Community College of Aurora 2024 All-In Action Plan

Prepared by Office of Student Leadership & Development and Department of Social Sciences

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Executive Summary

[Community College of Aurora](#) (CCA) is a two-year public, open access institution in Aurora, Colorado and is one of 13 community colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). The college was founded in 1983. Our student population is comprised of over 11,000 students representing over 60 countries.

CCA offers 72 degrees and certificate programs for students seeking to enhance their current skill set, pursue employment, or transfer to a four-year college or university upon graduation. We have an 8:1 student/faculty ratio. CCA is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) which accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the United States.

In a recent survey, 96.1% of CCA graduates reported that CCA helped them meet their educational goals. Additionally, 93.8% reported that CCA provided them with a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Our diverse student population is reflective of the Community we serve. Of our student population:
- 65% identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Color
- 52% identify as First Generation
- 33% identify as LatinX, making us a federally designated HSI
- 67% are Pell Grant Eligible

The Engagement Action Plan for Community College of Aurora was prepared by: Julie LaRock, Jacklynn Green, and Paul Langston; representing staff, faculty, and instructors at Community College of Aurora. Our Civic Engagement Programmatic efforts are housed within our Student Leadership & Development office.

The mission of the Student Leadership & Development Office at Community College of Aurora is as follows:

> *The Office of Student Leadership & Development is committed to providing inclusive, co-curricular opportunities that promote a sense of belonging and enhance the student experience.*

This plan will outline the goals and strategies for engaging students, faculty/instructors, and staff. We hope this plan will increase participation in civic engagement, community involvement, and co-curricular programing. We have created a scaffolded and intentional model to see increased engagement through our plan, ending Spring 2025.

This plan will be implemented to reach students on both our CentreTech and Lowry campuses. This model will help us reach full-time students as well as student parents, student part-time and full-time workers, and part-time students.

During the tenure of this plan, there will be some campus transitions. During the 24-25AY, we will be closing our Lowry Campus, transitioning our Lowry classes to the CentreTech campus, building a brand-new building on our CentreTech campus, and opening a third campus; increasing industry partner and community partner presence. This may shift some of our plans as we attempt to future cast how to best reach our students.

Leadership

Voting is Foxy will collaborate with staff, faculty/instructors, student groups, and administration to reach as many students as possible.

- Staff:
  - o Julie LaRock, Interim Director of Student Leadership & Development
  - o Jacklynn Green, Coordinator of Experiential Learning and Student Engagement

- Faculty:
  - o Dr. Paul Langston, Department Chair of Social Sciences

- Students and Student Groups:
  - o Student Government Association
  - o Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
  - o National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
  - o Black Student Alliance

- Community/National Organizations:
  - o John Harris, Community Engagement Coordinator
  - o Jorge Hernandez, New Era Colorado, Denver Regional Lead Organizer
  - o Lamine Kane, Colorado People's Alliance, Community Organizer

- City of Aurora & Arapahoe County:
  - o Sophia Bibbey, Chamber of Commerce, Director of Events
  - o Katie Sims, Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder's Office Elections Division, Community Services Manager

Commitment

The Voting is Foxy project aligns with Community College of Aurora's commitment toward community leadership and service. Our mission seeks to help students pursue knowledge as they gain a greater understanding of local, state, and national political issues. At the same time, we hope to expand their knowledge of our governmental structure and the important role they play within the system. This journey culminates in the voting of candidates in all levels of elections.

Within CCA's strategic plan, Voting is Foxy has a direct connection to Commitment 4: Community Leadership and Service.

CCA's Mission and Commitments:

Commitment 4: Community Leadership and Service
- Provide leadership and programs to meet regional workforce development needs.
- Establish and sustain community service and leadership opportunities for students, staff, faculty, and instructors.
- Expand partnerships with employers, community organizations, and city, county, and state governments.
- Strengthen relationships within the P-20 (preschool through college) pipeline.
- Develop and promote community-focused training, events, and activities.

We are committed to our strategic plan that has laid the groundwork for the work we have done and the work we are striving to do. Our current strategic plan is ending this year, and we are rolling out our new strategic plan in the following months. We will hold fidelity to the current strategic plan and begin to incorporate the pivotal items within the new strategic plan as we execute our Voting is Foxy campaign.

An area we are committed to is finding ways to partner with our faculty and instructors. An area of growth we have is bridging the gap to figure out ways to put our efforts into the classroom. We intend to work on communicating not just to students but utilize faculty and instructors as another delivery method both inside and outside of the classroom. If we can foster buy-in with faculty and instructors, we are confident we can boost engagement.

In addition to our strategic plan(s) is our President's commitment to supporting our efforts. Dr. Mordecai Brownlee has signed the ALL-IN's Presidents' Commitment and has approved our budget to host events on campus in order to increase our engagement, both quantitively and the level of engagement per student.

Due to our efforts thus far, we are proud to say that we received the Best in Class Most Improved Registration Rate at a HSI as well as a Silver Seal as of September 2024. These awards reflect our commitment to ensuring that nonpartisan democratic engagement is a defining feature of campus life.

Landscape

Community College of Aurora (CCA) was founded in 1983 and has vibrant campuses in Aurora and Denver, Colorado. As part of the 13-institution Colorado Community College System (CCCS), CCA provides pathways for professional and educational development.

CCA is designated as both a federally designated Hispanic and Minority-Serving Institution. CCA is historically known as the college without walls for the institution's commitment as an institution free from barriers to student success.

CCA has put a large emphasis on removing as many barriers as possible when it comes to co-curricular engagement as well. Events have been provided for our students, and we are expanding our programmatic efforts to increase engagement of our concurrent enrollment students and all students who do not engage with CCA in-person. Previous events have included: taking students to go vote in elections, tabling, passing out information, and sharing infographics passively & actively.

Some areas of growth we are working through are better merging the academic side of the house with our co-curricular learning. Our long-term plan includes finding ways to embed opportunities within the syllabi.

Goals

Our major focus of this campaign is to get our population interested in voting, signed up to vote, and educate our student population on multiple ways of advocacy. In utilizing multiple delivery methods to achieve this goal, we also believe this will aid in increasing our student voter participation and engagement. In all our communications and events, we will continue to be nonpartisan in accordance with CCA's policy.

Short Term Goals

- Voting is Foxy will focus on the upcoming election that will occur on November 5, 2024
- There will be information, talks, tabling, watch parties, and events about the upcoming Election
- We will improve accessibility concerns
    - With both of our campuses hosting polling stations, we hope that with this increased access, that we will see a direct increase in voter turnout
    - Our marketing will include the locations of Aurora polling stations, and how to complete early voting by mail
    - This will also include having interpretation services available at our events in hopes to help students engage in civil discourse
- There will be increased communication utilizing email, Gecko texting, our student newsletter, and our slideshows across campus
- Ongoing educational tabling during the entire fall semester run by staff, faculty/instructors, and students
- Hosting a Constitution Day event in collaboration with the Academic side of the house
- Provide opportunities to introduce underage students to the voting process and make them aware of societal issues and how that correlates to the ballot
- Providing education around advocacy for those that are not eligible to vote but still want to be engaged

Long Term Goals

- We will see at least a 10% increase in our student voter turnout
- We will see at least a 5% increase in our event attendance
- There will be a shift in culture to have a standardization of events to ensure that civic engagement programming is embedded every year campus wide, regardless of whether it is an election year or not
    - We will use assessment and ongoing feedback as we begin to create "tradition programs"
- There will be a partnership with Strategic Communications to build intentional CCA branding surrounding CCA Civic Engagement
- Fox LEADS will modify their curriculum to ensure there are civic engagement learning opportunities embedded into coursework in the fall semester as well as the spring semester
- There will be a partnership with Academic Support Services to build Civic Engagement into a D2L shell where every faculty/instructor will have it embedded into their course
- A presentation will be created that will be marketed to all faculty/instructors in order to have someone from the committee enter courses during any time in the semester to discuss civic engagement and provide opportunities for engagement
- With such a large part of our campus being concurrently enrolled, we understand that not all of our students are eligible to vote. We want to build materials and resources for these students so they are equipped when it is their time to vote. We want to ensure that our programmatic efforts are also accessible to them

NSLVE

There were a few primary key takeaways from our 2022 NSLVE report that informed our approach. We used these data points to begin building our goals. These are outlined below:

- Voting, Registration and Yield Rates
  - There is an opportunity to improve our registration rate, which is currently at 78.7%.
  - Our yield rate has fluctuated with a dramatic decrease from 2020 (84.2% in 2020 and 43% in 2022).
    - *Goals:*
      - *Increase voter registration opportunities on our campuses*
      - *Work with Faculty and instructors to collaborate on a communication plan on how to register to ensure students who do not come to either campus still have access to resources*
      - *Work to remove barriers for voter registration and poll turnout*
        - *Host polling locations on both the Centretech and Lowry campuses*
        - *Educate on multiple ways to register and vote*
- Age Group
  - We have seen a decrease in every age group, with our highest being ages 18-24+ and our lowest being 50+.
    - *Goals:*
      - *Conduct a few evaluative approaches (focus groups, surveys, etc.) to obtain qualitative data on why certain age groups are/are not choosing to vote. Using this data, tailor our outreach plan to meet this need*
      - *Use our Student Government Association (SGA) and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) as leaders on campus to become more engaged in getting their peers involved*
      - *Provide passive and active education during National Voter Education week*

Strategy

In order to fulfill the intentions of each of our identified goals, various strategies have been put in place. It is our hope that through these strategies we will be able to accomplish the goals we have outlined throughout this report.

Goal One: Increase Voter Registration in the Upcoming Election

Strategies: Our hope is to eliminate as many barriers as possible in order to increase voter registration and yield numbers. This includes:

- Host polling stations on both of our campuses
  - We will also be sharing the location of other Aurora polling stations and how to vote by mail

- Holding Voter Registration & Constitution Day covering all our campuses to have the most reach with our students

Goal Two: Expand Voter Education Programming

Strategies: There will be intentionality in adding additional programming that focuses on ensuring our community is aware of the resources available to them to cast an intentional and thoughtful ballot. This includes:

- Providing Watch Parties for the Debates that have opportunities to engage in conversations with their peers, have facilitated dialogue by hosts, and have a mock voting process.

- Tabling: We will offer a plethora of tabling opportunities throughout the year that will provide grab 'n' go educational opportunities.

Reporting

All progress made within this plan will be tracked and documented by the committee. This progress will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. During these quarterly meetings, committee members will evaluate goals and track progress, reflect on successful strategies, and reevaluate strategies that are not progressing as expected.

This plan will be shared with all members of the President's Cabinet as well as the Executive Leadership of the Community College of Colorado System (CCCS). We have and will continue to share the NSLVE data within our Division of Student Success, Academic Success, the President's Office, and Institutional Research. We will continue to keep our external community partners apprised of the information as well as our goals. When we are looking for ways to create new partnerships within our community, we will also share our data to ensure transparency as we create programming together to ensure it best aligns with the needs of our students. And finally, we plan to share everything we are able to the broader CCA community as transparency is critical in reaching our goals of increasing our numbers.

Evaluation

Our evaluation aims to assess if our efforts have been effective in increasing voter registration, yield, and an overall increase in civic engagement.

During the Spring 2025 semester, the committee will meet to discuss what goals were met and what goals were not met. A deep dive will be completed on each goal to better understand why it was met/not met. We will use this data to construct our Fall 2025 civic engagement rollout. This evaluation will be used to better understand and construct the upcoming version of this plan. We will utilize a 'start, stop, keep' model to determine which of our goals were beneficial to our community and if tweaks are necessary to continue the success.

All events will not only track attendance but do a small assessment of each participant. Participants will do a pre & post Likert scale sharing their level of knowledge gained and level of interest gained.

CCA Civic Engagement Programming

AY 2024-2025 Strategy		
Event	**Purpose**	**Date**
Day of Service	To support service-learning & volunteerism	7/19
Week of Welcome	Recruitment and promotion of voter education and registration	8/19-8/22
First Presidential Debate	To better understand the candidate's views and engage in discussion with peers	9/10
COPA Leadership Training	Training on how to be a leader and empower others to be civically engaged	9/12
Day of Service	To support service-learning & volunteerism	9/5
Day of Service	To support service-learning & volunteerism	9/13
National Voter Registration & Constitution Day Tabling	To promote registration and sign folx up	9/17
AI in Elections	To gain a better understanding of how to use AI in voting education	9/17
UNDIVIDE US Screening	An educational documentary and a time for students to engage in civic discourse	10/1
National Voter Education Week	To promote voter education and registration	10/7-10/11
New Era Tabling & 'What does it mean to be civically engaged?' event	Providing opportunities to register to vote as well as learn about different forms of advocacy	10/7
What's on the Ballot? Panel	To learn about what is on the ballot to encourage educated voting	10/8
Host for Polling Location	To increase student voter turnout	11/2 & 11/5
Election Day	To increase student voter turnout	11/5
Civic Engagement Week	To promote civic engagement awareness and voter education & registration	3/10-3/14
Aurora History Museum tour	To engage and foster pride	3/11

	in the Aurora community	
Student Government Application Tabling	To encourage students to apply for student government	3/13
New Era Tabling & 'What does it mean to be civically engaged?' event	Providing opportunities to learn about different forms of advocacy	3/17
Student Government Application Opens	To encourage students to apply for student government	3/18
Student Government Elections	To encourage students to vote and have a say in the future of their campus	4/1-4/5
Day of Service	To support service-learning & volunteerism	4/16