

# President's SBCCOE Report

Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

## Section One | Transform the Student Experience

### The Season for Celebrations



Nearly 650 students participated in PPSC's 2024 Commencement Ceremony on May 11, at the Broadmoor World Arena. Ranging in age from 16 – 72, the members of the Class of 2024 not only received their diplomas in front of a packed arena, but were also the first class to receive a traditional Native American Blessing.

Maria delaCruz, Associate Dean from the PPSC Division of Business, Technology & Public Service, was joined by the Thundering Eagles, a Native American drum group. Together they delivered the blessing and played a traditional song in honor of the graduates and their accomplishments.

A week before Commencement, more than 60 PPSC nursing students participated in the 2024 Nurse Pinning Ceremony at the PPSC Centennial Campus. Similarly, the PPSC Department of Military & Veterans Programs (MVP) honored active service and veteran graduates during a special reception. All MVP graduates were presented with a red, white and blue medal to wear during the commencement ceremony.



# President's SBCCOE Report

## Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

### PPSC Graduates in The News

PPSC graduates Time Niemeyer, Chase Lainez, and Hitcel Hernandez, were all featured in the Colorado Springs Gazette prior to graduation. Please read their stories below.

- **Best & Brightest:** Time is a Boettcher Foundation scholar and has his own album called 160Hours under the name Tim3. Time has been studying mathematics at PPSC and is now moving on to study engineering at the School of Mines. [Read more about Time's story here.](#)
- **Best & Brightest:** Chase serves as the president of the Keep Colorado Clean Club and as the squadron commander in AFJROTC at Air Academy High School. Chase is concurrently enrolled in PPSC's nursing program. [Learn more about Chase's story here.](#)
- **Graduate Feature:** Hitcel served as the past president of PPSC's honor society, Phi Theta Kappa, and played a huge role in organizing PPSC's first annual Hispanic Heritage Festival. Hitcel is a first-generation graduate and looks forward to making an impact at UCCS next year. [Learn more about Hitcel's legacy here.](#)

### Perfect Score for December 2023 PPSC Nursing Grads



The PPSC Registered Nurse (RN) December 2023 Graduates achieved a 100% pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) – the examination for the licensing of nurses in the U.S., Canada and Australia. On average, only seven in 10 graduates pass the NCLEX and among all test takers the 2023 pass rate was 69.66%.

This achievement positions PPSC at the forefront of nursing education in Colorado and nationally. The program is ranked first among 1,386 programs in the U.S.

This achievement comes on the heels of financial support for students through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) who provided \$465 stipends to 121 eligible nursing students.

# President's SBCCOE Report

Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

## SkillsUSA & FBLA Students Collect Awards



PPSC students from the Technical and Professional Division received numerous achievements at the Skills USA 2024 Competition. Four students were honored for their expertise and hard work: Liam Stewart (gold in Diesel Technology), Ben Blatz (silver in Auto Collision Technology), Levi Ellis (bronze in Diesel Technology), and Eric Stegman (bronze in Welding.)

Faculty members, Dr. Carol Kurkowski and Clint Schafer, led the PPSC Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) student group to success at the Colorado State Competition. Not only did the group win the lion's share of the awards, but all seven students qualified to represent PPSC at the prestigious FBLA Nationals in Orlando.

## PPSC Cybersecurity Receives \$300,000 in State Funding

Thanks to recent approval from the Colorado General Assembly, PPSC will receive \$300,000 in state dollars to continue growing its successful cybersecurity program

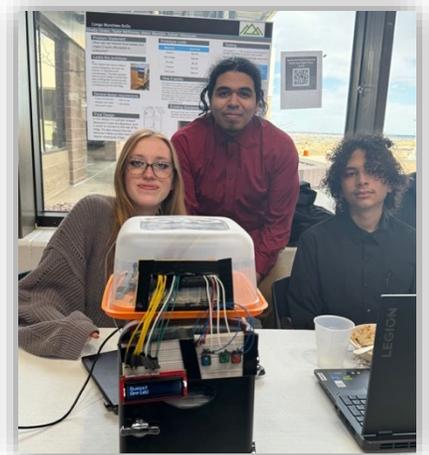
The funding builds on [Senate Bill 18-086](#), which set aside \$1.5 million to develop the college's cybersecurity training program in partnership with local organizations. In the past five years, PPSC has doubled course enrollment, awarded 82 credentials, and provided \$30,000 in scholarships for cyber students.

# President's SBCCOE Report

Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

## PPSC Engineering Students Hold Expo

PPSC IDEA Lab Students held an Engineering Design Exposition. The end-of-semester event provided an opportunity for students to share their project prototypes and posters with a panel of industry judges, while also learning about engineering professions and trends.



## Section Two | Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

### A Day at the Capital

Executive Deans, Joyce Kaplan and Heather Pierce, along with Engineering Department Chair, McKenna Lovejoy, attended the Aerospace Day at the Colorado Capitol. They enjoyed fostering relationships with university and industry partners as the college develops aerospace programs with transfer, career, and technical education pathways.

### PPSC Staff Receive System Honors

Four PPSC staff members received the Community College of Colorado System Commitment to Excellence Award. Congratulations to: Jack Grimm, Advising & Testing Program Advisor; Parker Burgess, Pipes Mechanical Trades Professional; Billie Jo Giles, Co-Chair of the English Department; and Carolyn Owen, Health and Wellness Instructor.

# President's SBCCOE Report

Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

## Section Three: Create Education Without Barriers Through Transformational Partnerships

### The Black Forest/Monument Fire Academy



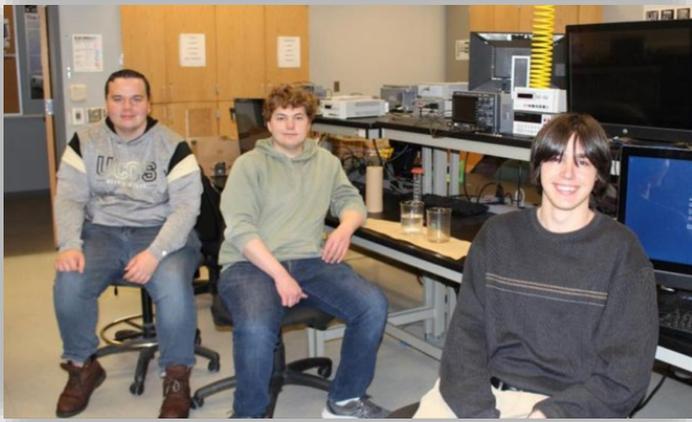
Last fall, PPSC partnered with the Black Forest Fire Rescue and the Monument Fire District, to create the Black Forest/Monument Fire Academy. This spring, the first class graduated during a special ceremony. More than a graduation, this event it is the mark of a safer, brighter future.

When these recruits started class together in January of 2024, it signaled a historic commitment to advancing public safety. The academy is designed to deliver unparalleled training and education to serve and protect the Pikes Peak Region. Those who complete the course not only have firefighter training, but are also eligible for career opportunities such as a paramedic, fire safety inspector, or investigators. [You can learn more about this impactful program by watching a recent news story featured on KRDO.](#)

# President's SBCCOE Report

Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

## Student Experiment Headed to International Space Station



PPSC Engineering freshman Blake MacDonald, along with UCCS Aerospace Engineering sophomore Luke Davis and UCCS Mechanical Engineering Junior Noah Grebe, were selected to fly their experiment on the International Space Station (ISS) in the fall of 2024. Their experiment, "Calcium Sulfate Crystal Growth in Microgravity," was selected as one of 37 for this prestigious honor.

The experiment will be part of the Mission 18 payload that will be placed on top a Falcon 9 Dragon rocket. The rocket will launch from NASA's Kennedy

Space Center, on historic pad 39A, the pad from which all Apollo missions to the Moon launched. The experiment will then be transported to the ISS, orbiting 250 miles above Earth's surface and traveling at 4.5 miles per second, where it will be operated by astronauts for two – four weeks.

## PPSC Faculty & D2 Students Connect with Astronauts



PPSC Engineering Department Chair McKenna Lovejoy and Assistant Professor of Business Dennis Natali joined students from Harrison School District 2 as they made amateur radio contact with astronauts on the ISS last month.

Crew members aboard the ISS talked with students ranging from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade for 10-minutes. The students talked with the astronauts about life in space, and their jobs working in science, technology, engineering and math.

# President's SBCCOE Report

## Dr. Lance Bolton | Pikes Peak State College | May 2024

### PPSC Goes to the Dogs



PPSC joined the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Antlers Dog Park, located directly across the street from the PPSC Downtown Campus.

To show support for our neighbors, connect with community leaders and create more awareness of the Downtown Campus, PPSC employees staffed a table and provided college information to more than 100 attendees and their furry friends.

### Harrison School District 2 Promise Program Expands

PPSC expanded its Harrison School D2 Promise Program to include direct admission. A no-cost program, direct admission ensures D2 juniors and seniors have their academic transcripts, basic demographics and contact information shared with PPSC. Direct Admission will help D2 students better understand PPSC post-secondary options and scholarship offers, while also eliminating paperwork, application fees and waiting periods.

## Section Four: Redefine Our Value Proposition Through Accessibility, Affordability, Quality, Accountability, Resource Development, and Operational Excellence

### Cops, Courts & Corrections Career Fair

Prior to graduation, PPSC students interested in a career in public service had the opportunity to visit and share their resumes with representatives from the Colorado Springs Police Department, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, and the Colorado Department of Corrections.

### New Needs-Based Scholarship

PPSC is offering three new scholarships to help students with: basic needs, academic needs, and childcare needs. These new scholarships reward selected students with up to \$400 a semester. The scholarships are open to all current students who are enrolled in at least six credit hours.