



MSU SM Student Affairs
DENVER

Annual Impact Report

2022-23

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Dear Roadrunner Partner:

Five years ago, President Janine Davidson, Ph.D., told me she wanted to center student voices in the University’s decision-making process. In creating the Student Affairs branch at MSU Denver, she not only ensured that the student experience would be represented at all levels of dialogue at the University but also created a mechanism to build synergy among our enrollment, student engagement and wellness, and career-planning teams. On Aug. 1, 2018, I shared my three priorities — that soon expanded to four — with branch team members:

1. All of our efforts will point to the ultimate goal of career and educational success for our students.
2. We will ensure their success by investing in student-engagement initiatives and efforts.
3. All of those efforts must be designed using the tenets of diversity, equity and inclusion.
4. We will lead efforts to be a radically accessible institution, ensuring that all Coloradans have access to the incredible Roadrunner experience.

True to our reputation and professional expertise, our branch’s team rallied to these priorities. Five years later, I am proud of the work we’ve done to build a solid foundation for the learner experience at MSU Denver. Not only are we at the forefront of truly reshaping higher education to serve our students, but we are doing so with care and concern for each individual with whom we engage. Even as we celebrate our successes; lean in to recovering, stabilizing and launching; and meet the day-to-day needs our students share with us, we are looking to the horizon and setting a robust vision for our future.



What could happen if we eliminated housing insecurity? What would it mean to erase equity gaps in graduation and retention? What does it mean to be a highly engaged commuter university? What would it look like if we became the most desirable place to work for Student Affairs educators? And how would our work change if our strategy and resource-allocation decisions were more transparent and data-informed?

That’s the system disruption we will make. Student Affairs educators at MSU Denver are energized by what could be. We are deeply committed to the CADRE values. We will not be complacent with the status quo when the status quo isn’t working for all of our students. We are fearless and unafraid to try new ideas and take radical action to meet our mission. Simply put, we embody the spirit of so many Student Affairs educators who shaped MSU Denver in its first 58 years, and we will carry their legacy of excellence forward.

If you’re reading this, you probably care a lot about MSU Denver students. I invite you to join us on this journey of discovery, invention and service. Together, we will soar.

Will Simpkins, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs
Metropolitan State University of Denver



Our Values

MSU Denver's values of **Community, Access, Diversity, Respect and Excellence** permeate the University experience for learners, staff, faculty and our community stakeholders. They guide our decisions and inform our approach to a 21st-century postsecondary experience. Student Affairs embraces these values, manifests them through our resources and programs and holds one another accountable to work in congruence with them.



Our Vision

Student Affairs at MSU Denver is a highly innovative, human-centered team that invests in justice- and community-engaged strategies to transform the learner experience.

Student Affairs 2030 Strategic Plan Goals

1. Student Affairs will create and utilize data-informed strategies to identify priorities and make resource-allocation decisions.
2. Student Affairs will lead efforts to close equity gaps in student retention and completion.
3. Student Affairs will create tailored experiences to increase student engagement.
4. Student Affairs will reduce or eliminate student housing insecurity at MSU Denver.
5. Student Affairs will become the best workplace for Student Affairs educators.

For up-to-date information on strategies and tactics to achieve the Strategic Plan goals, please visit: msudenver.edu/Student-Affairs/Student-Affairs-strategic-plan-framework or scan this QR code:



Our Mission

Student Affairs educators at MSU Denver are committed to supporting the learner experience by centering their unique life journeys in the programs, resources, and services that we offer.

Guiding Commitments

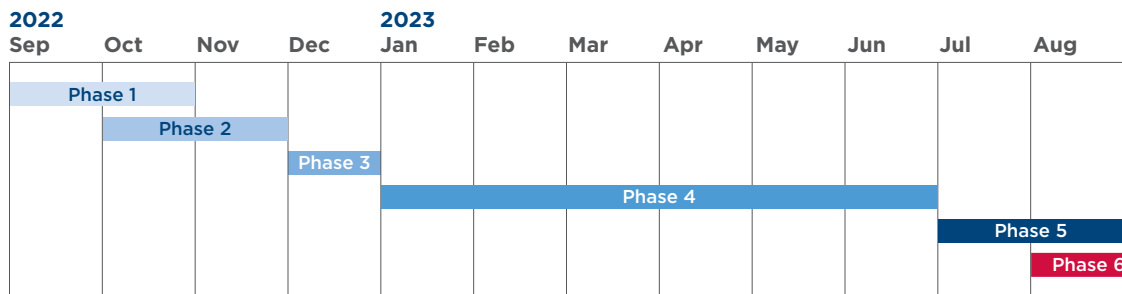
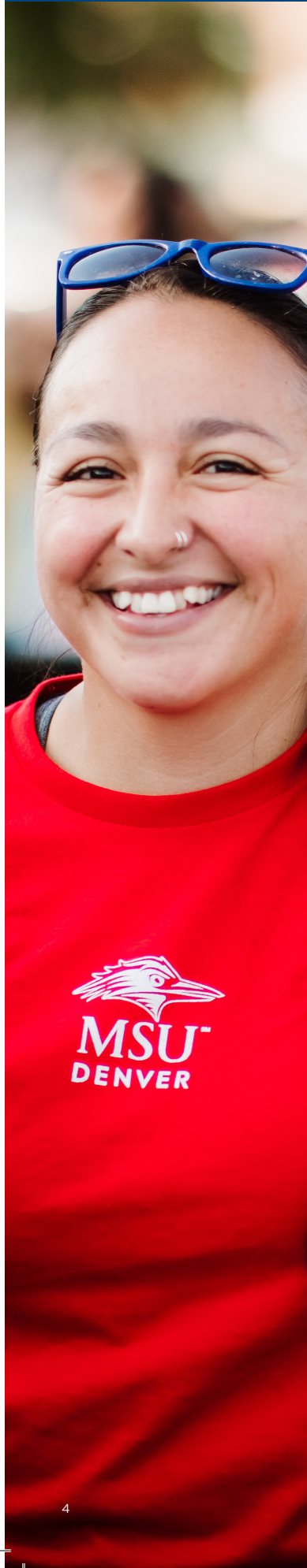
- **Access**
We advocate for resources and opportunities to ensure that learners have the support they need to succeed.
- **Student Engagement and Career Success**
We create opportunities for learners to recognize and grow the essential skills needed to create positive change in our/their communities and in their career progression/journey/endeavors.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
We insist on and hold ourselves accountable to responding actively to inequity, injustice and racism.



Creating the Strategic Plan

Last fall, Student Affairs at MSU Denver embarked on the process of creating foundational statements and documents to serve as a framework upon which our student-centered work will be built for the MSU Denver’s Student Affairs goals, activities and priorities. This phased approach also led us to the creation of a seven-year strategic plan to align with the **MSU Denver 2030 Strategic Plan**.

The strategic plan for Student Affairs progressed through six phases, each building upon the previous one, ensuring continuity and development.



Phase 1 (September - October)
We engaged Student Affairs leaders in ideating our future and hosted **visioning sessions** using appreciative inquiry to gather information highlighting the good already being done.

Phase 2 (October - November)
We hosted several **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats focus groups** with directors, associate/assistant directors and coordinator/entry-level staff members to assess where Student Affairs could positively contribute to student success and meeting the University’s 2030 vision.

Phase 3 (December)
Senior leadership in Student Affairs reviewed all information gathered through visioning sessions and SWOT focus groups, along with supplemental documents (i.e., National Survey for Student Engagement, RealCollege Survey, Engaged Leaders Survey Data) to **create the values, vision, mission, guiding commitments** and draft version of the **strategic plan goals**.

Phase 4 (January - June)
Strategic plan goals were finalized following an ideating session with all Student Affairs staff members. We identified working groups and lead facilitators using a nomination process. Teams then took time to **create strategies and tactics** to meet our five strategic goals. The vice president for Student Affairs and lead facilitators embraced shared governance and sought feedback on initial drafts of the strategic plan.

Phase 5 (July - August)
Student Affairs finalized the plan and launched it at the Fall Student Affairs Kickoff on Aug. 11.

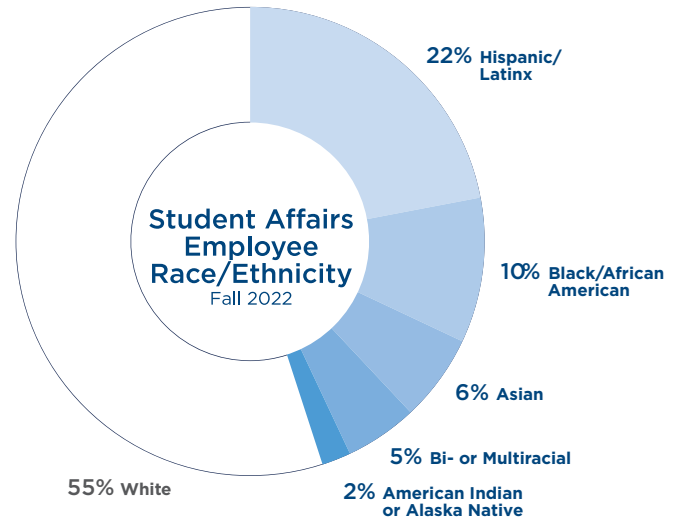
Phase 6 (Ongoing)
Assessment of the strategic plan will be ongoing and will include periodic tactic-setting and strategy revision as necessary.

Who We Are

The Student Affairs team consists of:

- **226 Full-time Staff Members**
- **13 Classified Staff Members**
- **300+ Student Employees**

Student Affairs takes immense pride in the ongoing efforts to enhance diversity and representation within our staff. We are committed to cultivating a team that truly reflects the rich tapestry of our student body and supports our role as a Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving institution. As shown in the chart at right, almost half of our staff members identify as people of color.



Find Us All Over the Auraria Campus!

Across the campus, you will discover a network of over **20 offices** placed in key locations throughout the MSU Denver neighborhood. This allows us to effectively support and engage with our diverse student population, ensuring that no one is far from needed assistance and resources.

Vice President for Student Affairs

Operations and Planning JSSB 350

Enrollment Management

Office of Admissions and Outreach JSSB Counter 1

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships JSSB 130

Office of the Registrar JSSB Counter 3

Orientation, Transfer and Reengagement JSSB 217

Office of Testing Services Tivoli 347

Career Engagement (C2 Hub)

Career Engagement Admin 270

Faculty Engagement JSSB 320

Industry Partnerships JSSB 320

Student Support and Retention JSSB 320

Student Engagement and Wellness

Access Center Plaza 122

Campus Recreation PE/Events 108

Center for Equity and Student Achievement JSSB 237

Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion Tivoli 305, 307, 313 and JSSB 237

College Assistance Migrant Program Tivoli 221

Counseling Center Tivoli 651

Dean of Students Tivoli 343

Health Center at Auraria Plaza 150

Immigrant Services JSSB 238

LGBTQ Resource Center Tivoli 213

Student Care Center Tivoli 311

TRIO Student Support Services JSSB 240

Veteran and Military Student Services Tivoli 215



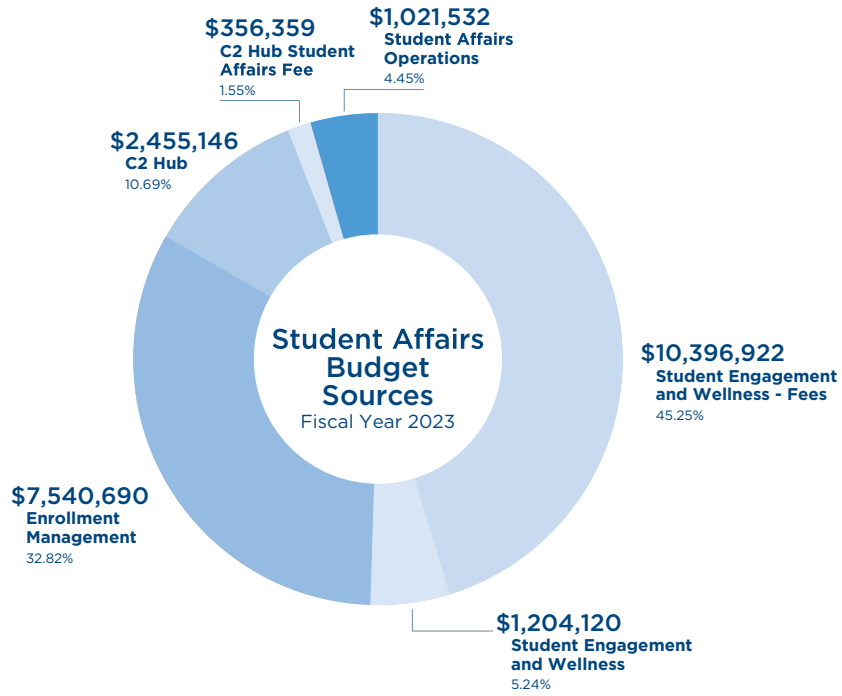
By the Numbers



\$7,786,068
External Gifts
and Grants

THE 'RUNNER

24%
Open rate of
weekly student
newsletter,
The 'Runner



Note: Does not include one-time additions to FY23 budget.

Overall Budget of Student Affairs for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Area	FY23 Base	FY23 Fees	FY23 One-time	FY23 Total
Student Affairs Operations	\$1,021,532	\$0	\$1,339,061	\$2,360,593
Enrollment Management	\$7,540,690	\$0	\$1,158,646	\$8,699,336
C2 Hub	\$2,455,146	\$356,359	\$1,973,267	\$4,784,772
Student Engagement and Wellness	\$1,204,120	\$10,396,922	\$89,089	\$11,690,131
Total	\$12,221,488	\$10,753,281	\$4,560,063	\$27,534,832



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Student Affairs designs programs, policies and procedures that address and reflect the unique needs of MSU Denver's urban community of students, faculty and staff members. To create an institutional culture that celebrates all student backgrounds and ensures that the University is welcoming, inclusive and empathetic, Student Affairs staff members provide student-support services that are equitable and individually focused. They understand how each student interaction impacts student retention.

PRIDE POINTS

- **The Classroom to Career Hub (C2 Hub) has made bold strides to crystallize the diversity, equity, inclusion and justice integral to the foundation of culturally responsive career planning for MSU Denver students and our employer partners.** Previously known as the Diversity Networking Event, the Workplace Equity Summit was created to forge meaningful connections between students with marginalized identities and industry professionals. The event's ultimate goal is to promote economic mobility by strengthening students' cultural capital so they can thrive in the global workforce. The impact of this successful event was clear:
- 110 attendees (30 employers, 20 staff/student employees, 60 students)
 - Over 75% students of color (46% Latino)
 - 67% first-generation
 - \$1,925 revenue generated from employer sponsors.
 - 90% of participants felt more confident advocating for themselves in the workplace.
 - 88% of participants felt more confident with challenging inequity in the workplace.
 - 88% of participants were satisfied with the overall event.

- **The Health Center at Auraria became an official Colorado Medicaid provider of multispecialty health care services.** This means that more than 8,000 students across campus who are insured by Colorado Medicaid can now access high-quality and affordable health care conveniently on campus. As a result, a 42% increase in access resulted in nearly 500 students being provided improved access to health care on the Auraria Campus and at MSU Denver. Medicaid is now the second-most common insurance coverage for new patients.



- **The C2 Hub, Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion partnered to deliver an equity-focused program under one initiative that provides financial support for personal, professional and leadership development to students with historically marginalized identities.** This year, the program supported a cohort of students to attend the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities conference and participate in the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor Trip (GGHT). The reach of this program was overwhelmingly successful:
- **HACU:** 15 fully funded participants
 - 52 nominations submitted (79% increase from the previous year)
 - 88% said this experience led them to connect with professionals
 - Career outcomes: One participant received two internship offers; one received two interview opportunities.
 - **GGHT:** 13 fully funded participants
 - Top skills developed
 - 100% developed critical-thinking and community-building skills.
 - 89% developed intercultural communication skills.
 - 78% developed verbal communication skills.
 - 67% developed leadership, networking and teamwork/collaboration skills.
 - Overall participation demographics:
 - 82% students of color
 - 87% first-generation

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

→ The Earn and Learn Program, housed within the C2 Hub, provides financial support to undergraduate and graduate students participating in what would otherwise be unpaid internships. **Through Earn and Learn, MSU Denver reduces financial barriers to ensure that students benefit from experiential learning.** Additionally, the Earn and Learn program continues to provide critical career-shaping opportunities through this high-impact practice. The program serves cohorts of diverse students, with over 60% reporting first-generation status, spanning 33 dynamic majors, providing them with valuable hands-on learning support for traditional and nontraditional students.

- As of spring 2022, for those students who have participated in Earn and Learn, fall-to-spring/spring-to-fall retention is over 96% and spring-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention is just over 80% (may not account for those who graduated in that time frame).
- Of those participating in the program, average time to graduation is 3.96 years.
- More than 50% of participants identify as students of color, and over 60% are first-generation college students.
- Just over half of students being supported by Earn and Learn are Pell Grant-eligible.
- In spring 2023, we launched our first cohort of 19 graduate students.

→ **MSU Denver's Pathways to Possible (P2P) Program was designed by a grant in 2021 to recruit underserved high school students and provide them with a smooth transition to and through the University.**

P2P provides Success Coaches and Peer Mentors who work with students to navigate the hurdles of transitioning into college. Program outcomes and success coaching focus on helping learners find their communities on campus, decide what to study and explore their identities. Due to the program's success, the University continued funding through an institutional investment to maintain the momentum toward higher retention for target populations. Data shows that P2P BIPOC students have a higher retention rate than the University average.

P2P Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 Retention Comparison*:

- Black/African American: +17% difference
- AAPI +1.3% difference
- Latino: +16% difference

*Data reflected is the percentage difference between P2P participant retention and University racial/ethnic-group retention.

Through the C2 Hub's partnership with Comcast, we were introduced to the CEO of Teaching the Autism Community Trades.

People with autism can often be highly adept at cybersecurity roles. To diversify the cybersecurity workforce and provide training resources to the larger MSU Denver community, we worked together to modify the existing Project PISCES training to meet the needs of six TACT learners. The training happened in person over four sessions. The relationship between TACT and MSU Denver continues, as the Cybersecurity Center was awarded \$30,000 from the Boettcher Foundation to further modify and build a cybersecurity-analyst training curriculum for TACT learners. Other outcomes from this partnership include:

- Six TACT learners participated in Project PISCES and received certificates of completion.
- Four MSU Denver faculty and staff members received training about neurodiverse learners and how best to approach training learners with autism.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

→ In an effort to expand opportunities for prospective students, the Office of Admissions made a significant revision to the auto-admit threshold for incoming high school students, reducing it to a **2.0 cumulative GPA**. This pivotal decision allowed us to extend admission offers in a much shorter time to a broader pool of students who would have otherwise been required to undergo our more comprehensive holistic admissions review process, which could be time-consuming and occasionally lead to denials. By lowering the auto-admit GPA threshold, we witnessed a notable increase in admissions for the spring 2023 and fall 2023 semesters. This change enabled more students to gain access to higher education.

- Spring 2023: High school admissions up 124 students, or 55%.
- Summer 2023: High school admissions up 2,424 students, or 27%.

The Admissions Office continued its efforts by advocating to eliminate the \$25 admissions-application fee. By achieving this, we removed the financial obstacle that previously hindered a considerable number of low-income students from applying to our institution. As a result, we have seen significant increases in applications:

- Spring 2023: Applications were up 1,145, or 25%.
- Summer 2023: Applications were up 233, or 15%.
- Fall 2023: Applications were up 2,365, or 17% (estimated).

→ The Office of the Registrar successfully led the initiative and passing of the elimination of the **18-credit-hour max limit for the Best Grade Stands policy**. This change, effective for the 2023-24 academic year, will allow students to repeat courses and exclude all previously earned lower grades from their GPA. This will improve student GPA, impacting graduation, retention and academic standing.

→ Orientation, Transfer and Reengagement collaborated with campus partners to offer specialized programming for students from diverse backgrounds. Specifically OTR offered programming, such as:

- “Movie Night” in partnership with Spanish and Family programming designed for transfer students and their families.
- “Snack and Learn” sessions to introduce new transfer students to the Honors Program.
- “Career Change Panel” for adult and transfer students, partnered with the Gender Institute for Teaching and Advocacy on a menstrual-care-package drive.

OTR also provided inclusive orientation sessions, including:

- “Orientation Familiar” which includes Spanish translation for English presentations and sessions.
- “Intro Al Colegio” — a series of sessions tailored to introduce Spanish-speaking community members to college details, the hidden curriculum and specific information about MSU Denver.



RECOVER ▲ STABILIZE LAUNCH!

Two years ago, President Davidson introduced the “**Recover, Stabilize, LAUNCH!**” framework as we charted our course out of the pandemic. During the most challenging times, we proactively planned how we would *recover* from the shocks of Covid-19, *stabilize* our enrollment and build the foundation to help us *launch* toward our Strategic Plan goals.



RECOVER

As the MSU Denver community embarked on its first academic year post-pandemic, Student Affairs took a keen interest in identifying and addressing underlying challenges that had gradually emerged over the preceding years and were accentuated during the pandemic. This period of transformation prompted us to acknowledge our staff and students' evolving needs and aspirations. In response, we strategically focused on implementing measures to recover and enhance our services. The following highlights showcase our resolute efforts in navigating this change.

PRIDE POINTS

- **Staff turnover in Student Affairs has declined significantly.** At the height of the pandemic, we experienced over a 30% vacancy rate and have now recovered to a commendable 10%, considering our staff size of over 230. A notable milestone in our progress is the enhancement of our compensation structure. Recognizing the importance of fair and competitive wages, we have raised our lowest salary from \$42,000 to \$46,300. Additionally, we are committed to continually recalibrating our salaries to align with the cost of living in the Denver and Front Range regions, ensuring our staff's financial well-being.

Student Affairs diligently upholds mandatory equitable-hiring training for all employees as part of our ongoing dedication to fostering inclusivity and equitable practices. This valuable training equips them for potential involvement in hiring committees at various points throughout the year, promoting a more inclusive and diverse recruitment process.

- **Many of the seeds planted in the early development of the C2 Hub have proved fruitful this year.** The first year of the C2 Hub's development (2019-20) focused on an institutional reorganization that repurposed existing staff and programmatic budget to develop the basic staffing pattern to better align with a truly scalable and impactful career hub. Impacted by the Covid pandemic and racial and civil reckoning, the second year of the C2 Hub's development responded to a cataclysmic change in the higher-education and broader workforces. The most significant development of the first two years of the C2 Hub included creating the Industry Partnerships team to strengthen and streamline our external partnerships with employers and industry leaders. In addition to preparing students for robust careers, the Industry Partnerships team works with employers to provide resources and training to prepare them for the diverse talent they seek. The third year (2021-22) of the



C2 Hub focused on weaving career development into our scholar and student-retention programs. Throughout this period, we focused on recovery and a return to "normal" while assessing how the pandemic impacted career trajectories, choices and trends for MSU Denver students.

- **The Office of the Registrar has achieved substantial advancements in the transfer-evaluation process, significantly reducing the timeline to an impressive average of one week.** This improvement has been made possible through a combination of strategic efforts, including the addition of a transfer-equivalency specialist to streamline data in the equivalency database; an automated and robust evaluation workflow that harnesses the power of the Slate CRM system; and the updating of prohibitive policy that obstructed student progress. Currently, the average time for evaluation is less than one week, marking a tremendous improvement in efficiency. The team's dedication extends beyond swift evaluations. It has diligently constructed and maintained an equivalency database, ensuring a smoother, more consistent and more organized evaluation process.
- **By adopting the software TD Client, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships established an automated daily data exchange with the US Department of Education.** This automation eliminated the need for a time-consuming manual process that previously occurred twice a week, taking up to 8-16 hours each time. Thanks to TD Client, Financial Aid can now exchange data with the Department of Education's system daily, resulting in a significant saving of over 800 hours of staff time per year. Additionally, students benefit from a faster communication time frame as a result of this streamlined process.

A newly implemented product, DynamicForms, offers students an online platform to conveniently fill out and electronically sign forms, which are directly routed to the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Through the joint collaboration of Compliance/Communications and the Systems teams, 18 new forms were developed. This advancement eliminated the need to update internal systems, which previously caused processing delays. As a result, students now have the flexibility to complete forms from anywhere, ensuring timely communication with the office and the elimination of unnecessary forms.

STABILIZE

As Student Affairs shored up our foundation during our recovery stage, we simultaneously turned our attention to stabilizing our student and staff experience. We invested a significant amount of resources into programs that create a sense of community, support and development for our students while also investing in our staff community's growth and skills.



PRIDE POINTS

- **In fall 2022, Student Affairs successfully organized the inaugural Universitywide Welcome Week.** This four-day celebration brought together more than 5,000 students and staff, faculty and community members, fostering a vibrant atmosphere for connection and community-building among all stakeholders. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with over 90% of survey respondents expressing a profound sense of belonging during the festivities. Many attendees even remarked that it was the most welcome they had ever felt on campus. The resounding success of Welcome Week highlights our commitment to creating inclusive and engaging experiences for everyone in our University community.
- **Continuing our commitment to the growth and development of our leaders and staff this year marked a significant shift in the purpose of our Student Affairs Leadership Team.** With a renewed focus on professional skills and competencies, we transformed our monthly meetings into skill-building sessions. To ensure comprehensive development, we incorporated competencies from NASPA & ACPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators.

Recognizing the invaluable impact of investing in our people, we dedicated branch funds to support various professional-development opportunities, including attending conferences, arranging in-person training with leading professionals in their fields and funding further education programs. Student Affairs leadership actively encouraged staff members to take advantage of the outstanding professional-development programs thoughtfully crafted by our Human Resources colleagues, with 14 staff members participating in a six-month leadership training.
- We understand that many of our Roadrunners are one emergency bill away from having to stop out of school. Because of this, MSU Denver and Student Affairs prioritize the investment of funds into our Student Emergency Retention Fund. **Through our Dean of Students Office, the Student Care Center awarded over \$665,000 in emergency dollars directly to 366 students requesting assistance.** From this support, 82% of recipients could persist in their education.
- **The Enrollment Management Call Center and Communications teams have invested hours into the University's webchat-and-text platform, Mainstay, which required significant maintenance and communication planning improvements.** The platform's web-based chat was previously programmed to reflect Covid-19 information that expired as the return to on-campus operations began. The knowledge base has been cleared of outdated information, and over 1,333 chatbot replies have been updated and revamped with current information. Text-message communications through the platform lacked strategy and planning; text messages mainly comprised nudges and were not gauged to build relationships with students. Beginning in January 2023, students were sent a "Welcome to the first week of class," message marking the start of relationship-building.
 - Nudges sent: 83
 - Interactive campaigns: 5
 - Total number of campaigns: 88
 - Individuals contacted via text by Call Center: 24,298
 - Webchat conversations initiated by students with Rowdybot (website): 10,150



- **The Office of Admissions, in partnership with University Communications and Marketing, reimaged how to engage with and attract prospective students to join us for our spring Open House.** Two significant changes occurred in the marketing for the spring event. Open House was marketed more on social media, and the mailing list was expanded to include all prospects, inquiries and admissions for future semesters in Colorado. These efforts significantly increased attendance at the event to 1,653 (674 students; 979 guests), an increase of 94%.
- There were significant accomplishments in our Classroom to Career Hub programs. **Collaborating closely with faculty, staff, and various departments, the C2 Hub worked to elevate student engagement in career events and programs.** This fruitful collaboration led to an impressive outcome: an outstanding 23% increase in student participation, with 3,461 students actively taking part in on-campus employer recruitment initiatives and events throughout the past academic year. Furthermore, the team's dedication and the collective efforts of our academic community resulted in another remarkable achievement. The usage of our Career Link platform saw a notable upswing, with over 6,000 students logging in — a substantial 4% increase compared with the previous year. This significant surge indicates a growing interest among students in exploring career opportunities and seeking the valuable resources offered.
- **The Financial Aid and Scholarships team, working together with the MSU Denver Foundation, made substantial improvements to the scholarship application, review and awarding procedures.** A total of 4,800 students successfully submitted completed scholarship applications. These modifications garnered positive feedback from scholarship reviewers due to the streamlined and simplified process. By utilizing the primary scholarship-awarding tracker shared by Financial Aid and the Donor Relations team, the awarding process was significantly expedited, enabling Financial Aid to complete all fund awards before June 1, marking a two-month improvement.

LAUNCH!

As we look to the next year of Student Affairs, our focus remains fixed on attaining the ambitious goals set forth in our 2030 Strategic Plan, and we have taken proactive steps to lay a strong foundation. We have already begun making strategic investments in our invaluable assets: our people and our programs. By prioritizing these essential aspects, we are steadfast in our commitment to staying on track and fulfilling our vision of delivering an exceptional and transformative university experience for our students.



PRIDE POINTS

- **Throughout the year, the Office of Operations and Planning dedicated its efforts to establishing a robust framework for the Student Affairs program-review process, aiming to evaluate three offices annually within a six-year cycle.** Leveraging the College of Arts and Sciences standards and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) professional competencies, our primary focus in the upcoming year will be a comprehensive Student Affairs review. This comprehensive review will offer invaluable insights into how our offices synergize as a cohesive student-support system. By delving into the interconnections among various units, we aim to identify areas of strength and opportunities for enhancement. This introspective evaluation will serve as a solid foundation, enabling us to prioritize improvements and optimize our collective efforts in the years ahead.
- **MSU Denver has been selected by the NASPA Center for First-generation Student Success to join a third phase, First Scholars, that signals an unprecedented commitment to serving first-generation students.** Staff members from the Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion joined 275+ institutions of higher education that have entered the Network to advance outcomes through establishing communities of practice, gaining knowledge of resources and establishing peer networks. With over 58% of MSU Denver students identifying as first-generation, CMEI has positioned itself as the leader in the first-generation space. It has placed emphasis on encouraging and empowering the Roadrunner community to embrace and celebrate the multiplicity of identities these students hold. It has simultaneously helped to remove systemic and institutional barriers to create pathways for first-generation students to retain and persist.
- **Native and Indigenous Student Support Services (NISS) is a new program created by the Center for Equity and Student Achievement.** NISS provides student resources and support and informs practices, programs and policies for establishing student-centered programming from a culturally conscious lens; collaborates with campus leaders in program development; and strengthens relationships with Native and Indigenous campus and community members. In its first year, NISS facilitated four programming events, including the annual Pow Wow, a Native Women's Leadership Panel and a Critical Dialogue Panel for improving support and services for self-identified Native and Indigenous students.
- **The Enrollment Management Communication and Call Center team has developed and launched its first communication plan for the Mainstay Chatbot.** The Mainstay team has partnered with Transfer Adult Student Success to send interactive texts that provide helpful resources to complete and submit student aid applications, such as links to the Educational Opportunity Center, Immigrant Services appointment calendars and Office of Financial Aid contact information.
- **MSU Denver now has over 5,000 employer partners that engage with us, up from 4,000 last year.** Several employer relationships have also strengthened into strategic relationships, with the team identifying over 150 strategic partners. The team developed and launched the



Front Runner newsletter to improve employer communication and engagement with over 50,000 employer contacts. The open rate of almost 30% means we are reaching 15,000 employer contacts.

→ **Employers continue to engage with MSU Denver to recruit our students.**

The 25% growth in employer partners is a testimony to the great work the Navigators are doing to build relationships and promote the amazing talent of our student body.

→ **A key milestone for the C2 Hub was successfully transitioning from a primarily virtual approach to hosting in-person career events and programs.** This strategic move significantly contributed to a surge in student participation (23% increase vs. prior year), providing students with invaluable face-to-face interactions with potential employers and valuable networking opportunities. In addition, the team implemented or expanded upon several improvements to drive student engagement:

- Classroom workshops and faculty extra credit: 617+ students (up 32%)
- New or expanded department-specific events:
 - Nursing (50 students)
 - The Society for Hispanic Human Resource Professionals Career Fair (80 students)
 - Health Institute Navigate Your Health (150 students, up 49%)
 - Federal Agency Event (102 students, up 41%)
 - Meet the Firms (142 students, up 21%)
 - Construction (71 students, up 11%)
- New employer branding packages to drive student turnout: food-truck sponsorship, pop-up pizza party employer showcase (135 students)
- Improved student communication

These enhancements were carefully designed to create a more enriching and impactful experience for our students. Through continuous evaluation and innovation, we ensured that our career events and programs were thoughtfully tailored to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student body.

→ **In January, MSU Denver joined a partnership with the Denver Housing Authority in furthering housing and education goals for MSU Denver students and Denver residents.** Since the partnership began, the team has worked on development of a pilot program for housing-choice vouchers and reviewed the housing landscape. The team is dedicated to incorporating an amenity rich development that fosters a sense of community within the three institutions on the Auraria Campus. For education and workforce teams, we have incorporated job and internship postings within our C2 Hub. The C2 Hub worked closely with DHA to create meaningful internships for our MSU Denver students and included DHA in all job fairs for future workforce placements. As the partnership grows, DHA will funnel its residents into the C2 Hub's Jumpstart a Revolution manufacturing program for growth opportunities. This program provides free training and opportunity for paid internships with progression to full-time jobs with local manufacturers within the community. The goal is to have 500 learners trained and placed into jobs.



MSUSM
DENVER

Student Affairs

Jordan Student Success Building
890 Auraria Parkway, Ste 350
Denver, CO 80202

303-615-0021