Curricular, Co-curricular Programs**

The College's assessment model targets learning outcomes in curricular programs using the multidimensional approach mentioned above, which includes course and program-level outcomes along with the College's Lifelong Skills. Several other assessment processes are being developed across the College which target learning outcomes in the College's co-curricular programs.

Curricular learning outcome assessment: The College's revised assessment model primarily focuses on the assessment of learning outcomes in its curricular programs, including Lifelong Skills, course competencies, and program outcomes. As noted, the College has a long history of assessing how effectively students master its Lifelong Skills. Each program assessed a chosen Lifelong Skill endemic to their program and a skill considered non-endemic to their program until 2011. At that time, the College changed its assessment model so every area of the College assessed the same two skills: Written Communication and Critical Inquiry. With our revised multi-dimensional model, the current scope of curricular learning outcomes targeted for assessment has expanded to include course competencies and program outcomes.

These shifts in assessment are particularly important to the College's Degrees with Designation (DWD) agreements between CCCS two-year institutions and State public four-year institutions. CCA will be able to use these curricular program outcomes to measure the readiness of DWD student cohorts for junior standing at four-year institutions, as well as to assess a program's overall quality. It is important to note that many of the College's CTE programs had articulated outcomes and assessments in place previously. The revised assessment model's focus on program outcome assessment has enabled the College to articulate program outcomes for those remaining programs that had not previously had specific assessment outcomes.

Future planning to aid in the assessment of curricular student achievement levels will include an evaluation of rubrics used by program faculty, and updates to the rubrics to encompass more variety within targeted competencies. The assessment committee has also discussed examining the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) LEAP value competencies as well as the updated rubrics that have been adopted by the Colorado Commission of Higher Education (CCHE) for statewide Pathways courses. If it is determined that these rubrics or

specific aspects of them might be a better fit with the College's Lifelong Skills, then the College will update its existing Lifelong Skills rubrics accordingly.

Co-Curricular Learning Outcome Assessment: Several processes are being developed to assess learning outcomes in the College's co-curricular programs. In 2014, an active Student Affairs representative was added to the assessment committee, which has resulted in improved communication between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and has helped Student Affairs embed learning outcomes in their programs.

Under the oversight of the HLC, the College's Learning Resource Center (LRC) created an [action plan on information literacy across the curriculum](#). This plan is aligned with the [gtPathways Information Literacy Competency](#) as well as the College's Lifelong Skills. Following the implementation of the plan, data was gathered and analyzed, and a [summary was developed, resulting in proposed interventions](#) for the spring 2016 semester. These strategies include actions for student, presentation, and assessment improvement.

The Student Success Center offers a one-credit course on Advanced Academic Achievement Strategies. This course's learning outcomes are designed to help students improve life, study, and time management skills. [Pre- and post-tests](#) are used to assess these specific outcomes, which are designed to impact completion and transfer rates. In 2016-17, data will be analyzed to determine if the class is having a positive impact on student success.

Other Student Affairs co-curricular programs are beginning to include student learning outcomes based on CCA's Lifelong skills, such as Critical Inquiry, Aesthetics, and Personal Responsibility, in their annual review protocol that has traditionally focused only on assessing the value of programs. For example, the Office of Student Life has developed specific [learning outcomes](#), and a [detailed Learning Plan](#) that integrates Student Learning Domains, Learning and Developmental Outcomes from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, CCA's Lifelong Skills, and a Value Rubric. Data is collected after each Student Life activity that identifies what the students learned and possible actionable next steps.

The College still needs to bring other kinds of co-curricular programs into the assessment process, such as the Honors Program, the Model United Nations (MUN), CSI: Aurora, and other programs and events that augment skills learned in the classroom and/or where instructors allow extra credit to be earned. Assessable learning outcomes in these co-curricular activities may include Critical Inquiry, Communication, and Personal and Social Responsibility, however, a formal method and process for measuring and assessing these outcomes in these programs is still needed.

### **Institution uses Information from Assessment to Improve Student Learning**

CCA demonstrates its commitment to improvement of student learning by using the data gained from assessment to inform next steps. The final stage in all of CCA's assessment efforts is to articulate interventions based on the conclusions reached after the analysis of assessment data that was collected, and in turn measure the effectiveness of those new action items. The length of the College's assessment cycle allows faculty, as content experts, the time to reflect on their

assessment results and make decisions about how to best increase student learning outcomes in their individual courses. Department chairs must report on collected data and interventions to the assessment committee at the end of the assessment cycle, along with their new plans.

At the end of the most recent assessment cycle in spring 2016, assessment reports highlighted areas for improvement and provided valuable information about the effectiveness of interventions that had been implemented. Several examples from across the College follow:

- Behavioral Sciences: A collective [online management shell was developed](#) to allow faculty to share and request new lessons, activities, and pedagogy strategies.
- English Department: A [list of action items](#) were created to strengthen students' analytical abilities, based on the previous cycle's findings.
- Math Department: Assessment results supported the [continued institution of specialized pathways](#) for students.
- Physical and Life Sciences: A change was implemented in Science of Biology to [shift focus from cumulative content knowledge to overall science literacy](#) and understanding of core concepts.
- Business Department: Utilizing external research and the previous assessment cycle's outcomes, the Business department created a [series of writing assignments](#) for the Introduction to Business course to assess students' understanding of core course concepts.
- Criminal Justice Department: Based on the previous assessment cycle's outcomes, the department found a need to [examine the pathways through which students come into the program](#); whether students have or have not taken previous law classes or criminal justice classes that have components of criminal law studied in them.
- Colorado Film School: [Student weakness in the category of Originality](#) motivated discussion among faculty, which resulted in a plan to test several approaches for improvement and evaluate those outcomes in the next cycle.
- Languages and Humanities Department: A [review of SPA 111 and SPA 112](#) showed a need for interventions in student success and retention. These data were used to [redesign the courses](#), which [improved success rates](#) in both courses.
- Arts and Communication Department: Previous years' annual reports and goals were utilized to form [a new, combined plan](#) for the newly formed department.

All assessment reports are stored on a shared drive and can be used by campus leaders to make strategic decisions about departments and programs across the College. In alignment with the [Academic Master Plan's](#) goals of success, retention, and completion, the deans and department chairs use assessment information to inform their program reviews in order to increase completion and transfer. For more specific information about the program review process see Core Component 4.A.

### **Institution's Assessment Processes Reflect Best Practices**

CCA is committed to implementing an assessment process that is effective. This commitment to an effective process is demonstrated by the fact that the College follows several essential best practices in its two-year cycle assessment model.

For example:

- The extended cycle provides four semesters to collect data in order to recognize valid trends before analysis begins.
- To maintain consistency, instructional programs use common tailored rubrics and common embedded measures for all targeted courses. Additionally, inter-rater reliability sessions occur before some departments grade assessment essays/assignments.
- Specific, measurable benchmarks are determined as initial assessment plans are articulated.
- The College has an assessment expert (Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness) who is available as questions arise about the College's assessment procedures. In addition, an Institutional Research staff member serves on the Assessment Committee in a consulting capacity.
- CCA's cycle allows a full semester for faculty collaboration on the analysis of findings and articulation of action items, eliminating hasty, unilateral analysis.

At a more general level, the College's overall assessment practices dovetail with characteristic best practices highlighted by National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), such as the American Association for Higher Education's (AAHE) [9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning](#). For example, CCA encourages program faculty to gather assessment data on student learning based on questions specific to their program. Also, the College's assessment process takes a long-term, ongoing approach in examining its courses and programs to better understand what is working and what isn't.

Utilizing principles from NILOA's Transparency Framework, the College meets its responsibilities to students and stakeholders with a public assessment website that features information from departments pertaining to how they are using the results of assessment. This website is being updated with information about the institutional outcomes students will be expected to learn. Currently, the College's internal portal is being improved in order to provide easy access to guidelines, information about best practices, frequently asked assessment questions, and outcomes for faculty and College staff.

In addition, CCA's assessment process is part of a larger set of conditions at the College regarding student success and completion. To increase student success in gatekeeper courses, CCA has recently hired achievement coaches who are working with programs with this goal in mind. The College's program review protocols, discussed in Core Component 4.A, pay attention to success and completion metrics. In other words, assessment at CCA is a natural fit with the overall identity and emphasis of the College, which is to improve student success and completion.

CCA's leadership team strongly supports College-wide assessment initiatives, which also has substantial participation from College faculty members and other instructional staff. This support is essential for an effective assessment process. As previously mentioned, regular faculty are involved throughout the two-year assessment cycle, and embed assessment assignments into targeted sections every semester. Adjunct instructors also embed assessment assignments into their courses, and grade and collect assessment data.

Department chairs write and submit the assessment plans after collaboration with program faculty, collect data from faculty, create plans for how the department will use results to inform teaching, and submit the reports of their assessment findings. Deans review all assessment plans, providing feedback to chairs and participating in the college-wide assessment committee. The College's Vice President of Academic Affairs monitors the college-wide assessment committee and helps spearhead assessment trainings each academic year. These seminars and workshops increase faculty involvement, expertise, and awareness.

Another important best practice for student assessment, derived from NIOLA, is student involvement. The College needs to increase student involvement in assessment as pointed out during CCA's 2013 HLC visit. Student involvement has been a challenging goal. The assessment committee has tried multiple ways to involve students in the past, including holding assessment symposia to showcase how the College uses assessment and using surveys to determine how much students know about assessment. Unfortunately, these efforts did not produce the student engagement that the committee hoped to achieve. Over the last two years, the committee has brainstormed about how to address this issue. As a result of these discussions, the committee has decided to look for student involvement in the process where it is actually occurring in the classroom.

In other words, faculty will be transparent with students regarding the assessment objectives in the course by making students aware of the competencies, outcomes, and skills that they are looking at, instead of making assessment an activity that is kept "behind the scenes." Faculty will then gather feedback from students regarding the effectiveness of the measures and interventions used in the class, etc. This approach is already being used in some departments and will be expanded. For example, in the ESL program, the course competencies are built into the students' D2L shells so that students can access reports about how well they're doing in each course competency. In psychology, students are informed that the instructors use their results to identify strengths and weaknesses in their instruction and welcome feedback from the students about the process. The Colorado Film School has students use the same rubrics to evaluate each other's work that the faculty uses to assess their work so that they understand the process of their own learning and evaluation.

**Addendum:**

**During CCA's last HLC visit in 2013, the HLC team requested a monitoring report addressing the following items:**

1) CCA has clear and distinctive measures for the institutional, program/department, and course/classroom levels and consistent expected thresholds for levels of achievement at each of these levels.

This effort should include, but not be limited to, demonstrating that assessment metrics have been developed and data collected and analyzed for course-specific student learning outcomes in all courses.

2) CCA consistently collects, analyzes, and uses assessment results for decision-making and continuous improvement across the institution and on all levels.

This initiative should include, but not be limited to, a process for using student learning outcome data in occupational skills programs for making improvements in those programs.

3) Specific student learning outcomes are consistent in all courses.

4) Student participation in the evaluation process increases.

5) Program review data has been used to make improvements in those programs, planning and resource management.

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- LRC Assessment Results Summary 2015
- LRC Info Literacy Across the Curriculum Action Plan 2015
- SA AAA 101 Pre and Post Test Assessment Analysis 2015
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- SA Student Life Learning Plan 2015

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Argument

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#### **College's Goals for Retention, Persistence, Completion are Ambitious, Attainable, Appropriate**

The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement by defining student retention, persistence, and completion goals that are attainable and appropriate for its student body and the mission of its educational programs. These goals are guided by the College's role as a member of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System), CCCS's performance contract with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and the College's mission. While the System's and College's strategic plans provide overarching guidance, CCA's Academic Master Plan contains specific goals that are both attainable and appropriate to the College's mission, student population, and educational offerings.

In 2013, CCCS signed a [performance contract](#) with CDHE that ties funding to student success, retention, and completion. The contract delineates several standards and requirements that all CCCS constituent colleges must meet. As a result, these goals were adapted as part of the [2015-2025 CCCS Strategic Plan](#), with adjustments that reflect needs within the System's specific student population:

- Increase number of certificates and degrees awarded by 1 percentage point annually
- Exceed the national fall-to-fall retention rate for full and part-time community college students by 2025

- Increase transfer to four-year institutions by students who earn at least 15 credits, for all students and specifically for underserved populations, by 2 percent per year beginning in FY2017

Informed by these System directives and CCA's focus on student success, the first goal of the [College's strategic plan](#) is to increase student retention, completion, transfer, and employment, with an emphasis on ensuring that this is a focus across the institution. The Academic Affairs division's [Academic Master Plan](#) (AMP) is aligned with CCA's strategic goals and the CCCS performance metrics. The defining of these goals and their measures in the AMP was the result of a collaborative effort between faculty, deans, and the College leadership team (cabinet), using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) model approach. Three of the six major goals of the AMP focus on student retention, persistence, and completion, with measures in place to evaluate progress upon annual plan review:

- Increase course success rates by 5 percent annually within each department through AY2016-2017
- Increase fall-to-fall retention by 5 percent annually through AY2016-2017
- Increase completion and transfer rates of African American and Latino students by 5 percent annually through AY2016-2017

The goals are ambitious to ensure commitment to the implementation of the defined strategies and changes in College practice. Strategies were articulated for each goal and were designed to give a pathway to attain the metrics. Many of the strategies in the AMP are best practices that have proven successful in increasing student success, completion, and retention. These include hiring achievement coaches, implementing a developmental education redesign, designing course interventions, using supplemental instruction for Math and English, and implementing a tracking database for degree and certificate completion. For example, to help attain the goal of increasing course completion and success, the College has hired academic achievement coaches who collaborate with several departments and program faculty to raise success rates in certain gatekeeper courses by articulating and implementing various interventions.

These goals are appropriate to CCA's mission, which seeks to graduate students who are prepared to obtain employment or continue their education. For this mission to be accomplished, students need to persist in their studies by succeeding in each course, so that they can complete their program and be credentialed. Since most of CCA's students do not already have a degree, the College's goals are appropriate as they are focused on course success and completion of the requirements needed to complete the degree or certificate and be prepared to transfer to a four-year institution or find employment. Additionally, because over half of CCA's student population are students of color, the College's AMP goal #3, to reduce achievement gaps for African American and Latino students, is appropriate as well.

### **College Collects, Analyzes Data on Student Retention, Persistence, Completion**

As discussed in Core Component 4.A, each year the College's Office of Institutional Research (IR) pulls data from the Banner system and analyzes retention, persistence, success, and completion rates for degree and certificate programs. IR generates data for different stakeholders

including the President, Cabinet, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs. For Academic Affairs, data is generated annually for each instructional department's program review. Data is sent to department chairs with the rates for their individual programs. IR also provides data by course that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and drop/fail/withdraw rates. Chairs review this data in collaboration with their deans and lead program faculty to observe trends related to student success, completion, and retention.

Institutional Research also produces an annual [Performance Goals and Plans report](#), as well as an annual [Progress Report towards Meeting CCA's Strategic Goals report](#). These reports go to the President's office and are analyzed and discussed by the College's leadership team. The IR department delivers a presentation and highlights the trends revealed in the data that are relevant to whether the College is meeting its strategic goals. These reports are also sent on to the System office every year. IR also produces a [Graduate Report](#) that records the number of degrees and certificates awarded, ethnic demographics, transfer rates, and transfer institutions. Similar metrics are tracked for the College's CTE programs and those are included in the Graduate Report as well. This report is important to CCA's stakeholders and helps keep the College accountable to its mission: the success of its students.

### **College Uses Retention, Persistence, Completion Data to Make Improvements**

The College uses data it collects on student retention, persistence, and completion to make improvements in its programs. As an example, data collected through assessment plans have directly influenced interventions and improvements, particularly within Instruction and Student Affairs.

In Student Affairs, the Advising department discovered that students were reactively, not proactively, using advising services; students approached advising only when there was a problem with their schedule or when they were required to do so. In response, the College is implementing more intrusive advising practices. Student Affairs also implemented changes within the Financial Aid department when data showed increasing rates of default on student loans. As a result, the College has the lowest cohort default rate among all thirteen colleges in the Colorado Community College System.

Within Instruction, there was concern about low success rates for students progressing from developmental English courses to ENG 121. Data was collected through an [IR study](#), a student survey, and faculty feedback. As a result of the study, changes were made to College Reading and Composition (CCR 092) classes:

- Total class size was lowered
- A co-requisite was added, Advanced Academic Achievement (AAA 109)
- Regular English faculty were assigned to teach CCR 092 classes

[Outcomes over two semesters showed](#) that pairing CCR 092 with AAA 109 led to an increase in retention and success rates, while failure rates decreased.

To cite another example, data from FY 2011-2013 revealed a three-year average success rate of only 68.2 percent in the College's Spanish program, specifically in SPA 111 and SPA 112. To combat this low success rate, in the fall semester of 2013, the Spanish curriculum went through a design overhaul. Program initiatives were developed by the chair in collaboration with Spanish faculty and implemented at the beginning of FY 2014. As a result, [success rates increased to 80.7 percent](#).

Instruction has also pursued closing success gaps between minority and majority student populations, as part of [Goal #3 in the Academic Master Plan](#). As reported by IR, African American and Latino students have lower success rates at the College compared to their white counterparts. In response, the College collaborated with the Center for Urban Education's [Excellence in Equity project](#). Through the Center's guidance and consultation, interventions were implemented in the Math department—and have since been introduced to other departments—and many courses have had [significant success reducing attainment gaps](#) for these student populations.

### **Processes and Methodologies for Collecting, Analyzing Information Reflect Good Practice**

CCA demonstrates its commitment to educational improvement by supporting an Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IR). IR plays a major role in ensuring that processes and methodologies for data collection and analysis reflect good practice and are followed across the College.

In establishing and following good practices, CCA works with CCCS and CDHE to establish [standard definitions](#), methodologies, and means of measure to be consistent across higher education institutions. IR also works with CDHE to establish common measures for retention, persistence, and completion of programs which are in line with IPEDS criteria, while ensuring the institution is following the same methodology to collect, analyze, and report data submitted to the State Unit Record Data System (SURDS). IR staff also assure sound quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used in designing internal instruments for data collection and analysis to ensure the quality of data used in reports. Institutional Research also follows and provides [ethical guidelines](#) related to data gathering and analysis to the College.

Industry-standard software is used in statistical analysis, including SPSS for parametric and non-parametric statistics. Personnel are hired who have the qualifications and training to follow strict protocols for the collection, analysis, and reporting of data consistent with sound quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Data is stored and/or retrieved from multiple secure sources (the Banner system, COGNOS queries and reports for retrieving and analyzing Banner data, surveys, student evaluations, etc.). Quality control measures are in place to assure accurate data is used in the analyses. For example, IR works with the Registrar and other offices to create data clean-up reports to ensure the accuracy of data in Banner and Cognos. The College enables separate users to access data within their domain and access campus-wide data on important issues such as retention and persistence, transfer, and graduation. The College also engages in comparative analysis, mostly at the System and state level, but does participate—through CCCS—in national comparative studies as well such as Complete College America and the National Community College Benchmark Project.

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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through regular instructional program review and the evaluation of credit awarded internally and accepted in transfer including credit awarded for prior learning. CCA's organizational structures ensure that its academic leadership maintains and exercises authority over the quality of educational programs including concurrent enrollment. This authority extends over course prerequisites and rigor, expectations for student learning, and faculty and instructor qualifications. The College's three programs accredited by specialized external agencies are in good standing. CTE programs complete a comprehensive review every five years in order to be renewed. CCA evaluates the success of its prior-year graduates with an annual survey whose data help the College to understand how well it is preparing students for employment and for transfer.

CCA demonstrates its commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. The assessment effort includes stated goals for student learning, and processes for evaluating and achieving these goals. To improve assessment, the College revised its assessment model in 2013 to one which targets learning outcomes at the course, program, and institution levels (the Lifelong Skills). To further strengthen assessment, processes are being developed to assess learning outcomes in co-curricular programs.

The College uses the information from these assessments to improve student learning through interventions recommended in reports prepared at the end of each two-year assessment cycle. CCA's processes and methodologies reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and they dovetail with the best practices highlighted by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). The College's assessment efforts are further described in a monitoring report integrated into Criterion 4.

CCA's Academic Master Plan relates goals that are attainable and appropriate to the College's mission, student population, and educational offerings. The plan has goals for retention, persistence, completion, and closing the achievement gap, and each year the College's Office of Institutional Research analyzes retention, persistence, success, and completion rates for degree and certificate programs for each instructional department's program review. Chairs review this data with their deans and lead program faculty through bi-annual department reviews and department plans. CCA's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion reflect good practice, including the use of standardized definitions and methodologies, the following of ethical guidelines related to data gathering and analysis, and the use of industry-standard software including SPSS.

## **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Argument

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) has sufficient resources to support its educational programs, its plans for maintaining and improving their quality, and the goals outlined for achieving the institution's mission. This is evidenced by its healthy fiscal position and sound infrastructure; growing numbers of carefully selected and well-qualified personnel; and improved processes for budgeting and allocating resources.

#### College Has Resources and Infrastructure to Support its Operations

Even as it faces funding challenges common to many higher education institutions, CCA's conservative approach to budgeting and well-managed financial operations have secured a fiscal position necessary to carry out and improve its programs. The [College budget](#) projects a FY17 general fund revenue of \$33.5 million, exceeding expenses of \$33.3 million, is actively preparing to meet future funding and enrollment challenges, and has healthy financial reserves. At the end of FY16 these reserves stood at \$10.4 million -- well above the minimum required by the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) [Reserve Requirements and Use](#) policy.

The College relies on two primary general fund revenue sources: funding from the state of Colorado and student tuition. The [state funding estimate](#) for FY17 includes the College Opportunity Fund (COF), \$11.8 million; fee for service, \$3.3 million; and gaming revenues, \$0.5 million. Student tuition is estimated to be \$19.4 million; student fees, \$1.3 million; and other sources, \$0.3 million.

Colorado enacted the COF system in 2004 to improve the state's higher education funding situation by redistributing state appropriations directly to resident undergraduate students through a stipend applied to their tuition bill (\$75.00 per credit for FY17). Despite the implementation of COF, state support for higher education, including community colleges, has continued to decline. In 2003-04, for example, the [amounts received by the Colorado Community College System](#) (CCCS/System) from the state's general fund and student tuition were nearly equal (general fund: \$106.2 million; tuition: \$106.7 million). By 2014-15, the ratio had changed dramatically (general fund: \$137.4 million; tuition: \$254.3 million).

With greater dependence on tuition revenue, CCA has become more reliant on maintaining enrollment and annual System-wide tuition increases to meet its fiscal needs. The College's FTE grew quite rapidly from FY09 to FY12, which brought increased revenue. However, [FTE dropped almost 15 percent between FY12 and FY16](#) and is a growing concern, although preliminary figures show some increase for fall 2016. Annual tuition increases have helped bolster College revenue, but have practical, political, and policy limitations. The System set tuition per credit hour for FY17 at \$136.90 after COF is applied, up 4.9 percent from last year and up 83.6 percent from a decade ago (FY07).

To strengthen its fiscal position, CCA has been conservative in its expenditures through steps such as continuing to rely on adjunct instructors to teach many course sections and adding only one new staff position in the 2016-17 budget. The College has also aggressively sought resources through [external grants](#) for projects that: expand funding for STEM scholarships; provide resources to pilot the design and implementation of new career and technical education (CTE) certificate programs focused on high growth industries and occupations; bolster wrap-around student support services for first-generation, low-income and other high-need, underserved student groups; and similar projects that strengthen CCA's education programs.

To maintain its enrollment and resulting tuition income, the College has utilized the recommendations of an [enrollment management task force](#), added outreach and recruitment staff, launched a new branding campaign and related advertising, hosted a variety of recruitment events, including some for Spanish speakers, implemented recruitment management software, and changed the drop for non-payment process.

In anticipation of future challenges, including further drops in state support or flattening enrollment, CCA is actively exploring additional ways to improve how it controls spending. Fiscal Affairs is encouraging staff to monitor expenditures more closely, questioning staffing levels, and creating guidelines for the addition of employee positions and filling vacant positions. The President's Cabinet has consulted with the expanded leadership group on how to reduce expenditures for official functions, travel, and memberships and subscriptions. Discussions are also underway on how to generate additional revenue, including adding new instructional

programs, considering differential tuition and increased fees for high-cost programs, and developing additional fee-based non-credit training. To increase financial efficiency and transparency, Fiscal Affairs plans to make more presentations and do more employee training on the College budget and budgeting process to ensure that employees understand their impact on the budget.

Following a rapid growth in the number of its employees over the last decade, CCA has the human resources necessary to support its operations. From 2005-06 to 2015-16, CCA's [full-time workforce increased 138 percent](#) (95 to 226) with full-time staff increasing 149 percent (68 to 169) and regular faculty by 111 percent (27 to 57). CCA made these increases to ensure sufficient human resources to support the College's student success goals and expand student services, to bolster College instructional and administrative operations, and to respond to concerns expressed in faculty and staff surveys about the intensity of employees' workloads. In the most recent CCCS survey of System faculty and staff, [79 percent of the CCA staff members](#) and [49 percent of faculty](#) responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "My workload is reasonable."

The instructional and student support structure for CCA's large concurrent enrollment program also contributes to the strength of CCA's human resources. Although the College assigns high school teachers who meet CCA's requirements for adjunct instructors to teach the concurrent classes, it does not need to hire staff for student support and other functions at the locations, which are fully staffed by the school districts. The [2015 HLC multi-location visit report](#) describes the concurrent enrollment staffing and found it to be sufficient.

The College has the physical resources sufficient to support operations on its CentreTech and Lowry campuses and at its high school concurrent enrollment locations. These resources include four main buildings at CentreTech comprising 110,000 square feet that house administrative functions, student support and activity programs, and classrooms and other facilities for general education, the liberal arts, and the visual and performing arts. Lowry's six buildings comprise 207,000 square feet, much of which is devoted to specialized facilities and labs for the sciences and CTE programs, student support services, and adult education. The [2015 space analysis report](#) provides a detailed description and analysis of CCA's facilities on both campuses.

CCA leases its Lowry buildings at below market rates from the System, but is responsible for their maintenance and improvement. These structures are older than the CentreTech campus buildings and were originally constructed to serve Air Force purposes, and they present maintenance and remodeling challenges. At the same time, Lowry houses many of the College's most innovative facilities, both pedagogically and in the creative ways they have been developed. The Center for Simulation (Sim Center), for example, has facilities for training first responders in life-like simulation studios envisioned and designed by CCA faculty and staff in what were originally Air Force maintenance shops. The Sim Center also houses other innovative facilities such as a mock courtroom and a fully-operational emergency operations center. Over the last decade, the Colorado Film School has turned what was once a campus television and media center into a sophisticated professional teaching facility for its nationally-ranked programs.

To achieve CCA's strategic goal of optimizing its physical resources, the College is developing an institution-wide facilities master plan with funds allocated in the 2016-17 budget. As the first step in this process, the [space analysis](#) confirmed that CCA has sufficient space overall but some of that space needs to be re-allocated for different purposes. The College has, for example, the classroom space it needs but lacks space for student study and activities. The College plans to work on the master plan before undertaking any major facilities projects, but it has continued to make needed physical improvements in the past year, including providing better work space for adjunct instructors at both campuses, remodeling the dean's area at the Lowry campus, improving ADA compliance at Lowry, and moving the CCA Foundation (CCAF/Foundation) offices to the CentreTech campus from the Lowry campus.

Central to the College's ability to maintain and strengthen its programs in the future is CCA's [recent assumption of the ownership of the CentreTech campus](#). Completed in 1990, CentreTech was funded by a bond issuance with support of the CCAF. The College leased the property from the Foundation for 25 years, with rents equal to the bond payments. Once these bonds were paid in full during FY16, the College made an additional \$1,750,000 payment from its reserves to the Foundation and took ownership of the campus. Ownership will permit CCA to request, for the first time, controlled maintenance and capital funding from the state, contingent on the waiving of a 15-year waiting period usually required after acquisition of new facilities. Ownership also clears the way for CCA to build at CentreTech if needed.

CCA's concurrent enrollment classes meet in outstanding physical facilities in local high schools. The nine high schools, primarily housed in large and relatively new suburban buildings, provide and maintain the facilities. The College must approve these facilities and their sufficiency was explained in CCA's report for the 2015 Multi-Location visit, and confirmed both in the [HLC's report](#) and on-site by the evaluator during his time in Aurora.

CCA's technology infrastructure and services provide a high level of support for College programs with extensive improvement underway for the future. CCA's Information Technology (IT) department is responsible for providing computer and network support for College-owned devices, support of enterprise applications, and telephone and technical support. IT also assists College departments with selecting software applications and services, and supports their installation and maintenance. The department's [five-year technology strategic plan](#) is guiding significant improvements to the IT infrastructure on both campuses.

Funded by CCA's \$2 million commitment to upgrade that infrastructure, IT has recently completed installation of improvements that increased the available internet bandwidth from 10Mbps to 40Mbps. These improvements also allowed the College to increase wireless speed on the campuses and better support the growing number of devices used by students, faculty, and staff. Another important initiative is the development of a plan to govern the replacement of technology components. IT is centralizing the purchase of all computer hardware for faculty and staff as well as for classrooms, allowing the College to ensure every faculty and staff member, as well as all students, have access to up-to-date technology.

In addition to the network infrastructure improvements, IT has started an initiative to update the technology available to instructors in College classrooms by providing teaching stations with the

capability to connect several different types of devices to the projection system in the classroom. This upgrade includes a robust audio system. To help guarantee the ability of CCA to continue to improve infrastructure, the College, with support from students, has implemented a student technology fee. This fee provides funding to support IT upgrades in student use areas such as classrooms, the library, and open labs. Currently, this fee is being applied to the aforementioned classroom technology upgrades.

### **Institutional Goals are Realistic in Light of Organization, Resources, and Opportunities**

The College's strategic goals are reasonable and achievable given CCA's organizational structure, existing resources, and opportunities. There has been no indication in [CCA's annual progress report on goal achievement](#) that the College is unable to support fulfillment of its goals because of lack of organizational structure, resources, or opportunities.

The College is organized so that areas of responsibility and their resources are aligned with the strategic goals. At least one member of the President's Cabinet has major responsibility for each goal, and their divisions have offices or individuals whose work focuses on completing initiatives to achieve the goals. For example, the Office of Outreach and Recruitment in Student Affairs carries out activities for optimizing enrollment, and the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Resource Development in Institutional Effectiveness works on partnerships and engagement. No goal remains without an organizational home, oversight, and advocacy.

The College's budgeting process prioritizes funding initiatives that support the institutional mission and goals. The College applies this principle to the use of reserve funds as well as to its general fund budget as demonstrated by the recent large allocation of reserve funds for the improvements of the technology infrastructure. In addition, three goals (optimizing enrollment; optimizing fiscal, technological, and physical resources; and strengthening human resources) contribute to building resources to meet CCA's strategic goals and mission.

The overlap between CCCS goals and CCA's goals provides opportunities for the College. For example, System funding for a series of innovation grant competitions promotes these joint goals, with College faculty and staff submitting a significant number of proposals. In addition, the College has received \$100,000 in State Board incentive funds each year for the past few years to allow the College to pursue initiatives in support of its goals and those of the System.

### **Staff in All Areas are Appropriately Qualified and Trained**

CCA has the staff it needs to support the high quality programs called for in its mission now and in the future. The College has well-established [human resources processes](#) to ensure that faculty and staff members are appropriately selected, qualified, and trained. These include high standards, a rigorous search and hiring process, new employee orientation, a range of professional development opportunities, and required annual evaluations and performance plans.

All Administrative/Professional/Technical positions at CCA meet minimum educational and professional qualifications established by the College. These are clearly described in job descriptions and employment announcements. Classified personnel must pass the State Civil

Service examination and regular faculty and adjunct instructors must have the appropriate levels of formal education and, for CTE faculty and instructors, professional training and experience. Faculty qualifications, evaluation, and professional development are discussed in more detail in Core Component 3.C.

To ensure the hiring of qualified employees, CCA job descriptions follow a prescribed format and include required qualifications. Searches are well-publicized, many nationally, to draw deep, diverse applicant pools. Search committee members must sign confidentiality agreements and complete implicit bias training. Human Resources staff orient committees before the start of a search. Committees bring finalists to the College for face-to-face interviews and, in many cases, for presentations and meetings with future colleagues. Reference and criminal background checks are mandatory prior to hire.

Employee professional development begins with onboarding, which includes an initial orientation session and a subsequent session with the Director of Human Resources and the College President that covers, among other things, the College mission, vision, and strategic plan. The Faculty Professional Development Committee, the Students Affairs Training Plan, the Inclusive Excellence Council, and Human Resources all assist in guiding [professional development](#), which ranges from College-wide Workplace Answers training to attendance at fee-based external trainings and conferences, to an in-service day for faculty.

To support continuous improvement, all CCA employees complete a [performance plan](#) each April (or within 30 days of hire) for the coming year with their own goals that are based on the College's strategic goals. The following April this plan becomes the basis for an annual evaluation done with their supervisors. Interim performance improvement plans may also be put in place when a supervisor believes an employee is not meeting performance standards.

### **College Has Processes for Resource Allocation, Budgeting, and Monitoring Expenses**

CCA has a well-established and recently improved approach for allocating resources and a clearly-delineated annual budgeting process. The allocation process has continually ensured that the first priority for College resources is the educational purposes of the College. For FY16, the budget distribution was 47 percent Instruction, 7 percent Academic Support, 13 percent Student Services, 17 percent Institutional Support, and 16 percent Facilities. College revenue is not disbursed to a superordinate entity.

CCA's [budgeting processes](#) are described in a document that includes in its purpose "to ensure the budget aligns with the College's strategic plan, mission, vision, and student outcomes." The College evaluates and establishes the baseline cost of operations each fiscal year and evaluates requests for additional funding in a collaborative manner. The College [guidelines on the budget development process](#) list the major steps that include submission in April of ranked budget requests aligned with the College strategic plan and mission, review by executive staff, approval by the President, and presentation to the State Board.

CCA monitors expenses through [monthly reports](#) to all budget managers and their supervisors. Budget managers are required to follow up with Fiscal Affairs to certify that their expenditures

are complete and accurate to support this process. Fiscal affairs provides group and individualized training, and the College's financial guidelines are available to employees through the College portal. The College is audited each year as part of the System-wide audit conducted by an outside auditing firm.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Argument

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The Community College of Aurora's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the College to fulfill its mission. Governance reflects CCA's position in a state-wide system under a governing board that sets policy for all system colleges, the opportunities the College offers for engagement in governance by groups across the institution, and internal structures that encourage involvement by faculty, staff, and students.

#### **Governing Board is Knowledgeable, Provides Oversight, Meets Responsibilities**

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE/State Board) is the [governing board](#) for the Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System) and its 13 colleges, including CCA. Through its president, CCA reports to the CCCS President, who reports to the SBCCOE. State Board policies provide overall direction to the System and its colleges. These include policies that mandate financial and academic oversight. The State Board prepares a [strategic plan for the System](#), establishes performance metrics for the colleges, and approves each college's annual budget, fees, new initiatives, and projects. [Committees](#) assist the Board in providing oversight and meeting its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. To further insure rigorous oversight, an internal audit department reports directly to the State Board.

To keep the State Board well informed about the College, CCA's President submits a [monthly report](#) summarizing College activities categorized by System strategic goals. Members may ask the President questions about this report. Board members see reports on how colleges are doing in meeting System metrics, attend System colleges' graduations and other events, visit college campuses for monthly board meetings, tour the colleges annually, and are each paired with a specific college for a more in-depth relationship. The [State Faculty Advisory Council](#) and the [State Student Advisory Council \(SSAC\)](#) provide the State Board with information from faculty and student perspectives through non-voting seats on the Board.

The System's organization promotes effective leadership and collaborative processes. System Board policies are implemented through System President's procedures. Contributing to effective and collaborative leadership are the CCCS Presidents' Council, System task forces, a curriculum committee, and regular meetings of System colleges' instructional and student services vice presidents, registrars, business officers, and institutional research staff. System-wide events such as the annual 2:2, which brings colleges' instructional departments together, encourage collaboration.

### **College Engages Internal Constituents in Governance**

CCA has structures and procedures in place for involving faculty, staff, students, and administrators in College governance. These are described in [written guidelines and procedures](#) approved by the President's Cabinet and posted on the College portal. State Board policy mandates several of these structures including a [student government](#) and [faculty shared governance](#). Reflecting strongly-held College values such as collaboration, respect, and inclusion, CCA also has informal practices for giving people a voice in what the institution does and how it is run. Satisfaction with this approach is reflected on the [2014 CCCS Faculty Survey](#), where 86.5% of those responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have a voice in decision making within my department."

All areas of the College are represented in the [President's Cabinet](#), the primary internal decision-making body at the College. Meeting weekly, Cabinet includes the President, the four vice presidents, and the Director of Human Resources. One week each month, Cabinet is extended to include the Instructional and Student Affairs deans, and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence. Cabinet regularly invites individuals or groups from across the College to meetings for presentations on specific items or responds to requests for discussion of a specific agenda item.

The structure for inclusion in College governance includes two major meetings. The expanded leadership team brings together about 35 unit directors, instructional department chairs, deans, and cabinet members, with a student added in 2016-17. The team meetings often feature small group discussions, which provide time and opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. Suggestions about and solutions to issues facing the College are sought and updates on institution-wide matters, such as budgets, are often given at these meetings. Team members then convene meetings with those who report to them to inform them about the most recent leadership meeting. Monthly all-college meetings hosted by the President are open to all, with an emphasis on sharing information. Both meetings also reflect CCA's value-driven, sometimes informal, approach to structuring opportunities for members of the College community to speak about and discuss issues facing the College.

The Student Government Association (SGA) represents an important vehicle for student contribution to CCA's institutional governance. Student Government runs the elections in which students vote on proposed student fees before fee proposals can be forwarded to the State Board. The SGA President meets at least twice each semester with the College President, and the SGA meetings provide a forum for discussion of new initiatives at the College, such as the College's

guided pathways initiative and a proposed campus-wide activity hour. The requests for SGA to discuss these initiatives often comes from College faculty and staff.

The SGA also contributes to institutional governance at the System level. [State Board Policy mandates the SSAC](#), which represents students' voices in the governance of the CCCS. Students elect the SSAC representatives from their colleges in student government-run elections, including special elections to fill vacancies.

### **College Has Structures for Contribution and Collaboration on Academic Requirements**

At CCA, regular faculty members, adjunct instructors, department chairs, and deans have structures for participation in instructional decision-making. These include the Faculty Senate, the Adjunct Alliance, the Chairs Council, and the Deans Council. The [Faculty Senate](#) provides a collective voice for all regular faculty (not including department chairs, who belong to the Chairs Council) in the development, implementation, and evaluation of campus academic practices. The Senate also elects the CCA representative to the State Faculty Advisory Council and two representatives to the State Faculty Curriculum Committee. The [Adjunct Alliance](#), which elects one representative to sit on the Faculty Senate, provides a voice for the many adjunct instructors who teach for CCA. The [Chairs Council](#) advocates for departments and faculty, and participates in planning and decision-making. In its advocacy role it recommends action to the Deans Council and Cabinet, works on instructional budget development, instructional program planning, and instructional-area budget development. The [College curriculum committee](#) deals with requests for new courses, changes to existing courses, and deleted courses, and the mandated [Career and Technical Educational Advisory Committees](#) provide input to CCA's CTE programs.

### **Sources**

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- INST Chairs Council Description 2013
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- PRES 5-3 President's Cabinet 2016
- PRES Faculty Staff Student Involvement Guidelines 2016
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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

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*Core Component 5A includes the monitoring report on planning requested by the 2013 comprehensive evaluation team.*

The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) plans systematically, integrating that planning with other institutional processes. The College aligns new budget requests with its strategic goals; has increased the links between planning, evaluation, and budgeting; completed an extensive comprehensive strategic planning process in 2014; understands its capacity including changes in enrollment and revenue; and continues to monitor emerging factors such as those studied in its 2013-14 planning process.

### College Allocates Resources in Alignment with its Mission and Priorities

CCA aligns its resources with its mission, especially to support student success, the primary focus of the College's vision, mission, and goals. In pursuit of this alignment, the College has strengthened its annual budgeting process over the last three years to ensure that requests support the strategic goals. Budgeting begins each spring when divisions, through their vice presidents, submit new spending proposals, first for review by Fiscal Affairs and then for discussion by the President's Cabinet. Requests are entered on a [budget initiative template](#) where they must include the specific strategic goal the request will address and explain how the allocation will help meet that goal. Following a review by the Budget Director and the Vice President for Administration, the President's Cabinet considers the requests, comparing them against the College goals as it prioritizes which to approve.

The alignment between CCA's budgeting and its goals is evident in the ways the College has directed monies in recent years. For example, it has added staff to create a Career Services Center to help increase graduate employment, one aspect of Goal 1; hired instructional coaches to improve student learning as part of Goal 2; added positions in Outreach and Recruitment and

increased the marketing budget to help raise enrollment, as called for in Goal 3; supported a major Information Technology improvement project, part of achieving Goal 4; and added the position of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence to help accomplish Goal 6.

The College matches its grant-seeking priorities with its strategic goals. The [current grants](#) that support projects for student success and learning include: the five-year renewal in 2015 of CCA's general TRiO grant and receipt of a second TRiO award focused on supporting English as a Second Language learners, a National Science Foundation grant which provides full-time scholarships for students pursuing STEM degrees, and increased scholarship funding from a private local foundation for students in their final semesters to degree completion. In an important summer 2016 System-wide innovation grant competition, CCA submitted applications to promote guided pathways, increase student course success and reduce group disparities, and to accelerate ESL and adult basic education students' transitions into healthcare and IT certificate programs. In addition, the Community College of Aurora Foundation has aligned its fund-raising with the College's mission, giving priority to [student scholarships](#), a key element in CCA's retention and completion efforts.

### **College Links Processes for Assessment, Evaluation of Operations, Planning, and Budgeting**

Over the last several years, CCA has made significant progress in linking its assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. Driving this progress was the initiative developed to support Goal 2 in the [2014 Strategic Plan](#) that called for increasing the use of student learning data for program review and budgeting.

The linking of these four processes is being done most successfully in the [instructional department reviews](#), where department chairs, faculty, and staff prepare reports that include student learning data, financial information, and an evaluation of the department's operations based on data from Institutional Research. These reports, reviewed and analyzed by deans and the area's vice president, serve as the basis for curricular and departmental planning as well as for program and department-level budgeting.

At the institutional level, CCA is progressing with linking its planning, budgeting, and operational evaluations. For example, the Student Affairs annual departmental reports include a budget analysis and goals and outcomes linked to the College's strategic goals. The College is still discussing how – and whether – to tie assessment data to other processes at the institutional level, especially given the success of this process in instructional departments and programs.

### **Planning Encompasses Institution as a Whole, Perspectives of Internal and External Groups**

CCA structured its 2013-14 strategic planning as a College-wide process with significant community input. Twenty-two people from across the institution worked for more than a semester to analyze [information about external trends](#), develop recommendations, turn those recommendations into draft goals, and propose new College mission and vision statements. The

broader College community participated through open meetings, opportunities to respond electronically, discussions at existing events such as the annual November faculty in-service days, and a Cabinet retreat and approval process. External groups were invited to the campus to comment on the plan as it was developed and existing groups such as the CCA Foundation Board and the College Advisory Council [provided critique and comment](#).

In the years when it is not engaging in institution-wide strategic planning, the College continues to gather and examine the perspectives of external constituents. To do this, CCA administrators, faculty, and staff interact regularly with community groups and individuals, legislators, and city and county officials who provide a variety of perspectives on the College, its offerings, and its direction. College representatives attend meetings and report back from organizations such as the Aurora Economic Development Council, the Aurora Mental Health Center, the Foundation Board for the Hispanic Chamber, the Aurora Chamber and its working groups, the Community Campus Partnership in north Aurora, the Visioning Committee for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and the Immigrant Roundtable.

Cabinet members and others have made visits in the last two years to institutions as varied as Buckley Air Force Base, the Aurora Welcome Center (for refugees and immigrants), and the Aurora Resilience Center, a community-based effort to build community strength following the 2012 Aurora theater shootings. On occasion, outside speakers such as the System president, the director of the local workforce center, and representatives from the Colorado Department of Higher Education have been invited to the expanded leadership or all-college meetings to present specific information.

The mandated career and technical education (CTE) advisory committees provide employer perspectives on CCA program and course offerings. The College Advisory Council, another mandated group, offers regular input from the perspective of members who come from the public schools, city government, local businesses and employers, and community organizations. As part of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), CCA has a high degree of interaction with similar institutions around the state both administratively and through regular meetings with counterparts, often at the vice president level.

### **College Plans on the Basis of a Sound Understanding of Current Capacity.**

CCA maintains a sound understanding of its capacity and uses this understanding as it carries out ongoing planning. Institutional Research (IR) supplies a broad range of data to College decision makers through written reports, presentations to College leadership, and data posted on its website. IR also maintains a close working relationship with the City of Aurora's Planning Division, which provides the College with data about [population growth and demographics](#). Enrollment reports are sent to leadership daily, and budget reports are sent to managers monthly. In 2016, Cabinet revised its meeting structure to include a weekly data presentation and a "yellow light" agenda item where members alert colleagues to emerging issues that may affect the College. Reports from System staff and participation by CCA leadership in System-level meetings provide additional information, particularly that related to the state and higher education budgets and to legislative developments.

## **Planning Anticipates Factors Such as Technology, Demographic Shifts, Globalization.**

CCA pays close attention in its planning to shifts in technology, demographics, global issues, and other broad developments. The Strategic Plan is built on the [2013-14 Analysis of External Trends report](#) from the planning committee, which highlighted the most significant trends the committee concluded were facing the College. These included declines in public funding for higher education, increasing globalization, new modes of instructional technology, declining governance capacity, and more social inequality. CCA leadership stays informed in these areas through reports at Cabinet meetings, such as updates given by the Director of Information Technology; attendance at informative community-level events, such as the Mayor's annual State of the City briefings; presentations by international visitors to the College, such as those given in the past year by the consul generals from the Republic of Korea and Belgium; and a culture of sharing reading materials of interest to colleagues, including journal articles and summaries from System-level meetings.

## **Monitoring Report**

The 2013 visitation team requested a monitoring report from CCA that demonstrated that the College had developed and was using a strategic planning process and a program review process with related policies and procedures. In the past three years, CCA has responded to the team's concerns by implementing the strategic planning process and follow-up activities and procedures, and expanding the review of programs with procedures based on System policies and college guidelines. The responses to the specific elements requested by the team are as follows:

**A mission review** -- The College completed a thorough review of its mission and vision as part of the 2013-14 strategic planning process. This review process will continue with each new strategic plan. The review examined the [existing mission](#) statement and found that it did not mention the College's transfer function and did not emphasize the importance of providing high quality support services to students. The [new mission statement](#) adds these components, as well as a more explicit statement on preparing students for employment and transfer. The vision statement is entirely new, shifting the vision from how prospective enrollees may view the College, to stating clearly that CCA operates with the premise that all students can succeed. These changes reflect more clearly and accurately the institution's actual practice, and the new statements are widely used throughout the College.

**An environmental scan** -- As part of the strategic planning process, an external analysis committee drawn from across the institution conducted an [extensive environmental scan](#) in the fall of 2013. The planning committee used the report and its summary of the significant trends facing CCA as it developed strategic goals and rewrote the mission and vision statements. The trends the committee identified were as follows:

- The high need for student remediation at Colorado community colleges, including CCA
- The challenges African-American and Latino students face in accessing and completing higher education
- The decline in public funding for higher education even as demand increases
- New modes of instruction emerging from technological innovation

- Campus transformation, with more emphasis on flexible facilities
- New regulation and scrutiny with related complexity impacting governance capacity
- Globalism bringing the need for the skills to compete in a world environment.

The College continues to observe and monitor its environment through regular interaction with the community and its leadership, participation in a broad range of organizations, on-campus speakers and community tours, interaction with CCCS and its member colleges, attendance at conferences and webinars, and organized readings of higher education and related literature. For example, in the summer of 2015, College leadership and others jointly read and discussed “Redesigning America's Community Colleges” (Bailey, Jaggars, Jenkins).

**Articulation of the College’s focused priorities and key performance indicators** -- The 2013-14 planning process developed six strategic goals, the majority of which address issues found in the environmental scan. The planning process also developed initiatives for achieving the goals, which were assigned to Cabinet members whose areas of responsibility align closely with the goals. Following acceptance of the plan and its goals, Cabinet charged the Director of Institutional Research with developing metrics to use in assessing goal attainment. Institutional Research used these metrics as the basis for the [FY2015](#) and [FY2016](#) annual progress reports it prepared for Cabinet, which describe the College's progress in meeting its strategic goals.

**Development of a College-wide strategic plan with measurable goals and strategies** -- The planning process that began in the fall of 2013 produced a plan with six strategic goals. As the plan and goals were discussed and reviewed across the College, the President’s Cabinet developed initiatives and implementation strategies for each goal. Following the plan’s approval, CCA’s Office of Institutional Research worked with the Cabinet to develop measurable metrics for each of the goals. The metrics continue to be a work in progress; discussions between IR and Cabinet allow room for the revision of existing metrics or the addition of new metrics, after several months' review of the annual report.

**Development of aligned unit-level strategic action plans with measurable goals** -- Following the completion and approval of the strategic plan in 2014, major College divisions completed their own strategic plans to describe how they would carry out CCA’s mission, vision, and goals. These divisions included [Academic Affairs](#), [Student Affairs](#), and [Human Resources](#). All College units also require their employees have annual performance plans in place with individuals goals based on the College goals.

**Linkage of the College’s budgeting process to strategic goals** -- As discussed in Criterion 5.A, the College has worked since 2014 to increase the linkage between its strategic goals and the budgeting process. This connection was strengthened in 2016 with the [introduction of instructions](#) for how budget requests were to be tied to the strategic goals, and the development and use of a format through which all requests were to be submitted with the goals. The President’s Cabinet, the group responsible for reviewing, discussing, and approving the budget, has increasingly based discussion on the College priorities, particularly around student success, enrollment, and inclusion. The strategic goals are also linked to the budgeting process at program and department levels through the department review process and its use of goal-based

criteria to help develop budgets, and at the division level, where budget requests are driven by the goals.

**Tracking of programs toward achievement of the College and unit plan goals** -- Utilizing the metrics developed in collaboration with, and approved by, Cabinet, the Office of Institutional Research compiled data and produced written reports in the summers of 2015 and 2016 tracking the achievement of the College goals. Units have also begun to track the achievement of their own goals, as illustrated in the [Office of Student Life 2015-2016 Annual Report](#).

**Communication of progress in meeting the strategic plan's goals to stakeholders** -- The Department of Institutional Research's report on progress in meeting the goals of the strategic plan is presented and discussed in the President's Cabinet. Cabinet members disseminate this information to their areas. Summaries of the report also go to the expanded leadership group, to all-college meetings, and to external groups. These venues also allow for questions about the report and College progress. Other modes of dissemination include an article in the report the President sends to the State Board, and reports in the College's internal and external newsletters.

**Program Review** -- CCA has a robust and effective department (program) review process that includes College criteria focused on CCA's strategic plan; an increasingly broad financial analysis; factors such as program history, partnerships, and mission; and academic quality based on results from CCA's assessment of student learning. The process relies on the College's [guideline on program review](#) which in turn is based on State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education policy [BP9-47](#) and CCCS President's Procedure [SP9-47](#). A College document provides details on the [department review requirements](#). In addition to being included in annual department program reviews, all the College's CTE programs undergo rigorous externally directed program review every five years. An important metric in the review process is the tracking of student success (a grade of "C" or better) and completion rates, as these metrics are key goals on the state's recent [Performance Funding contract](#), as well the [CCCS Strategic Plan](#).

CCA's strategic goals, including those related to student success and inclusion, provide criteria for the reviews. The Office of Institutional Research prepares data each summer for the reviews, supplemented by data from Instruction's own Academic Intelligence database. Data for criteria such as transfer, retention, and other student success measures is disaggregated by race, age, gender, and other factors. The reviews' use of financial information has increased over the last few years. Initially, that information was limited to department and program spending, but in 2015 it was broadened to include program fees in an effort to get fee income correctly allocated. In FY17 the inclusion of more comprehensive financial information will help more accurately determine the actual cost of each instructional program. The departments link assessment of student learning to budget and planning review by including assessment results for their programs in their reviews. Also considered in the review process are the program history including enrollment and other historical data, the program's legacy within the department and community, and the needs of partners and others within the community.

The department chairs, assisted by their faculty and staff, prepare the department reports and submit them to their deans and to the Vice President for Academic Affairs in late September or

October. The reports cover all the instructional programs within a department. The deans and the vice president review the plans, discuss them as a group, and respond to the chairs with questions. The approved reviews go back to the chairs for them to use for department and program planning. The early fall timing of the process allows time for curricular changes for the next year and for the development of budget requests.

The College's [Student Affairs division reviews its programs annually](#) and selects several to participate in an externally-driven, nationally normed program review process. The division utilizes a rigorous, externally driven self-assessment process through the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) which evaluates student affairs programs according to recognized essential outcomes. Student Affairs asks two of its programs to undertake this review each year. To date the Student Success Center, the Office of Disability and Equity (formerly Disability Services), Counseling, Student Life, and Student Conduct have completed their reviews with Admissions and Records and Outreach and Recruitment currently doing their reviews. The [Disabilities Services review](#) provides an exemplar of the CAS review materials.

Student Affairs also reviews its programs internally, asking the head of all departments to submit [a required plan](#) that assesses one key portion of their program each fall. The departments design the studies, carry them out, and report results in the spring along with recommendations for what they will change. They use data from either Institutional Research or from internal sources in their studies. The results are included on a required annual department report template that is used by all department heads. In line with the importance of linking program review to planning, the division uses the results from both the internal and external program reviews to determine if it needs to make changes or additions to the Student Affairs Strategic Plan.

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- SA Strategic Plan 2014-19
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## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) works systematically to document evidence of institutional, unit, and individual performance; to learn from that evidence and from operational experience; and to apply that learning for improvement. Guided by its mission and vision, CCA places special emphasis on understanding and improving its performance in meeting its strategic goals and those of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS/System). Efforts to document performance range from those for the institution as a whole (e.g., an annual Progress toward Strategic Goals Report and an annual report to CCCS), to those for units and special initiatives (e.g., annual program reviews and the 2016 climate survey report), to those for individuals (e.g., annual employee performance evaluations).

While evidence about CCA's performance comes from many sources, internal and external, the College relies heavily on its Office of Institutional Research (IR) for data, analysis, and reporting. Over the last four years CCA has strengthened its IR capacity by putting in place new leadership in 2014, increasing the number of staff from two to five, emphasizing a high level of service to faculty and staff, and providing more analysis to College leadership, accompanied by recommendations for how findings could be used to improve performance.

### Strategic Goals Report

Following approval of [CCA's strategic plan](#) and its goals in 2014, the President's Cabinet charged Institutional Research with developing metrics for the goals, collecting evidence to measure how well the College is progressing toward meeting them, preparing an annual written progress report, and meeting with the Cabinet each July for report presentation, review, and discussion. Among the findings in the [2016 progress report](#) were the need for the College to grow enrollment, close achievement gaps between students of color and white students, and develop a facilities master plan. The report also noted a significant drop in the percentage of CCA completers finding employment. To improve performance in these areas, the College is, among other things, clarifying and assigning responsibilities for the targets set in its 2015 enrollment plan, launching training in inclusive excellence for a cohort of employees and for College leadership in the fall of 2016, and working with an architectural firm to begin development of a facilities master plan.

### CCCS Report

Each spring, CCA's President receives a [metrics report](#) from the System that provides data on how the College has performed on the CCCS goals compared to the progress it had estimated it would make for the year. The President and her Cabinet review the System's report, discuss the findings, and develop proposals for steps the College will take to improve its performance. To begin the next year's cycle, the President, with the assistance of Institutional Research staff and Cabinet members, [develops a plan](#) that describes how the College will perform on each System metric during the coming year and actions it will take to reach those performance levels. The President meets with the System President to discuss CCA's results for the prior year as described in the report and to present her with the performance plan for the coming year. The System President may suggest changes to the plan prior to its acceptance and implementation.

The most recent System report (May 2016) indicated that CCA is making progress on minority completion and remedial success rates, but needs to raise its performance on degree completion, fall-to-fall retention, and transfer rates for those who have completed 12 or more credits. To increase transfer rates and AA and AS degree completion, the College is encouraging more students to enter Degrees with Designation and structured pathways.

To ensure that learning from these reports spreads across the institution, performance reports and improvement plans are widely shared. For example, soon after CCA's President submitted the 2016-17 plan to the System President, she [summarized](#) the most recent System report and metrics, as well as CCA and CCCS plans, in a presentation to deans, directors, and instructional department chairs at the expanded leadership meeting.

### **Enrollment Reports**

Increasing enrollment is a goal shared by the College and CCCS, especially given the importance of tuition to the fiscal health not only of CCA (as discussed in 5.A) but of all the System's colleges. Several reports regularly document CCA's enrollment performance and provide information for improving it. Each weekday morning, a group of nearly 40 College staff in departments with responsibilities related to enrollment receive an [emailed report](#) that shows CCA's headcount and FTE compared to the equivalent day in the previous year's enrollment cycle. Beginning five weeks before the start of a term, the report also includes charts showing headcount and FTE enrollment progress for the current year and for each of three years prior by location. A smaller group of senior leadership receives a weekly System-wide report that shows CCA's enrollment compared to that of all other CCCS colleges.

These reports are discussed in Cabinet and across the College, leading to changes in enrollment-related processes. The decreased enrollment levels documented in the daily reports in 2015 led to the implementation of a more effective approach to the drop for non-payment process and prompted College leadership to increase communication to students about the importance of enrolling in the summer. The weekly reports have made CCA staff aware of who is performing well on enrollment at other System colleges. Staff have then contacted these institutions to understand the reasons for their success and to learn about activities that could be implemented at CCA.

### **Institutional Reports from Internal Task Forces and Outside Groups**

When extensive, specialized learning for performance improvement is needed, the College utilizes internal task forces or, in some cases, turns to external consultants to report evidence of performance and make recommendations for improvement.

A recent example of an internal group doing an extensive review of performance and using what it learned to make recommendations for improvement is the [enrollment task force](#) that reported its findings and recommendations in 2015. Among the enrollment task force's findings were that current students were not enrolling in a timely manner for the next semester and that CCA had no formal, organized process for tracking potential students. To address these issues, the task force recommended a more intensive program of activities and events ("Registration Nation") to communicate the opening of registration to current students and a much more consistent tracking of potential students to learn, among other things, what percentage went from inquiry to application and from application to enrollment. To learn more about how to improve enrollment performance, the College hired Clarus Corporation, a company specializing in assisting community colleges with enrollment, marketing, and branding, to [conduct a study and develop recommendations](#).

In 2015, CCA hired JBA Incorporated, a firm that specializes in facilities planning services for institutions in higher education, to study its space utilization and to produce a [report of its findings](#). JBA found that the College has sufficient space, but not always the space it needs for particular purposes, at specific times, or on both campuses. Its report indicated, for example, that adjunct instructors need additional preparation space. As a result, CCA made improvements to adjunct space in 2015-16. The report also indicated that lack of effective scheduling was part of the space utilization problem. In response, CCA purchased and is implementing the Ad Astra scheduling system.

### **Unit-Level and Special Reports**

On the unit level, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and other departments collect and report evidence of performance related to their unit plans. Student Affairs, for example, completes an [annual report](#) that provides such information. In Academic Affairs, evidence of performance and recommendations for improvements come through the program review process discussed in 4.A and through an [extensive course evaluation process](#) conducted in collaboration with Institutional Research (IR). The College assessment committee works with Instructional and Student Affairs programs to assess the College's performance in improving student learning through a cycle that includes the collection of data and the application of what is learned from the data collection to implement improvements. This process is fully discussed in Criterion 4.B.

The schools within Academic Affairs have collaborated with IR on a major initiative over the past several years to improve student success through the collection and analysis of data. Aware of College-wide disparities in student success, the School of Liberal Arts has looked closely at student success (students with a grade of "C" or better) in courses with high enrollment and high failure rates (gatekeeper courses). They have used IR data, disaggregated by factors such as ethnicity, age, gender, and receipt of financial aid for two courses in history, philosophy, and English; interviewed faculty and surveyed students; and then [designed interventions](#) which will be implemented in a wider range of courses in the fall of 2016.

Reflecting the institutional commitment to using evidence to improve performance, College departments frequently request IR collaboration on reports that document performance including surveys, evaluations for grant-funded projects, and specialized one-time data requests. For example, in 2015-16, IR partnered with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (now Inclusive Excellence Council) to develop, administer, and analyze climate surveys for faculty, staff, and students. In addition to appearing in a [report](#), the findings from these surveys were discussed at College-wide open forums. In general, the survey found that while many people feel comfortable at CCA, there are a wide range of groups and situations where individuals do not find the College climate, or particular aspects of it, welcoming. An improvement based on the survey's finding was the creation of a new evening administration position at the Lowry campus to ensure a warmer sense of welcome and attention to administrative details for the diverse student population at Lowry.

In other cases, College units collect and analyze their own data as they seek ways to improve performance. For example, CCA's Center for Workforce Development collaborates with the Community Campus Partnership's Hire Local project to train residents from low-income neighborhoods in north Aurora for employment at the hospitals on the Anschutz Medical Campus. Many of the project's challenges relate to the recruitment, screening, and placing of community residents in complex educational and employment systems unfamiliar to them. To improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the training, project staff members keep records on each person contacted during the recruitment, screening, and placement processes, then meet to discuss what is being learned about barriers to program entry, completion, and successful employment.

### **Operational Experience**

At CCA, applying learning from operational experience for improvement is also practiced by specific programs. This has been the case with new student orientation, where the College's Center for Outreach and Recruitment staff has systematically gathered evidence about program operations and, with the help of Institutional Research, collected data about outcomes and used that information to improve the program. The initial approach, the collection of evidence, and the resulting refinements are the subject for a [manuscript submitted for publication](#). Other examples of this level of learning from experience and using that learning to improve operations include the regular debriefs that the Security department holds for participants following active shooter and other drills, and the processing of feedback from high schools gathered by CCA's concurrent enrollment staff.

### **Performance Plans**

CCA's systematic approach to documenting employees' performance, gathering their opinions, and utilizing this information to improve performance is a major strength. The College has a well-developed [employee performance evaluation system](#) that includes the development of an annual work plan, annual evaluations with documentation of employee performance, employee-supervisor conversations focused on improvement, and steps for improvement built into the goals in the employee's next performance plan. This process is being strengthened in 2016-17

with the introduction of a new performance evaluation form that requires more explicit performance planning.

In the last two years, CCA has also begun to gather [360-degree feedback for administrators](#) from persons who report to them, colleagues with whom they work closely, and their administrative peers. This information is used by supervisors in their performance evaluations and by employees as they develop their goals for the coming years. In addition, to learn employees' views on a wide range of work-related topics, the System surveys faculty and staff and then reports each [college's data](#) to the institution.

### **Broad Learning Efforts**

While the College generally relies on formal data gathering and reporting, it also learns from less formal observations, experiences, and feedback from groups and individuals. A case in point is the improvement now underway in IT. In 2014, CCA began assessing its campus IT operations and learned the extent to which it needed to upgrade its infrastructure. As a result, the College developed [a plan for improving the IT infrastructure](#) and used reserve funds to pay for the upgrades. To ensure a sustainable improvement, the College enlisted the assistance of students to gain support for a new technology fee to support new and ongoing technology improvements.

During the last 30 years, College administrators learned that while the creation of its CentreTech campus with funds raised through Community College of Aurora Foundation bonds was a wonderful gift, it also brought constraints. These included the need for CCA to use operating funds to pay rent equal to the Foundation's debt service payments on the bonds, the State of Colorado's unwillingness to construct a building on land it does not own, and CCA's ineligibility for state maintenance funds for buildings it did not own. Based on this operational learning, when the original lease and a one-year extension ended, the College successfully requested from the State Board that it be allowed to use reserve funds to purchase the CentreTech property from the CCA Foundation. This change means both improved effectiveness and the prospect of greater long-term sustainability as an institution.

### **Sources**

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- CCA 360 Evaluation Leadership Survey 2016
- CCA Clarus Report Draft 2016
- CCA Enrollment Management Plan Report 2015
- CCA HR 8.3 Performance Evaluations 2013
- CCA IT Strategic Plan 2014-19
- CCCS CCA Incentive Fund Spring Report 2016
- CCCS Faculty Staff Climate Surveys 2014
- CCCS Spring Report 2016
- FAC Space Analysis 2015
- INST Daily FTE Comparison 2016

- INST Gatekeeper Course Study 2016
- IR Campus Climate Survey Report 2016
- IR Course Evaluation Protocol 2016
- IR Progress Towards Strategic Goals Report 2016
- IR Progress Towards Strategic Goals Report 2016
- PRES Expanded Leadership Presentation 2016
- PRES Performance Goals and Plans 2016-17
- PRES Strategic Plan Booklet 2014
- SA Annual Report 2015-16
- SA Orientation Manuscript Sandoval-Lucero Antony 2016
- SBCCOE Meeting Minutes CCA CTC Purchase March 2016
- SBCCOE Meeting Minutes CCA CTC Purchase March 2016 (page number 3)

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Summary

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The Community College of Aurora (CCA/College) has the resources, structures, and processes sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. CCA is actively planning for the future.

Although Colorado's higher education financial situation is challenging, CCA has a positive fiscal position and solid infrastructure, increased numbers of well-qualified personnel, and improved processes for budgeting and resource allocation. Current improvement initiatives include a master facilities plan, continued work on IT infrastructure, and close examination of expenditures and additional revenue sources.

The College fulfills its mission through well-established governance and administrative structures that promote effective leadership and collaboration. Governance reflects CCA's position in a state-wide system whose governing board sets policy for all 13 system colleges and internal structures that encourage faculty, staff, and student participation. The College is building student leadership capabilities, faculty and instructors are becoming more involved in governance, and employees and students are participating actively in initiatives such as inclusive excellence.

CCA has strengthened its systematic planning over the past few years and is doing more to integrate planning with institutional processes. The College now aligns annual budget requests with its strategic goals and has increased the links among planning, evaluation, and budgeting. In 2014, CCA completed an extensive comprehensive strategic planning process with significant community input. The College understands its current capacity, including enrollment and revenue changes; uses that information in planning; and continues to pay close attention to emerging factors such as those studied in its 2013-14 planning process. A monitoring report on planning detailed in Core Component 5.C describes the significant progress the College has made, and continues to make, in these areas.

To improve performance, the College is working systematically to document evidence of institutional, unit, and individual performance; to learn from evidence and operational experience; and to apply that learning. CCA is placing special emphasis on understanding and improving its performance in meeting its strategic goals and those of the Colorado Community College System. The College relies heavily on its Office of Institutional Research (IR) for data, analysis, and reporting to help evaluate performance, and has strengthened its IR capacity in the last three years.

Among the challenges the Colleges faces are developing strategies to continue the recent (fall 2016) improvements in enrollment, developing and then implementing the facilities plan, continuing to strengthen planning including linking it more closely with other institutional processes, determining a timeline for the next college-wide strategic planning effort, strengthening collaboration to achieve success with CCA's completion agenda, and matching college revenues and expenses.

## **Sources**

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*There are no sources.*