

Red Rocks Community College

Environmental Scanning

2019-2025 Strategic Plan



The State and Governance Environment: Why We Are Planning

Red Rocks Community College aligns its planning with the Colorado Community College System Strategic Plan, with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CDHE) Master Plan. The CDHE Master Plan notes that higher education is critical to the state’s future economic and social vitality in several areas. These include (1) increasing credential completion, (2) closing equity gaps in achievement, (3) improving student success as measured by student persistence and completion, and (4) investment in affordability and innovation.

The CDHE Master Plan notes that increasing the number of Coloradans with postsecondary education is crucial to Colorado’s future economic vitality.

- Research suggests that by 2020, almost three-fourths of jobs will require some education beyond high school. Colorado’s 2016 Talent Pipeline Report found that 97 percent of in-demand jobs that show high growth and pay above a living wage— demand some level of formal postsecondary education or training. On the other end of the jobs spectrum, the demand for high-school educated workers in Colorado was second lowest in the country.
- However, today only 55 percent of the adult population in the state has a degree or certificate and only 49 percent has an associate or higher degree. Almost one-third of Colorado’s adult population lacks education of any type after high school. Moreover, attainment levels are not equal: Only 29 percent of Hispanics, our fastest-growing population, and 39 percent of African Americans have a certificate or degree, as compared to 64 percent for the white majority.

Therefore, in the 2017 Master Plan, CDHE reaffirmed an overarching goal to “increase the number of Coloradans aged 25 to 34 who hold a high-quality postsecondary credential—that is, a certificate or degree—to 66 percent by 2025.” Furthermore, and of particular interest to community colleges, are the two targets and indicators under this Goal.

1. Increase annual credential completion
 - a. Increase 9,200 credential completions per year on top of natural growth;
 - b. Increase certificate completion as a proportion of total credential completion from 25% (15,845) in 2017 to 33% (20,915) in 2025.
2. Increase high-demand credential completion
 - a. Increase STEM credentials, including health care, from 12,500 to 14,500 by 2025.
 - b. Increase educator-preparation credentials from 2,800 to 3,280 by 2025.

As noted above, closing the Equity Gap in higher education retention and completion is another critical goal for the future vitality of the state. The Master Plan defines the equity gap as the gap between the current attainment level for a demographic group and the CDHE Master Plan goal of 66 percent attainment. The CDHE Master Plan notes “Colorado’s largest- and fastest-growing ethnic group, Hispanic/ Latino, has the lowest average educational attainment and the lowest college enrollment rate of any ethnic group in the state.” The Master plan also notes that Colorado has “not only racial and

ethnic attainment gaps, but also attainment gaps for students from low-income families and those who are first in their families to attend postsecondary education.

Therefore, Master Plan sets the following targets and indicators.

1. Increase the age 25-34 population credential attainment:
 - a. Of the Hispanic population from 29% (2017) to 66% by 2025.
 - b. Of the African American population from 39% (2017) to 66% by 2025.
 - c. Of the Native American population from 29% (2017) to 66% by 2025.
2. Increase the number of annual credential completion by minority and low-income students.
3. Increase certificate completion by minority and low-income students.
4. Increase high-demand credential completion including:
 - a. Increase STEM credential completions by minority and low-income students.
 - b. Increase educator-preparation credential completions by minority and low-income students.

The Master Plan goal seeks to improve the persistence and completion rates for Colorado students compared to national averages. The Master Plan notes that beginning in high school the Colorado pipeline through higher education is leaky. Only 25% of Colorado 9th graders graduate high school in four years, immediately enroll in postsecondary education the following fall, and complete a postsecondary credential in “150 percent time” (three years for community colleges and six for baccalaureate colleges).

The growing importance of Concurrent Enrollment in Colorado is based upon evidence that suggests students who graduate from high school with some college credit are more likely to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. An emphasis on supplemental academic instruction comes from the need to address a lack of preparation for college-level work for about one-third of Colorado students on arrival in postsecondary education. Both these strategies are important to increasing the success of Colorado students and reducing the time to completion of a college credential.

The Master Plan sets the following Targets and Indicators.

1. Improve student persistence and retention.
 - a. Increase first-to-second-year and second-to-third-year retention rates.
2. Reduce remediation needs of students
 - a. Increase number of students successfully completing introductory gtPathways courses in English and math.
3. Reduce average time-to-degree.
 - a. Improve on-time graduation rates.
4. Reduce average credits to degree
 - a. Improve percentage of students who return for the second year with sophomore standing (30 credit hours or more).

The fourth and final goal of the CDHE Master Plan concerns affordability and innovation. This goal addresses the fact that as Colorado has disinvested in higher education, financing the cost has increasingly been through tuition increases. Students currently shoulder 65% of the cost versus 35% from the state. This has increased student loan debt. Today, over 60% of students enrolled at Colorado public institutions graduate with debt. The average debt is \$25,877 for a bachelor's degree and \$13,374 for an associate degree. An overly burdensome debt can prevent students from purchasing a home, obtaining access to other credit, and being economically upwardly mobile in the future.

CCHE observes that Colorado higher education, including Red Rocks Community College, has done well at maintaining quality under tightening budget constraints. To relieve the burden of disinvestment on students and public higher education, the Commission has set the following targets and indicators.

1. Increase public investment in student success, research, and innovation.
 - a. Increase state investment
 - b. Increase funding for need-based student aid (federal, state, and institutional)
2. Decrease average undergraduate federal student debt.
 - a. Decrease percentage of students with debt.
 - b. Of those students with debt, decrease average debt load.
3. Increase innovation
 - a. Innovate new education-delivery methods and business models.

The State Board for Community College and Occupational Education (SBCCOE), the governance board for Red Rocks Community College, has refined these goals for community college implementation. The Board notes several challenges for community colleges.

- Funding for community colleges, and all of higher education, remains low. The Colorado Community College System will continue to work with policy makers to improve funding and create innovative partnerships that build prosperity.
- Changing workforce needs demand that community colleges continue to be innovative and responsive with programs that meet business and industry needs, both today and in the future.
- Campus infrastructure needs additional investment. We will continue to work on creative ways through partnerships and grants to keep our buildings safe and provide the optimum learning environment.

The SBCCOE plan mentions numerous hallmarks of Colorado Community Colleges. Three are of special importance to Red Rocks.

- Business and organizational partnerships are the lifeblood of community colleges' ability to provide high quality education, and RRCC must work hard to ensure that our academic programs reflect the true needs of the careers of tomorrow.
- Technology is critical to providing the best services to both students and staff. Our classrooms should be equipped with the latest technology. There are also opportunities

to provide new online delivery and innovative programs such as immersion classes that provide remarkable learning environments.

- Professional Development is a priority for community colleges. Professional development enables faculty and staff to access information on new trends and developments to enhance their knowledge base to better provide students with the freshest and most-up-to-date information.

The plan also highlights transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions, the Bachelor of Applied Science degree, and college-level courses for high school students.

The Goals and Key Strategies of the CCCS Strategic Plan provide the framework for the RRCC Strategic Plan. Of key importance are the Key Performance Measures (KPMs). Each year, RRCC reports how it has advanced the CCCS Strategic Plan in terms of data and the strategies the college has employed. A summary of the CCCS Goals and Strategies is as follows. The Key Performance Measures, and the associated RRCC Strategic Goals and Strategies, are outlined under the implementation guidelines section of this plan.

Goal One - Transform the student experience

- Design rigorous educational experiences that combine the delivery of practical knowledge with the development of student creativity and innovation
- Implement and scale-up proven student support mechanisms that partner with students to confront and overcome educational barriers
- Create an innovation fund to foster student success through the utilization of best practices, such as technology-enhanced, immersive simulation and predictive analytics

Goal 2 - Transform our own workforce experience

- Develop a workforce that reflects student diversity
- Reward teamwork, innovation, and measurable outcomes through employee recognition programs and compensation
- Develop technology-based, best practice repositories as employee resources
- Support learning through professional development
- Develop future leaders for our institutions

Goal 3 - Create education without barriers through transformation partnerships

- Develop additional partnerships with businesses, K-12, community organizations, policy-makers, and other higher educational institutions
- Devise technology-supported and hybrid educational delivery solutions that transcend time and place barriers, maintain high quality, and foster student success

- Develop competency-based criteria to grant credit for prior experiences in order to widen educational pathways while reducing time to credential completion
- Design experiential learning opportunities

Goal 4 - Redefine our value proposition through accessibility, affordability, quality accountability, resource development, and operational excellence.

- Develop system-wide capacity in institutional research and data analytics to support a culture of inquiry, evidentiary decision-making, and student success
- Increase external resource development capacity to allow investment in student scholarships, and in appropriate physical and technological resources that support high quality learning experiences
- Promote the value of community colleges and of our successful student outcomes to prospective students, policy-makers, and taxpayers

RRCC has taken a leadership role in higher education to support the accomplishment of many of these goals. However, we can and should do more. To this end, we have developed a Strategic Plan to address both the internal and external trends facing the college, the needs of our students, our communities, and Colorado in the future.

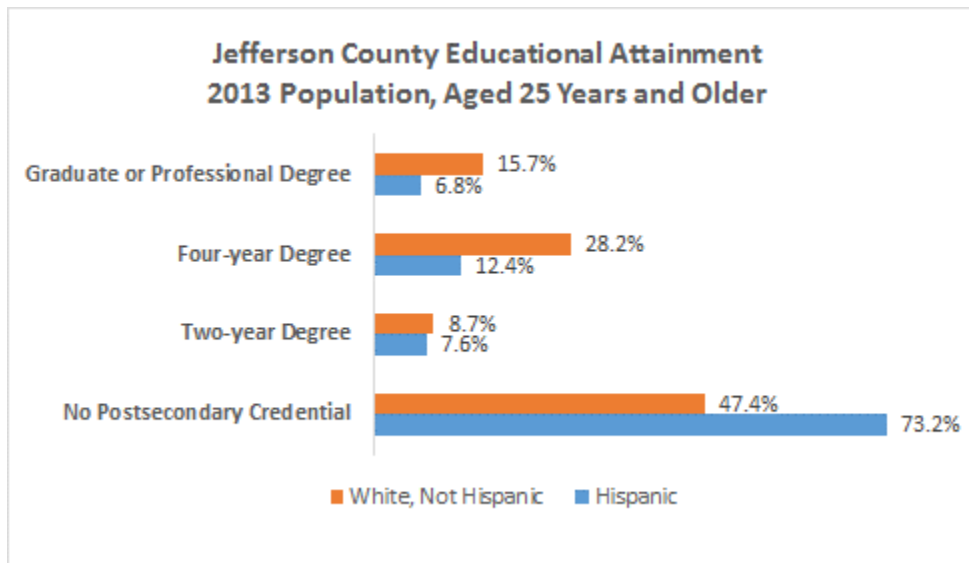


The Red Rocks Community College Local Community: Important External Trends

- Trends in two previous RRCC environmental scans have continued and amplified. The service area population continues to diversify and age. At the same time, about 45% of our students come from outside our service area. As this suggests, we must also consider the Denver Metro Area (Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA) as a basic planning unit. This is especially so for labor market trends, and the implications of those trends for (1) concurrent and traditional college-aged students 16 through 21 years, (2) entering and returning students aged 22 through 35 years old, and (3) mature students aged 55 and older looking to “upskill” to remain in the workforce longer.
- Jefferson County continues to grow, but has the slowest rate of all counties in the Metro Area. It continues to have an increasingly aging White, non-Hispanic population combined with a growing Hispanic population that is younger, especially in the age group 18 years or younger. Changes in RRCC enrollment numbers for Hispanic and Anglo students reflect these trends. After a decade of growth, the number of RRCC first generation students has stabilized, accounting for over half of enrollment in any given semester.

- The educational completion gap between Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic students is a concern in Jefferson County and at RRCC. The total completion rate for Hispanic and other ethnic students (17%) at RRCC is less than half that for White, Non-Hispanic students (35%). The gap wider for transfer students. Pell-eligible students, a growing group of students at RRCC, also have lower completion rates than non-Pell Eligible students. This is significant because a larger proportion of RRCC Hispanic (72.5%) than White Not Hispanic students (43.3%) are First Generation college students from low-income backgrounds. Further, this trend is increasing.
- Top employers in our service area and the metro area suggest the importance of high skill occupations.
 - Healthcare
 - Government
 - Financial, Professional, and Business Operations
 - Office and Administrative Support
 - Tourism, Accommodations, and Food Service
 - Construction, Installation, and Maintenance
 - EnergyManufacturing and Information industries are rebounding, especially in the area of software development.
- Poverty is a growing issue in Denver’s suburban communities and Jefferson County is no exception. With the housing crash and subsequent recession of the last decade, Jefferson County and its major cities and towns have seen exponential growth in the number of families living in or near poverty. RRCC has been experiencing an increase in the number of students who are food and shelter insecure. Jefferson Public Schools have also seen major increases in students living at or below the poverty line. In 2008-2009, the district’s free and reduced lunch enrollment, a measure of poverty, was just 24%. In 2012-2013, that percentage has climbed to 34%. To qualify for free lunch, families must make less than 130% of poverty, or about \$28,000 a year for a family of four.
- Since 2008, private, technical, and trade schools in Metro Denver declined by 44%. Public education, both four and two-year, declined from 2010 until 2016. Future enrollment growth will be modest at 1% FTE or less. This will mean that there will few extra resources available for higher education in the near future. Although Colorado high school graduates will show some growth, competition for these students will intensify. In keeping with the aging of the county population, Jefferson County high school graduates will decline.

- Educational Attainment in the RRCC service area is high overall, but on closer inspection, one can see that this is not the case for everyone. . The *2013 Report on the Postsecondary Progress and Success of High School Graduates* from the Colorado Departments of Higher Education and Education, found a 22 percent gap between White, Not Hispanic and Hispanic 2011 high school graduates in college attendance. The gap between Hispanic and White, Not Hispanic adults in Jefferson County with a postsecondary credential is 26 percent. This gap represents both a challenge and an opportunity for RRCC to serve the community and to build enrollment.



- Based on the 2018-2019 CCCS Fact book, In terms of percentage of the total Colorado community college headcount enrollment in the state, RRCC is fifth, with 9.7% of the total CCCS enrollment.
 - FRCC - 22.9%
 - ACC - 15.6%
 - PPCC - 15.2%
 - CCD - 10.1 %
 - RRCC - 9.7%
 - CCA - 9.0 %
- The percentages are different in terms of FTE in Colorado. RRCC is fourth, with 10.5% of the total FTE.
 - FRCC - 23.5%
 - PPCC - 18.1%
 - CCD - 10.6%
 - RRCC - 10.5%
 - ACC - 10.2%
 - CCA - 9.0%

- In the last ten years, CCA has increased their headcount enrollment by 30% and ACC has increased theirs by 28.1%. RRCC, FRCC, and CCD have all lost enrollment. RRCC has decreased its enrollment by 7.8%.
- FTE enrollment over the last ten years is a different story. CCA has increased its FTE by 37.5%. RRCC, despite having less headcount, has increased FTE by 11.4%
 - CCA - 37.5%
 - ACC - 19.8%
 - FRCC - 16.1%
 - RRCC - 11.4%
 - CCD - 2.8%
- High cost of housing and other costs of living put pressure on disposable income that otherwise might be spent on education. Over the past ten years, Colorado appropriations have declined by \$402. This has required student tuition increases to meet increasing costs. Millennials, the predominant workforce age group and higher educational market in the Denver Metro Area, are the most educated generation so far. Accordingly, the design and delivery of educational offerings is more important than ever. Cost and convenience are important considerations. As this implies, distance education is a critical aspect of appealing to new, potential students, as well as job-related certifications.
- The U.S. Census Bureau reports that one in two U.S. adults has some form of postsecondary credential; one in four has some form of certification or license independent of his/her postsecondary credential. National data on US Labor workforce education shows the percentage of certificates held by workers exceeds the percentage of associate degrees: certificates = 12%, associates degrees = 10%, some college/no degree = 14%. According to an *Educause* article, “Credentials are at the center of a new debate in higher education, with rising expectations from both students and employers for more comprehensive credentialing that documents knowledge and skills throughout a lifetime of learning.”
- In 2018, RRCC granted the second most certificates among Colorado community colleges with 2,307. FRCC granted the most with 2,866 certificates. The top career certificate for RRCC is for Fire Science (269 certificates). For ACC and CCD, their top career certificate is nursing assistant/patient care assistant (258 and 235 certificates). CCA’s top certificate is in emergency medical technician (116 certificates). FRCC’s top certificate is in business administration and management (557 certificates). Finally, concurrent enrollment figures in the CCCS Fact book show that 84% of high school students go to get certificates at community colleges. Only 16% go to get an associate degree.

- Students who have English as a Second Language, or who are learning English, come from several sources to take classes at RRCC. Non-resident alien students on educational visas take English as a Second Language (ESL), often with the goal of transferring to receiving transfer institutions, such as the Colorado School of Mines. Of equal concern are the resident Colorado students with limited English ability. We plan for these students by tracking census data and enrollment data from Jefferson County Public School. Census data for Jefferson County is most important because of the small numbers of ELL students in the other three counties comprising the RRCC Service Area.

**RRCC Service Area Population
 People Speaking a Language Other than English at Home**

	2017 Total	2017 ELL	%
Clear Creek County	9,625	83	0.86%
Gilpin County	6,000	93	1.55%
Jefferson County	580,233	64,173	11.06%
Park County	17,892	98	0.55%
Total	613,750	64,447	

SOURCE: U.S. Census Table 51601 and American Community Survey Five- Year Estimates

- Census data is important due to two demographic trends affecting RRCC student characteristics over the past two decades: the “graying” of the RRCC service area and the growth of the Hispanic population. Over the past two decades, the Hispanic population of Jefferson County increased by 45.8%. Park and Gilpin Counties also had notable increases. In Jefferson County, the Hispanic population increase of 23,996 people offset a decrease of 20,256 in the White not Hispanic population. Consequently, the greatest growth in the Jefferson County ELL pool was for individuals speaking Spanish at home.

**Jefferson County - Persons 5 Years and Older
 Persons 5 years and Older
 Speaking a Language Other than English at Home**

	2017	2010	Change
Spanish	33,288	30,217	3,071
Other Indo-European Language	15,200	12,526	2,674
Asian/ Pacific Islander	9,652	9,153	499
Other Language - Not English	2,170	1,733	417
English	473,881	444,338	29,543
Total	534,191	497,967	36,224

SOURCE: American Community Survey Five- Year Estimates

- Both the decline in the White, Not Hispanic population and the increase in the Hispanic population were fueled by younger age groups. In Jefferson County from 2000 to 2010 the Hispanic population 17 years and younger increased from 18,419 to 26,353, an increase of 7,934 or 43.1%. In contrast, the White, Not Hispanic population 17 years and younger decreased from 106,217 to 83,380, a decrease of 22,837 or 21.5%. These demographic changes present a picture of two service areas: an aging, affluent White, non-Hispanic population living in unincorporated suburbs, and another that is less affluent, more diverse, and concentrated in the major municipalities closer to the core metropolitan area.
- Between Fall 2000 and Fall 2011, the number of Jeffco Hispanic students grew from 10,589 to 20,192 students, an increase of 90.7%. The number of White, not Hispanic students went from 72,320 to 58,295, a decrease of 19.4%. Hispanic students increased their share of enrollment from 12.1% in Fall 2000 to 23.5% in Fall 2011. The percentage of White, not Hispanic students went from 82.5% in Fall 2000 to 67.9% in Fall 2011.
- In the 2018-2019 school year, there were approximately 10,000 ELL students in the Jefferson County Schools speaking 128 different languages. With a total enrollment of 83,460 pupils, ELL students in Jeffco comprised about 12% of all students. Jeffco has seen a 13% increase in ELLs over the past decade. The primary language for most of these students was Spanish, followed by Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese. Only 27% of the ELLs in Jeffco are new to English or just learning English. The rest, 73%, are intermediate or advanced students of English.
- RRCC is responding to these trends in ELLs with bilingual outreach and support services for first-generation college students. Faculty and staff development in cultural competence is also increasing along with inclusion and diversity programming. RRCC basic skills assessment and gateway curricula assessment will also target increased academic success, retention and completion. If the current trends continue, the pool of high school graduates in the service area is likely to stay at current levels or even undergo slight declines. The school-age population and high school graduates will become more diverse and postsecondary competition for these students will intensify. Articulation with our local high schools will take on new importance, both as an enrollment management and a program growth strategy.

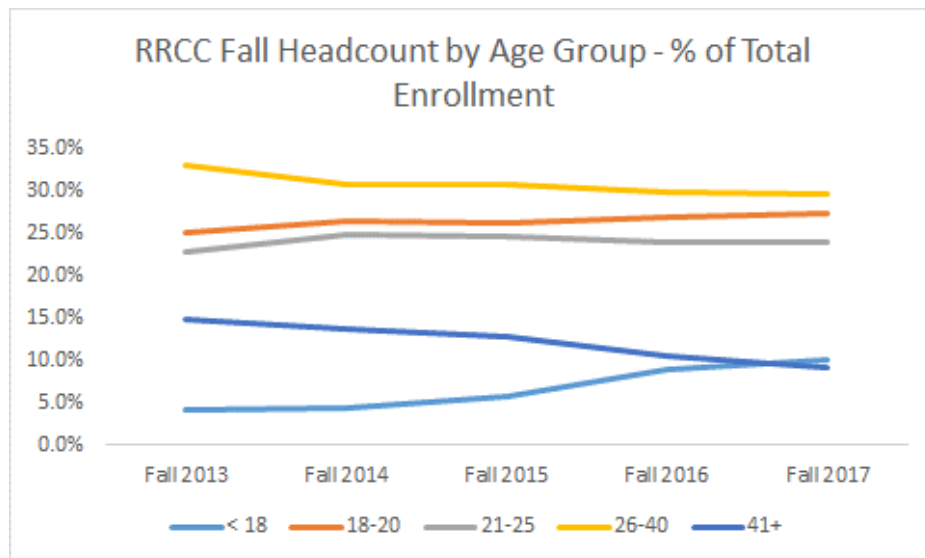


Red Rocks Community College Students, Programs, Faculty, and Staff: Important Internal Trends

- Enrollment at RRCC reached a peak in fall 2010 at 9,826 students. Since then, it has declined as economic conditions have improved and jobs take priority over education for many of RRCC's students. Headcount enrollment between fall 2010 and fall 2017 declined by 2,471 students. FTE enrollment has also declined. Over the past five years, FTE enrollment has gone from 5,945.80 annualized FTE to 5,212.61.
- Enrollment decline from fall 2010 to fall 2014 is attributable to CTE and Non-Degree Seeking students. Between 2010 and 2014, CTE students declined by 1,206 students, or 29.8%. At the same time, non-degree seeking students also declined sharply. Since 2014, CTE programs are making a comeback while Transfer programs, facing stiffer competition from four-year schools as economic times improve, are now experiencing declines.
- The enrollment trends data suggest that RRCC had a de facto continuing education unit in the Non-Degree Seeking student group. Turbulence from the recession prompted these students to return to college to upgrade their skills. The same motivation was likely at work for some students who declared a CTE degree or certificate program. Recent college re-organization to better address workforce development may address this trend but is still in a formative period.
- Student survey data on student goals indicates the majority of students enter RRCC with the goal of achieving a two-year degree and possibly transferring to a four-year college or university. However, rather than completing an A.A., A.S., or A.G.S., most students who take transfer courses come to take a few courses and then go to a four-year institution
- Over the past five years, concurrent enrollment at RRCC has grown. Reporting practices understate the amount of concurrent enrollment reported for the fall semester. Even with this practice, the table below illustrates a respectable growth trend. Traditional college-age students aged 18 through 20 have numerically and proportionally had some slight increases over the past five years. A positive contribution from these younger ages is a tendency to take larger credit hour loads than the other age groups. The declines in the 26 to 40 millennial age group, who numerically dominate the workforce, and students aged 41 years and older are notable and account for recent enrollment declines.

AGE GROUPS AT RRCC

	Fall 2017	%	Fall 2016	%	Fall 2015	%	Fall 2014	%	Fall 2013	%
< 18	743	10.1%	687	8.9%	444	5.7%	352	4.3%	364	4.2%
18-20	2005	27.3%	2080	26.9%	2038	26.2%	2150	26.5%	2151	25.0%
21-25	1762	24.0%	1852	23.9%	1913	24.6%	2004	24.7%	1960	22.8%
26-40	2177	29.6%	2298	29.7%	2390	30.7%	2492	30.7%	2844	33.1%
41+	668	9.1%	817	10.6%	1004	12.9%	1114	13.7%	1281	14.9%
Total	7355	-----	7734	-----	7789	-----	8112	-----	8600	-----



- The slight growth in the traditional college-age group reflects a projected increase in Colorado high school graduates after a preceding “trough”. The projected growth of 18.5% should span the academic year 2011-12 through 2024-25. Hispanic high school graduates are projected to increase by 62.1% while White, Not Hispanic graduates are projected to increase 8.0%. However, the Jeffco school district will not experience these levels of growth. During approximately the same period, Jeffco is projected to increase by 1.5%. The Jeffco Hispanic school-age population is projected to increase by 20.7% while the White, Not Hispanic school-age population is projected to increase by only 0.5%.
- RRCC offers 62 Associate Degrees, one Master’s and one Baccalaureate Degree, and 183 Certificates. Comparing student majors to program graduates shows some important trends. While certificate majors account for 12 to 16 percent of declared majors in the past several years, certificates account for 70 percent of credentials awarded by RRCC. Certificates awarded have shown an upswing beginning in

academic year 2015-16. Students tend to transfer out to four-year schools before completing an RRCC credential.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES AT RRCC

	Total Enrollment	CTE Certificate Majors		CTE Degree Majors		Transfer Degree Majors		Other (Non-Degree Seeking, BA, MA)	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Fall 2017	7,355	1,062	14.4%	1,932	26.3%	3,638	49.5%	723	9.8%
Fall 2016	7,734	1,177	16.0%	1,945	26.4%	3,888	52.9%	724	9.8%
Fall 2015	7,789	932	12.7%	1,721	23.4%	4,294	58.4%	842	11.4%
Fall 2014	8,112	847	11.5%	1,886	25.6%	4,574	62.2%	805	10.9%
Fall 2013	8,600	906	12.3%	2,113	28.7%	4,698	63.9%	883	12.0%
Fall 2012	9,031	944	12.8%	2,424	33.0%	4,689	63.8%	974	13.2%
Fall 2011	9,544	1,088	14.8%	2,800	38.1%	4,355	59.2%	1,301	17.7%

	Total Awards	CTE Certificate Majors		CTE Degree Majors		Transfer Degree Majors		Other (Non-Degree Seeking, BA, MA)	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
FY 2017-18	3016	2,307	76.5%	254	8.4%	454	15.1%	1	-----
FY 2016-17	2836	2,167	71.9%	244	8.1%	425	14.1%	0	-----
FY 2015-16	3057	2,368	78.5%	234	7.8%	455	15.1%	0	-----
FY 2014-15	2000	1,326	44.0%	251	8.3%	423	14.0%	0	-----
FY 2013-14	2254	1,501	49.8%	298	9.9%	455	15.1%	0	-----

- Distance education at RRCC accounts for about 28 percent of unduplicated headcount enrollment. It accounts for 18 percent of total annualized FTE enrollment. About 86 percent of RRCC online students live in Colorado. Of the total number of on-line students over the past five Fall semesters (an average of 2,217), about one-half exclusively took online classes (an average 1,182 for the fall semester).

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT RRCC

	Total Unduplicate d Headcount	Online Unduplicated Headcount	%	Exclusively Online Unduplicated Headcount	%
Fall 2017	7,355	2,079	28.3%	1,125	15.3%
Fall 2016	7,734	2,158	27.9%	1,128	14.6%
Fall 2015	7,789	2,181	28.0%	1,160	14.9%
Fall 2014	8,112	2,227	27.5%	1,195	14.7%
Fall 2013	8,600	2,443	28.4%	1,304	15.2%

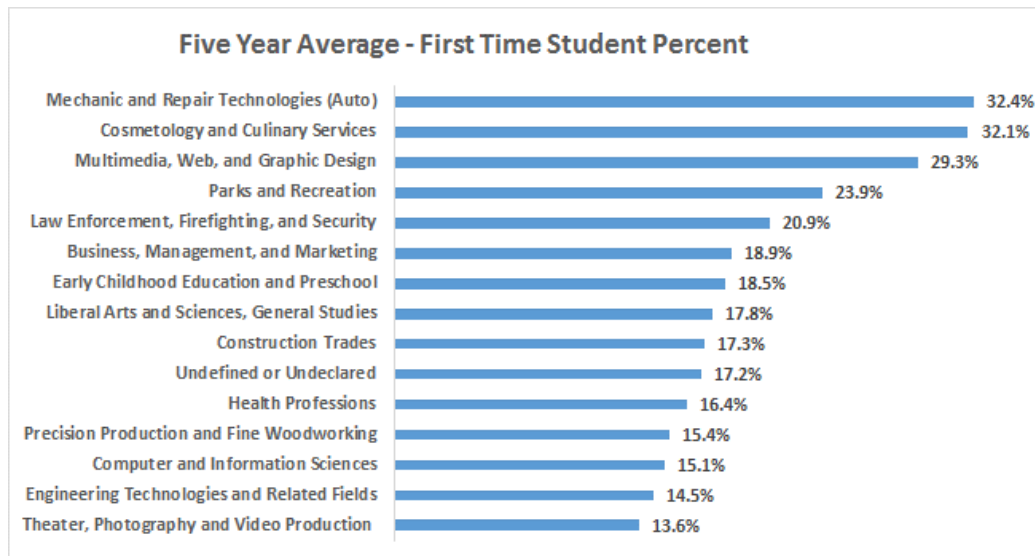
	Total Annualized FTE	Online Annualized FTE	%
FY 2017-18	5,212.6	961.0	18.4%
FY 2016-17	5,372.5	968.6	18.0%
FY 2015-16	5,296.5	962.7	18.2%
FY 2014-15	5,672.1	1,043.4	18.4%
FY 2013-14	5,945.8	1,127.1	19.0%

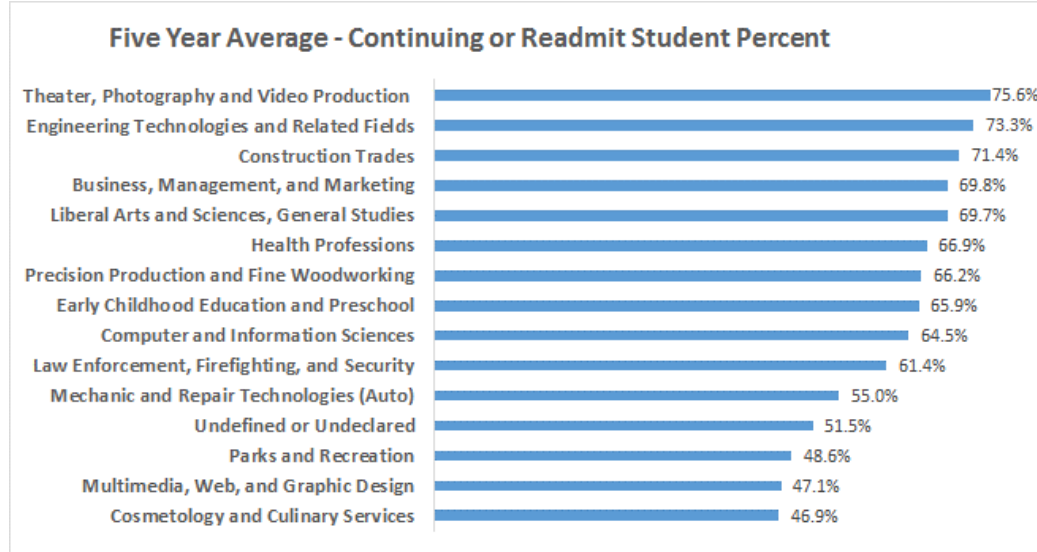
- While the types of students applying for financial aid, and the aid they receive, fluctuates from year-to-year we can observe some trends. The first is an increase in Pell Grants for low-income students. The next is a decline in the student default rate to currently around 16%. This is attributable to increasing emphasis to students of the benefits of applying for grants, versus taking out student loans. On the average, a third of all students registered for fall semester will apply for and receive a Pell grant. Of all the students registered in a fall semester, on average 47 percent will receive some kind of financial aid. For entering, first-time students, who are seeking a certificate or degree the average amount of financial aid received is \$4,251.
- The percentage of Low Income/First Generation (LIFG) and Disabled Students at RRCC has increased from less than half of the population in 2009 to over two-thirds of the population in 2017. This percentage of LIFG students has remained remarkably consistent since fall 2012. Two out of every three students at RRCC are low-income, first-generation, or disabled or some combination of these three characteristics. We know some things about these students: First, they need to learn how to be a student and to use the various support offered by the college, not just ad hoc but systemically and in a self-directed fashion. Secondly, they do not understand the relationship between general education and program majors. Finally, they need coherently mapped pathways to goal completion, as well as

- comprehension of support and supplemental instruction available throughout the student career.
- In the book by Thomas R. Bailey, Shann Smith Jaggars, Davis Jenkins, Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path To Student Success (Harvard University Press, 2015) the authors talk about how Community Colleges must change for Low Income/First Generation and Disabled Students in several ways. The community college must change from:
 - a focus on student access to a focus on access and success;
 - fragmented course-taking to clear, coherent educational pathways;
 - individual faculty prerogative to a collective responsibility for student success and;
 - a culture of anecdote to a culture of evidence.
 - Low-income students' financial concerns place them at a significant disadvantage in comparison to their higher-income peers. Low-income students frequently feel pressure to work and pay the bills and may receive little support from those around them to attend college. Working students often must wrestle with schedule and time restrictions that interfere with their ability to take classes, complete college coursework, and achieve academic success. These students will likely require additional support to be successful.
 - Further complicating the situation, when low-income students are also first-time college students, they struggle with another set of challenges. For first time college students the largest impediment is often a lack of social capital such as effective role models. These students are family forerunners on the path of college attendance. They do not have parents, grandparents or siblings with knowledge of the college experience to help them prepare and navigate the complex landscape of a college campus. These students often come to college with a limited knowledge of the resources available to them. For many students, their first time at college can be a shocking experience where they feel overwhelmed by unfamiliar surroundings. Many first-generation college students arrive at college lacking a specific plan or focus.
 - The two largest ethnic groups at RRCC are white students (65%) and Hispanic students (18%). (It should be noted that if the Hispanic population were to reach 25%, RRCC would qualify as a Hispanic-serving Institution. This would open new sources of potential funding for the college.) These are followed by those of two or more races and those of unknown ethnicity who together account for about 11% of the population. The only category that has noticeably changed over the last three years are those whose race or ethnicity remains unknown. The three-year credential rate for full-time, first-time students is 32.5% for White Not Hispanic

students and 23.6% for Hispanic students. Three-year transfer rates for these same set of students are 36.4% for White Not Hispanic and 34.7% for Hispanic students. Hispanic students seem to be more interested in transferring than in earning a credential at RRCC.

- When data is broken out by families of programs defined by the Classification of Instructional Program Code (CIP), there are very complex issues for RRCC students. The program areas with the highest number of first-time students do not necessarily having the highest retention. The data for first time and continuing/ readmit registration status shows that there is a wide range of variation among RRCC programs when comes to enrollment behavior.
- The relatively small number of first-time students in some CTE areas suggests what Cliff Adelman has defined as enrollment “churn”, a phenomenon indicative of two-year colleges in the United States. Churn” is a “stop-in” and “stop-out” pattern of enrollment when individuals attend classes to gain some skill or knowledge to advance in their trade or profession, or just to satisfy curiosity about a possible change in their life or career. This makes assessing persistence and the path to completion and transfer more complex. The data on full-time or continuing/readmit students suggest RRCC is experiencing enrollment churn.





- The five-year average for RRCC for first-time students was 17.8% of fall enrollment. The five-year average for continuing and readmit students was 66.4%. The size of the instructional area does not seem to be associated with whether an instructional area is above or below the average for either entering or continuing students. This suggests that we need to increase our efforts to understand what persistence, completion, and transfer behavior mean at the instructional department level, and perhaps at a level even smaller.
- Retention has become a major issue on several fronts. Not the least is the fact that in the face of declining state appropriations for higher education, RRCC has become more dependent on student tuition, and on raising tuition rates. Over the past fifteen years, state appropriations have risen by about 28%. During this period, the cost per credit hour has increased at a rate of about 140%. Keep in mind that this has occurred as the number of low-income students with financial needs has grown.
- Over the past five years, about three out of four RRCC graduates from CTE programs successfully enter the workforce within a year after graduation with higher wages than other graduates from Colorado two and four-year institutions. RRCC CTE graduates from programs with external accreditation consistently perform very highly on national certification examinations.
- STEM disciplines at RRCC have found that once students successfully complete basic college-level Math and English, they have a very great chance of successfully entering and completing STEM-based curriculum. However, first-generation and low-income students struggle more with STEM course work, and new support systems and initiatives will likely be needed to increase their success in the future.

- We have strong articulation agreements with three highly-selective four-year institutions: The Colorado School of Mines which allows RRCC pre-engineering students to directly transfer; Regis University which has a 3+1 program where students can attend RRCC for three years and then one year at Regis to complete a bachelor's degree; University of Colorado Health Sciences Center which has an Integrated Nursing Pathway 2+2 BS in Nursing.
- First generation, low-income students (LIFG) are more at-risk than other students and present a special set of needs. The imperative to continue to address those needs is evident in the completion and transfer rates for these students. While the percentage of LIFG students retained from fall to spring has increased, the fall-to-fall retention seems to be stuck around 40%. The three-year graduation rate is now around 21%.
- The real difference between LIFG students and their peers shows up in the percentage of students that transfer to a four-year college. While both groups have improved their transfer rate over the last eight years, the LIFG students still lag 13% behind the other students. This trend has been consistent over these eight years with LIFG students transferring between 8% to 16% less frequently than their peers do.
- Data seems to show that gateway courses in English, math, and other general education requirements erode as much as half our entering cohorts. Fewer still go on to establishing an academic pathway that will lead to a credential. On the other hand, the possibility of transfer. The data suggest the need to "touch early" and "touch often," not just now and then but systemically. There seems to be a need to integrate both instruction, that provides a clear pathway, and support, that develops self-directed learners.
- According to a national Gallup poll, only 38% of recent college graduates felt that their educations were worth the cost of tuition. Tuition has risen faster than most people can manage and, to make matters worse, most students do not graduate in a timely manner. In Colorado, this is compounded because higher education is only supported through the Colorado Opportunity Fund or COF funding that comes to the college only when students apply for it. COF funding has not increased in over 10 years. In addition, COF and Federal Financial Aid can run out quickly if the student does not complete their education in a timely manner.
- Data for RRCC indicate student concerns about class scheduling at convenient times, not being able to get needed classes, and the need for advising regarding program requirements. Career advising and connections with faculty advisors are desirable.

There is a need for clear pathways and the better development of students as self-directed learners. Students often do not progress due to a lack of coherent academic planning. This lack of coherency often is shared by the various instructional departments and support units they encounter.

- To sum up, at each stage of the student life cycle, we have improved student success, but not the numbers of students who go on to the next level. Persistence erodes from adult basic education to developmental education, from there to college level general education and program gateway courses, and, finally, to picking a programmatic direction and degree or certificate completion.
- To improve student success, faculty and staff, while accomplishing much within working units, are too “siloed” in terms of communication and student tracking. Faculty and staff need shared professional development training to develop and use coherent guided curricular pathways, delivery methods, integrated support, and assessment of student learning outcomes.



RESOURCES

Current RRCC Strategic, Facilities, and Academic Master Plans

<https://www.rccc.edu/strategic-planning>

RRCC Environmental Scanning

<https://www.rccc.edu/strategic-planning/current-projects>

RRCC Systems Portfolio

<https://www.rccc.edu/accreditation/systems-portfolio>

Colorado Community College System Fact Book

<https://www.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/CCCS-Fact-Book-2017-18-.pdf>

RRCC Annual Performance Reports

<https://www.rccc.edu/strategic-planning/current-projects>

RRCC Student Achievement

<https://www.rccc.edu/institutional-research/student-achievement>

RRCC Student Diversity and Inclusion

<https://www.rccc.edu/institutional-research/student-achievement>

RRCC IPEDS Reports

<https://www.rccc.edu/institutional-research/student-achievement>

RRCC Quality Highlights Report for Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)

<https://www.rccc.edu/sites/default/files/u182/Quality%20Highlights%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

RRCC Arvada Branch Campus Report for Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR)

<https://www.rccc.edu/sites/default/files/u182/Arvada%20Branch%20Campus%20Report%20Final%2009-15-2018.pdf>