Every year, AHEC submits a request for capital funding to the state of Colorado on behalf of the collective institutions. The process is a journey that includes, but is not limited to, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Office of the State Architect, and two key bodies at the legislature—the Capital Development Committee and the Joint Budget Committee. In previous years, we have acquired funding for campus initiatives, including the Auraria Library renovation and the Science Building renovation and expansion project. For the past three years, the campus has presented a request for the renovation and expansion of the King Center, but with budgets being what they are, funding has never been available.

In the meantime, the collective leadership of the campus had been striving to come up with alternatives for addressing controlled maintenance and capital renewal of a rapidly deteriorating infrastructure. The initial campus structures were all built at the same time, meaning they are also aging at the same rate, presenting a daunting outlook for the most basic of facility needs. Every avenue pursued to this point has been ineffective for the long-term well-being of the campus facilities. It’s time to come up with a creative solution to try and resolve the situation.

Consequently, the campus has embarked on another “first-ever” initiative—a state-funded capital renewal critical infrastructure project that proposes converting the 40-year-old failing steam heat...
system and hot water system to natural gas. Currently, the campus relies on steam to provide all the heating and hot water needs for over 750,000 square feet of space in eight buildings shared by CCD, MSU Denver, and CU Denver. The system is aging and unreliable, with a high risk of failure that would result in building closures and emergency repairs.

Once the system is converted, the campus will recognize nearly $1M in savings each year, which the institutions have already agreed to add to the internal campus deferred maintenance fund of $1.8M, to continue to self-fund future maintenance needs. The goal is not only to replace the existing deteriorating system, but to also become more self-sufficient in the future. The submittal process began last June, and efforts continue as the campus pursues this important project request through the state process.

Our next step is to present at the Capital Development Committee hearings in December, and I will keep you informed of our progress. It represents a bold move that focuses on caring for existing facilities and paving the way for us to collectively define our own frontier.

Barb Weiske
Chief Executive Officer

Republican George Brauchler responds to a question at CCD's attorney general debate.

Paralegal Program Hosts Attorney General Debate

In anticipation of the November election, CCD's Paralegal Program hosted a public debate between attorney general candidates Democrat Phil Weiser and Republican George Brauchler on October 22nd in the Confluence building. The debate, which was co-sponsored by the Colorado Criminal Defense Bar, focused on criminal justice issues and the differences between the candidates’ views on the role of the attorney general.

Ezra Headlee
Pipe Mechanic
Facilities Services

Ezra Headlee, a pipe mechanic trades employee, is incredibly modest for the praise he’s received since joining AHEC in March. As the October employee of the month for Facilities Services,
MSU Denver Athletics to Conduct NCAA Division I Feasibility Study

Metropolitan State University of Denver has been approached about elevating its athletics program to NCAA Division I, and the athletics department is set to begin a feasibility study to assess its options.

“We are a proud member of NCAA Division II, however it is always in the best interest of an institution to do its due diligence when an overture such as this one comes,” said Dr. Anthony Grant, MSU Denver’s director of athletics. “While conducting the feasibility study
we will also be assessing the resources required to be successful at the Division II level.”

In order to move to Division I, institutions must have an official invitation from a Division I conference. The Western Athletic Conference contacted MSU Denver and requested that they look into the possibility of joining the conference. Dr. Grant shared that information during a Board of Trustees meeting on September 14th.

The feasibility study by Collegiate Consultants began on October 29th with student and faculty open forums. Other closed focus groups will be conducted with donors, fans, community members, and staff. The results of the study are expected later in 2018.

The Western Athletic Conference includes New Mexico State, California Baptist, Cal State Bakersfield, Chicago State, Grand Canyon, Missouri-Kansas City, Seattle, Texas-Rio Grande Valley, and Utah Valley.

Celebrating Partnership: University, City Officials Join Grand Opening of CityCenter

Nearly 100 people packed the brand-new CityCenter on Oct. 10 for the official grand opening of what will serve as CU Denver’s new “front door” to the city, designed as a transparent portal for the community. Partnerships between CU Denver, business people, and city officials are already forming within the glass walls of the center on the corner of 14th and Lawrence streets, fulfilling a vision set forth by the mayor and embraced by Chancellor Dorothy Horrell.

The grand-opening event included the unveiling of CityCenter’s first initiative—Imagine a Great Region, aimed at targeting Colorado’s booming growth in the years ahead—by CityCenter Executive Director Nolbert Chavez, CU Denver’s chief of external initiatives and former state legislator.
“Today is a big deal,” Mayor Michael Hancock told the audience, which celebrated the CU Denver-City of Denver marriage with toasts and decorative cake. “In Denver, we have largely ignored this tremendous asset of student intellectual capital and faculty members that are some of the best in the world,” Hancock said.

Now, that expertise can help solve serious urban issues facing the city, from traffic and transportation to housing and homelessness.

“Innovation doesn’t happen in isolation,” said Xcel Energy President Alice Jackson. “CityCenter will be a true catalyst in promotion, innovation, collaboration and connection between students and faculty at the University of Colorado Denver and the great Denver-metro community that we get to serve and work in day to day.”

‘ONE AURARIA’ NEWS

HUMBLE HEROES

Seated: Bryon Weber, Matthew Carlson
Middle Row: John Garrett, Jesus Lopez, Leonard Gutierrez, Ben Dorak, Brett Jones, Jeff Stamper
Back Row: Michelle Staker, JaNae Nelson, Diego Lopez Orozco
Not pictured: Tara Weachter, Mike Nichols, John Osterman, John Gonzales, James Adamson

Landscaping and Safety Enhancement Team

Over the past year, a team from Facilities Services and Campus Planning has been actively working on a project to improve landscaping and safety enhancements throughout the pedestrian core of campus.

With concerns about protecting public spaces where there are high concentrations of people, the team embarked on developing ways to make the areas more secure while keeping aesthetics in mind. Senior Campus Planner Carl Meese said, “We wanted to seamlessly improve the space while making it more protected.”
The team used as many natural elements as possible to avoid overt, “closed-off” materials, such as fencing, gates, or barricades. Instead, natural boulders, pedestrian benches, planters, and walkway bollards were installed throughout the Tivoli Quad, 9th Street Historic Park, 10th Street Mall, and Lawrence Street Mall.

A testament to the “Make an Impact” Guiding Principle, within 10 minutes of the team placing some boulders, students were using them to lounge and study. Jeff Stamper, Chief Operations Officer, said this project has been one of the strongest landscaping enhancements made to the campus to date. He applauded Assistant Campus Planner Bryon Weber’s role in the project: “As a landscape architect, he did an awesome job strategically picking the boulders and placing them in a natural formation.”

In total, the project involved 22 planters, 29 benches, 70 bollards, and 160 tons of boulders. Grounds staff, led by Mike Nichols, worked in tandem with Weber in placing and installing all of the materials. It was a huge team effort.

Weber reiterated that the goal of the team project was to increase the safety and significance of the campus pedestrian areas. He said, “Overall, we strived to introduce elements that would elevate a pedestrian focus, maintain operational needs (such as emergency and service access), and blend aesthetically with the campus environment.”

He said the next phase of the project is in progress, with a goal of better directing campus traffic along service vehicle routes.