In 1986, CCA was ready to be ushered into the future. It just needed the right person to lead it there.

Dr. Larry Carter relaxes outside his Maui home in Summer 2012, above, and, left, gives a speech as Community College of Aurora's second president. Carter served atop CCA for more than 14 years, with the building of CentreTech campus and helping smooth entry onto the Lowry campus marking two of his greatest accomplishments.

PHOTO COURTESY ELIZABETH HIRSH, CCA

Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven plots college's course and vision for 2013-14 at annual All-College meeting Story / Page 16
Dr. Larry Carter, simply put, was one of the most important figures in the history of the Community College of Aurora.

His foremost accomplishments included the building of the CentreTech campus, getting CCA a foothold on the abandoned Lowry Air Force Base, and helping establish the college's Foundation as a real fund-raising arm of the institution.

Looking back as CCA celebrates its 30th anniversary, Carter summed up the ups and downs of the college succinctly, “It isn't line history,” he said. “Nothing ever is. But it has a lot of curves, breaks and bends in it.”

Carter also was in office when the Student Centre was added to the three original CentreTech buildings, and by the time he retired in 2000, he'd been recognized by having the black-box theater - which he played an integral role getting built - bear his name.

In this issue, Carter looks back on his days in office; employees of the college remember his period of leadership; the architectural vision for the main campus is articulated by the Anderson Mason Dale architectural firm that was in charge of design; and the first steps onto Lowry campus are re-examined.

Some other “curves, breaks and bends” are explored, too, focusing on some of the interesting people and programs - even wildlife - that filled the CCA story during the bustling period of the 1990s.

Given the times, oversized eyeglasses are certain to be included.

-- Lee Rasizer, CCA Public Relations Coordinator

A 1996 photo features three longtime CCA employees flanked by two students: Dr. Linda Bradford (second from left) the longtime Social Sciences coordinator/chair under the auspices of Dr. James Ford and later a Psychology faculty; Ileta Smith, Bud Ulrich's secretary in Student Development dating back to 1984 and an original CCA proponent; and Kazuo Kuriyagawa, Political Science faculty.

ON THE COVER: Elizabeth Hirsh, Anthropology faculty, took a pit stop during a Hawaiian vacation last summer to meet with 14-year CCA president Dr. Larry D. Carter. Carter was interviewed in the town of Pukalani in Maui, where he now resides. After Hirsh was given a tour of Carter’s home, the two sat down in the island of his kitchen and spoke for more than 90 minutes. This photo was taken on Carter’s lanai or porch, with the greenery dotting the background landscape. Carter touched on a number of topics during his lengthy tenure, which are captured, in large part, during a question-and-answer session that runs on pages 4-6.
OPEN FOR BUSINESS

CentreTech shiny new chapter for CCA

Looking back today, the CentreTech campus appears to be right where it belongs.

But a 1982 document prepared by the Site Selection/Acquisition Task Force shows multiple options originally were in play—16 in all.

- Aurora Business Center
- Piccadilly Road
- Sixth Ave.
- Springhill
- Jewell and Yale
- E. Buckley Air National Guard
- Chambers and Parker
- Chambers and Sixth
- Parker and Mississippi
- Quincy and Himalaya
- Buckley Site Adjacent to Aurora Technical Center
- Denver Business Center
- Urban Investment 1
- Urban Investment 2
- Upland Industries
- Green Valley Ranch

The Task Force recommended federal land in the Buckley Air National Guard Base but negotiations with the base commander failed due to a federal land freeze. That left the so-called Bresnahan Property owned by the City of Aurora, between Buckley and Chambers Roads and between Alameda and First Avenue, as the top choice.

Uses could be academic, occupational and administrative.

And when in 1982 the City Council approved the donation of 21 acres of that property, then eight years later, issued 20-year revenue bonds in the approximate amount of $11 million for the purpose of building a permanent campus for CCA, only then was the locale the no-brainer spot it now appears.

Bonds were refinanced in 1994 to take advantage of lower interest rates and issues hashed out relating to the use of the lower seven acres of the city through agreements with the state and college Foundation. Only then was CentreTech truly off and running.

Bob Lind, then the facilities director, played an integral role in the construction and conception of the campus and ensured, literally, a solid foundation for the college.

“I was involved with going to many, many buildings to see if we could rent those and expand the college,” he recalled. “Some we visited had Bentonite problems, where the floors waved when the expansive soil took over. So one of the things I did, on the battles we had with the architects and contractor, was to ensure we put down pilings rather than laying concrete directly on the surface excavation to keep the expansive soil from breaking the foundations.”

That lifted the cost substantially. CCA was urged to go the cheaper route instead. But Lind, who had some construction experience, pointed to buildings within a mile or two with Mennonite that proved his point. CCA might have been sunk shortly after CentreTech was built had Lind not persisted.

Lind was originally hired with the idea of modifying the East Park location but over a period of many

Clockwise: An invitation to the campus opening on July 10, 1991; architect Anderson Mason Dale’s brochure, explaining its vision for CentreTech; ribbon cutting at the bridge behind the Administration Building, featuring (from left) Olen Bell, Artie Cowan, Larry Yates, Ben Lewis, Jim Lewien and Frank Weddig, all members of the CCA’s President’s Advisory Council.
months the concepts that led to the original three CentreTech buildings took shape with Lind serving as coordinator under then-President Dr. Larry Carter.

Lind worked in lockstep with Anderson Mason and Dale on nearly a daily basis. As it turned out, the project came in on budget and "there were no excessive costs," Lind recalled, "which I thought was kind of remarkable."

The small stuff was sweated. Upgraded lighting was installed because of its affect on students working at their desks. Cable hookups ran throughout classrooms so TVs could be installed and a video control center could send out a signal to classrooms. A 12-foot dish originally sat on top the school to pipe in signals for teleconferences and conferences in the Fine Arts auditorium.

But the plans did run into hundreds, maybe thousands of small snags – prairie dogs.

"They would come in and, of course, make holes everywhere, make their little houses," Lind recalled. "Some people wanted to just go kill them; many people didn't want to kill prairie dogs because they're so cute and all. And they were out in the surrounding fields, too, and making mounds everywhere. So there was a battle over what we should do."

Little known fact at the time: there were prairie dog rescue organizations ready to rid CCA of the problem. So, no prairie dogs were harmed in the making of CentreTech. Instead, they all got a vigorous bath.

Soapsuds via water cannons were aggressively forced into the ground, while the rest of the holes were covered. And you thought pigs couldn't fly. "They came hotfooting out. And as they popped out, you'd catch them," Lind said.

At the time, the critters were relocated to Rocky Mountain Arsenal, out beyond the airport, which was formerly a wildlife area.

But that was a minor irritation in what was a multi-million dollar, intricate project.

Carter was very much involved in all the major meetings with the architects and contractor but left Lind in charge of making recommendations to which he usually acquiesced.

"It came in pretty smooth," Lind said of the CentreTech project. "We had problems along the way, like there always are in any construction project, but they were all solvable. It was a real challenge. I really enjoyed the challenge of the whole project."

And Lind learned a ton along the way. "I really get kind of a thrill with the fact I had something to do with it," he added.

Lind wasn't involved in the later erection of the Student Centre or Fine Arts Building expansion projects. He moved his office to Lowry, where he began work on the acquisition of buildings and setting up classrooms for what was soon to be CCA's second campus.

Lowry had no prairie dogs but looked like the entire circus had left town, having simply locked the door behind them.

But at least CentreTech now was a centralized place CCA could call its own while Phase II went into effect. "I think it made all the difference because we were really limited in how far we could go being a College Without Walls," said Debbie Irvine, a CCA employee since December 1983. "It would have limited our growth."

The whole reason we moved to CentreTech is we were outgrowing our space in the building there. It also gave us a campus feel.

"It seems like we had rapid growth after that," she added. "And just having a college campus has helped us to grow, having our own buildings, even though we didn't have as many buildings as we do now."

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CCA faculty poses on the CentreTech bridge, circa 1998.

How they envisioned CentreTech campus …

Anderson, Mason and Dale architects spelled out their vision for the CentreTech campus upon its completion. Part of their mindset is captured here:

"The design challenge at the Community College of Aurora was the creation of a "campus" – an educational setting – with all the amenities and symbols requisite to a traditional collegiate institution. Three buildings were planned for the first phase: an Academic Building, a Lecture Hall/Arts Building and an Administration Building. Site planning was critical not only to the immediate solution, but to the meaningful evolution of the campus environment.

"The master plan utilizes the old Highline Canal as the organizing element of the campus. Buildings are located on either side of the Canal, the most public ones to the front of the site adjacent of the parking and the academic buildings in the quieter zone of the site adjacent to the Canal. The resultant composition is a linear scheme where buildings extend along the canal and are linked by a series of bridges and walkways spanning and adjacent to the old Canal. The old Canal is preserved and enchanted and is intended to become a passive pedestrian zone, a place for reading, walking and other leisure activities."

"… One of the design goals was to separate the campus architecture from the existing office park typology. In addition it was important to make as many connections, both perceptual (color, texture) and literal (windows) to the site as possible. Brick, block and pre-cast concrete were the materials chosen to achieve those ends."

"The beige, buff and red colors were chosen from the palette of the existing native grasses. Each of the buildings is articulated slightly differently from the others, providing a rich variety within the material and design parameters established for the campus. The facades are like intricately woven patterns, where color, texture and shadow interlock repetitively. Up close or from a distance, the scale and character of the buildings are perceived equally well."

"Much care has been taken with details. The formation of openings, the joining of different materials and the planar relief of the walls combine to provide an animated facade which changes in the course of the day. Large windows at the grade level make literal connections with the surrounding landscape."

"In keeping with long established collegiate architecture, the public spaces, stairs and major rooms are formalized as bay windows, making connections of the site as well as the front range. More celebrated elements, such as the Arts Building, are expressed by the quoining of block, a more detailed cornice and a special marquee."
On August 1, 2012, CCA anthropology faculty Elizabeth Hirsh took a detour from her vacation in Maui to track down Dr. Larry D. Carter, the college’s second president, at his Hawaii home. Carter discussed his hiring, the early days, the building of CentreTech campus and much more during a wide-ranging interview lasting nearly two hours. Here are some excerpts from that discussion:

You were a direct appointment, in effect, of Don McGinnis, director of the state’s community colleges, after the Advisory Council of the state system was informed of Dr. Nai-Kwan Chang’s pending retirement and the need to find a replacement. What was the reception as you walked through the door as CCA president fresh from Fort Morgan?

“As you might expect, faculty and staff were wondering who this guy was. ‘We didn’t get to interview him or anything. …’ And I felt their pain very much and knew it wasn’t smart to walk in there where they didn’t have a chance. So I asked John McGuire, who had been the new academic dean for about a year or two and was really good to schedule something at the Holiday Inn on I-70 and have a room reserved for four or five hours and then schedule a session of all the faculty – part time included -- that could make it and all the support staff and then the administrators from division chairs through deans and so on and let them interview me, even though it was after the fact and I’d already signed the contract.

“That still didn’t seem like enough for me. I wanted them to feel like they were part of it. So I did kind of an aggressive move at the beginning of each interview by saying, ‘I know what’s happened. It’s not how I would choose it to be done but I’m going to consider this an interview and I want you to consider it the same and if any of these three groups don’t want me to come, I won’t take the job. That was a little scary and put them in a position of power long enough where I think everybody felt good about it, and we seemed to feel good about each other and it felt a lot better.”

CCA was created legislatively in 1983 and has been operating as a “College Without Walls” -- sans campus -- when you arrived. How far along was the planning for a permanent home for the college when you came on board?

“The definite word passed on by the Legislature to CCA was that you be a college without walls and don’t even bring up the word campus for five years. So when I got there, the deans took me over to show me where the city building is now and that little area of Aurora was not built on. There was nothing there. So a lot of people thought that’s where the permanent campus should be. And they had hired or at least got some sketching plans from an architect and it was as if we should build it and be done with it. ‘I had the words ‘don’t even say the word campus for five years’ and here we are looking at one, maybe. So I knew it wouldn’t fly. And we’d just get shot down and anger the legislators and it might even take longer, so I didn’t go for that one right away. Then, somewhere in there, I’m not quite sure when it happened, the city had donated about 25 acres for a campus and an option on 14 more at the present site. One area was free land and the other one wouldn’t have been and I didn’t know how we’d pay for it.
“First thing I asked people to do was quite saying 'College Without Walls.' I asked for them to refer to us as a "College Beyond Walls," which was softer but still took us one step closer to a campus. So I tried to do that and think of things beyond the walls. Simultaneous to that, we were in the six-story building at Chambers and 6th, second building down, and we had rented about the time I went there about 40,000 square feet and we were out of space for the growth we were experiencing. At the same time the people that preceded me had done an excellent job of having classes in downtown attendance centers and all, but having a little more trouble having night classes at the high schools, particularly at Cherry Creek, because Aurora schools could identify with Community College of Aurora and the Cherry Creek School District, they had Arapahoe (CC) and so on. So we worked on that.

“The rate I remember at the time, it was 21 dollars per square foot, which was pretty much outrageous because we were in the ‘80s and the economy was not that great and we needed space. So I talked to the owners a little bit. But Bob Lind did most of the work and I asked him to see what rate they’d take if we would rent everything that vacated. If there was an opening we’d take it; it didn’t matter what it was, because we needed all kinds of space, So they went from 21 dollars a square foot down to 12.

“We took the bargain, as it was, and before (East Park Plaza) left, and before the campus was built, we occupied the whole 60,000 square feet. So that was a fortuitous move and good on our part and a good opportunity, also. So that’s what saved us while we were waiting for the campus to evolve.

“The college Foundation had been formed before I got there, and the chair of it was Stan Whitaker who deserves recognition, because he’s a developer and had worked on Denver Tech Center along with Mr. Anderson, who was the … redeveloper of Denver airport …. So he was doing there what Stan was trying to do for us, which was help us get a campus. Bill Wiggins, a commercial developer, was on there (too). There were three or four solid and steady members. They invited me to Foundation meet-
On May 12, the Aurora City Council approved $12 million in educational development revenue bonds to build an 86,000 square foot facility near East First Ave. and Chambers Rd. The tax-exempt bonds were to be paid off by state money, not tuition; however, student-parking fees were to be increased to pay for parking lots at the new buildings. A Sept. 17, 1990 story in the Rocky Mountain News trumpeted the “booming” enrollments of community colleges around the state, including a 106.4 percent change since 1985 for CCA, which had 4,462 students in fall enrollment in 1990. The News pointed out that the increases came despite enrollment at four-year institutions nationwide either stagnant or declining.

On July 10, a campus dedication was held at the Community College of Aurora Lecture Hall at 16000 E. CentreTech Parkway – an event that spanned four days. A postcard accompanying the invitation touted special features at the new facility as the “Lecture Hall, Aurora Briefing Center, Corporate Training Room, and Science Labs” A newspaper article in the community Accent newspapers front page shouted that the new campus “spells IDENTITY for Aurora” CCA now served as the first college campus in the city. The article further noted that CCA would bring an expected $40 million to $50 million fiscal impact to Aurora. The city’s donation of 21 acres of land came with a lease with the college for one dollar per year for the next 50 years. CCA’s Foundation bought the other seven acres with funds from the $11 million in bond money it received for the construction of the project. Because CCA is part of the state college system, the state leased buildings back to the school at an average rate of $10.67 for 25 years. Design of the new facility began in April 1990. There were only three buildings originally, with the Student Center absent to start. The Fine Arts Building was only half the size it is now. When the school first opened later in July, classes still were at off-site schools such as Overland, Smoky Hill, Montbello, and Aurora Central high schools at night due to large nighttime enrollments. So ostensibly CCA went from a school without walls to a college with satellite locations using site monitors as administrators of those offices in the evenings.

CCA career? “One of the surprises I had was how long we went without a full-time faculty other than division chairs. And I’m not sure what the thinking was. I was ready for some full-time faculty. The first time I asked John McGuire, the dean of instruction, to talk with the division chairs and see what kind of faculty members we needed to hire first, how many and whatever, word came back, ‘We’re not ready yet.’ I was shocked by that and I think what they were thinking is, it’s gone pretty smoothly now, as soon as you get full-time faculty, then you have to have this or that. We may need another year of flexibility before we get engrained in the daily tasks of everybody or a lot begin full time. So that was one (surprise).

“My favorite book at that time was Causing Others to Want Your Leadership. It wasn’t a best seller. It was a small book as they go. Not very thick, written by a professor at Kansas State, which is where I got my Ph.D. … But just the title says the whole thing. It says you’re appointed, have the power, have the certificate, have the title, all of that, but if people don’t follow you collectively there is no power in an institution on how to get things done collectively. I was thinking the other day the name for the book might have been Allowing Others to Want Your Leadership, rather than ‘Causing,’ because ‘Causing’ somehow is making you do something like me or like what I do as a leader. … I won’t be president again, but I’d change it if I were to ‘Allowing Others to Want Your Leadership.’

“ar my emphasis as far as education always has been how differently people learn and my Ph.D. was in adult education but its subtitle should have been learning styles for adults, and it’s not as much style as preference. … When you ask community college students what they liked about Community College of Aurora, they’d say they like the instructors and the small class size, but they’re saying more than that. They’re saying they like the individualized learning aspect of it. And you can’t do that with 200 students so they relate it to size. But it was size that allowed them to learn the way they best learned and that will never go away as long as we have community colleges. So that was kind of my inner motivation for just about anything we did. I had my eye on that ball. Sometimes it worked; sometimes it didn’t.

“The evolution of faculty was an interesting thing to watch, and I think it did, and that our faculty development helped. It’s hard to change the way you’ve taught for years and years and some were naturals at it and some students don’t like that. It’s just touchy feely to them and they want to be taught because that’s how they learn. So there needs to be some of that. But I’d say my practice, whether noticed or not, was the evolution of the curriculum and the faculty by adding learning styles somewhere in the background (though) we didn’t always call it that.”
In order to commemorate the college’s 10th anniversary, the Faculty, Staff and Organizational Development Department sponsored a quilt project. The eight-foot tall quilt was connected by 36 18-inch muslin squares that illustrated the work and ideals of employees in various departments. The completed quilt was unveiled to faculty and staff Oct. 8 and was expected to be placed on permanent display at the college. Meanwhile, plans at the time were in the works for developing a portion of Lowry Air Force Base upon its evacuation in 1994 and CCA wanted to be the lead institution in seeking land for an educational campus that could include several colleges, technical schools and customized training outlets. Dr. Larry D. Carter and Community College of Denver President Dr. Byron McClenney submitted a proposal to the U.S. Dept. of Education in the summer. The CCHE granted accreditation for 10 years following the filing of another self-study report and evaluation team visit in April.

1993

In March, an internal study discussed the potential acquisition of Lowry for the new higher education campus. The state legislature was expected to decide any day about giving CCA money for renovations to make Lowry campus handicap accessible. Classes were planned for summer on Lowry. CCA was expected to have a lease agreement in place by October for two classroom buildings. The Air Force was on track for a June deadline of issuing a decision on all Lowry re-use projects. The transfer of property from the Air Force was expected to take six additional months after that decision. Machinery, desks and other equipment, numbering 20,000 pieces in all, were acquired by facilities and set aside for the new campus.

In the fall, the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES) acquired a portion of Lowry Air Force Base for use as an education campus. The Air Force closed the base and decaled the property surplus, and CCCOES requested a public benefit conveyance. The U.S. Dept of Education sponsored the conveyance to the state system at no cost 140 acres of land and approximately 950,000 square feet of buildings as well as millions in classroom equipment. Lowry had been a technical training center historically for the Air Force. CCCOES would share some of the classroom space with other higher-ed institutions. The anticipated transfer of property titles to the state system was expected to take a year but the Air Force entered into an interim lease with the state to occupy some of the classroom buildings and begin offering classes. CCA was named lead institution on campus and was first to offer courses at the new campus. In fall 1994, 60 class sections took place there with more than 800 students signed up. It was anticipated that technology training would be a major focus of Lowry in order to create well trained and educated workers to meet the need of Colorado business and industry moving forward. Among the programs expected to be offered: metrology; computer/IT; energy and the environment; health care and biotechnology; and aviation and transportation management. The Colorado state legislature gave CCCOES 1.8 million in 1994 to begin meeting American Disabilities Act requirements and install parking lot lighting. Early estimates were that during the first four years of operation $4.8 million in funding would be needed to fully achieve compliance with ADA standards.

1994

The quilt project that marked the 10th anniversary of CCA was hatched by the Faculty, Staff and Organizational Development Department and sewed together a collection of ideas, values, memories and hopes. The squares directly above the CCA logo were crafted by the President’s Cabinet (describing the management model for the college); College Services (representing the college values, among other financial pieces). The two squares below were from the Diversity Alliance (with its mission statement) and a blank square that symbolized the potential for the future of the college and work yet to be done.

Marian Lauterbach traverses the stairs at the Classroom Building as she takes a quick lunch break in this photo from about 1991-92 provided by Dr. Linda Bradford. Lauterbach at the time served as a CCA faculty but later was promoted to chair of the English Department. Lauterbach worked at the college from 1984-2005.
CCA aggressive into fray after base closure

Having retired from the Air Force, Bob Lind was intimately familiar with the Lowry base, which would be closing shop on Sept. 30, 1994.

The CCA facilities manager had worked at Lowry and knew not only its layout but also its people. “I recommended to the president that we go after acquiring Lowry as an educational center, a part of it,” Lind said, referring to Dr. Larry D. Carter. “I knew all the facilities there and even though a lot of them were old, it would make an excellent campus. So we went after that and acquired a large chunk of Lowry and multiple buildings used by the Air Force for their training programs.”

When Lind returned to the abandoned Lowry for the first time, it was “almost like they just walked out and closed the door.”

There was old, but operational equipment everywhere.

“I went in and discussed with them how much equipment we could acquire and they said, ‘Go ahead, start picking it up!’ I took crews down there with trucks on a daily basis and saw moved equipment from the other dormitories and classrooms from the headquarters building all over to the northeast quadrant and stored it. So we had close to probably $10 million worth of equipment — that would be if it were new. But the equipment was old.”

The overarching thought process was that CCA could run high-tech training programs at Lowry. But there soon would be a snag.

“After we did all this and acquired all the buildings, the system took a look at it and said, ‘You’ve got a lot of buildings out there and equipment,’ and they were paying big bucks downtown for their headquarters so they moved out there eventually, the community college system. Then we had other people move in, other colleges. Churches leased from us.

“We had all kinds of possibilities.”

Carter’s interest in Lowry was piqued three years before the Air Force abandoned the site. In 1991, there was an unofficial economic advisory committee that was trying to band Aurora together for what the base could be upon the military’s departure. Carter made sure he was on that board.

“I thought it would be mayors and Congress people but it was really grassroots,” Carter recalled.

Carter laughed thinking back to a man at a meeting wearing coveralls, a hat and a “Red Top Motel” T-shirt, which was a dive on Colfax Ave. One woman, he recalled, felt that Fitzsimons Army Base would close and that veterans’ services should move. Others wanted a housing development. Some favored industry.

But Carter knew that after the Air Force had shut down flights to its runway, a technical training center had emerged, with dentistry, metrology and other specialized areas housed on the premises.

“The section was within the bounds of what used to be Aurora, so that gave us an edge towards the piece we wanted,” Carter said.

But other colleges, universities, board and advisory council members wanted a piece of the action, too, once Dr. Jerry Wartgow, head of the state community college system, presented them with potential options. Wartgow had experience with multiple colleges operating while working at Auraria campus and recognized the appeal at Lowry.

“That scared me enough to make sure I was on every committee in the world that had to do with Lowry,” Carter said.

And this was a complex enterprise, having to do with governmental red tape, the involvement of the Department of Education, Housing and Urban Development, and the egos and ideas of a lot of smart people in higher ed.

It ended up a shared enterprise, though CCA’s early jump in the fray helped keep the college front and center on the revamped educational campus.

“It was a reflection of the success of the college and the need for that, and the desire to grow,” said Terry Campbell Caron, who has held a slew of positions in a more than 30-year association with the college.

Still, buildings needed renovation or demolition before any classes could start. Lind worked his magic with the help of system money and had CCA running classes before anyone else in the Fall of 1994.

But progress took time.

Wayne Gilbert, a CCA faculty member from 1986-2012, called Lowry in its earliest days “exile.” He
Lowry move had pitfalls

From Lowry / Page 5

remembered broken chairs. Tables had little wooden blocks under a leg to keep it even. The lighting left much to be desired. The halls were "gloomy and spooky." Blackboards were held up by paperclips and would slap against the wall. Signage was sparse and what parking was available was on crumbled blacktop.

"That was when I came up with the idea that teaching really is third-world missionary work," Gilbert said. Yet, despite the issues, "I loved it, too," Gilbert added. "I taught Literature/Composition in the same classrooms where my Dad taught Care and Feeding of Nuclear Weapons."

And improvements began to take place. Building 806, where the University of Northern Colorado now resides, was one of the first to get up to snuff.

Once Dr. Linda S. Bowman took over as CCA president, there were more than cosmetic changes but major renovations that transformed Lowry from "far away and (crudily)," as Gilbert put it, to "slowly improving."

"It was very challenging," Lind said. "Sometimes the people downtown didn't sometimes truly understand what we were trying to do out at the hinterlands at the community college, but there were no really big problems. Once they understood what a great idea this was at Lowry for a huge campus with multiple buildings and all kinds of equipment for virtually nothing, it worked out real well."

Original plans in 1994 to the Department of Education requested the takeover of 17 of the Lowry buildings, most of which were classrooms and dormitories but also a chapel and theater.

"At one point they talked about a gunsmithing program from Trinidad coming up there or a ranch management program from Lamar but they didn't seem to fit," Carter remembered.

Pueblo was to bring over a culinary program. Red Rocks eventually moved its film school there. Welding was another option.

Aside from colleges and universities, charter schools and elementary schools eventually settled on the property, which currently is going through another possible redevelopment phase.

"So there was a lot of education out there and still is," Carter said, "which is good."

Give me a ‘C’ … on second thought …

It was called the Higher Education and Advanced Technology, or HEAT Center, comprising 156 acres on the former Lowry Air Force Base in the mid to late 1990s.

Its primary focus would be technology-based study, including advanced manufacturing, information technology and telecommunications, life sciences and biotechnology.

Fourteen colleges and universities, businesses and foundations staked their claim to the center's nine classrooms and labs.

Equipment that had been 1950s surplusses along with upgraded technology would comprise this planned facility of the future. But like the remains of the air fleet left over at Lowry, it never got off the ground once it outlived its usefulness.

As CCA Social Sciences chair and historian Geoff Hunt explained, perhaps HEAT Center was doomed to fail from the start.

CCA and Community College of Denver were originally lead institutions at Lowry before the system office took control. Hunt recalls attending an early meeting with Larry Steele, facilities manager at CCA, when the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES) began kicking around potential names for this futuristic learning palace.

"They were originally going to call it the 'Colorado Higher Education and Training Center,'” Hunt recalled. "Larry Steele was at the table and said, 'Ooohh! Ooohh! Can I get the franchise rights to make the T-shirts? They said, 'Why?' … 'It's the acronym,' Larry replied. 'What student wouldn't want a T-shirt that said CHEAT?'" It was never to be ‘C’ again, and soon, never to be seen again in its intended form, either.

To get best swag, gotta make it stick

Geoff Hunt, a decade before starting as a CCA adjunct, was charged with closing the Lowry Heritage Museum – located in Building 880. He then ran Wings Over the Rockies Museum, with the help of another future colleague, Ginny Steele, serving as curator.

All the aircraft were moved into a hangar except for a B-52 for this new venture.

But once Lowry was officially shuttered, there was plenty still left behind.

And it was just the beginning of 'sticker wars.'

CCA's Larry Steele was charged by the community college system to stake his claim to items, handing him rolls of green stickers to mark his territory. Hunt's museum stickers were blue. The race was on.

"We were running all over the base, slapping those stickers on things," Hunt recalled. "I'd go running to the other end and weld race each other to get the coolest stuff. It helped that we were looking for different stuff. But a file cabinet is a file cabinet is a swivel chair."

"It was pretty amusing. Then we had to sit down and have lunch with each other."

Larry Steele among his haul landed a five-ton forklift. Hunt commandeered a genie boom, which aids hanging high objects. And Ginny Steele? She discovered two cruise missiles in a dumpster - unarmed, thankfully.

The first employees to move to Lowry, left to right (back row): Yonette Hintzen-Schmidt, Mary Westendorf, David Lisman, Tom Kimbrell, David Moore, Bob Finch, Lauren Saine, Don Goodwin. First row: Anna Landers, Ophelia Mejia, Linda Freund and Linda Capra.
The demeanor of Larry Carter was laid back. His style favored the bousing of ideas and talking things out. He excelled as someone who could network with others. But he didn’t just build bridges or consensus. The buck often clearly stopped with him.

And in the end, CentreTech, Lowry expansion, a Student Centre, additions to the Fine Arts Building, those are all lasting reminders of Carter’s 14 years at Community College of Aurora.

Carter wasn’t universally liked. Some felt his style was to put his thumb on his underlings to maintain control, using then-Dean of Instruction John McGuire as a buffer when things could escalate. One former employee described him as a “paternalistic dictator,” hard yet soft.

But make no mistake, there was substance far beyond his perceived style.

“His legacy is remarkable,” Dr. Linda S. Bowman, Carter’s successor in the president’s chair, said, “because he changed the total character of that institution. He pulled together the community with his creativity. He built CentreTech and without that, the college couldn’t have become the comprehensive community college and community asset that it is today.”

Larry Steele recalled Carter meeting with every new hire to discuss the college’s philosophy.

“One of the things that always stuck with me, and I was 27-28 years old, was, ‘don’t be afraid to take risks. Everything we do here isn’t going to succeed, but if we don’t try new stuff, we’ll never progress. So don’t be afraid to innovate or propose innovation.’

Part of that mindset translated to Carter’s own job, where he helped found the CCA Foundation that played an integral role in getting buildings off the ground. Yet, he was accessible enough to play on the CCA softball team.

Original Aurora Education Center faculty member Ron Walters described Carter as “kind of folksy, but that went very far,” in building relationships with the local academic and business community.

“When Larry Carter started talking about a new building, somebody downtown said, ‘No, you can’t have it because you are a college without walls,” longtime faculty Jim Weedin recalled. “Larry showed him the bill, which didn’t have that wording in it, and this guy was furious because he had spent several weeks trying to come up with this report that we shouldn’t have any more buildings.”

At one of the initial forays to Lowry to check out the portion the Air Force bestowed to the area, Carter apparently wasn’t invited by the community college system. He made sure he was on that exploratory bus trip and immediately told system head Jerry Wartgow that “This is in Aurora and we need more space.” CCA eventually became the ‘lead’ institution at Lowry.

There were struggles, too. The Higher Education and Advanced Technology Center at Lowry, which was supposed to be a higher education facility of the future in concert with industry, was failing. Carter’s demands and legislative wherewithal to pump money into the project with tangible results didn’t always intersect, due in part to a lack of students. Harsh financial realities were part of his tenure’s end in 2000. But CCA, as usual, persevered.

“If we knew we had cancer when I met her 4 1/2 years before that, so we knew for the last five years that she may not make it because it was very advanced,” Carter told Anthropology faculty Elizabeth Hirsh last summer. “So that grieving starts early. And I learned probably after the fact it affects you a lot.”

Carter’s tenure also included the death of his parents, a divorce, and his remarriage to Donna that ended in involved treatments that first brought hope then hopelessness.

So, it became well known that Carter wasn’t particularly happy for personal reasons for a good portion of his presidency due to his real-life trials.

“I didn’t realize how much less effective I was from ’95 to 2000 than I had been before,” he admitted.

Carter received a “reprieve” after his CCA retirement and wife’s passing when CCCS president Jor May asked if he would fill in at Arapahoe Community College as interim head after its president left suddenly.

“I was a good president again, but it wasn’t me all the way, “ Carter said.

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“Carter is honored by Aurora Mayor Paul E. Tauer in this 2001 photo at the City of Aurora’s council chambers. Carter’s 14-year tenure as president stands as the longest in the office in CCA history. Carter: Personal travails in office dulled efficiency

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“Aurora College Gets a Campus,” Rocky Mountain News, June 23, 1991: For eight years, finding the Community College of Aurora campus was about as easy as finding downtown Aurora – it didn’t exist. … That’s about to change, says school president Larry Carter. Next week the state’s fastest growing community college will open a three-building campus near South Chambers Road and East Alameda Avenue. “We’ll still have classes throughout the city, but this will help our identity,” Carter said. “When you’re headquartered in a rented office building, it’s hard for people to identify with you. Still, holding classes without a campus wasn’t detrimental to the burgeoning school. Since its inception in 1983, the community college has ballooned from 1,772 students to more than 4,500.

“Community College in Aurora Dedicated,” Denver Post, July 11, 1991: From the barren dirt slopes that cry out for a sod covering, the three-building Aurora Community College complex has grown into a center for cultivating fertile minds. “A few years ago, it was a dream and it was a challenge,” said Aurora Mayor Paul Tauer at yesterday’s dedication ceremonies. “The buildings make it real.” … Aurora officials see the new campus as the final victory in a 25-year struggle to land a community college there.

“Campus Use Urged for Lowry - Ideas For Base After it Closes Explored,” Sept. 11, 1992, Denver Post: Lowry Air Force Base could be marketed as a “campus” with open space and recreation areas once its closure commences in 1994, a group studying potential uses for the property said last night. Lowry has about 1,866 acres and more than 6 million square feet of buildings, including dormitories, classrooms, hangars, grocery stores, churches, and a child care center. Members of the Lowry Economic Recovery Project suggested at a public meeting that the base be marketed as a school site. Existing training facilities could be used for community colleges or a corporate training site. They also suggested marketing the approximately 600 acres of open space and recreational areas, which include parks, playing fields and a golf course.

“Lowry’s Closing Presents the State an Educational Bargain,” Bill Hornby column, Jan. 9, 1994, Denver Post: “The most exciting and useful improvement in Colorado higher education in the next decade, as well as the most cost-effective, is apt to be the Lowry Higher Education Center, proposed for the northeast quadrant of Lowry Air Force base. … This Lowry window of opportunity for Colorado higher-ed expansion did not opinion the state’s timetable but on the feds. But the bargain opportunity would meet needs of student population growth and workforce skill provision that clearly face Colorado leadership in the next few years. … The two-year community college and vocational education programs are particularly necessary to providing the workforce skills for our changing economy and changing population demographics. … The economic bargain of the Air Force gift of the facilities (is) the relatively low renovation costs as phased over time, the fact that the center can start slow and build with and not ahead of student demand, and the obvious necessity of meeting that demand if Colorado’s economy of a decade hence is to have the skilled workforce it will need. These facts suggest that Lowry Higher education Center is one Colorado dream that can come true.”

“Lowry Campus Hums Along Quietly,” Rocky Mountain News, Nov. 8, 1994: “The first semester of the new Lowry Higher Education Center is off to a quick start, although the “megaplex” campus still looks like an abandoned military training center. More than 700 students from the Community College of Aurora have enrolled in about 65 courses at the former Lowry Air Force Base. They were able to begin classes immediately because the Air Force turned over its technical training buildings still furnished with classroom equipment – desks, chairs, file cabinets, computers – campus planner Linda Capra said. Plans for the Lowry center are to turn it into another Auraria Campus, with many of the same institutions located on 140 acres in the former base’s northeast corner.”

“Colorado’s Community Colleges Have Wrought a Quiet Revolution,” Bill Hornby column, The Denver Post, May 19, 1996: “About two-thirds of Colorado’s lower division college students attend community colleges, and it’s a good thing for Colorado that the system’s on hand. Of every 100 Coloradans who enter high school, only 48 enter and 24 graduate from a four-year traditional college. That means that three-fourths of the kids entering high school will have to get their post-high school higher education and training start somewhere else, and that somewhere else in Colorado is largely the Colorado Community College and Occupational System. … It has been a very difficult task in a state well focused on its four-year higher-ed institutions to get the community colleges the respect they deserve, from the business or the philanthropic communities. Hopefully that is beginning to change.”

“New Building Allows Students to Learn in Many Ways,” CCA Today, Fall 1999: “As instructors at the Community College of Aurora build futures in the classroom, workers are nearly finished building a new Student Center just a few feet away. Construction on the 25,000 square-foot building began in December 1998 and is expected to open its doors in November this year. The new structure promises increased capabilities for student services and activities.”

“Lowry Developers Get 75% Off On Land Deal,” Denver Post, Dec. 14, 1999: It’s a bargain basement kind of deal. Under a new law, the federal government will charge Lowry redevelopment officials only $8 million of the $32.6 million sticker price for the former Air Force Base. On one condition, Lowry must put all the money it makes from land sales and other revenues back into the redevelopment project for at least the next seven years. Not a problem, said Tom Markham, executive director of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority. That’s a huge improvement over sending half of all land sale revenues to the feds for the last few years, he said.

“Dr. Larry Carter honored by Community College of Aurora,” hometown kansas publication, Sept. 2000: The Community College of Aurora Foundation recently named the college’s new black box theater after retiring CCA president Larry Carter. The theater was named for Carter during a ceremony honoring his 14 years as CCA president. The Larry D. Carter Theater is part of the College’s 8,000 square foot expansion of its fine arts facility at the CentreTech Campus.”
1995: Lowry Education Center opens doors on the 155-acre Northeast quadrant of the former Air Force base. The Center is operated by the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System as part of 1,866 total acres of useable space and hundreds of buildings acquired at Lowry. Carter along with CCCCOES President Jerome Wartgow envisioned a new kind of technical training center for the Denver metro area. Carter saw Lowry as an opportunity to expand CCA programs into the community in a cost effective fashion. It took 15 months to convert the quadrant into the technical training center for use by state and private business. Five institutions decided to offer courses originally at the LEC. The first was the Higher Education and Advanced Technology Center (HEAT), which was designed to serve the state’s advanced technology training needs and support development of new technological training. CCA’s Metrology and Precision Measurements program was the first to located at the HEAT Center. Also at HEAT: CCA’s Biotechnology program. The Lowry education center attracted more than 1500 student to the institutions at Lowry, including CCD, UNC, CU-Denver, Americorps, Rocky Mountain Manufacturing academy and CCA.

1998: A groundbreaking celebration is held July 9 on a 25,000-square foot Student Centre, which is earmarked for student services and activities. Construction begins in December. Original plans call for a large rotunda room to serve as a general-purpose area for student events, job fairs and special meetings; a bigger, enhanced college cafeteria that will accommodate a growing student population; and a new lounge to give students a space to relax and study. Additional space was to be made available for organizations such as Student Senate, Student Activities and a Student newspaper. The second floor was to house the Learning Resource Center featuring an “electronic library … on a six computer workstation,” as well as job placement and disability offices and a career center. The CCA Foundation announced the college’s first capital campaign initiative: the Partnership for Excellence. The goal was to raise $800,000 over the next three years to support technology and projects for the college. Commerce Bank President Jim Lewien and State Farm Insurance owner Doug Evans were co-chairs.

2000: On Feb 17, the grand opening of the CCA Student Centre – CentreTech’s fourth building – was held. An announcement touting the new building, which was build using bonds raised by students, stated that, “Students have always been at the centre of our universe … Now, they’re in the centre of our campus as well.” On July 13, the SBCCOE named Dr. Linda S. Bowman president of CCA, effective Oct. 1. Bowman at the time was interim president at Lamar Community College. Dr. Carter had announced his retirement. Chair of the state board, Elwood Gillis, said in announcing the hire, “Dr. Bowman is a proven leader within our system. I am pleased that she has this opportunity to carry on the high level of service she has provided at our other colleges.” In September, ground is broken on the expansion of the Fine Arts Forum, which will include a new 150-seat Black Box Theatre and additional faculty and classroom spaces. The project was endorsed by the city’s Cultural Services Department, giving the public increased opportunity to attend live theater, music and dance performances. The building is named after retiring college President Larry Carter by the CCA Foundation. Additionally, CCA enters into an agreement to work with the Higher Education and Advanced Technology (HEAT) Center to support student services at Lowry. CCA’s accreditation to include distance delivery of associate degree programs – first authorized in 1997 and coordinated through Colorado Community Colleges Online – is extended. The Colorado Film School starts in building 999 at Lowry, which had been a film-video center for the Air Force.

The Student Centre was built with brick, mortar and plenty of cooperation.

Constructed beginning in December 1998, the building was funded by bonds sold by students, state funding and as part of the college’s Foundation’s first-ever capital campaign initiative.

The finished product would include 25,000 square feet, with “student-related” facilities primarily located on the first floor and a Learning Resource Center anchoring the upstairs space.

The building was the brainchild of then-President Larry Carter, who would leave office shortly after the building’s opening in 2000.

The construction, coming less than a decade after the opening of the CentreTech campus, was indicative of the growth CCA was experiencing and was indicative of a shift demographically in its students.

“Having a campus made us more attractive to graduating high school seniors, so the average age of students dropped as we built these facilities,” said Larry Steele, who was facilities director at the time and was charged with writing the funding proposal to the state - a first-time venture.

“The younger student clientele would therefore be more likely to hang around campus between classes rather than the older students who left and didn’t spend a great deal of time on the campus. The Student Centre was intended to provide them with a place to hang out.”

It was also a litmus test in fundraising. Carter asked Jim Lewien of Commerce Bank and local State Farm Insurance branch owner Doug Evans to co-chair what would be entitled “The Partnership for Excellence,” to not only assist in the capital improvements but help fund technology, cultural, scholarship and other opportunities at CCA.

The initiative would include financial contributions from the Foundation’s board of directors but largely was tasked with getting Aurora community and business leaders to come on board with the college enhancements.

“There were not a lot of corporations headquartered in Aurora, so we had to work really hard to make the money to get the down payment and get going on it,” recalled Evans, who served as a Foundation president and was a member of its board for about 13 years. “But it got done and it surprised us all, because originally we were going to try for $500,000, then we decided, ‘Let’s go for a million’ and we did it. It took getting all the people in the city involved at the time. But it went off real well.”

A brick sale accompanied the building’s rise. Inscriptions with donor’s names still can be found on the path outside. Naming rights for rooms also were sold.

The LRC originally would be equipped with six computer workstations that offered Internet access, a CD-ROM library and specialized databases.

Yet the building’s calling card was likely the Rotunda, which was designed to host student activities and events, job fairs, and special meetings. That total cost of the project came in at around $1.7 million.

“It’s been a great asset to the college,” Evans said. “It’s a place that can be a center point for the Aurora campus.”
CCA featured a prince among men in 1990s

Dr. Okolie Uwadibie was the third Social Sciences chair behind Dr. James Ford and Dr. Linda Bradford.

He also was a real African prince. A local museum every year would ask for his robes to display. If that didn’t make him feel special enough, perhaps the fact that he was the youngest of 22 children in his family. And the only male.

“He came over here as an Olympic runner and then he stayed,” Bradford recalled.

Uwadibie would wear his garb on selected holidays, the only hint of his royal background.

“With our international students it’s very likely we’ve had others,” Bradford said. “But he’s the only one that I know of on staff.”

Uwadibie taught Economics, primarily, in the 1990s.

Bradford said. “But he’s the only one that I know of on staff. ”

“With our international students it’s very likely we’ve had others, ” Bradford recalled.

His expertise undoubtedly proved helpful when raising funds to build a library in his homeland.

Lifelong skills are born

Karl Van Etten remembers the college’s lifelong skills taking shape out of concepts hatched at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wis.

Van Etten, dean of Instruction at the time, Richard Tubbs, head of Arts and Humanities, and Tony Clark, history faculty were like-minded in vision but needed help in execution.

“It was one of those things where ships are traveling together in a fog, the fog lifts, and they see they aren’t together,” Van Etten said.

To get those ships to reconvene, selected staff met in Room 114 of the Classroom Building with an easel that listed answers to a basic question: If a student had a degree from CCA, what would you like them to be able to do in addition to obtaining academic knowledge?

Van Etten recalled boiling it down to nine skills but added that when Dr. Larry Carter saw the results, the list was tweaked and pared to seven with the input of staff. Noreen Domenico replaced Van Etten during the process. There are now six Lifelong Skills at CCA.

“The key there is we can’t find nine, ” Van Etten said. “So we can’t do a side-by-side comparison. And there’s been a number of changes. ”

Van Etten recalled revisiting the list and that was occurring in an adjacent parking lot.

Carver told the Rocky Mountain News that when he heard the assault had a gone, “I’d better do something quick or he’d probably do her in.”

Carver at the time was a Denver police technician and a member of the SWAT team. He negotiated with the suspect for nearly an hour before grabbing the latter’s pistol as he appeared ready to turn it on himself.

The suspect’s 25-year-old ex-wife, who was the attempted victim, got away, unharmed. The man arrested had been wanted on warrants for assault, reckless endangerment and unlawful display of a weapon before kidnapping and menacing chargers were added to the list.

The Criminal Justice midterm that was interrupted was rescheduled.

“I’ll bet they remember this longer than they would one of my lectures,” Carver told the News.

One faculty takes a bite out of crime

When CCA states it hires folks with real-world experience to teach its classes, this isn’t what the college had in mind.

On Sept. 26, 1988, Patrick Carver -- then an adjunct at CCA -- was in the midst of a midterm when he was called upon to intervene in an attack that was occurring in an adjacent parking lot.

Carver told the Rocky Mountain News that when he heard the assailant had a gone, “I’d better do something quick or he’d probably do her in.”

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Around and around the town they go

Community College of Aurora: Community-Based Facilities (1989-2003)

PRIVATE SECTOR BUILDINGS
-- HEMCO Real Estate, HEMCO Building, 791 Chambers Rd.
-- Various owners, Original Aurora Center Building, 11111 E. Mississippi Ave.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUILDINGS
-- Aurora Public Schools: Aurora Central HS, Rangeview HS, T.H. Pickens Vocational/Technical School
-- Cherry Creek School District No. 5: Cherry Creek, Eaglecrest, Grandview, Overland, Smoky Hill high schools
-- Denver Public Schools: Montbello HS

MILITARY INSTALLATION
-- Buckley Air National Guard Base, Education Building
-- Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Education Building
-- Lowry Air Force Base: Education Building, Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Building

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES
-- City of Aurora, Municipal Building and Jail, East 16th Ave., between Dayton and Florence
-- Aurora Public Library
IN THE NEXT ISSUE
THE HISTORY OF CCA: A FOUR-PART SERIES

BOWMAN HITS THE GROUND RUNNING
Oudenhoven plots the course

Priorities, strategic planning initiatives headline topics at All-College Meeting

Interim President Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven made it clear at an Aug. 19 All-College Meeting that it’s time to look ahead to the college’s future and begin plotting a course on how to get Community College of Aurora to where it aspires, beginning in Year 31.

“One of the things that’s important to me as we go into this next year is that everyone at the college has information and input into the things that we’re doing that affect the college and our students – all of you,” she told staff, administration and faculty.

Dr. Oudenhoven discussed performance indicators relating to completion, increasing retention rates and closing the attainment gap. But she mainly touched upon the core philosophies moving forward that will encompass overall strategic planning – one of two areas of concern in the recent Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation report. Assessment of student learning and revisiting the college’s mission and goals is another aspect HLC mentioned and will be addressed quickly.

External factors in the community such as the economy, politics, technology, lifestyles and labor force will help guide the eventual answers that allow CCA to not only meet its goals, but be a strong community partner, as well.

“All the pieces are there. We just have to capture them and bring them together. That’s one of the things we have to do this year,” she said.

One of the guiding principals as CCA moves forward with its strategic vision will relate to upcoming legislation in Colorado that soon transfers performance measures, rather than enrollment figures, directly into the college’s funding.

“The news for higher education is now we’re expected to measure what we do and for us, and for all our peer institutions, to improve our success rates,” Dr. Oudenhoven said. “Community colleges have always had an access mission but as many of you are aware, that conversation has been moving over the years from access to success to completion. Just bringing students in isn’t sufficient. We need them to complete their goals, whatever they may be.

“And the interesting thing about community colleges, there are all different goals. And some of those goals aren’t always about degree completion, and measurements have always been based on four-year college models. It’s about first-time full-time students and degree completion. That’s not always our students. So what the community college system is trying to do is help us figure out. What matters to us? What matters to our students? And how we measure it.”

Some of the hallmarks at CCA now and expanding in the near future will relate to ongoing developmental education redesign in Math and English. More recent is the introduction of a new “Equity in Excellence” project whose overarching mission is to examine the college through a different lens while transforming the college into an “equity-minded” endeavor.
All-College

From Page 16

That component will touch on the relative success and failures of different groups of students within various academic settings and examine how to create individual experiences that engender success.

“How can we transform this institution to help close gaps for our students?” Oudenhoven asked. “It’s not about changing the student. It’s about trying to understand how different students experience this college differently and what we can do to help impact their experience so that they’re successful.”

Dr. Oudenhoven also stressed that questions regarding the diversity at CCA and how it relates to goal attainment must be asked and the college must be open to the uncomfortable answers that could emanate from that inquisitive process.

Professional development, faculty and staff hiring and other moves will continue to be addressed as they relate to the eclectic student population, she added.

“I need to be explicit about it: one of our goals is to diversify our faculty and staff. And we will talk about strategies to do that.”

Overall, Dr. Oudenhoven noted that the job of all CCA employees is to work together as a college via communication, collaboration and cooperation. Keeping students at the center and focusing on their success, retention and completion remains paramount but new avenues must be examined, whether in teaching methodology, use of space, or the expansion or contraction of programs.

The issue of enrollment and whether the college should grow not only in numbers, but scrutinizing its makeup to see where and if gains are needed to match local demographics are important conversations for the coming months, too.

“CCA is an incredibly unique and wonderful college and different in many ways from other colleges,” Dr. Oudenhoven said. “We need to capture that.”
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA has further expanded its successful mandatory orientation program unveiled last year as part of a national directive and study of best practices.

These additional options figure to not only bolster the acclimation process for new attendees and improve the chances of retention but foster a bond with the faculty with whom they most often are associated within their fields of study.

The changes at CCA emanated out of a key study document, “A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Success,” by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) and were reinforced by President Barack Obama’s “National College Completion Agenda,” which endeavors to raise the number of postsecondary degree graduates in the U.S. to at least 55 percent by 2025.

“The focus has shifted at community colleges from one of access to one of completion,” interim VP of Student Affairs and Dean of Student Success Elena Sandoval-Lucero said.

CCA’s mandatory orientation sessions for new students went live in Spring 2012 and already have been a qualified success.

“We actually implemented an evaluation process where we could assess whether attending orientation actually impacted student learning,” Sandoval-Lucero added.

“We collected data and had a statistician analyze it and we actually were able to demonstrate in all the different areas that we want students to know about going through an orientation – registration, financial aid, degree offerings, support services offered, student life -- student learning was impacted in all areas.”

The new piece, entitled CCA Connect, which ran in August, was hatched to piggyback off those gains in a more specific way relating to the individual student’s course work. This portion of the orientation piece currently is optional but was designed to make admirals more engaged on campus and in the college.

Students could hear directly from faculty about their areas of expertise and discuss the secrets of success in individual programs.

Further, it represented a chance to learn more about college resources.

In addition to individual departments meeting with students, a general session and another for military and veterans were implemented in order to cover all bases.

In short: There is much more intentionality about getting to know faculty and a demonstration of the importance of building those connections in these sessions.

“It’s an attempt to take the basic information that students are getting on how to be a student and introducing them to what it’s actually like to be a student at Community College of Aurora, the importance of getting to know your peers and others at the institution, and with the resources and services we offer,” Director of Outreach and Recruitment Kyla Doddrige said.

The comprehensive plan was hatched first with the help of a task force that included cross-campus representation from the likes of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, the Center for Workforce Development, Grants and Planning, and Strategic Partnerships.

The overriding goal was to develop a student success plan for the college.

The research coming out of those study sessions clearly showed that higher student satisfaction, greater use of student support services, and improved retention on at-risk students were potential outcomes with mandatory orientation. That first piece at CCA now covers approximately 1,500 new students at the start of each semester, including online access.

Two sessions in a single day comprised CCA Connect within an individual’s academic home. That included a tour of the facilities.

Additionally, these new students were given official welcomes by CCA Interim President Dr. Betsy Oudenhoven and Sandoval-Lucero.

Student Ambassadors who have experience on campus and could knowledgeably answer questions for the newcomers also was integrated into the program.

“We did hear from our academic colleagues that they felt last fall and spring semesters were much easier starts than they experienced in the past because students were much more informed about what they needed to do in order to be successful,” Sandoval-Lucero said.

“That’s just anecdotal, but we’re preparing, and as soon as fall data is completed, we’ll analyze and not only examine what we’ve learned in orientation but compare academic outcomes to those students that had no orientation.”
The Office of Student Life alerts staff, faculty, students and administration to get their acts together for CCA's Got Talent. Auditions will be held four times on the CentreTech Campus in Room F100 (Sept. 3, 12:30-1:30 p.m.; Sept 4, 10-11:30 a.m. and 3:30-7:30 p.m.; Sept. 5, 5-7 p.m.). There are also four single audition sessions in Room 112 in the Lowry West Quad on Sept. 5 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Organizers are seeking singers, dancers, soloists, ensembles, slam poets, short films, stand-up comics, comedy sketches, bands, monologues, stupid pet tricks, magic acts and much more. A house band and disc jockey are needed, as well.

Show dates will be Oct. 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Oct. 4 at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Larry D. Carter Theater. All proceeds will benefit the CCA Foundation's Transforming Lowry, Transforming Lives campaign.

Admission is $4 for students; $7 for faculty, staff, and the community.

Career Services and Student Life will be hosting a Part-Time Job, Internship and "Free Stuff" Fair on Sept. 11 at CentreTech.

Students will have the opportunity to meet employers; receive a CCA discount card that's only available at this event; and eat lunch at Denver and Aurora food trucks.

These employment opportunities are geared towards students looking to work around their college schedule or to gain experience in their chosen fields.

A shuttle from Lowry campus will be provided.

For local businesses, tables are available in which qualified candidates can be vetted. Registration for potential employers ranges from no cost to $30. Registrations will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Sept. 6.

The registration fee provides company marketing, one six-foot skirted table, two chairs, and two meal tickets (additional lunches available for an $10.00 pp extra charge). This event will be held outside. There are two tents area available with limited space: register early to get a table under one of the tents.

Please complete an online form, fax the information at 303-361-7432 or e-mail Barbara.Lindsay@ccaurora.edu.

Several personnel additions and revised job descriptions have occurred since the August issue of Intercom. They are as follows:-- Steve Zeh has been promoted to Director of Accessibility Services following Reneice Jones' retirement. Zeh has served as a specialist in the department. Jones still works part-time in that area, while Kathy Weisensel has been hired as an Accessibility Services Specialist. Weisensel last worked at the University of Oregon’s Accessible Education Center. -- Jeff Simpson has been hired as Director of Security, replacing Charles Holzmeier, who had been serving as a deputy chief and left to pursue other interests. Simpson has an extensive background in campus security and is completing a Master's degree in Emergency Management at the University of Denver, where he spent the last six years as a security officer and training instructor. -- Financial Aid added Anthony Vu as a loan officer after nine years at the University of Colorado-Denver and Pima Medical Institute. Carol Hoffbauer is another department newcomer. She most recently worked at the Denver Post and has more than 30 years experience as a data entry operator, word processor and administrative assistant. -- Angie Tiedeman has transitioned from Student Life to a new role as Coordinator of Student Conduct, Intervention and Retention. Her position will be charged with proactively responding to campus safety and behavioral intervention issues at CCA, among other duties.

-- Libby Kingsmth has been named Director of the Student Success Center, while Brad Jacobson will serve as Assistant Director for the Transfer Success Program. Several new arrivals have joined the department, as well, including, Erick Chavez (TRiO advisor); Ivan Blount and Kara Trevil (graduate assistants, Transfer Success program); Megan Keeley (part-time advisor, ASCENT).

Stephanie Plum, assistant director of TRiO left the college to travel in South America with her husband, with the goal of eventually moving back east, closer to family. Bailee Bannon, program coordinator for TRiO, will leave CCA on Sept. 10 to become academic advisor at the Women's College at the University of Denver.

-- Megan Kinney is leaving CCA to pursue a PhD in the ATLAS program at CU Boulder. In her three years at CCA, Megan and her team have transformed the library and its services—including the development of a popular chat research service, online and in person instruction, and highly customized one on one ap-pointment. The Library has increased the physical collection from 10,000 items to over 500,000 by joining a union catalog called Aspencat, reclassified the collection into Library of Congress, and facilitated access to tens of thousands of e-books and hundreds of thousands of articles.

-- Bita Ashouri Rivas, an adjunct in the Psychology department, has been hired full time at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs in its counseling and human services office. Rivas successfully defended her dissertation in April and graduated with an Ed.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision in June.

-- The Center for Workforce Development announced the departure of Christy Bernal after 10 years. Bernal is recognized for her knowledge and contributions to the Adams County CHOICES contract, administered by CFWD. She has provided outstanding service to community members as well as students at the Community College of Aurora. Bernal has developed a considerable number of partnerships within the community that have become an asset to the Center for Workforce Development. Bernal will return to her passion for teaching.

CCA is hosting an "Immersion Excursion" conference Sept. 13 from 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Lowry Conference Center. In 2012, the Colorado Community College System solicited grant proposals from the 13 community colleges to develop immersive and game-based learning projects. These "faculty-challenge" grant projects will be presented; meanwhile, faculty and staff presenters who previously were awarded these grants will share their experiences teaching students through game-based and immersive techniques.

The conference is free but limited to 100 participants. To register, please visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WPS08GZ.

Josh Gold, associate director of donor relations for the CCA Foundation, invites employees to participate in the 2nd Annual Holiday Silent Auction. There will be both in-person and online components to this December event.

The Foundation is seeking items for the silent auction and volunteers to help before and during the event. Departments are being asked to come up with a gift basket and this year there will be a prize for the most creative department basket.

If you are interested in volunteering for either CCA’s Got Talent or the Holiday Silent Auction, please email sarah.pretzer@ccaurora.edu or joshua.gold@ccaurora.edu.

Tanya Cook, adjunct instructor in Sociology, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at University of Wisconsin.
Children are notoriously fickle when it comes to future career choices, changing their vision of adulthood as often as favorite fashions or the month’s boyfriend/girlfriend.

To get a window into the blinders worn by Ron Mickle, one only has to drift through the mists of time to the tiny town of Elba, Ala., population 4,500, where Mickle, then just a pre-teen, built a full-scale mockup of the Apollo moon module in his backyard.

A self-professed science geek, he’d already taken more than a cursory interest in the Mercury and Gemini programs that preceded Apollo’s launch. His failure to take a lasting black-and-white photo of the moon landing with his camera still gnaws at him.

If that wasn’t going above and beyond in the pursuit of happiness, Mickle also attempted to build a concave mirror used on reflecting telescopes at age 12.

But his passion in Astronomy really was ignited when his cousin gave him a series of small, color NASA posters.

“Never before had I envisioned something out there so colorful, yet you couldn’t really see it with the naked eye. At that time, oversized telescopes were really first coming online for research.”

Given that high school chemistry, physics and math all were components of star gazing for a possible living, a trio of classes he enjoyed immensely, and the predisposition Mickle felt towards exploring the stars only made greater sense.

“It’s normal to go through and let your mind wander through different disciplines,” said Mickle, now an Astronomy adjunct at Community College of Aurora and University of Denver. “Astronomy never left me.”

Yet, in many ways, it did fade from his adulthood.

Mickle wanted to be an astronaut but instead flew helicopters in the military. Near his Alabama home town, he’d watch flybys that encompassed 150-200 whirlibirds and those also resonated to the point of action. He was too young for Vietnam, but while in the Army, got to travel the world in a copter, including in Iran back in the Shah’s rule in Iran in 1979-80.

His career veered into different areas, as well. He embraced scuba diving and was charged with body recovery in underwater caves as early as his high school years. He delivered boats to the Caribbean (“Not much money, but a lot of fun,” he said.) He’d fly commercially in Alaska, where he once was stationed in the Army. Astronomy at this point was merely a background passion.

It was pushed further into the recesses of his mind when he landed a job in counterterrorism, before the term was widely used as it is today. He ended up traveling to 40 countries during a 25-year span, a large chunk of his 34 years working for the federal government.

“It was nothing like the movies,” he said of that time period in his life. “My experience was very simple. I worked with aviation authorities in different countries to get them trained and on board with identifying and reacting to hijackers, thinking like that. I worked mostly in third-world countries that were less industrialized and needed assistance. There was no spy stuff or anything like that.”

Since 2011, Mickle moved back to Denver and worked behind the scenes at the airport with the Transportation Security Administration, which absorbed his agency after 9/11 as part of Homeland Security. His main task was to oversee inspectors at the airports and checking out the airlines for flight readiness.

At the same time, Astronomy never left his thought process. He became active in the Denver Astronomical Society and served as its president for a year. That time period also featured his enrollment at the Swinburne Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing in Melbourne, Australia, where he received his graduate degree.

“What I wanted to do when I retired was to go into teaching at college and the university level. That’s what I had wanted to do for a long time. Completing that degree was really important. Not long after that, I got a call from (former CCA faculty) Jerry Sherlin and he recommended me to Victor Anderson.”

Mickle retired two years into his CCA adjunct career to devote his full attention to teaching.

“I can’t tell you why it interests me so much other than I’ve always had a yearning to know more about the universe as much as I can. It’s much more in one way laid back than the adrenalin rush people get from other things but it’s rewarding in its own way, and to be honest with you, I consider the CCA and DU offers the high points of my life. It really worked out the way I wanted to.”

Mickle teaches Astronomy 101 at CCA. It only took almost five decades to get to this point, but, he hopes, all these years later that he imparts the same type of joy he sees when peering through a telescope. He wasn’t going cold into teaching, though, having been an instructor for pilots at a Federal Aeronautical Administration in Oklahoma City and commercial scuba divers in Alaska.

Yet, teaching Astronomy, makes Mickle “happier than I can relate to you.”

“When I look through a telescope I see more than a point of life, like a star, I see the type of star, a blue giant, a red super giant, a normal star like our sun. I extrapolate information based on what I already know so I see a lot more into it than most people. I see an evolutionary process in our universe and in our own galaxy. And then you have to wonder if there’s intelligent life elsewhere? And the odds are, by far, there is. All those things come to mind.”

It’s millions of miles removed from that Apollo landing module mockup that had all the neighbors talking in 1969 with a peek into Mickle’s backyard.

“It took me a long time to build it,” he said. “I was ready.”
Counterclockwise from top: Members of student government (and some young helpers) put on a successful SGA Sizzle fundraiser. The group included, top, from left, Javon Brame, Rob Hatcher, Tim Cali (below) Tanda Satchell, Janelle Jenkins, Stevi Mooreland, Traci Fielden and Desiree Mayberry; the bridge connecting the Administration and Classroom Fine Arts buildings got a fresh coat of paint and new wood, courtesy of Jamme Gonzales and Co. at CentreTech; three former CCA Students -- Diana Xiao, Anita Ben-Obi, and Lesleigh Potter -- received their just rewards during a White Coat Ceremony marking their entrance into the University of Colorado School of Pharmacy; the CentreTech Bookstore is swamped as students stock up on class materials before the start of the Aug. 26 fall semester.