WHO ARE YOU?

The question is fundamental. But as a new CCA stage production shows, addressing a critical inner piece and discovering inner peace isn’t always the easiest juxtaposition.

CCA student Dana Bergren plays the role of transgender character Dean in the upcoming play, “Pronoun.”
There's no doubt that the transgender themes that permeate the new stage production "Pronoun" may be difficult for some, whether because of personal belief systems, adherence to religious doctrine, or its challenge of so-called cultural norms.

CCA Theater Director Stacey D'Angelo admitted the adaptation of the production, first commissioned as part of the 2014 National Theatre Connections Festival in Great Britain, "is one of the more risky pieces I’ve picked."

At the same time, the play focuses on the transition of the main character, Dean, from male to female in a "tame" fashion, she added, with romantic comedy at its core.

But there also seems to be little question that the timing is right for such a dialogue. Caitlin Jenner’s journey has been splashed across international headlines, opening the door for such discussion. But it was D’Angelo witnessing hateful messages on club posters for the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Questioning and Asexual (LGBTQA) Alliance hung on campus bathrooms at CCA that prompted her to raise the subject closer to home in Aurora.

"There’s a huge percentage of our community that doesn’t engage with people who identify in a way much different than themselves," D'Angelo explained. "They’re on board, but they don’t know how to talk about it. They’re afraid to say something wrong; therefore, ignorance is bliss.

"This is a facet of our community that deserves a love story."

Count Dana Bergren among the smitten. The 18-year-old, enrolled for the first time at CCA, was selected to play Dean.

This isn’t just a part for Bergren. It’s resonated on both personal and universal levels.

Only a few months ago, Bergren came out to close friends as gender queer, non-binary – meaning gender identification as neither male nor female. Androgynous would be the closest, if not exact, description of this population.

Non-binary falls under the transgender umbrella, though there are differences. Bergren doesn’t connect with Dean’s strong male identification, for example.

Yet, the stage production has become an opportunity for Bergren to continue navigating a very personal path while bringing fellow actors – and the viewing public – along on the journey.

"I think that a lot of times trans issues really are not accepted still. It’s still a battle we really have to fight," said Bergren, the daughter of the late CCA Science faculty member Todd Bergren, who died of cancer in 2011.

"I think a lot of people really don’t understand the concept of a gender-binary. You’re a boy. You’re a girl. It goes a lot different than that, and it's more complicated than people think. A lot of people still will make comments that, ‘It's all in your head, and you're just making it up to get attention,’ about being non-binary and trans. They think it’s an attention-seeking thing. It’s not. It’s a big part of your identity in a way that people aren't ready to accept yet."

"Pronoun" has become a vehicle for Bergren to talk about self-identification "in a way that I wasn’t able to before."

That type of sincerity and willingness to dig deep helped Bergren land the lead role.

Bergren read the play before auditions and connected to it right away. But, despite having done about 20 previous stage productions in middle and high school, little thought was given to the notion that the lead part was a possibility until the news was delivered.

Once cast, Bergren told everyone about the root of gone about putting personal emotions and experiences into building the character.

"I like the acronym HOW: Honest, Open, and Willing. And, along with the acting chops, Dana definitely was honest open and willing," said Joe Gill, who is co-directing the play with perhaps not in the United States. Video of the first-ever incarnation from London was found on the web. The sets were sparse in that production, allowing for plenty of room for CCA's directing team to interpret and expand upon the accompanying visuals and audio.

"It’s more complicated than people think.”
way that I’ve never seen before,” Bergren added. “Most of the time these stories are just so tragic – people killing themselves because they aren’t accepted by the community and all this horrible drama. But this is a comedy, and it’s really fun.

“There are intense moments, but I think it’s very honest and optimistic in a way that I haven’t seen this subject matter dealt with before. And I really connected to it as someone who recently came out as non-binary.”

At the audition, Bergren was asked, along with all of the other actors, to fill out an information sheet. One of the questions centered upon a connection to the LGBTQ community. “I’m part of it,” was Bergren’s response.

“I’m pretty much experiencing nothing but support and love from my other actors, and it’s really amazing,” Bergren said. “There are times where it gets confusing for people. They think of me as a girl and use feminine pronouns, so they kind of get embarrassed, like, ‘I don’t know what to call you.’ But people just want to learn, understand and accept, and I didn’t really anticipate that when I came out.”

The hope is that audiences in Aurora will be equally understanding of the play and its subject matter. Eight performances are scheduled between Oct. 15-25 at the Larry D. Carter Theater on the CentreTech campus.

“To me, the play is about coming of age and coming into their own in a world that’s maybe a few steps behind them,” Gill said. “And for me, it’s about patience – patience with yourself, but when you do choose this thing, having patience with what’s happening around you.”

Bergren hopes that Pronoun breeds acceptance on some level of the transgender community, and that individual life choices are allowed to be celebrated, and not attacked out of ignorance.

“There can be a happy ending. That’s a line from the play; You’re allowed to have a happy ending in your story,” Bergren said. “And I think that’s a very important message for a lot of LGBTQ kids.”

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Every play that Stacey D’Angelo directs for Community College of Aurora requires an accompanying director’s note, which is the overriding message she presents to the audience in order to shed light on the production’s roots and important themes.

Concocting that note is something that D’Angelo admitted is often stressful, and many times will crop up suddenly in the dark of night.

Last month, D’Angelo thought she was having one of those experiences. She was dreaming, and when she awoke she recalled that she was giving a speech in a place that was not quite recognizable. D’Angelo got out of bed, grabbed her computer, and began to type a stream of consciousness that didn’t encapsulate the upcoming production, but, instead, her life’s direction.

Only recently, D’Angelo had been diagnosed with breast cancer. She began a leave of absence from CCA in early October, and the plan is for her to undergo a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery.

The emotions that she’s experienced are typical, alternating between the feeling of facing a fierce fight with every fiber, and the fear of the unknown.

The show must go on, and will, personally and professionally.

The play “Pronoun” will be in good hands, as Joe Gill and Colleen Mylott, longtime collaborators and friends, take over the bulk of behind-the-scenes work.

For D’Angelo, the director’s note she penned in the darkness while everyone slept is her intended direction. It was part personal pep talk and a straightforward message to those around her wondering, wonderfully, what they can do for her.

From a very personal perspective, it’s her way to let everyone in her family and extended family that she will fight; that she will be back at CCA soon. And that there’s confidence she will be fine.

For my daughter, Sydney:
I am not defined by my breasts.
I am not defined by my cup size or uterus or the ability to make milk or birth a baby or cook or clean or smooth legs or ruby red lips or a curved, petite silhouette.
I am not defined by the expectations others put before me, or the words others use who see me. I am not defined by the actions of those who came before me or the decisions made which affect every molecule within my body and the air I breathe, water I drink, and food I eat.
I am not defined by the negativity that will creep to the surface, swim from the depths far below that hide in me, or others that walk amongst me.
I am not defined by my breasts.
I am defined by the relationships in my life and the people that fill them.
I am defined by my actions and the lessons I instill within my daughter. I am defined by the community I have built around me, and the relationships with the people that fill it.
I am defined by the love and joy that is manifested through the creation of my daughter with my beautiful partner. I am defined by the music I make, the art I create, the words I pen, the images I cherish and the beauty of this world I inhabit.
I am defined by love.
I am defined by my voice – my ability to speak and communicate my heart and thoughts with free abandon, the words I create to become my manifesto.
I am defined by my thoughts - my intellect to make meaning all of the hardships and joys collected together to create meaning and purpose for life.
I am defined by my daughter. I hope to be a human she looks toward for guidance, she hopes to resemble in her future and she relies on to help her navigate this always curving journey called life.
I am defined by my hope.
I am defined by my strength. I am defined by my image of the future.
I am not defined by my breasts.
I am not defined by cancer. I am not defined by the pain and the fear of the unknown. Death is inevitable. It’s the closing chapter to the beautiful infinity of life. While we aren’t able to breathe the air and drink the water and taste the fruit of this world indefinitely, we are forever connected, deeply rooted, and will live in on the connections we make with people, the impact we have on our community, and the love we hold in our hearts which will guide and direct and move forward eternally.
I am the world through the eyes of my daughter.
I AM life.

D’Angelo hopes to be recovered in time to see the play by the second weekend of performances. But a private showing with friends and family would hold a lot of meaning, as well.

“That,” Gill said, “would be a beautiful night.”
Grant renewal allows for reduced-fee Citizenship classes

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services announced Sept. 17 that it has renewed a joint grant application between Community College of Aurora and two local service organizations to continue offering citizenship classes at a reduced rate in an effort to help area residents prepare for the process of becoming American citizens. CCA and Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (LFSRM) subcontracted with the Colorado African Organization (CAO) on the program for fiscal year 2015. The federal government awarded $248,364 to the Colorado Collaborative Citizenship Program for the period starting Oct. 1 and ending Sept. 30, 2017.

CCA will receive $49,167 over the two-year period in order to subsidize its Citizenship class, allowing students to pay $40 to attend instead of the full $165 charge. The college hopes to serve 110 students annually. CAO also hopes to serve an additional 120 legal permanent residents through its concurrent citizenship classes. Lutheran Family Services provides legal support to help diverse and underserved populations navigate the process of securing legal citizenship.

“What the grant has allowed us to do is double the amount of class offerings,” said Christopher Tumbari, chair of CCA’s English as a Second Language department. “Prior to that, students were paying the full fee to take Citizenship, and we were able to run a class. But now we run two classes per term. And instructor Irene O’Brien’s students get their citizenship in huge numbers.”

CCA’s Community ESL program has been providing classes to the local community since 2003 and currently serves over 2,000 students annually, representing approximately 65 countries and 60 languages. CCA’s citizenship program began in January 2008 through the college’s Center for Workforce Development. Administration of the program was transferred to the Community ESL program in Fall 2012. Students now attend 10-week sessions for four hours per week. In fiscal year 2013’s grant cycle, CCA and CAO combined to provide citizenship instruction to 241 individuals and boasted a 98 percent success rate of students completing the training class and passing the naturalization process.

“Prior to 2012, there were two classes per term.”

CCA’s outreach plan will include leveraging partnerships with the City of Aurora’s immigrant liaison staff and other organizations in 26 states that will help green-card holders prepare and apply for citizenship.

SGA delegation headed to D.C. for national leadership summit

As president of the revamped Student Government Association, Sean “Twich” Collins and his cohorts are attempting to rebuild the organization from the ground up after it temporarily disbanded.

The group is about to get some tremendous pointers on next steps from those in the know.

CCA is sending five representatives from SGA to the fall National Student Government Summit in Washington D.C. from Oct. 1-4.

Sponsored by the American Student Government Association, the summit is an annual, four-day conference, featuring nearly 50 workshop sessions, 40 brainstorming roundtables, acclaimed keynote speakers and more than 24 intense, information-packed hours of practical help, research, and advice on how to improve student government.

“It’s a chance for personal growth, and to see how other people do it and how we stack up against them,” Collins said. “And it’s a chance for the entire group to gauge its leadership skills and see that we are much further ahead of the game than some of us may think we are.”

The breakdown of SGA prior to Spring 2014 semester left the group having to identify its priorities and activities moving forward.

The conference is an opportunity to learn training, ideas and techniques that are applicable to SGA’s current and future state.

“It’s a chance to see how other community colleges and traditional schools are doing, to see if there things that we can model and adapt ourselves to,” Collins added.

The conference is the largest of its kind in the U.S. each year. In 2013, 616 student leaders and advisors from 120 institutions in 33 states attended, including 48 community colleges.

This will be the first time CCA will be sending a delegation.

Aside from Collins, other attendees include SGA Vice President Andrea Mora, State Student Advisory Council Representative Kingsley Lawson, Secretary Ceilidh Givan, Treasurer Anyeka Reyna, and advisor Kathryn Sturtevant, who doubles as director of Student Life.

“This is the perfect time for this group, which is committed to a year’s service, to be able to take it all in and really absorb all the resources this conference provides,” Sturtevant said.

“Being able to learn more about ourselves as leaders and bring back the ideas learned at the conference is huge. And it’s a chance to solidify them as a stronger team.”

Delegations will be taught best practices and provided assistance on developing plans on pressing issues and long-term projects.

Among the topics expected to be discussed by summit experts and staff are improving voter turnout, enhancing the image of student government, boosting attendance at events, maximizing budgets, recruiting and retaining new members, improving relations with college administrators, and much more.

All of the presenters at the summit are considered among the nation’s premier student government experts on issues, problems and trends. Each speaker is a former SGA officer and/or advisor. This year’s group includes authors, college consultants and trainers, small-business owners, the head of a leadership and diversity institute, and a magazine editor-in-chief.

It won’t be all business and no play, though. There will be time for delegates to experience the food, culture and nightlife of D.C., as well as explore the nation’s seat of power.

“There’s a lot of history to explore. And I’m an advocate of parliamentary procedure, so to be going to a place where parliamentary procedure takes place is a cool, geeky, nerdy thing to see.”
Brown-bag series offers professional development

The Professional Development Committee is making a comeback.

Its first tangible contribution in its return to CCA after a several-year absence is a series of brown-bag lunches at both campuses focusing on academic support services.

Sessions will begin Oct. 13 and include subject matter ranging from tutoring and information literacy services, to learning objective alignment in D2L and web accessibility.

But in the big picture, the series hopes to serve as a repository of information covering a wide breadth of topics for adjuncts and full-time faculty.

At the beginning of the current academic year, the college didn’t do an across-the-board new faculty orientation. Instead it was handled within the departments. Existing faculty weren’t required to take part in those sessions. That meant there was no direct connection to CCAs academic support services at the beginning of the fall semester.

The brown-bag sessions are designed to be more in depth and a direct response to requests for better training from the Professional Development Committee, which is an offshoot of the Faculty Senate.

“These initial workshops give faculty enhanced opportunities to use the academic tools that are available to them, whether taking the form of technology, research or support for students having difficulty,” said Janet Brandau, vice president of Academic Affairs.

“It’s really a way to let faculty know what’s available for them and provide the resources and tools that they can use to improve their teaching, access to students, and more.”

The hope is that by offering topics each semester that have widescale appeal, these regular sessions will reach a broad base of regular and adjunct faculty, while centering on topics.

Robley Welliver, chair of the Professional Development Committee, said she can envision future sessions covering such subjects as innovation and creativity in the classroom, equity practices, dealing with difficult situations that arise within the profession, or best practices in teaching.

“I like the idea that it’s an informal training,” Welliver said. “It not only will support students, but gives faculty the chance to get together with colleagues a little bit, hopefully in a cross-curricular fashion.”

Attendees are encouraged to bring lunch.

Patti Molai, director of the Academic Learning Center, will kick off the series at CentreTech (sessions will rotate between campuses). Her topic: What is Tutoring?

Welliver called the brown-bag sessions during Fall 2015 “a great first step.”

“I’m excited about it and hope that people take advantage of it, not just our new faculty and adjuncts, but our regular faculty,” she explained.

“There’s a lot of new resources that most of us are unaware of or aren’t fully aware of. And this semester, it’s being aware of support services so that we can best communicate them to our students and help them take full advantage of all the support that they have.”

Joanna Powell, director of Library Services, Alex Nye, instructional designer and technologist, and Tamara White, dean of students, also are scheduled to present in the eight scheduled brown-bag sessions through Dec. 16.

“What I’m very thankful for is that the academic support services staff is excited to interact and bring some helpful tutelage to the faculty,” Brandau said. “Hopefully we’ll provide some good information.”

Welliver can envision a time when the brown-bag sessions become an integral part of faculty calendars each semester.

“It may take a few semesters for it to get its legs and be something that people know that they can go do;” she said.

“But having something that’s regularly scheduled, where you know you can get face time with your colleagues, and perhaps administration, while also learning something to make you more effective in the classroom and help our students, that would be fabulous.”

Math chair Gray addresses equity conference in Los Angeles

Math chair James Gray served as the keynote speaker at the sold-out 2015 Student Equity Plan Institute (SEPI) conference in Los Angeles from Sept. 16-17.

Gray was asked to present by the host Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California.

The state of California has a requirement that every college develop an equity plan. CUE has more than 15 years experience addressing educational opportunity gaps and offers the SEPI conference to community colleges that are cultivating and implementing those plans.

Gray has been at the forefront of CCA’s equity efforts for the last two years.

“Looking back two years later, we have made tremendous inroads creating a campus that is welcoming of all,” he said.

“We still have a lot of work to do, but we have many, many individuals who were once skeptical of equity work now actively working to address issues of equity. And equity is now a part of our strategic plans, and even part of many individual performance plans.”
New event encourages students to aim high

Nancy Mann’s list of written notes continued to grow, as speakers took the dais one-by-one and addressed the crowd at the college’s first-ever convocation Sept. 11.

Mann’s attention to detail was noticeable for a few reasons.

This wasn’t a quiz. There would be no follow-up questions on content that required study. Also, Mann is in her third semester at the college, not a new student, an audience to whom the event was targeted in an effort to provide inspiration for future graduation.

But Mann stood out for another reason – her age.

Nearing 67, she attended convocation to listen intently to the young people telling their stories on stage, and by imagining the future prospects of those attempting to launch new chapters in their lives. At the same time, she considered her own journey.

Coming back to school for the first time since attending Metropolitan State University in 1980, her notes were reminders of just what was at stake during her second go-round, and provided clues on how to successfully navigate her path.

Student leaders, former faculty of the year Chris Tombari, and CCA President Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven were among the convocation speakers attempting to provide guidance through the prism of their own educational experiences.

Mann wanted to make sure she remembered their key messaging, so she wrote down many of the salient points.

“The young people, the millennials, have the technical knowledge. They see things as immediate. But as an older person, I see things with a different perspective. There’s some wisdom that comes with the school of hard knocks,” Mann said. “At the same time, they bring me inspiration.”

Mann hopes to one day leave CCA with a degree that focuses on history and women’s studies. She wants to be a teaching assistant.

“I have a huge desire to learn and be a knowledgeable person,” she explained.

CCA faculty, staff and leadership sat in the front and rear of the auditorium during convocation to symbolize the support students like Mann and the incoming students will receive from start to completion.

“The college views convocation as a bookend event to graduation in May.

“This ceremony is all about your commitment to the completion of your academic career at CCA and beyond; Twitch Collins, president of the Student Government Association (SGA), said in his opening remarks.

“This moment is about you, the students. … This is our ceremony. This is for us. We are the reason this institution exists, and it will only continue to breathe life if we commit to excellence and pushing forward in the hard times.”

Tombari in his speech expanded upon that notion, asking students to not let “this world of higher education intimidate you.” And when things do appear overwhelming, he told them, “keep your goals in mind. Take it semester by semester, class by class, and remember we’re all here to support you.”

Oudenhoven discussed the diverse college community at CCA. The college features a student body averaging age 26, 58 percent women, 61 percent first-generation students, and 60 percent students of color.

Oudenhoven called CCA “the path to your ultimate goal.”

“The vision for this college is that every student succeeds – not just some students, every student,” she said. “What you get in an institution like this is small classes and wonderful teachers, and with the campus diversity, you get the advantage of students with a lot of different perspectives.

“And I want you to know that you won’t get lost here. People will know your names.”

Three well-known students were part of the convocation program in order to tell their stories.

Andrea Mora needed to overcome language barriers and fear to find motivation and opportunity at CCA, where she now is excelling in the classroom. She also serves as vice president of SGA and the LatinX club, as president of the International Student Association, and works in the Office of Student Life.

Abdu Jemil, a first-generation college student from Er- itrea, began in the English as a Second Language program. He now studies Political Science, and was selected last year as a member of the college’s National Model United Nations delegation in New York.

“There is nothing to hold you back from being a successful person,” he said. “Explore your potential, set goals and make a short- and long-term plan on how to reach them.”

Tiffany Christian talked about the commitment and sacrifice she made in the face of her pervasive feeling of being overwhelmed. Life’s challenges were beaten back by her resolve, though, so much so that Christian received her diploma and is preparing to transfer to a four-year college.

“Through our commitment, we’re breaking cycles and creating a new life,” she told the audience. “We all made it here through different methods. And it’s powerful, because we’re pressing forward and beating the odds.

“We’re digging deep and hanging onto that character of perseverance one semester at a time to reach that end goal.”

“And,” she added, “this is only the beginning.”
Fall Job and Internship Fair

The CCA Fall Job and Internship Fair, held Sept. 2 on the CentreTech campus, afforded more than 400 students the opportunity to meet 68 companies and organizations. Working from the theme, “Passport To Your Career,” students picked up passports with recognition stamps as the first step toward qualifying for prizes during the Spring Career Expo. Moe’s BBQ, Mike’s 2 and Denver Cupcake Truck were on hand to feed the masses. (Photos by Ryan Elam)
An August tour of Children’s Hospital gave a cohort of CCA students not only a look at the facilities, but possibilities.

Upon its arrival, the 14-person group bumped into Beverly Florance, who was in the midst of her first day on the job as an sterile processor at the hospital’s sprawling facility housed on Anschutz Medical Campus.

Florance is a graduate of the first Adult Basic Skills/Healthcare Bridge Program at Community College of Aurora, and its initial success story.

The touring students at the time were part of the second cohort, trying to gain education and skills that could lead to the kind of opportunity they saw in black-and-white in Florance’s presence.

“It was super exciting, especially for the cohort, because they could see someone hired. It let them know that it is possible,” said Valerie Gantzler, adult educator and coordinator of the healthcare bridge program.

“Beverly’s in her 50s, and it gave some of our students that are a little more mature a lot of optimism,” Gantzler added. “Some older students think companies won’t hire them because they aren’t 35 anymore. But it doesn’t have to do with age, but ability.”

The training was made possible by a $106,000 grant that CCA received over three years from the Colorado Department of Education to help train North Aurora residents for job opportunities on the Anschutz Medical Campus. The grant runs through 2017.

The project operates in conjunction with numerous local partners, including Community-Campus Partnership, Children’s Hospital Colorado, The Learning Source, Arapahoe/Douglas Works! and the Adams County Workforce and Business Center.

The grant is the first concrete funding earmarked towards an initiative that develops a workforce pipeline, which is the main focus of the Community-Campus Partnership’s mission.

Florance increased her earning power through the program, bumping her pre-program salary of $9.10 per hour to $14 in her new position. Yet, she’s also planning on taking more classes to advance in the sterile processing/surgical support field in work outside. Staying in a little motel room was lonely. “

Florance had spent 18 years as a stay-at-home mother, had gone through a divorce, and held significant debt. She had been working at Safeway before leaving for the heavy-labor job a state away.

“The pay was good, and by going out and doing that, it allowed me to be able to pay my bills and got me out of a financial hole I couldn’t get out of in Denver,” she said.

But the healthcare bridge could potentially keep her home and provide a possible pathway for the remainder of her working life.

The healthcare bridge was that start. For Florance, she needed to get help with a resume, cover letter, the interview process and more.

“Society had changed so much in 20 years, I didn’t know how things worked nowadays,” Florance said. “I hadn’t looked for a job for a long time. It opened the door to a job that paid halfway decent.”

Florance had tried several years earlier to get into sterile processing, but she was unable to find a school that offered the curriculum.

A newspaper article about CCA’s program came at an optimal time.

“She wanted to keep from going job to job and state to state. She wanted a pension, a way to save, and getting her foot in the door in a healthcare field with benefits, which for her was a first, was all very exciting to her,” said Gantzler.

Florance says she’s enjoying her work and her new career and life, she managed to persevere.

“I wasn’t going to miss my opportunity,” she explained.

Florance says she’s enjoying the here and now, even while looking at perhaps advancing in the field in the future to become an instrument technician.

“I like it. I really do,” she said. “I kind of like going in and just doing my job. There’s really no pressure, other than the productivity part, because they monitor what you do.

“I feel much better coming home at night than I did working at Safeway. There’s a lot less stress than working directly with the public.”

CCA now has graduated two full cohorts. A third will go through its commencement ceremony Dec. 3. The fourth cohort is scheduled to run Jan. 11-March 17, 2016.

Gantzler said that the pro-
Human Resources hosted its Annual Health Fair on Sept. 30. Employees and their families were able to receive numerous free health screenings and services, including blood tests and flu shots, depending on the participant’s health provider.

CCA will host its first-ever “Safe Trick-or-Treat” event Oct. 28 from 3-6 p.m. on the CentreTech campus. Trick-or-treating, face painting, photo booth, and police/fire safety information will be featured. The event is free and is designed to provide a safe place for children to celebrate Halloween. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

“Los Valientes (The Courageous Ones),” a free chamber and musical theater work conceived and performed by the touring Core Ensemble and written by Jose Cruz Gonzalez, is scheduled for Oct. 12 at 12:30 p.m. at the Larry D. Carter Theater on the CentreTech campus.

Actor Kevin Melendez will help CCA celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by playing the roles of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, and Mexican-American desperado Joaquin Murrieta, better known as Zorro.

Melendez will be accompanied by a musical trio including cello (Ju Young Lee), piano (Hugh Hinton) and percussion (Michael Parola), as they whisk the audience through locales such as San Francisco, San Salvador and the U.S./Mexico border.

The event is free. Pizzas will be served prior to the performance at noon. No cell phones, alarms, flash photography or unauthorized videotaping are allowed during the performance by Core Ensemble, which receives support from cultural councils from the state of Florida and Palm Beach County, Fla.

The Community College of Aurora Foundation hosted its 10th Annual Scholarship Luncheon on Oct. 2 at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center. Among the speakers were student scholars, CCA President Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven, members of the Foundation’s board of directors, and Foundation Executive Director Gene Sobczak.

Special recognition was given to the Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation.

The film “Not in Our Town: Waking in Oak Creek” will be shown Nov. 12 from 12:30-1:45 p.m. in the Student Centre Rotunda at CentreTech. The movie centers on the Sikh community in Oak Creek, Wis., whose world was shattered by a deadly hate attack and its resiliency in the face of such turbulence. Together, a community rocked by hate is awakened and transformed by the Sikh spirit of relentless optimism.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. CCA is doing its part to spread the word by hosting the University of Colorado Health Sciences “Pink Life Saver” mobile mammography van on Oct. 13 (CentreTech) and Oct. 20 (Lowry). Appointments can be scheduled by calling 720-848-1030. Walk-in appointments are available from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Please bring your insurance card. Panel discussions, information tables and open-mic sessions will be held as part of accompanying campus events, running from 10:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

The Student Success Center and Office of Student Life are co-hosting fall visits to Metropolitan State University and the University of Colorado Denver (Oct. 23) and the University of Denver (Nov. 20). Any current CCA student who is registered for classes and interested in attending one of these institutions can sign up for the college visits online.

The Student Success Center also is bringing four-year university representatives to CCA for one-on-one transfer advising sessions with students. Information also can be found on the college-wide transfer advising page or at the Student Success Center. More information is available by calling 303-340-7573.

The 10th annual Student Success Awards will be held Dec. 4 from noon-2 p.m. in the Rotunda on the CentreTech campus. Faculty and staff nominated students by the Oct. 2 deadline who have persevered and overcome obstacles in order to receive an education. The awards showcase qualities such as desire and leadership over grade-point average. Nominating faculty and staff will present the awards, and families of the winning students are encouraged to attend.

CCA Security has made its annual reports available online for CentreTech and Lowry campuses. A paper copy of either report is available at the CentreTech Security Office, located in the Administration Building, Room 101.

CCA will co-sponsor the America’s Promise Career Expo along with the City of Aurora, Aurora Public Schools, and the Cherry Creek School District. The event will take place Oct. 22 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the APS Professional Learning and Conference Center (15771 E. 1st Avenue, Aurora).

CCA students and their families are encouraged to bring their middle and high school students to receive valuable career and educational information from a variety of entities, including numerous college representatives.

CCA Security has made its annual reports available online for CentreTech and Lowry campuses. A paper copy of either report is available at the CentreTech Security Office, located in the Administration Building, Room 101.

CCA will co-sponsor the America’s Promise Career Expo along with the City of Aurora, Aurora Public Schools, and the Cherry Creek School District. The event will take place Oct. 22 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the APS Professional Learning and Conference Center (15771 E. 1st Avenue, Aurora).

CCA students and their families are encouraged to bring their middle and high school students to receive valuable career and educational information from a variety of entities, including numerous college representatives.

The college’s annual softball game and barbeque was held Sept. 18 at Lowry. The Celebration Committee organized the event, and included: Stephanie Agner, Robin Blish, Sheryl Broadnax, Stacey D’Angelo, Cindy Hesse, Debbie Irvine, Heidi McKinnon, Tami Morrissey, Charles Robinson, Michelle Samuel, and Staci Shulman.

CCA dispersed $6.97 million in grants, scholarships, subsidized and unsubsidized loans in the Fall 2015 semester, a 4.3 percent increase over the same period last year. To date, 3,582 unduplicated students have benefitted from these monetary outlays this semester. They’ve come largely in the form of Pell grants and merit scholarships, as well as state, private, institutional and CCA Foundation scholarships. Many students have received more than one form of financial assistance. CCA distributed $6.7 million in financial aid awards in Fall 2014 to 4,692 individual students.

Dr. Ted Snow, dean of the School of Liberal Arts, published a pair of articles in the Sept. 2015 newsletter from the National Council of Instructional Administrators, which features stories on leadership, innovation, advocacy, and development. Snow’s articles covered two topics that have been at the forefront of CCA: “In Redesigning America’s Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Success,” and a column entitled, “What Happens After ESL.”
Around campus

Clockwise from top: Math faculty LaVelle Knight describes his classroom experience relating to equitable teaching methods during the All-College Forum on Sept. 9; a student peers through a series of flasks during a Chemistry class at Lowry on Sept. 14; Geoff Chadwick, assistant professor at the Colorado Film School, chases Financial Aid's Mason Parmenter back to third base during the CentreTech/Lowry softball game Sept. 18; members of Kate O'Donnell's Drawing I class on Sept. 21 collaborate on a project hanging outside of Classroom Building, Room 311.