



FRCC September 2022 Board Report

Colleen Simpson, Ed.D.

President

Transform the student experience.

This summer, FRCC's **Natural Resources Field Ecology** class was back in business transforming students' educational journey through field work in Alaska. This course introduces students to ecosystems not found in Colorado, expanding their minds and knowledge bank. Highlights included:

- Nest surveys of the glaucous winged gull (while the eggs were hatching!)
- A trip to the sonar counting station whose data determines salmon commercial fishing regulations on a daily basis. (Followed by a 21-mile paddle down the Copper River to get back to their vans.)
- A paddle outing to the Sheridan glacier to discuss glaciers and climate change. (When FRCC first began this class 12 years ago, participants could walk on the glacier from the trail head; now it is a three-mile paddle across a lake—meltwater from the glacier—to access the glacier.)



Saul Tapia Vega—a recent graduate from FRCC's Boulder County Campus—had a busy summer participating in the **Colorado Governor's Internship program**. He served as part of the team that sets up press conferences and events for Governor Jared Polis. Saul has also started working as an intern for the Latino Chamber of Boulder County helping to update their website. As a student, Saul was a star participant in FRCC's LEADS (Latinx Excellence, Achievement and Development Scholars) and [TRIO Student Support Services](#) programs. He is transferring to CU-Boulder this fall majoring in finance with a computer science integration.

In June, two FRCC students took 2nd place out of 12 schools from the around in the US in the **Community College Innovation Challenge**. Cristian Madrazo and Xavier Cotton were selected as finalists for their design of a new device to help clean up oil spills. The two got to travel to Washington, DC, with their mentor Diane Rhodes (computer science faculty at FRCC).




Their project was a design for a drone that can help clean up aquatic oil spills—using hair as part of its filtration system. Find out more about their experience—and about their winning design—in [Cristian's recent FRCC blog post](#). (Spoiler alert: It all started with a project for faculty member Anne Wrobetz's engineering design class.) We can't wait to see what these two do next!



This summer, several students from FRCC's [Wolves to Rams](#) program were busy for 10 weeks of **Research Experience for Undergraduates** (REU) in various Colorado State University research labs. These National Institutes of Health grant trainees spent 40 hours per week doing individual research projects in a bench or behavioral lab. They also got helpful career guidance, sessions on ethics and professionalism—and great team building experiences. (Each grant year, six trainees participate in a full academic year of trainings and hands-on practice research experiences at FRCC's Larimer Campus to help them prepare for their CSU summer REU experience and transfer.)



Front Range Community College's [TRIO Student Support Services](#) program hosted its second **Summer Bridge Seminar** at our Boulder County Campus. The event is designed to help new TRIO scholars—who are also new to college—prepare for a successful start to the fall semester. The students got to hear from campus Vice President Aparna D-N Palmer, PhD, who shared her personal higher education story. They took a career interest survey, and participated in sessions that covered topics such as academic success in the classroom and cultural leadership. This engaging program helped the new TRIO scholars begin building a sense of community as they start their own higher education journey.

 **Geo-Launchpad** Four FRCC students completed [Geo-Launchpad internships](#) this summer. The program helps community college students from Colorado and New Mexico develop the research and professional skills they need for future science careers. Two of the interns worked on projects with the [UNAVCO](#) consortium, testing GPS equipment by designing and implementing a study on different equipment models. The other two interns worked with the non-profit [Western Resources Advocates](#) (in partnership with UNAVCO). One researched how wildfires disproportionately affect different communities, providing potential policy recommendations. The other conducted state research to update a policy database. Three of the four will be presenting their work at the Geological Society of America's annual meeting in Denver this October. All four interns received training in job seeking and professional soft skills, as well as formal mentorship. Interns also got to talk with geoscience professionals through a series of weekly brown bag lunch meetings.

Create education without barriers through transformational partnerships.

FRCC was recently selected as an **Apprenticeship Ambassador** by the US Department of Labor (DOL). FRCC is the only college in Colorado participating in the [ambassadorship program](#). The goal of this initiative is to expand, strengthen, promote and diversify apprenticeships around the country. FRCC sees apprenticeships as a critical component of the college's broader workforce strategy, helping to develop talent and expand opportunities for historically underserved people in high-demand industries. Cybersecurity is a special focus for the DOL's work—and FRCC is currently [working to create new apprenticeships](#) with local employers in this field, as well as in information technology and other industries. Over the last year, FRCC has served 324 apprentices and pre-apprentices in our health care, manufacturing and tree care [apprenticeship programs](#). In addition to getting paid while going to school, 92% of our apprentices have completed their FRCC certificate while working in their chosen field.

Several current and former FRCC **sterile processing apprentices** got to meet Governor Jared Polis this summer—as he promoted the expansion of apprenticeship programs statewide. The governor signed an executive order at St. Anthony Hospital—a Centura Health location representing successful apprenticeship programs in the medical field. FRCC works with Centura on several health care [apprenticeships](#)—including our pharmacy technician, sterile processing and medical assisting programs. The executive order directs state agencies to work on increasing the number of registered apprenticeships the state offers. FRCC continues to expand our apprenticeship offerings in health care, IT, cybersecurity, manufacturing, tree care and more.



*Pictured here behind the governor are:
Steve Weber, Alex Armendariz, Aimee Robuck, Katy Sampson,
Melissa Brionez and Robert Hernandez*

FRCC's **Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources** team was invited to present about [their program](#) to the state's wildfire matters legislative committee, which is part of the governor's task force on forest health. One of the committee's greatest priorities is workforce development. FRCC has the only two-year program for forestry in the state of Colorado.

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

This semester, FRCC is rolling out a new pilot—creating a collegewide **Computing Technology Department**. (Up to this point, each of our three campuses has had its own separate computer science and IT programs.) Computing faculty from all three of our campuses and online have been meeting regularly and made the request to become a single department. Their goal is to optimize student course scheduling and determine which hardware and software tools work best for their students across the college. Faculty from the following programs will now work collaboratively under one dean:

- Computer networking
- Computer information systems
- Computer science
- Web development

Forty-seven students from the **registered nursing program** at FRCC's Westminster Campus recently took the NCLEX-RN examination—and every single one of them passed. The exceptional student performance on the industry certification exam is due to the hard work of our nursing faculty and staff in preparing these students to enter the nursing field. Their performance earned the Westminster Campus RN program the #1 spot in its jurisdiction.