



## President's Report

Dr. Mordecai Brownlee

December 2021 · Issue No. 291

### *Transform the Student Experience*



#### **CCA Hosts First In-Person Theater Production in Nearly Two Years**

The Community College of Aurora's Theatre Department performed "The Love Theory: A Play About Climate Change and Us" from Oct. 15-17 – the college's first theater production since early 2020 and first-ever play performed outdoors. CCA theater students performed the play in CCA's outdoor amphitheater on the CentreTech campus. The play, centered around climate change, features the work of many CCA student essays woven together by former CCA theater student Aisha Spencer. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the final performances of the college's spring 2020 production were canceled and the fall 2020 and spring 2021 plays were performed on Zoom.



#### **CCA to Make Return to Model United Nations After Two-Year Hiatus**

The Community College of Aurora's Model United Nations team will travel to New York in March for the 2022 Model United Nations. CCA normally sends a delegation of 12-18 students to the annual event, but due to COVID, the college was unable to participate the past two years. **Bobby Pace**, Vice President for Academic Success, announced the Model UN CCA delegation on November 11. CCA's Model UN team will represent Botswana. CCA is one of only a handful of community colleges from across the United States to participate in Model UN and has won several awards at the competition.



### **CCA Uses \$1.11M in Federal Relief Funds to Pay Off Tuition Debt for Hundreds of Students**

The Community College of Aurora used \$1.11 million in federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) money to eliminate tuition debt for hundreds of students. The funds, made possible by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, were used to clear the balances—totaling \$669,800—for 378 students enrolled in fall 2020 classes at CCA. Nearly half of those students are now enrolled in fall 2021 classes and continuing what they had to put on hold because of the pandemic. An additional \$442,200 in tuition debt will be written off for 374 students enrolled in spring 2021 and/or summer 2021 classes at CCA.



### **CCA, HealthOne Host Open House**

The Community College of Aurora partnered with HealthONE, the largest health care system in the Denver metro area, to host an open house on October 20 at the Medical Center of Aurora for students to learn more about the health care field and career options at HealthONE. Students who attended the open house also had the opportunity to learn about CCA's career-ready certificates and degrees.



### **CCA Hosts National First-Generation Celebration Week Event**

The Community College of Aurora hosted six events throughout the week of November 8 to acknowledge and celebrate first-generation students. As part of National First-Generation Celebration Week, CCA hosted a panel in which alumni and faculty



discussed their first-generation experience; a workshop featuring first-generation student and inspirational speaker Tamam Waritu; and an “I Am First” Resource Fair where students could grab food, participate in activities, and learn about resources available to them at CCA.

Caption: Members of the student and faculty First Generation panel on November 9.

### **Community ESL Citizenship Class Attends Veterans Day Celebration**

The Community College of Aurora Community ESL Program’s citizenship class attended the college’s Veterans Day celebration on November 11 at the Lowry campus. As part of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services grant the program received, the class must complete two assimilation activities per term to learn more about life in the United States. Attending events such as the Veterans Day celebration also helps the citizenship students learn more about United States holidays and observances, which helps them during the naturalization interview.

### **Aurora TV Profiles Ex-CCA Student’s Journey**

Aurora TV profiled **Gabriel Toepel**, a Community College of Aurora graduate, for a segment celebrating Veterans Day and National Adoption Month in November. Toepel, who earned Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees from the CCA, was adopted from a Japanese orphanage by an American couple serving in the U.S. Navy when he was 2 years old. Growing up in America, Toepel was a track star at Brighton High School and applied to West Point, only to discover he was not a U.S. citizen. He eventually joined the military as a non-citizen resident and was granted U.S. citizenship upon completion of basic military training. Toepel is currently earning his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Colorado College of Nursing. You can [watch the Aurora TV segment on Toepel here](#) and [read an article CU’s College of Nursing wrote about him here](#).

### ***Transform Our Own Work Experience***





### **Angela Marquez Tabbed as CCA's Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Dr. **Angela Marquez** was named Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at the Community College of Aurora in October. Marquez had been CCA's Vice President of Student Affairs since January 2020. In her new role, Marquez will establish and oversee a new Center for Multicultural Student Services at CCA. Serving students from more than 60 countries, CCA is by far the most diverse college in Colorado. Additionally, 61 percent of its students are minorities. Marquez's selection to this post reaffirms the college's commitment to DEI work and is a continuation of the college's effort to create an equitable and inclusive environment for students, staff, and faculty.

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

#### **Simpson Co-Authors Textbook Chapter**

Dr. **Ashley Simpson**, Chair for the Education and World Languages Department, coauthored a chapter titled "Demonstrating Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator" in the latest edition of the textbook "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs for the National Association for the Education of Young Children" (NAEYC). Simpson is also a member of NAEYC's Affiliate Council, Accreditation Board, and Peer Review Team.

#### **Lawrence Serves as Author/Editor for Cases on Leadership for Equity and Justice in Higher Education**

Library Services Director **Dan Lawrence** served as an author and managing editor for the planning, design, and launch of the inaugural issue of a new open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed journal called "[Cases on Leadership for Equity and Justice in Higher Education](#)" (CLEJHE). CLEJHE supports higher-education leadership development by providing case narratives and teaching notes that inform the practice of learners and leaders in college, university, and policy settings. The journal is a collaborative project at the University of Colorado Denver involving its ThingStudio learning community and the School of Education and Human Development programs for Leadership for Educational Equity in Higher Education and Learning, Design, and Technology.

#### **Center for Adult Education Sees Enrollment Growth**

Throughout the remote portion of the pandemic, CCA's Center for Adult Education (CAE) saw a lower student enrollment than pre-pandemic. While serving students remotely, CAE enrollment was around 300 students – Community ESL enrollment was in the mid 200s and High School Equivalency enrollment in the 80s. CAE saw a large increase for the fall 2021 learning period when its enrollment more than doubled – the Community ESL program enrollment is more than 500 students and the HSE student population is nearly 100. CAE serves students from 64 different countries and 38 different language backgrounds.



### **Center for Adult Education Receives Two-Year Citizenship and Immigration Services Grant**

The Center for Adult Education's (CAE) Citizenship program, in partnership with Lutheran Family Services, has been awarded the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) grant for an additional two years. CAE will receive around \$70,000 over the two years to pay for the instruction of students who are preparing for their naturalization application and interview. Lutheran Family Services will be the lead on the grant and provide legal services to the students. This is the fifth grant CAE has received from USCIS and each two-year grant supports students in their naturalization goals.

### **Communications and Marketing Department Wins Regional Marketing Awards**

CCA's Communications and Marketing Department won five 2021 National Council for Marketing & Public Relations District 4 Medallion Awards in October:

- Videographer **Tim Meyer** won Gold for his 2021 Community College of Aurora Foundation Luncheon video in the "Video-Long Form" category.
- Marketing Manager **Ana Romero** won Bronze for her 2021 Concurrent Enrollment matriculation campaign in the "Successful Recruitment or Marketing Program" category. This campaign included emails, flyers, text messages, and a website landing page to promote the High School to College virtual open house on April 20, 2021, and CCA's Bridge to Bachelor's Degree program. The campaign also included a postcard sent to 3,000 CE students congratulating them on their high school graduation and inviting them to register for summer and fall 2021 classes at CCA.
- Web Content Specialist **Joe Florkowski** won Bronze for his April 2021 employee newsletter in the "Electronic Newsletter" category.
- Meyer and Graphic Designer **Nancy Sells** and Social Media Specialist **Kristine Dorame** won Bronze for their collective work on the 2021 "Doing Our Part" campaign in the "Government or Community Relations Campaign" category. The campaign showed current and potential CCA students that college employees were "doing their part"—getting the COVID-19 vaccine to keep themselves and everyone around them safe. The campaign included a poster designed by Sells, short-form videos created by Meyer, and social media content posted by Dorame.
- Sells won Bronze for her 2021 commencement program in the "Wild Card" category.

***Create Education Without Barriers Through Transformational Partnerships***



### **Brownlee Introduced to Aurora Community, Fields Honored at Celebrating Connections**

CCA President Dr. **Mordecai Brownlee** was formally introduced to the greater Aurora-Denver community while Colorado State Senator **Rhonda Fields** was honored during the college's Celebrating Connections event on October 19. More than 150 local business leaders, political officials, school representatives, and other community members attended the event at the Hyatt Regency Aurora. Brownlee started at CCA on August 2 and is the sixth president in CCA's history. Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Chancellor **Joe Garcia** presented Fields with the Legislator of the Year Award for her work to advance the mission of the college system. CCCS gives the award annually to legislators who make an extra effort to understand and champion the system's priorities.

Caption: From left to right, Aurora Mayor **Mike Coffman**, CCCS Chancellor **Joe Garcia**, Colorado State Senator **Rhonda Fields**, and CCA President Dr. **Mordecai Brownlee** at Celebrating Connections



### **CCA Staff Represent Skilled Trades Program at Transportation and Construction GIRL Day**

CCA staff represented the Skilled Trades program at the Transportation and Construction GIRL Day on September 28 at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. CCA staff attended the event to raise awareness for the college's Construction Management



and Diesel Power Mechanics programs as well as to network with participating companies. Transportation and Construction GIRL Day is an event to show girls possible careers in transportation and construction.

Caption: From left, **Mason Jenkins**, College Recruiter, **Brian Horvath**, Interim Department Chair – Skilled Trades, **Ernie Navarette**, Pathway Advisor, and **Veronica Nation**, Academic Program Support Specialist were some of the CCA staff at Transportation and Construction GIRL Day.