



MSUSM
DENVER

Enrollment and Student Affairs

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Annual Impact Report

2024-25





**A Message from Will Simpkins, Ed.D.
Vice President for Enrollment & Student Affairs**

At MSU Denver, we believe in building the future of higher education—one student, one strategy, one moment of connection at a time. As we reflect on the 2024-2025 academic year, I'm proud to share highlights from our Enrollment & Student Affairs (ESA) branch that demonstrate our commitment to access, equity, and care.

Community remains our greatest strength. From record-breaking attendance at graduation celebrations to the launch of new student-led programming like Roadrunners After Dark, our campus culture is vibrant and inclusive. These efforts reflect our CADRE values—Community, Access, Diversity, Respect, and Excellence—and the intentional labor of our dedicated team.

This year marked the second phase of our branch Strategic Plan, a framework designed to align our daily work with long-term goals. We've focused on clarity—clarity in leadership roles, in strategic priorities, and in how we support students from admission to graduation. Our plan is not a task list; it's a vision for what's possible when we center student success and staff well-being.

We've made meaningful progress toward becoming a Caring University, a concept championed by Dr. Kevin McClure. Through smarter compensation, expanded professional development, and clearer career pathways, we're investing in the people who make MSU Denver exceptional.

We understand that change is constant in higher education, whether it's responding to shifts in federal policy, adapting to enrollment trends, or launching bold new initiatives like our first-ever student housing and the transformative C2 Hub for career and industry engagement.

To navigate these transitions effectively, we've invested in leadership development and organizational strategy. Our Enrollment and Student Affairs leadership team participated in a dedicated workshop led by Imani Morning, Executive Director of Leadership and Organizational Engagement, to explore how change impacts individuals and teams. One key takeaway: culture is built through predictability. When we make thoughtful, consistent choices, we create a workplace where people feel safe, seen, and supported—even in times of uncertainty.

As we begin the celebration of our 60th year serving Colorado, I'm reminded of Robert Frost's words: "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." At MSU Denver, we choose the road less traveled because we believe in building something extraordinary—for our students, our staff, and our community.

Thank you for walking this path with us.

Warmly,

Will

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Will Simpkins".

Who We Are

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 twenty-first century postsecondary experience. ESA embraces these values, manifests them through our resources and programs, and holds each other accountable to working in congruence with them.



Our Vision

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

Our Mission

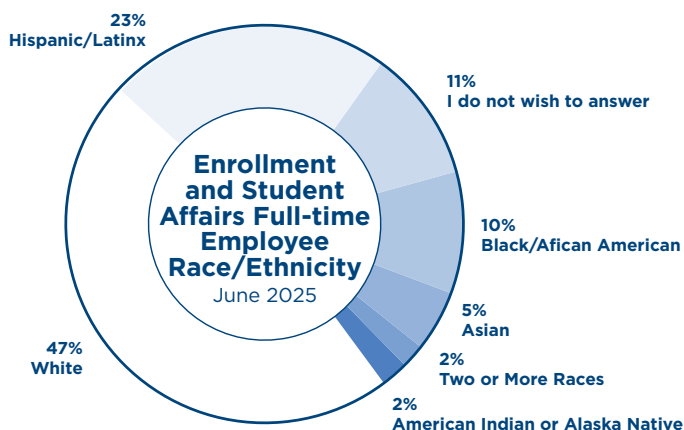
ESA educators at MSU Denver are committed to supporting the learner experience by centering their unique life journeys in the programs, resources, and services that we offer.

Guiding Commitments

- **Access:** We advocate for resources and opportunities to ensure learners have the support they need to succeed.
- **Student Engagement & 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(s) progression/journey/endeavors.
- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** We insist on and hold ourselves accountable to responding actively to inequity, injustice, and racism.



ESA 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.



Where to Find Us

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, including the Tivoli Student Union, Jordan Student Success Building, Administrative Building, and P.E. Events Center. This allows us to effectively support and engage with our diverse student population, ensuring that no one is far from the needed assistance and resources.

Vice President for ESA

Operations and Planning JSSB 350

Enrollment Management

Office of Admissions and Outreach JSSB Counter 1

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships JSSB 130, Counter 6

Office of the Registrar JSSB Counter 3

Orientation, Transfer and Reengagement JSSB 217

Office of Testing Services Tivoli 347

Classroom to Career Initiatives

Career Engagement JSSB 320

Faculty Engagement & Experiential Learning Admin 270

Industry Partnerships Admin 270

Student Support & Retention JSSB 170, 320, Tivoli 223

Student Engagement and Well-being

Access Center Plaza 122

Campus Recreation PE 108

Center for Equity and Student Engagement JSSB 237

Center for Multicultural Engagement & Inclusion Tivoli 129, 305, 307, 313

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

ESA Budget Sources - Fiscal Year 2025

Student Affairs Operations	\$508,142
Enrollment Management	\$10,573,536
Enrollment Management - Fees and Revenue	\$562,395
Student Engagement and Well-being	\$3,681,798
Student Engagement and Well-being - Fees and Revenue	\$14,375,732
C2 Hub	\$2,286,148
C2 Hub - Fees and Revenue	\$514,556

Student Communications

618K

The 'Runner Sends

45%

Runner Staff/Faculty
Open Rate

127K

Instagram Views

22%

Runner Student
Open Rate

13.6%

Runner Click To
Open Rate
(60% increase)

28K

Instagram Users
Reached
(13% increase)



\$1,583,147.75
External Gifts
and Private Grants



\$2,241,137.47
Sponsored Research
and Public Grants

Enrollment Management

In 2024–2025, Enrollment Management advanced MSU Denver’s mission through a deeply collaborative, equity-driven, and data-informed approach. Across all units, teams aligned systems, partnerships, and strategies to deliver seamless, student-centered experiences from recruitment through graduation. **These efforts helped drive Fall 2025 enrollment growth by 3.1%, totaling 18,336 students, encompassing 17,111 undergraduates and 1,225 graduate students.**

Systems Integration and Data-Driven Strategy. Enrollment Management invested in scalable systems that improved efficiency and transparency. The Office of Admissions leveraged tools like the Yield IQ predictive model, a centralized Counselor Command Center (launching July 2025), and a custom Fraud Tracking Portal that flagged 713 suspicious records. Orientation integrated its platform with university systems to track student engagement, while the Registrar prepared for the transition to Workday Student and streamlined FERPA compliance. Financial Aid adopted TDNext for escalation tracking and reduced processing times from over 40 days to under 10—demonstrating the power of integrated, student-first operations.

Collaboration as a Cornerstone. Cross-campus and external partnerships were central to Enrollment Management’s success. Orientation, Transfer, and Reengagement (OTR) collaborated with nearly every ESA unit, Academic Affairs, and community partners like the Center for Community Wealth Building. Admissions launched the Recruitment Hub in partnership with internal stakeholders and signed a Guaranteed Admissions MOU with Denver Public Schools. The Registrar worked with the Alternative Credit Steering Committee to expand Prior Learning Assessment, while Financial Aid aligned with scholarship programs and state auditors to ensure compliance and access.

Equity and Access at the Forefront. Equity remained a guiding principle across all units. Admissions expanded outreach to middle schools and underrepresented communities. Financial Aid exceeded scholarship goals, awarding \$135,499 more in Foundation funds than the previous year and increasing participation in programs like FosterEd and Displaced Aurarian. Transfer and Adult Student Services supported over 1,200 students through tailored advising, peer mentorship, and lifecycle-based communications. The Registrar implemented SB24-164 transfer transparency measures and supported 128 international students—a 10.3% increase from the prior year.

Operational Excellence and Student-Centered Innovation. Despite staffing challenges and shifting federal policies, Enrollment Management teams delivered high-impact results. The Registrar processed over 8,000 transcript evaluations, 712 curriculum updates (up 27.6%), and trained 1,300 employees on FERPA. Testing Services scaled placement testing (Accuplacer up 15%, First Year Writing up 21%) and began transitioning to ProctorU. OTR increased orientation completion rates and is redesigning its model for long-term sustainability. These efforts reflect a shared commitment to operational excellence and a seamless student experience.



Student Engagement & Well-being

The 2024–2025 academic year was an amazing year for Student Engagement and Well-being (SEW). Our teams across Access, Advocacy, and Accountability; Health & Well-being; and Equity and Student Engagement delivered innovative programs, tackled operational challenges head-on, and deepened campus partnerships—all while keeping students at the center of everything we do.

Perhaps most exciting was the shared commitment across teams to **building systems and structures that will sustain and elevate our work** for years to come. Several teams successfully reorganized or redesigned roles to meet evolving needs. The Student Care Center (SCC) clarified its core functions into case management and campus education, and basic needs and housing support. The Counseling Center introduced a triage-first model, reducing wait times from 1–2 weeks to under 48 hours, increasing access for all students. The Access Center implemented a new database to streamline accommodation management, while the Health Center at Auraria (HCA) automated immunization compliance, boosting rates to over 90% and reducing manual processes. Campus Recreation restructured leadership, completed a landscape analysis to inform future growth, and rebranded as Recreation & Well-being to reflect the integration of health education and promotion.

Equity and inclusion remained guiding values for SEW.

The Tri-Institutional Gender-Affirming Care Working Group—led by HCA with support from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Student Resource Center (LGBTQ SRC)—updated policies, language, and wraparound supports for all students. Campus Recreation expanded programming for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, reaching 60% participation. The Dean of Students Office (DOS) introduced restorative justice practices and embedded Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) goals into student conduct. Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion (CMEI) launched the Black Student Success Initiative and Asian Pacific Islander Student Engagement and Success program, each supported by strategic hiring, cultural programming, and alignment with institutional retention goals. Immigrant Services (ISP) served 426 students with persistence and GPA rates above the campus average and launched the Inclusive Experiential Learning Fund for students pursuing unpaid internships.



Student engagement and well-being were visible everywhere.

Rowdy's Corner averaged 855 weekly visits—nearly 47,000 total—supporting food security and academic focus. Campus Recreation gained 397 members and saw major participation jumps in intramurals, open recreation, e-sports, and personal training. New spaces, including the Auraria Recovery Community (ARC) meeting space and the “Zen Den,” created intentional areas for connection, crisis recovery, and well-being. The Counseling Center provided nearly 5,000 sessions to 776 students, achieving high satisfaction rates. 116 people took part in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training, while SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising & Registration) collaborative programming, leadership retreats, and identity-based celebrations welcomed thousands. CAMP and TRIO programs exceeded federal grant benchmarks, with TRIO serving 217 participants and expanding the Epic Scholars initiative.

Data and assessment guided our growth. The Counseling Center began tracking satisfaction and retention, demonstrating counseling's positive impact on students. Campus Recreation improved analytics to disaggregate data by identity group and inform decision-making. The Dean of Students office and Student Care Center aligned workflows based on external review findings, while ISP tracked GPA and graduation rates, with 18.7% of program participants graduating. Mediat software automation helped the Health Center at Auraria boost compliance and efficiency, and Rowdy's Corner usage data highlighted the ongoing demand for basic needs across our student population.

Collaboration was foundational. The Access Center partnered with Admissions, Orientation, Testing Services, and Academic Affairs to provide support and training. HCA, Counseling Center, and the SCC maintained daily care coordination. Recreation & Well-being teamed up with CMEI, the Nutrition Department, Athletics, AHEC, ROTC, and others to host inclusive campus-wide events. ISP collaborated with faculty to support 31 students through the new internship fund. CMEI hosted 15 civic engagement events, a major spring concert with nearly 1,000 attendees, and leadership development programs such as Roadrunners Give Back and the Summer Leadership Retreat. CAMP partnered with the Castro Professorship and Chicana/o Studies to deliver impactful Hispanic Heritage Month programming.

Across SEW, our departments shared a common vision—to center students, build equitable systems, and nurture thriving communities. We stepped boldly into this work and are ready to enter 2025–2026 with renewed energy and optimism.

Classroom to Career Hub

The past year proved pivotal in demonstrating the Classroom to Career (C2) Hub's vital role in transforming career access and readiness at MSU Denver. This year, we balanced operational excellence with student-, faculty-, and employer partner-centered innovation while navigating shifting funding, evolving workforce needs, and persistent demands to scale while maintaining our close connection to the students we serve.

Grounded in its history, the C2 Hub has evolved from an ambitious vision into a structured reality, anchored by four integrated teams—Industry Partnerships, Faculty Engagement & Experiential Learning, Student Success, and Operations. This structure allows us to honor stakeholder expertise while addressing the fragmentation common in higher education. Over the past year, intentional cross-team collaboration and alignment on shared goals and metrics, paired with clear accountability, proved key to our success.

Key Impacts Across Teams

The Industry Partnerships Team saw student participation rise 70%, expanded employer partnerships by 6%, and grew Career Treks from 4 to 20 events. Collaborations with Denver International Airport, Gates Inc., and Colorado Thrives delivered high-impact experiences to more than 5,700 students. The NSF ASCEND Engine project, a place-based innovation ecosystem designed to transform cutting-edge research, engaged more than 280 students in green workforce pathways, reinforcing our commitment to future-ready careers.

The Faculty Engagement & Experiential Learning experienced a record year—awarding professional development funding to more than 650 students, reducing award processing time by 50%, and launching scalable frameworks like the Experiential Learning for All initiative and the Community Engaged Learning Designation. Faculty Engagement activities also saw a benchmark year with 290 faculty participants, demonstrating the Hub's increasing relevance in academic settings.

The Student Success Team provided one-on-one career advising to nearly 1,150 students while leading the university's 100% Career Engagement initiative, increasing baseline participation to 59.86% and substantive engagement to 46.59%. Our partnership with Financial Aid resulted in the Rowdy Journey to Completion Grant, awarding \$27,585 in scholarships with a 94.7% retention/graduation rate. Aligning First-Generation Initiatives with C2 Hub operations enhanced clarity and support for first-generation scholars.

The Operations Team evolved strategically with the creation of the Director of Operations & Systems role, consolidating signature events, cross-functional communications, and data systems to advance scalable impact. The team also prepared for the new C2 Hub location as part of Auraria's next iteration, ensuring systems are built for intentional growth and student-centered design.



Cross-Team Highlights

- Advanced **data-informed decision-making** through expanded use of Career Link, Navigate 360, and EDW collaboration.
- Prioritized **inclusive excellence**, launching initiatives for first-generation and historically underrepresented students.
- Strengthened **faculty partnerships** through curricular integration, co-teaching models, and career-catalyst initiatives.
- Increased **employer engagement** through targeted industry partnerships that align with Colorado's economic forecasts.
- Elevated revenue-generating signature events under a **unified operations strategy**, increasing sustainability while remaining mission-focused.

Enrollment and Student Affairs Strategic Plan

Overview

The 2024-25 ESA Strategic Plan highlights our progress across multiple student success goals. This report outlines the impact, lessons learned, and future directions. The initiatives described reflect a commitment to equity, engagement, and institutional excellence.

24-25 Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: Create and utilize data-informed strategies to identify priorities and make resource allocation decisions.

Goal 2: Lead efforts to close Equity Gaps in Student Retention and Completion

Goal 3: Create tailored experiences to increase student engagement.

Goal 4: Reduce or eliminate student basic needs at MSU Denver.

Goal 5: Become the best workplace for student affairs educators.

Highlights

Black Student Success Initiative (BSSI)

Launched in response to institutional equity goals, BSSI aims to improve student success outcomes for Black students through identity-affirming support.

Key Accomplishments:

- Hired an Associate Director of Black/ African Student Engagement and Success.
- Developed a three-year strategic budget and operational plan.
- Secured dedicated space (Tivoli 129) for programming and community building.
- Formed a cross-divisional working group to align BSSI with retention and graduation priorities.



Comprehensive Engagement Model

The comprehensive student engagement strategy focused on (2) two major philosophical approaches: the socio-ecological model and the domains of wellness as grounding work for all interventions that impacts student success.

Key Accomplishments:

- Campus-wide tour sharing the student engagement strategy. More than 30 consultations occurred with various teams and leadership structures within MSU Denver and the Auraria Campus.
- The facilitation of structured conversations with students about how they engage across campus.

Future Directions:

- Align and categorize interventions, identify gaps/efficiencies and pinpoint the data needed to be able to effectively and clearly tell Roadrunners' stories.
- Design, evolve and align strategies around first-year retention and the student engagement model.





Early Outreach Using Orientation Data

A new tool enables departments to access student interest data for proactive outreach and engagement.

Key Accomplishments:

- All engagement partners trained in data retrieval and outreach strategies.
- Flexible training formats ensured broad participation.
- Success tied to departments' readiness for early outreach.
- Future efforts will focus on cultural adoption and assessment integration.



Career Engagement for All Undergraduates

Efforts focused on centralizing career engagement data rather than launching new programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- 59.86% initial touchpoint engagement (2023-24)
- Expanded data sources: experiential learning, VMock, HACU, and more
- On track to meet 50% overall engagement goal



Innovative Personnel Strategies

Support and empower team members through targeted programs.

Key Accomplishments:

Spanish Language Skills Program

- 11 staff enrolled
- Services include translation, interpretation, and public speaking

Student Affairs Onboarding Program

- Fosters cross-functional collaboration from day one





Jordan Student Success Building | 890 Auraria Parkway, Ste 350 | Denver, CO 80202 | 303-615-0021



Enrollment and Student Affairs

**CHANGEMAKERS
WANTED**