DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA

Department and Colorado Commission on Higher Education

Thursday, January 9, 2025

1:30pm – 5:00pm

1:30-1:40 DHE/CCHE Introductions and Opening Comments

Presenter: Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

1:40-1:45 Common Questions

Main Presenters:

- Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Crystal L. Collins, Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Dr. Tricia Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Topics:

- One-Time State and Federal Stimulus Funds: Question 1, Page 5 in the packet, Slide 5

1:45-2:05 Change Requests

Main Presenters:

- Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Crystal L. Collins, Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Dr. Sophia Laderman, Chief Policy and Research Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Supporting Presenters:

- Corey Evans, Budget Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Topics:

- R1 State Funding Increase and Transparency Bill: Questions 2-4, Pages 5-7 in the packet, Slide 11
- R3 Financial Aid Staff: Question 5, Pages 7-9 in the packet, Slide 12

- R5 PSEP Roll-off: Questions 6-8, Pages 9-10 in the packet, Slide 13
- R7 Limited FFS: Questions 9-10, Pages 10-11 in the packet, Slide 14

2:05-2:25 Other Budget Reduction Options

Main Presenters:

- Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Crystal L. Collins, Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Dr. Tricia Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Supporting Presenters:

- Dr. Cynthia N. Armendariz, COSI Program Managing Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Topics:

- JBC Staff-identified reduction options: Question 11, Pages 12-19 in the packet, Slide 15-18

2:25-2:40 Free tuition option and FAFSA completion

Main Presenters:

- Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Dr. Tricia Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Supporting Presenters:

- Crystal L. Collins, Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Topics:

- Free Tuition Option: Question 14, Pages 19-20 in the packet, Slide 19
- FAFSA Completion: Question 15, Page 20 in the packet, Slide 19

2:40 – 3:00 Department Operations

Main Presenters:

- Dr. Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
- Dr. Tricia Johnson, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Supporting Presenters:

- Crystal L. Collins, Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Topics:

- Staff turnover: Question16, Pages 20-21 in the packet, Slide 20
- Co-location/consolidation opportunities: Questions 17-18, Pages 21-23 in the packet, Slide 21
- Role and work of the Commission: Question 19, Pages 23-24 in the packet, Slide 4

<< 3:00pm – 3:15pm BREAK >>

3:15 – 4:30 Community College System and Local District Colleges (Colorado Mountain College & Aims Community College

Main Presenters:

- Chancellor Joe Garcia, Colorado Community College System
- Dr. Matt Gianneschi, President, Colorado Mountain College
- Mr. Chuck Jensen, Vice President Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer, Aims Community College

Supporting Presenters:

- Mary Boyd, Vice President of Finance & Administration/Chief Financial Officer, Colorado Mountain College
- Paul Lind, Assistant Vice President Administrative Services, Aims Community College

Topics:

- Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers:
  - Colorado Community College System: Pages 25-26 in the packet, Questions 1-5
  - Colorado Mountain College: Pages 29-33 in the packet, Questions 1-5
  - Aims Community College, Pages 37-38 in the packet, Questions 1-5
- Economic Impacts:
  - Colorado Community College System: Pages 26-27 in the packet, Question 6
  - Colorado Mountain College: Page 34 in the packet, Question 6
  - Aims Community College, Pages 38-39 in the packet, Question 6
- Financial Aid/Free Tuition Messaging:
  - Colorado Community College System: Pages 27-28 in the packet, Questions 7-8
  - Colorado Mountain College: Pages 35-36 in the packet, Questions 7-8
  - Aims Community College, Pages 39-40 in the packet, Questions 7-8

4:30 – 5:00 Area Technical Colleges

Main Presenters:

- Randy Johnson, Director, Emily Griffith Technical College
- Dr. Teina McConnell, Director, Pickens Technical College
- Randal Palmer, Director, Technical College of the Rockies

Topics:

- Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers: Pages 41-44 in the packet, Questions 1-5
- Economic Impacts: Pages 44-45 in the packet, Question 6
- Financial Aid/Free Tuition Messaging: Pages 45-46 in the packet, Questions 7-8

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Department and Colorado Commission on Higher Education

Thursday, January 9, 2025

1:30-3:00 pm

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AT DEPARTMENT HEARINGS

1 Please describe any budget requests that replace one-time General Fund or ARPA funded programs with ongoing appropriations, including the following information:
  a. Original fund source (General Fund, ARPA, other), amount, and FTE;
  b. Original program time frame;
  c. Original authorization (budget decision, legislation, other);
  d. Requested ongoing fund source, amount, and FTE; and
  e. Requested time frame (one-time extension or ongoing).

Response: The Department does not have any budget requests that replace one-time stimulus funded programs with ongoing appropriations. However, the Department's R3 request addresses the need for ongoing general fund support for two FTE—FAFSA and CASFA outreach positions—originally funded with one-time general fund support under HB22-1366.

At the time of the passage of this bill, these positions were identified as state supported for two years, but were "assumed to be ongoing" in the fiscal note, with the indirect cost recoveries used to fund the Department at the time identified as the ongoing funding source. In 2023, the Department was moved from reappropriated funds (sourced from the institutions) to general fund support. The Department believes this means the ongoing support for these positions should be included as part of the movement from reappropriated funds (indirect cost recoveries) to general fund support. The Department is requesting ongoing general fund support for these FTE. Without it, the Department will be unable to continue to fund these positions after June 30, 2025.

CHANGE REQUESTS

R1 State Funding Increase and Transparency Bill

2 [Rep. Taggart/Rep. Bird]: How much does the COWINs agreement alone cost the institutions?

Response: In September 2024, the Governor signed a three-year partnership agreement with Colorado WINs (COWINs), expanding on the current state employee compensation and benefits package. This new agreement includes an assumed 2.5 percent increase in state employee compensation for Fiscal Year 2025-26. The salary increase for classified staff at institutions is expected to be about $8.2 million. There is also an associated increase of $1.9 million for POTS and $3.5 million for health, life, and dental for classified staff per the agreement. This is a total estimated cost of $13.7 million to cover the institutions' classified employees. The state's average general fund split for these costs is 57 percent. The November 1 R1 operating request assumed a 56.85 percent general fund split of the total cost of the classified employee increase, with the rest of the costs covered by the institutions' cash funds. The general fund split of $7.8 million to cover the COWINs agreement for the institutions' classified employees is detailed below.

	Total Cost COWINs Increase	Est. General Fund Split (56.85%)
Classified Salaries (FY24)	$8,190,273	$4,656,170
POTS	$1,961,570	$1,115,153
Health, Life, Dental (HLD)	$3,558,796	$2,023,176
Total	$13,710,639	$7,794,499

3 [Rep. Taggart]: Provide more specifics in terms of what you are proposing be included in a "transparency" bill.

Response: Colorado's institutions of higher education are both state run businesses and a state responsibility; the request for a transparency bill aims to ensure Colorado decisionmakers have all the information relevant to develop thoughtful policy in respect to both and in a standardized format.

Budget forecasts project several years of challenging fiscal environments, and in historic downturns, the state has used public higher education as a "balancing wheel," reducing appropriations to institutions of higher education (IHEs) to balance the budget. Information shared on an annual basis to the Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) and the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) staff is currently not holistic enough to determine if an individual IHE can withstand a budget reduction without significantly impacting their core functions as an institution.

Currently, institutions report information to the DHE and JBC on expenses and revenue through the Budget Data Books Request for Information (RFI) and financial data that are used to calculate the components of the Composite Financial Index (CFI) to JBC staff on an ad hoc basis. However, much of the data provided is not standardized across institutions. The Budget Data Book RFI was expanded this past year to include information on policy decisions, but each institution interpreted the request differently. This indicates a need for standardizing definitions and data formats, for the data to be comparable across institutions and usable for statewide policy deliberations. Additionally, further information could be collected and in a standardized format to ensure the State has a clear, comparative picture of an institution's financial health, costs, and revenues.

The Department requests legislation to ensure the year-over-year collection of the information currently contained in the budget data books. Legislation will ensure that there is a process for defining metrics so that all data is reported in a standardized format across institutions. Currently, this is not consistently done.

The Department also requests that metrics be added to this information and that the information be collected in a standardized format to ensure easy analyses by the DHE, OSPB, and JBC. Additional metrics to capture would include additional revenue streams for the institutions such as donations, athletics revenue and federal funds. This is information that institutions already report federally. The Department also requests to capture information on year over year percentage changes in these financial metrics, rationale from IHEs on what may have caused a large percentage change, and policies around salary and health, life and dental benefits increases. We believe this additional information will allow the DHE, OSPB, and JBC to analyze the data more effectively.

As part of the legislation, the Department requests codifying the collection of financial data that are used to calculate the components of the CFI, as well as the net financial positions of the institutions. A 0 on the CFI would indicate the institution is not financially viable, while a 10 would indicate the strongest possible financial health. The CFI considers primary reserve ratio (net expendable assets to total expense), viability ratio (net assets to debt), return on net assets and net operating ratio (proportion of total income not expended) with emphasis on availability of liquid expandable funds. This will ensure that the DHE, OSPB, and JBC all have access to this information while making decisions year over year.

This legislation will ensure that data on institutional financial health, revenue, and expenditures is in one easily usable, standardized format for the DHE, OSPB, and JBC to access and analyze when making funding decisions.

4 [Sen. Bridges]: Why do we need a transparency bill? Why isn't one or more RFI sufficient?

Response: A transparency bill will allow for standardization of data metrics and reporting that will ensure proper analyses of this data. By placing this into statute it allows for certain data to be defined or required to be defined by DHE like other data collection processes.

As an example, the Return on Investment (ROI) report, created under 23-1-135, C.R.S., is a statutory report that defines data collection and definition needs in a way that ensures compliance and understanding. Statute states the department shall determine data definitions and gives the department the authority to collect data necessary to complete the report. When DHE and institutions know that data collection requirements will be ongoing (rather than when data are requested through an ad hoc RFI which may change or go away at any time), we are able to establish definitions for the metrics that will be collected and develop long-term data collection mechanisms and structures which ensure standardization and accuracy in the data reported by institutions. The development and maintenance of standardized definitions and data elements is critical for any longitudinal analysis. This will ensure that each institution is reporting the same data for the same categories. This standardization is particularly helpful in data requests around the policies impacting changes in the data as each institution can interpret that differently.

R3 Financial Aid Staff

5 *[Rep. Bird]* Please have the Department outline what these positions are actually doing. How do they supplement the financial aid activities in the institutions?

Response: The Colorado Department of Higher Education's Outreach and Community Engagement team works directly with school districts, schools, educators, and all families and students – specifically foster care students and students who experienced homelessness in high school – in navigating the questions that come as students decide on an educational or career path beyond high school.

The team assists Coloradans in completing college admissions and financial aid applications; provides information on grants, scholarships and other financial support opportunities; career planning; and highlights the importance of pursuing a postsecondary education path.

The Department's outreach team is available to help K12 schools with back-to-school nights, parent nights, college fairs and other events and presentations.

House Bill 22-1366 required the Department of Higher Education to establish an outreach team to provide training to public K12 schools to assist them in preparing students to transition from the K12 system to a postsecondary option. The bill also required DHE to develop a tool kit to provide free, online resources to higher education administrators, K12 institutions, and nonprofit organizations that support the completion of state (CASFA) and federal (FAFSA) financial aid forms.

In response to these statutory directives, the Department hired two positions: a FAFSA Coordinator and CASFA Coordinator. In Academic Year 2023-24, these two positions supported the following deliverables:

- Met the statutory requirement to provide support to CDE for the Finance Literacy Resource Bank. This included supporting the translation of many of these resources into Spanish to increase accessibility to Spanish-speaking Coloradans.
- Presented at nearly 150 outreach events addressing FAFSA and/or CASFA completion. This outreach reached an estimated 11,000 attendees.
- Hosted several all-day training events at various locations and virtual lunch and learns.

An overview of the job duties of each position is provided below.

FAFSA Coordinator

- Oversees a statewide plan for FAFSA completion; and meaningful FAFSA resources for various audiences.
- DHE in-house FAFSA expert, supporting divisions across the agency with FAFSA questions and guidance.
- Manages local, state, and national partnerships; prepare for and convene meetings with stakeholders.
- Main point of contact for the Financial Aid Application Tool (formerly known as the FAFSA Completion Portal). Cleans and updates data weekly on the portal, downloading FAFSA data from the Student Aid Internet Gateway.
    - Oversees revisions and improvements to the Financial Aid Application Tool.
    - Develops and tracks data agreements with school districts
- Assists with reporting requirements, as outlined in state statute related to FAFSA completion.
- Develops and updates annually the Financial Aid Application toolkit for use by higher education administrators, middle and high schools, and nonprofit organizations that support the completion of FAFSA.
- Presents FAFSA and financial aid information at events and trainings including the statewide Educator Financial Aid Trainings (as outlined under HB 22-1366).

CASFA Coordinator

- Leads the policy priorities of the CASFA program
- Orients and briefs DHE and CCHE members on CASFA programs and policies
- Creates and reviews internal and external documents for completeness and correctness
- Conducts a program assessment of CASFA, including identifying and implementing systems improvement opportunities
- Prepares marketing materials, fact sheets and tracking documentation
- Provides internal and external technical assistance for the CASFA portal
- Collects and evaluates data and prepares reports
- Works with software vendor on system upgrades and updates and provides support on the RFP/contracting process
- Reads and interprets new and existing statutes to identify the impact of proposed legislation on the department

- Aids and works with financial aid directors to answer questions, identify and implement system improvements
- Presents CASFA information at events and trainings including the statewide Educator Financial Aid Trainings (as outlined under HB 22-1366)

R5 PSEP Optometry Program Roll-off

6 *[Rep. Taggart]* Please describe what will happen to the debt incurred by students participating in the program who should be paying it back. How much is the amount of debt that the Department intends to "write off"? Is this because the Department can't find the students? Has the Department looked at working with an agency that could help with the collections?

Response: The Department is requesting that the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) be eliminated through a step-down process, concluding in Fiscal Year 2027-28. This step down process will allow two important things to happen: a) will hold harmless students currently enrolled in an optometry program, ensuring they can complete their degree under the current terms of the program; and b) allow the Department to continue to collect debt incurred by the students currently in active repayment through Fiscal Year 2027-28, reducing the amount of funds identified for potential forgiveness.

The Department's November 1 R5 request identified $326,145 as the total outstanding debt for active students currently in repayment. Since submission of this budget request, this has declined to $289,540 due to payments received from these active repayment students. DHE estimates it will collect an additional $268,900 through Fiscal Year 2027-28, leaving less than $20,000 estimated outstanding at the time of full program closure, assuming all students currently in repayment remain in good standing. The Department is requesting that this final $20,000 be forgiven to allow the program to fully conclude in June 2028.

Additionally, the Department is aware of outstanding debt attributable to students who are not actively in repayment, most of which accrued between 1992 and 2013. The Department does not operate as a collection agency and does not have the infrastructure to find these students who have been delinquent on repayment of these loans for over 30 years. The Department recently learned that it does not possess the statutory authority necessary to place sanctions against optometry licenses for students who participated in the PSEP program and defaulted on their debt. The Department would be interested in working with a collection agency to determine if the outstanding debt attributable to students not in active repayment can be collected.

7 *[Sen. Kirkmeyer]* Why would we not have current students pay back what they're required to pay?

Response: The Department agrees that students should continue to be held accountable to agreements made under the Professional Student Exchange Program. The Department intends to continue to collect the debt owed by students currently in active repayment under the provisions of this program. Currently, five students are in active repayment status. Four of these student accounts are in good standing and one student account is currently delinquent. The Department is actively working with the delinquent student account holder to move this account back into good standing.

This step down process will allow two important things to happen: a) will hold harmless students currently enrolled in an optometry program, ensuring they can complete their degree under the current terms of the program; and b)) allow the Department to continue to collect debt incurred by the students currently in active repayment through Fiscal Year 2027-28, reducing the amount of funds identified for potential forgiveness.

The Department's November 1 R5 request identified $326,145 as the total outstanding debt for active students currently in repayment. Since submission, this amount has declined to about $289,540 due to payments received from these students. The Department estimates it will collect an additional $268,900 through Fiscal Year 2027-28, leaving less than $20,000 estimated outstanding at the time of full program closure, assuming all students currently in repayment remain in good standing.

8 *[Sen. Bridges]* Where would the Department prioritize this loan program relative to all the other loan and aid programs in the State?

Response: The Department has administered loan forgiveness programs in the past, but the PSEP optometry program is the only loan program where the Department must administer a loan payment program from students. Currently, the Department administers two loan forgiveness repayment programs. These programs forgive loans for qualified teachers by contracting with a third-party to make loan payments on behalf of students.

As an administrator of a loan forgiveness program, the Department is not required to: develop and oversee the creation of a student repayment plan, accept student payments, or search for students who do not meet the obligations of their contracted repayment schedule. However, because the PSEP program is a loan payment program, these are all requirements for the proper administration of loans distributed through the PSEP program.

While beneficial for students, the PSEP program serves a small number of students and is not need-based like other programs in the state. Cohort sizes for this program generally include 3-4 students. This would mean the PSEP program has served between 135-180 students. Of those, the Department estimates a return rate of less than 70 percent. This means that fewer than 125 optometrists have been produced by this program since it was created 45 years ago. Additionally, the PSEP program is not limited to low- or middle-income Coloradans, as are most of the other financial aid programs in Colorado.

R7 Limited FFS

9 [Sen. Kirkmeyer]: How did the Executive Branch pick the Limited Purpose Fee-for-service programs to eliminate or reduce? Why didn't you eliminate all of it?

Response: These eliminations and reductions were submitted to maximize the biggest fiscal impact or slow the growth of ongoing expenses while also protecting core services. This meant the Department focused on programs that may not require state support to continue and may result in ongoing expense growth. Additional information about the programs recommended for reduction or elimination is detailed below.

- Colorado Rural Healthcare Workforce Initiative (SB22-172 and SB23-221) - response to the impact of the COVID pandemic on healthcare workers, specifically those in rural and frontier counties, this program invested in the creation or expansion of health-care professional rural tracks within any specified health-care professional credential or degree program. The initiative was intended to conduct an outreach campaign to grow interest and identify potential applicants; prioritize admission of students interested in the rural tracks; award scholarships to students in the rural track; develop new curriculum; and establish connections with rural and frontier counties for clinical training. Work may continue without additional state funding.
- Substance Use Disorders/Recovery Friendly Workplace (SB23-048) - creates a recovery-friendly workplace program at the Center for Health, Work, and Environment at the Colorado School of Public Health at the University of Colorado. Work may continue without additional state funding.
- Cyber Coding Cryptology for State Record (SB18-086) - participating institutions are required to use a set percentage of funds for scholarships to students doing work in connection with cybersecurity and distributed ledger technologies. Institutions are also required to create degree and certificate

programs in cybersecurity and blockchain, awarding over 400 credentials in the most recent academic year. Now that the program has been established and the equipment and facility resources have been dedicated, institutions seeing benefits from the program can maintain it through existing resources.

- Food Systems Advisory Council (HB19-1202) - Colorado's food systems advisory council was created in 2010 and focused primarily on strengthening healthy food access for all Coloradans through the growth of Colorado agriculture and local food system economies. In FY 2023-24, the funding associated with this bill supported two employees at CSU, a council coordinator and council administrator. The Council will sunset in September 2026. There is an opportunity to sunset the funding sooner.
- Expanding Concurrent Enrollment Opportunities (SB 18-176) - Supports 1.0 FTE at the community college system office to manage and coordinate concurrent enrollment within the system, including eliminating administrative barriers, implementing efforts to increase participation, and sharing best practices. This work may continue without additional state funding.
- Supporting Educator Workforce in Colorado (SB21-185) - Instructed the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center to establish and operate an educator well-being and mental health program to provide support services for educators serving students in Colorado's public elementary and secondary schools during the pandemic. This bill was primarily in response to the pandemic and is already set to end in 2026.

Additional information on the programs not identified for reduction is detailed below:

- Improve Healthcare Access for Older Coloradans (SB23-031) - This created the Colorado Multidisciplinary Health-Care Provider Access Training Program. This program develops and administers geriatric training opportunities for clinical health professionals. A committee was also created to establish collaboration across institutions. This program is newer, and an evaluation of the work is not required until July 2025. Discontinuing this program could also negatively impact older Coloradans.
- Career & Technical Education & Apprenticeship Alignment Project (SB24-104) - The legislation requires the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the community college system to work to align the high school career and technical education system and the registered apprenticeship system. If successful, this program could improve the efficiency in which students plan for postsecondary education and training, potentially reducing future state costs. This funding was recently awarded and the first deadline for this work is not until July 2026.
- Career Pathways Funding (HB15-1274) - Requires CDLE and the community college system to work together to determine career pathways for different occupations, create a website on these pathways, and provide training on them. This funding is important for career pathways in the state and interacts with CDLE. Improving the efficiency and visibility of career pathways helps Colorado students and may reduce the overall cost to the state if students can successfully connect into the pathway of their choosing without significant intervention.

10 [Sen. Kirkmeyer] Which of the programs that you are proposing to eliminate were identified as priorities of the Governor/funded out of the Governor's "pot", i.e, funds set aside for initiatives the Governor requested?

Response: All the limited purpose fee-for-service programs are statutory and were created by the General Assembly through legislations that were subsequently either signed or let become law without signature by the Governor at that time. The necessary funding for each program was appropriated by the General Assembly.

OTHER BUDGET REDUCTION OPTIONS

11 [Staff] Please respond to the staff-identified options for budget reductions.

a. Eliminate funding for the Prosecution Fellowship Program (GF Savings $356,496)

Response: The Prosecution Fellowship Program has reverted funding in recent years due to challenges finding graduating law students to participate in the program. The Colorado District Attorneys Council (CDAC), who administers the program, will be bringing a bill this session to address this program to ensure that the dollars are spent in a way that will address rural DA workforce needs in alignment with current program goals. The Department does not administer this program and only acts as a passthrough entity for funding to CDAC. The Department would defer to CDAC and their partnering institutions at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and the University of Colorado School of Law to comment on the impact of reducing funding for this program.

b. Reduce funding for the Colorado State Forest Service at Colorado State University (GF Savings $2,072,005)

Response: Please refer to the responses from the Colorado State Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources for a response to this budget reduction consideration.

c. Reduce funding for the America 250-Colorado 150 Commission (GF Savings $168,653)

Response: Please refer to the History Colorado materials for a response to this budget reduction consideration.

d. Reduce funding for the Center for Substance Use Disorder, Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support Strategies at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (GF Savings $250,00)

Response: The identified funding supports the perinatal data linkage project. There is no other funding source for the project and the proposed cut will effectively end the project. Legislative policymakers will not have the data they need to develop the best policy solutions to reduce and prevent prenatal substance abuse and maternal mortality.

The perinatal data linkage project provides Colorado legislative and state department leaders with state specific data on the prevalence of prenatal substance use in Colorado. It links relevant data across departments and organizations. This data linkage is necessary because families interact with many organizations during pregnancy and a baby's first year and the data are often siloed between organizations. This data is essential for understanding where and how to invest resources to prevent prenatal substance use and maternal mortality.

The project has influenced, and can continue to influence, the strategic planning of several state departments and statewide organizations. The project is co-designed with those entities to ensure maximum value for informing the priority questions of Colorado policymakers.

e. Eliminate funding for the Rural Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development program (GF Savings $1,209,357)

Response: The Rural Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development line item in the Department of Higher Education's budget each year supports rural educators and students across the state. There are various services provided through these funds:

Colorado Rural Teacher Fellowships

The Colorado Rural Teacher fellowships support rural educator candidates who are completing a year-long clinical experience in a rural school during the final year of their teacher preparation programs and commit to teaching for two years in a rural district after completion. Candidates receive $5,000 from their institution of higher education and $5,000 from the Department during their final year of licensure preparation (representing a 1:1 match for impact of this program).

Year-long fellowships are created via partnerships between educator preparation programs and rural Colorado schools, districts, cooperative education services, and charter schools. Eligible partnerships must be between the educator preparatory program and a rural education provider that need support hiring or retaining teachers and providing teacher fellowships due to financial constraints.

Since 2018, there have been approximately 90 rural fellows who have participated in the program. DHE is currently working with CDE to better understand what data are available regarding the retention of these educators within Colorado's teacher workforce, with a deliverable to more detailed data in Spring 2025.

Colorado Rural Education Coordinator

As detailed in SB16-104, these funds also established and continue to support the work of the Colorado Rural Education Coordinator, the purpose of which is to:

- Provide an emphasis on access to teacher preparation programs that focus on rural education.
- Increase rural teacher recruitment.
- Develop an educator pipeline to rural schools and school districts.
- Provide support mechanisms for rural schools and school districts, cooperative education services, and alternative education preparation providers.

This position is supported by these funds and is currently housed at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in their Colorado Center for Rural Education (CCRE). This position works very closely with rural superintendents and cooperative education service providers to better understand current workforce issues and to focus efforts on rural teacher shortages. The coordinator also attends multiple career fairs throughout the year and hosts weekly office hours to educate interested candidates in available funds and pathways into the field.

Educator and Student Teacher Stipends

The **Colorado Rural Educator Stipends (CRES)** are administered by the CCRE at UNC, directly supporting the recruitment, retention, and development of educators all across the state. Since 2016, the CCRE has awarded $5 million in stipends to recruit teacher candidates and retain practicing rural educators.

The **Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend (CRTS)** provides $4,000 to a student teacher who is enrolled in a traditional preparation program, placed in student teaching in a rural Colorado district, and willing to commit to two years of rural teaching after graduation. Since 2016, this stipend has supported approximately 350 candidates for a total of about $1.4 million.

The **Colorado Rural Inservice Educator Stipend (RIES)** awards $6,000 to encourage talented in-service PK12 educators working in a rural Colorado school district to pursue the necessary qualifications to teach concurrent enrollment courses, add an additional endorsement, or fulfill a local faculty need. The stipend offsets costs associated with a qualifying program by one of Colorado's public institutions. These educators must commit to teach in a Colorado rural school district for three years after receiving the award.

The **National Board-Certified Teacher Stipend (NBCT)** distributes $4,250 to cover the cost of national board certification to both the educator ($2,250) to cover the cost of the certification and to the facilitator ($2,000) for the required training and materials. Educators must be currently employed in a Colorado rural district and commit to teaching in a rural setting for three years after becoming a National Board candidate.

The RIES and NBCT stipends for in-service educators have paid out over $2 million in stipends since 2016, elevating the profession and providing career pathways beyond initial licensure for several Colorado teachers.

The **Rural Alternative Licensure Stipends (RALS)** provides $6,000 to a teacher completing an alternative licensure program that leads to initial licensure in the state of Colorado and full-time employment as a teacher in a rural school or school district that serves rural schools. The CCRE has awarded approximately $1.4 million in stipends through this program since 2016.

Data collected by the CCRE and analyzed by Marzano Research has shown that the catalog of stipends is having a positive effect on the rural teaching corps in Colorado. Retention rates for those receiving either a pre-service or in-service stipend outpace the statewide rural retention rate. See data below.

- Retained at least one year:
  - 81 percent of all rural teachers statewide
  - 86 percent of pre-service rural teachers who received a stipend
  - 91 percent of in-service rural teachers who received a stipend
- Retained at least two years:
  - 67 percent of all rural teachers statewide
  - 82 percent of pre-service rural teachers who received a stipend
  - 85 percent of in-service rural teachers who received a stipend
- Retained at least three years:
  - 58 percent of all rural teachers statewide
  - 80 percent of pre-service rural teachers who received a stipend
  - 86 percent of in-service rural teachers who received a stipend

Teacher Cadet Program

Finally, this appropriation includes $50,000 annually that supports the outreach of the Teacher Cadet program to rural districts in Colorado. The Teacher Cadet Program encourages academically talented, high achieving high school students to consider teaching as a career. There are currently 33 active Teacher Cadet programs in Colorado with numerous teachers and districts trained to offer the program. Teacher Cadet coordinators are currently working to establish a regional network of programs within the cooperative educator services and community colleges to ensure both credit and distance delivery support to the program. This is a high school teacher pipeline program that is poised to expand its offerings over the next few years.

f. Eliminate funding for the Growing Great Teachers - Teacher Mentor Grant Program (GF Savings $348,477)

Response: Senate Bill 19-190 created the Teacher Mentor Grant Program within the Department of Higher Education (DHE). The purpose of this program is to provide funding to educator preparation programs (EPP) that partner with local education providers (LEP), including school districts, boards of cooperative services, and charter schools to provide training and stipends for teachers who serve as mentors for teacher candidates participating in clinical practice and novice teachers in their initial years in the field. Grants are subject to available appropriations and have a duration period of up to three fiscal years, subject to annual review and renewal.

As shared with prospective applicants, the expected outcomes of this program include:

- Strengthening the clinical preparation of teacher candidates.
- Strengthening the development, practice, and retention of novice teachers.
- Increasing the alignment between teacher candidate preparation and early career development.

To apply for the grants, applicants submit proposals outlining the program's particular design, including a rationale for the program including any history between the partners; an outline of EPP and LEP clinical roles and responsibilities; key components of the program including how it adapts for specific district and school partners; and the method of mentor selection, specifically including those guidelines called for in the legislation. This program currently supports five institutions of higher education (IHEs) in their efforts to create more numerous and proficient educator mentors across the state.

Adams State University has helped 44 teachers to earn the mentor teacher endorsement with some of them mentoring multiple individuals during and since their time in the program. The 12-credit hour program includes in-person meetings with ASU faculty once a month, synchronous virtual sessions once a month, and asynchronous modules, readings, and discussions throughout.

Colorado Mountain College has trained approximately 60 new mentors through the first three years of the Teacher Mentor Grant Program, guiding them to develop formal mentoring skills that directly assist in supporting newly graduated rural teacher candidates from CMC's education baccalaureate program. This work builds on an already established informal mentoring program by providing additional professional credentials and augmented skills for teachers willing to serve in the mentor role.

University of Colorado Colorado Springs College of Education began offering the coursework for the Mentor Teacher endorsement in the fall of 2023. The program offers two three-credit graduate courses and concludes with a capstone action research project in which participants explore, experiment, and evaluate improvements to their mentoring practices and share their findings at an in-person symposium. In the first year of the program, 22 educators from local districts enrolled in the program parallel to their work with UCCS teacher candidates in their professional year (the final year of their initial program).

University of Colorado Denver has supported almost 100 mentor teachers from across dozens of school districts during the first three years of the program and now has a cohort of four lead mentors who completed the program during its initial years and are now working alongside UCD faculty and current mentors to support the program and further develop their teacher leadership.

Western Colorado University has hosted almost sixty new mentor teachers in the program's first three years, most of whom have hosted WCU traditional or alternative licensure candidates and even a few from other state programs, a fact that speaks to the program's statewide reach. WCU reports that 100% of educators who have completed the mentor program remain in the teaching profession, as are 100% of the mentees who worked with program participants, showing the effectiveness of the program in the retention of veteran and novice educators alike.

Since the inception of the program, the participating programs have successfully trained more than 250 new mentors for various districts around the state with more taking part in 24-25, and those mentors have served more than 500 mentees collectively. In 2024, the Colorado General Assembly broadened the program's statutory language to include novice teachers in their initial three years of teaching in addition to teacher candidates in their clinical practice.

g. *Reduce funding for the SB22-192 Development and Implementation of Stackable Credentials program through SB24-143 (GF Savings $138,685)*

Response: This JBC staff consideration would impact two pieces of legislation.

Senate Bill 22-192 Opportunities for Credential Attainment

SB22-192 created a cross-agency team and developed 11 stackable credential pathways in five industries, including behavioral health, cybersecurity, education, healthcare, and software development. In addition to the stackable credentials, the project team also developed a Credential Quality Rubric for assessing the quality of nondegree credentials including industry certifications, professional licenses, and micro-credentials.

SB22-192 included state stimulus funding of $1.8 million to be distributed based on a department created policy to community, local district, and technical colleges to increase access to high-value, short-term nondegree credential programs. DHE provided funding to 12 colleges and supported over 1,000 students with financial assistance resulting in the awarding of over 500 high-quality nondegree credentials. This work is set to conclude at the end of Fiscal Year 2024-25 and the 1.5 FTE associated with this work will be annualized out.

Senate Bill 24-143 Credential Quality Apprenticeship Classification

SB24-143 provides 1.5 FTE to the Department and directs DHE to develop, test, and validate a standardized system for classifying nondegree credentials in Colorado using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) system. ISCED is a well-established and internationally recognized system for determining the equivalency of all types of learning and education regardless of the time, place, or manner of delivery in which the learning takes place. ISCED codes will:

- Provide individuals and families in Colorado clear alternatives to, and variations on, "traditional" degree programs and provides the ability to quickly and reliably assess the quality of non-degree credentials. This can encourage learners to pursue educational opportunities while remaining in the workforce.
- Enable learners to "stack" nondegree credentials towards an academic degree over time. This approach can also help address concerns about the cost of postsecondary education.
- Develop a reliable and credible system that helps learners and employees understand the relative value of different education and training options available to them in terms of market demand, employment outcomes, skills and competencies developed, and potential stackability of the credential into a career pathway. This can motivate employers to financially sponsor employees to obtain nondegree credentials that are confirmed to be high quality and in-demand.
- Promote economic mobility by offering a faster pathway to acquire the rapidly evolving skillsets required in many industries. This system will help produce a more highly skilled Colorado workforce.
- Establish formalized "equivalencies" between different types of education and training to help address gaps between traditional higher education and work-based learning. These equivalencies can also help Colorado's institutions of higher education be more responsive to the needs of the workforce by creating their own non-degree credential programs that deliver the skills and knowledge employers need most.

SB24-143 outlines reporting requirements, including the assignment of ISCED codes to high-quality, nondegree credentials and supplying the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) with a list of these credential programs for inclusion in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report and an accompanying credential registry endorsed by the state. This legislation requires the Department to coordinate with many other state agencies and relies on the Department to develop a high quality framework for credential identification and career maps targeted to the needs of end users.

The funding for SB22-192 is set to annualize out at the end of Fiscal Year 2024-25, including the remaining general fund support of $61,258 held in the Credentials to Support Colorado Jobs Cash Fund. The general fund savings identified here would eliminate the 1.0 FTE to complete the work of SB24-143.

h. Eliminate funding for the Open Educational Resources Initiative (GF Savings $1,108,200)

Response: Open Educational Resources (OER) include textbooks and other educational materials licensed to be shared at no cost, increasing the overall affordability of higher education for all students. Colorado launched an OER grant program in House Bill 18-1331, which included $1.5 million in grant support to public institutions of higher education, faculty and staff to create and expand OER opportunities. The original OER program was set for repeal in November 2021. During the 2021 legislative session, the OER grant program was extended through Senate Bill 21-215 which identified $1 million in ongoing OER grants through termination of the grant program identified for November 1, 2026.

Since its creation, the Open Educational Resources grant program has received $4.35 million in state support and has accomplished the following:

- The Department estimates that Colorado students have saved over $42 million in textbook costs, 9.6 times the return on state investment. DHE staff estimate that nearly $55 million will be saved in educational material costs to students by June 2025.
- Over 140,000 students were enrolled in at least one of the nearly 2,000 courses that converted to an OER option supported through this grant program.

The Department estimates that another $3 million will be saved in costs to students in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Another successful program developed through the OER grant program is the development of Zero Textbook Cost degree programs, known as "z-degrees." These "z-degrees" provide students with pathways to complete their degree with no textbook costs. Utilizing OER grant program funds, the following "z-degrees" have been developed:

- Bachelor of Arts in Spanish - CSU-Pueblo
- Certificate in Spanish for Health Professionals - CSU-Pueblo
- Master of Arts in Social Work - CSU-Pueblo
- Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering - School of Mines
- Bachelor of Applied Science in Business - CC System

The Department estimates that 15 additional "z-degrees" will be created in Academic Year 2024-25 and Academic Year 2025-26 with existing funding. An additional seven "z-degrees" have been identified for development in future fiscal years.

Several institutions have provided matching funds to extend the reach of the state funded OER grant program. CU-Boulder, UCCS, MSU-Denver, and Fort Lewis have all invested institutional funds to further support the growth of open educational resources. Some institutions may be able to provide some level of continued OER funding without state support, through the grant program.

OER funding also supports the annual Colorado OER conference; OER publishing through Pressbooks for Colorado instructors; external trainings for librarians and faculty such as the Creative Commons Certificate; virtual professional development through webinars and learning communities; and statewide open education community collaboration organized through DHE and the OER Council. It is anticipated that OER initiatives at rural institutions, collaborations between multiple institutional partners, and z-degree development will plateau without state investment.

The general fund savings identified here would eliminate the grant funding support for awards as well as the support of a 1.0 FTE for the OER initiative administrator.

i. HB24-1290 Student Educator Stipend Program (One-time Savings $920,000)

Response: House Bill 24-1290 provided additional funding for the student educator stipend program established under House Bill 22-1220. The purpose of the stipend program is to award stipend money to an eligible student to reduce the financial barriers to entering the educator workforce while the student is enrolled in an educator program. HB24-1290 appropriated $4.197 million to support continuation of the work started under HB22-1220 and funded from the Economic Recovery and Relief Cash Fund. The funding identified in HB24-1290 is one-time funding and would revert to the state education fund at the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2024-25.

j. Eliminate funding for financial aid at proprietary institutions (GF Savings $1,177,869)

Response: The proposed reduction of $1,177,869 in general fund support for this program is estimated to impact nearly 500 students. Most of the students supported through this program meet demonstrated financial need requirements to receive state financial aid support. The Department believes that this may disproportionately impact low-income students who depend on state-funded financial aid support to complete their degree and certificate programs.

k. Reduce funding for financial aid at private nonprofit institutions (GF Savings $2,554,128)

Response: The proposed reduction of $2,554,128 in general fund support for this program is estimated to impact nearly 1,700 students. Most of the students supported through this program meet demonstrated financial need requirements to receive state financial aid support. The Department believes that this may disproportionately impact low-income students who depend on state-funded financial aid support to complete their degree and certificate programs.

l. Reduce funding formula for higher education governing boards (excludes financial aid) (GF Savings $63,422,374)

Response: The Department's Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Requests identified specific and targeted reductions in the higher education budget to support statewide budget balancing. In the past, when statewide budget reductions were necessary, Governing Board operating support has often been the first and largest reduction. However, the Governor's submitted budget is balanced without relying on a large, across the board cut to higher education formula funding. The Department continues to support the submitted targeted reductions and balanced budget and looks forward to supporting the JBC on passing a balanced budget without across-the-board cuts to the higher education funding formula. The Department has forwarded this question to the governing boards and asked them to address the potential impacts of a large funding formula reduction during their hearings with the JBC directly.

m. Reduce funding for the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (GF Savings $250,000)

Response: A reduction in funding to the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) would impact the 2025-2026 allocations for the Matching Student Scholarship and Career Launch programs. These programs leverage matching funds to amplify scholarship support for Colorado learners, particularly those from low-income backgrounds and underrepresented communities.

Through strong partnerships with institutions, foundations, and non-profit organizations, these programs serve over 6,700 students annually. These programs have a proven track record of success. COSI Scholars exhibit significantly higher persistence rates compared to their peers, often by 18-27 percentage points. They also incur up to $4,204 less student debt per year. Over 12,000 students have successfully completed postsecondary credentials or degrees.

12 [Sen Bridges] Educator Stipends: What have been the outcomes of educators that receive these stipends vs. those that don't? What data do you have?

Response: The Educator Stipend program created under HB22-1220 served approximately 1,000 students in Academic Year 2022-2023. The educator stipend program allowed for funding for student teacher residencies across the state. The department is currently collecting data for the academic year 2023-2024 for this program. It is too early in the programs to determine efficacy of those who received the stipend and those who did not as the first cohort is half-way through their second year of teaching.

13 [Sen Bridges] COSI: How are COSI services different from the supports that institutions are already providing in terms of performance. Please discuss the effectiveness and impact of these funds.

Response: The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) enhances access, affordability, and success for underserved students across Colorado. Key programs include Matching Student Scholarships–which leverage state funding by matching private donations 1:1–and the Community Partner Postsecondary program–which provides comprehensive support services to students receiving COSI scholarships. The COSI postsecondary program is similar in many ways to programs funded by federal (e.g., TRIO program), state (e.g., CUNY ASAP program), and institutional sources that provide scholarships and student services to aid students through their higher education path. Additionally, like these programs, COSI is grounded in evidence-based best practices and has yielded results that speak to the success of the program.

COSI leverages private funding through its matching scholarship program, effectively doubling the impact of state investment. This approach supports students up to 250 percent above Pell-eligibility, ensuring that students from low- and middle-income in Colorado are served, maximizing the reach and impact of available resources. Furthermore, COSI's focus on partnerships with institutions, foundations, and non-profit organizations extends its reach and support to a broader range of students across the state.

By combining scholarships with comprehensive support services, COSI helps students overcome not only financial barriers, but also academic and personal barriers to success. This integrated approach leads to significant improvements in student outcomes. Persistence rates for COSI-supported students are significantly higher than those of their peers from similar backgrounds, with 87 percent to 92 percent of students persisting from year one to year two (18 percentage points to 27 percentage points higher than their non-COSI supported peers) and 70 percent to 78 percent persisting through years four and five. The COSI program has facilitated over 12,000 degree and credential completions, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in helping students achieve their educational goals.

COSI invests state support directly into wraparound student supports and leverages matching funds from non-state sources to extend the impact of these high-quality supports. The program ensures that not only are the financial needs of students addressed (like other financial aid programs like the Colorado Student Grants or institutional Promise programs) but also that direct support is provided to combat academic and personal roadblocks. These positive outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of COSI's integrated approach in supporting student success.

FREE TUITION OPTION AND FAFSA COMPLETION

14 [Staff] What would the Department like to see as next steps for the "free tuition" messaging project, including on publicizing this and H.B. 24-1340 (higher education tax credits)?

Response: The Department recognizes the importance of developing a clear and consistent statewide message which includes both front-end promise programs currently operating at individual institutions of higher education as well as House Bill 24-1340, Colorado Promise: Two Free Years of College Expanded. The messaging needs to provide clear information for all Colorado students and families and needs to be wide-reaching enough to ensure all low- and middle-income high school students understand the message of their financial options for postsecondary education. Given the complex and overlapping nature of the front-end institutional programs and Colorado Promise, the Department believes that any campaign needs to make sure it achieves the following priorities:

- A coordinated effort with institutions of higher education, such that materials can be readily incorporated by institutional admissions and recruitment efforts.
- Provides more in-depth resources and potential training for high school guidance counselors and other K-12 staff.
- Finds and connects with students where they are, not expecting them to seek out resources.
- Provides resources and guidance on what they may qualify for and how to successfully receive the tax credit.

The Department has identified an existing funding source to support a marketing outreach campaign to initial cohorts of students. These funds are associated with the Affordability Message RFI and are available through June 30, 2025.

15 [Sen. Bridges] Has the work to improve FAFSA completion helped? What does the data show?

Response: The most recent FAFSA completion rate data analysis uses 2024-25 FAFSA forms matched with the 2023-2024 high school senior October count. Following substantial changes to the federal application, the 2024-25 FAFSA opened three months later than usual on December 31, 2023, and experienced technical difficulties from January until May of 2024, greatly impacting the completion rates for states across the country including Colorado. Just over 22 percent of Colorado high school seniors had completed a FAFSA by March 2024, 39.6 percentage points lower than the number of high school seniors who had completed the form by March 2023.

With the support of the Department's outreach team, including the FAFSA and CASFA coordinators, Colorado increased the FAFSA completion rate to 43.8 percent by the start of the 2024 academic year, lagging the 2023 completion rate by only 8.2 percentage points. Nearly 33,600 Colorado high school seniors completed the FAFSA in 2024. Despite this effort, Colorado still falls below the national average in FAFSA completion rates. We believe it is important for the State to continue to invest in resources to ensure that any Colorado student that wants to complete a FAFSA does so before high school graduation.

FAFSA completion information collected through the portal developed as part of HB22-1366 was directly impacted by the cybersecurity incident that occurred in June 2023. Therefore, the Department does not have direct data to support the impact of the work to improve FAFSA completion in Colorado.

The 2025-2026 FAFSA application is open until June 30, 2025.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATIONS

16 *[Rep. Taggart]* Please give us more information about turnover within the Department. What have been the trends over time? Does the Department conduct exit interviews? If so, what do the exit interviews indicate?

Response: The average length of tenure at the Department of Higher Education is approximately 4.5 years. A breakdown by tenure is included below:

- 14% of employees: 10+ years
- 15% of employees: 5 to 10 years

- 33% of employees: 2 to 5 years
- 38% of employees: less than 2 years

Thanks to the JBC investment, the Department secured a full-time, dedicated Human Resources Director and has been able to track vacancies and conduct exit interviews. Since that time, we have had 23 open positions, with three currently open. Of the 23 vacancies:

- Four were turnover of term-limited positions (with the employees leaving the role before the end of the term). We filled four of those term-limited positions and ended two of those positions early.
- Six were associated with new funding sources from the 2024 legislative session (supplemental or special bill).
- Two were associated with promotional opportunities at the Department for existing staff.
- One of the vacancies was a result of the retirement of the employee.
- The remaining vacancies were attributable to employees moving on to different opportunities.

According to the exit interviews conducted, reasons employees leave included term-limited positions and promotional opportunities within Colorado State Government or outside Colorado. The exit interviews consisted of phrases such as "I needed to take this opportunity to provide for my family better" and "This is a better opportunity for my growth in my career."

Further information on employee satisfaction can be gleaned from the responses provided to an annual employee survey. The survey compared responses from Department employees to all respondents to the survey (not just those in state government) and found:

- When answering the question "I am extremely proud to tell people I work for my agency", the Department scored in the 80th percentile (e.g., better than 80 percent of all companies and agencies that responded).
- When answering the question "I am satisfied with my opportunities for career growth and development", the Department scored in the 15th percentile.
- When answering the question "The amount of work I am asked to do is reasonable", the Department scored in the 14th percentile.
- When answering the question "In my agency, we have the capacity (people, time, resources) to achieve our goals and mandates", the Department scored in the 11th percentile.
- When answering the question "I am paid fairly for the work I do", the Department scored in the 1st percentile (e.g., worse than 99 percent of all companies and agencies that responded).

It is important to note that this survey was conducted in May 2024 before salary increases, including the equity and STEP-like funding provided in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget process, were applied to Department salaries. These increases have enabled the Department to bring employees to 85 percent of market-mid range pay for comparative job duties.

17 *[Rep. Bird]* What would be the benefits of co-location or consolidation of operations with the Department of Education? What would be the drawbacks or concerns? What efficiencies of scale might be found?

Response: There are several initial drawbacks and concerns related to the co-location or consolidation of the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

First, DHE and CDE have very different governance structures and very different missions.

Prior to 2008 the Department of Higher Education was governed by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). CCHE members are appointed by the Governor. DHE was created in 2008. Upon creation, the Executive Director became a member of the Executive Branch. The Executive Director and members of the Commission serve at the Governor's discretion. Today, the Department runs programs, provides technical assistance to institutions, and implements higher education policy and legislation. Department procedures and the strategic plan for higher education are reviewed and approved by the Commission.

Conversely, as per the Colorado Constitution, CDE is not an executive agency. Rather, members of the State Board of Education are elected by the Congressional districts they represent, with one member elected at-large to provide an odd number for voting.

Second, the different governance structures could result in confusing data governance questions.

CDE is mandated to serve minors in Colorado, and while DHE serves adult learners, participation in higher education is not a requirement. These different constituencies and the mandate to participate in K12 mean CDE and DHE have different program and data governance requirements. To protect the data of minors, CDE cannot collect data unless it is legally mandated, whereas DHE works directly with adult learners. These differences impose different data privacy requirements for each set of data. Additionally, DHE and CDE have different reporting and compliance requirements for data reported federally.

Third, consolidation would likely require significant—and costly—system and infrastructure enhancements for both departments resulting in higher, not lower, costs.

While DHE cannot speak to the internal systems at CDE, the Department can share that there is not a single unified system that could consolidate data or functions of both state agencies. To operationalize this consolidation would require CDE to expand its responsibilities regarding data governance. CDE's data responsibilities and capacity are fully occupied. Additional data management responsibilities at CDE give both CDE and DHE concerns, particularly in the absence of additional funding to integrate and modernize data systems.

Finally, the staffing models between the two are not comparable, and aligning them would likely increase expenses.

All DHE staff are nonclassified compared to a majority of CDE staff. To transition staff into a new agency would have implications on the impact of the COWINs agreement and may result in staff attrition and increased expenses.

Given that CDE and DHE are currently staffed based on legislative mandates, and in absence of a reduction of legislative mandates, moving staff from one agency to another will not have an immediate cost savings or increase efficiencies.

The two agencies currently have very different structures and scopes, and additional analysis on the benefits of combining functions warrants a deeper legal and operational review.

18 *[Sen Bridges]* What would be the benefits of a co-location or consolidation of operations with the Department of Labor and Employment and/or another more workforce-oriented department? What would be the drawbacks or concerns? What efficiencies of scale might be found?

Response: The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) are both executive branch agencies. This governance structure ensures that agencies have similar oversight and operational processes. Both Executive Directors are accountable to the Governor, which can be strategically beneficial for policy development and shared implementation.

CDLE and DHE are both responsible for helping adult learners and earners develop skills. This has resulted in co-management of several shared products such as My Colorado Journey (MCJ) and the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

MCJ— a product of the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Department of Human Services (DHS)—connects students and job seekers to careers, education planning, and supportive resources on a single platform. Additionally, CDLE and DHE co-manage the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which is a platform that Colorado Workforce Center communities use to determine the most appropriate, reliable, and highest quality training opportunities available to public workforce system customers. Programs listed on the ETPL often include programs at technical colleges and community colleges but may also include apprenticeship programs and other forms of training. Programs on the list are eligible to receive Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) funding, which is a federal grant administered by CDLE. Programs on this list are often also eligible for Pell grant funds, which is federal financial aid that can be used for education and training costs.

An IHE is required to be represented on each of Colorado's ten Local Workforce Boards (LWBs). LWBs are required under WIOA, and they promote alignment between business representatives, local government, economic development, education, and workforce partners to engage in and implement talent development solutions. Members of the LWBs are appointed by local elected officials; however local workforce directors work closely with the CDLE Division of Employment and Training and the CWDC helps the state generate a WIOA state plan every 4 years to provide continuity on the strategic direction of service delivery.

While both agencies have experience working with adult learners, DHE is in a different IT environment than CDLE. Additionally, CDLE and DHE current staffing are linked to program administration and legislative mandates, and in absence of a reduction of legislative mandates, moving staff from one agency to another will not have an immediate cost savings or increase efficiency. DHE and CDLE continue close collaboration to ensure there are no wrong doors into Colorado's economy. However more analysis is needed to speak definitively on the benefits, efficiencies, or drawbacks of this change.

Finally, while there is significant interaction between the work of these two Departments on the abovementioned policy issues, both Departments have additional responsibilities where there is limited overlap. For example, CDLE is responsible for regulations of petroleum storage tanks and amusement rides. CDLE is also responsible for work such as unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and just transition. While these programs are integral to maintaining a healthy state and healthy workforce, they are distinct from CDHE's specific strategic goals of making education accessible and affordable to all Coloradans. To consolidate these two agencies in a way that creates efficiencies or budget savings would require more careful and detailed analysis of how the missions and operations of these two organizations could be combined into one organization.

19 *[Rep Bird]* Please describe the role and work of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

Response: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) was created by the General Assembly in 1965 to maximize opportunities for postsecondary education in Colorado. The Commission is a policy and coordinating board—in contrast to a governing board—and its powers and duties are outlined in Title 23 of Colorado Revised Statutes.

The Commission is a Type 1 Board. This means that while the Department operates under the supervision of the Executive Director, the Commission exercises prescribed statutory powers, duties and functions independently of the Department.

As the central policy and coordinating board for Colorado's system of public higher education, the CCHE implements the policies of the General Assembly and serves as a bridge among the Governor, the General Assembly, and the governing boards of the state-supported postsecondary institutions. It oversees and approves core budgeting and financing matters for our public institutions—including allocation of state investment, state financial aid, and capital construction—and has further broad statutory authority for statewide planning and data collection.

As specified in statute, the Commission is composed of 11 commissioners, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The makeup of the Commission must represent each Congressional district; have no more than six members of a particular political party; and, have at least one member representing the Western Slope. Appointments are limited to two consecutive four-year terms unless filling a Commissioner vacancy.

In addition, the statute calls for a 13-member advisory committee composed of legislators and subject matter experts to participate in Commission discussions to help clarify solutions to challenges facing higher education.

To meet its responsibility for systemwide planning for higher education in Colorado, the Commission is focused on the implementation of the current CCHE Strategic Plan, Building Skills for an Evolving Economy. Adopted in 2023, the plan considers the needs of the entire state with regard to higher education and a strategic goal to meet those needs.

The Strategic Plan puts forth a strategic goal to increase the number of Coloradans benefiting from valuable career skills, obtained while in high school or via postsecondary education, that –at a minimum– enable additional lifetime earnings greater than the cost of attendance.

In Colorado, the Commission sets statewide higher education policy to which institutions must adhere. As the Commission's administrative arm, the Department is responsible for carrying out the policies as well as implementing the laws passed by the General Assembly.

CCHE is charged to examine and respond to the higher education needs from a statewide perspective. While statute requires a balance between political parties and geographic regions for Commissioners, CCHE prides itself in working as a non-partisan, cooperative body with a statewide focus on the needs of Colorado and our state systems of higher education.

Through the work of two standing committees, CCHE oversees, reviews and approves fiscal and audit issues of public institutions of higher education in Colorado. The Finance, Performance, and Accountability Committee reviews proposed policies and procedures (and changes thereto) related to fiscal matters such as 1) operating budget requests, 2) allocations to governing boards through the higher education allocation formula, 3) the capital prioritization and budget request, 4) allocations of state funded financial aid, 5) tuition and fees, 6) the College Opportunity Fund (COF), 7) reciprocal tuition agreements, and 8) educational exchange programs and other related areas of policy. The Student Success and Workforce Alignment Committee reviews proposed policies and procedures (and changes thereto) that include components related to student success and academic affairs and to fiscal affairs and audit, such as 1) extended studies, 2) developmental education, 3) degree authorization, 4) academic programs, 5) service areas of Colorado's public institutions 5) tuition and fees, reciprocal tuition agreements, 6) state funded student financial aid, 7) education exchange programs, 8) WICHE regional graduate programs, and 9) Western undergraduate exchange.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Colorado Community College System Responses

Thursday, January 9. 2025

3:15PM – 4:30PM

QUESTIONS FOR ALL GOVERNING BOARDS/INSTITUTIONS

Please briefly introduce yourself and the institution(s) you represent. (Please keep to 5 minutes per institution/governing body)

Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers

1 [Sen. Bridges]: The institutions have requested an increase of $80.2 million General Fund, including financial aid, which is over $100 million more than Governor's request. The JBC has asked other state agencies to propose budget cuts. How can higher education assist the JBC in balancing the budget?

Response: The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) continues to operate as one of the most efficient higher education systems in the state, with Education & General (E&G) operating costs per student at approximately two-fifths of those at Colorado's two largest university systems. Despite this efficiency, the Governor's November request provides less than half the revenue (from tuition and state appropriations) required to meet projected mandatory costs, including statewide salary and benefit increases, as well as inflationary pressures on operational expenses.

The funding levels outlined in the joint higher education proposal represent the necessary mix of General Fund investment and tuition spending authority to ensure we can address these mandatory costs while keeping tuition increases reasonable for students. However, we understand the challenges the Joint Budget Committee faces in balancing the FY 2025-26 budget and are committed to working with the committee to achieve solutions that balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining educational quality, critical support services, and tuition affordability.

As 68% of CCCS expenditures are dedicated to salaries and benefits, any reductions in funding will directly impact personnel and the services they provide. For example, a 5% General Fund cut would result in a reduction of approximately 286 full-time employees, which would significantly affect our ability to serve students and communities effectively.

2 [Sen. Bridges] Discuss your employment trends in an environment of declining student enrollment. In particular, how much has the FTE for faculty/staff involved in your educational mission changed between FY 2018-19 and the present? How much has student FTE enrollment changed over the same period? Are those two trends aligned, i.e., has the faculty/staff to student ratio changed? Why/why not?

Response: Between FY 19 & FY 24, CCCS has closely aligned faculty and staff employment trends with changes in student enrollment. During this period, student full-time equivalent (FTE) decreased by 1.1%, while E&G faculty and staff FTE decreased by 2.6%. This alignment demonstrates our commitment to maintaining operational efficiency while addressing enrollment fluctuations.

3 [Rep. Bird]: How does the WINS agreement affect your budget, both directly and indirectly? Understanding that classified staff are a small portion of the employees, doesn't the WINS agreement have equity impacts and create pressure for pay?

Response: Yes, the WINS agreement creates pressure for CCCS to align with at least the core cost of living salary increase that the General Assembly approves for classified employees. For example, in FY 25, while we were able to match the 3.0% cost of living increase for faculty/staff that was approved for classified employees, we were not able to provide the additional average 6.8% step adjustments that were approved and implemented for our classified staff. Although classified employees represent only 11% of our total population of employees, it is important for us to internally align overall salary increases when feasible in striving to carry out a compensation philosophy that empowers talent by focusing on fairness and equity.

As an example, in the FY 26 common policy increase of 2.5%, classified salaries account for $1.05 million in costs and matching this increase for our non-classified staff will cost an additional $8.6 million. As an organization that dedicates 68% of our expenditures to personnel, and with State funding providing less than half of the increases we would need to cover based on state common policies, even a modest sounding 2.5% decrease will have far reaching impacts.

4 [Sen. Bridges]: How has pay for your adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty changed in recent years? Have you taken steps to improve pay/pay equity for these types of employees? What do those salaries look like right now?

Response: Since FY 2021-2022 Adjunct instructor pay rates have increased substantially at CCCS colleges, with increases ranging from 30 to 35 percent at our urban and suburban colleges that employ the vast majority of our adjunct instructors, while over the same period, non-classified full-time faculty and staff pay increased by 11.4% over that same time period.

5 [Sen. Kirkmeyer/Bridges; Reps. Taggart/Bird]: Provide feedback on the Executive Branch request for a bill to improve transparency. Are there components you would like to have included in such a bill?

Response: While CCCS supports efforts to enhance transparency we would seek additional clarity on specific elements of the proposal. The Department's description of what reports and data elements would be included in a bill is not particularly clear to us at this point, but we certainly would be interested in learning more details about their proposal. CCCS already provides the Department, the State Controller's office, the Office of the State Auditor, and Legislative Council a lot of student data (from enrollment to retention to completion), financial information (from annual financial statement audits to budget data books to CFI), and targeted analysis of legislation and policy (fiscal notes to enrollment and tuition spending authority forecasting). We would want to understand more clearly what information the department or other entities are missing or not using before determining the scope or needs for a bill of this type.

Economic Impacts

6 [Sen. Amabile] What can you tell us about the economic impact of your institution(s) on the state?

Response: The economic impact of CCCS for the state of Colorado in FY 24 is estimated at just over $7.7 billion. This figure was arrived at by taking our most recent economic impact study and increasing it for inflation. Results of this study demonstrated that CCCS colleges create value from multiple perspectives, including increasing consumer spending in the state, supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers into the workforce, and enriching the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. Additionally, CCCS colleges benefit state and local taxpayers through increased tax receipts across the state and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, they benefit society as a whole in Colorado by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.

Financial Aid/ Free Tuition Messaging

7 [Staff] Discuss any "Promise"/Free tuition program you've launched at your institution. What has been the impact so far? Do you have recommendations or feedback on launching a statewide initiative that helps low-to-moderate income students understand a statewide front-end ("promise") for low income students related to tuition and fees, as well as the back-end tax credit for students with AGI up to $90,000?

Response: With our already low tuition rates, CCCS has made substantial progress in fulfilling the promise of affordability, complemented by targeted initiatives and programs designed to remove financial barriers for students. More than 63% of CCCS students graduate debt-free.

While several of our individual community colleges offer limited promise programs based on specific eligibility criteria—for example, the Pikes Peak State College Promise Program [https://www.pikespeak.edu/costs-scholarships-aid/promise-programs/] (as they have been able to bring in significant outside revenue to fund the program)—CCCS does not currently have a system-wide or statewide promise program in place. However, legislative initiatives such as SB 22-226 (Care Forward) and HB 23-1246 (Career Advance) have provided federal and state funding to cover tuition, fees, and materials for short-term, in-demand workforce programs over recent years. Additionally, CCCS plays a key role in facilitating one of the largest "promise" programs in the state through Concurrent Enrollment, which allows high school students to earn college credit at no cost. And for very low-income students, the maximum Pell Grant award fully covers tuition and, in many cases, fees for full-time enrollment at CCCS colleges. Notably, Care Forward and Career Advance are one time funds.

Regarding recommendations or feedback on a statewide promise program and associated tax credits, we offer the following considerations based on our student demographics:
Clarity in Messaging: Ensure messaging around program eligibility is clear and precise, particularly regarding income thresholds. For instance, specify whether the threshold applies to individuals or families and, if for families, the applicable family size. These details are critical for families whose financial obligations extend beyond tuition and fees to include opportunity costs such as reduced working hours or time away from caregiving responsibilities.
Sustainable Funding: Establish secure, reliable funding mechanisms to honor the promise, even during economic downturns when enrollments are likely to spike. For example, if students are required to front the costs of attendance while relying on future tax credits, a dedicated reserve or "lockbox" for these funds should be established to avoid potential funding shortfalls. Broken promises can severely erode student trust and persistence.

Given the very real opportunity cost of attending college beyond tuition and fees, policy makers may need to temper expectations regarding the enrollment impacts for community college students of a statewide promise program, considering our relative tuition affordability compared to other higher education institutions in the State.

8 [Sen. Bridges]: How are the programs being provided at your institution(s) by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) different from the supports that your institution is providing? Discuss the effectiveness and impact of COSI funding at your institution.

Response: The programs – scholarships and wrap around supports for traditionally underserved students - provided at the 13 CCCS colleges through COSI resources are not fundamentally different from the scholarship and wrap around supports that colleges can provide, but dramatically amplify the reach of these programs. COSI resources and their leveraged private matching gifts enable the colleges to serve more students with scholarships and wrap around services, and to serve them more effectively. For example, the Foundation for Colorado Community Colleges administered $5,285,665 in COSI funding providing 3,582 students with scholarships via three distinct COSI programs over four years (AY 20-21 through AY 23-24). Approximately one half of this funding was provided by COSI with those funds acting as a challenge grant to leverage matching funds. Further, most CCCS colleges participate in COSI's Community Partners Program to ensure these students receive wrap around support. Without COSI resources, these scholarships would not have been available to students and key success strategies (wrap around support) would not have been in place.

The Colorado Department of Higher Education's most recent outcome evaluation studies of COSI programs document the significant positive impacts on persistence and completion for students supported by COSI resources. While such students have traditionally had lower persistence and completion rates, students receiving matching student scholarships and supports outperform the general population of their colleges. Beyond the quantitative results, COSI has helped drive a stronger culture of philanthropy throughout the 13 CCCS colleges, as indicated by a substantial increase in private giving at CCCS since COSI was founded. Furthermore, COSI's investment, and the subsequent increase in philanthropic funding, has resulted in CCCS colleges developing more sophisticated approaches to scholarship awarding and student support.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Colorado Mountain College Responses

Thursday, January 9. 2025

3:15PM – 4:30PM

QUESTIONS FOR ALL GOVERNING BOARDS/INSTITUTIONS

Please briefly introduce yourself and the institution(s) you represent. (Please keep to 5 minutes per institution/governing body)

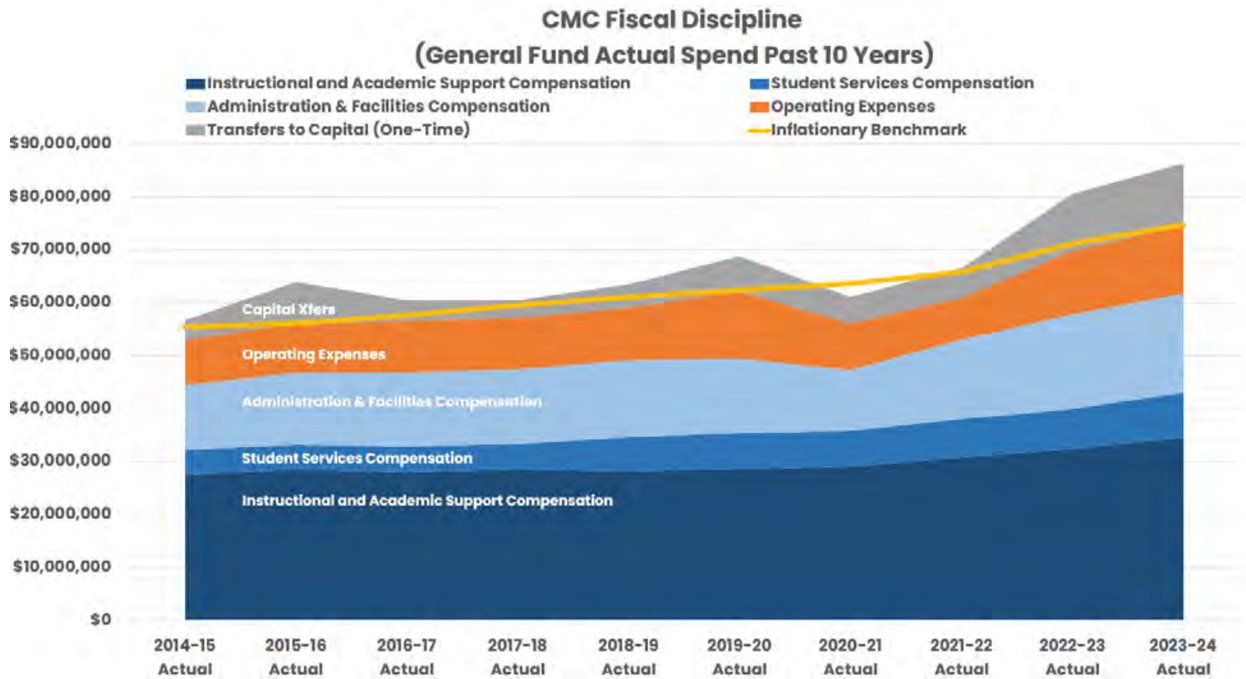
Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers

1 [Sen. Bridges]: The institutions have requested an increase of $80.2 million General Fund, including financial aid, which is over $100 million more than Governor's request. The JBC has asked other state agencies to propose budget cuts. How can higher education assist the JBC in balancing the budget?

Response: While Colorado Mountain College is a local district college and therefore has limited opportunities to directly support state-level budget considerations, there may be opportunities for HIED institutions to assist the state. A few ideas might include encouraging state departments to lease space at college campuses instead of paying leases with private parties. Other options might include relocating certain state enterprises into college operations or encouraging state agencies to explore operational partnerships with colleges for services such as human resources, insurance, IT, or accounting services. Finally, running a statewide ballot measure to officially declare that higher education is an enterprise under TABOR would provide additional longer-term flexibility to both HIED and the General Assembly to budget without worrying about whether legislative decisions might impact colleges' enterprise statuses in a given year.

2 [Sen. Bridges] Discuss your employment trends in an environment of declining student enrollment. In particular, How much has the FTE for faculty/staff involved in your educational mission changed between FY 2018-19 and the present? How much has student FTE enrollment changed over the same period? Are those two trends aligned, i.e., has the faculty/staff to student ratio changed? Why/why not?

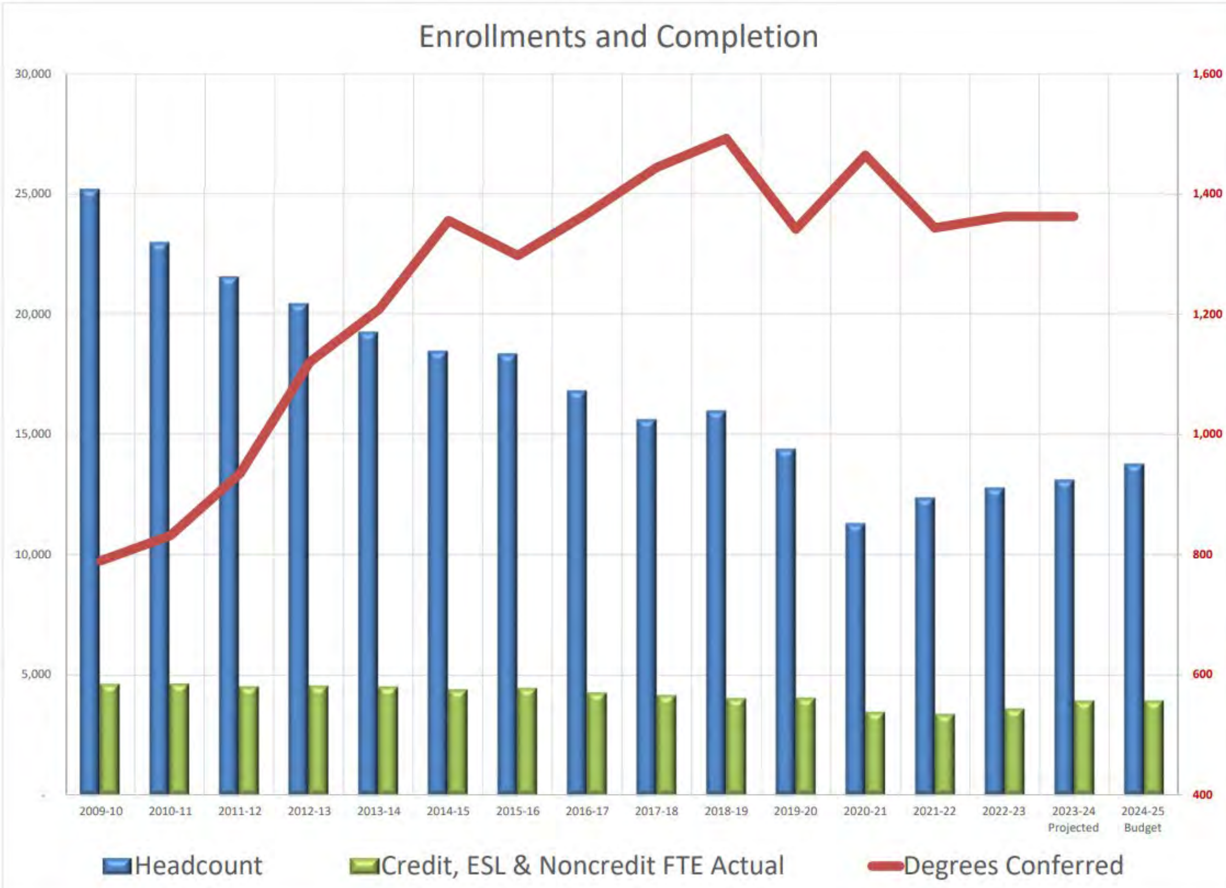
Response: CMC believes that effectively stewarding local resources requires the college to balance care for employees with integrity on behalf of taxpayers. Our employment trends reflect these strategic commitments. Each year we focus on maintaining lean, highly effective budgets based on the college's ability to reach students effectively and efficiently while maintaining the fidelity of our instructional and operational models. Personnel is the largest cost at the college by a wide margin. By maintaining steady faculty/staff FTE in line with overall enrollment trends, CMC prevents itself from overcommitting ongoing funds. The following figure demonstrates CMC's commitment to ensuring that the college's overall operating budget grows at a rate near inflation while remaining a highly competitive employer:



More specifically, Table 1 (below) presents CMC's actual employee numbers, by IPEDS category, for the five prior years. Overall, the college has reduced the overall headcount of employees by -18% while increasing full-time faculty by +5%. The most significant changes across the personnel categories regards part-time employees, both faculty and staff. In the post-pandemic environment, costs of living in mountain regions have increased substantially. The result has been that there are fewer individuals willing to work on a part-time basis and without health benefits. To respond to this reality, several CMC campuses have consolidated multiple part-time positions into a smaller number of full-time ones.

	2018-2019	**2019-2020**	**2020-2021**	**2021-2022**	**2022-2023**
Part-Time Adjuncts	507	463	326	334	376
Full-Time Faculty	113	117	114	116	119
Part-Time Admin/Staff	228	268	160	154	151
Full-Time Admin/Staff	310	319	315	322	332
Total Employees	**1,158**	**1,168**	**915**	**926**	**978**

Student full-time equivalency (FTE) has effectively recovered over the same period. While a longer lookback shows a shift in declining headcount (blue), yet steady credit full-time equivalency (green), this trend can be explained by the addition of certain high-demand degree programs (e.g. expanding nursing and addition bachelor's degrees) and the college's explicit focus on degree completions (red):



As a result of steady employment and enrollments, CMC has maintained an average class size of 11 students for the past five years.

3 [Rep. Bird]: How does the WINS agreement affect your budget, both directly and indirectly? Understanding that classified staff are a small portion of the employees, doesn't the WINS agreement have equity impacts and create pressure for pay?

Response: Colorado Mountain College has no state classified staff, but the college benchmarks staff compensation to a national peer group on an annual basis. Several Colorado institutions are included in CMC's national peer group. Therefore, if certain positions at peer institutions that are covered by the WINS agreement experience salary increases larger than with other positions at the campuses that are not part of WINS, all other things equal, CMC costs could be directly impacted.

4 [Sen. Bridges]: How has pay for your adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty changed in recent years? Have you taken steps to improve pay/pay equity for these types of employees? What do those salaries look like right now?

Faculty Employment and Compensation at Colorado Mountain College

Response: At Colorado Mountain College (CMC), all full-time faculty are employed in non-tenure track positions and operate under common employment agreements as it concerns required teaching loads and service. CMC maintains highly competitive compensation practices. The college consistently offers cost-of-living increases at or slightly above the state CPI average, along with a Board of Trustees-approved annual merit payment of approximately 2% of salaries over the past seven years. In fall 2024, a comprehensive wage analysis compared CMC full-time faculty salaries to those of 117 peer institutions, revealing that CMC faculty salaries range between 125% and 140% of the peer group average.

Adjunct Faculty Advancement and Compensation

Response: Since 2017, CMC has implemented a promotion system for adjunct (part-time) faculty, enabling pay increases based on credits taught and professional development achievements. Adjunct faculty are also compensated for non-teaching contributions, such as attending departmental meetings or participating in special projects. These initiatives have supported wage growth, but the college continues to explore strategies to improve both adjunct compensation and workplace conditions.

To enhance the environment for adjunct faculty, CMC has introduced a range of benefits, including:

- 12% contribution to retirement plans
- A $250 Healthy Lifestyles reimbursement option
- Free access to mental health, financial, and legal services, including counseling sessions through the Employee Assistance Program
- Tuition remission of up to six credits for adjuncts and their dependents at CMC
- Subsidized tuition (up to 80%) for MBA and Ed.D. programs offered in partnership with the University of Denver
- Pet insurance
- Emergency financial assistance of up to $2,500 for unexpected hardships

Adjunct Wage Analysis and Ongoing Improvements

Response: In fall 2024, CMC conducted an adjunct faculty wage analysis using the same peer group identified for full-time faculty. The average adjunct wage was determined to be $1,244 per credit hour, whereas CMC's starting lecture wages range from $1,048 to $1,213, and lab wages range from $1,421 to $1,644. However, limited data was available on additional compensation opportunities, such as pay for non-teaching duties or promotion systems.

Through its shared governance structure, CMC is actively working to enhance adjunct compensation. Proposed improvements include:

- A 10.3% increase in starting wages.
- A more robust compensation structure for adjuncts contributing to departmental and college-wide duties beyond teaching.
- A streamlined promotion system to provide a more efficient pathway to promotion and increased wages.

These efforts underscore CMC's commitment to fostering a supportive and equitable environment for all faculty members.

5 [Sen. Kirkmeyer/Bridges; Reps. Taggart/Bird]: Provide feedback on the Executive Branch request for a bill to improve transparency. Are there components you would like to have included in such a bill?

Response: Operational transparency is a core feature of CMC's strategic commitment to "integrity." Consequently, CMC welcomes opportunities to share its fiscal, academic, and operational performance. Over the years, CMC has developed several "transparency" techniques that may be helpful for consideration by the Executive Branch.

First, we ensure that the metrics or KPI's used reflect outcomes that are influenceable by institutional actions and not simply artifacts of the larger environment. For example, if the Executive Branch wished to explore the intersection between colleges and energy from renewable sources, the KPI's employed might include the institution's percentage of energy derived from renewable and non-renewable sources or their investments in renewable energy projects as a percentage of overall energy-related investments. The KPI's should <u>not</u> reflect overall global warming or statewide methane output. While these latter indicators are highly relevant to the state emissions goals, they do not reflect outcomes under the direct influence of colleges. Following a similar logic, overall enrollment patterns are unlikely to reflect the circumstances under an institution's influence. Nevertheless, other indicators such as course completion rates, the transferability of credits, total credits earned, or time spent on completing degrees are indeed influenced by institutional actions.

We would also encourage the state to implement accountability measures that are universal in nature and broadly accessible to the public. To the extent possible, compare like courses, programs, and instructional modalities. The Executive Branch should also consider the ways in which it can use its process to assist institutional efforts to improve operational efficiencies or productivities. For example, for many decades before 2006 it was routine for the state (i.e., the DHE) to produce an annual report on academic productivity and discontinuance. This annual report was simple: it showed the total number of declared students and graduates, by institution, program, and degree level. While this report lacked nuance, it was part of a routine practice of informing legislators, governing board members, and perhaps most important, institutional leaders, of how academic programs fared over time and compared with similar programs at other institutions in the state. Without such a report, colleges are only able to evaluate the productivity of their academic programs within their institution. That is, institutions can't easily discern if the challenges they observe are unique to their campus or are more universal. The absence of information of this kind can blunt institutional responsiveness to broader trends in the higher education marketplace.

Finally, we recommend that the Executive Branch treat neither institutions nor their students as monolithic or uniform. Evaluate institutions and students based upon observed, objective patterns that are appropriately sensitive to qualitative differences rather than applying generic definitions and assuming comparability. For example, the graduation expectation for a highly prepared student enrolled full-time at a highly selective campus should be fundamentally different from the same expectation for a less well prepared student enrolled part-time at an open-enrollment college. Institutions are responsible for all the students they enroll, but the assumed "institution effect" should reflect the realities of different types of students and institutions. Similarly, the Executive Branch should take care to recognize that different programs have fundamentally different cost functions. It is a fact that courses in certain CTE programs are far more expensive per credit hour than certain traditional transfer courses due to small class sizes for OSHA or other safety requirements, the high costs of equipment and instructional spaces, and, perhaps, differential costs of personnel (faculty). And then there are differences in institutional facilities: some colleges have huge lecture halls—which can result in very significant economies of scale—while others have no spaces large enough to accommodate more than 25 students. It is certainly fair game to evaluate a college's costs per course among and within comparable courses, but it is inappropriate to assume that production functions of credits at all colleges are identical or that colleges all have access to the same facilities. Economists like to say "all other things equal" when comparing outcomes across institutions, but for this to be true, one must first control for the effects of different inputs, structures, and related constraints.

Economic Impacts

6 [Sen. Amabile] What can you tell us about the economic impact of your institution(s) on the state?

Response: Typical economic impact analyses attempt to show the positive fiscal contributions colleges and universities make to state or local economies. Such analyses attempt to show the ways in which a dollar spent in higher education multiplies its impact in an economic cycle. These studies are helpful in showing the positive impacts of public investments but can be difficult to operationalize in real time. With a goal to be a bit more precise about the immediate impacts of public investments, CMC prefers to explore the direct impacts of the college's productivity, specifically individual rates of return (i.e., labor market returns for graduates) and social rates of return (i.e., the benefits produced by the college to the taxpaying communities).

Given CMC's mission as a local district college and considering that no other college operates in the college's rural, remote, and extremely high-cost communities, the individual and social rates of return are fortunately somewhat easy to observe. That is, because CMC does not compete with any other colleges and universities in its region, the college's impact on students and communities is apparent.

Take, for example, the college's investments in three nursing simulation labs. These labs each cost between $2M - $5M. Because CMC receives no financial support for capital from the state, the money invested in these labs can be viewed as a direct investment of local funds into local projects. Adding IRR and SRR to the estimates, however, allows us to see that the investments allowed the college to double the number of nursing students in the college, thereby producing twice the number of graduates for local employers. Assuming most nursing graduates will earn roughly double the typical salary for an entry-level employee in health care, we can view the lab investment as enabling a million in IRR each year. Additionally, these graduates lower the costs of recruitment for employers and provide a more stable workforce to care for the residents of high mountain communities. Measuring these impacts is difficult but can be estimated in terms of timeliness of care, quality of care, delivery of advanced services, and overall health of a community. Researchers have historically assumed that these "social rates of return" exceed those to the individual. SRR returns have been estimated to be between 1.09 - 1.13. In other words, one dollar spent results in a 9%-13% annual return to society; individual rates of return are usually in the 1.07-1.10 range, depending on the time and costs of a student's education.

Importantly, however, these social rates of return are not universal. In the mountain context, these returns can only be achieved if the graduates stay in the local economy and are trained in fields that result in earnings that exceed the expected outcomes of a non-college graduates (i.e., the "prevailing wage" for high school graduates, whatever that might be). This is why CMC has adopted a "labor market aware" philosophy to academic programming. We view our purpose as preparing a skilled workforce for sustainable-wage jobs that are in demand in mountain communities. To this end, CMC is the main—and often only—provider of nurses, police officers, fire fighters, EMT's, and teachers in resort communities. And, considering the impressive diversity of the local population in mountain communities, CMC's graduates reflect the diversity of the regions we serve. As an example, Colorado Public Radio recently reported that CMC's teacher preparation program is the most diverse such program in the state at 47.5% individuals of color. Similar trends have been observed in competitive fields such as human services, dental hygiene, and business.

So, while CMC does not often produce economic impact studies that show a theoretical "trickle down" impact of public investments, we approach our mission and purpose with a clear sense of purpose: to enable local residents to complete education and training leading to sustainable-wage careers in mountain economies. Using the IRR & SRR estimates as benchmarks, we can confidently assume that each dollar invested in a graduate produces a 9% or more annual return to the student and a 11% or more return to the community...and a 20% total annual yield is a figure we proudly report to our primary investors—the local taxpayers.

Financial Aid/ Free Tuition Messaging

7 [Staff] Discuss any "Promise"/Free tuition program you've launched at your institution. What has been the impact so far? Do you have recommendations or feedback on launching a statewide initiative that helps low-to-moderate income students understand a statewide front-end ("promise") for low income students related to tuition and fees, as well as the back-end tax credit for students with AGI up to $90,000?

Response: CMC offers the "Colorado Mountain Promise Program," which provides zero tuition net of aid to all in-state students with household incomes of less than $75,000 (for families) or $50,000 (for individuals). CMC's Colorado Mountain Promise is a successful program that reinforces our support for students and families that may not be full Pell recipients. For years there has been a large cohort of students who need financial support, but just miss Pell qualification. Our program helps these students.

In its first two years, this program required an average of $265,000 to operate which comes from a $150,000 ongoing annual budget commitment plus CMC has a reserve ("quasi-endowment") that provides ongoing revenues to this program that cover any excess above annual budget commitments.

Promise Programs can help boost enrollments among price sensitive students, but they should be pursued very thoughtfully. Simply offering "free" tuition is unlikely to motivate large numbers of students to enroll in college, as the barriers to enrollment are not only tuition. Housing, earnings foregone from lost work hours, and family assistance programs (early childhood, after-school programs, etc.) are much bigger barriers to working adults. And the costs of "promise" programs can outweigh their benefits. Depending on the administrative requirements of the program, targeted aid programs can often be more cost-effective and have a higher ROI, all other things equal.

In terms of launching a statewide initiative, changes to existing programs proposed by the state or the General Assembly should be funded with additional state revenues.

Finally, the back-end tax credit for students will be complicated for students to understand, as initial staff feedback already demonstrates internal confusion on how the specifics will play out specific to the complicated data gathering and documentation requirements that need to be provided to students. At minimum, CMC requests the timing change from academic year to calendar year, with a 1/31 deadline for data instead of 1/15, so that it better aligns with 1098-T submission deadlines.

8 [Sen. Bridges]: How are the programs being provided at your institution(s) by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) different from the supports that your institution is providing? Discuss the effectiveness and impact of COSI funding at your institution.

Response: Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) offers a variety of scholarships and wrap-around support for COSI Scholars collegewide. CMC offers approximately $300,000 annually in general scholarships for students in-district or in-state, pursuing a credential at CMC, and meeting income requirements provided by DHE. CMC also has approximately $200,000 in COSI Career Launch and Workforce scholarships for programs related to Business and Human Services. Overall, CMC's COSI Scholarships support anywhere from 200 – 300 students annually. Those COSI Scholars are assigned to our collegewide COSI Coordinator who serves as a primary point of contact for students as they navigate CMC and their campus. The COSI Coordinator serves all CMC campuses and supports students virtually and in-person and their respective campuses. The COSI Coordinator also connects students to campus-based and college-wide resources as well as collaborates with departments and campuses to provide services to students.

COSI Scholars at CMC have a 99% FASFA/CASFA completion rate, 93% of COSI Scholars are in good standing, and 78% of COSI Scholars persisted from Spring 2024 to Fall 2024 while the CMC population persisted at 53%.

	FAFSA/CASFA Completion Rate	Good Standing Rate	Spring 2024 – Fall 2024 Persistence Rate
All CMC	27%	79%	53%
COSI	99%	93%	93%

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Aims Community College Responses

Thursday, January 9. 2025

3:15PM – 4:30PM

QUESTIONS FOR ALL GOVERNING BOARDS/INSTITUTIONS

Please briefly introduce yourself and the institution(s) you represent. (Please keep to 5 minutes per institution/governing body)

Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers

1 [Sen. Bridges]: The institutions have requested an increase of $80.2 million General Fund, including financial aid, which is over $100 million more than Governor's request. The JBC has asked other state agencies to propose budget cuts. How can higher education assist the JBC in balancing the budget?

Response: As a local district college, approximately 72% of Aims' general fund revenue comes from local property tax revenue. Assessed valuations within our taxing district, including oil and gas production, commercial, industrial, and residential, continue to experience growth which has provided stability in our funding. While most of our funding comes from local property taxes, we appreciate the support from the General Assembly.

Since local district colleges get the average of the increase of the other higher education governing boards, Aims would take the average decrease if the General Assembly were to reduce funding. With the "core minimum cost" increases expected across all institutions, not funding the IHE's funding request could have significant impacts across the state. Aims supports the commentary and information that has been shared demonstrating how investing in higher education generates significant economic, social, and cultural returns that benefit individuals, communities, and the state as a whole and does not believe that budget cuts should include higher education.

2 [Sen. Bridges] Discuss your employment trends in an environment of declining student enrollment. In particular, How much has the FTE for faculty/staff involved in your educational mission changed between FY 2018-19 and the present? How much has student FTE enrollment changed over the same period? Are those two trends aligned, i.e., has the faculty/staff to student ratio changed? Why/why not?

Response: Aims has experienced a 22% growth in student FTE from FY 2018-19 to FY 2024-25 (est.). For this same period, our full and part-time faculty FTE grew by 18% resulting in a slight increase in our faculty to student ratio from 16:1 to 17:1.

3 [Rep. Bird]: How does the WINS agreement affect your budget, both directly and indirectly? Understanding that classified staff are a small portion of the employees, doesn't the WINS agreement have equity impacts and create pressure for pay?

Response: Aims Community College does not participate in the WINs agreement.

4 [Sen. Bridges]: How has pay for your adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty changed in recent years? Have you taken steps to improve pay/pay equity for these types of employees? What do those salaries look like right now?

Response: Pay has increased in alignment with that of other college positions. Aims conducts an annual review process to ensure pay equity for all employees, including adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty. These salaries are consistent with internal pay structures and are comparable to similar positions at peer institutions in the market.

Since FY 2021-22, our adjunct pay per credit-lecture has increased a total of 13% to a current rate of $1,297/credit. Adjunct instructors can also earn additional pay for other work performed, i.e. serving on committees, etc.

5 [Sen. Kirkmeyer/Bridges; Reps. Taggart/Bird]: Provide feedback on the Executive Branch request for a bill to improve transparency. Are there components you would like to have included in such a bill?

Response: Aims has not taken an official position on any legislation regarding transparency but is willing to be part of any discussions to arrive at solutions regarding use of IHE data.

Economic Impacts

6 [Sen. Amabile] What can you tell us about the economic impact of your institution(s) on the state?

Response: Aims creates economic value in many ways. The college plays a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. Aims provides students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers. Aims is a source of higher education to Aims service area residents and a supplier of trained workers to regional industries, enhancing overall productivity in the regional workforce.

Aims is responsive to local and statewide needs by ensuring our academic and student services programming continues to meet the needs of our students and the workforce needs of employers. Recent examples include:

- In our automotive program, launching a Ford ASSET degree program in partnership with the Ford Motor Company. This is currently the only active ASSET program in the state.
- Collaborating with local hospitals to begin an acute care nurse aide program to help alleviate the shortage in nursing care.
- Beginning to offer an online 3D concrete printing course to offer students a gateway to job opportunities in the growing field of 3D printed homes and infrastructure.
- Developing and building the Aims Workforce Innovation Center on the Greeley Campus. This facility will nurture local business startups and help students gain cutting-edge business and technical skills. It is the first innovation incubator in Weld County.
- Developing and building a new Student Health and Wellness Center on the Greeley Campus. This facility will help address the considerable mental and physical health needs of our students. Aims has partnered with Sunrise Community Health, who will provide medical care at the facility. Providing these services will help more students complete their programs of study successfully, benefiting the students while also helping to meet regional workforce needs.

Economic Impact

The college's last economic impact analysis was completed in July 2022 (based on FY 2019-20 data). This study measured the economic impacts created by Aims on the business community and the benefits the college generates in return for the investments made by its key stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society.

Aims added $244.1 million in income to the Aims service area economy during the analysis year, equal to the sum of the operations and payroll spending impacts, the student spending impact, and the alumni impact. This can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The $244.1 million impact supported 3,448 regional jobs.

Society in Colorado benefits from the presence of Aims in two major ways. Primarily, it benefits from an increased economic base in the state, which is attributed to by the added income from students' increased lifetime earnings and increased business output. Both items help to raise economic prosperity in Colorado.

Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of Aims students. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings.

Altogether, the social benefits of Aims equal a present value of $850.9 million. These benefits include $589.3 million in added student income, $161.9 million in added business income, $82.4 million in added income from college activities, as well as $17.2 million in social savings related to health, crime, and income assistance in Colorado.

The results of the analysis and the new academic and student services demonstrate that Aims is a strong investment for students and society. Students receive a great return for their investments in an Aims education. Aims enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential.

Financial Aid/ Free Tuition Messaging

7 [Staff] Discuss any "Promise"/Free tuition program you've launched at your institution. What has been the impact so far? Do you have recommendations or feedback on launching a statewide initiative that helps low-to-moderate income students understand a statewide front-end ("promise") for low-income students related to tuition and fees, as well as the back-end tax credit for students with AGI up to $90,000?

Response: Aims launched its Tuition Promise program in Fall 2024. A last-dollar-in program, the effort covers any remaining standard tuition after federal, state, and institutional aid has been exhausted. To qualify, dependent students must have an AGI of $65,000 or less ($50,000 or less for independent students) and be Colorado residents for tuition purposes, complete a FAFSA or CAFSA, be degree or certificate seeking, enroll in at least 6 credits, and be in good academic standing. Given our already low tuition, the impact has been extremely minimal to our students (less than $25K was spent for around two dozen students in Fall 2024). To that end, the College will launch the Strong Start Scholarship in Fall 2025, in which all new in-district students (regardless of income) will qualify for up to a $1,000 scholarship during their first year of enrollment. That said, we are supportive of any efforts to make college more affordable and accessible to all students; however, our low tuition drastically minimizes the impact of these types of programs (hence our rolling out a scholarship program that all new students will qualify for).

8 [Sen. Bridges]: How are the programs being provided at your institution(s) by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) different from the supports that your institution is providing? Discuss the effectiveness and impact of COSI funding at your institution.

Response: The COSI Finish What You Started (FWYS) program enhances existing student support programs and services like TRIO, Pathway Advising, and Aims2UNC by focusing on students with "some college, but no degree." It targets students who have stopped out, helping them overcome barriers like financial stress, academic challenges, and lack of belonging. The program provides personalized success coaching, offering one-on-one support, goal-setting, and tailored interventions. Required workshops and scholarships help foster community and ease the financial burden on part-time students balancing work and care-taking responsibilities. COSI funding has strengthened Aims' ability to integrate multiple departments into a cohesive support model, improving retention, completion rates, and overall student success.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2025-26 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Area Technical Colleges (ATCs) Responses

Thursday, January 9. 2025

3:15PM – 4:30PM

QUESTIONS FOR ALL GOVERNING BOARDS/INSTITUTIONS

Please briefly introduce yourself and the institution(s) you represent. (Please keep to 5 minutes per institution/governing body)

Executive Request, Institutions' Funding Request, and Cost Drivers

1 [Sen. Bridges]: The institutions have requested an increase of $80.2 million General Fund, including financial aid, which is over $100 million more than Governor's request. The JBC has asked other state agencies to propose budget cuts. How can higher education assist the JBC in balancing the budget?

Emily Griffith Technical College (EGTC)

Response: If there is a need for EGTC to make budget cuts, we have anticipated the following possible reductions: reduce our Adult Basic Education, English Language and Construction Pre-Apprenticeship programming, cancel all professional development (both Instructional and Administrative), no longer execute the grant match for one of our grant programs, drastically reduce our tech refresh budget, and pause upcoming hybrid module creation for both new and current programs planned. This reduction will impact roughly 1,775 students, and all faculty and staff.

Pickens Technical College (Pickens)

Response: Instead of requesting a budget increase, Pickens Tech could stay at the level of funding from the prior year.

As stated above, the ATCs prepare students for a meaningful career and offer workforce development support. To aid in reduction efforts, Pickens Tech could:

- Pause any new programming.
- Make spending on necessary equipment and consumables as needs based only.
- Identify gaps in our profit and loss viability for financial decision making.
- Identify non-viable programs and make tough decisions on closures.
- Allow only essential building maintenance and repairs.

Technical College of the Rockies (TCR)

Response: The TCR is committed to supporting the Joint Budget Committee in balancing the state budget through targeted cost-saving measures. Efforts include restructuring information systems and the student information system to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Non-essential expenditures, such as holiday length-of-service bonuses and peer accreditation reviews are being eliminated. Instructional material costs will be passed on to students, and adjunct faculty will replace full-time instructors in newly launched programs to reduce expenses. Additionally, professional development and out-of-county extension services will be scaled back, while low ROI programs like the Drone Program and Civil CADD will be discontinued.

2 [Sen. Bridges] Discuss your employment trends in an environment of declining student enrollment. In particular, how much has the FTE for faculty/staff involved in your educational mission changed between FY 2018-19 and the present? How much has student FTE enrollment changed over the same period? Are those two trends aligned, i.e., has the faculty/staff to student ratio changed? Why/why not?

EGTC

Response: As EGTC has seen a 76.91% increase in student FTE over the last 10 years, we continue to focus on the required staffing ratios as determined by various institutional and programmatic accrediting bodies. When we reach the maximum limits, we ensure we hire the appropriate staffing and/or hold on opening additional cohorts until staffing can be added. As student FTE grows, our staffing is likely to grow to accommodate the increase in FTE.

Pickens

Response: Our faculty/staff ratio from 2018 has not changed significantly and our FTE has remained constant.

TCR

Response: The TCR has experienced dynamic employment trends in an environment of shifting student enrollment. Between FY 2021 and FY 2024, the FTE for faculty/staff fluctuated, with 40 instructors in 2021-22, decreasing to 34 in 2022-23 and rising again to 38 in 2023-24. Over the same period, student FTE enrollment increased from 296.4 in 2021-22 to 309.35 in 2022-23, followed by a slight decline to 299.82 in 2023-24. The student-to-teacher ratio shifted from 7.4 to 9.1 before stabilizing at 7.9, reflecting responsive adjustments to enrollment and staffing needs.

Overall program enrollment showed significant growth, increasing by 33% from 2021-22 (363 students) to 2022-23 (792 students) and by an additional 22% from 2022-23 to 2023-24 (892 students). This growth is attributed to strategic measures, including yearly feasibility studies aligning program offerings with high-demand jobs in the Colorado Talent Pipeline, the launch of new programs, and direct faculty involvement in program development. These initiatives have increased enrollment and credentialing rates and influenced staffing decisions to ensure quality program delivery. While faculty FTE changes do not strictly mirror student FTE trends, the adjustments reflect a proactive approach to maintaining a balanced and effective student-to-teacher ratio in response to enrollment surges.

3 [Rep. Bird]: How does the WINS agreement affect your budget, both directly and indirectly? Understanding that classified staff are a small portion of the employees, doesn't the WINS agreement have equity impacts and create pressure for pay?

The ATCs are not subject to the WINS agreement. All ATCs are part of their local school districts.

EGTC

Response: As EGTC is governed by Denver Public Schools (DPS), the district sets all employee wage brackets and EGTC follows the roadmap laid out. In addition, EGTC follows all other DPS rules and regulations set forth including recognizing employees who are members of negotiated groups.

Pickens

Response: No direct effect on APS/PTC.

TCR

Response: Not applicable.

4 [Sen. Bridges]: How has pay for your adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty changed in recent years? Have you taken steps to improve pay/pay equity for these types of employees? What do those salaries look like right now?

EGTC

Response: Pay for EGTC adjunct instructors has drastically improved over the last 3 years, increasing by roughly 13.5% since just FY 22-23. EGTC follows the district policy on all hiring practices and works very closely with DPS HR to ensure prior to a salary/wage being offered to any employee, it has gone through the DPS comparative wage process and is in sync with other employees in the same and/or similar position.

Pickens

Response: Pickens moved the majority of adjunct faculty to contracted positions in fall of 2023. This provides consistent salary on the APS teacher salary schedule and provides benefits. We continue to employ adjuncts for our temporary clinical preceptors that are housed at the clinical sites.

TCR

Response: Between FY 2021 and FY 2024, TCR significantly improved adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty pay. Instructional salaries increased by 21.4% from $1,013,347.86 in 2021-22 to $1,230,088.54 in 2022-23 and by an additional 7.5% to $1,322,252.78 in 2023-24. These adjustments reflect TCR's commitment to providing a competitive market salary that attracts and retains highly qualified instructors, ensuring students can access expert educators.

TCR has implemented an adjunct faculty schedule that aligns closely with the institution's operating schedule, maximizing the utilization of instructional staff to meet the evolving needs of students and programs. This approach has allowed us to balance operational efficiency with fair compensation, enhancing pay equity for adjunct faculty. The salary increases reflect TCR's efforts to address pay disparities while recognizing these educators' critical role in the institution's mission.

Currently, adjunct and non-tenure-track teaching faculty salaries are designed to align with market standards, ensuring both competitive pay and the placement of industry experts in front of students. These measures, combined with TCR's strategic scheduling and salary increases, underscore our dedication to fostering a high-quality instructional environment and promoting pay equity for faculty.

5 [Sen. Kirkmeyer/Bridges; Reps. Taggart/Bird]: Provide feedback on the Executive Branch request for a bill to improve transparency. Are there components you would like to have included in such a bill?

EGTC

Response: EGTC was completely in support of SB 24-164, as it promises to support our students in transferring credits earned to 2-and-4-year institutions. In addition, a component of transparency that is to be implemented already exists with EGTC and the other area technical colleges – and that is in only offering programs that result in preparation for in-demand careers that pay a livable wage. Students don't attend technical colleges to "explore a major" – all our courses are career specific. If there is another transparency bill that moves forward, and depending on the item, it would be important to remember that different institutions use different systems. Area technical colleges follow the community college course numbering system and approval process which provides consistency with transcripts and verified curricula, but otherwise are not part of a formal state system. The feedback then is that any new bill designed for good could potentially place an undue financial burden on an ATC should it involve new software/processes/systems typically managed by a state system such as CCCS or DHE.

Pickens

Response: Not applicable.

TCR

Response: Not applicable.

Economic Impacts

6 [Sen. Amabile] What can you tell us about the economic impact of your institution(s) on the state?

EGTC

Response: Emily Griffith Technical College is a 108-year-old institution founded on the vision that an "Opportunity for All Who Wish to Learn" career skills education has the ability to change the life circumstance, and life trajectory, of anyone and everyone that walks in the school door seeking hope for something more. As of 2024, there have been approximately 1.5 million students who have walked through the doors seeking opportunity at EGTC. This means that, quite literally, EGTC alumni have built Denver and continue to keep it running – an almost immeasurable economic impact. Though EGTC currently has joined the LINC/WORC project (use of actual salaries of EGTC graduates to determine wage earning and growth), there has not been a formal economic impact study completed since 2016. This past study, completed by BBC Research and Consulting (also profiled on 9News in 2016), found the incredible impact noted below (impact that is certain to have magnified over 8 years):

- The graduating class of 2014-2015 had a total economic impact of $62.3M.
- The projected economic impact from 2006-2016 was $2.2B.
- For each state dollar invested into the class of 14-15, EGTC generated $10 of realized and potential labor income gains.
- Every dollar invested by students in 14-15 yielded $7 in annual potential.

As the school has grown in enrollment and career training opportunities over the decades – weathering pandemics, world wars, depression and recession, civil unrest, and changing politics – EGTC (until 2010, known as the Opportunity School, and then Emily Griffith Opportunity School) was charged by Colorado State Statue (23-60-103) to function as an area technical college and academically conform to the academic "standards established by the state board for community colleges and occupational education" while remaining a direct member of Denver Public Schools. EGTC functions as a state leader in post-secondary career and technical education (CTE) programming/workforce development, and in alignment with the original mission of the school, is also the largest provider of language education for immigrants and refugees in Colorado. Our CTE students complete their programs at an incredible rate of 85%, with 93% placed into a job within their field of study, and right at 100% of our students that take state or national exams for licensure – pass. This is an incredible impact on Denver's economy.

Pickens

Response: Pickens plays an important role in the economic development of the state. The school provides technical workforce training and a path toward a career – directly contributing to workforce development and local employment. Pickens has a very high program completion rate (92%), certification, and job placement rate (78%), which demonstrates its significant role in contributing to the state's economic growth.

TCR

Response: The TCR plays a significant role in driving economic impact at the state level, demonstrated by its contributions to workforce development, local employment, and overall economic output. In FY 2023-24, TCR's flagship programs generated a total economic impact of nearly $9.95 million in first-year earnings, with industry-aligned training resulting in high placement rates averaging 96% across programs and producing over 940 industry-recognized credentials. This excludes TCR's broader contributions as an employer, facility, and integral community entity.

Key programs like Cosmetology, Automotive, and Medical Assisting exemplify TCR's impact. For example, the Cosmetology/Barber/Esthetics program enrolled 81 students with an 87% placement rate, contributing $2.74 million in economic impact through first-year earnings. Automotive graduates achieved a 100% placement rate, generating nearly $2 million in economic impact, with starting salaries averaging $48,880. Emerging fields like Cyber-Security and Diagnostic Medical Imaging further bolster economic prospects, offering starting salaries ranging from $58,400 to over $78,000.

TCR's strategic expansion into Surgical Technology and Patient Care Technician programs underscores its alignment with state workforce needs, contributing to the Colorado Talent Pipeline and meeting critical job demands. Beyond direct earnings, TCR enriches the community through extended benefits, including enhanced employment opportunities, industry partnerships, and the availability of high-demand skill training locally. TCR's multifaceted economic contributions extend beyond the immediate financial impact, fostering a skilled workforce, supporting industry growth, and enhancing community resilience, all of which underscore its value to the state economy.

Financial Aid/ Free Tuition Messaging

7 [Staff] Discuss any "Promise"/Free tuition program you've launched at your institution. What has been the impact so far? Do you have recommendations or feedback on launching a statewide initiative that helps low-to-moderate income students understand a statewide front-end ("promise") for low-income students related to tuition and fees, as well as the back-end tax credit for students with AGI up to $90,000?

EGTC

Response: Essentially, with the help of both Care Forward Colorado and Career Advance Colorado, we've been able to offer free tuition and free student support(s) for students throughout their time in the programs that these grants cover. This has been an incredible opportunity for students, and one that EGTC strongly encourages the legislature to consider continuing or replicating by any means possible. EGTC does not have a formal "Promise"/Free tuition program. The majority of our students that complete the FAFSA are eligible for Pell support, but since they are actively seeking a career they often walk in our doors without a consistent income that covers the life expenses not always necessary to a more traditional higher education student (childcare, transportation, rent, etc.). The reality for institutions like EGTC that focus on rapid workforce development, is that for most students "backend" tax credits are less motivating or accessible since they are self-sufficient trying to make immediate financial ends meet. EGTC does not offer student loans, and even though the average out-of-pocket costs for students after all other aid is applied is approximately $1,500, this doesn't account for the life expenses that our students must figure out during their time of attendance.

Pickens

Response: Not applicable to PTC, although the average out of pocket cost to attend Pickens Tech is only $1,500.

TCR

Response: Our efforts include focused planning sessions with high school student services teams to engage students and families directly, social media campaigns, and website videos to increase awareness of our programs and affordability. Additionally, personalized financial aid conferences help students navigate funding options and understand their commitments. These initiatives, combined with our already affordable tuition, have driven positive enrollment growth.

A statewide "Promise" initiative could further enhance access to education. Clear eligibility criteria and a simplified application process integrated with FAFSA would ensure transparency and ease of access for students.

Clear communication and strong community engagement are crucial for such an initiative to succeed. Outreach must emphasize immediate financial relief and long-term benefits like tax credits and career outcomes. Partnerships with high schools, community organizations, and employers can amplify the initiative's impact.

TCR welcomes state collaboration on programs that increase access to education and economic mobility. A statewide "Promise" initiative aligns with our mission and would benefit students, families, and the broader community.

8 [Sen. Bridges]: How are the programs being provided at your institution(s) by the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) different from the supports that your institution is providing? Discuss the effectiveness and impact of COSI funding at your institution.

EGTC

Response: We currently have no COSI programs offered at EGTC. Nonetheless, EGTC uses a variety of in-house scholarships (funded both through our foundation, as well as outside grantors that assist us in ensuring we are providing every opportunity for a free education).

Pickens

Response: This funding assisted students with pandemic recovery.

TCR

Response: The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) provides students with focused, one-on-one support, encompassing services like counseling and job placement. These scholarships significantly alleviate students' financial burdens, and in many cases, they make pursuing an education at Technical College of the Rockies possible. Additionally, through the "Finish What You Started" program, students receive personalized guidance and assistance with essential needs such as food and rent. This comprehensive, wraparound support is a level of care that Technical College of the Rockies strives to offer every student.

Department of Higher Education

Joint Budget Committee Hearing

January 9, 2025

COLORADO
Department of Higher Education

Agenda

- Department Overview
  - Higher Education Ecosystem
- Department Requests
- Discussion Questions
  - Other Budget Considerations
- Affordability Work
- Department Operations

Department Overview

- Department consists of six primary divisions.
  - Executive Team
  - Budget and Accounting
  - Data, Research and Policy
  - Division of Private Occupational Schools
  - Student Success and Academic Affairs
  - Office of Educational Equity
- 103 current employees
  - 55 fully supported by GF
  - 27 fully supported by FF
  - 16 fully supported by CF

MISSION + VISION

Higher Education Ecosystem

- The Polis Administration
- Colorado General Assembly
- Colorado Department of Higher Education/ Colorado Commission on Higher Education
  - 10 Institutional Governing Boards
  - 2 Local District Colleges
  - 3 Area Technical Colleges

390,000

Students served by

31

Public Institutions

354

Private Institutions

Common Questions

Budget Requests

FY 2025-26 Governor's Budget Request Summary — Higher Education

1. State Operating Support and Tuition Spending Authority
2. Fort Lewis College Native American Tuition Waiver
3. Financial Aid FTE Staffing Needs
4. College Opportunity Fund (COF) Statute Realignment
5. Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) Rolloff
6. Dependent Tuition Assistance Program (DTAP) Realignment
7. Reduction of Limited Purpose Fee For Service (LPFFS) Funding
8. New Cash Fund for IHE Capital Expenses
9. Discontinue Limited Gaming Fund Support of CHECRA
10. Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program Reduction
11. Reduce Teacher Mentor Grant Funding
12. University of Colorado School of Medicine (CUSOM) Refinance
13. Enterprise Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC)

FY26 Budget Amendment Requests

BA-01 – Funding for Rural Institutions of Higher Education

FY25 Budget Supplemental Requests

S-01 – College Opportunity Fund Overexpenditure Request

S-02 – FY24 IT Supplemental Rollforward Request

S-03 – CU Anschutz Fitzsimons COP Trueup

S-04 – CSU National Western Center COP Trueup

Cybersecurity Supplemental Funding

- Progress Addressing Summer 2023 Cybersecurity Incident
  - Four new FTE to support IT and data needs
  - Managed Service Provider (MSP) to ensure industry best practices
  - SURDS Data System Rebuilt
- Remaining Work
  - Program Case Management System implementation
    - FY25 Supplemental Request to roll forward $920,000 in one-time contractor support through June 2026.

Discussion Questions

State Funding Increase and Transparency Bill

FY26 Department Budget Request

R1 – State Operating Support and Tuition Spending Authority

- Fiscal Year 2024-25 Base Appropriation - $1.27B (ongoing and one-time funding support)
  - Executive Request - $12.1M Increase in General Fund Support
    - $7.8M GF to the Governing Boards
    - $1.6M GF to the Special Education Programs (CU Anschutz + CSU Veterinary)
    - $0.4M GF to the Local District Colleges (LDCs) + Area Technical Colleges (ATCs)
    - $2.3M GF to support Financial Aid
  - 2.5% increase in operating support (GF + CF support) – TIED TO INFLATION
    - Support for COWINs classified employees split between GF and CF
  - 2.3% increase in resident UG tuition / 2.4% increase in nonresident UG and GRAD tuition

- Financial Transparency Bill

Financial Aid FTE Needs

FY26 Department Budget Request

R3 – Financial Aid FTE Staffing Needs

Improving Students' Postsecondary Options (HB22-1366)

- Create outreach team to support schools as they prepare students to transition from K12 to postsecondary options
- Positions funded before DHE moved from institutional indirect cost recoveries to full GF support
    - FAFSA Coordinator Position
    - CASFA Coordinator Position
- Helping FAFSA/CASFA completion rates in Colorado

PSEP Optometry Program Rolloff

FY26 Department Budget Request

R5 – Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) Rolloff

- Department requesting step-down rolloff of the PSEP program
    - Will ensure students in the program are able to complete their degree programs under the provisions of their agreement with the State
    - Will allow the Department to continue to collect debt owed by students currently in active repayment
- Current Outstanding Debt - $326,145
- Anticipated Debt Collected through FY2027-28 - $268,900
- Estimated Remaining Debt at Program Conclusion - $20,000

- How PSEP differs from other DHE loan programs

Limited Purpose Funding

FY26 Department Budget Request

R7 – Reduction of Limited Purpose Fee For Service Funding

- Identify reductions that result in BIG fiscal impact while protecting CORE services.
- Focused on programs that may not require state support to continue and those that may result in unsustainable ongoing expenses.
- Request identifies 6 initiatives for elimination:
  - COVID Response = 2
  - Upcoming Sunset = 2
  - Established Programing = 2
- 3 programs not identified for elimination

Other Budget Considerations

JBC Staff Budget Considerations

1. Eliminate Prosecution Fellowship Funding
2. Reduce Funding for Colorado State Forestry Service
3. Reduce Funding for America 250/Colorado 150
4. Reduce Funding for Center for Substance Use Disorder
5. Eliminate Funding for Rural Teacher Recruitment
6. Eliminate Funding for Growing Great Teachers
7. Reduce Funding for SB22-192/Eliminate Funding for SB24-143
8. Eliminate Funding for Open Education Resources
9. Eliminate HB24-1290 Educator Stipend Program
10. Eliminate Financial Aid for Proprietary Institutions
11. Reduce Financial Aid for Private Non-Profit Institutions
12. Reduce Funding Formula for Higher Education Governing Boards
13. Reduce Funding for Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative

Reducing the Cost of Postsecondary Ed

Some of the current initiatives to reduce the cost of postsecondary education for Coloradans:

- Zero Cost Programs
- Stackable Credentials
- Open Educational Resources
- Educator Supports
- Need-based Financial Aid

Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) Successes

The Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative is an investment in Colorado's future. The program funds scholarships and student services, helping more learners earn valuable credentials by increasing access to affordable higher education. The outcomes of the Matching Student Scholarship and the Community Partner Postsecondary programs are highlighted below.

- 87% to 92% year one to year two persistence rate
- Serving approximately 11,000 students annually
- 57% to 65% identify as students of color
- 71% to 73% Pell-eligible
- Up to $4,200 less student debt per year
- More than 12,000 completions

A Promising College Affordability Message

- Affordability Message Work
- Institutional Promise Programs
- HB24-1340 Tax Credit
- FAFSA Completion Improvement

Department Operations Overview

- The average tenure of DHE employees is 4.5 years.
  - Nearly 30% of employees have been at DHE 5+ years
- 23 vacancies in 2024
  - 50% of open positions were due to:
    - term-limited positions
    - 2024 new positions
    - promotions or retirements
  - Exit interviews identified:
    - better paying opportunities
    - better career growth opportunities
- Annual Employee Survey Results

Colorado Department of Higher Education

- Developing and implementing highly innovative policy
- Ensuring high-quality postsecondary education and training
- Managing, analyzing, and reporting unique data elements
- Engaging and maximizing the talents of higher education experts

Thank You.

Department of Higher Education JBC Hearing

January 9, 2025

COLORADO
Department of Higher Education

COLORADO

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

We're Changing The Way Colorado Goes to College.

Joint Budget Committee Hearing

Joe Garcia, CCCS Chancellor | Jan. 9, 2025

THE POWER OF 13

ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. LITTLETON CAMPUS
2. LEGACY CAMPUS
3. CASTLE ROCK - STURM COLLABORATION CAMPUS

COLORADO NORTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. RANGELY CAMPUS
2. CRAIG CAMPUS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA
1. CENTRETECH CAMPUS
2. LOWRY CAMPUS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER
1. AURARIA CAMPUS
2. ADVANCED MANFACTURING CENTER
3. LOWRY CAMPUS
4. CEC EARLY COLLEGE

FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. WESTMINSTER CAMPUS
2. BOULDER COUNTY CAMPUS
3. LARIMER CAMPUS
4. CENTER FOR INTG. MANUFACTURING

LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. LAMAR CAMPUS

MORGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. FORT MORGAN
2. BENNETT CENTER
3. BURLINGTON CENTER
4. LIMON CENTER
5. WRAY CENTER

NORTHEASTERN JUNIOR COLLEGE
1. STERLING CAMPUS

OTERO COLLEGE
1. LA JUNTA CAMPUS

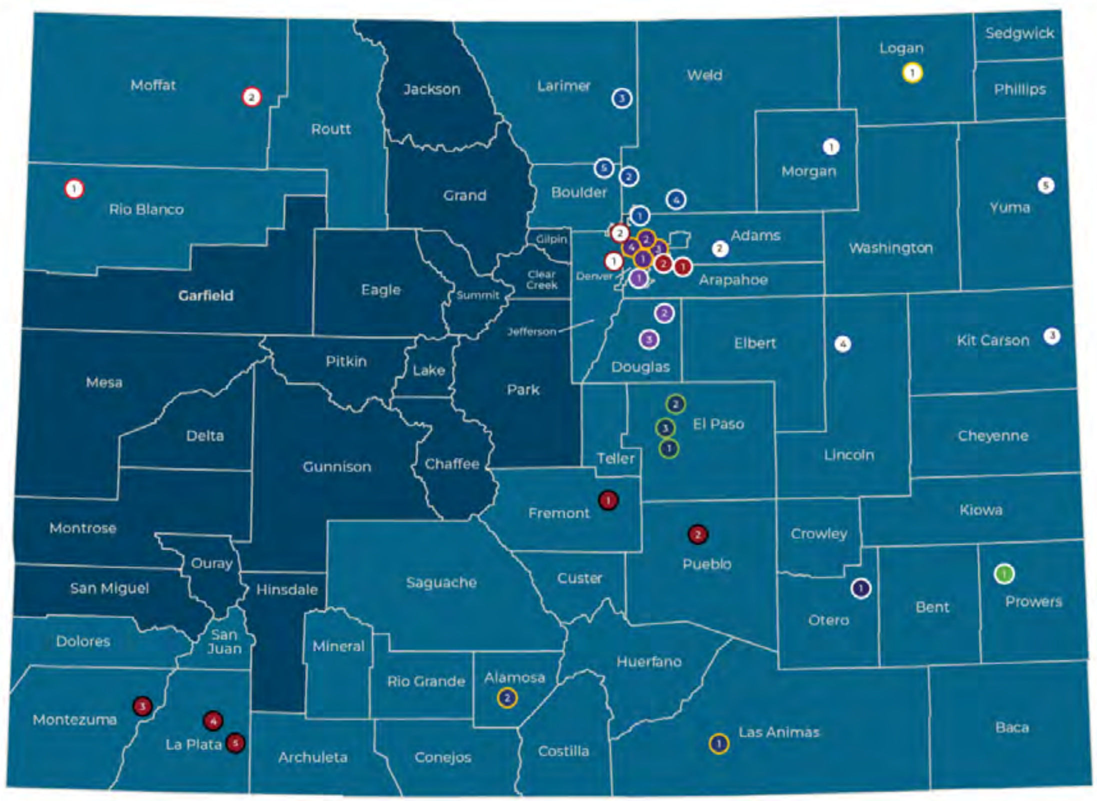
PIKES PEAK COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. CENTENNIAL CAMPUS
2. RAMPART RANGE CAMPUS
3. DOWNTOWN STUDIO CAMPUS

PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. PUEBLO CAMPUS
2. FREMONT CAMPUS
3. SOUTHWEST CAMPUS - MANCOS
4. SOUTHWEST SITE - DURANGO
5. SOUTHWEST SITE - BAYFIELD

RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1. LAKEWOOD CAMPUS
2. ARVADA CAMPUS

TRINIDAD STATE COLLEGE
1. TRINIDAD CAMPUS
2. VALLEY CAMPUS

35+ Locations. Online Everywhere.



Our Students

124,000 +

undergraduate students served annually

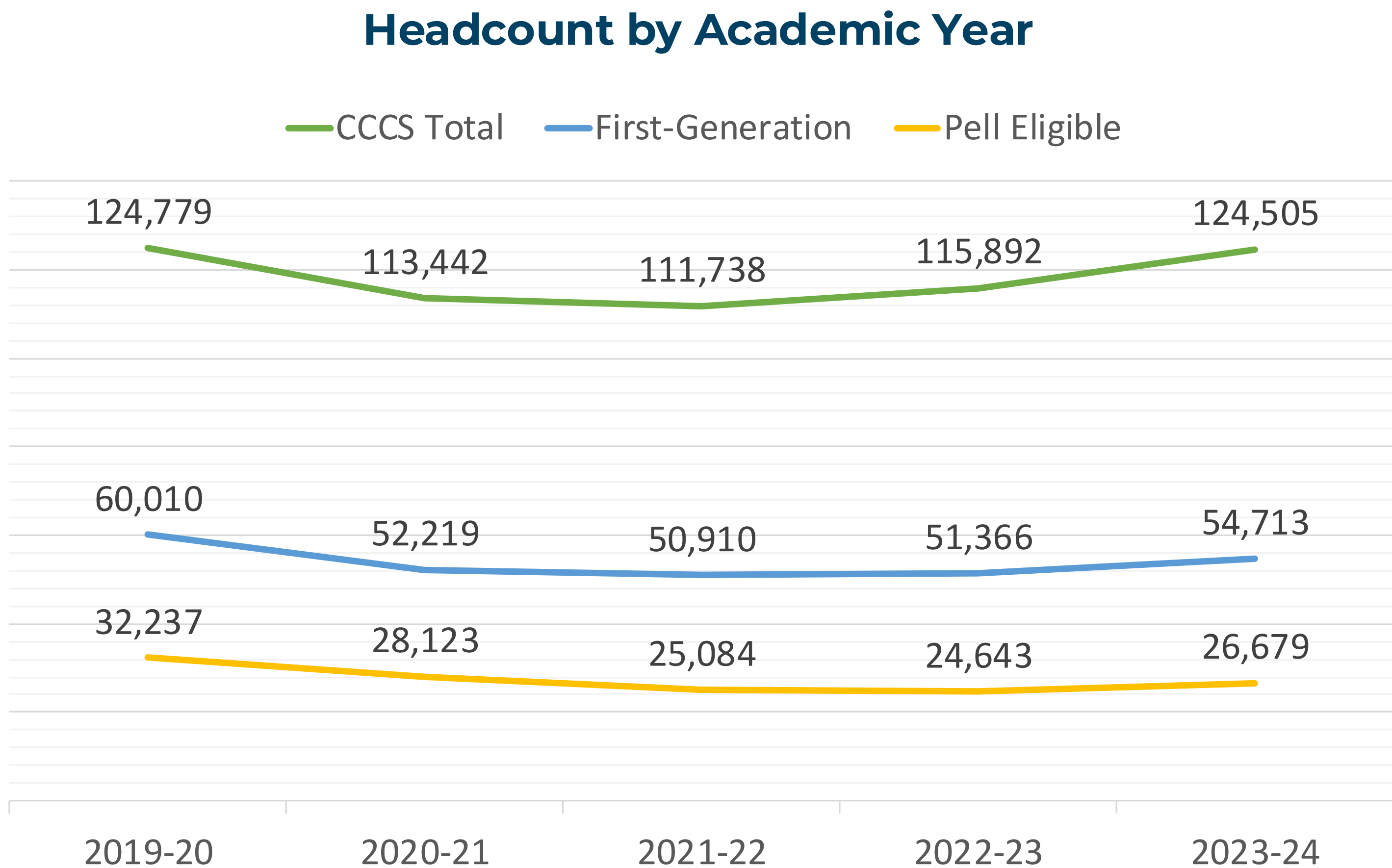
4,000 +

new and incumbent employees trained annually

Demographics

96%	Colorado Resident
44%	First Generation
41%	Pell Eligible
6%	Military-Related Students
27%	Full-time (12+ credits)
73%	Part-time (<12 credits)

Recapturing Enrollment and Closing Attainment Gaps



Colorado's economic engine is fueled by its community colleges.

Operational Efficiencies

We <u>promise</u> fiscal stewardship and low-cost operations.

- **Centralized** IT Infrastructure
- **Shared** legal services
- **Colorado Online** first-in-nation model

Workforce Training

CCCS is the Partner of Choice for workforce training.

We help companies build apprenticeships and develop custom employee trainings to meet their talent needs.

CCCS is the only community college system in the nation that houses, manages, and approves all levels of CTE programs statewide that are funded by Federal Perkins dollars.

State Investment in Workforce Training

Zero-Cost Training for In-Demand Jobs.

Care Forward Colorado

Over a dozen allied-health programs, including:

- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Dental Assistant

- Construction
- Education
- Early Childhood Education
- Firefighting
- Forestry
- Law Enforcement
- Nursing

CAREER ADVANCE COLORADO

How You Can Help

Building Colorado's Future Workforce

Fund

- The Colorado institutions of higher education joint funding request.

CCCS's capital construction,
IT, and controlled maintenance requests.

Our Promise to Colorado

To provide Colorado students with the education and training needed to be successful in an ever-evolving workforce.

We promise affordable and accessible opportunities for our students.

- **60%** Lower resident tuition than the average Colorado public research university.
- **More than 63%** of students graduate debt-free.
- **More jobs than ever**
  require certificates, degrees or training.

COLORADO

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

We Have Promises To Keep.

And It Starts With You.

Join us in changing the way Colorado goes to college.

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COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

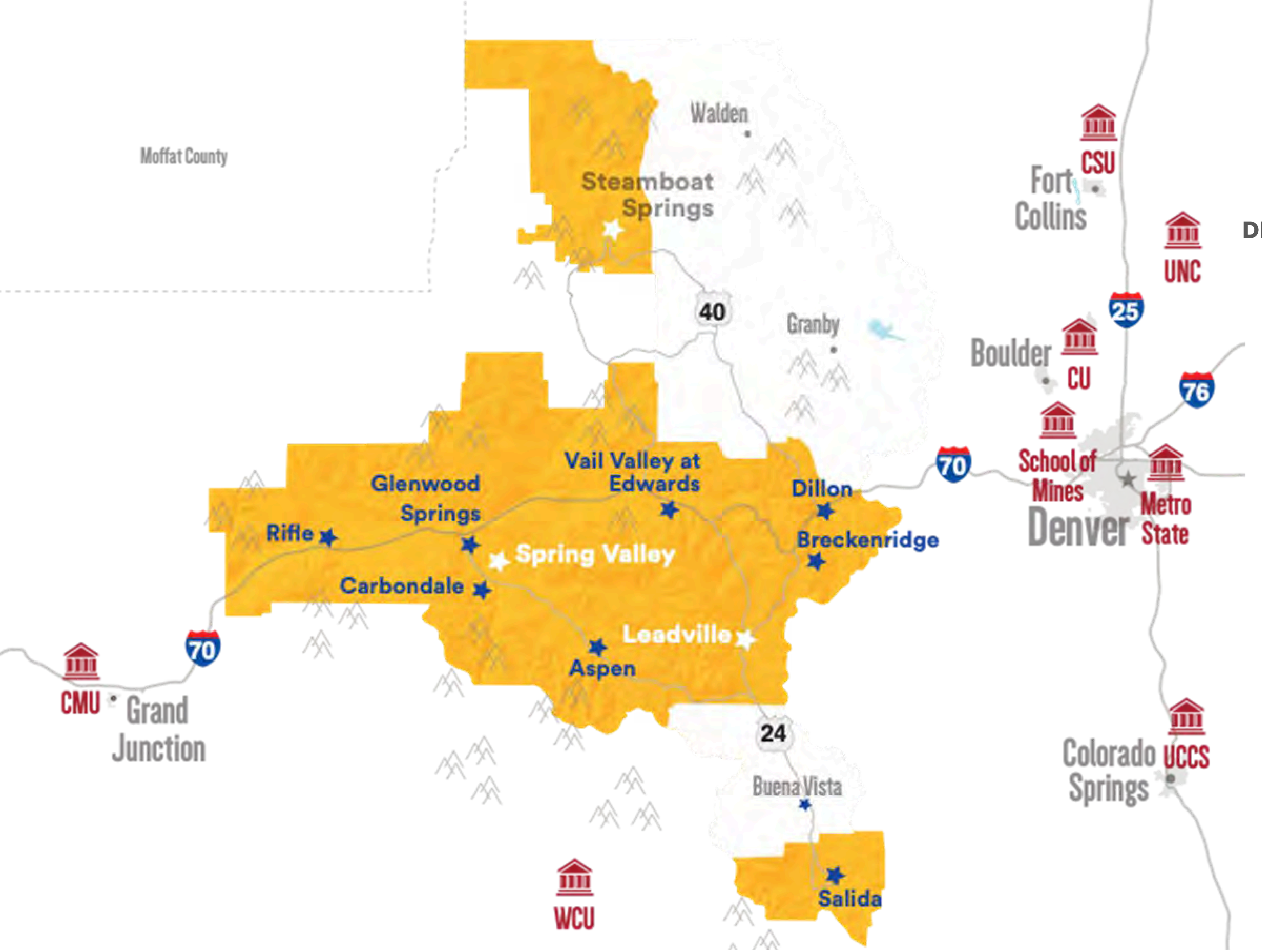
Colorado Mountain College

JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

January 9, 2025

Matt Gianneschi, Ph.D.
President

coloradomtn.edu
mgianneschi@coloradomtn.edu



COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

DISTRICT & GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

11 campus locations
8 counties
9 school districts
17 ski resorts
24 14,000-ft peaks
15 wilderness areas

District
Traditional Residential
Community Campus
Community Campus With Housing

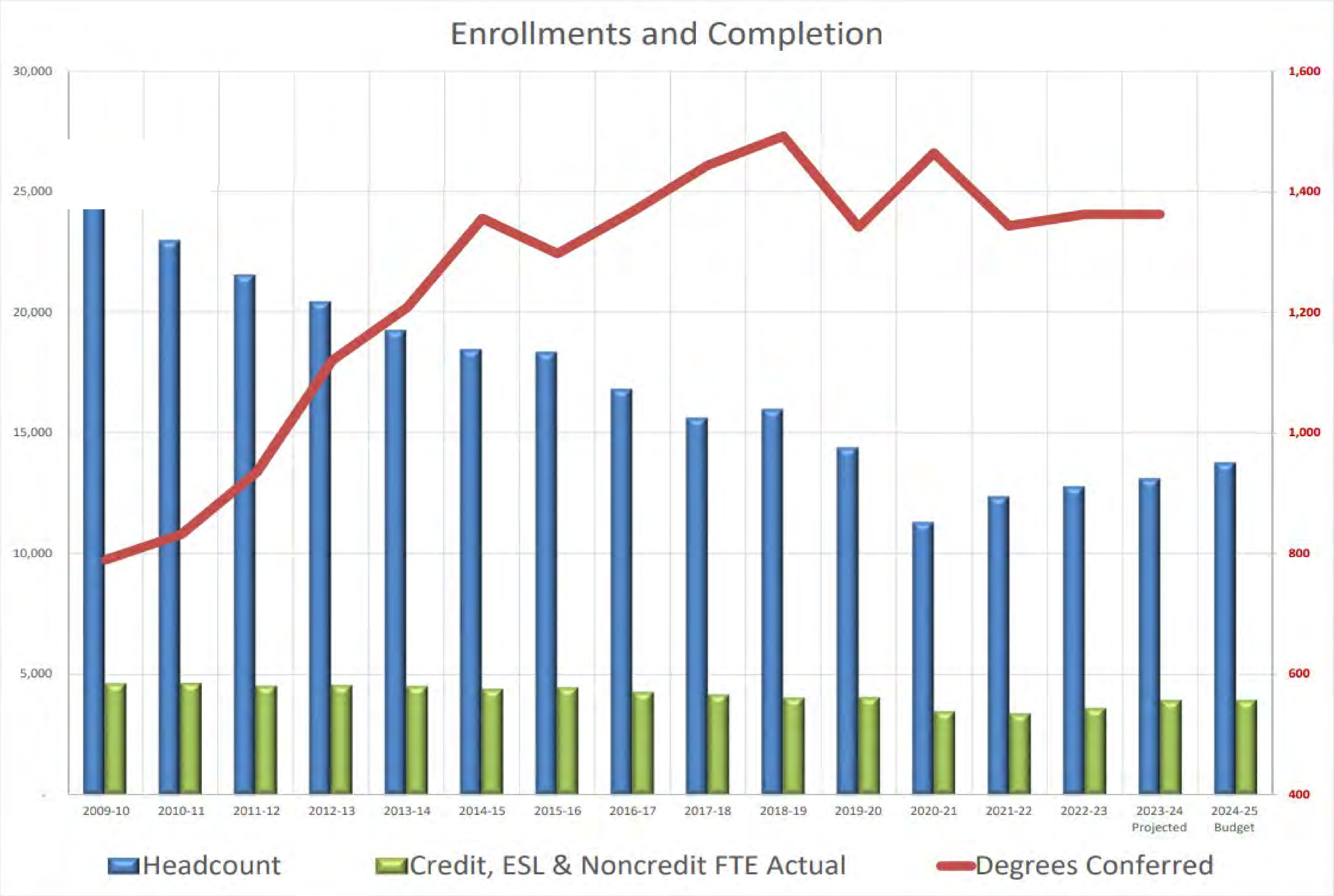

INTEGRITY
Constitutional Amendments
vote
LIVING MY TRUTH


CARE

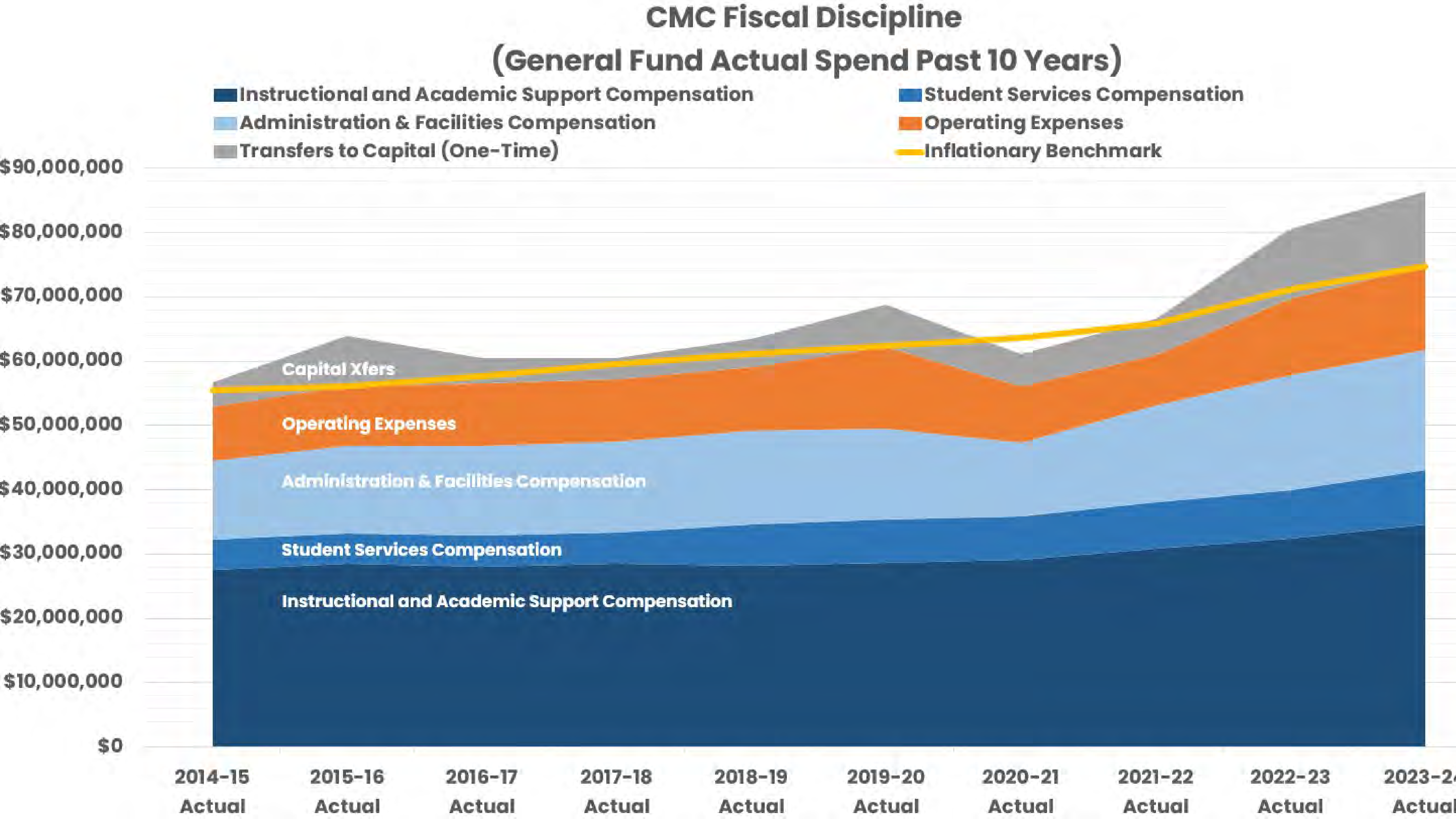
Who We Are


EQUITY


INNOVATION



ELEVATE YOUR FUTURE


CMC Fiscal Discipline
(General Fund Actual Spend Past 10 Years)
Instructional and Academic Support Compensation
Student Services Compensation
Administration & Facilities Compensation
Operating Expenses
Transfers to Capital (One-Time)
Inflationary Benchmark
$90,000,000
$80,000,000
$70,000,000
$60,000,000
$50,000,000
$40,000,000
$30,000,000
$20,000,000
$10,000,000
$0
Capital Xfers
Operating Expenses
Administration & Facilities Compensation
Student Services Compensation
Instructional and Academic Support Compensation
2014-15 Actual
2015-16 Actual
2016-17 Actual
2017-18 Actual
2018-19 Actual
2019-20 Actual
2020-21 Actual
2021-22 Actual
2022-23 Actual

CMC Employee Counts

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Part-Time Adjuncts	507	463	326	334	376
Full-Time Faculty	113	117	114	116	119
Part-Time Admin/Staff	228	268	160	154	151
Full-Time Admin/Staff	310	319	315	322	332
Total Employees	**1158**	**1168**	**915**	**926**	**978**

Economic Impacts

- Oral Health Clinic
- Salida Campus
- Nursing & Allied Health
- Rural Teacher Preparation
- Law Enforcement Officers & First Responders
- ESL Bridge Curriculum (ESL, GED, HSE, AHSD)
- Concurrent Enrollment

COLORADO
MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

With the Colorado Mountain Promise, **we will cover tuition** for any Colorado resident whose family income is below $70,000. If you're an independent student (typically over 24 years of age) we'll cover your tuition if your household income is $50,000 or less.

COLORADO MOUNTAIN PROMI$E

Impact of COSI funding at CMC

200–300 Scholarships awarded annually

93% In good standing (compared to 79% institutionally)

93% Persistence Rate (compared to 53% institutionally)

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Thank You

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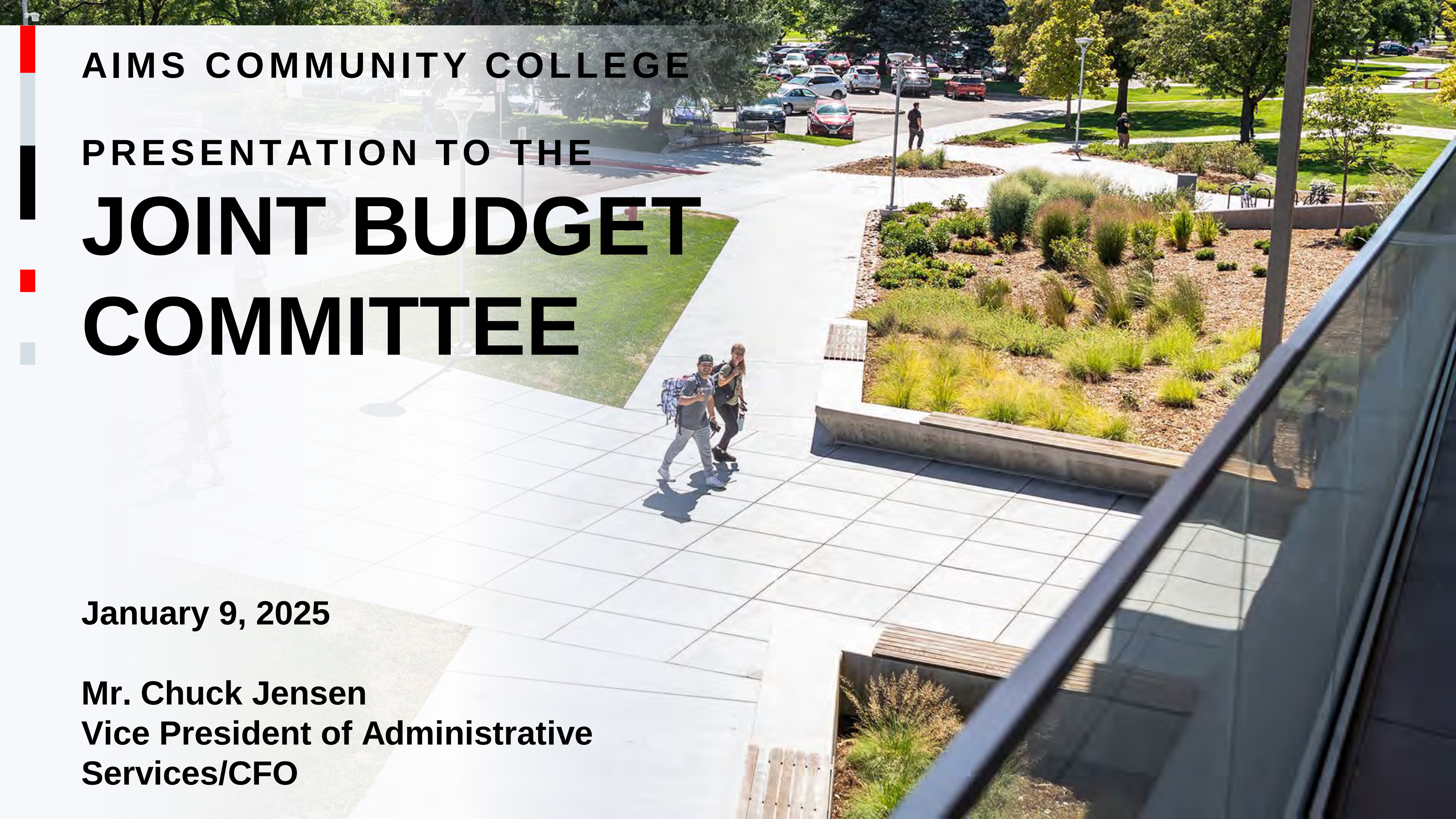


AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

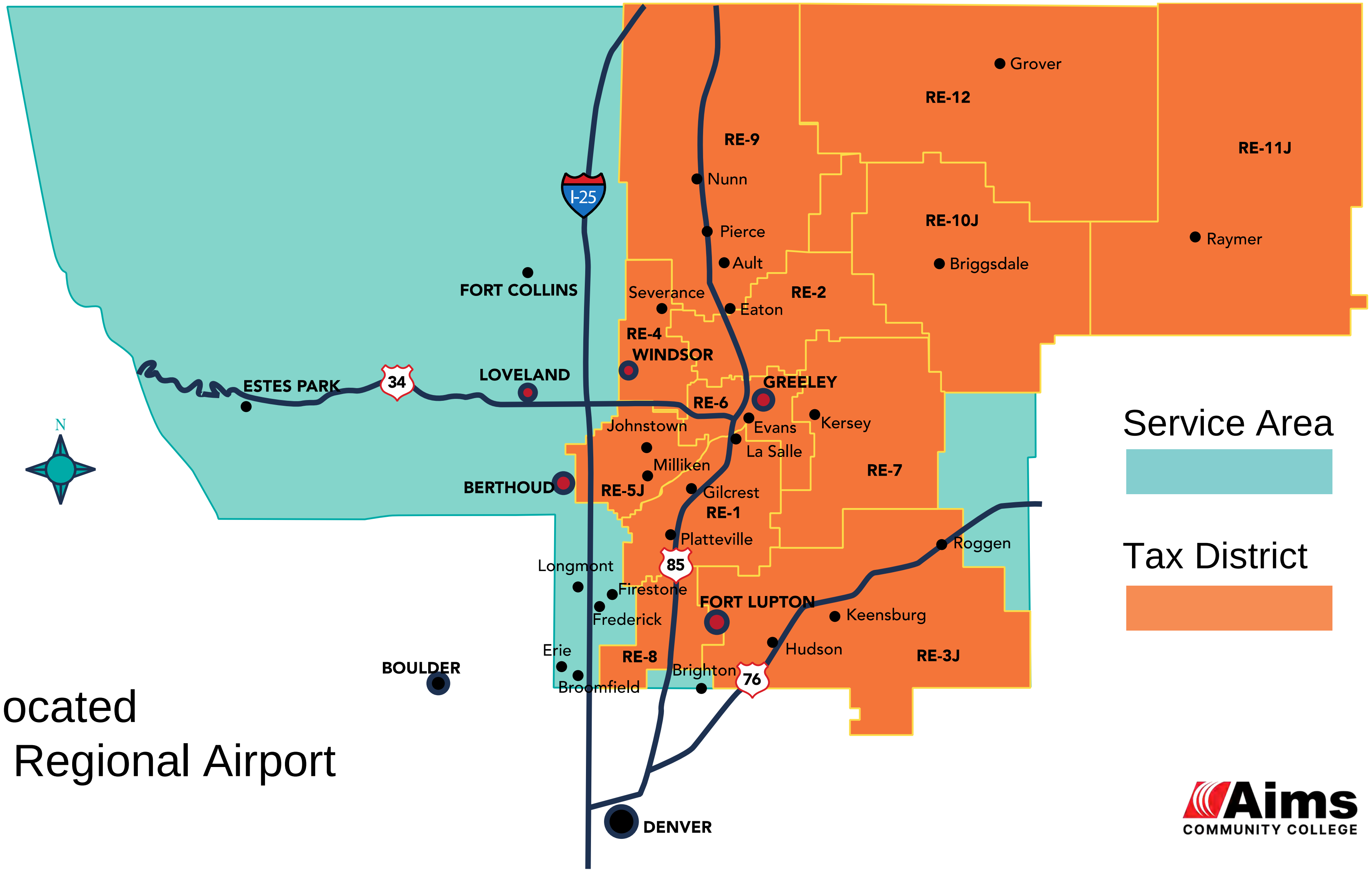
PRESENTATION TO THE

JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

January 9, 2025

Mr. Chuck Jensen
Vice President of Administrative Services/CFO

Service Area & Taxing District



4 CAMPUSES:
Greeley, Fort Lupton, Loveland and Windsor
Aviation Flight Center is located at the Northern Colorado Regional Airport

Aims COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Enrollment & Student Data

10,122 Students Served	**22% growth in Student FTE** Since FY2018-19
49% First-Generation	**39%** Identify as racially or ethnically diverse

77% of graduates employed within 6 months after graduation

97% of our students are Colorado residents

Affordability

- **$82/credit**
  In-district Tuition

- **Aims Tuition Promise**

- **Strong Start Scholarship**
  New this fall

Support for Students

Staffing and faculty to meet the needs of students

Expansion of food pantry services to all four campuses

Continued investment in wraparound services and mental healthcare for students

Developing and building a Student Health and Wellness Center

Academic Highlights

Fire, Police Academies and EMT Program at full capacity

In partnership with Ford Motor Co., launching ASSET degree program

Developed an acute care nurse aide program in collaboration with area hospitals

Began offering an online 3D concrete printing course in partnership with industry partner

Developing and building the Aims Workforce Innovation Center

Commercial Driver License program has partnered with English Language Learners program

Aims2UNC

Streamlines the path for students to transition directly to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC)

242 Students Transitioned to UNC

48% Underrepresented Minorities

59% First-Generation

906 Students have been admitted to the program

Building off the framework of Aims2UNC – Aims has launched High School to Aims (HS2Aims) Transition Program

Aims
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

High School Programs

77 **High School Partners**	**97%+** **Completion Rate**
4,395 **HS Students 2023-24**	**$2.9M** **Tuition Saved by Students**

Early College Academy

Allows students to simultaneously earn both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree

320 students enrolled

5,318 college credits earned

76 students graduated Spring 2024

100% H.S. graduation rate

78% A.A. completion rate

Aims COMMUNITY COLLEGE

College Operations

72% of our funding comes from our taxing district

Predictability & stability in property tax legislation

FY25 budget is stable

Projecting a stable budget for FY26

Maintaining market competitiveness for adjunct pay

Aims COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Strategic Direction for 2025-2027

New 3-year strategic plan:

Focus on student success through improving recruitment, enrollment and retention

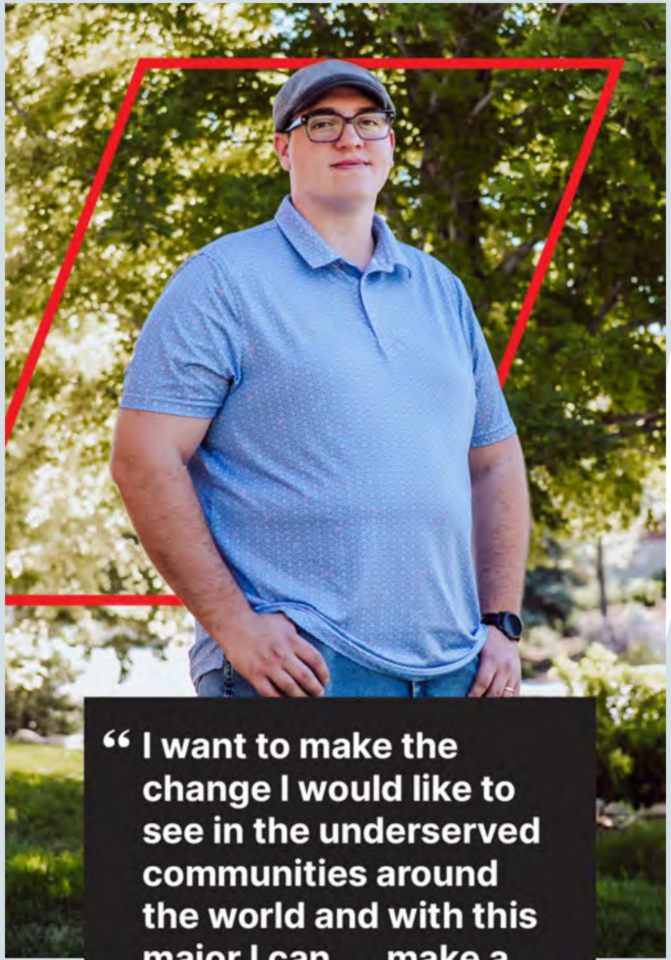
Transform and create new curriculum and delivery modes centered on student success and workforce needs

Enhance strategies for employee recruitment, professional growth and development

Students

“Aims provided me with a safe space to explore my education.”

JERIKA ROSALES
Graduate, Psychology



“I want to make the change I would like to see in the underserved communities around the world and with this major I can ... make a global difference.”

CHRIS BENTLEY
Graduate, Organizational Leadership

“I was able to build connections on a professional level. In addition to this, I am graduating with no college debt.”

ERIN FLORES
Graduate, Animal Science

Aims
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

aims.edu

GREELEY   FORT LUPTON   LOVELAND   WINDSOR   ONLINE

Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat
@aimscc

Instagram and TikTok
@aims_cc

COLORADO AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES

JANUARY 9, 2025

EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE

RANDY JOHNSON

PICKENS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

DR. TEINA MCCONNELL

TCR
TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES

RANDAL PALMER

WHO WE ARE

- The Area Technical Colleges are Nationally Accredited Public Institutions of Higher Education.
- Provide workforce readiness training and technical education to students in Colorado.
- Offer program certificates and a streamlined path to internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities.
- Programs include but are not limited to: welding, automotive, cosmetology, EMT, CNA, accounting, culinary arts, dental, and more.

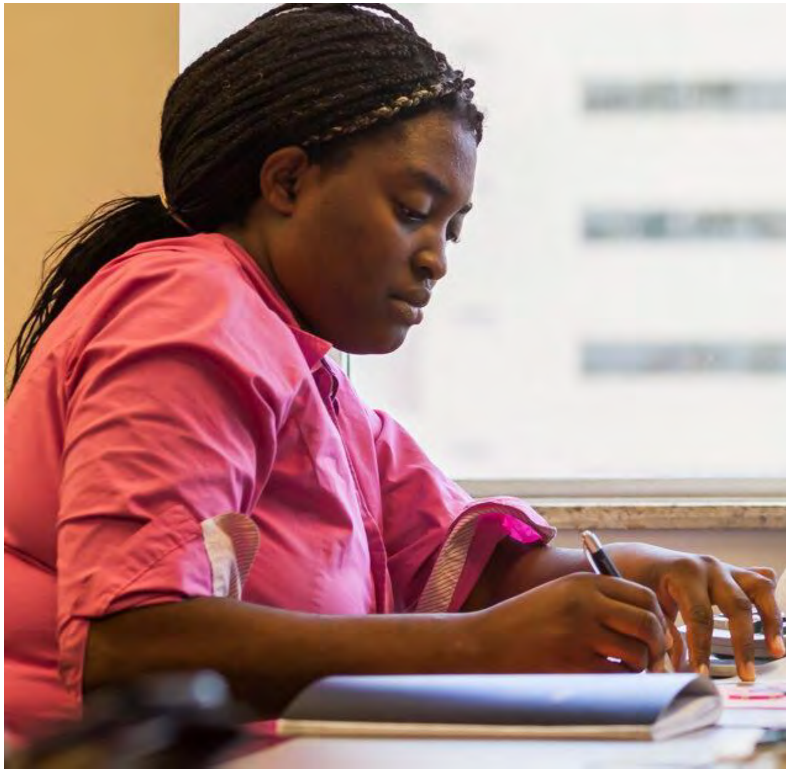
WHAT DO WE HAVE?

- The ***lowest tuition*** of any higher education institution in the state of Colorado.
- The ***highest student completion rates*** in the state of Colorado.
- ***No student loans*** – students leave our facilities debt free.

BACKGROUND

	EGTC	PTC	TCR
Average Cost	$6,710	$6,000	$6,300
Average Out of Pocket Cost	$1,500	$1,500	$3,328
Tuition Increase	Has only increased tuition 4% in the last 4 years.	Has only increased tuition 4% in the last 4 years.	Has only increased tuition 2.9% in 4 years.

CHALLENGES



- Community Need:
  - ATCs do not have the bandwidth or capacity to serve every student. We do not have the funds to expand – our only sources of funding are through the GF and student tuition. (ATCs do not qualify for BEST grants or state capital funding)
  - In the last 10 years, the ATCs have ***increased resident student FTE by 50 percent.***
- Waitlists:
  - Students often wait upwards of one year to be placed in a program, and when space is available, their lives may have moved away from higher education.

KEY WAITLIST STATISTICS

	TCR	PTC	EGTC
Medical (nursing, medical assisting, EMT)	52	40	86
Welding	N/A	37	22
Cosmetology, Esthetician, Barbering	45	32	295

TOTAL WAITLIST STATISTICS ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

TCR	PTC	EGTC
123	194	469

ARPA FUNDS IMPACT

- With the assistance of ARPA funds, the ATCs were able to fund key projects and programs.
  - At TCR, the ARPA offset of $311,796 reduced the overall cost of the eligible programs of $545,515, providing students with an earning opportunity of $7,044,201. In short, the students paid $233,718 for training to earn over $7M in initial salary, resulting in an ROI of over 30x.
  - Pickens received grants from CARE forward, Colorado Career Advance, Opportunity Next, and COSI – Finish what you started. Students were able to fill seats fully funded by ARPA.
  - EGTC used ARPA funds to offer free tuition for health programs including Medical Assisting, Dental Assisting, Nurse Assisting, and Practical Nursing programs.

SUCCESSES

- Throughout all programs, ATC students have a near 100% average placement rate post graduation.

EGTC	PTC	TCR
93%	78%	93.5%

- We also have very high program completion rates:

EGTC	PTC	TCR
85%	92%	94%

- The ATCs grant thousands of of certificates yearly.

EGTC	PTC	TCR
4,376	694	940

ATC FUTURE

- ATCs will continue to serve their students and meet community workforce demands – but it is essential to eliminate waitlists to properly do so. Ongoing need:
  - Increase instructional space
  - Hire more instructors
  - Implement new technologies
  - Expand programs
- EGTC, TCR, and PTC will continue to provide gold standard education and training to ***all students and meet community need***.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

THANK YOU!