

TOUCHSTONE 2: ACCOMPLISHING OTHER DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES

2C1: Institutional objectives beyond helping students learn

Community College of Denver is committed to providing access and creating opportunities for success to the people in its unique urban community. Beyond helping students learn, CCD has established many other distinctive objectives with priority given to the following:

Addressing the unique needs of the urban, first-generation, minority and under-prepared students in the community
Bridging the learning gap between high school and college for Denver's students

CCD provides a variety of services to address the needs of unprepared and under-prepared students through support services including advising, case management tutoring and other academic assistance. This holistic approach creates an environment where success is possible for all CCD students. The Center for Persons with Disabilities offers support services to those students with physical and learning disabilities, ensuring that students have access to the services they need to be successful in their academic pursuits (See 1C4). The Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA) oversees the TRiO Scholars, Title V Access & Success and First Generation Student Success programs. The Center for Educational Advancement facilitates developmental education for under-prepared and unprepared students. The Testing Center provides the assessment testing and evaluation vital to appropriate class placement, enhancing students' ability to succeed in their studies. The Essential Guide to Student Services (Appendix 2) illustrates support services available to all students.

CCD and Denver Public Schools (DPS) have cemented a partnership to keep high school students through graduation. CCD and DPS pioneered Colorado's first early/middle college high schools: the Fred N. Thomas Career Education Center Middle College of Denver and Southwest Early College. The early/middle college goals are to assess and prepare students in grades nine and 10 for college; enroll students in college courses in their junior year of high school; and ensure early/middle college stu-

dents graduate from high school with at least 30 college credits or a two-year associate's degree.

CCD and DPS are taking a component of the early/middle college model and placing it within DPS traditional and alternative high schools. The Bridge-to-Achievement Labs give CCD a presence in DPS high schools and the opportunity to deliver its nationally known developmental education model. The labs focus on underserved students: low-income, minority and students with special learning needs. CCD's Bridge-to-Achievement Labs provide college-level assessment of all 10th grade students; professional and peer tutoring; computerized math and literacy training; peer or near mentoring; case management for Bridge program students; and opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses through the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program.

2C2: Ensuring alignment with mission

Communication is the key to effectively aligning these distinctive college objectives to our mission. Convocation – CCD's twice annual meeting of all full-time faculty, staff and administrators – is the primary opportunity to share the priorities of the year and discuss strategies formulated for implementation. The performance contracts between Colorado Community College System (CCCS), and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), guide the college's priorities.

The college's administrators hold weekly Executive Staff meetings, bringing college leaders together to strategize and formulate plans to communicate important guiding principles and objectives with their respective staffs. In addition to Executive Staff, distinctive priorities are discussed at appropriate college committee and leadership groups.

The Community College of Denver Foundation Board and academic program advisory committees also inform and drive the college planning process and provide additional leadership in the development of implementation strategies.

2C3: Complementing processes and systems for helping students learn

CCD's holistic approach to supporting students both in and outside the classroom is evident in the other distinctive objective priorities as defined in 2C1. Examples of the college's student support include case management, tutoring, peer mentoring, co-curricular learning, opportunities for involvement and other learning support.

2P1: Setting objectives

The process through which CCD develops objectives involves Executive Staff, deans, directors, program chairs and advisory boards. Objectives are defined by the demographics of the college service area and other external demands from CCHE and the Colorado Legislature. Objectives are driven by both the college vision and external demands identified by the community. These objectives are integrated into the strategic planning process and the AQIP action projects.

2P2: Communication of expectations

Executive Staff, employee group and department meetings, and the *CCDaily* and *Inside CCD* employee newsletters are other vehicles through which expectations are shared. Convocation provides an additional opportunity for information and expectation sharing. The interpersonal process is informal enough that expectations may not always be communicated consistently. CCD is aware of the need to consider improvements in the way we communicate expectations (see 211).

2P3: Determining faculty and staff needs relative to objectives

Faculty and staff needs related to these distinctive objectives, are determined through ongoing dialogue and internal staff meetings. Additionally, individuals have an opportunity to request professional development skills upgrade. Individual performance evaluations and professional goals are identified and set through the annual performance evaluation process.

The Teaching/Learning Center consistently surveys faculty to define areas for professional development and facilitates programming that ties to the college objectives. These workshops are available for all faculty and staff. CCD needs to implement a process where feedback is solicited on a regular basis and used to build training and professional development opportunities for all staff. The Communication Analysis

Team was developed specifically to address concerns over engagement of faculty in the culture of the college. Communication was identified as a key issue critical to maintaining good connections among faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders.

2P4: Assessing and reviewing objectives

Surveys, evaluations, program reviews, audits and accreditation processes provide the feedback and data needed to evaluate college objectives. Individual departments and responsible parties use this information to develop operational plans that achieve the college goals. A college-wide strategic plan ties together efforts from all departments to ensure each objective is being met and determine any operational gaps.

2P5: Measures of distinctive objectives

CCD regularly collects and analyzes data from the following measures:

- enrollment, course placement, retention, transfer and graduation data specific to distinct populations (i.e. high school partners, first-generation programs and other populations as described in 2C1)
- grant reviews and reporting
- Bridge-to-Achievement Lab usage and user evaluations
- CCCSE Student Satisfaction Survey
- Student evaluations of faculty

2R1: Results in accomplishing distinctive objectives

There are two distinctive objectives that set CCD apart from other community colleges: addressing unique community needs and bridging the learning gap between high school and college (See 2C1). Data from CCD support programs for first-generation and low-income students in the Center for Academic Support & Achievement demonstrate that CCD is meeting these objectives. Increased graduation rates based on this support are detailed in 1R3. In addition, from the Title V grant, the average semester-to-semester (fall to spring) retention rate (2003-04) was 90 percent for full-time and 77 percent for part-time students. TRiO Scholars reports a 71 percent retention rate for all participants.

In order to place under-prepared students in appropriate developmental classes, CCD's Testing Center uses the Accuplacer™ to assess all incoming non-exempt students and to increase their opportunities for success and persistence. For the year 2004-05, the Testing Center admin-

istered 7,751 placement tests college-wide. As part of the Bridge-to-Achievement Lab program, 849 high school students took the Accuplacer™.

2R2: Comparisons with peers

Of the 13 community colleges in the Colorado Community College System, CCD is the only urban institution that serves such a unique student population. On the Auraria Campus, in comparison to Metropolitan State College of Denver and University of Colorado at Denver, CCD plays a distinctive role serving a predominantly first-generation, non-traditional population. Federal grant programs supporting first-generation students compare favorably with national peers as demonstrated by regular renewal of grant funding.

As a relatively new initiative, pre-collegiate programs are beginning to create comparative measures.

The AQIP process provides another avenue through which CCD will compare results with peer institutions.

2R3: How results strengthen and enhance

Data informs the college's understanding of its ability to provide services that reach the target markets successfully. Formal and informal dialog with business and community partners, legislators and student groups provide the invaluable feedback to strengthen and enhance CCD's work in the community.

2I1 & 2I2: targeting, setting priorities and communicating improvements

Using data referred to in 2R1, along with CCD's Performance Contract with the state, current legislative directives and community economics, Executive Staff will determine priority changes, potential target audiences and necessary improvements in services beyond the classroom. The following communication tools represent how CCD shares current results and priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators and other stakeholders:

- Spring and fall employee convocations
- Department and center meetings
- Electronic newsletters
- Annual Report
- CCD Catalog
- News releases to community media, the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Denver Partnership, legislators and city council members and the CCD student newspaper

While there are many vehicles through which CCD shares its expectations, consistency of message is not managed as effectively as it could be. Also, expectations are not always clearly tied to strategic implementation, so the outcomes are not easily measured or clear. Increased face-to-face information sharing of consistent messages would clarify and build unity around college expectations. It is important that CCD continues to create venues for dialogue so that opportunities for clarification are realized