COLLEGE & FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY REPORT

VOL. 2, FALL 2026

Pueblo Community College



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HOAG/RAWLINGS LEGACY

PCC BY THE NUMBERS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Leland Tran
Nursing student,
Pueblo campus

His story



HSI PROUD

PCC is a Hispanic-Serving Institution. To be designated an HSI by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, at least 25% of a college's student body must be Hispanic.

- 37% of PCC students identify as Hispanic
- PCC received its HSI designation more than 30 years ago
- Colorado has 13 HSIs
- 645 HSIs in the United States.

Sources: PCC, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Excelencia in Education

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“We are delivering on the promise of our current strategic plan, Destination 2027, to transform lives, enrich communities, and strengthen regional economies.”

DR. CHATO HAZELBAKER

A Letter from the President

College presidents love to launch a new strategic plan. I'm guilty of it, too. We are currently working on the 2028-2033 strategic plan, and I can't wait to share it with you next fall. But the harder (and maybe less fun) work is to reflect at the end of a strategic plan and ask, "How did we do?"

This year, Pueblo Community College is preparing for a visit from our accreditation body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Accreditation is often misunderstood. At its best and simplest, accreditation is the process through which a college takes a hard look at itself and then partners with peers from other colleges to assess if the college is effectively delivering on the promise that is in its mission statement and its strategic plan. In my mind, that is what our greater community cares about as well: Are we doing the things we promised to do with your tax dollars, student lives, and the trust you place in us?

The more we prepare for this HLC visit, and the more I talk to folks about the work of the college, the more I'm convinced that we are delivering on the promise of our current strategic plan, Destination 2027, to transform lives, enrich communities, and strengthen regional economies.

We are transforming lives by preparing more students for living-wage jobs in the communities we serve. One example is our new Practical Nursing Plus program. We have always trained nurses in Pueblo, Fremont County and PCC Southwest, but the PN Plus credential is meeting the need our partners told us they have for nurses with additional training in behavioral health. And the opening of the Walt and Gloria Schepp Nursing Simulation Center at our Fremont Campus in Cañon City gives students amazing opportunities to train for jobs that are open today. Across the board, enrollment is growing, demonstrating the strong demand for the work we do.

In terms of enriching the community, I see it in our students and the ways we continually open our doors to everyone. This fall, more than 3,800 high school students will earn some credit at PCC while still in high school. Whether they plan to finish with us or transfer to a university, their first taste of college at PCC sets them up for success. And we are engaged with our community through things like the Panther Block Party, guest speakers, and events for students, employees, and the public – several of which are highlighted in this publication.

Finally, maybe the aspect closest to my heart is strengthening regional economies. Right now, the workforce is key in economic development, and PCC has a great reputation in working with employers to find out what they need and tailoring education programs to meet those requirements.

According to the Pueblo Economic Dashboard, there are 1.14 workers for every open job in Pueblo County. That number seems odd, because if there is a worker for every job, why do we have unemployment? It's all about skills. Many would-be workers simply don't have the skills they need to move into those positions. We see it in everything from healthcare to welding to law enforcement. There are open jobs in roles critical to community vitality but not enough skilled workers to fill them.

As you will see throughout this report, we are working alongside employers, agencies, and our other educational partners to be that bridge between ambition and opportunity. Through our efforts, I believe we will continue to earn your trust and fulfill our mission.

Thank you for your support of Pueblo Community College.

Dr. Chato Hazelbaker
President, Pueblo Community College

Pueblo
Community College



"I was struck by how a single act of generosity can ripple outward, reaching the students who train there and the patients they will one day serve."

- JULIE RODRIGUEZ

A Letter from the Pueblo Community College Foundation

As we round out the 45th year of the Pueblo Community College Foundation, community has been at the heart of what we do. It is what we practice, and this year gave us more ways than ever to do so. Across all our campuses, we saw neighbors, colleagues, graduates, and friends come together, each with the same hope – that every student in our region has the opportunity to succeed.

Our annual golf tournament rang in summer, bringing sponsors, players, and student volunteers together on a beautiful day for a cause they believe in. The faculty-staff mixer gave those who teach and support our students a chance to relax, connect, and hear our gratitude in person.

Additionally, we launched the first event of our revamped Alumni Association with a mixer allowing graduates to reconnect with classmates and instructors. To hear how PCC shaped their careers and their lives was one of the most inspiring moments of the year. I look forward to building on that enthusiasm in the months ahead.

This year also marked the foundation's first Farm to Table dinner, an evening I will remember for a long time. Guests shared a meal made in collaboration with local vendors, enjoyed live performances from students, and celebrated what our region can accomplish together. Community members got a glimpse into the programs PCC provides through the academic market, which comprised faculty and volunteers showcasing what they do best. Longtime friends of the college welcomed new ones. It was the kind of night that cannot be planned by one party; it was a massive effort on the part of the foundation, the college, and our community.

In August, we gathered at the Fremont campus for the opening and dedication of the Walter F. and Gloria R. Schepp Nursing Simulation Center. Made possible by the extraordinary generosity of Schepp family, longtime supporters of PCC, with a $2 million donation, the center will give nursing students hands-on experience that prepares them for the demands of patient care. Standing among donors, students, and college leaders that day, I was struck by how a single act of generosity can ripple outward, reaching the students who train there and the patients they will one day serve.

I am grateful to the foundation board of directors, President Hazelbaker, and our dedicated staff for their partnership and belief in what we can achieve together. To every donor, volunteer, and community member who attended, sponsored, or simply spread the word, thank you. Your commitment to our students truly represents what community looks like.

With gratitude,

Julie Rodriguez
CEO, Pueblo Community College Foundation

45 YEARS
Pueblo Community College FOUNDATION
1981-2026



AROUND CAMPUS

WOVEN CARE PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS OTA STUDENTS

A partnership with pediatric therapy provider Woven Care provides PCC occupational therapy assistant students with everything from professional development opportunities to jobs.

Woven Care made a three-year commitment to provide scholarship funding for tuition and National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy exam costs. Joe Ancona, head of recruiting for Woven Care, personally awarded five $540 scholarships to students during their capstone class.

“It was a meaningful moment of recognition and encouragement at a pivotal point in their education,” said Tricia Vigil, PCC’s OTA program director.

Woven Care helped more than two dozen OTA students attend the Colorado Occupational Therapy State Conference in 2025 and 2026. The experience provided an opportunity to network with other occupational therapy practitioners and expand their knowledge of the profession.

Vigil said the company has also provided emergency funds for students facing unexpected financial hardships, ensuring they can stay on track with their education.

Most importantly, Woven Care provides jobs.

“They have put their commitment into action, hiring approximately 25% of the 2026 graduating class and demonstrating their deep belief in the talent coming out of our OTA program,” said Vigil.

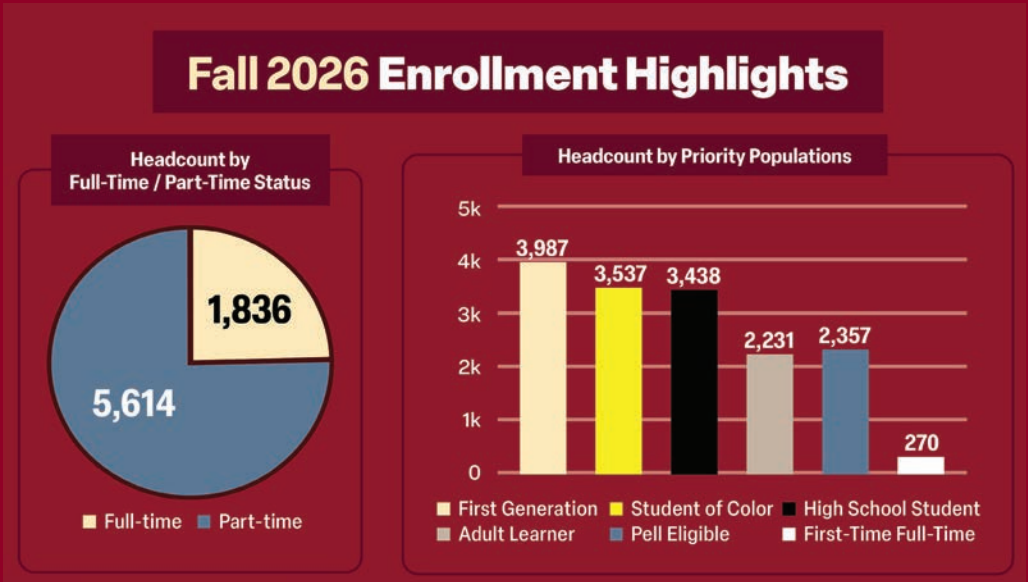
Ancona said roughly 50% of Woven Care’s OTAs and physical therapist assistants are graduates of PCC’s programs.

“We are incredibly honored to work so closely with PCC over the years,” said Ancona. “This partnership is our way of showing our appreciation for your program and the amazing students and therapists that come from your graduating classes. We are excited to see the program continue to grow and change lives of not only students but the community as a whole.”

FALL ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS

More than 7,400 students enrolled at PCC campuses for the fall 2026 semester. Final enrollment numbers are expected to reflect a 7% to 10% increase over fall 2025. Between 2021 and 2025, PCC's fall semester end-of-term enrollment rose by more than 25%, from 5,937 to 7,445.

The number of concurrent enrollment students – high school students taking courses at PCC – increased by 85%. PCC works with school districts throughout its service area to provide this tuition-free opportunity for high schoolers to earn college credit, potentially saving them and their families thousands of dollars on a college education.



NEW BACHELOR'S DEGREES AT PCC

Four new Bachelor of Applied Science degrees are being added to PCC's available programs:

Diagnostic Medical Sonography (started fall 2026)
Technology Education (spring 2027)
Healthcare Administration & Management (spring 2027)
Operational Leadership, Trades (fall 2027, pending board approval)

All of PCC's bachelor-degree completion programs are online, so working professionals can complete coursework on their own schedule. With the addition of the new degree programs, PCC will offer 16 bachelor-degree options.

SEEING STARS ON FREMONT CAMPUS

PCC's Fremont Campus has a new retractable-roof observatory that houses a powerful Celestron 14 telescope. The telescope rests on a mount that was designed and created by PCC machining students and faculty.

"This is a huge addition to our astronomy class," said Fremont Campus Executive Director Mike Maffucci.

The telescope was donated by Graham Bell, an amateur astronomer who is credited with the discovery of several dozen numbered minor planets and one periodic comet.

While the observatory is currently for PCC students and employees, Maffucci said eventually it will open to the community for scheduled events. A grand opening is planned for late fall.

"It's going to be great just being able to look at the stars and cosmos – to share that with people and draw them to campus," said Maffucci.







MADE IN THE STEEL CITY

Several hundred people attended PCC's Made in the Steel City manufacturing showcase on Oct. 7 to learn about local manufacturers and the careers they offer. More than 20 organizations participated, including Rocky Mountain Steel Mills, Gulfco Manufacturing, TR Toppers, the Southern Colorado Small Business Development Center, and Fomcore. The event was organized by Brett Burke, PCC's dean of Business and Advanced Technology, in recognition of National Manufacturing Day and to connect PCC students, high school students, and community members with this important sector of the local and regional economy. Many local manufacturers partner with PCC to train their employees.



COLORADO STATE FAIR HIGHLIGHTS PARTNERSHIPS

Two important community partnerships were on display in August. First, the Pueblo Community Health Center sponsored the live broadcast of the Colorado State Fair Parade, which is produced by PCC's Center for New Media. The signature kickoff event for the fair features entries from throughout the state and draws hundreds of viewers. Second, the longtime collaboration between PCC's art department and the fair's Fine Arts Exhibition provides internship opportunities for several students every year. PCC also sponsors the opening reception for the show.

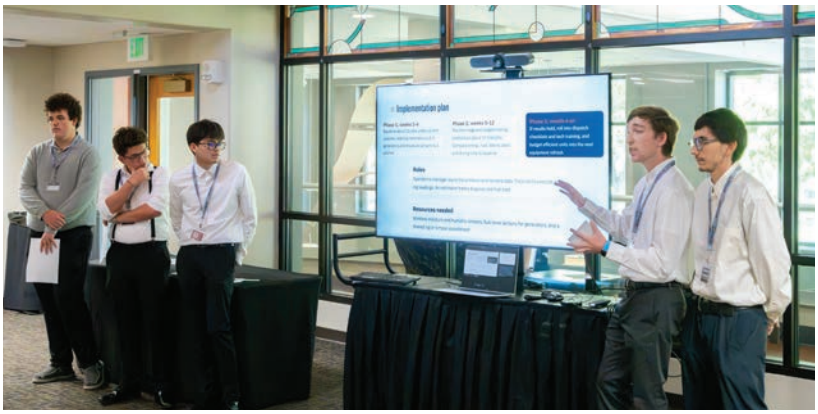
THREE CHEERS FOR FOOTBALL TRADITIONS

PCC's Center for New Media and radio station KDZA again partnered to broadcast Pueblo's two biggest high school football rivalries, the Bell and Cannon games. Thousands of viewers and listeners experienced the games online, on TV and on the radio. President Hazelbaker joined broadcaster Guy Girtin to provide Bell Game commentary and PCC students helped produce the video broadcast.

SOCO & AI CONFERENCE

PCC hosted its second SoCo & AI Conference Oct. 2. Attendees took part in multiple workshops and heard presentations from keynote speakers Jonathan Liebert, CEO/executive director of the Better Business Bureau of Southern Colorado, and France Hoang, CEO/founder of BoodleBox. The themes of this year's conference were AI ethics and responsible use of the rapidly growing technology in education, business, and everyday life. PCC's AI Integration Lead, Jamie Patti, worked alongside colleagues from across the college to produce the event, with major contributions from the Division of Arts and Sciences and the AI Steering Committee.









FREMONT NURSING SIMULATION CENTER OPENS

The Walter F. and Gloria R. Schepp Nursing Simulation Center opened Aug. 6 on PCC's Fremont Campus in Cañon City. The 2,700-square-foot building, funded by a $2 million donation from Walt Schepp, will enable Fremont nursing students to complete their clinical work on campus instead of traveling to other facilities. The center has two fully equipped simulation rooms, two control rooms, and a nursing station.



‘TRANSFORMATIONAL’ OPPORTUNITY

Pueblo West expansion creates new paths for automotive and welding students

Amid a continuing stream of not-so-positive stories about higher education, Pueblo Community College is counteracting the narrative with the announcement of a significant expansion.

The purchase of an existing building at 713 E. Spaulding Ave. in Pueblo West will enable PCC to grow two of its most popular programs – automotive service technology and welding.

"We are not moving any classes or programs from our other locations," said PCC President Dr. Chato Hazelbaker. "This represents true growth for the college.

MEETING DEMAND

PCC offers welding and automotive courses at its Pueblo and Southwest campuses and at Cañon City High School. Automotive classes are also available at Pueblo West High School. In the 2025-26 academic year, 544 students were enrolled in the welding program; 215 were part of the automotive program. Despite offering day and evening classes in both departments, there is a waiting list every year, according to Brett Burke, PCC's dean of Business and Advanced Technology.

"At the same time, we hear from employers that they need more employees with these skills," Burke said.

Regional employers in vital industries such as manufacturing, energy, agriculture, and transportation are dealing with the effects of workforce shortages in





both areas. According to 2026 data from labor market analytics firm Lightcast, PCC's automotive and welding graduates can expect to earn salaries that are above the national average, and both industries are expected to continue growing over the next decade.

For high school students who earn certificates and degrees through the Concurrent Enrollment program, that means they can embark on a good career by the time they get their high school diploma.

"Concurrent enrollment students are hungry for innovative programs. They want to find jobs locally and be ahead of the game when it comes to entering the workforce," Burke said.

ROOM TO GROW

The Pueblo West building offers enough room to eventually serve about 140 students between the two programs, Burke said. Additional space can be used for other classes or projects.

"It allows us to remain flexible so we can adapt to future needs," he said. "Just training more workers for the workforce overall, I think that's incredibly important."

The cost to purchase and prepare the building will be approximately $3 million. The funds will come primarily from college reserves, and the PCC Foundation is supporting the project with a campaign to raise $1 million. Classes are expected to begin in fall 2027.



"The location couldn't be better, and I was excited to see that the building is close to move-in ready," said Burke. "Not that we don't have to do any improvements, but it's a great situation."

The Pueblo West location, situated about 10 miles from PCC's Pueblo campus and 30 minutes from Cañon City, is positioned to attract local students who aren't able to get to the main campus and adult students in Cañon City who don't have access to auto and welding courses in Fremont County. Burke said PCC is also working with other regional high school partners whose students could be served by the new location.

In short: Come one, come all.

"We want folks to know this is open to the community," said Burke. "There are limited seats, but they're open to anybody – first come, first served."

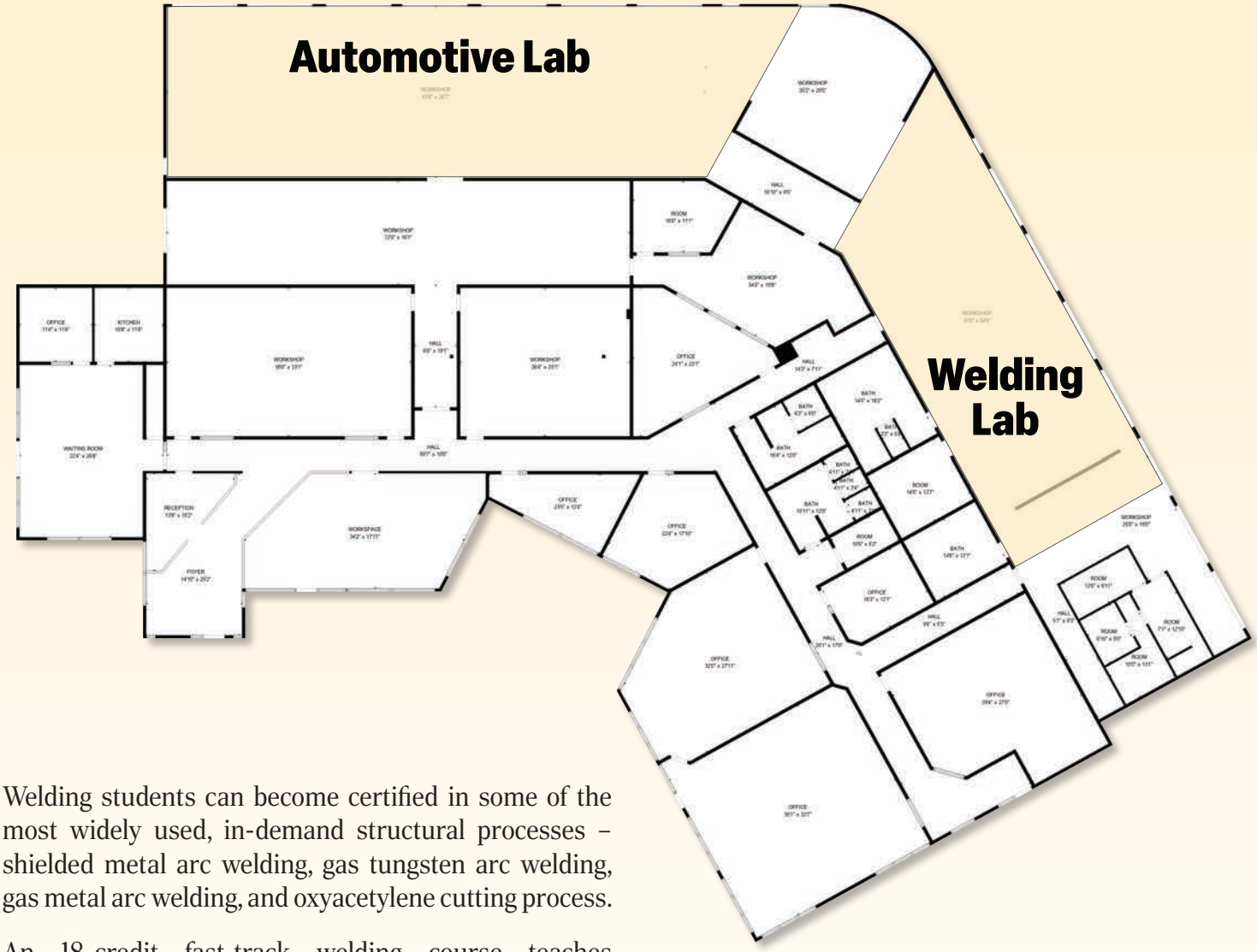
CHANGING FUTURES

PCC's welding and automotive programs have earned reputations for producing skilled, well-rounded graduates who are able to meet the needs of employers throughout the region.

They can leave PCC with everything from entry-level certificates to an Associate of Applied Science degree, and the ability to earn stackable credentials allows students to customize their education according to their career plans:

The automotive program is the statewide leader in electric and hybrid vehicle maintenance education and will offer a full electric vehicle (EV) certificate in 2027.

Automotive students can earn multiple industry certifications as they progress through the program.



Welding students can become certified in some of the most widely used, in-demand structural processes – shielded metal arc welding, gas tungsten arc welding, gas metal arc welding, and oxyacetylene cutting process.

An 18-credit fast-track welding course teaches foundational skills in just one semester.

All automotive licensing exams and welding certification tests are offered locally, so students do not have to travel to complete them.

The excitement surrounding the expansion isn't only external. Burke said the project has generated enthusiasm throughout the college.

"The internal team is not afraid to step outside their comfort zone to make sure we meet our standards with this," he said. "It's so great to see people in areas like facilities and information technology taking this project on, knowing it will be more work but being excited to do it because it's good for the community.

"It's a big opportunity for us to be transformational for a lot of students."





TRADE VALUE

Jane Rawlings Invests in PCC Workforce Development Programs

Thirty students in Pueblo Community College's workforce development programs owe thanks to Jane Rawlings and the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation that she heads.

Those students, who each received $500 scholarships this fall in a first-year pilot program, might also stop and thank Mike Rowe.

What exactly are PCC's workforce development programs? And who in the world is Mike Rowe?

First things first.

PCC's workforce development programs offer training and certification in areas such as automated precision manufacturing, automotive technology, industrial technology, welding and aviation maintenance, among others – programs more commonly known as the trades.

Second answer: Mike Rowe was the star of a cable television series called "Dirty Jobs". OK. So, what does that have to do with PCC and the scholarships awarded by Rawlings and her foundation?

"I used to watch that show all of the time," Rawlings said. "Every week, Rowe would do a dirty job. One week, for example, he cleaned silos. Who knew that could be such a dangerous job? Another week, he helped artificially inseminate cattle."
Rawlings became fascinated with how important "dirty jobs" are to a functioning society.



"These were/are jobs that need to be done," the former and retired publisher of The Pueblo Chieftain newspaper said. "If we don't value them, young people will not do them.

"I remember sitting in editorial board meetings at the Chieftain, listening to trade union officials talk about the growing need for workers such as plumbers and electricians due to people retiring but not being replaced by young people (because they) were not entering these fields."

Rawlings pointed out that the Chieftain, under the leadership of Frank Hoag Jr., then his nephew, Robert Hoag Rawlings (Jane's late father), has long supported Colorado State University Pueblo.

"There is great value in a university education," said the Colorado College graduate. "But in recent years, we all have become aware of students who have degrees that have not provided them (with) jobs. And they have all of this student loan debt.

"Another time, I did a tour with Rotary 43 at the industrial park, and they were telling us they can't find a qualified maintenance person. That really hit home with me.

"And that is why I have chosen to work with PCC on helping students who want to work and who want to stay in Pueblo. Of course, we can't require the latter, but we can ascertain their interest in staying," she said with a sly smile.

Her father had a trust that expired about a year ago with a bit more than $70,000 left in the account. The only restriction on the use of the money was that it had to go toward education.

Rawlings decided to take $15,000 of that and use it to award 30 PCC students $500 scholarships in fall 2026. If it's well-received and successful, she plans to spend more money helping students who want to work in these trade areas.

"These are good jobs with good pay," Rawlings said. "There was a luncheon for the scholarship recipients, and I sat next to a young woman who was loving learning about welding and was so excited about working in the welding field. It was really great to hear that."

PCC President Dr. Chato Hazelbaker said this kind of support from community benefactors is invaluable.

"Jane's interest in trade programs aligns perfectly with what we are hearing from students and the community. We need these professionals more than ever and they are great jobs," he said.

"Jane's gifts have really helped us fulfill our mission of being a bridge of opportunity for students who have the ability but lack the resources."

Robert Hoag Rawlings died in March 2017, bequeathing a substantial amount of money to the Rawlings Foundation.

"If Dad were overseeing that money, he'd want it to last forever," Rawlings said, explaining that the capital would be untouched and the interest earnings would go to worthy causes in Pueblo and southern Colorado.

"That's not what I intend to do, nor is it what I am doing. I want to use that money now, for kids who need it now," she said. "Eventually, the money will run out, but that's what I intend to do, because the need is so great now."

The Rawlings Foundation has other scholarships established with the PCC Foundation. They include four scholarships to individuals who are studying media-related or workforce-related programs and another endowed scholarship that has no restrictions on field of study.

"I am especially excited about these new scholarships and the foundation's role in supporting the trades programs at PCC," Rawlings said. "In one year or two, students learn a valuable skill in a job that we all need done, and they make good money. I think that's a terrific thing."



The influence of the Pueblo Hoag and Rawlings families on Pueblo Community College is profound.

Their contributions began in 1933, when Frank Hoag Jr., at the remarkable age of 26, joined with several other community leaders to petition the state to grant Pueblo a certificate of incorporation for the newly formed Southern Colorado Junior College.

At that time, Hoag was a reporter for The Pueblo Chieftain newspaper, which was owned by his father, Frank Hoag Sr. After his father died, Hoag became the owner and publisher of the newspaper. In that role, he continued to support the new college as it evolved through the years until it became the PCC we know today. In 2015, a bronze statue of Hoag Jr., titled "Founding Father," was installed on PCC's main campus.

Hoag died in 1989, and his mantle was passed on to his nephew, Robert Hoag Rawlings. Rawlings, owner and publisher of the Chieftain, continued to support the school and numerous other community entities.

That legacy continues today as Jane Rawlings, retired Chieftain publisher and daughter of Robert Rawlings, supports PCC through the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation that she heads. She has a special affinity for PCC's trade programs, and this fall began a pilot program through the PCC Foundation to award dozens of scholarships to students in those areas.



MOTHERS' ADVOCATE

Nursing Student Eager to Begin Dream Career

Anahi Vasquez has a heart for mothers. First, naturally, is her own mom, Rosa. Second are the ones she may never meet personally, but who she has helped through her projects to donate diapers and other baby essentials. And third are the mothers she intends to assist as a nurse midwife.

Vasquez, a first-year nursing student at Pueblo Community College, is pursuing that professional dream with the help of multiple scholarships. One of them is from the PCC Foundation, which distributed more than $1 million in scholarships and grants to PCC students in the 2025-26 academic year thanks to the continuing support of donors.

Vasquez's other awards came from outside scholarships, which can be just as important to students' success. One was from UCHealth and another came from the Colorado State Fair Fiesta Committee – a scholarship she earned by winning the 2026 Colorado State Fair Fiesta Queen scholarship pageant in June.

"I'm very grateful to be able to go through the first year of nursing school without worrying," she said. "My scholarships are taking some of that financial burden off me and my family."

As Fiesta Queen, Vasquez served as an ambassador for the Hispanic community during Fiesta Day events at the fair and in Pueblo.

"The overall mission the Fiesta Queen court and I have is to lead by example for our community and for younger girls who are of Hispanic heritage, just to show them 'You can do this,'" said Vasquez.

She was involved in multiple student organizations and academic competitions when she attended Pueblo West High School but had never been in a pageant.

“It was definitely a nerve-wracking experience,” she said. “I felt like I wanted to throw up the whole time, but I think it was worth it. One thing I’ve noticed is whenever I put myself through extremely uncomfortable situations, it ends up working out. I think that’s something I’m going to see as a good thing in life.”

Though she may be comfortable with being uncomfortable, Vasquez is passionate about providing new mothers and mothers-to-be with a level of comfort she believes can be missing from various aspects of the healthcare industry.

“I came to the realization that a lot of mothers, whether it’s in the healthcare system or society, feel like they’re not seen or not receiving the care that they should,” she said.

That concern led her to pursue multiple projects in high school, from collecting 125 packages of baby essentials to pitching an idea for a postpartum pain-relief product. This semester, she coordinated a diaper-donation drive for the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

Vasquez wanted to stay close to home for college and chose PCC because of its affordability and personal attention.

“I think Pueblo has a lot of good resources for people my age. It’s a good place to get your life figured out,” she said.

She sees midwifery as the best way to combine nursing expertise with a more personal touch.

“I saw something that said a hospital is a cold, sterile, very bright room and it doesn’t feel like that room is surrounded by love,” she said. “When you are going to have a baby, you should be surrounded by love in a comforting place, and I think that really changed my perspective about how we do things traditionally in America.”

Nursing may may be in her DNA: Vasquez’s mother, who grew up in a small town in Chihuahua, Mexico, had the same aspirations.

“It was my mom’s dream to become a nurse,” Vasquez said, “but she had to work to support her family. Being able to pursue not only my dream but also my mother’s dream – it means a lot, especially since I’m the daughter of an immigrant. It’s rewarding and something I’m very grateful for.”





CONSTRUCTING CONNECTIONS

State Grant Helps PCC Southwest Forge New Community Partnership

A state grant program is helping Pueblo Community College Southwest and its students build things physically and metaphorically.

The Colorado Partnership for Education and Rural Revitalization grant (COPERR), funded through the Colorado Attorney General's Office, was created to provide participants with basic construction skills, help alleviate a shortage of trained workers in the industry, and improve blighted neighborhoods throughout the state. Pueblo Corporate College, a division of PCC, received a $417,000 COPERR grant in 2023 to create a new basic construction skills curriculum and partner with nonprofit organizations in PCC's service area to provide on-the-job training and connections to construction companies in need of workers.

At PCC Southwest, outreach efforts with local organizations led to a conversation with the leaders of Fundamental Needs, a nonprofit that works with underserved communities in the Four Corneron to

Fundamental Needs opened the Cortez Makerspace in January 2026 to provide community members a source for hands-on learning and skill development.

"The idea was simple: Give people here a place to learn a skill, earn a credential and use tools most of us can't afford on our own," said Tyler Bruce, manager of the Cortez Makerspace.

That goal was an ideal fit for the COPERR program.

"It's a mutual interest in serving the Cortez community and building things that are important to the community," said Kelsie Condon, chair of the construction technology program at PCC Southwest. "We contribute this grant-funded class and curriculum, tools, and materials. Fundamental Needs contributes the location and instructor."

Thanks to the grant, the six-week course is free for those who sign up. Classes are held twice a week, and students earn a stipend for participating in weekend labs. They learn basic construction safety, how to use hand and power tools, blueprint reading, measurements, construction math, and framing. Those who complete the class receive OSHA 10-hour certification (basic workplace health and safety) and National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core credentials that are recognized nationwide.

"Evening and Saturday classes mean folks working full time can still make it. Southwest Open School students, home schoolers, seniors, and everyone in between have come through, and several have stuck around as Makerspace members and volunteers," said Bruce.

"Fundamental Needs' downtown location makes the training accessible for all, and the students in the training ultimately build projects that essentially become community assets," Condon said.

Participants in one of the Cortez sessions built a deck behind the Makerspace building. To date, 48 people have participated in COPERR sessions in Cortez, Mancos, and Towaoc, and 26 have completed the course, according to Trish Veneklasen, COPERR coordinator for Pueblo Corporate College.

Students get information about the construction industry and learn how to connect with community resources and employment opportunities, armed with their credentials as a building block. For students who want to continue their education, PCC Southwest offers a full construction technology program through which they can earn an associate degree.

Their new skills can be put to work in their communities, their neighborhoods, and their own homes – "real projects, neighbor to neighbor," Bruce said.

"It's a good deal all around," said Bruce. "PCC gets a presence on Main Street in Cortez. We get to anchor the makerspace in real workforce training. And the region gets a start on two problems everyone feels – contractors who can't find trained help and families who can't find housing they can afford."



‘GET INVOLVED’:

PCC alum returns to campus as foundation board member

She had plenty of reasons to say no. Considering her full business and personal schedules, no one would have faulted her. But when the opportunity came for Tiffany Heath-Garcia to become a member of the Pueblo Community College Foundation, there was only going to be one response.

This is a person whose reply to problems and complaints is, “Well, what are you going to do about it? Get involved and change it.” Pair that mindset with the fact that she’s an alum of two PCC programs, and the invitation to join the foundation earned an emphatic yes.

“I find great value in PCC,” said Heath-Garcia. “Continuing my education provided the means for me to change my life."

Her PCC experiences came about 20 years apart. As a student at Pueblo South High School, she took automotive classes, and that foundation led to a 25-year career in the industry. She worked as a mechanic, supervisor and manager at local dealerships and auto shops.

“I was earning decent money, but I was a single mom and had no retirement plan or other benefits,” she said.

In her 30s, she started taking night classes at PCC to earn an associate degree in sociology. She then transferred to the University of Northern Colorado and completed her bachelor’s degree online.

Through a person she knew in the automotive world, Heath-Garcia discovered a volunteer opportunity at Catholic Charities of Southern Colorado. She started helping with the organization’s parenting classes while still working at her auto service job and deciding how – or if – to start another career utilizing her new degree.



“Continuing my education provided the means for me to change my life."

While she debated with herself, a full-time job became available in the Catholic Charities parenting program. End of debate. She worked with the organization through the COVID pandemic, during which Catholic Charities became a primary food distributor for the region.

“That’s real boots-on-the-ground work,” she said. “For our families, we were their primary connection to resources. We had to move a massive amount of food in a short time.”

Today Heath-Garcia is the lead business outreach specialist with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She works with regional employers to place individuals with disabilities and provides guidance about workplace accommodations and inclusive hiring practices.

“We’re helping people find new paths,” she said. “People don’t have to come to us to fulfill any of their disability requirements. It’s voluntary. We have so many people who want to work. I see lots of people with bachelor’s and master’s degrees.”

Heath-Garcia is a certified Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator and serves on the Pueblo County ADA Advisory Committee. Some of her other community involvement includes serving as a judge for local scholarship competitions, working with the El Pomar Foundation, and participating in the Leadership Pueblo program.

Her personal passion is fitness. In 2023, Heath-Garcia started working out and taking Jiu-Jitsu classes. Over the past three years, she lost about 100 pounds by becoming more active and doing something every day to maintain that commitment. She shares her journey through her social media accounts to encourage others.

Through her community work, Heath-Garcia met Julie Rodriguez. When Rodriguez became CEO of the PCC Foundation in 2025, she reached out to Heath-Garcia about becoming involved with her alma mater.

She is already fluent in the languages of business and education, so her professional experiences align well with PCC’s mission to transform the lives of students, enrich communities, and strengthen regional economies.

Heath-Garcia speaks knowledgeably about PCC’s student support and career services, as well as the school’s plans for new programs and ways to connect students with careers and resources that match their aspirations.

“The growth that’s happening is amazing,” she said. “I think it’s good to dream big.”

If anyone chooses to express a negative opinion about the state of local education, be prepared: Heath-Garcia will get involved in the conversation, and she will be eager to counter that argument.

“I can’t be a wallflower,” she said, laughing. “I tried. It doesn’t work.”

BY THE NUMBERS

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT FOR 2025-26

Pueblo Campus	PCC Southwest	Fremont Campus	Fully Online
6,021	1,928	1,463	557

WHERE OUR STUDENTS LIVE

- **52%** Pueblo County
- **15%** Fremont County
- **12%** La Plata County
- **5%** Montezuma County

TOP ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- Health Science
- Welding
- Nursing

1,017 AREA WORKERS TRAINED

- Rocky Mountain Steel Mills
- Trane
- Bal Seal Engineering
- Colorado Department of Corrections
- Colorado Department of Youth Services

13.5
Average Class Size

Excludes Consortium online sections, Second Chance Pell Online sections, and sections with less than 5 students enrolled.

94%
of 2024-25 graduates were employed or continuing their education

4,801
Concurrent Enrollment students served

37%
of students identify as Hispanic

Pueblo Community College

Pueblo Community College FOUNDATION

2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR INFORMATION

$21.8 million
in donor restricted funds

Nearly
$3 million
awarded for scholarships and program support

The foundation awarded
852 scholarships to
669 PCC students

91 cents of every dollar
goes directly to the mission of supporting PCC students and programs











PCC FOUNDATION CELEBRATES COMMUNITY WITH FARM TO TABLE EVENT

The PCC Foundation held its inaugural Farm to Table dinner under the Orman Avenue lights Sept. 26 on the Pueblo Campus.

Attendees sat at long tables set up under the lights along the portion of Orman Avenue that runs through the heart of the campus. The event functioned as a fundraiser with a twist: There was no auction, no program, no raffle.

Instead, the evening began with brief opening remarks from PCC President Dr. Chato Hazelbaker and a thank you from foundation CEO Julie Rodriguez. The remainder of the night focused on a locally sourced meal curated by Heart and Harvest Catering, live music, and connection among dozens of community members. East High School's ProStart culinary students assisted with the dinner service.

"It was just an incredible evening," Pueblo City Council member Ted Herndandez said during a council meeting two days after the event. "The amount of people who were there from different walks of life, breaking bread and sharing conversation, (I think) is a reflection of what this community is capable of."





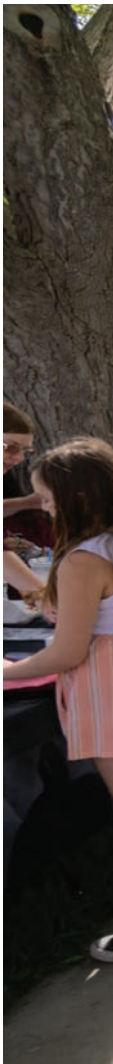
PANTHER BLOCK PARTY ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD

Several hundred current and prospective PCC students and their families came to the Pueblo Campus on a sunny Saturday for the second Panther Block Party, or La Fiesta del Pantera. The Sept. 12 event was a celebration of Hispanic-Serving Institution Week and National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Attractions included mariachi music, folklorico dancers, food trucks, a car show, and family activities. Visitors were able to learn about PCC's academic programs, enrollment process and support resources. Many community organizations also participated to share information about their services.

The event was produced by PCC's Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee.









UPCOMING EVENTS

"MOMENTS THAT MADE US"

This exhibit explores the ideals at the heart of the Declaration of Independence through moments from our nation's 250-year history.

Monday, Nov. 2-Friday, Nov. 27
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday
8 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday
Closed weekends
Pueblo Campus library

AMERICAN REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE

This national traveling exhibit explores the effects of the Revolutionary War on the daily lives of ordinary people

Tuesday, Dec. 1-Thursday, Dec. 17
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday
8 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday
Closed weekends
Pueblo Campus Library

MIRACLE ON ORMAN AVENUE

Community tree-lighting event

Tuesday, Dec. 1
4-6 p.m.
Pueblo Campus

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Pueblo Community College
FOUNDATION
1981-2026

Pueblo Community College
900 W. Orman Avenue
Pueblo, CO 81004

719-544-0677
www.puebloccfoundation.org



AVERIE WILLIAMS

Averie Williams was a full-time concurrent enrollment student at PCC, attending college while still in high school. She graduated in May 2026 with an associate degree in economics and transferred this fall to the Colorado School of Mines to study engineering.

"PCC's flexibility allowed me to get a great education while balancing a busy high school life. PCC gave me the opportunity to do things I never thought I could, and it has set me up for success going forward. It taught me perseverance and independence, and I'm grateful for every opportunity I had."