Dr. Linda S. Bowman helped raise CCA’s profile, and the bar, during a 12-year career in the President’s chair. She succeeded with more than a little help from husband (and traveling partner) Roger, and a large dose of political savvy. She’d often administer something equally important managerially for the college: compassion.
Dr. Linda S. Bowman conducted a lengthy interview that touched on her dozen years in office just prior to her departure as CCA president in February 2012.

Near the end of the conversation, she was asked an oddball question: If the walls of her office could talk, what did she think they might say?

“They’d probably say, ‘I’m sure getting older,’ ” she responded with a laugh. “Actually, I would probably say the walls would say that the most interesting people have come through that door to talk. We have people that have worked all over the world. Our department chairs, Oh, my God, some of their experiences … It’s just an unbelievable group of talented and smart and committed people who have come together to help.”

A sense of humor. Passing around credit. Even on the way out Bowman was using many of the skills that had served her so well in office.

Her abilities to integrate the college, and her family, into the Aurora community; to juggle dual roles at the state higher education level with her CCA responsibilities without seeming partisan, and to make tough decisions without creating rancor were equally important to her longevity and effectiveness as a leader.

Since Bowman’s exit, there has been a state of flux at the top of the executive chain. There have been two interim presidents -- Dr. Geri Anderson and Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven -- sandwiched around a brief one-year term in office by Alton D. Scales.

The times in the office Bowman once occupied undoubtedly have been no less interesting. Only those four walls know for sure as CCA moves into its fourth decade of official existence.

-- Lee Rasizer, CCA Public Relations Coordinator
Dr. Linda S. Bowman had a deft touch: able to connect individually with her employees, see eye-to-eye with political powerhouses on both sides of the aisle, and to interject a fierce determination to raise CCA's academic standards and effectively serve Aurora’s diverse population.

A PASSION PLAY

It was one of those days.

It wasn’t one of those “so you had a bad day” moments gleefully put to music, American Idol style, while a contestant’s goodbye video hides the tears of elimination.

This was an I’m-going-to-blow-a-gasket-can’t-take-it-anymore moment on the clock at Community College of Aurora, or as Linda Bradford described it, just part of her love affair with the institution that’s often been counterbalanced with periodic tough times, such as this particular occasion.

Day had turned to night as she sat at her desk stewing, on the precipice of tears, while many others had already made their trek home.

In sauntered Linda Bowman.

“I started to share with her things that I was going through, and we cried, we laughed. And it fixed it,” Bradford, the former chair of Social Sciences and longtime Psychology faculty, recalled. “It fixed everything, and she didn’t change one thing. There was nothing that I was going through as far as my job or any of that stuff that was making me cry that she changed. But when she left, I was OK. I was fixed.”

It should be noted that meeting occurred on Bowman’s first day on the job at CCA in the fall of 2000.

She had simply come down the hallway to introduce herself to employees and ended up in an impromptu counseling session.
Over the next dozen years, Bowman would keep showing up -- at the funeral for Bradford’s mom; when the latter’s daughter was married -- all while juggling a presidency that was replete with potential pitfalls and later, a second position as a vice president for academic affairs for the community college system.

“I really just think she’s magic,” Bradford said.

Bowman certainly was remarkable in one sense. She could keep employees at arm’s length to make the tough decisions while simultaneously delivering more hugs per person than possibly anyone around either CCA campus over a 12-year period.

And Bowman herself had more than her share of excusable, want-to-scream moments herself. Fiscal crises. Layoffs. Turning what could have been a boondoggle at Lowry into a functional second academic arm for the college. Navigating the intolerance that existed post-9/11 in a diverse community. Weathering a public-relations storm brought upon by a mentally-ill employee off his medication and sending illegal missives to politicos.

Bowman did it, in part, by keeping a single-minded vision aimed at branding CCA as the highest of quality educational choices that would advance students as graduates to the next step in their careers, life or education, while trying to constantly back up that promise with the programs and people to match.

Bowman said in a recent interview that CCA was so young upon her arrival that it was her mission to not only establish the institution’s reputation as high quality but as the college of choice for the Eastern metro area.

“She added a professionalism to the college,” said Reniece Jones, former Accessibility Services director and CCA employee since 1987, on Linda Bowman’s impact.

From Page 3

“She added a professionalism to the college. There was a much higher standard.”

-- Reniece Jones, former Accessibility Services director and CCA employee since 1987, on Linda Bowman’s impact.
Brooke Bowman

From Page 4

said they could really do this. And so one of the things we really set our minds to was to move those top-end lab sciences out there.”

The shifting of programs became the Lowry core, including the inheri-
tance of the Colorado Film School from Red Rocks Community College. The Aurora Language Center would be established, building up what had been a modest English as a Second Language Program. In time, the Cen-
ter for Simulation became a fixture. Computer labs were installed and populated.

Standing in one of those Science labs at Lowry recently, Jackson-Car-
ter, was asked about that part of the college’s legacy. She responded, “I’m pretty sure this place wouldn’t exist without Linda Bowman.”

The existence of concurrent en-
rollment and ASCENT programs that produced college credit for local high school students is another part of Bowman’s professional legacy. In her academic affairs role for the system, she was a significant player in legisla-
tion involving those initiatives.

“Linda is the kind of person that we might say is an exemplary states-
man,” said Matt Gianneschi, an expert on state and national education policy who worked both with Bowman as a governor’s aide and for her briefly as a CCA employee. “She always fought for issues that were bigger than her and bigger than her institution. It was never personal. It was never about what Linda wants. It was about what was good for her students, faculty and staff.”

Bowman “never seemed to be in-
timidated by anything,” added Traci Fielden, who was Bowman’s first ad-
ministrative assistant. “If there was any-thing, she would just find her way.”

Bowman’s voice also was heard at the college, where she often gathered and explained to employees what the college’s legacy. She responded, “I’m pretty sure this place wouldn’t exist without Linda Bowman.”

To get a sense of the depth of the financial issues facing Community College of Aurora as a Colorado higher education institution, one fact looms largest.

From the time Linda Bowman took over as col-
lege president to the time she left office, the model for budgeting institutional income had completely flipped – from 35 percent tuition funding and 65 per-
cent state appropriations to 65/35 the other way.

“That doesn’t happen without a lot of pain,” Bowman said.

To add salt to the wound, when Bowman took of-

fice, the books were, you might say, slightly askew.

Unrealistic projections were made about the cost of doing business and the amount of tuition revenue the college would likely earn.

“It was bad,” recalled Wes Geary, who was hired as the VP of administrative services by Bowman and charged with budget oversight. “I think we overspent something like $600,000 the first year, but it was re-

ally built into the base. It wasn’t frivolous stuff. They had just made assumptions that weren’t good about the budget. It wasn’t that they were buying stuff they didn’t need. They had built the base up higher than they could afford. They couldn’t really afford all the full-time teachers they wanted or some of the pro-

grams they had, non-credit programs and things like that.”

So, needless to say, when the first Colorado legisla-
tive crisis hit higher ed in 2001-02, CCA already was in a precarious state to handle what followed. Institutions that had been focused on operational qual-
ity and not enrollment growth had to quickly change their mindset when increases in tuition pushed the state/tuition split to about 50-50.

Dozens of layoffs became necessary at CCA.

A second statewide budget crisis in 2009 was akin to piling on.

Matt Gianneschi, who cut his teeth on educational policies in the governor’s office, as a senior policy an-

alyt for the State Higher Education Executive Offi-

cers and as Chief Academic Officer for the Colorado Department of Higher Education, explained that the second downturn “hit us hard, hit us fast and kind of caught us off guard.” Billions of state-budget dollars were cut within a quarter and colleges were not im-
mune, with 15-30 percent losses in state revenues on budgets that already were in place.

Many institutions raised tuition by huge numbers. Online tuition at CCA went up around 40 percent for residents in one year. Resident tuition rose 8.9 per-
cent, which paled compared to schools like Metro State and the University of Colorado.

Economic stimulus money eventually helped but wasn’t a panacea.

Gianneschi praised Bowman’s handling of the fi-

nancial burden she faced not just as CCA president, but negotiating for other community colleges on gov-

ernment committees.

“She was diplomatic. She understood we couldn’t invent or print money,” he said. “We don’t operate that way and there are fiscal constraints well outside of her control, the legislature, and, frankly, our gov-

ernor. She recognized those challenges and her ad-

vocacy was on behalf of students. It wasn’t advocacy to save her institution. She never put CCA ahead of another institution, but she made the case about the effects of budget reductions.

“She put a face to it and would explain the implica-
tions of decisions that may need to be made.”

Bowman’s voice also was heard at the college, where she often gathered and explained to employees the fiscal realities that were occurring. Some of the fallout included bigger class sizes, less student servic-
es, shrinking financial aid and fewer classes, despite enrollment increases.

“People want input,” Bowman said. “But at the end of the day nobody wants a part of those kinds of terrible decisions.”
What are your first memories as CCA president?

“The (Larry D. Carter) theater project was underway and actually it was a time of some financial difficulties and fiscal strife. Enrollment had been so great and every year better and better and had then softened. That was all happening when I came in. and we ended up actually over the course of the 12 years having a couple of major state fiscal crises. So we seemed to keep going into those depths. But it was also … it’s hard to talk first impression because I had been around the system office already for nine years so I knew a lot about CCA from afar and it was a college that I had always admired. I knew it was a college that had really been a bootstrap organization, of making things happen, and what I found when I arrived, having prior been at Red Rocks and Lamar, was that in some ways, with its community connection, it was more like a small-town college because of that closeness that really continues to be unique among the metro area colleges. Metro Denver has lots of local colleges and universities. But there’s this special bond between CCA and the community and I loved that about it.”

The Lowry piece was tremendously unsettling when you arrived. The HEAT Center especially wasn’t living up to expectations, was getting pricey and not delivering the high-tech programs that it promised. The state came to you and essentially said, ‘Can you fix it?’ How daunting was that?

“One huge thing we did … was move programs instead of starting new ones. … Some of the programs we inherited from Red Rocks – you got the good with the bad things. We got the film program, which we moved to a different building shortly thereafter. But we also inherited a welding program, which I mean, I could count the students on one hand, so we ended up having to close that. So that was not a very fun part of inheriting. And we had a deal at the time where we were renting the facilities from the System essentially, so we were taking on a financial liability. The arrangement now works a little differently and over years it still continues. ‘Who will do what?’; because it’s not a CCA campus. … Regarding HEAT, I was worried for the system and the perception of the system that HEAT wasn’t really what the glossy brochure showed, that it did not have that success. And it was so recognizable and had been such an investment and there was such a strong perception of success by the policymakers that I was very, very worried about that. … I think there still remains some resentment out there among some parties. … But we had to do a lot of work in saying, ‘We’re going to change this model and even change the name.’ Now, whether or not we should have changed the name is arguable at this point. Maybe we should have held on to it. But the thought at the time was if
we held onto the name, we’d also hold onto the same perception of what happened out there. And we were taking it to a comprehensive community college concept eventually, not immediately, and we were being careful not to duplicate things as much as possible. But we were also taking on this whole split campus deal that is still, at times, problematic.”

When you look at Lowry from afar now, and you think about the machinations that it endured -- changing names, culture, and almost taking over a lot of the campus as CCAs own and planting a flag -- what do you think about that campus these days?

“It’s a point of great pride in my career. In some ways I wonder if I should have been more aggressive. I tried to really balance the politics within the community college system and the perception by the other colleges of, ‘Was CCA getting too much?’ And then maybe (there) could have been a greater aggressiveness for the college. … Maybe it could have been more than planting that flag but trying to put up a fence around it saying, ‘This is ours.’ And I don’t even know if that would have been successful. But Larry Carter was a far more aggressive president, if you think about his accomplishment of building CentreTech, essentially defying all the odds, getting the community, getting the city to put up the land on this long-term lease and all of those things. And you need a different kind of leader for every era within an institution’s life, I believe. And Larry was very, very aggressive. I came in as someone who was less aggressive -- a little different type of detail orientation. When I stepped down I thought, ‘You need somebody now who’s again ready to take more chances’ I’m a different kind of risk taker, though I don’t think anyone becomes a president without becoming a risk taker to some extent.”

When you came aboard at CCA, the essential infrastructure was in place. So did you consider your role building upon the infrastructure that Larry had put together and adhering an academic ‘stamp’ on the college?

“If I wanted to really work with the faculty and the academic leadership, and when I say ‘academic’ I’m including CTE, to invest in always figuring out what would be the best student experience so we would have the best graduates who were best prepared to go onto four-year (college) or go on to work in whatever they were going to do. Because CCA was so young, I think what hadn’t been established was the reputation for being the best. So we had at one time as sort of our tagline ‘the college of choice for the eastern metro area.’ So the idea was we don’t want people to think if I get to go to college I’m going downtown to Denver but to think about CCA.

What do you believe is your legacy at CCA?

“I think Lowry is an important part of my legacy. I’m less flashy so I have a less flashy legacy (laughs). I think that I brought a stability and academic-quality focus because you can’t do all things at one time. And so there were a lot of things that were working really well and a number, including fiscal operations, that weren’t getting as much attention because you just can’t do it all at once, as I said. So I think I brought that kind of stability. I really felt when I left the college that I left it with an incredible quality … I put a great focus on diversity and becoming more reflective of our community. When I arrived there was a tiny little ESL program. I mean it was like 30 people and, to me, this is Aurora and we have a tiny ESL? How can we be Aurora’s college? And that was really my mantra -- we are this community’s college and we take that role seriously. So I think I brought that stability and sensibility to the emerging needs of Aurora. I think part of legacy is that connection … We already had the Police Academy and there were some dark days with that … but the EMS program was just starting … simulation studies. So I think my legacy was that I really had the opportunity to work with and recognize some incredible talent and I felt comfortable running with ideas, while knowing that if it wasn’t going well and we were going to get in trouble, they’d tell me so we could get out of it together. So I think that’s what I brought. … The other piece is the relationship with Aurora Public Schools and the work on concurrent credit, which existed in a different form prior to me coming. But one of my legacies may be state-wide in the work I did on the legislation.”

On March 27, Larry D. Carter announced he would retire Oct. 1, ending his 14-year tenure at CCA. Carter served as the college’s second president. He told the Aurora Sentinel that, “The most exciting element of the college is the emphasis placed on learning. Our broad-based community support has helped the college and the entire Aurora community grow stronger.” … On June 15, 2000, it’s announced that Dr. Linda S. Bowman, head of Lamar Community College, will take over as president. Bowman worked for Red Rocks Community College for eight years, last as VP of Instruction, before moving to Lamar. … Shortly after taking office, Bowman discussed challenges inherent in any complex organization, including preparation and education of students for jobs of the future, which are not just a reflection of the current economy; finding space to handle recent growth; continually developing new programs that meet the needs of the growth field of computer networking; and keeping up with ever-changing technology.

CCA’s faculty and staff survey is conducted in back-to-back years as Bowman tried to get the pulse of the college early in her presidential tenure. There were concerns about allocation of college resources; clarity of mission and goals; and organizational structure. “As I reviewed these results I came away with a strong sense of the dedication and commitment of the faculty and staff of CCA,” Bowman wrote to employees. “We are proud of our work, of our students and our institution. But we have some important tasks to accomplish.”

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce named Bowman its “Woman of the Year” and celebrated her accomplishments in office in a April 12 ceremony. Chamber president Kevin Hougen told the Aurora Sentinel that despite Bowman’s short stint in the area, her considerable impact couldn’t be ignored. “She breezed into our community like a soft southern zephyr, and blew us all away with her talent, energy and enthusiasm,” he said. Among the other business and residents honored, Terry Campbell Caron was feted with the Chamber’s Humanitarian Award. Campbell Caron was CCA’s executive director of financial aid. The Chamber’s selection was based on “her exemplary service as CCA’s own and planting a flag -- what do you think about that campus these days?”

In April, CCA was recommended in preliminary findings for a 10-year reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. … Cuts by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the longest possible term. Team recommendations were to be sent to the HLC for final review. …
CCA tuition rose only 1.1 percent with inflation but there are dark clouds on horizon if major reforms to TABOR and Amendment 23 relating to higher education aren’t made, Bowman warned. … Lowry redevelopment is about 70 percent complete but several projects remained in limbo, including a golf-course expansion and the construction of hundreds of homes. Environmental contamination left by the former Air Force Base was a major issue. Aurora’s 11 percent piece of Lowry at the time was home to nearly half of the programs offered at CCA, the headquarters for the state community college office, and other educational facilities on the eastern edge of the campus. … A task force report, focused on the fiscal nightmare facing the community college system, recommended in April that a portion of the system’s 153-acre campus at Lowry should be sold to fix budget shortfalls. … About 20 officers participate in a week-long Simunition training offered by the college. The reality-based training for law enforcement is part of a movement to “simulation,” that will only continue to grow at the college … Under a new state law beginning in Fall ‘04 CCA an funnel state funding to tuition vouchers, which won’t give additional money to students but divert education funds back to colleges to avert complicated state revenue laws and allow for discretionary increases in tuitions and fees … U.S. Rep. Bob Beauprez, R-Colo, is a keynote speaker at May commencement …. On Oct. 29, Hollywood editor Dede Allen, one of American cinema’s first women to gain respect in the male-dominated industry in the 1940s and 1950s, address the Colorado Film School about her six-decade career that included such films as “The Hustler,” “ Bonnie and Clyde,” ”Serpico,” “ Dog Day Afternoon,” ”The Breakfast Club,” and many others. … An internal investigation revealed that $75,000 was stolen from the college by a longtime employee.

CCA began to offer a program that guaranteed full-time workers a degree within two years. The first-of-its-kind program in Colorado gave students the opportunity to plan schedules two years in advances, which assured them a spot in classes and gave them time to plan ahead. Most of the classes were scheduled for evenings and online CCA hoped to place graduates in four-year universities to complete their degrees.

Leaders of the Colorado Community College System worked on a plan to sell 75 acres of Lowry land to developers. A portion of the profits, which could be more than $20 million, would be reinvested into the remaining 50-acre Lowry campus owned by the community colleges. Bowman touted a “vibrant, urban campus” that includes tall buildings, parking structures and public transportation, and told the Aurora Sentinel, “It could be the largest community college campus in the state, more than doubling the number of students there now … It will all be in Aurora.” Zoning issues still needed to be resolved before proceeding. … In May, Bowman was appointed to the CCCS role of vice president for academic and student services, with her term set to begin June 1. … Up to 580 evacuees of Hurricane Katrina were housed at the former CCA dormitory at Lowry through October. FEMA spent about $1 million to get the building ready for their stay. The college established a Katrina Student Tuition Relief fund for victims wanting to attend classes for free. … Referendum C, which would temporarily relax TABOR, the 1992 constitutional amendment that limits state taxation and spending, and Referendum D, allowing the state to borrow up to $2.1 billion for roads, school maintenance, pensions and other projects if C is approved, go before voters. Referendum C passed; D failed.
Programs got credit where credit was due

Concurrent enrollment and ASCENT – giving high school kids credits at places like CCA – were ideas that not only would fly but eventually soar. Getting to those heights, though, was straight out of the Wright Brothers manual, including just as many twists, turns and near crashes.

“We were building the airplane as we went along,” said John Barry, superintendent of Aurora Public Schools from 2006-12.

The conversation on concurrent enrollment began in ’07 as an offshoot of the previous year’s talks surrounding the school district’s vision statement and strategic plan. At the time, only the rare child would attend high school while accumulating college credit, usually through a summer course or via the persistence of a parent.

But with buy-in from the state, and some dogged persistence by the likes of Barry, CCA president Linda Bowman -- who worked simultaneously for the community college system office -- and Matt Gianneschi, then Gov. Bill Ritter’s education policy adviser, the educational landscape dramatically shifted.

The concurrent enrollment piece happened first.

“We had to start thinking about breaking down the walls, clocks and calendars of 20th century learning,” Barry said. “We used different words but that’s what I use now. And we started thinking aggressively about it, the idea of kids taking courses not only on the campus but in our high schools with our teachers being adjunct professors authorized by CCA.”

But the measuring sticks to which Barry alluded were broken down even further with the idea of ASCENT. The acronym stands for Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment and allows seniors to remain enrolled in high school and take a fifth year consisting entirely of college courses, if they’ve met all their high school graduation requirements; have taken 12 hours of college classes prior to the end of their senior year; and are considered college or career ready.

That second component was put into place by the state legislature in May 2009, with Bowman serving as chair of the concurrent enrollment subcommittee.

“I knew it had potential,” Bowman said, adding that she never envisioned concurrent enrollment reaching its current figures. “As it was going through the legislature we were having problems because everybody was freaked out about how much money it would cost and all of that. It was supposed to get an appropriation originally and it wasn’t nearly what we had wanted it to be, but it’s been remarkable. It’s amazing to me that Aurora has continued to hold such a strong lead in the work.”

CCA actually had firmer ties early on with Cherry Creek School District in concurrent enrollment before Barry made a partnership with the college a priority. Of the nearly 10,000 college credits earned last year by APS students, about 95 percent were earned at CCA. And 75 percent of APS children that successfully completed college courses did so by taking classes in their own high schools, taught by CCA adjuncts.

APS now boasts seven concurrent enrollment ‘hosts’ in Central, Hinkley, William Smith, Gateway, Vista Peak, Rangeview, and Aurora West. Cherry Creek school district has five high schools working with CCA: Cherokee Trail, Eaglcrest, Grandview, Overland, and Smoky Hill. Barry said that what essentially was established with the advent of these programs was a Preschool through 20th-grade concept to replace the longstanding K through 12 model.

It’s been so successful that when the Higher Learning Commission that is charged with accrediting CCA inspected the programs, including the rigor of the curriculum and faculty qualifications, "what they said verbally is this has to be a model for the nation," according to Barry.

The four 'Cs' of 21st century learning have been emphasized - critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication – and made operational.

Gianneschi cited a willingness by policymakers to "provide accessibility," while being "more deliberate about alternate revenues" as keys to getting concurrent enrollment instituted. It also created a meaningful pathway between the K-12 system and higher ed by taking the message directly inside local high schools.

“It was not a win for CCA at first because it had to put a lot of staff time and investment into creating the network, but once changes started to take place, the numbers came back as far as enrollments and it was unbelievable,” said Gianneschi who worked nearly two years at CCA as VP of Student Services after his state position ended as senior policy advisor in Ritter’s administration.

“The average age went from 28 to 26 in a year,” he added. “There was dramatic growth, with 20-30 percent of FTE found in high school students. And what it did for the community is not just say college is possible, but made it a reality every day.”

CCA now serves more than 3,000 concurrent enrollment and ASCENT students yearly. Many of these students the college had been unable to reach before, whose brothers and sisters or parents never attended college, because they didn’t have a similar opportunity.

“It is the national model,” said Gianneschi, who currently is senior education policy analyst for Education Commission of the States.

“I get calls all the time and routinely talk to communities throughout the country because they want to know how we did what we did in Aurora, and a lot of it is leadership and a person like Linda who says, ‘I believe in this, I’m willing to change and I’m willing to think differently about our future because it’s good for our community and college.’ ”

Bowman marveled at groups of students who walk across the commencement stage with a full CCA degree and high school diploma in hand, underscoring the full impact these programs have had.

“It’s unbelievably great,” she said.

Prepped and ready
Official Profile End-of-Term numbers for concurrent enrollment students through the years. Unofficial totals are denoted with an asterisk. Numbers do not include high school students taking classes on their own at CCA or ASCENT participants.

*Fall 2006: 94
*Fall 2007: 140
Fall 2008: 155
Fall 2009: 253
Fall 2010: 1,295
Fall 2011: 1,466
Fall 2012: 1,610
Spring 2013: 2,354
* - Figures from Cognos Demographic Snapshots

(Thanks to Catherine Trouth, CCA Institutional Research)
Bowman was named President of the year for 2007 by the State Student Advisory Council. “They say, ‘If you can do something you love, you’ll never work a day in your life,’” she told the Sentinel. “This is truly a labor of love.” Greg Goode, VP of student services at CCA, said that under Bowman “phenomenal changes” took place at the college and that “faculty and staff satisfaction surveys for college leadership have jumped 50 percent during her start.” … In October, CCA celebrated the opening of a new computer lab especially for English as a Second Language students. The lab included 26 workstations to serve roughly 700 ESL students enrolled each semester. … As of July, CCA had one of the highest percentages of adjunct faculty employed by a college in the state — about 91 percent. That dwarfed the figures at other nearby institutions such as Metro State (61 percent) and Community College of Denver (81). The high rate is attributed to the college’s start as a “College Without Walls,” which employed a model that kept the number of full-time faculty low. However, CCA began a push to increase full-time positions, adding a dozen in two years.

In February, CCA received $331,000 in federal funds to help fund a 1,758 square foot, $1.8 million Critical Incident Theater, a simulation training facility for disaster responders in the state and around the country. It would be the first of facility of its kind in the country. … Amendment 50, allowed voters in Black Hawk, Central City and Cripple Creek, to expand their gaming communities, via a vote that could pour millions of dollars into the kitty for Colorado community colleges. The amendment would pass, providing 78% for financial aid and classroom instruction at Colorado community, junior, and district colleges based on each school’s number of students. … The Colorado Film School announced a partnership with Regis University allowing students a chance to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with Regis while taking classes at the film school. The program is “three and one,” meaning three years of course work at CCA before moving on to Regis for one year, all while taking courses at Lowry. … On August 28, Black Entertainment Television’s top-rated show “106 & Park,” broadcast live at CCA in an effort to get more young people politically involved before the November elections. Correspondent Terrence Jenkins was on campus to interview students as they registered to vote. … Peak Motorcoach and Stadium Medical in July donated ambulances to CCA’s simulation program. The vehicles were valued at more than $100,000 in new condition. The ambulances would be used to train both new recruits and for professional development for current EMTs.

Greg Goode

CcCS President Dr. Nancy McCallin, Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden, and Dr. Linda S. Bowman at Lowry on May 26, 2009.

CCA students submit the documentary “The Wars We Fought: Frontline Stories of Colorado Veterans,” to the Library of Congress. Filmmakers, Bowman and Congressman Ed Perlmutter, D-Colo., traveled to Washington D.C. for a ceremony. … Spring enrollment was up 16 percent from the previous year as the economy plodded along and workers needed to learn new skills or earn another degree to add to their marketability and viability. … Dr. Jill Biden, wife of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, visited the Lowry campus on May 26 and toured the EMS simulation studios, biotechnology workplace lab, and the future site of the Critical Incident Theater. Dr. Biden’s visit was designed to showcase the Obama-Biden administration’s commitment to community colleges. … Richard Maestas, former comptroller for Community College of Denver, is named VP for administrative services and began his new job in July. … The Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center opened a branch office in Building 859 at Lowry. … A mass casualty drill was held at Lowry in November.

Oudenhoven joined CCA as VP for student services and enrollment management. Oudenhoven had spent nearly four years at Joliet (Ill.) Junior College as its VP of student services and enrollment management. … In October, CCA celebrated the opening of a new computer lab especially for English as a Second Language students. The lab included 26 workstations to serve roughly 700 ESL students enrolled each semester. … As of July, CCA had one of the highest percentages of adjunct faculty employed by a college in the state — about 91 percent. That dwarfed the figures at other nearby institutions such as Metro State (61 percent) and Community College of Denver (81). The high rate is attributed to the college’s start as a “College Without Walls,” which employed a model that kept the number of full-time faculty low. However, CCA began a push to increase full-time positions, adding a dozen in two years.

Gov. John Hickenlooper proposed $125 million in state funding cuts for colleges and universities to help bridge a $1 billion state budget gap. Bowman predicted the impact at CCA could range from higher class sizes to tuition hikes. … Matt Giannesi leaves his post as VP of student services to become an executive with the Colorado Department of Higher Education. … Construction on Phase 1 at Lowry was in full swing, ultimately bringing a new entrance to the campus. The project included $14 million in contributions from the CCA Foundation, Boettcher Foundation, Lowry Redevelopment Authority and others. … Dr. Todd Bergren, an influential CCA science faculty who helped shape Lowry campus, died at age 48 years old in May after a lengthy illness. The college held a memorial in his honor and a meeting room at Lowry later was named in his honor. In August, Betsy Oudenhoven joined CCA as VP for student services and enrollment management. Oudenhoven had spent nearly four years at Joliet (Ill.) Junior College as its VP of student development, with overall responsibility over admissions, financial aid, registration and records, counseling, career services, disability services and numerous other areas.
Hallelujah, volunteers heeded the call of disability services

Helping the blind and others with reading disabilities read took some ‘divine intervention’ in Reniece Jones’ early days with the college.

Popping a CD into a car stereo and listening to a book on tape is commonplace today. But when Jones, then CCAs sign-language interpreter, was charged with coming up with a solution to best serve a group of students needing textbook help it wasn’t as easy as using the computers and screen readers of today.

Instead, it was Radio Shack and charitable contributions. She purchased seven tape recorders, audio tapes and text books. She then went to her church and looked for volunteer readers. Mind you, this wasn’t the latest Stephen King novel but material from various classes that wasn’t exactly beach reading.

“I was begging people – begging people,” Jones recalled. “And if I didn’t get anyone, I’d have to be the one doing that and there was no way I could do that amount of work.”

The pay was consistent: there wasn’t any.

The tape recorder technology was the now prehistoric large cassette tapes. The unit was prepped with an external microphone.

“These were big honkers of machines. You can hardly find them today anymore. We now have these little Dictaphones.”

But Jones was consistent in her sales pitch. These students had disabilities, needed the tapes and wouldn’t be able to learn properly otherwise.

“A lot of people would say yes,” Jones said. “Most of them would start out, do a chapter and return it to me saying, ‘This is hard. I can’t do it.’”

Even today, math books are problematic because the scanners have difficulty with certain symbols.

But with Jones and others trying to find technological solutions, CCA has been able to serve the disabled population ably through the years.
ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Faculty Development Program videos were a real trip (Aliens? Star Wars scrolls? Professor Goodenough?) But underneath the cheesy production values lied a conceptual vision whose wisdom helped instructors improve their classroom craft, until it all vanished.

Wayne Gilbert, a CCA fixture for nearly 25 years, was recently stunned to discover what a little investigative reporting could uncover.

"Oh, my God," he said with a chuckle. "You found Dr. Goodenough."

Of all the items used to build a nationally recognized Faculty Development Program at Community College of Aurora from 1982 through 2002, the creation of better educators stands above all accomplishments.

The memories of yearly mountain conferences that drew faculty members from all 50 states, except perhaps Alaska, linger on.

The sophisticated, comprehensive approach to the professional development of educators remains a useful model even today.

But, try as they might, Gilbert and the others who helped keep the Faculty Development Program can't avoid all these years later the old videos. Dr. Goodenough was a fictional character in one of the stories distributed, way back when, via VCR tapes nationally to colleges.

And, believe it or not, Dr. Goodenough engages verbally quite liberally with an alien that's seemingly attired from the "Mork and Mindy"...
Faculty initiative meant to inspire

From Faculty / Page 12

wardrobe closet.
It was all part of spreading the message, albeit colorized and nearly entirely stripped of production value.

Luckily, the core of the program wasn't an eyesore but instead visionary, which was the important aspect.

“We were all about turning subject experts into teachers,” Gilbert said. “The videos were made early on and are still floating around. We offered workshops on active learning, interactive teaching – those were some of the buzzwords going around in those days – so people we hired could become teachers. We even developed tiers or levels. The idea was kind of ‘novice, apprentice, master,’ so the students would get the best possible teaching and demonstrate that while the lecture model was one method of teaching, it definitely wasn’t the only one.”

So, that’s why a classroom of early 1990s students are shown in one of the rediscovered videos bored silly, saying in unison ‘drone, drone, drone . . .’ while a lecture hits its nadir.

Dr. Cynthia Barnes, the college’s former director of faculty development and then dean/VP, initially got the program off the ground with mentoring and orientation pieces. But Barnes and Diane Cheatwood truly took the program to great heights by securing a Colorado Program of Excellence grant totaling $1 million over five years. Awash in that cash, the program could not only try to initiate CCA’s culture of teaching and learning, but take the program to great heights by securing a Colorado Program of Excellence grant totaling $1 million over five years.

Subjects such as herbolology, journaling, acupuncture, yoga, and meditation were core subjects in an area of study that offered only a certificate of accomplishment after so many hours, not a degree.

Ford offered that Mind-Body Health started with the idea of the high toll stress was taking on people in the community and exploring meaningful ways to combat the effects. The program began with Ford and then-Science chair Al-ice Phillips teaching two classes later expanding to numerous one-hour offerings.

The program served its purpose well, even though it never became a huge endeavor.

“I felt we met a need in the community,” Ford said. “But this was also a heyday when Eastern medicine and all kinds of tools were just becoming mainstream and people were beginning to say, ‘Hey, maybe there is something to this sort of thing.’ But there also were a lot of people out there peddling snake oil. So we felt the important thing to do in a college setting was give them facts about the reality of stuff.”

“Wél have practitioners of Chinese medicine or East India talking about that.”

Mind-Body Health (the first two words were purposely hyphenated to emphasize the connection) for several years hosted a health fair and trained people to become certified yoga instructors.

A three-day national conference hosted by CCA offered a whole slew of workshops. Budget constraints and reductions in state funding eventually killed the program in 06.

“Which excited part of those first years as a college is you had some ‘risk’ money if I could put it that way,” Ford said. “You could try programs and see if they worked. Those were really heady days where you could be really creative and not follow the traditional blueprint of a college.”

Another defunct program just for the health of it

Its physical presence is gone, but the Mind, Body, Health program that ran nearly two decades lives on in people’s memories.

“I remember Linda Bowman saying to me at one point that when she talked to people in the community, that was one of the main things that most often popped up, that we had such a unique program in that area,” said Dr. James Ford, who was chair of the Sociology, Psychology and Mind-Body Health during a CCA career spanning 1982-2006.

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The program's funding later would be buttressed by a pair of FIPSE (Funds for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) grants, which focused upon faculty of color and ethics across curriculum.

The program would grow to point where there would be mentors following faculty, newsletters, even master problem solving workshops, to go along with new faculty orientation.

The annual mountain conferences were dubbed “Teaching for a Change” and actually paid part-time faculty to attend. The events lasted 19 years.

“‘To my knowledge, it was one of the first comprehensive, ongoing professional development programs for faculty,” said Barnes, now an associate professor with an M.S. in organization leadership at Regis University. “One of the things we didn’t want to do was what I call ‘drive-by faculty development,’ where you spend one day in the fall and one day in the spring, people come, and it doesn’t change anything. We really wanted to do something that was ongoing that would get people involved in the process and really talk about the scholarship of teaching and learning so that it would really change their practice.”

One of the key tenets was collaboration and cooperation in the classroom that engaged the learners in the process. Barnes recalled a conversation with former VP of Instruction Karl Van Ettan, who had received a complaint from a student because a faculty member was lecturing and having been through “learner-centered instruction” in other classes, was upset it wasn’t happening in another of his classes.

“That let me know that we were definitely having an impact.”

And that impact still lives on. “I got a call last year from Front Range Community College asking me to do a workshop. She said, ‘We’re trying to put together a faculty development program.' I was like, ‘Really?’ Barnes said with a chuckle. ‘You don’t have one? But one of the things that I found are things we did, even though it was so many years ago, are new to some.”

The faculty development program not only had a ‘tiered’ program of advancement but also ended with an integrated yearlong project that touched upon a particular educational theme.

“It was one of my proudest accomplishments, I think, because it really engaged people,” Barnes said.

Still, not everyone was completely onboard. In the mid-1990s, adjuncts moved to organize into a union and identified the program as an enemy. The opposition was voiced in a Westword article, and as Gilbert recalled, “it was a nasty fight.”

Harder still was keeping the program’s vision and values going once the money began to trickle out of the coffers, leading to the eventual demise of the Faculty Development program. The program needed to find its own money as the 2000s started and couldn’t sustain itself.

“It wasn’t for everyone,” admitted Karen Hewitt, long-time director of faculty, staff and organizational development and a major cog in the program. “One of the department chairs said to Diane one time, ‘I don’t come to this stuff because I’m as good a teacher as I want to be.’ That idea of being as good a teacher as I want was a completely foreign paradigm. Not continuing to develop as a teacher; we couldn’t even put words around it. But there certainly was a group of teachers that felt they were doing fine and didn’t want to be bothered with all this new stuff.”

Yet, for many who completely embraced the concepts, she added, “It changed their lives.”

“We helped a lot of people be really effective teachers for the kinds of students we have,” said Gilbert, who continues to teach at University of Colorado-Denver.

“I’m totally convinced what we were doing was the wave of the future. Maybe we were too early. But those are still methods that are really controversial.”
Bob Matoba, as a veteran of the Aurora Fire Department, didn’t need to be told that an initial spark is sometimes all it takes.

For Matoba, the construction of a faux house inside Building 859 on the Lowry campus in 2005 was the kindling that set the entire move toward simulation at CCA as an educational tool ablaze.

“Once we had that,” the college’s former Emergency Medical Services director and department chair said, “it was very easy to sell the rest.”

Getting there was the hard part. There was an eight-month turf battle over what had previously been storage space. But once that considerable obstacle was navigated, the hiring of a contractor to build the house was approved and became a tangible resource to get the buy-in necessary to construct a unique program from scratch that emphasized “more realistic, more relevant training.”

“We were basically creating the curriculum as we were delivering our first cohort,” Matoba recalled. “There were days we were basically going from hand to class when the class was starting. It was pretty amazing.”

It’s a concept that continues to grow today at the college with numerous game-based and immersive learning projects, numerous disaster preparedness and training exercises, high-fidelity mannequins employed to guide current and future first responders, and more.

And it all started with the house. That space was tangible evidence convincing various foundations and the state to provide financing that could lift the entire project off the ground and into a growth phase.

A second simulation space — a street scene -- followed the house. A bar scene was added soon after. One of the key philosophical ideas that drove the project was a move away from fixed construction to a more Hollywood style sound stage design that could be more adaptable to scenarios and add necessary flexibility to exercises.

CCA before Matoba’s arrival had done simulation exercises for local law enforcement and its police academy. But having come to the college after a stint as an advanced life support educator for AFD, Matoba envisioned the possibilities beyond that narrow scope.

Les Moroye, former associate VP at Lowry, was an early proponent. Then-president Linda Bowman was also in support of what is now known, in the totality of Building 859, as the Center for Simulation, and the use of realism-centered training beyond EMS and the Police Academy.

In the early days, “We started doing joint programs with Colorado Film School students, where they could film in the sim studios,” Matoba said. “We actually worked with a few English professors to have some students write essays on how simulation was being utilized.”

Yet, that was just scratching the surface.

Mike Carter, longtime director of the Police Academy, already had overseen simulated crime scenes and active-shooter trainings in buildings 900 and 700 and single-story dormitories formerly located in between. He was eager for the college to grow the concept — particularly after a trip to watch table-top exercises at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, N.Y., in April 2004.

“I thought they were really innovative, so I came back and spoke with Les Moroye, and found out at the time Bob already was thinking of that and had the same ideas,” Carter recalled. “So we collaborated on aspects of the program.”

The concept of what was then known as the Critical Incident Theater was born, despite harsh economic times. Carter credited Matoba as the “brains” behind the overall simulation vision, some of which came via a seat-of-the-pants approach but was equally measured.

It would take another two years of committees to shape the vision for the Disaster Management Institute, which was designed and built to train emergency managers.

A fully operational command and control center — with the moniker the DMI and replete with new-fangled technology, opened in ’09. Funding appropriated by Congressman Ed Perlmutter buttressed by CCA Foundation gave the college the financial wherewithal to expand past the simulation spaces.

Over time, the DMI moved away from emergency management training due to economic conditions and towards a model that emphasized disaster training and preparedness.

Political Panic — which went through a mock scenario of a Congressman falling victim to a bomb at a rally — was the first wide-scale training scenario hosted by the DMI in November ’09.

Clinton Andersen was hired to oversee the DMI project.

Then faculty members Pony An-

See Sim Center Page 15
Scenes mimicking terrorist acts (left) are now part of the DMI’s mission to help civilian and military partners. The Center for Simulation’s command and control center can be a boon to such exercises.
The ESL program at CCA in the early 2000s might as well have stood for Extremely Small and Limited. Classes were held at a Wells Fargo Bank basement and a couple of churches.

There was a four-credit college prep English as a Second Language college-prep program that had existed for several years that stood as the sum total of offerings on campus.

Former CCA president Linda Bowman was perplexed at that limited scope, especially given the surrounding population. “It was like 30 people, and to me, this is Aurora and we have a tiny ESL?” Bowman recalled. “How can we be Aurora’s college? And that was really my mantra. We are this community’s college and we take that role seriously.”

Bowman’s vision and circumstances converged to quickly grow ESL into an asset rather than an afterthought.

Aurora Public Schools had decided to cease its ESL program for adults and The Learning Source, a non-profit organization working to educate undereducated individuals and families in the region, was receptive to a partnership with CCA to help fill the void.

The Learning Center had national grant funding. The college had space on both campuses to house a growing department and GED testing taught by volunteers, as well as instructors that were knowledgeable educational practitioners.

A customized training program running computer courses for business and a moderate-sized ESL class existed for about a year, until the college combined community and college-prep ESL programs into what would be known as the Aurora Language Center.

“Around 2002-03, it really began to take off,” said Chris Ward, who was charged with oversight of the ALC and named director of community ESL. “The need for the program was pretty clear.”

The college-prep ESL and non-credit programs were housed on separate campuses to avert potential confusion among students at different stages of their English-speaking journey. The Lowry campus was home to students needing life skills and took advantage of the makeup of the surrounding neighborhood, which was more likely to need those specific services than CentreTech.

Enrollment in the college-prep program showed steady growth until a slight downturn last year. Attendance at Lowry has been steady for the last 7-8 years, Ward said.

Needless to say it’s a far cry from the old bank basement and church locales.

“I think for me it’s one of the really important things and one of the things I’ve really taken pride in since I’ve been here,” added Ward, CCA’s director of grants and planning. “When you talk to people – and it’s easy to see because there are so many students – but when you talk to them individually, they all have a story and many or most of them have stories that are far more dramatic and filled with hurdles and sometimes unfortunate things that most of the rest of us don’t deal with.”

About 15 percent of the student population in the community program are over 45, meaning they are learning English at an age that provides another added, if more welcome, challenge. The college-prep program’s focus is on writing, speaking and listening skills needed at the university level.

One of the key components often overlooked when considering both ESL segments is that they occur within a campus atmosphere.

Ward believes that, psychologically, the locale plants a seed about the educational possibilities beyond CCA’s walls. Several hundred students have taken the step ladder path of community ESL, college-prep ESL and beyond to four-year colleges.

That pathway is a vital part of Bowman’s presidential legacy.

More than 100 nationalities have come through CCA, with a hearty portion passing through the ESL programs along the way.

“I remember one Sunday afternoon – this is when we were doing some of our classes at St. Therese’s church – Linda went over there with a couple of us and was actually helping us register students as one of the people from the physical office,” Ward noted. “She was really supportive from the very beginning.”

The Colorado Film School soon would use the spaces for projects. English students wrote essays on the use of simulation. But the DMI opened the door to training working professionals in the field, as the simulation spaces had been a student-based asset.

Anderson, now the director of the DMI and Center for Simulation, would become point person for advanced training exercises that position CCA as a partner in national defense, as well as a leader in technology and training that not only uses the simulation rooms but Building 900 and the surrounding property around 859.

The Center for Simulation has set such a unique footprint that Dr. Jill Biden, wife of U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, toured the facility for its educational promise. Over 200 agencies at the local state and federal levels have since trained at Lowry involved in preparedness exercises spanning terrorist, rogue bombers, WMDs, hazardous materials, hostage crises and many others.

In September 2011, the Center for Simulation was the epicenter for Operation Mountain Guardian, which was the largest full-scale, terrorist-borne exercises in the state of Colorado’s history and one of the largest in the nation, encompassing 107 agencies and 3,000 people.

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Four Sight

It was unthinkable to this group it would be survivors that would serve under all CCA presidents

Debbie Irvine started her CCA career as a 15-day emergency appointment on Dec. 5, 1983, serving as an administrative assistant.

“They just kept renewing me,” she said.

Thirty years later, Irvine is one of only four employees to have served during each of four presidencies and their two interim replacements.

Irvine was just 22 when she began, going from hoping that something would “kind of work out” to becoming a college fixture for decades.

“Isn’t that crazy?” said Irvine, who now is a General Professional II in the college’s Human Resources department. “I never would have thought it would happen. And I had taken a year off between ’85 and ’86 when I had my son and I wasn’t a permanent employee at that point, so I really didn’t expect to come back. I wanted to come back and put the word out there if there was a position open to call me.

There was at some point.”

Caron grew up in Aurora and said it’s been a “trip” to see how the college has been transformed. Her days all the way back at the Aurora Education Center, leading to CCA, included time in the old Police/Fire Building. That front office was located where people once paid tickets and fines.

“We used to joke, ‘Are we still collecting fines?’

Caron has spent time as an adjunct, in Financial Aid, the Center for Physically Disadvantaged, Disability Services, as the director of the Learning Resource Center, while teaching sign language for more than 20 years. She was director of Financial Aid under Linda Bowman.

Bradford served time in the Social Sciences chair, as a Psychology faculty, and, now, an adjunct.

Weedin was all over the place, starting as a part-timer in biology/geology, then shifting to Facilities, director of the Student Education Achievement Center at the Buckingham facility, before become unofficially and officially chair of the Science department. He’s now an adjunct.

“I really felt incredibly lucky to be one of those four. A lot of people have been here 20 years or more but I was here from the very beginning, and even colleges these days, that doesn’t necessarily happen all that often.”

TIMELINE

2012

Geri Anderson, provost and VP of student and academic affairs for the state community college system, is named CCA interim president. A committee is formed to find a permanent replacement for Dr. Linda S. Bowman. … Bowman left her presidency Feb. 29 after accepting a Fulbright Specialists Award that would take her to Hong Kong for work on higher education policy. Bowman joined the faculty of the University of Denver’s Morgridge College of Education in the fall. She also retained her position with CCCS. … In March, an amalgamation of departments including anthropology, criminal justice and science classes join together for a game-based, immersive-learning exercise centered around a mock crime scene investigation. Its success would help set the stage for future interdisciplinary grants. … The Donna Moravec Gallery had its grand opening with plans to feature works by local, regional, student and faculty artists. … CCAs presidential search is whittled down to two finalists, including Alton D. Scales, CEO of the Summit Campus of Colorado Mountain College. … Yeturah Woodley took over as vice president of instruction in April. … A national tragedy just a mile from campus occurred with 12 shot dead at Aurora’s Century 16 movie theater. Four of the victims are current or former CCA students. … Scales accepts an offer to become CCAs fourth full-time president and begins work (unofficially) in July, just a day after the theater tragedy. … Two days before the U.S. presidential election, the incumbent, Barack Obama, held a rally at the Lowry West quad. Local officials put attendance in the 20,000 range, about 2,000-3,000 above Secret Service estimates. The late-night stump speech included rock star Dave Matthews as the warmup act.

2013

Dr. Nancy McCallin, right, formally introduced Betsy Oudenhoven to CCA staff after the latter’s appointment to interim president.

CCA hosts the first Model United Nations at a Colorado community college since 1975. … The college prepped for its reaccreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission and ultimately received its stamp of approval. … The college received nearly $435,000 in grant funding from the CCCS to implement five new immersive-learning projects through 2014. CCA had nine such game-based initiatives in motion at the time. … Scales suddenly resigned on July 10 and was replaced by Oudenhoven as interim president. Dr. Nancy McCallin, president of the CCCS, reserved the right to conduct a full-fledged search or make a direct appointment or promotion to the full-time position. … CCA prepared to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its establishment as a legal entity with community and college events.
“Future charts demanding course for community college,” Linda Bowman column, Aurora Sentinel, Nov. 9, 2000: David Wesel, a Pulitzer Prize winner and Berlin Bureau Chief for the Wall Street Journal, … (recently) talked at length about the American dream and the overarching goal for America of raising the standard of living … He focused on the important role of education in general, and community colleges specifically. Describing education as the escalator to upward mobility, Wesel stated that community colleges provide the way to ensure that our prosperity is more widely shared. But he cautioned against complacency … To ensure that our prosperity is more widely shared, I think, is the essence of the role of the Community College of Aurora. Implied in that statement is our responsibility to be a partner with citizens, communities, businesses and industries, K-12 and universities, our students, and governments. … In short, together, we must anticipate the needs of the new economy and help prepare our constituencies to be full participants.

“CCA named the state’s best in its class,” Aurora Sun-Sentinel: March 21, 2002: The Colorado Commission of Higher Education recently named the school the best community college in the state in its annual evaluation. “We’re a new, small college, so the environment is more personal than most colleges,” said Libby Broughton, an academic advisor and future interim VP and director. “I think the size of the college really allows us to help the students in a more one-on-one way.” The school’s catalogue lists 258 faculty members as instructors for the 4,800 students enrolled. … The CCHE has evaluated state schools for the past three years after a bill was passed to implement the system. Of the $35 million given to higher education last year, $20.7 million was funded based on the evaluations. Two-year and four-year public colleges are scored in categories such as graduation rates, freshman retention rates, minority student success, and class size. The commission measures standards set by peer institutions nationwide, not necessarily other schools in Colorado. … For two-year colleges, CCA had 2,313 points, Aims Community College 2,306 and Front Range Community College 2,304.

“Tuition hike not too bad for CCA,”

Aurora Sentinel, June 23, 2004: The bad news is that if certain state constitutional amendments aren’t changed soon, CCA students could be paying twice as much for tuition by 2009, according to CCA president Linda Bowman. “There are major questions about the future funding of higher education in this state and the sad part is that so many people are not aware of the horrible results. The trend we are seeing the past few years is that as enrollment at our school goes up, state funding remains the same. Now it’s up to us to make up the difference without raising tuition — that’s not realistic.” CCA similar to other colleges in the state has seen its state funding reduced a total of 35 percent in the past three years while enrollment has increased 20 percent.

“Fix college problems not symptoms,” Aurora Sentinel editorial, Sept. 1, 2004: “ … The Community College of Aurora is looking to take part in a desperate move to keep it and other state community colleges afloat. TABOR, the so-called Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights, is Douglas Bruce’s malfeasance that sends tax rebates to people even as needed state agencies close and roads and bridges fail. One of the worst maladies TABOR has inflicted on Colorado has resulted in continued diminishing community college funds even as school enrollment increases. To avoid financial collapse, schools and state lawmakers created a shell game that allows community college funds to be converted into a voucher program. Other and other tortuous funding schemes, allow community colleges to avoid the TABOR vise, which for years has been slowly squeezing the life from the popular and critical community college system. But while this funding scheme will allow colleges to stay afloat, it will do that at the expense of students who can usually least afford it. Tuition’s going up.”

“CCA prez named to additional post,” Aurora Sentinel, May 12, 2005: CCA president Linda Bowman said she is looking forward to her new position (as VP for Academic and Student Services for CCCS), improving graduation rates and creating more opportunities for students. “A major role is to encourage more people to attend college,” she said. “This is extremely important with the Colorado Paradox.” Colorado Paradox is a term that has been used to describe the relatively low number of high school graduates who finish college, despite the high number of college graduates who live in the state. … Bowman will continue to serve as CCA president.

“Four Aurora schools approved as full sites for college-credit work,” Aurora Sentinel, August 31, 2010: Four high schools in Aurora now qualify as official educational sites for the Community College of Aurora. … Higher Learning Commission reviewers visited Aurora Central, William Smith, Rangeview, and Overland high schools earlier in the year. Those institutions offer concurrent college enrollment through CCA. The HLC announced earlier in August that all four schools have been approved as full sites, which means there are no limits on the concurrent enrollment courses offered. APS Superintendent John Bary praised the decision. … “The partnership between CCA and the Aurora school districts should be a model for the nation.”

“CCA, APS mark collaboration with impressive enrollment figures,” Aurora Sentinel, March 8, 2013: The Aurora Public Schools district leads the state in the number of high school students who take college courses, according to a report. District officials (said) that 990 APS students are currently taking college classes in district high schools. More than 200 APS students are taking classes on the Community College of Aurora campus, and more than 100 are enrolled in the ASCENT program, an initiative that sees students earning college credits while taking part in a fifth year of high school enrollment.

“Scales resigns as president of CCA,” Aurora Sentinel, July 9, 2013: Community College of Aurora President Alton Scales resigned Tuesday, two weeks shy of his first anniversary of taking the top spot at the college. Officials named Betsy Oudenhoven, the school’s vice president of student affairs, as interim president. … Oudenhoven, a former administrator at Joliet Junior College in Illinois has a background that includes specialized research in English language learning in community college settings.
“The future is unwritten . . . ”
CCA is a hard look in the mirror in order to discover impediments that may be adversely impacting its African-American population as part of a two-year, $1 million project designed to transform the college into an “equity-minded” institution while identifying goals that will shape state higher-education policy.

CCA already boasts a highly diverse student population. Nevertheless, gaps exist in the types of academic milestones achieved within that broad population.

The project is being spearheaded by the Center for Urban Education at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Higher Education. It is being financed by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

CUE and WICHE partnered previously on an equity-focused project in Nevada.

Colorado leaders are seeking to identify goals related to equity gaps in targeted academic milestones -- such as retention; science, technology, engineering and math courses (STEM); and transfer or degree completion.

“What we’re trying to do in this project is figure out how different students experience the Community College of Aurora differently,” Interim President Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven said. “One size doesn’t usually fit all. You have to take into account who your particular students are and where they’re starting from, and I think sometimes we are reluctant to have conversations about race and other factors that are impacting our students. Because of our diversity, I think sometimes we think everybody’s doing fine.

“What’s nice about this is it makes issues of race explicit,” Dr. Oudenhoven added. “It’s helping us have some hard conversations, looking at a very specific group of students, and how they’re experiencing the institution and why, perhaps, they’re not being as successful. And it’s turning it the way it should be -- which is looking at ourselves.”

Metro State University and the University of Colorado-Denver are other in-state entities participating in the program, which endeavors to provide practical tools and systems to measure and improve student success.

CCA is the lone community college involved in the project in the state and may be one of the most diverse higher-education institutions in Colorado, making participation in this study “an obligation,” according to Dr. Oudenhoven. But diversity doesn’t necessarily translate to equity when it comes to success.

That runs counter to Community College of Aurora’s values, meaning this self-reflective process could result in necessary adjustments on the college’s part in order to create a classroom experience that is more welcoming and aligned towards the success of all students.

Factors such as gender, class, religion, disabilities, and ethnicities have a surprising ability to impact that process, as well as the in-house goals is not only giving us a way to understand how they apply to them and can implement them forward yet powerful way. One of the in-house goals is not only giving people a concrete idea of the kinds of things that are being examined, but how they apply to them and can influence their own work at the college.

The ultimate goal of the initiative is to look at outcomes and have every group at CCA graduating at the same, high rate, in part, by examining the demographics of students both coming in and out the door and noting the differences.

“The Equity in Excellence initiative is part and parcel of efforts over the last two years in Colorado to reform the state’s higher-education system. The project, further, will integrate campus-level action plans and benchmarks into overall state policy reforms in order to strengthen the state’s policy strategies, particularly with respect to closing postsecondary attainment gaps.”

“Dr. Oudenhoven has spent her professional life in higher education and done work with issues of racism, white privilege and diversity and admitted while it sometimes was difficult, it also was ultimately helpful. At CCA, information thus far has shown that African-American students are persisting from fall to spring at higher levels than other student groups but that there’s a sharp decline to the next fall. The reasons behind the loss of those students is just one area that will be explored in hopes of becoming an equity-minded institution.”

“I don’t expect it to be all good news,” Dr. Oudenhoven said of the review. “But I think it’s really critical that we have these conversations and have them out in the open. The data is pretty clear. Our students of color are not performing -- and we’re not alone in this. But just because we’re not alone and some of those students have significant challenges doesn’t let us off the hook. … There may be surprises about what’s helpful or what students perceive and we may inadvertently be doing something to create barriers. It’s not easy to hear, but it’s helpful information if we can act upon it.”

The Equity in Excellence committee is leaning on cues from CUE to present the information in a straightforward yet powerful way. One of the in-house goals is not only giving people a concrete idea of the kinds of things that are being examined, but how they apply to them and can influence their own work at the college.

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CCA hosted its first annual Welcome Fest on Aug. 29 and the event attracted students, faculty and families to enjoy a carnival atmosphere, food, and information about college programs. The day is captured on the next four pages, including (clockwise from top), a child enjoying the bouncy house; Elena Sandoval Lucero preparing for liftoff on the velcro wall; Chris Tombari peeking out from a rollerball; Olimpia Marroquin and Walter Correll with the new CCA mascot; Caleb Goforth, peeking out of a sumo wrestler costume; and the smiling Nguc Le, Emelda Jones and Nene Sumbumu.
Clockwise from top: Nate and Cassie Sanchez, two parts of the band The Constant Tourists, who provided musical entertainment at Welcome Fest, get in some pre-show fun; Javon Brame delivers liquid refreshment; the arts and crafts table was put to good use by one attendee; Travis Puga spins daughter Lydia while mom watches in the background; Victor Villapando and Angie Tiedeman have it made in the shade just before the start of the day's festivities.
Clockwise from top: A line at Lowry gives a hint of the successful endeavor Welcome Fest was in its first year; Memuna Tossa, Riska Jara and Huria Tossa pose with the new CCA mascot, whose name has yet to be revealed after a campus-wide design contest; mother and daughter share a laugh in front of one of the many inflatable carnival rides; Tim Cali of Student Life gives an overview of the college’s extracurricular opportunities to Brittany Beach and Amber Pederson.
Clockwise from top: Stephen Achziger, CCA student and son of English faculty Susan Achziger, hangs out for awhile and gives the thumbs up sign while trying to avoid a head rush; Jocelyn Mujica signs a commitment to complete her CCA education at the Phi Theta Kappa booth; Dylan, infant daughter of Associate Director of Donor Relations Josh Gold, takes interrupts her first CCA event with an impromptu nap; Libby Klingsmith, director of the Student Success Center, catches up with former CCA employee Ruthanne Orihuela; Admissions specialist Nicole Hockert and Assistant Registrar Valerie Sangiuliano goof off for the camera wearing matching college attire.
ESL's Folley was globetrotting educator before becoming fixture on CCA's staff

Meredith Folley can recall as a young girl driving to ballet class with her sister, stuck in Colorado traffic, staring out the window at the chrome of the cars ahead as they reflected the sunlight and the dirtied, black-snow remnants of car exhaust that aligned the roads.

Thoughts permeated her mind about whether this, in fact, embodied life.

It really wasn't an open-ended question. She already intrinsically knew that it didn't. Her spirit was much more free, awaiting escape— even in these formative years.

Folley credited her disabled grandmother, whom she described as “courage itself” for helping her explore the boundaries beyond a car window, and, eventually, beyond borders.

Yet the trait to think with a more finely developed worldview was seemingly in her DNA even earlier.

She often bypassed non-fiction for fairy tales because it took her to other places in her mind. She would have dinners with foreign-exchange students as a teen and when it was time for a rare dose of reality within the written page, it was to, say, read a book with her grandmother about a doctor in India who had become a leading surgeon for lepers—not the latest *New York Times* bestselling autobiography.

It’s no wonder, then, that Folley started her professional career as a freelance journalist and children’s writer, and later was inspired to become an instructor of English as a Second Language.

Her journey eventually would land her in places like Togo and Ghana in Africa for years at a time before a lengthy pit stop at CCA while her son received his introduction into American culture and education.

“I liked people of different cultures. I don’t know,” Folley said, in discussing her sense of wonder about the world, borne at an early age. “I had a doll collection of people of different cultures. I asked my parents to buy me records so I could learn French in third grade. And I always loved to hear foreign accents.”

The leap from writer to the ESL realm was, in large part, inspired by hearing these disparate voices—she knew so well, but in a very real sense. She was hooked.

She made the decision to obtain her Master’s Degree in teaching ESL from the University of Idaho.

By 1981, Folley would move to Togo and land a job at the university in the capital city, teaching English in the Economics Department and later directing the English Language Program at the American Cultural Center. She would head to Ghana and the American International School 12 years later, teaching various history courses, French, and, later, ESL.

She would experience life’s ‘norms,’ such as marriage in Africa but also military crackdowns, scads of culture and stimulating intellectual conversations in all kinds of environs.

“There were just fascinating situations,” she said.

Returning to the U.S., and joining CCA, Folley was able to use these life experiences to better serve her ESL students. “It’s setting a rapport and letting them know that you care about them, that you’re friendly, smiling, noticing things about them that you can help them with. And at the very basic level, it’s pictures. They’re the absolute best way. So I developed a lot of materials based on pictures.”

Yet in her mind’s eye, Folley herself can still envision a return one day to Ghana, where her husband has built a retirement home and where she can resume the writing career suspended temporarily all these years by shaping the lives of others in the classroom.

Folley peered out her office window at CentreTech campus, as she did all those years ago on the way to ballet.

Look hard enough, and you could almost sense the new horizons out there she’ll again examine with a full heart, beyond the snow-peaked Rocky Mountains.
Citizenship grant allows CCA to lower student costs

To mark Citizenship Day on Sept. 17, United States Immigration and Citizenship Services announced that the Colorado Collaborative Citizenship Program – of which CCA is a part -- has received a grant for approximately $350,000.

This collaborative is comprised of the Colorado African Organization (lead applicant and Citizenship instruction), Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountain-Refugee and Asylee Programs (legal services), and CCA (Citizenship instruction).

The goal of the project is to "build upon successful current programming and enhance the availability of citizenship instruction and naturalization services for refugee and migrant Legal Permanent Residents in metro Denver/Aurora, Colorado."

CCA received approximately $33,000, which will be a boon to the Community ESL program because the grant will allow for subsidization of the college’s Citizenship classes, reducing the cost to $40 per person.

“What it’s going to do is allow us to double the amount of students we serve,” English as a Second Language chair Chris Tombari said.

“This is a growing program and for the students involved, it allows us to give more direct services to those who want to become citizens.”

In addition, the college will have the means to purchase technology supplies to upgrade the citizenship classroom and accommodate a lesson where students complete their citizenship applications online.

USCIS’ Citizenship and Integration Grant Program has helped more than 66,000 permanent residents in 31 states and the District of Columbia prepare for citizenship since its inception in 2009. The group anticipates an additional 31,000 will receive similar services through Sept. 30, 2015.

The Colorado African Organization has provided education and social services to African immigrants and refugees in the Denver metro area. Permanent residents of Ghana, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea, among other African countries, primarily have been served.
Math chair James Gray reminds faculty that the deadline for submitting nominations for this year’s Student Success Awards is Oct. 4. The awards honor students for their determination to overcome obstacles in order to obtain an education.

This year’s ceremony will be held in the Student Centre Rotunda from 12-2 p.m. on Dec. 6. Nomination forms for this year’s awards can be accessed at http://www.ccaurora.edu/student-success-awards-nomination-form.

The Learning Resource Center was recognized for its collaboration with AskAcademic, which affords students the opportunity to access a librarian 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The LRC was given a plaque that also marked AskAcademic decade-long efforts to provide that expansive access to information through such state entities.

Reppenhagen is the son of a Vietnam veteran and the grandchild of World War II veterans. He enlisted in 2001 as a cavalry scout in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany, before joining Boeing as a senior systems engineer. He served 10 years in the U.S. Air Force as a signals intelligence officer, completing assignments in both Germany and Japan before joining Boeing as a senior systems engineer.

The CCA Security Department & Office of Conduct, Intervention & Retention is presenting numerous safety/security videos and Q-and-A sessions during the fall semester. CCA Campus Security Personnel will be on hand to answer questions.

The schedule is as follows:

Monday, Sept. 30: The documentary “Flashpoint”: Recognizing and Preventing Violence on Campus. Topics covered: Harassment, Stalking, Suicide, and Depression. Two showings: 12 - 1 p.m., CTC; Student Centre Rotunda; 3:30-4:30 p.m. at the Lowry West Quad, Bergren Room 112

The counseling services department is pleased to announce a fall presentation series to provide students with more information regarding mental health and wellness. We will be presenting on one topic each month with dates as follows.

- 10/15/2013: National Alliance on Mental Illness: In Our Own Voice² CentreTech Rotunda 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
- 11/04/2013: Suicide Prevention, Lowry Todd Bergren Room, 11:30 to 12:30
- 11/05/2013: Suicide Prevention, CentreTech Rotunda, 12:30-1:30
- 12/04/2013: Stress Management, Lowry, Todd Bergren Room, 12:30-1:30
- 12/05/2013: Stress Management, CentreTech Rotunda, 12:30-1:30

Please consider encouraging students to attend and/or incorporating these events into your course by bringing your entire class so we can plan accordingly.

CCA will be hosting a Bonfils Blood Drive on Monday, Oct. 7 at the Student Centre Rotunda at CentreTech from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Those interested in donating can contact Student Life at studentlife@ccaaurora.edu to register.

The CCA Hispanic Heritage Series continues Wednesday, Oct. 2 from 6-8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Forum with “Hispanic Heritage Live,” as Fred Blanco gives a dramatic depiction of Cesar Chavez.

Chavez is considered of the most inspirational and influential civil rights leaders of his generation. The play focuses on the man and his struggle for equality through the eight various characters brought to life on stage.
Around campus

Clockwise from top: Los Romanticos perform as part of CCA’s recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month; Carlos Guevara searches for an answer with his teammates during a Constitution Day quiz in the Rotunda; Rain could not deter an extensive turnout on Sept. 11 for the Fall Part-Time Job, Internship and “Free Stuff Fair” hosted by Career Services; Marty Cirbo of Wagner Equipment Co. talks about his company’s partnership with the college as part of a state community-college video marketing campaign; the race is on as two students try to hit the buzzer first at the top of the rock climbing wall installed Sept. 10 during a Student Life event at CentreTech.