



## College Report – April 12, 2023

Patty Erjavec, PhD, *President*

### Transform the student experience

**Teaching and Learning Center opens** – The [grand opening of PCC's Nursing and Allied Health Teaching and Learning Center](#) at St. Mary-Corwin Hospital took place Jan. 26, the culmination of a four-year project. The TLC occupies approximately 60,000 square feet on four floors of the hospital's east tower and includes a simulation center, learning labs, classrooms, offices and student spaces for nine of PCC's health programs. Several hundred community members toured the center and/or attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



**Healthy Minds campus** – PCC received the [Healthy Minds Campus designation](#) from the Colorado Department of Higher Education in recognition of the school's efforts to raise awareness and increase students' access to mental health services.

"We are taking the necessary steps to ensure our students have all of the tools and resources needed to be successful in school and in life," said Toni Skilling, PCC's director of student life and leadership.

**Pantry expansion** – The [Panther Student Pantry](#) has a new, larger location on the Pueblo campus and supporters celebrated its re-opening Feb. 13. Thanks to ongoing generous donations from the PCC Foundation, Care and Share Food Bank of Southern Colorado, the Educational Credit Management Corporation and others, current PCC students have access to a variety of fresh, frozen and shelf-stable food, as well as toiletry items, throughout the school year. Students can select up to six free food items and one hygiene product per week.

The Pueblo pantry opened in 2014 and there now are pantries on all three PCC campuses.

Transform our own workforce experience

**New branch campus deans** – Dr. Lisa Snyder became the new executive dean for the PCC Southwest campus and sites on Feb. 1. Prior to joining PCC Southwest, Snyder was the dean of the School of Humanities at San Juan College. She also worked as the associate vice president for academic affairs at Fort Lewis College. Her career in education spans more than 20 years. In addition to leadership positions in higher education, she was a faculty member at universities in New York and Oregon.

Snyder is a first-generation college graduate. She earned her doctorate in instructional leadership from Argosy University in Sarasota, Fla., a master's in curriculum

Dr. Michael Verderaime is the new executive dean at the PCC Fremont campus in Cañon City. He has more than 20 years of experience in K-12 and higher education.

Before joining PCC, he was the director of student pathways for the South Central Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). He also served as department chair and professor of world language and communications for CCCS.

Verderaime received his doctorate in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He earned a master's degree in education at the University of Northern Colorado and La Universidad de Salamanca (Spain) and a bachelor's degree in Spanish from Adams State College, now Adams State University.



**Outstanding Women award** – Maria de la Cruz, the academic excellence administrator for PCC's Business and Advanced Technology Division, was recognized at the Pueblo City-County Library District's Outstanding Women awards luncheon March 31. The annual ceremony honors women who have made important contributions to the community and have celebrated the important role that women have played in Pueblo's history.

De la Cruz has held multiple roles at PCC and was named APT employee of the year in 2021. She is active in the PCC and Pueblo communities and works to preserve her Native American culture through prayer, song, dance, foods, storytelling and clothing. Her nomination read, “Maria has said that her overwhelming goal in life is to do all that she can every day, on every level, to just make the world a better place. Everyone who knows her, knows that these words are genuine, that they truly speak to the kind of person Maria is, and how deserving she is of the Outstanding Women award.”



Create education without barriers through partnerships

**PCC partners with UCCS** – PCC welcomed University of Colorado Colorado Springs Chancellor Venkat Reddy and a large group of UCCS and PCC staff and supporters to campus Feb. 3 for the announcement of our new partnership. Chancellor Reddy and President Erjavec signed a memorandum of understanding for a pre-engineering program that will enable students to receive an associate degree from PCC and transfer easily to UCCS to complete a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. We also welcomed the members of UCCS’ pre-collegiate program, whose office is now located on the PCC campus.



**COPERR grant helps students, neighborhoods** – Pueblo Corporate College, a division of PCC, will [receive more than \\$417,000](#) to begin a construction skills training program as part of the Colorado Partnership for Education and Rural Revitalization (COPERR) grant, which was established by the office of Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser.

Through the grant, Pueblo Corporate College will start new construction skills training program and collaborate with local nonprofit organizations to provide students with on-the-job training, according to a press release from the attorney general’s office.

**President selected for state committee** – PCC President Patty Erjavec was named to the Colorado HSI Consortium Steering Committee. The consortium provides a “collaborative community of HSIs aimed at strengthening our organizational capacity to intentionally serve Latinx/Hispanic students,” according to cofounder Dr. Manuel Del Real. The steering committee will develop and implement the consortium’s goals and activities.

Raise value standards through excellence & accessibility

**PCC hosts Drive Clean Colorado** – PCC welcomed [Drive Clean Colorado](#) to the Pueblo campus for its February Drive Clean Connection. James Cordova, chair of the automotive service technology department, spoke about PCC’s new electric vehicle program and took participants on a tour of the department.

Drive Clean Colorado is a nonprofit organization that supports “equitable clean transportation and efficient mobility choices with the goal of reducing greenhouse gases for cleaner, healthier air for Colorado,” according to its website.

**Black History Month events** – PCC held a variety of events to celebrate Black History Month. In conjunction with the Pueblo City-County Library District, PCC hosted the Colorado Humanities Black History Live tour, featuring the life of Josephine Baker. The Associated Student Government Movie Night featured “Till,” the story of Mamie Till-Bradley and her pursuit of justice after the murder of her teenage son, Emmett. Finally, PCC’s Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee brought local band The Shades of the Blues and dance group the Southpaq Crew to the Student Center, where they performed for a large, appreciative crowd.

**TUESDAY, FEB. 7**  
6 PM  
Hoag Theater | AB Lower Level  
**Josephine Baker**  
CHAUTAUQUA  
A live performance starring  
Becky Stone. FREE admission.

**THURSDAY, FEB. 16**  
6 PM  
Occhiato Theater | GATC Building  
ASG  
**FREE**  
Movie  
Night  
**TILL**

**TUESDAY, FEB. 21**  
11 AM-1 PM  
Welcome Center | Student Center  
Live music by  
**The Shades of the Blues**  
and dance performance  
by the Southpaq Crew  
**Shades of the Blues**  
FREE admission.  
Food will be provided.

*Celebrating*  
**BLACK HISTORY**  
*Month*

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**National customer-service recognition** – PCC’s Customer Solutions Center and advising team were recognized in January by LiveHelpNow for 45 consecutive months in the top 10% of LiveHelpNow’s key customer service metrics in live chat and texting. PCC was the only college in Colorado to receive the award in January. In addition, PCC was one of just 100 companies nationwide to receive the Best Customer Service award for 2022.

**Parolee re-entry simulation event** – PCC’s Criminal Justice program hosted a parolee re-entry simulation March 29. The event, presented by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, offered participants a chance to see what post-prison life is like for recent parolees, get a closer look at the challenges they face as they rebuild their lives, and share their thoughts about the experience at a debriefing following the event.