

# Community College of Denver - CO

HLC ID 1047

---

OPEN PATHWAY: Reaffirmation Review

Visit Date: 3/6/2017

---

**Everette Freeman**  
*President*

**Tom Bordenkircher**  
*HLC Liaison*

**Maura Abrahamson**  
*Review Team Chair*

**Pamela Humphrey**  
*Federal Compliance Reviewer*

**Roderick Brown**  
*Team Member*

**Brian Dille**  
*Team Member*

**Jan Doebbert**  
*Team Member*

**J. Gabe Estill**  
*Team Member*

## Context and Nature of Review

---

### Visit Date

---

3/6/2017

#### Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

#### Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

### Scope of Review

- Reaffirmation Review
- Federal Compliance
- On-site Visit
- Multi-Campus Visit (if applicable)

*There are no forms assigned.*

## Institutional Context

---

The Community College of Denver (CCD) is the third largest of 13 community colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). The College was first established in 1967 by the Colorado legislature and moved to its permanent residence, the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) campus in downtown Denver, in 1975. Additional locations include the Advanced Manufacturing Center, opened in 2015, and located about four miles from the main Auraria campus and the Lowry campus, bordering east Denver and west Aurora, and housing the Health Sciences and Dental Hygiene programs. The College was first accredited by the Higher Learning Commission in 1975 and became an AQIP institution before joining PEAQ and then the Open Pathway.

CCD enjoys the distinction of being the only community college in the U.S. to share a campus with two four-year Universities-Metropolitan State University of Denver and the University of Colorado-Denver. Attending a college that shares physical space, resources, and support services with two universities allows CCD's students to become familiar with the four-year institutional environment. This experience appears to be a motivating factor in the decision to continue one's education beyond community college, in pursuit of a four-year degree.

The College has been designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by the federal government. As such, programs and services at CCD are designed to serve the diverse needs of the student body. Additionally, college personnel are clearly focused on guiding and supporting all students as they navigate the road toward completion and success.

The College recently opened the Confluence Building, a large inviting center that was clearly designed to accommodate the needs of the students served by CCD. This building offers everything from centralized and easily accessible intake offices and welcome center to large, dedicated study areas. Amidst the modern buildings situated on the campus, there are thirteen restored Victorian cottages, a turn-of-the century grocery store, Golda Meir's childhood residence, and historic churches. This architectural contrast lends a flare and charm, not often associated with an urban campus. A Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail station is also situated adjacent to the campus, making transportation to and from CCD easy and affordable.

## Interactions with Constituencies

---

Academic Advisor (6)

Academic Credentials Specialist

Accessibility Specialist

Adjunct Faculty (8)

Administrative Assistant (3)

Administrative Assistant II

Administrative Assistant III (2)

Admissions Specialist

Assistant Director of Financial Aid

Assistant Director of Recruitment

Assistant Registrar

Assistant Technical Specialist

Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Administration and Student Success

Associate Dean of Instruction

Associate Designer

Associate Director of Financial Aid

Bilingual Recruiter

Call Center Manager

Care Case Manager

Career Services Coordinator

CCD Foundation Board Representative (2)

CCD Foundation Chair

Chief Executive Officer, AHEC Leadership

Concurrent Enrollment Specialist

Conduct Officer

Controller

Coordinator of Human Services

Coordinator of Professional Development

Coordinator, KEYS scholarship

CTE Advisory Board Representative (2)

Dean, Arts and Humanities

Dean, Center for Career and Technical Education

Dean, Center for Math and Science

Dean, Center for Performing Arts, Behavior & Social Sciences

Dean, Health Sciences

Dean, Math and Science

Dean, Student Development and Retention

Dean, Student Life

Chief Executive Officer, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Desktop Project Manager

Director of Confucius Institute Staff

Director, Academic Excellence

Director, Accessibility Center

Director, Call Center

Director, Career and Transfer

Director, College Pathways

Director, Creative Services

Director, Educational Opportunity Center

Director, Facilities

Director, Financial Aid

Director, Foundational Skills Institute

Director, Human Resources

Director, Information Technology Services

Director, Institutional Effectiveness

Director, Institutional Research

Director, Marketing Communications

Director, Outreach

Director, Recruitment

Director, Student Conduct

Director, Teaching and Learning Center

Director, Testing

Director, Transfer Success Center

Director, TRIO EOC

Director, TRIO SSS

Displaced Homemakers Grant Manager

Distance Testing Specialist

Educational Access Specialist

Enrollment Management Specialist (2)

Events Coordinator

Executive Dean, Enrollment Management

Executive Director, CCCOnline

Facilities Manager

Financial Awareness Manager

Front Desk Student Assistant

Full-time Faculty (86)

Grants Director

HIS STEM Grant Director

Human Resources Assistant Director

Human Services Specialist

Interim Assistant Registrar

Interim COSO Director

Interim Director of Outreach

Interim Instructional Advising Director

Interim Recruiter

Interpreter Coordinator

LMS Coordinator

Manufacturing Pathways Campus Coordinator

Office Assistant

Office Coordinator

Office Manager (3)

Operations Manager

Operations Specialist

President

President, Colorado Community College System (CCCS)

Processing Manager

Program Advisor, College Pathways (3)

Program Specialist

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Recruitment Coordinator

Registrar

Research Associate

Retention Specialist (4)

Scheduling Manager

Scholarship Coordinator

Scholarship Manager

Senior Academic Advisor

Staff Assistant

Staffing Specialist

State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) Member (2)

STEM Grant Office Coordinator

STEM Learning Center Coordinator

Student (38)

Student Activities Coordinator

Student Success Specialist (2)

Systems Administrator

Testing Center Director

Trio Advisor

Veteran Services Coordinator

Vice President of Administrative Service and Chief Financial Officer

Vice President of Enrollment Administration and Student Success

Welcome Center Specialist

Work-study Coordinator

Criteria 1 & 2 Open Forum (100 attendees)

Criteria 3 & 4 Open Forum (62 attendees)

Criterion 5 Open Forum (59 attendees)

## **Additional Documents**

---

- HLC Student Survey Results
- Executive Staff ASB response letter (2/10/17)
- Executive Staff response to ASB recommendations (2/10/17)
- Fiscal Year 2014 Draft 3 Year Cohort Default Rate, Department of Education letter, dated February 2017
- Student Learning Committee (SLC) meeting minutes, 2015-2017



## 1 - Mission

---

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

---

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.*

The mission of the Community College of Denver (CCD) is: *CCD provides our diverse community an opportunity to gain quality higher education and achieve personal success in a supportive and inclusive environment.* The HLC visiting team learned, in meetings with various constituency groups, that there was general input from internal and external stakeholders during the most recent revision process (2013). While reflective of purpose, the HLC visiting team observed that there may be a need to revisit and revise the current statement in order to better align with recent personnel and demographic changes, including new institutional leadership and strategies, the College's HSI status, and the college's growing presence in the community.

While the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) is the governing board for CCD, according to state policy the institution has the ability to adopt its own mission statement, independent of other entities. CCD's mission aligns with SBCCOE's statement that *the mission of the community colleges shall be to serve Colorado residents who reside in their service areas by offering a broad range of general, personal, career, and technical education programs.* (C.R.S. 23-60-201) CCD is also part of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) which serves "approximately 137,000 students annually at 13 colleges and 39 locations across Colorado." (CCCS website)

The current President of CCD was appointed by the President of CCCS in consultation with SBCCOE in 2013. The HLC team observed that the President and his Cabinet are clearly dedicated to upholding the mission of the College. During the meeting with this group, the President described recent developments at the College and demonstrated his involvement and attention to maintaining an

environment that supports student success.

After the new CCD President arrived, the College developed a strategic plan that took priority over developing or revising the mission statement. While in need of revisiting and revising, the team observed that the institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

The HLC visiting team also observed that the College is located in a diverse, urban setting and that enrollment and student services support the community. Programs are also responsive to the needs of the community, with evidence in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas and the transfer pathways. The Team learned that advisory boards, comprised of local industry leaders and professionals, help inform the curriculum and provide direction for alignment between programs and industry needs. During the meeting with SBCCOE and CCCS representatives and foundation and community members, the Team learned that first generation college students are well served as they attend a "school that does not have the same pressures as a large university."

The Community College of Denver offers Associate of Arts and Science degrees and the majority of students at the College are transfer students, receiving support through advising and a designated transfer center. The College is part of the statewide Guaranteed Transfer Pathway (gtPathways) system that ensures that all credits transfer to Colorado public four-year schools. The College also has a degree with designation guaranteeing that all 60 credits transfer to Metro State University and University of Colorado, the two universities that share a campus with CCD. As such, the College is clearly designed to support students who plan to transfer to four-year institutions as well as those who are preparing to enter the workforce upon completion.

CCD has served over 2200 individuals with its concurrent enrollment program, primarily within the Denver Public Schools (DPS). During the Spring 2017 semester, concurrent enrollment constituted 8495.5 credits (out of 69873.5 total); 283.2 FTE (out of 2329.1 total); and 12.2% of total enrollment, increasing from 9.2% for the Fall 2016 semester. The HLC team learned in meeting with DPS representatives that the College and area high schools enjoy a close, mutually supportive relationship. Students benefit from being able to earn college credit during high school, providing incentive to enroll in college. The Team also learned that advising support staff in the DPS system provide encouragement for students to enroll at CCD.

CCD's budget process purpose statement (FS-13; approved by the President, 2015) specifically addresses alignment with the mission, which is to "detail the process utilized in formulating the Community College of Denver's (College) budget and to ensure the budget aligns with the College's strategic plan, mission, vision and student outcomes." It further states that the College is "committed to our mission to provide every member of our community with the education that s/he desires. The budget process is designed to provide that opportunity to our diverse community by aligning expenditures with our educational purpose." In meetings with the CFO and other personnel, the Team was able to confirm that this commitment is maintained at the College.

Although not the main intention of the Program Prioritization committee, the Team concluded that there is anecdotal evidence that Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB), the College's program prioritization process, will result in budget prioritization to support its mission. It was also pointed out in the Assurance Argument that "program prioritization will help us return to a more strategically-based budgeting process."

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

---

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The mission is articulated publicly.*

CCD's mission statement is posted on the college website, in the academic catalog, and on LCD monitors and computer screens in high traffic areas of the College; however, the Team observed that it is not permanently displayed in public areas of the campus. On the other hand, the institutional outcomes are prominently and permanently displayed in numerous areas and across the campuses.

Through the Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB) initiative, the committee maintained that the mission may not accurately reflect the current changes at the College. One of the ASB action items indicated that the College may update the mission as part of the initiative.

CCD's facilities, academic practices, and curriculum reflect the College's commitment to its mission. As the Team toured the campus, reviewers were able to note that the College appeared to be in compliance with ADA regulations, including large elevators and ramps that facilitated the needs of disabled students. Furthermore, academic programs tended to be richly developed and inclusive of a wide range of discipline areas.

During meetings with various groups, the HLC team learned that the College is aware of the need to target and identify its diverse constituencies, but the mission statement does not directly identify these groups. As such, the Team recommends that CCD focuses on revisiting and revising the mission statement as mentioned in the ASB.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

---

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.*

A number of the comments in the HLC Student Opinion Survey addressed diversity at CCD. One student noted "I love the diversity at CCD" and another maintained the diversity of the overall College "provides the best social interactions."

CCD has outreach to all students, including providing financial planning assistance to students in need, with diversity in mind.

The Lowry campus provides space to the Colorado Association of Black Professional Engineers and Scientists for its math enrichment program. Furthermore, the Urban Male Initiative (UMI) program serves all male students of Community College of Denver (CCD).

The College partners with the Denver Scholarship Foundation to provide educational opportunities. The Foundation mission is to inspire and empower *Denver Public Schools' students to enroll in and graduate from postsecondary institutions of higher education, by providing the tools, knowledge, and financial resources essential for success.* (Denver Scholarship Foundation website) The HLC team had an opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive Officer who explained that the relationship between the Foundation, CCD, and community and industry leaders is mutually supportive and focused on fostering student success.

The LGBTQ Student Resource Center, located in the Tivoli Student Union, is a tri-institutional support service on the Auraria campus. The Center serves students, faculty and staff of Metropolitan State University of Denver, the Community College of Denver, and the University of Colorado at Denver.

CCD has excellent Safe Zone training with multiple workshops throughout the year. The College explains that these "trainings openly addressed the legal and pedagogical issues that arise, as CCD strives to serve students within the GLBTQ community. This committee also partners in a tri-institutional capacity with the other two institutions of higher education on the Auraria campus." (GLBTQSafeZoneTraining\_FY15.pdf) The College also has a Diversity and Inclusion council (DaIC) which fosters community partnerships and coordinates with the office of GLBT Student Services to provide training to CCD faculty and staff. There is a line item in the budget for this council, demonstrating that CCD is dedicated to promoting and protecting diversity on its campus.

CCD is the only community college with a Confucius Institute focused on Chinese culture. The HLC visiting team had an opportunity to tour this site and noted that it was located in a large, inviting area that was well-suited to large group gatherings. As part of the ASB initiative and articulated in the Executive Staff Response spreadsheet, the College is considering "realigning" the Institute, noting in the recommendations that "the opportunity analysis hints at expanded partnerships or collaborations with the World Languages and International Center Programs." A goal, articulated in the spreadsheet is to create a multicultural center with space, programming (both credit and non-credit bearing) and services designed to "better support our multicultural campus." CCD has also entered an agreement with the Confucius Institute for a faculty exchange with University of Jinan in China.

CCD has an exemplary TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program, including advisors that are highly praised by students. As the TRIO SSS webpage explains, "all TRIO SSS participants are overcoming obstacles to higher education—such as limited income, first generation to college, or disability—en route to graduation and transfer." The college website includes a YouTube video that explains how TRIO SSS provides opportunities for students in need. Furthermore, the webpage includes important information for students, such as contact information, location of services, eligibility requirements, and student success stories.

The College holds conversation days that support diversity and promote conversation focused on culturally responsive teaching. These events are inclusive of college employees and include a focus on understanding one's own connection to diversity.

The College participates in the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program, allowing for affordable access to programs in other participating states. CCD has also developed a partnership with the Center for Urban Education in California focused on global learning and equity.

The Confluence building houses the Accessibility Center (AC), offering students with documented disabilities the ability to arrange for course accommodations. CCD also conducts outreach to the high schools to help students with disabilities transition to college.

In response to the HLC Student Opinion Survey, a student acknowledged that "there needs to be more teacher cultural diversity." According to the Assurance Argument, in 2014, 81.8% of the faculty and 52.9% of staff identified as white; whereas, 33.9% of students identified as white. As noted in the Assurance Argument and communicated to the Team while on campus, the College is aware of this discrepancy and is attempting to find ways to diversify its personnel. Team members also learned that there is no director of multi-cultural affairs.

The College qualifies as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), as it meets the threshold defined by the federal government of at least 25% FTE declared as Hispanic. The population of Hispanic students at CCD, however, has remained just over the threshold (at 25.2% in 2014), putting the institution at risk of losing this status in the future. As such, CCD has developed an Enrollment Management Plan goal that focuses on achieving 30% Hispanic enrollment by 2019. The CCD HSI committee is a cross-representational group vested with the responsibility of making recommendations that, according to the college website, "enhance appreciation and support for the Hispanic culture, as well as increase, retain, and improve student, faculty, and staff experiences at all levels." The College provides opportunities and services for the Hispanic student population, including providing informational material that is printed in Spanish and hosting special cultural events.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

---

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.*

CCD serves a critical role in its community as it provides access to higher education to underserved populations. As an open-enrollment institution, the College is also inclusive and attractive to those from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The College's Dental Hygiene Clinic provides service to the Greater Denver Community and is available to those who receive Medicare. The Clinic also provides special services to community members affected by HIV/AIDS through a special projects grant from the Denver Office of HIV Resources. Furthermore, the College operates a Wellness Clinic through its Vet Tech program that offers services to the public and pets. These clinics benefit both students by providing the opportunity to prepare for the workforce and the general public, as services are provided at reduced rates.

The College provides free tax preparation for underserved community members. As noted on the CCD website the College has a designated SPOC (single point of contact), whose goal is to "help our homeless, or unaccompanied youth, qualify for financial aid in the absence of their parents' tax information and family support."

CCD includes a food pantry for those in need. The food pantry, which is available to all CCD students free of charge, is managed by Office of Student Life staff and students. The Office of Student life also includes a lending library where current CCD students may borrow textbooks to use for semester classes free of charge. The College also provides grants and other support services for homeless and other students in need.

The Student Life Office conducts events with the Latino community. The College is responsive to the religious needs of the community with a Catholic church and a reflection room to serve the Muslim student population.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

---

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### Evidence

---

*The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.*

CCD's mission is focused on supporting its student population and is included in mission documents and on its website. The HLC visiting team recommends, in agreement with the ASB initiative, that the College revisits and revises the mission so that it aligns with and accurately reflects recent changes in the community and at the institution.

The mission statement clearly guides governance, programming, planning, resource allocation, support services, and budget development at CCD. While the statement is not permanently or prominently displayed through campus, the institutional outcomes are frequently viewed by those touring the institution.

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

---

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

---

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Rating

---

Met

#### Evidence

---

*The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.*

The policies of the Community College of Denver appear to be fair and ethical. The faculty, staff and student handbooks include policies that adhere to the relevant state laws, policies, and statutes.

The College is audited annually by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). The most recent Title IV review occurred in July 2013. CCD was found to be out of compliance in a few areas; those deficiencies were corrected and a letter from the Department of Education in October 2014 indicates that the review is closed.

CCD was required to submit a Default Prevention and Management Plan to the Department of Education due to the FY11 cohort default rate of more than 30%. The following year the default rate dropped significantly and sanctions were lifted. Default rates are listed as 30.8, 27.9 and 23.2. on the Federal Compliance worksheet. A letter from the Department of Education, dated February, 2017 regarding the Fiscal Year 2014 Draft 3-year Cohort Default Rate indicated that the rate had further decreased to 21.5%. CCD does not have relationships with any private lenders, but works with students who wish to take out private student loans.

In meetings with the CFO and representatives from the financial aid office and after reviewing the Default Prevention and Management Plan, the Team concluded that there is strong evidence that the College is working to maintain its lower default rate through consistent oversight, planning, and intervention. For example, the Team viewed posters advertising financial literacy workshops offered frequently throughout the year.

The new employee, faculty, and student orientations provide training and resources related to mandatory compliance, use of a master syllabus, and adherence to a student code of conduct.

CCD uses student login for student authentication (assigned user i.d. and password). The College conducts professional development with faculty to help them identify ways to detect identity fraud. The cost of online courses is clearly explained on the website; tuition rates per credit hour. Students receive a copy of their tuition statement and can view it on the student portal.

In discussion with CCD personnel, the HLC team learned that the math and science departments require students to test on the campus or at remote locations, allowing for the determination of authenticity. College personnel reported that the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) is currently looking to institute a common proctoring practice for all community colleges in the system. Currently, faculty use Turnitin.com to encourage student academic integrity.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

---

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.*

The CCD website provides the current academic catalog and links to earlier catalogs. The website also provides the course costs and fees, financial aid information, and regional accreditation information from The Higher Learning Commission. The College's social media sites provide accurate and useful information to students and the community. CCD Connect, the online student portal, provides essential information and access to college resources. Students are able to access and use DegreeWorks, an audit program that provides a list of courses students need to graduate.

During discussions with students, the HLC visiting team learned that there is a perceived need for CCD to provide information that is accurate and consistent. Students complained about issues with financial aid information, book adoption listings, and advising practices. Financial aid concerns were expressed to HLC team members while on campus and appeared frequently in the student comment section of the HLC Student Opinion survey. It would benefit the College to continue surveying students about their experiences with these and other areas of concern on a regular basis and to make improvements based on findings.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

---

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.*

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) serves as the governing board for all thirteen community colleges within the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). The SBCCOE Board members are appointed by the governor. The SBCCOE approves a broad range of programs to meet the education needs of the people of Colorado. Legislative statutes indicate that the SBCCOE has the autonomous authority to set policy for the CCCS. In doing so, the SBCCOE is accountable to the Commission on Higher Education, the Colorado Department of Higher Education's primary oversight agency.

In conversation with the HLC visiting team, SBCCOE Board members indicated that the Board is only responsible for establishing policy. CCD has the authority to establish practices, procedures, and guidelines for its daily operations. The employee and faculty handbooks clearly state that faculty have oversight over academic matters and that the faculty own the College's curriculum development process. Nevertheless, the HLC visiting team is concerned that the CCCS online curriculum (CCOnline) development process may not be faculty-driven. This arrangement, however, may be beyond CCD's immediate control.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.D - Core Component 2.D**

---

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### **Rating**

---

Met

### **Evidence**

---

*The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.*

The faculty handbook protects academic freedom and intellectual inquiry and encourages faculty to respect students' free expression. CCD has a vibrant campus culture, partly as a result of sharing its campus with two other institutions of higher education. In conversations with the HLC visiting team, students expressed that the College welcomes diverse views and is open to dialogue with student groups, including minority groups, veterans, and white men.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

---

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.*

CCD provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. CCD follows state board policy related to intellectual property and academic honesty. The CCCS has a federally authorized Institutional Review Board (IRB) to oversee research involving human subjects. To protect students, the IRB does not consider external data requests. The CCD Office of Institutional Research serves as an internal IRB consultant to help faculty and staff. CCD faculty use the IRB when relevant and necessary and report that it is easily accessible.

The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources. The New Student Orientation and New Faculty Orientation cover academic dishonesty policies and ethical practices. The Advising and Student Conduct Offices conduct workshops on academic integrity that are open to all students and required as sanctions when necessary. As mentioned in Criterion 2.A of this report, the Turnitin.com online application helps detect academic dishonesty and the math and science departments require proctored online exams. Examples of these policies in practice include that the student literary magazine only takes first publication rights so students retain ownership of their work, and the Digital Storytelling (DST) assignments require students to ensure they are not using copyrighted material.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary**

---

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### **Evidence**

---

*The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.*

CCD has policies and practices in place to ensure that the institution operates with integrity and acts in an ethical and responsible manner. The SBCCOE has the authority and mandate to develop policies that are intended to meet the educational needs of the people of Colorado. The College's handbooks, orientations, and practices ensure that faculty, staff, and students are aware of ethical guidelines and adhere to them. Faculty oversee academic matters and there is a culture of diversity and openness at the campus.

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

---

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

---

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### **Rating**

---

Met

### **Evidence**

---

*The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.*

The Community College of Denver (CCD) offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as a Bachelor of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene. The College also offers short-term certificates as stackable credentials within select career and technical (CTE) programs (e.g., Paralegal Studies, Veterinary Technology, Architectural Technology, and Medical Assistant). CCD differentiates learning goals between its degrees and certificates; this differentiation helps prepare students for transfer and allows for stackable credentials and ease of movement to advanced programs.

Consistent with its mission as a community college, CCD offers academic credentials designed for transfer as well as for entry into the workforce. CCD's gtPathways membership ensures that courses are transferable statewide. Degrees with Designation (DWDs) are transferable in their entirety to Metropolitan State University of Denver and University of Colorado-Denver, thus ensuring the program outcomes align with these Universities. All CTE programs at CCD have advisory boards that meet to ensure currency of curriculum and alignment with the workforce. Students enrolled in Health Science programs were particularly complimentary of the College's academics and likened their experience to "a two-year interview." As one Radiologic Technology student stated, "Once we become certified, we can work anywhere.... We can get a job in Thailand if we wanted to."

The institution offers three methods of instruction: face-to-face, hybrid, and online. As a member of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), CCD uses a common syllabus template for all courses regardless of location or modality. Institutional learning outcomes are included on every

syllabus for every course. Some departments, such as mathematics, have established a common final for all courses regardless of location or modality. With respect to distance education, some students expressed confusion over whether their online courses are taught by CCD faculty or CCCS faculty. In addition, while CCD faculty who teach online reported that they generally enjoyed their teaching experience, some questioned the consistency in quality and content between online courses taught by CCD and CCCS.

CCD has a strong concurrent enrollment program and enjoys a good relationship with Denver Public Schools. Concurrent enrollment includes courses taught on the high school campus by high school instructors, on CCD campus by CCD faculty, and on high school campuses by CCD faculty. All concurrent enrollment instructors meet the same credential criteria as other adjuncts and use the same syllabi and textbooks as CCD instructors. As indicated in Criterion 1.A, the program accounts for approximately 12.2 percent of the College's total enrollment.

During the site visit, faculty introduced the topic of competency-based instruction. Faculty indicated that several programs are in the process of being approved by the state board to use competency-based instruction. The College's Federal Compliance report stated that there were no competency-based programs, and the College provided no evidence regarding this topic. The visiting team recommends that the College provides clarity on this status, as competency-based instruction would be a new instructional modality.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

---

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.*

As stated in the Assurance Argument, the six institutional student-learning outcomes (ISLOs) align with CCD's mission and capture the role and purpose of general education at the College. These outcomes are prominently displayed throughout the College and listed on every syllabus. Information literacy is included among the outcomes. The ISLOs were developed based on LEAP (Liberal Education America's Promise), a framework established by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The team responsible for authoring the Assurance Argument indicated that developing certain ISLOs (e.g., Reading and Writing Across Disciplines) provided an opportunity for faculty to "grow out of [their] silos." Programmatically, the ISLOs are integrated into all of CCD's educational offerings with the exception of a few short-term certificates. According to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the advisory boards for CTE programs emphasize the importance of general education competencies in the workforce.

The institution places special focus on global awareness with its Confucius Institute. Currently, the institute's focus is on Chinese culture and language; however, there have been discussions about broadening the scope and purpose to create an intercultural center, as identified in Criterion 1.C of this report. In addition, CCD offers culturally specific courses that reflect the diversity of its student population, including Introduction to Women's Studies, History of Latin America, African-

American and African History, Ethnic Literature, and a variety of world languages. Also, faculty in Radiologic Technology and Dental Hygiene have designed courses to ensure their students can care for patients from diverse backgrounds.

As mentioned in the Assurance Argument, the institution provides numerous opportunities for creative expression and scholarship. The Auraria campus features a Center for Performing Arts for students and faculty to showcase their musical and theatrical talents. Additionally, the College's Center for Arts and Humanities allows faculty and students to collaborate on two student publications: *Ourglass*, a student literary and art magazine, and *The Star Journal of Excellence*, a multimedia online magazine. Within the classroom, faculty use Digital Storytelling (DST) as a creative way for students to demonstrate they have mastered the material in a given discipline. The institution honors its students by giving out awards for three different categories in DST: academic scholarship, narrative, and creative writing. According to faculty, the depth of understanding demonstrated in these projects is impressive; moreover, this methodology gives students the opportunity to share their culture and personal testimonies of resiliency. Furthermore, as explained in Criterion 2.E of this report, students learn about academic integrity through participation in these projects. It should be noted, however, that in interviews with Health Science students, DST is sometimes viewed as exceptionally time-consuming with minimal return on investment.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

---

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.*

Full-time faculty at CCD teach five courses per semester and are required to provide college service by serving on institutional committees, advising clubs and organizations, and/or engaging in professional development activities. Most faculty are involved in program-level assessment, and interviews with faculty indicated that many departments have faculty learning communities solely focused on the program assessment process. All faculty are evaluated once a year through observation, and students evaluate faculty using the SmartEvals online system. New CCCOnline instructors are evaluated two consecutive semesters. All faculty, full-time and adjunct, are required to hold weekly office hours, and online faculty may use a chat feature in Desire2Learn® to conduct synchronous, online office hours.

Although students expressed great satisfaction with the level of access to faculty, they were concerned that faculty lacked sufficient time to fulfill all their responsibilities. Similarly, members of the Faculty Council noted that the roles and responsibilities of department chairs need to be clarified and perhaps streamlined. In addition, some disciplines, such as Political Science, rely solely on adjunct instruction. To recruit and retain full-time faculty, the College has enacted a five-year plan to increase full-time faculty salaries. In addition, faculty with terminal degrees will receive a pay increase, and full-time faculty who teach overloads or who teach during the summer will be paid at the top-tier.

CCD faculty, regardless of modality or location, are required to meet the minimum qualifications of a Masters degree in their field or a Masters in any field with 18 hours of graduate coursework in the field. In some programs, this qualification can be met through a combination of post-secondary education and experience in the industry. Other programs require industry-specific certification or credentials.

During the on-site visit, the HLC visiting team reviewed personnel files, including transcripts, for 10 full-time, adjunct faculty concurrent faculty (totaling 30). The sample confirmed that in most cases, CCD faculty are properly credentialed as explained in the Assurance Argument. One concern was that official transcripts were not included in a personnel file, but were located at a different location on campus. In another case, there was a personnel file for an individual who was not properly credentialed, but had not taught at CCD.

A few concurrent instructors lack the minimum credentials, and it is unclear whether CCD has a plan to ensure they meet the appropriate credentials. The Assurance Argument team noted that they scrutinized and ultimately refined the credentialing process for CTE and general education faculty. The state's community college system later adopted CCD's model for faculty credentialing.

It was also confirmed during discussions with CCD personnel that they are aware of the HLC guidelines that will be imposed as of September 1, 2017, regarding faculty qualifications and credentialing.

CCD offers a variety of professional development opportunities for faculty to promote subject matter expertise and effective practices in higher education instruction. According to the Provost, each department chair receives \$500 per year for professional development. Academic departments have occasionally combined their resources to offer general faculty in-services on topics such as competency-based education and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, the Teaching and Learning Center provides grants and travel money and conducts professional growth workshops, face-to-face and on-line. Adjunct instructors also have professional development opportunities available to them and are paid when they attend faculty workshops and meetings. Some faculty expressed a desire for additional resources to work more effectively with underprepared students, first-generation students, and students with undiagnosed mental health issues.

Student support services staff at CCD have professional development opportunities available to them, including travel to conferences, in-person workshops, and online resources. CCD staff take advantage of Auraria's shared campus to access professional development resources at Metropolitan State University and University of Colorado-Denver. Some student support services staff expressed concern that the responsibilities of vacant positions have been added to their workload without adequate training, cross-training, or compensation. In addition, faculty and students based at the Lowry campus indicated that Auraria support staff are unfamiliar with the Lowry campus and provide minimal support for those pursuing degrees in the health sciences. The College has established a Tutoring and Learning Support Task Force to improve lines of communication between faculty and advisors.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*



## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

---

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.*

The Community College of Denver is an open access institution with a diverse, commuter population. According to the College's website, all new students are required to participate in new student orientation unless they meet certain criteria that exempt them from attendance. Consistent with the College's institutional student learning outcomes, new student orientation includes presentations on academic honesty, ethical use of technology, and information literacy. All degree-seeking students are required to take ENG 121 and ENG 122, which focus on finding, utilizing, and analyzing information. To address issues of plagiarism, Turnitin® is used across the Colorado Community College System.

CCD students enrolled in system-wide online classes have access to a 24-hour help desk provided under the College's contract with BlackBeltHelp®. Online technical issues are addressed by CCD staff. Every college in the Colorado Community College System has its own Desire2Learn® representative to provide additional support for faculty and staff.

CCD recently redesigned its developmental English and math course offerings. Rather than use placement tests to enroll students into developmental courses, students are enrolled in college level courses with a one-credit support class depending on career path or level of preparedness. As stated in the Assurance Argument, students are advised to select one of seven career pathways to build their academic program of study. Because many community college students are first-generation and unclear of their programs of study when they enroll, CCD students are encouraged to enroll in College 101: Student Experience (AAA 101), a one-credit hour introduction to college, or Advanced Academic Achievement (AAA 109), a three-credit hour study skills course.

The Auraria campus benefits from a strong infrastructure and resources to support teaching and

learning. Student support services at the Auraria campus are comprehensive, and many are conveniently located in the Confluence building. As noted in the introduction to this report, this center is designed for the needs of today's students and includes student spaces, computer stations, and locker rentals. Students at Auraria benefit from centralized and sequential resources, including registration, financial aid, tutoring, and advising. Signage in the Confluence building clearly identifies each student support area. In addition, the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) at Auraria provides career counseling, transfer admissions, financial aid applications, and technical school enrollment. Students reported the EOC was extremely helpful and they appreciated this resource. CCD is responsive to student needs at Auraria, as evidenced by a printer station, quiet study room, and reflection room for religious needs, all of which were student-initiated. The Auraria campus also features a child care center for students with young children, along with services for veterans, students with accessibility needs, homeless students, and students who are economically disadvantaged. Faculty at Auraria indicated that the shared campus provides many benefits for students. The Auraria library provides comprehensive help with research in both face to face and on-line formats, and students have access to graduate-level research databases. Chemistry students take classes in the same building as students from MSU and UC-Denver; as a result, they have access to instrumentation that they would not have if CCD had to maintain its own labs. Other shared resources include a writing center, a performing arts center, and a variety of student spaces. The Teaching and Learning Center provides a variety of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. The Auraria campus is also easily accessible by light rail.

The Lowry Campus is designated for Health Science programs and boasts well-appointed labs, large instructional spaces, and as mentioned by multiple faculty and students, free parking. Health Science faculty use their instructional spaces efficiently for multiple programs. In contrast to the Auraria campus, student support services at the Lowry campus are limited to a single program advisor for students in Health Sciences. Despite these benefits, faculty at the Lowry campus noted that they struggle to secure lecture space for their classes. Health Science classes are not assigned specific classrooms, and office managers are responsible for all room scheduling. As a result, classes in Health Sciences do not receive priority, and Health Science faculty are often "shuffled between classrooms." Faculty at Lowry also noted that the lack of public transportation has been a challenge for students and faculty, with one faculty member stating that some students express an interest in a Health Science major but simply lack the means to visit the Lowry campus. Health Science faculty and students were quite complimentary of the single program advisor assigned to the campus; one faculty member described her as "a fabulous safety net" for students. However, both groups expressed great concern about the lack of financial aid counseling and tutoring services for students enrolled concurrently in program-specific courses and general education classes. The Tutoring and Learning Support Task Force is reviewing the College's support services, with an emphasis on the equitable distribution for CTE tutoring.

The site visit also revealed some inconsistencies in the College's quality of academic advising. Although TRIO advising is well-funded and comprehensive, most regular academic advising is understaffed and in transition. These changes seem to be correlated with the redesign and high turnover in advising staff. Some students complained that advisors attempted to place them in pre-determined courses rather than classes that fit the students' academic goals or desires. Students also indicated that advisers were not sufficiently knowledgeable about the pathways and often misplaced students in the wrong pathways. Similarly, faculty criticized the new advising model and the process for its development. According to faculty, advisors used to be co-located with faculty; now, students have difficulty locating their advisors. Collaborations between faculty and advisors have declined significantly, which has resulted in a lack of communication about key issues affecting students (e.g., career advising for CTE students; the new math pathways). Faculty also stated that they were not

heard when the new advising model was proposed, and as a result the quality of advising at CCD has been, as one faculty member stated, “destroyed.” The College has recently hired three new positions, and the college community is optimistic that these additional staff members may mitigate these reported problems.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

---

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.*

In general, the Community College of Denver provides a vibrant student activities environment for its students, and recently increased funding to student organizations for activities. Student activities include a chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, a Muslim Student Organization, and a team of student ambassadors. CCD's Student Government Association provides leadership and advocacy, sometimes with significant impact on institutional practices. For example, the students voted to increase their fees to raise money for the Confluence Center, to increase funds for the student pantry and lending library, and to hire staff for behavioral health counseling. CCD students at the Auraria campus participate in clubs and organizations alongside UC-Denver and Metro State University students and share facilities such as the concert hall, theatre, and the campus' Catholic church. Although radiologic technology students annually participate in the statewide Student Bowl, students at the Lowry campus shared that they do not have much opportunity for involvement in clubs and organizations because they are separate from the Auraria campus and lack the amount and diversity of campus resources. The HLC visiting team strongly recommends a formal assessment of the College's co-curricular offerings to demonstrate its claims related to an enriched educational environment.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

### **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

---

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

#### **Evidence**

---

*The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.*

Consistent with its mission as a community college, the Community College of Denver (CCD) offers short-term certificates and associate degree programs designed for transfer and immediate entry into the workforce. CCD courses are offered in a variety of modalities: face-to-face, online, and hybrid. The College also enjoys a strong concurrent enrollment program and a good relationship with Denver Public Schools. In general, syllabi are consistent across modalities, and all faculty must meet the same credentials regardless of modality or location. During the site visit, faculty introduced the topic of competency-based education; however, it is unclear the extent to which this modality has been adopted at CCD. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

CCD has identified six institutional student-learning outcomes (ISLOs), which align with CCD's mission and capture the role and purpose of general education at the College. The ISLOs, based on a framework endorsed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, are prominently displayed throughout the College and listed on every syllabus. The College demonstrates a commitment to global awareness and diversity appreciation as evidenced by its Confucius Institute and culturally specific courses in history and literature. CCD also provides numerous opportunities for creative expression and scholarship through curricular and co-curricular programs.

CCD demonstrates a commitment to professional development for faculty and staff. Each department chair receives an annual budget for professional development, and the College's Teaching and Learning Center provides grants and travel money and conducts professional growth workshops, face-to-face and on-line. Student support services staff also have professional development opportunities available to them, including travel to conferences, in-person workshops, and online resources. Enhanced opportunities, such as cross-training and workshops held at the Lowry campus, will improve services and foster better relationships with faculty, students, and support staff.

Support for teaching and learning is generally effective but uneven. The Auraria campus benefits from a strong infrastructure and resources to support teaching and learning. Student support services at the Auraria campus are comprehensive, and many are conveniently located in a single building. The Auraria campus is also easily accessible by light rail. The Lowry campus is designated for Health Science programs and boasts well-appointed labs, large instructional spaces, and as mentioned by multiple faculty and students, free parking. However, faculty at Lowry noted the lack of public transportation to the campus, and faculty and staff expressed great concern about the lack of comprehensive services at Lowry. Additionally, most regular academic advising is understaffed and in transition; as a result, according to students interviewed, advisors are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the transfer and career pathways. The College recognizes this challenge as an opportunity for improvement and has recently hired three new positions related to student support.

In general, the Community College of Denver provides broad, diverse co-curricular opportunities. It should be noted that students at the Auraria campus have many more options than those at the Lowry campus. Additionally, the visiting team recommends that CCD assess its co-curricular programs and

map them against its student learning outcomes.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.*

The Community College of Denver's (CCD) comprehensive Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB) process serves as the primary mechanism for quality management of its programs. Although the institution reviews its Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs over the span of a five-year cycle, the College's ASB process contains more extensive criteria than the traditional program review process, which the College did not find as effective. Academic leaders expressed interest in an annual program review process, guided by ASB's principles and practices, that could inform institutional decision-making. The general education curriculum serves as one missing piece in the College's

current program review process. With the advent of Degrees with Designation (DWD), program chairs now have a mechanism to extract and analyze data related to transfer courses and degrees. The DWD initiative could serve as a catalyst for program review within the general education curriculum.

CCD awards credit for prior learning through several different means, including appropriate standardized exam scores, challenge exams, published guides, or portfolio assessment. Through its use of the American Council on Education's Alternative Credit Program as well as Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's portfolio system, the College awards alternative credit.

Additionally, CCD utilizes the Transfer Evaluation System, a national transcript review system, to review incoming and outgoing transfer credit. The College's website includes its transfer procedures, awards for prior learning, and alternative credit.

The Community College of Denver (CCD) manages its courses' prerequisites, academic rigor, student learning outcomes, learning resources, and faculty teaching qualifications. CCD offers its own online courses as well as courses through the Colorado Community College System's Colorado Community College Online network. Course content and evaluation are somewhat consistent across modality and location. Although practices are in place to mentor new online instructors at CCD, faculty expressed concerns that the statewide online course system is not as rigorous as the courses directly administered through CCD, triggering concerns over course consistency between the two systems. To assess student learning in its online environment, CCD has been developing an assessment initiative that will focus on five online courses with high enrollment.

To ensure standard qualifications across all teaching modalities, CCD conducts extensive monitoring of the Denver Public School's faculty who teach concurrent enrollment courses. CCD's senior faculty mentor high school instructors teaching concurrent enrollment courses. The Teaching and Learning Center, the College's hub for professional development, offers workshops for high school teachers. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier in this report, there have been a few issues with concurrent faculty credentials.

In addition to its regional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, CCD's CTE programs maintain their respective accreditation through five different agencies. These agencies help ensure that CCD's CTE programs provide curriculum that is current, relevant, and focused on job placement for program graduates.

To measure post-graduate success, CCD administers graduate surveys to students who complete their degrees at CCD. However, the most recent survey data included in the Assurance Argument is dated 2014. The College's DWD agreements with neighboring institutions like Metropolitan State University and the University of Colorado-Denver illustrate the quality and consistency of CCD's transfer degrees to its two primary transfer institutions. CCD's CTE program advisory boards provide some, albeit anecdotal, evidence of graduates' success and placement in relevant industries.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring recommended.*



## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

---

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Rating

---

Met With Concerns

### Evidence

---

*The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.*

The HLC visiting team had the opportunity to meet with the Student Learning Committee (SLC) which is a large, inclusive committee vested with the task of overseeing assessment at the College. The Committee was established in 2009 and, as explained in the Assurance Argument, is composed of "representatives from full-time faculty from each center, institutional research, the office of the provost, and the Office of the Vice President of Enrollment Administration and Student Success, and the director of institutional effectiveness." The College provided SLC meeting minutes for 2015-2017, which, most recently, reveal a robust discussion about how to best explain CCD's assessment initiatives to the HLC visiting team. These minutes seem to indicate that there is general lack of clarity, some confusion, and many unanswered questions regarding the assessment process.

As a result of meeting with this committee and other constituent groups, the HLC visiting team concluded that while the Community College of Denver (CCD) has adopted learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education levels, the processes and practices of assessment are often unclear or inconsistent, with strengths in some areas but little to no application in others. For instance, the College has developed six institutional outcomes and supporting rubrics, but there is no evidence that CCD has assessed these outcomes, which are tied to courses and programs throughout the curriculum.

The HLC team also concluded that course-level assessment seems arbitrary and inconsistent rather than a full-fledged process practiced within every academic department. Of concern was the lack of assessment of distance learning classes. One college representative explained that "we were going to do online assessment, but program prioritization became the octopus that swallowed us."

Programmatic assessment appears more straightforward as the College has recently adopted the Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB) program prioritization process to serve as a more comprehensive

version of program review. On the other hand, the direct assessment of student learning at the program-level is not as clear across disciplines. Much of the program-level assessment of student learning appears to reside in the Health Sciences programs, where specialized accreditation often guides programmatic assessment of student learning outcomes.

CCD has performed a curriculum mapping exercise that has aligned learning outcomes across courses and programs. This process, while beneficial, does not serve as a genuine assessment initiative to directly measure and improve student learning. CCD has an opportunity to develop additional measurement and improvement initiatives that can build on the curriculum mapping project's momentum and focus.

The College cites very few examples that demonstrate that it is making data-informed improvements on the institutional, program or course level. While the Assurance Argument cites percentages of programs completing assessment cycles, it does not include specific examples of how these programs used findings to make improvements, closing the loop. CCD also confirms in the Assurance Argument that this is an area of opportunity.

During a site visit meeting, one faculty council member stated, "Assessment at CCD is grassroots." This comment suggests a lack of institutional direction in the assessment process. While CCD includes assessment as a component of its New Faculty Orientation and has convened a committee to address assessment, the College is aware that assessment of student learning presents challenges. The College should work to ensure that assessment practices are widely understood by all relevant stakeholders, routinely documented, and utilized to foster improvement.

Conversations with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Vice President of Academic Affairs revealed that CCD has yet to establish co-curricular outcomes. The absence of co-curricular outcomes indicates that the institution needs a means to measure how well its co-curricular programs demonstrate student learning as well as the effect that the College's diverse programming has on its students.

Furthermore, CCD has not presented evidence that it benchmarks its assessment data to similar institutions. Accredited CTE programs, in particular, should benchmark their data to comparable programs. Additionally, the College may have an opportunity to harness data from the Colorado Community College System, which serves as the oversight organization for 13 community colleges in the state.

The HLC visiting team learned from SLC minutes and during the meeting with this committee that the College does not produce an annual assessment report. It is highly advisable that the Student Learning Committee (SLC) focus on drafting a year-end report, documenting both achievements made over the course of the year as well as outstanding opportunities for future consideration. This report should be shared with the entire college community, perhaps during CCD's Assessment Day, allowing for comprehensive reflection on accomplishments as well as insight into the future.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

In order to meet Criterion 4.B, CCD needs to streamline its processes so that assessment occurs perpetually at the course, program, and institutional-levels. CCD has developed some promising initiatives and performed some very meaningful work, including the curriculum mapping exercise,

program prioritization, and the establishment of the Student Learning Committee. However, these efforts are processes and mechanisms rather than direct assessment of student learning. Processes and mechanisms only have limited value if they are not followed by results and improvements. The development of a institution-wide assessment plan on a regimented schedule, inclusive of milestones and targets, would help the College gather greater insight into student performance and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

The numerous initiatives and stakeholders have put the pieces in place for a robust system of the assessment of student learning in curricular and co-curricular programs. CCD now has the opportunity to engage in the actual work of assessment, particularly the assessment of the College's institutional outcomes. These outcomes, found throughout the curriculum, are thoughtfully written and reflect the holistic experience the College aspires to create for its students. CCD now has the opportunity to convey that students can demonstrate these skills.

It is recommended that one year after the conclusion of the HLC team visit (7/2/2018), CCD submits an interim monitoring report documenting that it has designed and implemented a plan to holistically assess student learning at all levels (institution-wide, program, and course-level). This initiative should be inclusive of curricular and co-curricular offerings and the assessment of the College's institutional outcomes. It is recommended that the report include, but not be limited to, documented evidence that the College:

- developed a plan that includes milestones for achieving embedded short-term goals;
- identified metrics and measures used for direct assessment;
- collected and analyzed data at each level;
- used findings to make improvements across the institution;
- and found ways to benchmark against other like-institutions.

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

---

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.*

The Community College of Denver (CCD) sets annual targets in line with Colorado Community College System's system-wide goals for completion, transfer, retention, remediation, and outreach to and success with underserved populations. While the institution's targets for improvement related to persistence and completion appear unambitious, they align to the CCCS's annual performance goals for all colleges within the system. Several relatively recent initiatives, led by a cross-section of internal college stakeholders, seek to improve enrollment, persistence, and completion efforts.

The College's Office of Institutional Research and Planning serves as the primary source for data collection, analysis, and reporting. Other campus groups allow CCD to develop strategies related to enrollment, persistence, and completion. As stated within the Assurance Argument, CCD's Persistence and Completion Committee (PCC) reviews relevant data regularly, performs research related to persistence and completion, establishes the College's short- and long-term retention and graduation rate improvement strategies, and helps the institution pursue the Colorado Community College System's system-wide goals for persistence and completion. Additionally, CCD's Enrollment Management Council and Committee aims to improve retention and enrollment efforts. Faculty and advisors can contact struggling students and pull relevant data at checkpoints throughout the semester via the College's early alert warning system.

On certain measures related to Criterion 4.C, CCD has performed remarkably well, exceeding its

annual targets. The overall transfer rate has increased substantially. The minority student completion rate is even more impressive, with an increase from 10% to 17%. Through a redesign of developmental education and entry-level placement, CCD's completion rates in remedial courses and corresponding program level courses have increased significantly.

CCD contributes to standard reporting houses like Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Common Dataset Initiative. The College publicizes an array of persistence and completion results within its annual Fact Book available on its Institutional Research and Planning website. At the state level, CCD receives a five-year trend report from the CCCS's Student Unit Records Data System (SURDS). The College also utilizes the state-wide CCCS dashboard for comparative purposes.

In 2015-2016, the EM Council and Committee developed an Enrollment Management Plan designed to center on specific goals, including: stabilizing recent enrollment decreases; developing action strategies to grow FTE enrollment by 2% for FY17; doubling first time full time graduation rate from 10% to 20% by 2019; increasing degree attainment by one percentage point per year by 2025; increasing HSI status to 30% by 2019; and decreasing the financial aid default rate by at least one percentage point each year through 2019. The Community College of Denver and President Goals, 2106-2017 document summarizes recent findings relative to these goals, including accomplishments and opportunities. The goals and the embedded recommendations included in the report demonstrate that CCD is focused on remediating issues with retention, persistence, and completion.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

---

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Evidence

---

The Community College of Denver's (CCD) comprehensive Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB) process serves as the primary mechanism for quality management of its programs. The ASB is an ambitious program that college stakeholders, at least according to site visit testimony, have embraced. The College should ensure, however, that program review is more comprehensive, including the regular review of courses and programs within the general education curriculum.

CCD recognizes prior learning in a variety of ways. CCD awards credit for prior learning through appropriate standardized exam scores, challenge exams, published guides, and portfolio assessment. Additionally, CCD makes its credit-awarding processes clear to students and the public, publishing its transfer procedures, awards for prior learning, and alternative credit on its website.

CCD manages its courses' prerequisites, academic rigor, student learning outcomes, learning resources, and faculty teaching qualifications across modalities and locations, including at area high schools and online. CCD offers online courses alongside the state system's offerings. This two-pronged approach to online education has created some ambivalence. Although practices are in place to mentor new online instructors at CCD, faculty expressed concerns that the state-wide online course system is not as rigorous as the courses directly administered through CCD, triggering concerns over course consistency between the two systems.

CCD's career and technical education programs maintain their respective accreditation through five different agencies. To measure post-graduate success, CCD administers graduate surveys to students who complete their degrees at CCD.

The Community College of Denver (CCD) sets annual targets in line with Colorado Community College System's system-wide goals for completion, transfer, retention, remediation, and outreach to and success with underserved populations. The College's Office of Institutional Research and Planning serves as the primary source for data collection, analysis, and reporting. On certain measures related to Criterion 4C, CCD has performed remarkably well, exceeding its annual targets. The overall transfer rate has increased substantially. The minority student completion rate is even more impressive, with an increase from 10% to 17%. Through a redesign of developmental education and entry-level placement, CCD's completion rates in remedial courses and corresponding program level courses have increased significantly.

The Community College of Denver (CCD) has adopted learning outcomes at the course, program, and general education levels. During an extensive curriculum mapping exercise, CCD aligned these learning outcomes across its courses and programs. However, the processes and practices of assessment of these outcomes are often unclear or inconsistent. Course-level assessment seems arbitrary and inconsistent rather than a full-fledged process practiced within every academic department. Even though the ASB is intended to serve as a means of evaluating program quality, the direct assessment of student learning at the program-level is not as clear across disciplines. The

College is aware that assessment of student learning presents challenges. An effort to ensure that assessment practices are widely understood by all relevant stakeholders, routinely documented, and utilized to foster improvement would allow the College to move forward with regard to the assessment of student learning.

Due to the lack of maturity with regard to assessment data collection, analysis, and improvements, criterion four is met with concerns. The College's talented faculty, staff, and leadership recognize this challenge and have the resources and intellectual capital to ensure that its performance in this criterion improves.

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

---

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

---

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.*

CCD is faced with multiple challenges in building a sustainable base for its educational programs, student needs, and personnel. State funding of the Colorado Community Colleges is among the lowest in the nation. Public funding is driven primarily by the Colorado Opportunity Fund that links state resources directly to an individual student. If a student fails, or does not return, the college has an immediate loss of revenue not only from tuition, but also from the loss of the COF stipend for that student. Over the seven years prior to the visit, enrollment dropped from 8390 FTE to 5425 FTE.

Despite the challenges, CCD had a 2015 CFI Composite Index of 2.88, increasing significantly from the prior year's CFI of 0.59 (the College explained that the single year decrease, putting it "In the Zone," was due to the "drop in enrollment, our operating revenue decrease by \$1,955,767.26 and our non-operating revenue (Pell primarily) dropped by \$4,963,724.94. These two drops account for our \$6 million change in net assets for the year end.") . Current financial indicators are stable.

Through its 2016 campus-wide Achieving Strategic Balance process, the College has strategically eliminated 27 positions and restructured processes to address priority needs of students and programs.



Focusing on retention, the College has increased its minority student completion rate from 10-17%, providing increased revenue. Alternative funding has been successfully accomplished through grants, such as the federal grant for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and business partnerships driven by the college foundation. The College has actively participated in the campus based consortium with University of Colorado-Denver and Metropolitan State University to manage costs through shared use of space, student academic resources, and management of facilities. CCD has provided evidence that the College has sufficient resources to support its current educational programs and future improvements that will support student success.

CCD is doing a good job of managing its difficult financial situation through cost cutting measures. This enables the institution to make necessary investments. CCD has slightly increased faculty salary, bringing the salary levels closer to state-mandated targets than other schools in the Colorado system. The aging Wi-Fi is being upgraded. A majority will be funded directly by legislative appropriation with the balance being paid by the College. After conducting a survey of students to obtain their approval, CCD assessed an activity fee to pay for needed renovations to their classroom (Boulder Creek Plan) and student services space (Confluence). These efforts demonstrate that CCD creatively has secured resources to support its educational mission.

As a member of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), CCD is aligned with legislative initiatives, requirements, and restrictions. The College has adopted the CCCS ethics policies and has annual financial audits to assure that the College has used its public funds from students and the State of Colorado responsibly. CCD demonstrated commitment to supporting its mission of providing "our diverse community an opportunity to gain quality higher education and achieve personal success." Evidence includes the student demographics where 52% of students identified as an ethnic minority. College priorities are heavily focused on student success with new initiatives on retention, co-requisite developmental and college course options, support programs such as TRIO, and awareness of the role of advising.

CCD has initiated college-wide processes to develop priorities for setting goals and prioritizing funds. The college Enrollment Management Plan developed in 2015 and 2016 and the in-process Achieving Strategic Balance initiative reflects the commitment to developing attainable college goals. Each initiative resulted in tangible outcomes that were supported by data and aligned to the economic and academic realities of the College. The College is now in the process of implementing the outcomes.

Continued budget cuts since 2011 have strained and directly limited student support across the College. The elimination of positions has required those individuals remaining to take on new responsibilities and to be cross trained to take on new roles. In some of these situations, the training was viewed as inadequate and the staffing inadequate to continue the same level of service for student support. The College may benefit from conducting assessment on the student support service areas, as planned in the ASB, and then comparing results between programs in order to gain a better understanding of critical areas for reassignment or change.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

---

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.*

In compliance with Colorado State Statute, the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) governs the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). The Community College of Denver (CCD) is a member college of the CCCS. Through monthly meetings, regularly scheduled campus reviews of the college facilities and programs, annual review of CCD's financial and program performance, monthly reporting of institutional performance in achieving System strategic goals, and presidential evaluations, Board members provide oversight of the College. As HLC team members met with Board members, they demonstrated both in depth knowledge of CCD's operations and strong commitment to the institution.

As the third largest member college of the Colorado Community College System, CCD has been actively involved in advising the CCCS on policy development and procedures that are adopted at the campus level. The College is represented on the State Faculty Advisory Council, the State Faculty Curriculum Committee and its discipline-specific curriculum approval advisory teams, Statewide Student Advisory Council, and the Presidents' Council. This system-level involvement is integrated into campus governance and planning through adoption of campus policies and procedures after involvement of campus-based governance. Faculty involvement in curriculum adoption is developed through department and college curriculum review. Departments develop annual reports that provide a summary of student enrollment, success, and budget. Evidence of campus-based planning was provided through a final report of the Achieving Strategic Balance team, which includes members from full- and part-time faculty members, administration, and staff. The Enrollment Management planning document also provides strong evidence of data-driven and integrated campus planning.

The current president was broadly recognized for providing open access to all members of the college

community and to promoting shared governance. Sharing is not limited to discussion, but also promotes the responsibility for decisions that drive changes. This culture has generally been adopted across the College. The Assurance Argument team (The 55) demonstrated a collaborative spirit in compiling and authoring the Assurance Argument. Several members of this diverse group of faculty and staff indicated that the team fostered a culture of collaboration that spread across the campus. For example, new conversation emerged regarding reading and writing across the curriculum after working together on The 55 team.

Staff identified a concern that no organized structure exists for their unified input on institutional change. Unlike the faculty governance structure, there is no union representation, no staff association, and no structure to coordinate across the support departments. The current process generally is limited to providing concerns to their immediate supervisor. Some administrators were more open to input than others. While individual staff members participated in college-wide planning, the HLC team recognizes the potential for personal consequences for individuals who represent staff concerns that are not in alignment with administrative decisions. The College has an opportunity to develop a staff association –or structure—that gives voice to integrated staff input.

Students were actively involved in supporting the College during the HLC team visit. The Visiting Team enjoyed the campus tour led by the student ambassadors and was impressed with their knowledge of the campus and the HLC purpose.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

---

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.*

The Community College of Denver understands the critical impact of enrollment on the College and its students. Funding for the College and new initiatives are nearly entirely dependent on student tuition and the College Opportunity Funds that are linked to individual student enrollment. Aligning allocation of resources with the strategic goals of the College is reflected in the budget for 2016-17. Key initiatives include increasing access to grants for students, a consistent advisor for each student, funding for growing undocumented student enrollment, program prioritization throughout the College (Achieving Strategic Balance initiative), college-wide professional development, and the expansion of online and concurrent courses. These initiatives reflect the college focus on retention, new enrollment, and cost savings through strategic redesign. Multiple planning processes and the annual budgeting process focus the College's limited resources on goals identified in the college strategic plan.

Until 2016, the College has been in a continued cycle of declining revenue and student enrollment. State funding increases in 2016 allowed for a short term stabilization of the down trend. Projections indicate a continued decline in funding with only small enrollment increases being generated primarily from increased student completion and retention. Despite these financial pressures, CCD has prioritized benefitting students over maximizing revenue, as shown through their revised academic practices regarding developmental courses. In 2014, responding to state-wide initiatives and its own course success information, CCD initiated a co-requisite model for math students needing developmental education. This model is being adopted across the College. The design limits the number of developmental courses required of students. Rather than taking a sequential set of developmental courses, the student is now enrolled in both a college level course appropriate to their degree and a supporting developmental course. The results have demonstrated improved student retention even while the short-term negative financial impact has been a reduced number of credits earned at the

College. CCD has demonstrated that as it improves its learning assessment, the College will budget to implement improvements that benefit students.

As indicated in 5.B, CCD has demonstrated a culture and practice of inclusive involvement in planning under its current president. The review of the mission statement and the strategic plan were developed with the input from across the college faculty and staff in collaboration with community members. Advisory committees for the college Career and Technical Programs review and advise programs on curriculum and budget priorities. The Enrollment Management Plan incorporated information from across student services and academic programs. The Achieving Strategic Balance team is broadly representative of the college administration, faculty, and staff, including part-time faculty members. Generally, the College has a culture of inclusiveness in considering perspectives of its constituent groups. On the other hand, there were a limited number of isolated cases that contradicted this finding, such as faculty input into the adoption of the new advising model.

The Community College of Denver is a model for how demographic, economic and pedagogical change, when linked to decreased public funding, creates fiscal crisis in two year colleges. CCD experienced enrollment declines of approximately 30% linked to an improved job market coming out of the recession, competitive colleges offering similar lower division courses, reduced credits sold due to the redesign of developmental courses, and implementation of career pathways. These changes occurred as the legislature continued to reduce funding for the College through 2015. The College has continued to adjust to the reality of less revenue. In doing that, CCD has been well managed in addressing this changing environment. Temporary cuts and reductions have been reviewed and moved into a strategic prioritization process. Planning at CCD incorporates a clear understanding of the potential for a changing environment. The institution understands the need for increases in FTE and is focused on student retention, increased enrollment of undocumented students using Colorado incentives, increases in concurrent (dual) high school enrollment, and curriculum redesign to support student success.

The Community College of Denver shares facilities, maintenance, and some technology infrastructure with University of Colorado-Denver and Metropolitan State University. Their common campus is managed by the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC). While there is shared space, a plan for campus communities has been developed to bring identity to each of the institutions, while continuing to share resources. This unique arrangement provides CCD with access to library services of the Universities, a performing arts center, and many advantages of emerging technologies.

A dominant strength of CCD is its diverse student body that is broadly representative of the population it serves. The College has consistently averaged a self-identified 25% Hispanic students, 12% African American, 6% Asian American, and 33% White. The welcoming and integrated college environment reflects a strong commitment to meeting the needs of emerging demographics and a global environment. To continue its expansion of services for all students, the College is expanding an Intercultural Center that is located adjacent to the Confucius Institute, a unique center for cultural sharing with China.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

---

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Rating

---

Met

### Evidence

---

*The institution works systematically to improve its performance.*

The Community College of Denver has a wide range of performance documentation for the institution, its students, and its programs. Much of this is required reporting such as IPEDS data, Colorado Community College System performance measures, audited financial performance data, and student academic records. The Assurance Argument and HLC team follow-up provided evidence that data is available and accurately reflects performance measures. In addition to required data reporting, the College collects information such as faculty and staff climate surveys, program level financial and student success data, employment data for graduates of Career and Technical Programs, and student course evaluations. Assessment data is collected for those divisions that have mature assessment measures. The Enrollment Management and Student Services (EASS) division has adopted the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The College has also participated in the national Common Data Set Initiative, though it is not clear if that has been continued in 2016-17.

Data is presented across the institution and to the public through the development of an annual Fact Book and targeted reports or documents. The Enrollment Management Plan provides an organized and fact-filled resource with recommendations for change. Development of the Assurance Argument through The 55 Team provided broad access to the multiple sources of information referenced in the Argument.

Collecting and organizing data is pervasive across the College. While the institution has some promising initiatives such as the Achieving Strategic Balance prioritization team, grant monitoring initiatives, and commitment to enhancing academic assessment in programs, there is no clear process for continuous improvement in response to the evidence collected. The HLC team had input from multiple segments of the College suggesting that Institutional Research needed to be strengthened – and funded. The instability of the college resources and continuously changing environment requires rethinking and shortening of traditional improvement cycles. The college ASB process is encouraging and may create a more defined improvement process and focus the College on key initiatives.

Given the continued projections for declining revenue and moderate increases in costs for salaries and operations, CCD is encouraged to continue its efforts to measure and articulate success in achieving the college strategic goals. There is little opportunity for funding non-productive or failing initiatives.

**Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

---

*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

---

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Evidence

---

*The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.*

The Community College of Denver faces many challenges. As a Colorado public community college, CCD receives funding that is among the lowest for two-year colleges in the nation. The College has faced declining enrollment since 2011 due to changes in the economy, academic restructuring for developmental course enrollment, and the continuing competitive environment to recruit and enroll students. Despite the challenges, CCD has created an environment that is exceptionally welcoming and supportive for its diverse student body. The institution has embraced its mission to provide "our diverse community an opportunity to gain quality higher education and achieve personal success" not in posters on the wall, but through faculty and staff who are engaged in the institution and are strongly committed to its diverse students.

Through its planning and resource allocation, the College has embraced diversity as an asset for the institution and the Denver community. The College partnership with the Denver High School provides opportunity for the high percentage of low income and first generation students an opportunity to go to College. The partnerships with the transfer institutions, including the University of Colorado-Denver and Metropolitan State University, provide a clear pathway to transfer for these same students. The shared campus provides the resources of a large university while maintaining the caring and small classes of a community college. Most importantly, through its planning and resource allocation, improvements have been demonstrated in retention rates, graduation rates, and transfer rates while reducing its student loan default rate by more than 25%.

Responding to the challenges for the institution, presidential leadership has personally set standards that have engaged individuals from across the College in finding solutions. The HLC team noted repeated references to the impact of being invited to participate and take responsibility for planning and implementation of change for the future. The College has been and is continuing its prioritization of initiatives through its Achieving Strategic Balance (ASB) process, which involved representation from across the institution. The results must be monitored as plans are implemented; however, the foundation exists for continuous progress on achieving strategic goals and improved student success.

The Community College of Denver resources, structures, and processes are being managed in a manner that allows the institution to fulfill its mission and respond to future challenges and opportunities.



## Review Dashboard

---

| Number | Title  | Rating            |
|--------|--|-------------------|
| 1      | Mission  |                   |
| 1.A    | Core Component 1.A                                     | Met               |
| 1.B    | Core Component 1.B                                     | Met               |
| 1.C    | Core Component 1.C                                     | Met               |
| 1.D    | Core Component 1.D                                     | Met               |
| 1.S    | Criterion 1 - Summary                                  | Met               |
| 2      | Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct             |                   |
| 2.A    | Core Component 2.A                                     | Met               |
| 2.B    | Core Component 2.B                                     | Met               |
| 2.C    | Core Component 2.C                                     | Met               |
| 2.D    | Core Component 2.D                                     | Met               |
| 2.E    | Core Component 2.E                                     | Met               |
| 2.S    | Criterion 2 - Summary                                  | Met               |
| 3      | Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support |                   |
| 3.A    | Core Component 3.A                                     | Met               |
| 3.B    | Core Component 3.B                                     | Met               |
| 3.C    | Core Component 3.C                                     | Met               |
| 3.D    | Core Component 3.D                                     | Met               |
| 3.E    | Core Component 3.E                                     | Met               |
| 3.S    | Criterion 3 - Summary                                  | Met               |
| 4      | Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement      |                   |
| 4.A    | Core Component 4.A                                     | Met               |
| 4.B    | Core Component 4.B                                     | Met With Concerns |
| 4.C    | Core Component 4.C                                     | Met               |
| 4.S    | Criterion 4 - Summary                                  | Met With Concerns |
| 5      | Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness   |                   |
| 5.A    | Core Component 5.A                                     | Met               |
| 5.B    | Core Component 5.B                                     | Met               |
| 5.C    | Core Component 5.C                                     | Met               |
| 5.D    | Core Component 5.D                                     | Met               |
| 5.S    | Criterion 5 - Summary                                  | Met               |

## Review Summary

---

### Interim Report(s) Required

---

#### Due Date

7/2/2018

#### Report Focus

It is recommended that approximately one year after the IAC meeting to review this report(7/2/2018), CCD submits an interim monitoring report documenting that it has designed and implemented a plan to holistically assess student learning at all levels (institution-wide, program, and course-level). This initiative should be inclusive of curricular and co-curricular offerings and the assessment of the College's institutional outcomes. It is recommended that the report include, but not be limited to, documented evidence that the College:

- developed a plan that includes milestones for achieving embedded short-term goals;
  - identified metrics and measures used for direct assessment;
  - collected and analyzed data at each level;
  - used findings to make improvements across the institution;
  - and found ways to benchmark against other like-institutions.
- 

### Conclusion

---

The HLC visiting team has concluded after a review of the Assurance Argument, other documentation, and as a result of meetings with stakeholders and constituent groups representing the Community College of Denver, that the College is in compliance with HLC expectations. The Team recommends that the College be eligible to choose its pathway.

The HLC visiting team was particularly impressed by the large number of stakeholders who attended each of the meetings. These stakeholder groups were forthcoming and transparent with the information they provided to the Team. This impressive turn-out and participation speaks to the overwhelming support the College enjoys from constituency groups, including students and representatives from external oversight agencies.

As CCD sets its sights on the future, it will need to develop creative and strategic ways to ensure solvency in the face of limited external funding. The College has demonstrated that it has the resources to support this task and will need to be ever-mindful of assessing and reassessing the need for improvement in all areas of the College. Continuing initiatives that provide a comprehensive perspective on the status of college operations, such as the ASB project, will allow CCD to better gauge whether it is sufficiently serving the needs of its primary stakeholders, the students.

### Overall Recommendations

---

**Criteria For Accreditation**

Met With Concerns

**Sanctions Recommendation**

No Sanction

**Pathways Recommendation**

Eligible to choose