



College Report – Sept. 14, 2022

Patty Erjavec, PhD, *President*

Transform the student experience

Electric vehicle showcase – The leaders of our Automotive Technology program took part in the recent Black Hills Energy EV Expo in Pueblo. Department Chair James Cordova and President Erjavec spoke with Pueblo Mayor Nick Gradisar, Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce President Duane Nava, Black Hills Colorado Vice President Kelli Ashcraft, Christian Williss from the Colorado Energy Office and other leaders about PCC’s new electric vehicle program. Starting in fall 2023, PCC automotive graduates will be able to add electric vehicle certification to their list of credentials. The program already has seven vehicles for students to work on – four electric and three hybrids. “We’re taking this to the next level,” Cordova said. “This is a highly skilled profession and our students will be recognized for that.”



National Cyber League rankings – PCC was [ranked 28th nationwide](#) out of approximately 600 competing schools in the most recent Cyber Power Rankings from Cyber Skyline and the National Cyber League. In the NCL, students put their knowledge to work performing real-world cybersecurity tasks including identifying hackers from forensic data, pen testing and auditing vulnerable websites and recovering from ransomware attacks.

Pantherfest draws a crowd – The Student Services division staged the second annual Pantherfest Aug. 6. Current and future students, along with their families, were able to register for fall classes, tour the campus, and enjoy food and activities.

First-week festivities – The 13th annual Celebration Walk took place on the first day of classes, Aug. 22, to welcome students to the fall semester. Hundreds of students made the walk with President Erjavec down Orman Avenue to be cheered and applauded by faculty and staff. PCC Associated Student Government provided daily activities to get Panthers engaged on campus.



Transform our own workforce experience

Nursing faculty member on national board – Claudia Estrada-Hickman, a member of PCC's Nursing faculty, was elected to serve on the board of commissioners for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.

Estrada-Hickman joined the associate degree nursing program in 2021. She has been a registered nurse since 1985 and held nursing and management positions with numerous acute care organizations. Estrada-Hickman has been an active volunteer with the ACEN since 2013, serving as a peer evaluator and team chair. She has completed more than 10 site visits and participated in numerous evaluation review panels. Most recently, she served on the 2023 standards and criteria committee.

Interim Southwest dean announced – President Erjavec named Dr. Kevin Aten as the interim executive dean for PCC's Southwest campus and sites. Aten is a longtime educator who most recently served as superintendent of the Bayfield School District. He also worked as principal of Mountain View High School, chief human resources officer for Greeley-Evans School District 6 and director of innovation, instruction and technology for Estes Park Schools. He was an adjunct instructor for several institutions of higher education and is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, as well as the author of several literary publications.



CCCS Leadership Academy – Andrew Miller, PCC’s Dean of Health Professions and Public Safety, and Hannah Moody-Goo, a PCC librarian, were chosen for the CCCS Leadership Academy pilot program after a competitive application process. They are part of an elite group of 30 participants system-wide. Through in-person and virtual meetings, they will identify and strengthen their leadership, relationship and development skills.



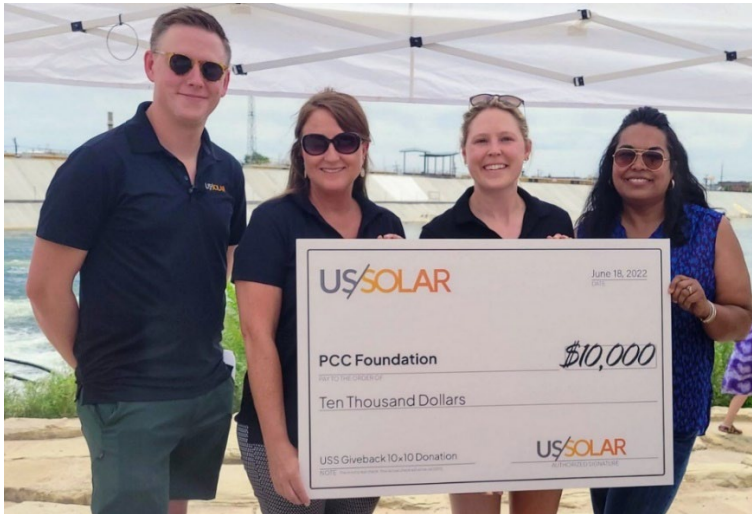
Customer Solutions Center recognized – PCC’s Customer Solutions Center was recognized in June by LiveHelpNow for spending 40 consecutive months in the top 10% of all key customer service metrics. PCC was the only college in Colorado to receive that designation. Members of the CSC staff are director Richie Ince, Cheryl Ayala, Robin Romero and Stacy Esparza.

Create education without barriers through partnerships

US Solar donates – US Solar donated \$10,000 to the PCC Foundation to benefit the school's renewable energy learning lab. PCC launched a solar program in 2021 and plans to expand the renewable energy program into fields such as electric vehicle technician.

The donation is part of USS Giveback, US Solar's first community solar gardens with Black Hills Energy. The Community Solar program allows multiple people, families and businesses to participate in one large project, called a community solar garden. US Solar is developing 14 such gardens in Colorado.

Pictured are Spencer Albers, director of US Solar's residential programs; Jennifer Sherman, dean of PCC's business and advanced technology division; Greta Chizek, US Solar senior manager of commercial origination; and Patricia Potter, administrative assistant for PCC's business and advanced technology division.



Career and Education Day – In conjunction with Colorado Youth Awareness Week, PCC hosted Career and Education Day on July 26 for 53 teens and young adults. They learned about PCC's Machining Technology, Industrial Technology Maintenance and Automotive Technology programs, enjoyed a complimentary lunch and five students won \$500 scholarships.



State Fair art show – PCC again sponsored Colorado State Fair Fine Arts Exhibit to help bring the work of Colorado artists to a large audience every year. The exhibit is also a valuable learning lab for some of our art students: Since 1995, PCC students have helped with all aspects of the exhibit’s production. Ann Oreskovich, assistant chair of our Fine Arts, Humanities & Media Communications department, and students Acacia Alexander, Ember Peaslee, Emma Harry and Makiyah Skyye Phillips worked on this year’s show and all were recognized for their dedicated efforts. Acacia, Makiyah and Emma had pieces selected for the exhibit and Makiyah won third place for her painting.



State Fair parade and tribute – This year’s Colorado State Fair parade once again was broadcast and livestreamed by PCC’s Center for New Media. This was the first parade production without Scott Richards, head of the CNM, who passed away in June. In honor of Scott, who was responsible for innumerable community productions over the past two decades, he was named marshal emeritus for the parade and his family – wife Meg, children and grandchildren – rode in front of PCC’s float. The PCC float, designed and built by students and staff, won second place in the civic/community category for its interpretation of the parade theme, *Colorado ... It’s our Nature*.



CU praises partnership – University of Colorado President Todd Saliman touted CU’s close ties to Pueblo, noting its partnership with PCC, in an [Aug. 7 op-ed](#) in the Pueblo Chieftain: “One of our great partners is Pueblo Community College and its president, Patty Erjavec. There are many students who earn an associate’s degree at PCC and then transfer to our Colorado Springs campus or other CU campuses, where they thrive.”

Raise value standards through excellence & accessibility

AG speaks at PCC – Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser came to PCC Aug. 26 to announce a redesign of police academy training statewide. The new training will emphasize emotional awareness, officer mental health and resiliency, and more experiential and reality-based training, according to the *Pueblo Chieftain*. Weiser came to Pueblo to get input from local law enforcement and police academy leaders, including those at PCC.



Community helpers – Jaidyn and Megan, two of PCC’s student ambassadors, helped at a recent community backpack drive at the Pueblo Mall. A large group of local children attended; they received backpacks and supplies for the upcoming school year.



Pueblo West chamber presentation – President Erjavec joined Pueblo Corporate College Executive Director Amanda Corum and Southern Colorado Small Business Development Center Executive Director Brian Estrada Aug. 17 for a presentation to members of the Pueblo West Chamber of Commerce. PCC hosts the SBDC, which operates under the umbrella of the Corporate College. Corum and Estrada discussed the many ways the two entities can help local businesses fill the skills gap, including noncredit classes, mobile learning labs and specialized training.

New city economic dashboard – The City of Pueblo recently created a detailed [economic dashboard](#) to provide information to the community and those involved in the area’s economic development. PCC was one of the collaborators on the project, providing data to make sure the city is offering the most comprehensive economic picture available.

New communication tool – Two new electronic signs greet students and neighborhood travelers on PCC’s Pueblo campus. One is positioned on the main street that runs through the campus; the other greets visitors next to the Student Center parking lot.

